

## I.1 INTRODUCTION TO ANTHROPOSOPHICAL MEDICINE

Anthroposophy, derived from the Greek words: anthropos=man, sophia=wisdom represents a way of dealing with science, and life issues in general, in a most-comprehensive holistic way. Anthroposophy is rooted in the Western (scientific) tradition; it has a Western perspective. It incorporates all fields of modern science into a spiritual and comprehensible approach. Therefore, Anthroposophy is synonymous with "Spiritual Science" (Geisteswissenschaft).



**Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland**

The Anthroposophical Society, as it exists today, was founded by Rudolf Steiner in 1923, and has its headquarters in the Goetheanum, Dornach, Switzerland. The Goetheanum is the seat of the administration of the Anthroposophical Society, and the School for Spiritual Science (Freie Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft). The School for Spiritual Science is divided into several "sections" to serve various fields of research and training. The Medical Section supports and coordinates all activities in the (para-) medical field. Regular national and international conferences are held in the Goetheanum by the specific sections.



**Rudolf Steiner, PhD. (1861 - 1925)**

The Founder of Anthroposophy was Rudolf Steiner, PhD, an Austrian natural scientist and philosopher, who was born on February 27, 1861, at Kraljevec in what is now part of Croatia. He entered the University of Vienna at age 18 and studied natural history, mathematics and chemistry. He read extensively in philosophy and attended philosophy lectures by Karl

Julius Schröer, a leading philosopher and scientist of that time. Due to Professor Schröer, at age 22, Rudolf Steiner began to edit Goethe's Natural Scientific Writings. At age 25, he wrote his *Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*. From 1890 to 1897, Rudolf Steiner lived in Weimar, Germany, where Goethe had lived most of his life and where most of Goethe's writings are kept in archives. In 1891, Rudolf Steiner received his PhD at the University of Rostock. His thesis was: *Die Grundfrage der Erkenntnistheorie (The Fundamentals of a Theory of Cognition)*. Rudolf Steiner became a leading scientist in the field of Erkenntnistheorie (Theory of Cognition, or Theory of Knowledge). In 1894, Rudolf Steiner wrote his first "anthroposophical" book, "Philosophie der Freiheit", or, as it is currently translated "Intuitive Thinking as a Spiritual Path".

Also in 1894, a series of personal meetings with Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900) took place in Weimar, where Nietzsche also lived, and at his home in Berlin. Rudolf Steiner died in his small studio in Dornach, Switzerland, in 1925. ("The Essential Steiner" by Robert A. McDermott., 1984. Harper San Francisco. ISBN 0-06-065345-0, gives a wonderful and thorough overview of the person and work of Rudolf Steiner).

Rudolf Steiner was not a physician. He therefore founded Anthroposophical Medicine and the Medical Section at the Goetheanum in association with the Dutch physician Ita Wegman, MD, (1876 to 1943). Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman co-wrote the basic book on Anthroposophical Medicine, "Fundamentals of Therapy" (Mercury Press, Spring Valley, New York, 1999, ISBN 0-929979-75-3).



**Ita Wegman, MD, (1876 - 1943)**

Anthroposophical medicine has achieved a growing reputation for its methods of treatment and offers a new approach to meeting the demands of a rapidly changing world. Anthroposophical medicine is firmly based on the knowledge and experience of conventional (Western) medicine and fully recognizes the values of conventional medicine. Anthroposophical medicine therefore cannot strictly be seen as a form of alternative medicine and should rather be viewed as an "extended" or "integrative" medicine.

Anthroposophical medicine treats both acute and chronic diseases, taking into account both the

physical and the non-physical (spiritual) elements of the patient. Working with such elements to extend the range of conventional practice does not make Anthroposophical medicine vague or imprecise. All Anthroposophical doctors and other health care providers must first qualify in their conventional training before they can effectively study, and then practice Anthroposophical medicine. Also, in preventive medicine Anthroposophical medicine has lots to offer. What is now called “Life Style Changes” play an important role in Anthroposophical medicine.

Western academic medicine, as we know it, is derived from natural science, the study of material phenomena, where things can be weighed, measured or counted (ponderable values, the world quantities). In the last 500 years, natural science has hugely expanded our understanding of the world around us. Although many of the early scientists were persecuted for their systematic thinking and discoveries, they were inspired by this new method of inquiry, as they no longer had to rely on traditional religious and philosophical teachings, dogmas and traditions. For us today, this spirit of independent inquiry is as important a legacy as the brilliant achievements of natural science in technology and medicine.

The modern, scientific view of the world has gradually been evolved by building one set of discoveries upon another. The pioneers made their greatest contributions in the field of astronomy and physics, producing formulae to describe the apparent movements of the planets in relation to the sun. In the seventeenth century, Sir Isaac Newton proposed the concept of force and gravity, with which the movements of the planets were explained by the same formulae that described the way inert objects fall to earth. The basic laws of chemistry began to be formulated when it was discovered that, by weighing inorganic materials before and after chemical reactions had taken place, it was possible to make mathematical descriptions of those reactions.

In the Renaissance Italy, an interest in human anatomy prompted artists (notably Leonardo da Vinci) to dissect corpses in order to make the first detailed drawings of the internal structures of the body. The modern discipline of anatomy grew from these studies of dead bodies. Similarly, observation and measurement of the functions of human and animal bodies and their organs led to the gradual development of physiology, which is an accumulation of methods of applying the laws of physics to living organisms. Biochemistry also emerged as a method of applying the laws of chemistry to living things.

Currently, anatomy, physiology and biochemistry are taught as a basis to all medical students and students of most other health care professions. The principles of each are derived from studies of the non-living, but their methods have been applied to the living: the plant, the animal and the human being. Because of this, modern science (including conventional medicine) presents an incomplete picture of the world in its totality. As will be seen in this course, the laws that relate to inert matter should only be applied to the physical aspects of living organisms. They do not take into account their life, soul (mind) and spiritual dimensions and, therefore, a further science is required to complete the picture. This is the role of Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy.

The whole of life is characterized by processes, e.g. the circulation of the blood, the flow of substances in and out of the liver, and the digestive activity. Natural, scientific examinations of these processes tend to reduce them to mechanical systems and chemical reactions, typically breaking up the organism to be studied and analyzing the parts outside their normal environments. This "freezes" the physical expression of the processes into a form which can either be dealt with in the laboratory or other experimental settings, but fails to explain fully its role within the living being. It might be said that natural science tends to analyze a "snapshot" of a process rather than the process itself.

Anthroposophy differs from this approach by regarding the processes in the living being as expressions of spiritual (imponderable) principles. It is these higher principles underlying the physical realm that have to be grasped before the life element (or life forces or etheric forces) can be understood. If the activity involved in a life process is studied, rather than an isolated "snapshot", a step is taken towards understanding that element which organizes inert matter into a complex living organism or body.

Wherever life prevails, the normal behavior of matter is modified, or even reversed. For example, lifeless matter always tends towards a state of disorganization. A stone wall breaks down into dust due to erosion; a hot kettle returns to the same temperature as its surroundings when removed from the heat source. However, in plants, animals and human beings, matter is organized into complex physical bodies. As long as the life element is present, the high state of organization is preserved. But when it departs, as at death, the matter of the physical body breaks down again into a disorganized state; it returns to "dust".

Another example of how life modifies the laws of the physical realm can be observed in the fact that inert matter predictably falls under the influence of gravity. Plants, however, grow up from the ground towards the sun, in opposition to gravity. It is, of course, recognized that they are still subject to gravity, and that ripe apples fall to the ground. The point here is that the plant draws mineral substances from the earth, organizes them in accordance with a predetermined structure, and endows the whole with an ability to oppose gravity. ("Anthroposophical Medicine" by Dr Michael Evans and Lain Rodger, 1992. Thorsons. ISBN 0 7225 2771 3 ).

There is thus a *ponderable* world which is the domain of natural sciences and which is inert and material in its origin, and where things can be measured in kilograms, meters, liters, Hertz, Angstrom, Rad, etc. The ponderable world is a world of quantities.

In addition, there is an *imponderable*, living world which deals with phenomena which cannot be measured by the ordinary natural scientific method: love, hatred, flexibility, endurance, joy, sense of humor, etc. cannot be measured in kilograms or gallons. The imponderable world is a world of qualities. Later in the course we will describe possible ways to "objectify" qualitative observations and data.

Health, or well-being, might be an example of something imponderable. There are many definitions of "health", all of which are an effort to objectify, to describe what is so complex, that it is difficult to capture it in words alone. Two North-American national organizations – the American Holistic Health Association (AHHA), with its headquarters in Anaheim, California, and the American Holistic Medical Association (AHMA), located in Raleigh, North Carolina - have each referred to the traditional philosophical dualism of "part/whole", directly addressed in the field of holistic health in the following way:

According to the American Holistic Health Association:

"Rather than focusing on illness or specific parts of the body, holistic health considers the *whole person* and how it interacts with its environment. It emphasizes the connection of body, mind, and spirit. Holistic Health is based on the law of nature that *awhole is made up of interdependent parts*. The earth is made up of systems, such as air, land, water, plants, and animals. If life is to be sustained, they cannot be separated, for what is happening to one is also felt by all of the other

systems. In the same way, an individual is a whole composed of interdependent parts, which are the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. When one part is not working at its best, it will impact on all other parts of that person. Further, this whole person, including all other parts, is consistently interacting with everything in the surrounding environment."

According to the American Holistic Medical Association:

"Wellness is defined as a state of well-being, in which an individual's body, mind, emotions, and spirit are in harmony with, and guided by, an awareness of society, nature, and the universe.... [It] encompasses all safe modalities of diagnosis and treatment, including the use of medications and surgery, emphasizing the necessity of looking at the whole person."

When one studies both statements one can see that concepts like mind, mental, emotional and spirit, or spiritual are mentioned. What is the difference between mind and spirit ? How does spirit relate to the body ? Anthroposophical medicine has developed comprehensible concepts and a very clear and precise nomenclature to enter the imponderable world, and overcome the traditional (philosophical) dualism.

Anthroposophical medicine seeks to study both the ponderable and the imponderable worlds by developing new methods of research and thus bridge the abyss between the "dead" (inorganic) and the "living" worlds.

Anthroposophical medicine is a product of such strivings. Anthroposophical medicine seeks to understand the physical and the non-physical (ponderable and the imponderable), and apply the results of its research to health and healing.

Since the establishment of the first Anthroposophical clinic in Arlesheim, Switzerland, in 1923 several large community and university hospitals have been established throughout Europe and other continents. Some of which are:

**Husemann Clinic - an Anthroposophical mental hospital**

**Filder Klinik in Stuttgart, Germany - General hospital and community clinic**

**University teaching hospital Herdecke, Germany - general and community hospital**



**Teaching hospital Öschelbronn near Stuttgart: general and community hospital**

**Medical Center Cologne, Cologne, Germany: general clinic with emphasis on oncology.  
University teaching clinic.**

**General and community hospital in Jaerna, near Stockholm Sweden**

**For further information on this topic go to:**

[www.anthroposophy.org](http://www.anthroposophy.org)

[www.paam.net](http://www.paam.net)

[www.medical-center-cologne.com](http://www.medical-center-cologne.com)

[www.anthroposophical-medicine.info](http://www.anthroposophical-medicine.info)

<http://www.info3.de>

For questions concerning Anthroposophical nursing email:

[mail@anthro-pflegeberufe.de](mailto:mail@anthro-pflegeberufe.de)

## **I.2 Man on the Threshold**

**(A modern path of inner development)**

In the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, **Rudolf Steiner** (1861-1925) mentioned for the first time that

mankind was in the process of “crossing the threshold” and that by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mankind as a whole would have crossed this threshold. Those safe boundaries that surrounded our consciousness during the past centuries would no longer be familiar and safe. Especially the inward boundaries, towards the inner processes of body and soul, would become unreliable. Unfamiliar and compulsive forces could gain entrance to the consciousness and push fears, compulsions, alienation, and depression to the surface. He predicted that the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be determined by forces, which would come from deep and unknown layers of the soul, which would surface as forces of destruction; a kind of “war of everybody against everybody” at the end of the Sixth Post-Atlantean Epoch. Rudolf Steiner predicted a century of unrest and upheaval as a kind of “preview” of what will come one day at the end of the Sixth Post-Atlantean Epoch, and hinted at in the Apocalypses of John. (Currently, we live in the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch, which started in 1413 AD; each cultural epoch lasts approximately 2,100 years). The form of aggression during the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be different in character from previous forms of aggression. No longer would national conflicts play the dominant role in triggering wars; now, there would be a shift towards aggression by individuals, who would select other individuals as targets for their aggression. The surge of suicide bombers, terrorist acts, etc., might be expressions of what was meant here by Rudolf Steiner.

The first sign of this came around the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, some 100 years ago, when psychoanalysis brought a break through in medicine. At first ridiculed by those for whom the boundary was still rock-solid, psychoanalysis soon penetrated cultural life. Today, it is difficult to imagine a novel or movie without psychoanalytic overtones.

The sense of anxiety seems to increase by the year. But this cannot be! One is supposed to be healthy, young, sexy and energetic, and psychologically well adjusted, by which is usually meant having a “sensible” consciousness (to possess “common sense”), oriented to the tangible and visible material world. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the use of tranquillizers, sleeping medication, “designer” drugs and alcohol have fully taken hold of most societies. Especially in the last quarter of the last century, the use of prescription drugs, like tranquillizers, anti-depressants and sleeping medications, have almost quadrupled. What are the reasons for this phenomenon?

This chapter has been written to introduce the student to create a deeper understanding of these phenomena from the viewpoint of Anthroposophy and its image of human nature. Anthroposophy provides insights in areas that are obscure to our daily consciousness and understanding. Real insights form the basis for overcoming anxiety and fear. Understanding banishes fear and opens the path to develop love for oneself and for one's neighbor, and the world as such. It will lead to trust towards the future, whatever may come. The book written by **Bernhard Lievegoed** (September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1905 in Medan in Indonesia - December 12<sup>th</sup>, 1992 in Zeist, the Netherlands) "*Man on the Threshold*" - is highly recommended literature for the student to study.

All previous cultures, as we know them, were based on a spiritualistic worldview in which the divine world was seen as the creator in one way or another. The only true reality was a spiritual one. Matter was considered, or even experienced, as Maya (Sanskrit: illusion, an illusionary world). The ancient Greeks, in a certain way, still lived with this divine world, but developed the then still new world view of idealism, in which behind each external phenomenon the idea was experienced as cause and creator. (Idea in Plato's sense: the World of Ideas is a world where things are as they truly are; the phenomena of the physical world are but mere shadows of the Ideas, or spiritual entities).

Our current (Western) culture has relegated both the divine and the ideal world to the realm of childish wishfulness, and knows only (and seemingly only wants to know) about matter. In materialism, to which we all have succumbed to some degree, natural laws and chance (statistics) are causes and creators of everything, and spirit has become the big Maya, the illusionary world.

But, hopefully, classical materialism has passed its zenith by now. Mankind seems to be about to take the next step: to "spiritual realism", in which matter and spirit both are realities and in conscious interaction. "No spirit without matter, no matter without spirit!" This is a statement by Rudolf Steiner, which shows him to be a true realist. Modern man seems to live between two boundaries. One is an observational boundary. One views the outside of the phenomenal world. Everywhere one sees only outer surfaces. If one wants to know what lies behind the surface, and

cuts the object one is observing in two, two new surfaces are created. Even the greatest imaginable magnification of the electron microscope one can only see the surfaces of the smallest particles, until the particles dissolve into non-material, hypothetical forces, which one can infer only through their activity.

Man's view outward impinges on surfaces, made visible by illumination. Man's view inward, into his own soul (psyche or mind), hits a dark wall, on which usually only memories are depicted. What goes on behind this wall, this mirror of memories in the way of organic processes and unconscious soul processes escapes one's direct observation to the same extent as the forces working within nature escape one's observation. On the way outward, one invents and builds instruments to magnify or reduce in order to penetrate into the essence of the world. On the way inward, one attempts to get to know the essence of the world(s) behind the wall, the mirror of memory by means of techniques such as dream analysis, hypnosis, and investigation of psychological phenomena.

But here to, one gets no further than describing processes of an unconscious world in terms of the conscious. Thus, the human being seems to live between two boundaries he cannot cross with his day (regular, common) consciousness.

The cosmos outside, perceived through the senses, and metabolism inside are the two unknown worlds. Materialism is, in its essence, agnostic but it is honest about it. It defines the world of the senses but it chooses not to say anything about its essence, about its true nature, about "das Dasein" und "das Ding-an-Sich" All forms of materialism can say about the cosmos that it is an expression of various forms of energy. The world of the atom consists of emptiness, filled with energy. **Immanuel Kant** (1724-1804), one of the most significant German philosophers, who was born, spent his whole life, and died in Königsberg, East Prussia, now part of Poland, published his most famous book Critique of Pure Reason in 1781. In this book, he lays down the basis of modern thinking of Western Societies. The central concern of Kant's philosophy is with the possibility of metaphysics, understood as philosophical knowledge that transcends the bounds

of experience. For Kant, such knowledge claims to be both “synthetic” and “a priori” In other words, metaphysics purports to provide necessary truths, which, as such, cannot be based on empirical evidence (their apriority), but which also claim more of their referents than can be derived from an analysis of their concepts (their syntheticity). The propositions “God exists” and “Every event has a cause” are examples of such a claim. By contrast, propositions which merely explicate what is already thought in the concept of a subject. e.g. “God is omnipotent”, are termed analytic. Since the truth of the latter can be ascertained merely by appealing to accepted meanings and logical considerations, Kant thought that these were non-problematic. Accordingly, the fundamental philosophical task is to account for the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge; and, following to a certain extent the Dutch philosopher **Baruch (Benedictus) Spinoza** (1632-1677), Kant also believed that mathematical propositions are of this nature, and became an integral part of his worldview.

The second aspect of Immanuel Kant’s concern with metaphysics is with the problem of the “antinomies”. As a result of his reflections on the concept of a world, he became convinced that reason inevitably falls into contradiction with itself when it endeavors to “think the whole”, that is, when it ventures beyond experience in order to answer such questions as whether the universe has a beginning in time, limit in space, or first cause, or so, rather, infinite in these respects. The contradiction or antinomy arises because it is possible to construct valid proofs for each of the two conflicting positions: the universe has a beginning in time; the universe has existed for an infinite period of time; etc. He also thought that, if unresolved, this problem would lead to a hopeless skepticism, which he termed the “euthanasia of pure reason”. Consequently, Kant came to see the “fate of metaphysics” as crucially dependent on a successful resolution of the antinomies as well as an account of the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge.

According to Kant, human knowledge is limited to “appearances” (phenomena), whereas “things-in-themselves” (das Ding-an-Sich), or noumena, are thinkable but actual not knowable. Kant states that the human mind is, in fact, endowed with such conditions, and demonstrates, in his way, the main task of the Transcendental Aesthetic and the Transcendental Analytic. In the former, Kant argues that space and time are subjective forms of human sensibility, through which

the manifold of sense is given to the mind, rather than either self-subsisting realities (Newton) or relations between self-subsisting things (Leibnitz). He also argued that only this conception of space is capable of accounting for the possibility of geometry. In the latter, he first tried to establish by means of a “transcendental deduction” that certain pure concepts or categories, including substance and causality, are universally valid with respect to possible experience, since they are necessary conditions of the empirical thought of an object.

On the basis of these contemplations, Kant then argued that for a set of synthetic a priori principles regarding nature, considered as the sum total of objects of possible experience. Prominent among these are the principles that substance in nature remains permanent throughout all change and that every alteration has a cause.

The bottom line of Kant’s philosophy is, that man can never obtain full knowledge, or know the truth. Man’s senses will always betray him; they will fool him.

In contrast to Kant stands another German philosopher, Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749-1832), who one could consider as an “early anthroposophist”. He argues strongly against Kant’s worldview. From Goethe comes “the light has created the eye so that the eye can perceive the light”. Goethe would argue that one’s senses do not betray (mislead) one but that one’s interpretations betray (mislead) him. Goethe argued that through exercise and growth, man can obtain a better and better understanding and knowledge of the world and himself, and, finally, obtain true knowledge (in a Platonic sense).

Therefore, Goethe is considered by some as a Neo-Platonist, referring to the great Greek philosopher Plato (c. 428-347 BC). It was Plato’s worldview, that truth could be obtained (known) if man would work his way up away from the “World of Shadows” (the physical world of sense perception) into the “World of Ideas”, which was the world of Truth, or true being; the world of intuitions. Man is born as a four-fold being (see Module IV), namely with a physical body, with life forces (the etheric body), and animalistic soul forces (the astral body). The ego,

which goes through the various earth incarnations, must then still penetrate these instruments; tame them and humanize them.

This humanizing process is especially one's task for the first half of life; subsequently, the humanized forces can be used for further development. This development always takes place in interaction with other human beings. In receiving and giving, one follows one's individual life's path (biography), and augments the "talents" with which one started this life. This, one is taught by the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14)

The human being has the animalistic soul functions in common with the animal. Out of the life sphere, drives rise up dedicated to perpetuating life: eating, procreating, building a nest, and defending a territory – all drives that man has in common with the animal.

The stimulus-response mechanism forms the basis for the psychology of behaviorism. A materialistic psychology sees these mechanisms as the "only real" soul life, and views all "so-called higher" drives and desires as a flight from reality. Man, it is said, should certainly not imagine himself to be more than an intelligent animal. And the cause for all psychological disturbances would be, in fact, that man, under the influence of cultural taboos, suppresses these animalistic mechanisms. The cure, therefore, can only be the removal of these cultural obstacles, and the creation of situations in which the animalistic mechanisms can be given free reign. Most modern forms of group therapy are based on this principle. It is all derived, more or less, from psychoanalysis, and acknowledges only a conscious and an unconscious psychical world. Only the logo therapy of Frankl and the psychosynthesis of Assagioli recognize a psychical world related to a higher consciousness. In the higher consciousness, man comes in contact with his "higher ego" and with that which he has gained in cultural attributes due to this higher consciousness. The animal is tossed between sympathy and antipathy, between comfort and discomfort, between challenge and withdrawal, between hunger and satiation, etc. Man can internalize these stimuli; man can say "no!" to animalistic (instinctive) stimuli.

The humanization of the animalistic forces take place in three distinct steps: the development of the

1) sentient soul (“Empfindungsseele”): study of the Third Post-Atlantean Epoch (Mesopotamian-Egyptian-Chaldian cultures) can give a good insight in the development of the qualities of the sentient soul;

2) intellectual- or mind soul (“Verstandesseele”): study of the Fourth Post-Atlantean Epoch (Greek-Roman cultures) can give a good insight in the development of the qualities of the intellectual soul;

3) spirit- or consciousness soul (“Bewusstseinsseele”): study of the Fifth Post-Atlantean Epoch (current evolving culture) can give a good insight in the development of the qualities of the spirit soul. (see Chapter 10 in “Man on the Threshold” by Bernard Lievegoed).

One could build the following image: Consider a carriage (physical body) with the horse in front of it (astral body), and the driver on top (ego, or spirit). The horse in front of the carriage can pull the carriage in any direction it wants; it can even run off with it. The driver must manage and control the horse, so that the carriage will arrive at its goal safely, and in time. In a certain way, this is a very similar picture as the image of Arjuna in the Bagavadgita of the Hindu philosophy, when he finds himself on the battle field and must fight the armies of his family members.

For the Western (European) spiritual development one can distinguish four definite streams of development, represented by:

1) the Egyptian culture and mysteries coming from the South (chapter 2 in “Man on the Threshold”);



- 2) the Germanic culture and mysteries, coming from the North (chapter 3 in “Man on the Threshold”);
- 3) the Greek and Roman cultures and mysteries, coming from the East;
- 4) the Hibernian culture and mysteries, coming from the West (Ireland).

Characteristic of the Egyptian mysteries are the preparations for the human being through an intensive period of purification to prepare himself for initiation. After the pupil was considered to be prepared for actual initiation, he was placed in an excavation in the floor in the temple (pyramid), similar to a grave. The hierophant brought the pupil into a somnambulous sleep, much deeper than the ordinary sleep. Around the initiation grave, or in an adjacent room, stood twelve helpers who had been initiated earlier, and who trained to intercept the demonic forces that we know as the lower egoistic drives, and to assimilate these inwardly and thereby divert them from the pupil. In spite of this preparation the pupil would otherwise have been inwardly torn apart by these demonic (animalistic) forces, or beings. That is a process that corresponds to what we know nowadays as schizophrenia. The initiation in the Egyptian mysteries took place in absolute secrecy, and far away from the “ordinary”, unprepared people outside the temple. The disciple had given over his ego entirely to the priest-teacher. He viewed himself through the priest’s eyes, and thus he indirectly experienced how the forces of the astral body, the ether body, and the physical body became conscious.

The disciple now entered the world of his own astral body, the carrier of the animalistic soul life. First of all, he now experienced everything he had not done, but could have and should have done; all sins out of omission started to weigh upon him as a heavy burden, and this burden of sin grew to a feeling of devastation so powerful that in ordinary life, if arising without preparation, it would have lead to suicide.

But the Egyptian disciple was prepared for this in a very careful and thorough manner. During the initiation rites, the total of all onerous aspects of life till then condensed into a figure that came into view as a “guardian of the threshold”. This was a spiritual entity, formed out of the personal experiences and deeds of the disciple, objectified as it were, and experienced as a hindrance to further descent (progress). In the Egyptian cultural epoch, this guardian took the appearance of the sphinx, which the pupil had already come to know outwardly on his way to the temple in the statues flanking the road to the entrance.

It is appropriate to mention here that the path inward means a path backwards in time. Our bodily constitution, our inner organs, are formed by forces out of the past. They are the fruit of previous incarnations that have, as it were, congealed in the formation and functions of our body. During the process of (Egyptian) initiation, this process was experienced in reverse.

If the preparations had been as it should, the Egyptian pupil could during his initiation pass the guardian on the threshold fairly quickly, and face his own astral body (and specifically the area below the solar plexus – the unconscious soul life, in other words). To “show” that an initiate had mastered the forces below the solar plexus (below the diaphragm) he would wear a triangle from his waste down, covering his three lower chackra’s. This measure is still held up by modern Free Masonry tradition.

An initiation took three days and nights. On the third day, the pupil was brought back in a wakening condition; he was “raised out of the grave”. From now on, he was considered to be an initiate, a person who was “born again”.

Any person, who would betray the secrets of the initiation, would be persecuted and put to death.

We are still reminded of these old Egyptian initiation rites in the New Testament, when Lazarus is laying in a grave for three days, and is awakened by the Christ. It is interesting to notice that

only after this event, when Lazarus is awakened by the Christ, the Christ becomes fiercely persecuted by the rabbis. In a certain way, in their eyes and tradition, Christ betrayed the old initiation rites.

Also Socrates was accused to have betrayed the secrets of the mysteries, and must die.

The Egyptian mysteries lay the foundation for what we know as **psychology** nowadays.

The Germanic mysteries were of a very different nature. Here, the student was not lead into his inner world but into the outer world. Here, sense perception led to the experience of the creation (nature). Here, the ego did not descent downwards and inwardly but got diluted, spread out in the cosmos, as it appears to the senses. In the Northern European mysteries, courage was developed and tested. Courage was tested both on the physical plane as morally. This explains, in part, the journeys of the Vikings in their small boats, as a preparation for, and as an exercise of courage. The Germanic initiation rites were mainly various trials to show courage and being master over difficult situations in the physical world. By conquering the physical world, nature, what lived in the four elements, namely earth, water, air and fire, were directly perceived. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, this is beautifully portrait by the Austrian composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart in his opera “the Magic Flute”, which reveals several Free Mason symbols and traditions. Here, Tamino and Pamina go through the trials of the four elements. Thus, the Germanic mysteries nurture the development of **courage**.

Characteristic of the Greek and Roman cultures is that the ancient Greeks tried to capture the essentials through thinking. For Greek mysteries, the sense perception was a gate to the spiritual world. Thinking is, in part, dependent on memory. The etheric world is where all is saved as cosmic memory (AkashaRecord, or Cosmic Memory). In early Greek civilization, the mysteries of Ephesus played an important role. Central in the mysteries of Ephesus stood Artemis, the Goddess with many breasts, symbolizing the etheric world, the world of life forces. Artemis is in the Egyptian mysteries Nuth, the Goddess, who, with her thousands of breasts, feeds the pharaoh

and all living creatures. In Greece, thinking and the very first experimentation is initiated. Greek mysteries lay the foundation for current **natural sciences**.

The Hibernian mysteries in the West were cultivated in what we now know as Ireland and part of the British Isles. Here, the student was introduced to the elementary beings which live in the four elements; into the masculine and feminine sides of nature. It is interesting to notice that Europe was Christianized by Irish monks, who were still living out of the Hibernian traditions. They had experienced the effects of the Mystery of Golgotha directly through what had suddenly changed in their experience of the four elements, and what lives in these four elements. Interestingly, Europe was not Christianized by missionaries from Rome. It was Irish monks, who spread early Christianity throughout Northern and Western Europe, and who came all the way down as far as the Alps. For instance, the Irish monk Gallenius founded St Gallen as an early monastery in Switzerland. The Hibernian mysteries lay the foundation for an understanding of the living the earth as a vital and vulnerable organism: **ecology**, an ecological consciousness, and feeling of responsibility towards nature, as the direct deeds of the Hierarchies.

According to Rudolf Steiner, modern man should incorporate all four mystery streams and Anthroposophy wants to be a path, which unites all four mysteries into a new and fruitful next step in the development of mankind.

The following book by Bernhard Lievegoed: “Man on the Threshold” (Hawthorn Press, October 1996, 210 pages; ASIN 0950706264) is highly recommended.