

# Make It Known!

## Anthroposophy Offers a Spiritual Path for Our Times

by Sara Ciborski

In a recent issue of *being human*, John Beck urged readers to undertake a campaign to make anthroposophy more visible. From where I stand, what is unfortunately less visible than it should be is that the source and fruit of anthroposophy is meditation. Many people who meet anthroposophy through Waldorf education, biodynamic farms, or other initiatives, don't realize—because no one tells them?—that *anthroposophy offers a modern path for fully conscious, individual, spiritual self-development and contemplative inquiry*.

Do we make it clear, beyond our one-sentence definitions (e.g., “the wisdom of the human being”) that with the study of anthroposophy one may learn techniques for meditation—indeed, a variety of spiritual practices, which are not just relevant but critical for our times?

I'm not referring to those whose encounter with anthroposophy leads to serious engagement in the initiatives; students in Waldorf teacher education programs, for example, are given practical guidance for inner work. I'm thinking rather of folks whose contact with anthroposophists is casual or brief. We know that many people today, especially young people, want to learn how to meditate. That young and old are flocking to specifically Buddhist and other mindfulness centers attests to a widespread longing for spiritual practice. Many of them might be receptive to Steiner's approach—if they knew that anthroposophy is an option.

We are reluctant, for good reasons, to interfere with individual destiny in this matter. But it would not infringe on anyone's freedom if—when speaking about Rudolf Steiner or the initiatives—we were more forthcoming about anthroposophical meditation. And beyond simply recommending books or book-study groups, ideally we would make it possible for any interested person to learn from experienced students of anthroposophy some of the particular ways that we practice. And we would need to be prepared, whenever an opportunity arises in conversation, to give a thumbnail description of our practice.

To begin, we could use the phrase in italics above. But it is important to add—to distinguish the anthroposophical path from some others—that it is a *cognitive* path,

which can lead toward understanding as well as to inner peace, to confidence in thinking, and to knowing rather than faith. We could also stress that anthroposophical inner work addresses burning questions about the meaning of the individual self and destiny, the nature and meaning of evil, the evolution of consciousness, and the riddle of matter in relation to spirit. Mindfulness practice, as far as I know, does not engage directly in these questions. At the same time, like most other paths, anthroposophy is concerned to cultivate reverence, devotion, gratitude, and strength and insight for personal and social renewal.

Specifically (we could say) that anthroposophical practice may include:

- Meditative reading of sacred texts and the study of Steiner's basic books.
- Working with Steiner's epistemology: how do we know what we know?
- Exercises to strengthen attentiveness and direct attention to its source.
- Exercises to develop sense-free thinking and to strengthen soul faculties to act independently of external influence or inner pathology.
- Exercises in perception and concentration.
- Meditation on specific texts, images, concepts, and themes.
- Artistic activity to awaken new spiritual faculties: poetry, music, painting, drawing, speech, movement.

These points could be used in outreach—a flyer, for example, if a local branch wanted to offer an introductory meditation workshop. I know that some individuals and groups have indeed been offering guidance in practice based on, or enriched by, anthroposophy. If they would share their experience, it may encourage others among us to make this essence of anthroposophy more widely known and accessible to spiritual seekers everywhere.

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