

# STEINER and KINDRED SPIRITS

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Cover image: *Kindred Spirits* (1849) by Asher Brown Durand of the Hudson River School. It depicts Thomas Cole with the poet William Cullen Bryant in the Catskill Mountains. Book & cover design: William Jens Jensen

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## KINDRED SPIRITS

## THE POSSIBILITY OF SPIRITUAL KNOWLEDGE

Because I believe that Rudolf Steiner is neither the only word nor the last word, this book is about the worldviews and insights contributed both by Steiner and by other thinkers (some of whom are also activists) who seem to me in some respects as deep as Steiner in the same fields, as well as more contemporary. This book assumes that more than one spiritual thinker is needed for anyone searching for light in a dark spiritual environment. Steiner was expert not only on the nature and causes of this darkness but also on its causes and the methods for its cure. He is a supreme guide for the healing of our individual lives and modern Western culture. Along with Jung, Steiner is a healer of the *anima mundi*, the increasingly sick soul of the world. But more than Jung, and more than any other thinker who is or could be included in a book comparing spiritual worldviews, Steiner's contributions run from truly arcane insights on obscure topics to contemporary methods of education, agriculture, and medicine. To his great credit, but at high risk, Steiner institutionalized his teachings, thereby allowing both followers and casual observers to exploit his insights for less ideal purposes than the ones that he served throughout his life. Overall, Steiner's contributions are clearly positive, but because their implementation has depended on others, thus far the results have been inadequate, even tragic, relative to their potential.

With so many great figures to inspire us, why focus on Rudolf Steiner? Why attend to a still-peripheral European esoteric teacher who died several generations ago? What can Rudolf Steiner add to C. G. Jung's profound analysis of the unconscious,

or Teilhard de Chardin's union of science and spirituality, or the exalted words and exemplary lives of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., and His Holiness the Dalai Lama? Or the ideas of Thomas Berry, Wingari Matthai, Joanna Macy, and other prophetic voices awakening us to impending ecological catastrophe and its solutions? The wisdom of all of these individuals is needed as we confront unprecedented challenges. Rudolf Steiner's contributions are vast, deep, and timely. He is needed for his insights, his selfless service to humanity, and the practical import of his research and counsel. He merits our attention because his thought and spiritual practice are profound and comprehensive, and have not yet received the serious attention they deserve.

In this book I have concentrated on thinkers whom I have studied, taught, and written about for several decades. As a result, I am convinced that their methods and insights are in one or more respects comparable to Steiner's as well as worth recommending on their own terms. These comparisons do not include any substantive criticisms of these thinkers, though critiques have been published on all of them, as well as, of course, on Rudolf Steiner. Along with making the case for Steiner, I also recommend a variety of methods, worldviews, and individual ideas. I affirm Steiner's abilities and contributions while showing that he was not alone in some of the problems he tried to solve, in some of his methods, and in some of his insights.

Steiner worked on many of the same problems, and offered insights, however differently articulated, comparable to those of Rabindranath Tagore, Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, Teilhard de Chardin, C. G. Jung, and the Dalai Lama, as well as a spiritual basis for democracy, human rights and dignity crucially developed by the civil rights and feminist movements of the past fifty years in the West. Steiner's teachings should be significant for anyone committed to the work of M. K. (Mahatma) Gandhi and Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., to the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and to the single most important challenge facing humanity, the ecological sustainability of Gaia. These thinkers I wish to compare with Steiner include the following, some more prominently than others:

*Kindred Spirits*

Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, and Josiah Royce,  
American philosophers  
Martin Buber, philosopher of an I–Thou way of life  
C. G. Jung, archetypal psychologist  
Sri Aurobindo, Hindu poet, philosopher, teacher of Integral  
Yoga  
Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, mystical scientist  
His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhist exemplar of  
compassion  
Scholars and devotees of the goddess Sophia  
Rabindranath Tagore, Bengali poet, musician, educator,  
internationalist  
M. K. (Mahatma) Gandhi and other exemplars of nonviolence  
John Dewey’s and Maria Montessori’s insights concerning  
education  
Thomas Berry, prophetic exponent of “The New Story”

Most of the comparisons between Steiner and these others have some spiritual content, though not very much esoteric content. There would be not much point in comparing Steiner’s view of the human soul, or of human afterlife, or of Buddha or Christ, with a thinker who flatly denies spiritual knowledge or spiritual realities. Consequently, with few exceptions (e.g., John Dewey) the twenty or so thinkers brought into conversation with Rudolf Steiner in this book all affirm a height or depth dimension, broadly categorizable by the Buddhist term “Mahayana,” the more expansive path, or, in the felicitous phrase of William James, “Something More.”

This book summarizes and recommends a wide variety of religious and spiritual individuals, practices, and worldviews, along with various conceptions of the divine, the sacred, and spiritual ideas. A synonym for these words is *numen*, which literally means “a bow of the head,” and by application, bowing to what is perceived to be a manifestation of the divine. In *The Idea of the Holy* (1923) Rudolf Otto extended the noun *numen* to the adjective *numinous*, “something bearing the character of a ‘numen.’”<sup>1</sup> Like the words *sacred* and *spiritual*, the word *numinous* is most

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1. Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 11.

useful as an adjective, but in my opinion all of the terms just introduced—*sacred*, *spiritual*, *holy*, and *numinous*, or *numinal*—can also be used as a noun in an effort to render it an objective reality. This book affirms and tries to point the reader to Spirit as well as spiritual, to divinity as well as to holy, and to Numen, as well as to numinous experience. *Numen* and *numinous* are perhaps more useful words than *holy*, *spiritual*, or *sacred*, all of which have been overused, flattened, and somewhat drained of their special meanings. All of these words can be useful, however, in the attempt to describe and recommend lives characterized by spiritual capacities, places that enable us to glimpse depth and mystery, and ideas that encourage us to think at a higher level of creativity.

Among historical figures, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and Mohammed are almost universally considered numinous. Among individuals presently living, the most obvious such person is His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as well as other recent Nobel Laureates such as Desmond Tutu, Wangari Maathai, and Aun Sang Suu Kyi—perhaps not coincidentally, all persons of color. “Numinous” justifiably can also modify certain places such as the birth and death places of Gautama Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed; the Ajanta Caves and Dharamsala (both in India); the Dome of the Rock and Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem; Chartres Cathedral and Lourdes in France; Mecca in Saudi Arabia; and the ashrams of Sri Aurobindo and Ramana Maharshi in India. In quite a different way, Gettysburg, Hiroshima, and Auschwitz are also at least sacred (they deserve to be visited and ought not be disturbed), and perhaps are numinous (they emit a sense of eternal, transcendent mystery). Yosemite and the Grand Canyon are obviously awe-inspiring, and they certainly make us feel one with nature, with the whole of creation.

I consider certain contemporary experiences, particularly with a spiritual person, to be numinous, for example, a hug by Amma or a meeting with the Dalai Lama. Experiential traces of such a person can be found at the ashram of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, or the Goetheanum of Rudolf Steiner. Such experiences typically transcend our ordinary categories; they are not just interesting or impressive, but mysterious, incomparable, irreducible. Ideas can

also be numinous, for example, the Christian Trinity, *Sunyata* (the Buddhist teaching of Emptiness), the Beloved Community according to Josiah Royce and Martin Luther King, Jr., Gandhi's *satyagraha*, Sri Aurobindo's idea of Supermind, Jung's archetypes, and perhaps the Ontological Argument (God understood as "that than which nothing greater can be conceived"). The arts offer excellent opportunities for numinous experience: The Bach Mass in B-minor, a cello concert by Yo-Yo Ma, a performance of *King Lear*, or eurythmy performance. A simple conversation can be sacred, full of grace, an opportunity for gratitude, transformation words, or an inspiring presence deeper than words. Steiner referred to such a conversation as a contemporary form of Eucharist. Consider numinous as well the seeming miracle of a child's first poem or mathematical answer.

The criteria for designating something or someone as numinous, sacred, spiritual, transpersonal, or divine are not at all objective, but neither are they entirely arbitrary. The criteria require a recursive loop or a relationship between a mysterious source and someone with capacity to appreciate that phenomenon. For a tree to be known to fall in the forest someone needs to know the concept "tree," the concept "forest," and the concept "fall." Similarly, to experience someone or something as numinous is to be capable of such an experience. Numinous objects, places and persons do not ray out uniformly. Because the effect of a numinous experience might be felt slowly and imperceptibly, I try not to judge any of these situations confidently. Some inspiring experiences might be powerful in the moment but not have a lasting impact. A numinous object that impacts one person or group can be lost on another. When I was in the presence of the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram, I felt that nothing happened to me while around me disciples swooned and cried. By contrast, when I met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in the penthouse of the Fairmont Hotel in 1992, I was overwhelmed and unable to look at him directly, yet I noticed that some others seemed to register only a slight impact. When a young chorister sings "Once in Royal David City" at Midnight Mass at Grace Cathedral, some seem not to notice. On average, however, these

and similar events elicit an intense response, at least temporarily—and perhaps more than temporarily—transformative.

Here I have discussed more than a dozen thinkers and activists who seem to me likely to lead you, the reader, to a glimpse (or more) of the numinous dimension, to a connection with a deep transcendent reality, an experience of grace and an occasion for gratitude. This book consists of a series of pointers: “Look here, do you see what I see, what I hear; would you be willing to consider this worldview, these ideas, these practices?” I have written this book in the hope that you will think these same insights that I have learned from Steiner and others. Just for a minute consider the possibility that Buddha and Christ, while separated by language, geography, and five centuries, are nevertheless deeply connected in the spiritual world, and devoted collaboratively to the evolution of humanity. Or consider that human evolution is guided by higher beings, and that Sophia is again emerging in human consciousness in many forms and in many parts of the world.

Also consider the possibility that in the spiritual world after death some of the thinkers discussed in this book encountered each other. As my friend Becky Gould wrote an essay that imagined a conversation at Walden Pond between Steiner and Thoreau, we might similarly imagine Rudolf Steiner in conversation with Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, Sri Aurobindo, or His Holiness the Dalai Lama. This book does not recreate such conversations, but it does try to bring a dozen great religious and spiritual thinkers of the last one hundred years, approximately, into closer proximity than they themselves communicated during their lifetime—even though many of them could have done so. Steiner did not personally know any of his contemporaries discussed in this book; through their writings he knew only Rabindranath Tagore, who was born in 1861, the same year as Steiner, Gandhi, whom he referred to as “a great soul,” and C. G. Jung, who lived in Zurich, a short train ride from Basel where Steiner lived for the last thirteen years of his life.

Among philosophers he would have benefitted from conversations with three representatives of the classical American

philosophical tradition: Ralph Waldo Emerson, William James, and Josiah Royce, the latter two almost his exact contemporaries. Among religious thinkers, he would have learned about Indian arts from Rabindranath Tagore, about advanced yogic practices from Sri Aurobindo, paleontology and Jesuit spirituality from Teilhard de Chardin, the archetypes of the collective unconscious from C. G. Jung, and compassion from His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He could have learned contemporary feminism from Rosemary Ruether, Catherine Keller, and Charlene Spretnak, and ecology from Rachel Carson, Caroline Merchant, Wingari Maathai, and Mary Evelyn Tucker. He could have appreciated the great social justice activists influenced by Gandhi—Dorothy Day, Martin Luther King, Jr., Desmond Tutu, Aun Sung Sau Kyi, and Joanna Macy. Because of Steiner’s intuitive power and dedication to high spiritual beings, each of these great thinkers, teachers, and activists would likely have benefitted from conversations and collaboration with him. This book is an attempt to make up for the conversations that did not take place during Steiner’s lifetime.

This book is also a defense of spiritual genius, of charismatic (literally, gifted) individuals. A tour of the vast museums in Florence and Rome reveal the paintings, sculptures, and architecture of three astonishingly creative artists: Leonardo da Vinci, Michaelangelo, and Raphael. We do not compare to their genius but we do not therefore deny their genius. Our writings do not approach those of Plato or Aristotle, Dante or Shakespeare, Emerson or Whitehead. And then there are the three musical miracles, Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven. How was Mozart possible! In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century Goethe not only wrote *Faust*, considered the greatest work of modern literature, but he also made important advances in optics and botany. Thomas Jefferson, primary author of the United States Declaration of Independence, designed the University of Virginia and made contributions to agriculture. As President John Kennedy said to a room of Nobel Laureates gathered at a dinner at the White House, “There has not been this much intelligence in this room since Thomas Jefferson dined alone.” Though hyperbolic,

this remark was not wild: Jefferson was an original genius. We do not say, “No, such genius is impossible. Since we do not have the level of knowledge and creativity of these great figures, then neither could they have had that level.”

Opponents of religious and spiritual worldviews, however, not only deny the experiences and insights of religious and spiritual thinkers, but also insist that no such experiences and insights are possible. Such opponents who sell books in the millions and are in charge of university departments of science and philosophy insist that those who claim spiritual knowledge are delusional, because there is no spirit to be known. William James faced such opposition head-on in his brilliant set of lectures published as *Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902). At the end of the *Varieties*, James asserted that the accumulative evidence provided by those he called experts in religious experience—for example, Saint Paul and Saint John, Augustine and Aquinas, Whitman and Tolstoy—indicate that we are “continuous with ‘Something More’ through which saving experiences come.”

In the spirit of Rudolf Otto and C. G. Jung, this book is about the numinous, the sense of the irreducibly mysterious and sacred. It is about Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and Sophia, all in the context of the evolution of consciousness. It is also about the “Thou” of daily life and relationships according to Martin Buber. Drawing on Sri Aurobindo, it describes several yogas, including knowledge, action, love, and contemplation. It recounts the Gandhian tradition of nonviolence. It is about Sophianic wisdom, thinking that is infused by the divine feminine. It portrays wisdom and compassion in the spirit of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. In addition to the chapter on Sophia, the entire book is an effort by a senior male professor to practice and present ideas in a way that might deserve to be considered feminine, a difficult word to characterize, but probably well understood as relational, affective, and nuanced rather than assertive, argumentative, and competitive.

Because the ecological situation must be addressed, this book surveys some of the most important books on ecology written in the past half century (from Rachel Carson to Joanna Macy and Elizabeth Kolbert), and offers a full discussion of the ecological

Teilhardian vision of Thomas Berry. The last chapter offers some spiritual practices of the Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and anthroposophic traditions. The entire book aims to be pluralistic but not relativistic, positive but not preachy, and contemporary without being so recent as to be faddish. It focuses on twentieth-century thinkers who will, I believe, be important throughout the twenty-first century, and in the case of Steiner, Buber, Jung, Teilhard, Aurobindo, Gandhi, and Tagore, quite likely for many centuries to come.

Unlike some professors who insist that overviews should come before seminars, or others who insist that seminars should come before overviews, I think that whichever comes first can serve perfectly well as an introduction. I chose philosophy as the first comparative discipline simply because it is foundational and because it came first in Steiner's life. Topics such as social justice, education, or ecology would probably have served equally well. This is a book with two introductory chapters and ten comparative chapters, all of which are intended as entry points. All twelve chapters are summarized in the remainder of this chapter. After reading this chapter, Steiner's "Kindred Spirits," and the next, "Steiner Alone," both of which are summarized below, you should be well prepared to proceed to any of the ten comparative chapters.

## CHAPTER ONE: KINDRED SPIRITS

Whether he was seeing into the etheric forces of plants, experiencing discarnate human souls, or reading the inner meaning of the sacrifice of Christ, Steiner knew in ways available to very few others—not to no one else, but to very few. Students of esotericism generally agree that any list of such individuals would include, in addition to Steiner, Pythagoras, Paracelsus, Ibn 'Arabi, Jakob Böhme, Immanuel Swedenborg, Goethe, Blake, H. P. Blavatsky, Gurdjieff, C. G. Jung, and Valentin Tomberg. This list could be extended to dozens and perhaps hundreds of Western esoteric teachers. Lists could also be developed for Asian traditions to include Hindus (Yogananda Paramahansa, Sri Aurobindo),

Buddhists (Lama Govinda, His Holiness the Dalai Lama), and Daoists (John Blofeld), as well as countless ancient and contemporary practitioners of shamanism such as Black Elk.

By comparing Steiner's worldview to those of modern philosophers and spiritual teachers, this book makes a case for claims at once radical and practical. To the reductionist, scientific "nothing but" worldview, the content of this book says essentially, "Maybe your skepticism is warranted, but consider the possibility that claims by and about Steiner might be true, that he exhibited the level of knowledge he recommends, and that such knowing might be possible for some individuals." If tried, some of Steiner's ideas might prove to be profoundly efficacious, even though seemingly, or initially, unlikely. Consider asking, what are the alternatives? Does reductionist science explain as well as Steiner does the mysteries of the cosmos, or birth and death? In the conclusion of his brief, significant book, *Mind and Cosmos*, Thomas Nagel, a philosopher of science and acknowledged atheist, recommends to his readers a definition of philosophy first offered by William James, namely, that it is a habit of seeing alternatives:

Philosophy has to proceed comparatively. The best we can do is to develop the rival alternative conceptions in each important domain as fully and carefully as possible, depending on our antecedent sympathies, and see how they measure up. That is a more credible form of progress than decisive proof or refutation.<sup>2</sup>

Following Nagel's reminder, Steiner's thought would seem to be exemplary of a rival worldview and ideas "in each important domain" developed "as fully and carefully as possible." He understood "antecedent sympathies" as one's multi-lived karmic history. Some individuals, irrespective of their family of origin, come looking for spiritual ideas, practices, and communities, while others, again irrespective of their families of origin, cannot imagine the validity of any of these. John Dewey, entirely admirable and nonreligious (in traditional institutional terms) immediately comes to mind.

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2. Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*, 127.

In some respects, Steiner's worldview, specific ideas, and practical counsel are clearly singular, and in other respects they can be profitably compared with other spiritual and esoteric teachers. He drew from Goethe's "gentle empiricism" and understanding of metamorphosis, as well as the concept of the "I" or Self in the epistemological and metaphysical idealism of Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. He also drew heavily from the insights and terminology first expressed by H. P. Blavatsky, the cofounder of the Theosophical Society and its primary teacher until her death in 1891.

Of the figures in this book, only Jung knew of Steiner and most of them did not know one another. Gandhi and Sri Aurobindo never met, although Gandhi, and subsequently his son, went to Puducherry with a message in an attempt to coax Aurobindo to join the campaign against the British colonization of India. Tagore visited Aurobindo in Puducherry and Jung and Buber met at an Eranos conference in Switzerland and engaged in a brief unsuccessful correspondence concerning their differing conceptions of God. Unlike philosophers and scientists, great spiritual thinkers, particularly those with followers, typically do not collaborate. They seem to have insufficient peripheral vision for seeing other great spiritual teachers. Aurobindo had many visitors, but he himself did not leave his apartment in Puducherry for the last twenty four years of his life. Steiner lectured on Jung's psychology but despite their living a few hours apart in Switzerland for thirteen years, they never met. Tagore and Teilhard were the most collaborative: Tagore visited more than a dozen countries and met the major thinkers and artists in every one. Teilhard had a copy of Aurobindo's *Life Divine* on his night table when he died, and Jung had a copy of Teilhard's *The Human Phenomenon* on his night table when he died.

Anyone interested in Sri Aurobindo's Integral Yoga is likely to appreciate his relationship with Mira Richard, the Mother of the Sri Aurobindo Ashram. Those interested in Jung's study of archetypes are likely to be interested in his approach to alchemy, his theory of individuation, and his analysis of contemporary consciousness. Those interested in Teilhard's understanding of evolution are likely to be interested in his experience of Christ. Finally,

anyone interested in the Dalai Lama's Tibetan Buddhist teaching of compassion is likely to be interested in his understanding of Western science and the relationships among religions. We follow these great thinkers into several fields for the same reasons that they went into those fields: there are mysteries to be illuminated, problems to be solved, and human communities in need of spiritual insight and inspiration. The rest of this chapter offers a brief introduction to the remaining chapters and the religious and spiritual thinkers who offer perspectives comparable to Steiner's.

## CHAPTER TWO: STEINER ALONE

Since very few human beings—especially in contemporary society—can “see clearly” into the invisible, many consider Steiner's esoteric ability to be impossible. This book aims to show that Steiner did indeed have such an ability, that he used it wisely and selflessly to the advantage of anyone who would attend to the results of his research, and that disciplined effort makes it possible for individuals not born with this ability to develop some degree of it. As Saul Bellow noted in his foreword to *Boundaries of Natural Science*, a series of lectures Steiner delivered in 1920:

I have thought it best not to interpose myself but to allow Steiner to speak for himself, for he is more than a thinker, he is an initiate and only he is able to communicate what he has experienced. The human mind, he tells us, must learn to will pure thinking, but it must learn also how to set conceptual thinking aside and to live within phenomena. “It is through phenomenology, and not abstract metaphysics, that we attain knowledge of the spirit by consciously observing, by raising to consciousness, what we would otherwise do unconsciously; by observing how through the sense world spiritual forces enter into our being and work formatively upon it.”<sup>3</sup>

Steiner taught initiation in the Western esoteric tradition. In ancient cultures such as Egypt and Greece, a neophyte, or esoteric

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3. Saul Bellow, “Foreword,” Rudolf Steiner, *The Boundaries of Natural Science*, xxi.

student, would submit to the discipline of a spiritual master, and then undergo a kind of death, from which the master would call forth the disciple in a heightened state of awareness. An initiate would then be able to benefit fully from the teachings of the initiator, and could in turn develop into a teacher in his or her own right. Following in this tradition, Steiner encouraged them to develop their esoteric ability and to benefit from the influence of spiritual beings. Steiner's commitment to freedom of the individual in all religious and cultural endeavors encourages each person to approach esoteric ideas and practices as each thinks best for his or her individual capacities and aspirations. Steiner always had an eye on individual karma: He recognized that an idea or action that would be spiritually, morally, and culturally right for one person would not necessarily be right for another. He thought that Anthroposophy and Christianity were right for some persons and not others.

No doubt many in Steiner's audiences believed what he said simply because they believed in him and everything that he said. Audiences of several thousand (as were typical toward the end of his life) presumably included a range of responses from total affirmation to total skepticism. But Steiner himself was not arguing for anyone to believe his ideas. He considered individual freedom to follow from the replacement of belief by knowledge. He calmly described what he was seeing and researching, and then asked his audiences to do their own research. Here is what he said and thought concerning acceptance of his clairvoyant research:

Much that I have said today can be substantiated only by means of occult investigation. Yet I beg you not to give credence to these things because I say them, but to test them by everything known to you from history, and above all by what you can learn from your own experience. I am absolutely certain that the more closely you examine them, the more confirmation you will find. In this age of intellectualism, I do not appeal to your belief in authority but to your capacity for intelligent examination.<sup>4</sup>

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4. Rudolf Steiner, "Bodhisattvas, Buddhas and Christ" in *From Buddha to Christ*, 91-92.

In his singularity, Steiner might prove important for each person's intellectual and spiritual life. For a start, considering these summaries of Steiner's ideas in comparison to the ideas of other twentieth- and twenty-first-century religious and spiritual thinkers might establish that there is at least one individual (and surely many others) who has attained important knowledge regarded by the dominant modern Western paradigm as impossible. You might decide that Steiner was a genuine clairvoyant, a clear seer concerning research on topics (such as karma, afterlife, and rebirth) widely regarded as unknowable. You might consider Steiner to be an example of the "one white crow" sought by William James.<sup>5</sup> Steiner was apparently able to see spiritual realities, including something about exalted spiritual beings such as Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and Sophia. He reported on individuals who had died as well as the causes and meanings of important events. He disclosed these findings in lectures to audiences familiar with his research.

In the same way that many Christians, Buddhists, Jungians, and followers of Aurobindo and the Mother tend to see the world and all of its particulars through the lens of their specific religious or spiritual commitment, devoted followers of Rudolf Steiner tend to see every topic, every event, every relationship, and in fact absolutely everything, through the lens of Steiner and Anthroposophy. Given the almost impossible range of Steiner's interests and insights, this exclusivist focus is understandable. It can also be regrettable: It can lead to arrogance, dogmatism, and fundamentalist literalism. I have met many individuals whose initial interest in Steiner and Anthroposophy was discouraged, and sometimes negated, by contact with a devoted anthroposophist. One does not meet followers of Teilhard de Chardin or His Holiness the Dalai Lama who make one want to avoid these teachers or their followers. This unfortunate phenomenon does, however, affect the communities around Steiner and Sri Aurobindo. One of the reasons for this cultic appearance, and to some extent cultic reality, probably is the attempt by both Steiner and Aurobindo to institutionalize their influence.

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5. William James, *Essays in Psychological Research*, 13.

Beginning with the founding of the Anthroposophical Society in 1912, and then more systematically and decisively beginning in 1923 (for the last two and a half years of his life) Rudolf Steiner was the esoteric teacher not only of Anthroposophy, but of the Anthroposophical Society. Similarly, since 1926 Sri Aurobindo's and the Mother's teachings have been the guide of thought and practice at the Sri Aurobindo Ashram in Puducherry (formerly Pondicherry), and in ashrams throughout the world. Institutions bring the problems characteristic of religion—dogmas, regulations, hierarchy, politics, and intolerance of outsiders. There are many historically grounded reasons to oppose religion, not just a religion, but all religion. Hence, the contemporary mantra, “spiritual not religious.” But spirituality disconnected from a religious institution can be elitist and invisible: No one has to show up to do the work, publish the books, give the lectures, lead the artistic experiences, and update the website. The ideal is for the spiritual and the religious to work complementarily without the elitism of spirituality and without the political, dogmatic, and cultic problems of religion.

Steiner also made significant contributions to fields not usually considered spiritual, that are regrettably neglected in this volume. However impossible it might seem to anyone not previously familiar with Steiner, in addition to the wide variety of his contributions explored in this book, there are other topics, fields, and achievements that would need to be addressed to treat Steiner's significance comprehensively. Among sciences, he contributed to an understanding of light, warmth, geometry, chemistry, occult physiology, bees, and medicine. Among social sciences he lectured extensively on money, community, historical patterns, the destinies of civilizations and nations, and the psychology of individuals and peoples. I have omitted some of these topics because I could not find an appropriate comparison for Steiner's contributions, and some quite simply because I do not feel competent to discuss them. The fields that would have been ideal for inclusion in this book but of which I am still regrettably ignorant include medicine, economics, evolutionary biology, contemporary Islamic thought, and recent European philosophy.

Steiner sought to show the inner realities of the natural world, the significance of the spiritual world, and the relationship between them. He sought to explain not only how he himself knew spiritual realities but also how others could do the same. In addition he also strove to expose and oppose all the negative, destructive, and alienating aspects of contemporary thought and culture. To a degree that appears to be unsurpassed by any other modern figure, almost nothing was foreign to Steiner. He described the inner realities of many physical and spiritual entities, complex processes, and specific phenomena.

Rudolf Steiner came into life with spiritual gifts that he further developed. He spent the last twenty-five years of his life helping others to develop spiritual insights and capacities. He is one of the truly great “experts” who experienced and explained James’s “Something More.” Unfortunately, James did not know of Steiner and so did not include his expertise in the Gifford Lectures that James delivered in 1901, the very year that Steiner began his career as an esoteric teacher. Steiner is more controversial than most (and perhaps all other) religious thinkers such as James himself, because he not only made important contributions in a dozen fields, far beyond the claims of James or any twentieth-century philosopher, but because he also exhibited and defended a depth and range of knowledge that challenges the dominant reductionist view of what is knowable.

Steiner’s claims to the truth of his method and teaching are backed and tested by his willing sacrifice on behalf of his claims. He did not simply make claims; he reached important truths through strenuous and selfless effort, and then offered them freely to anyone who asked for them. All of his claims arose from experience won by diligent effort and held up against frequent intellectual opposition. Toward the end of his life this opposition became increasingly personal and violent. When a teacher or leader offers insights selflessly and peacefully that prove effective, and are backed by a demonstrated willingness to suffer on their behalf, such a person would seem to warrant a respectful hearing—certainly more than Steiner has received to date.

To appreciate Steiner and his contributions it is possible to focus on only one field—for example the Waldorf approach to education or biodynamic (BD) agriculture, two of his most prominent practical works—but it is important and rewarding to honor the unity of Steiner’s thought by proceeding from Waldorf or BD back to his ideas on philosophy, evolution of consciousness, exalted beings, and esoteric cosmology. Perhaps the best reason for studying the results of his esoteric research is simply that they might lead one to engage with his spiritual practices either on their own or as a complement to those of another spiritual teacher such as Teilhard de Chardin or His Holiness the Dalai Lama, both of whom are included prominently in several chapters in this book, including the last chapter on spiritual practice.

### CHAPTER THREE: PHILOSOPHY

The first of ten chapters that compare Rudolf Steiner with other important religious and spiritual thinkers summarizes the leading ideas of three classical American philosophers: Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1881), William James (1841–1910), and Josiah Royce (1855–1916). Before Steiner was an esoteric teacher—i.e., before he spoke from his clairvoyant experiences concerning the spiritual world—he wrote about Goethe, German Idealism, and Nietzsche as well as philosophized concerning knowledge, ethics, aesthetics, nature, culture, and history. At the end of his life he considered his *Philosophy of Freedom*, his first major work, to be the one most deserving to remain influential in future centuries. Consequently, it is appropriate that the first comparative chapter should explore similarities and differences between Steiner and three twentieth-century philosophers with whom his philosophy is most comparable.

These three philosophers share with Steiner the influence of the same nineteenth-century European thinkers, especially the German Idealists (Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel), a commitment to evolution, and a focus on the interpenetration of matter and spirit. They also share with Steiner a focus, variously developed, on the relationship between the individual and community.

They all drew deeply from the Christian tradition and they affirm broad religious ideals and perspectives. Of these three thinkers the one closest to Steiner is Josiah Royce, a philosopher with a profound sense of the long intelligible arc of history, including the incarnation of Christ, the efficacy of ideals, and the redemptive mission of sorrow.

#### CHAPTER FOUR: EVOLUTION OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Evolution of consciousness can be thought of as very deep history—the sources, inner processes, and implications of history that are not on the surface to see. Whereas history can be observed by intellect, evolution of consciousness needs to be observed by intuition. Henri Bergson’s classic study, *Creative Evolution*, was one of the first and most influential accounts of natural evolution generated by a deep source that he called *elan vital*. Aurobindo, Teilhard, and Steiner, all of whom had read Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*, offer the three most detailed and comprehensive accounts of evolution of consciousness.

All of Sri Aurobindo’s major works—*Human Cycle*, *Savitri*, *The Life Divine*, *Synthesis of Yoga*—chronicle the subtle, invisible patterns of historical change. Teilhard de Chardin’s major work, *The Human Phenomenon*, chronicles the four major phases of the evolution of consciousness: prelife, life, thought, super life. Sri Aurobindo describes four almost identical phases: matter, life, mind, and Supermind. Both Aurobindo and Teilhard are eager to show their readers that the present holds the possibility of the next great evolutionary leap, which Aurobindo refers to as the Supermind and Teilhard refers to as the Omega Point. According to Aurobindo, the descent of Supermind will facilitate the ideal synthesis of Western intellect and science and Indian spirituality. For Aurobindo, the next evolutionary stage, which he refers to as “the life divine on Earth” and “the coming of a spiritual age,” will be realized when the West overcomes its “materialist denial” of spirit and the East (by which he means India) will overcome its “ascetic refusal,” the denial of the individual and

history characteristic of some forms of Indian monism, particularly *a-dvaita* (non-dual) Vedanta.

Teilhard, the most optimistic thinker discussed in this book, looks to the convergence of spirit and matter made possible by the guidance of Christ. The end point which he envisions is essentially the triumph of love, the energy of the entire evolutionary process. Profoundly Christian and mystical, Teilhard identifies love with Christ through whom, as in the Prologue to the Gospel of John, everything came to be.

## CHAPTER FIVE: KRISHNA, BUDDHA, AND CHRIST

Whereas leaders and interpreters of religious traditions typically have a significant relationship to a specific divine source of their tradition—Hindus to Krishna (and other deities such as Shiva), Buddhists to Buddha, and Christians to Christ—a few advanced individuals such as Sri Ramakrishna, Yogananda Paramahansa, Bede Griffiths, and Rudolf Steiner have described their deep relationship to more than one of these figures. Some contemporary spiritual teachers and scholars are increasingly able to introduce these deities in ways that make them more accessible to adherents of other religious traditions. Such is the case with the way that Sri Aurobindo writes about Krishna, His Holiness the Dalai Lama writes about Buddha and Buddhature, and Teilhard de Chardin writes about Christ.

In 1908 to 1909, while Aurobindo Ghose (as he was then known) was in jail for opposition to the British Government of India, he memorized the Bhagavad Gita in Sanskrit and recited it daily in his cell. He envisioned Krishna holding the murderers and jailers in one loving embrace. In 1926 he experienced the descent of Krishna entering his transformed subtle body and endowing him with a level of consciousness that he later described as “Overmental.” His Holiness the Dalai Lama offers a view of Buddha as Buddhature, or the infinite and eternal *Dharmakaya* or truth body of Buddha. Teilhard de Chardin offers a view of Christ that is cosmic, far transcending the conception of Christ as Jesus in traditional Christian theology.

Based on his esoteric research, especially during the years that he was inexorably moving away from the Theosophical Society, Steiner offered an interpretation of Krishna that resembles Aurobindo's interpretation, an interpretation of Buddha that resembles the Dalai Lama's, and an interpretation of Christ that resembles Teilhard's. In this book, the relations between Christ and other beings are explored in seven of twelve chapters:

Chapter Five: In addition to describing complex esoteric relations among Krishna, Buddha, and Christ, Steiner discusses important figures in the New Testament.

Chapter Six: Christ is discussed in relation to Sophia.

Chapter Seven: Both Jung and Steiner see Christ as the great healer.

Chapter Eight: Dorothy Day, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., and Archbishop Desmond Tutu took their inspiration from the teachings and example of Jesus.

Chapter Ten: Steiner presents Christ as the balance between matter and spirit (and in their distorted expressions, between the opposite tempters, Lucifer and Ahriman).

Chapter 11: Steiner presents a picture of Christ surrounding Earth.

Chapter 12: Jung, Teilhard, and Steiner affirm that Christ is spiritually active in the Consecration of the Mass.

This entire book recommends the reality and transformative influence of Krishna, Buddha, Christ, and Sophia, and all human consciousness that partakes of their influence, however unconsciously.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE GODDESS SOPHIA

The core of the Christian faith that establishes its uniqueness in relation to all other religious traditions, and permeates the thought and culture of a large segment of the world's population, is the incarnation of a divine being, Jesus Christ, in a human body and in human history. This chapter adds to this standard theological conception of Jesus Christ an account of the Christian divine feminine, usually referred to as Sophia, active in history as well as in the spiritual world. Since the Council of Constantinople in 325 CE, Christian churches have affirmed the doctrine of the Holy Trinity consisting

of Father (often depicted as the Creator, as in Michelangelo's ceiling in the Sistine Chapel), Son (Jesus Christ, in a wide variety of representations), and Holy Spirit (often depicted as a dove). Christians aware of the problem attending the unconscious assumption and ubiquitous influence of patriarchy, and the exclusive male gender language for the Christian conception of the Trinity will understand Mary Daly's angry dismissal: "Two men and a bird."

One attempt to solve the problem of this all-male language is to add Mother to Father and Hers to His in all references to the three Persons of the Trinity. Another solution is to retrieve the reality, and not merely the language, of the divine feminine. This solution is found in an expanding library of books and images that form an impressive movement aimed at retrieving the image of the goddess Sophia. The most convincing of these accounts, *Myth of the Goddess: Evolution of an Image*, is the foundational book for the Sophia component of this chapter.

As Christopher Bamford wrote in the introduction to a volume of Steiner's lectures on Sophia, "Over the past centuries, the being of Sophia, or feminine Divine Wisdom, has been emerging from the mists of ancient history, like Venus from the waters, to become a sign of our times."<sup>6</sup> This chapter traces some of the important contributions to this emergence: Sophia in world religions; in the history of Christianity; in the thought of Thomas Merton, Teilhard de Chardin, C. G. Jung; three anthroposophic sophiologists—Valentin Tomberg, Sergei Prokofieff, and Michael Debus; and Sophia and feminism, including the theology of Elizabeth Johnson. The chapter concludes with my "Invocation to Sophia."

## CHAPTER SEVEN: GOD, EVIL, AND SUFFERING

Some of the best philosophizing has been done at the edge of the academy. Buber was more a public intellectual than a professor, and Jung was not a professor at all but a psychiatrist in private practice. Both were devoted to the restoration of religious and spiritual values to European individuals and cultures.

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6. Christopher Bamford, ed., "Introduction," in Rudolf Steiner, *Isis Mary Sophia: Her Mission and Ours*, 7.

Using one of Buber's key terms, his defining task was to "Hallow Life." Buber drew from and advanced German intellectual culture and twentieth-century Jewish thought, specifically biblical faith, Zionism, and Hasidism. His most original and enduring contribution is *I and Thou* (1923), a poetic and inspiring text that combines the Jewish ideal of community and twentieth-century European existentialist radical individualism. This combination closely resembles Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, a philosophy of ethical individualism—i.e., individuals ethically committed to community. Significantly, Buber, Jung, and Steiner all began their intellectual careers in response to Kant's unavoidable volume, *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781).

Buber, Jung, and Steiner broke through the limits set by Kant's first *Critique*, but to some extent Jung wrote as though he were observing the limitations Kant set to theoretical knowledge. In fact, Jung went much further than Buber (though not as far as Steiner) in his affirmation of knowledge above the line set by Kant—to knowledge of the divine, human freedom, and the enduring self. Beginning in 1913, immediately after his break with Freud, and even more dramatically in the 1940s and 1950s, Jung experienced the heights and depths of the personal and collective unconscious, including its myths, archetypes, symbols, and images. In all of his researches, Jung functioned as a physician for individuals and contemporary European culture, always in an effort to unite the individual ego with the wise and active unconscious.

Steiner wrote philosophy with an eye to the alienation profoundly affecting modern Western culture, and he offered an epistemology intended to help Western humanity think with feeling and will—i.e., freely and ethically. Steiner understood the individual person in terms of a lifelong struggle to realize authentic destiny: one's karma and ultimately one's identity with the spiritual world. Whereas Buber's terminology employs a highly original existentialist vocabulary, Steiner's is Idealist, Christian, and esoteric. Steiner characterizes Anthroposophy—his spiritual-esoteric research and discipline as a path of will and feeling-imbued knowing to lead the spiritual in the individual (Buber's potential "I") to the spiritual in the Universe (Buber's "Thou").

One of the important differences between Buber and both Jung and Steiner is Buber's strictly monotheistic Jewish, and specifically biblical, theology. Buber and Steiner agree on the personal character of God (as creator, revealer, and redeemer) but of course they diverge on the status of Christ. Whereas Buber regards Jesus as "his older brother," a rabbi of great historical significance, Steiner regards Jesus as the bearer of the Christ, the second Person of the Trinity. This theological difference, however, does not significantly detract from their philosophical conviction concerning the need of each person to realize his or her authentic self by dedicated effort, including person-to-person and person-to-universe dialogue.

C. G. Jung, a psychiatrist and gnostic scholar, shares with Steiner the conviction that modern Western consciousness is characterized by many problems and disabilities mostly having to do with what Jung calls the shadow (the forceful, usually negative dimension hidden in the unconscious). Jung was convinced that by embracing the Western scientific paradigm (a way of seeing, thinking, and behavior) exclusive of the unconscious, Western humanity had lost its soul. Jung sought to reconnect Western humanity to unconscious depth by showing the wise revelatory power of dreams, myths, symbols, and archetypes (psychic structures such as the Self, Christ, Divine Feminine, Senex, Puer, Shadow, and Mandala).

Jung's research into the unconscious was personal and experiential: He wrote from his own journey into his own unconscious. He also researched esoteric teachings and practices of entire cultures, past and present. He brought to the attention of secular Western readers the wisdom and transformative power of the Chinese *I Ching*, Tibetan mandalas, the spiritual significance of the Roman Catholic mass, medieval Christian alchemy, and worldwide shamanic traditions. This chapter's discussion of Jung's archetypal psychology concludes with an introduction to a scholarly and beautifully written case for astrological cosmology, *Cosmos and Psyche*, by Richard Tarnas who is also the author of an important study, *Passion of the Western Mind*.

## CHAPTER EIGHT: SOCIAL JUSTICE

In a manifestly unjust world there is no shortage of theories and explanations (beginning with original sin) as well as recommendations, pleas, and exemplars, concerning social justice. Among twentieth-century exemplars, Gandhi would seem to be preeminent. On the occasion of Gandhi's seventieth birthday, Albert Einstein wrote: "Generations to come, it may well be, will scarce believe that such a man as this once ever in flesh and blood walked upon this Earth." Gandhi is the primary source of nonviolent theory and action subsequently advanced by Dorothy Day, the American pacifist; Thomas Merton, the Roman Catholic monk; Martin Luther King, Jr., the martyr and leader of the American Civil Rights movement; His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the spiritual and former political leader of the Tibetan people; Aun Sang Suu Kyi, the pro-democracy activist of Myanmar; and Desmond Tutu, the South African Episcopal Archbishop. Four of these individuals—King, Dalai Lama, Tutu, and Suu Kyi,—are Nobel Laureates and also people of color. Obviously, these are not the only exemplars of peace and justice, but there is a special power in the Gandhian tradition because it includes a commitment to the practice as well as the theory of nonviolence. To the extent that it is viable, Gandhian nonviolence is a direct challenge to the dominant paradigm that considers war to be inevitable. Despite the limitations of Gandhian nonviolent action—Gandhi's letters to Buber and Hitler concerning the Nazi holocaust of European Jews are uninformed, presumptuous, and naive—nonviolence as a way of life is clearly positive and necessary.

Steiner did not announce himself as a pacifist or practitioner of nonviolence, but his entire teaching and way of life are counters to egoism and selfishness, in favor of love and service. He considered violence to be an inevitable if indirect result of a faulty construction of society which allows the economic and rights spheres to overwhelm the cultural sphere—which absolutely should be free of such control.

## CHAPTER NINE EDUCATION

Rudolf Steiner is perhaps best known for the Waldorf approach to education, which now consists of several thousand nursery, elementary, and high schools in more than one hundred countries. The teachers in Waldorf schools continue to draw guidance from the hundreds of lectures that Steiner delivered on child development, curriculum, and pedagogy, all made possible by his ability to see and to communicate the realities of the inner lives of children. This is one way in which Steiner contributes to the spiritual renewal of the individual and of Western culture in ways comparable to other important thinkers, but because he thinks more deeply and more widely than any of them, he can be shown to have established the truth of their contributions in addition to his own.

The chapter on education is an extension of the previous chapter on social justice. Because of an imbalance of power between children and adults who care for children, any thought or action that affects children is necessarily a matter of justice. In every society care for children should be a deep moral and spiritual as well as a cultural responsibility. John Dewey, a world-class philosopher, not only studied and wrote about child development and the education of the child, he also created and devoted a significant portion of his life to a school laboratory that he founded and directed with his wife Alice Chipman. Maria Montessori, an Italian physician, created a brilliant approach to education for children who had been left behind (literally left on the street) as a result of World War II. Rudolf Steiner developed an approach to education based on his spiritual understanding of the inner life of the child. While the differences in approach to education of these three great educators are significant, their similarities are important and generally not acknowledged.

## CHAPTER TEN: ART AND AESTHETICS

All of the chapters in this book, and particularly this chapter on art and aesthetics, point from the visible to the spiritual. We might say that art, particularly as understood and practiced by Rabindranath Tagore and Rudolf Steiner, is a pointing. Tagore's

poetry, songs, plays, short stories, and paintings all serve to point matter toward spirit, the finite toward the infinite, and the human toward the divine. While Tagore was religious, philosophical, and political, he was essentially an artist, a person whose entire life was devoted to releasing the encased spirit by activating the artistic imagination. The school that he founded and directed, Shantiniketan, is devoted to traditional Indian arts, all of which remain devoted to releasing and celebrating spirit.

Because Indian thought and culture has not experienced the separation of arts and spirit characteristic of the arts in the modern West, virtually all Indian arts, whether music, dance, painting, or literature, are suffused by the reality of spiritual experience and spiritual beings. In the modern West spirit is sustained in the arts by Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, and Rilke, by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, and Mahler, as well as Turner, Kandinsky, Marc Chagall, and Matisse. Rudolf Steiner is one of the few twentieth-century artists to have held spirit and matter together in several arts and in ways comparable to the painting, poetry, dramas, and songs of Tagore. Tagore's fabulous artistic creativity is thoroughly rooted in the Upanishads, classical Indian texts of the eighth to fifth centuries BCE. His art carries a deep revelation of the divinity in all creation, whether sound and sight, word and gesture. Steiner's conception of art, and practice of many arts, is revealed in two series of lectures: *Art as Seen in the Light of Mystery Wisdom* (1915) and *Arts and their Mission* (1923). Steiner's most important lectures on the particular arts to which he contributed by theory and practice—sculpture, architecture, music, poetry, mystery dramas, speech, and singing—are collected in a volume accurately entitled *Art as Spiritual Practice*. It is common for followers of Steiner to think of Anthroposophy in terms of a redeemed thinking, but anthroposophic practice is devoted very significantly to arts.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN: ON BEHALF OF GAIA

The ecological movement, which is really the process of awakening to unimaginable devastation, was launched in popular

consciousness in 1962, more than fifty years ago, by the publication of Rachel Carson's book, *Silent Spring*. The next major ecological event was Earth Day, 1971, followed by *An Inconvenient Truth* (2006), the bestselling book and widely viewed film by former Vice President Al Gore. In 1978 Thomas Berry published "The New Story," an essay that has served as a proclamation and plea for a vision of humans as Earth creatures. By a combination of his profound knowledge, his inspiring person, and his oracular writing, Thomas Berry has exercised a significant impact on several scholars of ecology and religion, including Matthew Fox, Brian Thomas Swimme, and most significantly the husband-and-wife team Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim.

In addition to the mystical ecology of Teilhard and the humanistic ecology of Thomas Berry, the impending ecological challenges have been met by a variety of charismatic ecological activists. As the work of Paul Hawken and Sean Esbjorn-Harkens has shown, there are many important approaches to ecological theory and activism, including Sean Kelly's five principles of an integral ecology. One of the tasks of this chapter is to try to discern, in William James's helpful phrase, "what difference will it make" if we approach the ecological crisis from a humanist, religious, spiritual, or esoteric worldview? The need for humanist and religious approaches ("where the people are") is obvious, whereas the need for a spiritual and esoteric approach is difficult to demonstrate. But it is one of the tasks of this chapter to show that approaching ecology from a spiritual and an esoteric perspective will indeed make a positive difference.

On the way to forming one's own individual ecological perspective, it will be worthwhile to explore the similarities and differences between Teilhard and Berry, two great Earth-loving thinkers. I want to hold and recommend a continuity from Teilhard's (and Steiner's) pre-ecological spiritual cosmology to Berry's passionate humanistic ecological vision. A well known Buddhist teaching says there is no time to discuss fire when one's house is burning. But because there are other houses and potentially other fires to burn them, it is essential to know why houses burn and how they can be prevented from burning. Berry excelled at

analyzing why Earth is burning, and what to do about it. In service of this double commitment he increasingly ignored Teilhard as a solution because he considered Teilhard to be too optimistic, too much in favor of technology, and too affirmative of some Roman Catholic teachings.

The chapter concludes with a summation of Steiner's esoteric ecology, including his account of spirit and matter, the reality of the etheric, biodynamic farming, and his conviction that the etheric body of Christ has encircled the Earth.

## CHAPTER TWELVE: SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

This book assumes the truth of Sri Aurobindo's maxim, "All life is a secret yoga," which I take to mean that all life is spiritual practice. All religious traditions teach core practices such as the golden rule, and all spiritual disciplines affirm these same practices as preconditions for spiritual progress. While some individuals on a spiritual path dismiss religion as a lower level of aspiration, this chapter emphasizes the continuous recursive relationship between religious traditions and mysticism. The four approaches presented here represent the synthesis of spiritual teachers with specific religious traditions: Sri Aurobindo with Hinduism, His Holiness the Dalai Lama with Tibetan Buddhism, the Roman Catholic tradition represented by Teilhard de Chardin, and Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy mixed with significant Christian components. In the Christian section I recommend the Mass or Eucharist, which has been powerfully affirmed by Teilhard, Jung, and Steiner.

In the section on anthroposophic practice, the tradition that I know best and practice, I include a discussion of practices that seem to me especially efficacious: the integration of thinking, feeling, and willing (a modern Western version of the yogas of the Bhagavad Gita); the practice of forgiveness; the use of verses and meditations; the discipline of attending to the mysterious reality of karma and rebirth; the disciplined expression of the etheric, astral, and "I" by manifold arts; the spiritual discipline of loving relationships; the conscious attention to a wide variety

of religious and spiritual traditions; and all of these in the context of the divinely guided evolution of consciousness.

This entire chapter is an attempt to transmit advice to be found in the writings of these teachers, Steiner foremost but not exclusively. I trust their advice because I have learned to trust their respective syntheses of new ideas with their lifelong manifest virtue. I believe that any one of them can lead any one of us to an increase in wisdom and compassion, and that when we learn to work with all of them for different purposes, they can lead us even more effectively. It is also important, I believe, to develop and serve a spiritual home, and to use the terms of the Buddhist three jewels, to have a primary teacher, to have a primary *dharma* (teaching and practice), and to serve a primary *sangha* (spiritual or religious community).