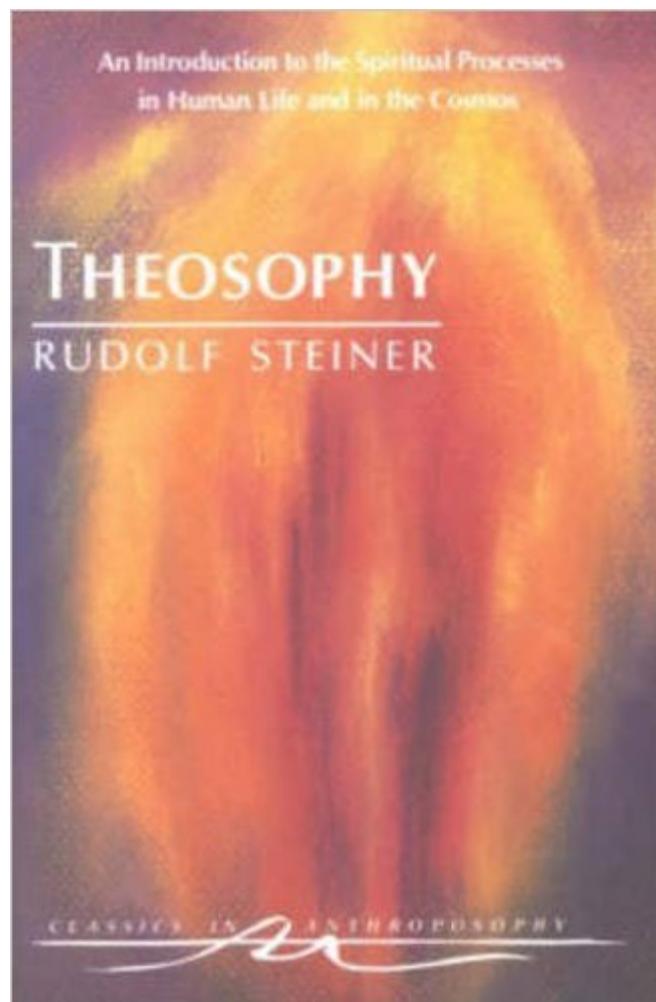


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Theosophy : An Introduction To The Spiritual Processes In Human Life And In The Cosmos



Synopsis

Written in 1904 (CW 9) Theosophy is a key work for gaining a solid footing in spiritual reality as described by Rudolf Steiner. It is organized into four parts. First, Steiner builds a comprehensive understanding of human nature: physical bodily nature; soul qualities; spirit being, or I-being; and the higher spiritual aspects. This leads us to Steiner's description of the human being as sevenfold: Material, physical body Ether body, or body of life forces Sentient soul body Mind soul Spirit-filled consciousness soul Life spirit Spirit body In the next section, Steiner offers an extraordinary overview of the laws of reincarnation and the principles of karma, as we pass from one life to the next. This prepares us for the third section, in which he shows the various ways in which we live—during life on earth and after death and in the three worlds of body, soul, and spirit. Finally, we are given a succinct description of the path of knowledge, along which each person can begin to understand the marvelous and harmonious complexity of the psycho-spiritual worlds in their fullness. Contents: Foreword by Michael Holdrege Prefaces by Rudolf Steiner Chapter 1: The Essential Nature of the Human Being: The Bodily Nature of the Human Being The Soul Nature of the Human Being The Spirit Nature of the Human Being Body, Soul, and Spirit Chapter 2: Destiny & the Reincarnation of the Spirit Chapter 3: The Three Worlds: The Soul World The Soul in the Soul World after Death The Country of Spirit Beings The Spirit in Spirit Country after Death The Physical World and Its Connection to the Worlds of Souls and Spirits Chapter 4: The Path to Knowledge Related Reading Index This volume is a translation of "Theosophie, Einführung in die spirituelle Welterkenntnis und Menschenbestimmung" (GA 9)

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

There are strong marks of the German philosophical tradition in this text, which was originally published in 1910 and revised a number of times until its last version in 1922. Steiner's approach to what he calls "Theosophy" is less baroque than that of either Blavatsky or Besant, although his general conceptual structures have strong family resemblances to their work. His basic model of the human being is triadic with the physical body (emerging out of the ancient mineral domains) being the lowest, the soul body being the middle and mutually connecting dimension, and the spirit body being the eternal and post-personal dimension. He stresses a kind of epistemological or experiential model in which the whole triadic self moves through reincarnations to gain as much knowledge of the real non-subjective world as is possible. Throughout, the concern is with helping the physical self find its way past the delusions of incomplete sense experience into those forms of sense awareness that are open to the occult world. The soul is personal in nature and has the difficult task of bringing consciousness into the body while simultaneously allowing the spirit into both its own consciousness and into its vehicle the body. The soul gives human beings the possibility of finding the depth-sensations behind things (not in a supernatural realm but right here and now). This soul is the center of our experience of the "I" and moves with us after the death of the body. However, the soul is not ultimate and can be defined as the locus where the spiritual world manifests itself in individuals. When we develop the "spiritual eye" we are in a position to go beyond our subjective perceptual distortions and the maya producing desires that twist the real into unreal shapes.

This work by Steiner covers the fundamentals of spirituality and mankind's place in the cosmos. Chapter One deals with the essential nature of the human being as body, soul and spirit, beginning with the physical bodily nature and concluding with the higher spiritual aspects of our being. The picture that emerges is one of the human being in an evolving process of becoming, where the agent of transformation is the "I". Chapter Two covers destiny and the reincarnation of the human spirit, while Chapter Three discusses other dimensions of consciousness like the soul world, the spirit world and their connection with the physical world and includes with a section on thought forms and the human aura. These worlds are not to be considered spatially, but are states of consciousness, qualitative spaces of inner relationship. Chapter Four discusses the individual's spiritual path and encourages the acquisition of spiritual knowledge with the emphasis on thinking and proving truth for oneself. Steiner sees the first step in this path of knowledge as the assimilation

of scientific spiritual concepts. He asks the reader not to "believe" what he says, but to "think" it. It is not a question of belief but of experience. Here his thoughts correspond with those of Jung as explained in Stephan Hoeller's great book The Gnostic Jung And The Seven Sermons To The Dead - that mankind has a need of religious experience, not of belief. Unlike a major portion of Eastern thought which believes in the dissolution of individuality, Steiner's view is that spiritual growth does not take place at the expense of individuality, but through its enhancement. A similar idea can be found in Thomas Troward's beautiful book The Creative Process In The Individual.

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