

The Importance of the So-Called Dead

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For years I have seen the imprint of those who have died upon those left behind. I have seen the impact on descendants and friends of those who have passed. From my interest in star wisdom, and especially through the work of Willi Sucher,¹ I noted the effects of those who died upon those born on the same “star date” as the deceased, when the Sun lay in the same position in relation to the stars. I wrote a case history of this in *Star Wisdom & Rudolf Steiner*.² Later I devised the Tea with Your Mentor approach.³ Responses to these have been mostly positive, including a few very pointed challenges to this approach.⁴ These critiques have prompted me to reconsider this approach – why deal with the dead? Aren't they dead and gone, departed, disappeared, any notion of their existence a fantasy? Are they simply too difficult because we can't see or hear them? Are they perhaps dangerous and ought to be left alone? Or are they an immense resource from which we can learn a great deal?

Prologue: A Caveat

This paper formulates some of my thoughts on the importance of the discarnate and the so-called dead. It is an ongoing investigation. Though I had put a great deal of attention to the Tea with Your Mentor program, I have since put that on

¹ Willi Sucher's many works on star wisdom weave a large mantle that includes the impact of the so-called dead. Knowing a client's birth day and therefore birth chart, he would match them with the dead who had similar placements. See astrosophycenter.com for Sucher's entire work.

² David Tresemer, with Robert Schiappacasse, *Star Wisdom & Rudolf Steiner: A Life Seen Through the Oracle of the Solar Cross* (Steiner Books, 2007).

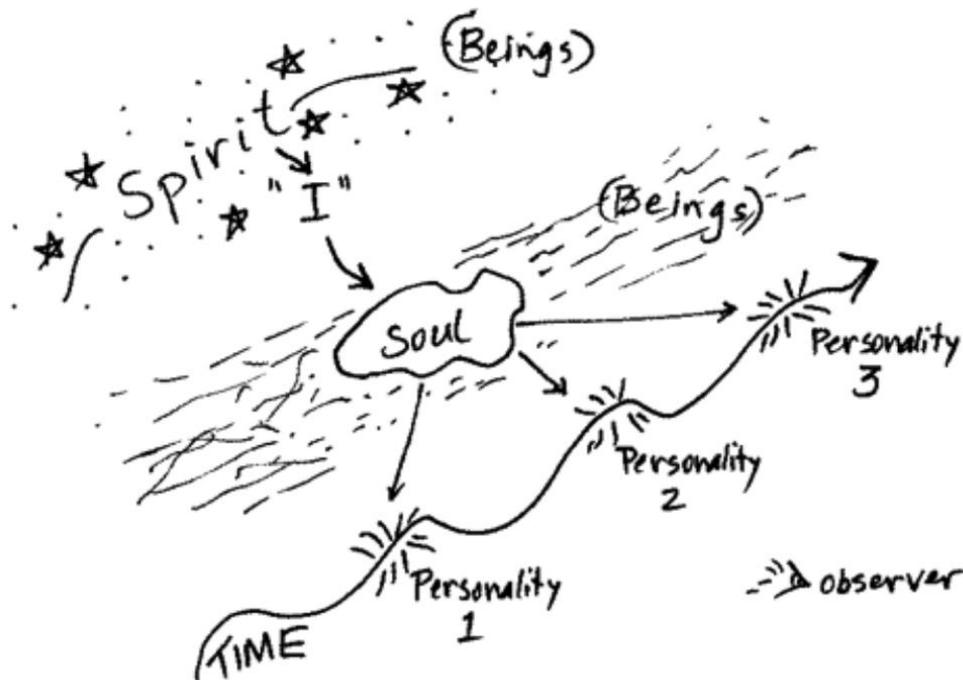
³ From www.StarWisdom.org. Sucher's approach also comes from Steiner's indications, for example, “We always have a certain relationship with those among the dead who are karmically united with us.” That karma comes from a similar placement of the key event of birth in relation to the heavens. Quote from “The Feeling of Community and the Experience of Gratitude,” in Rudolf Steiner (Christopher Bamford, ed.) *Staying Connected: How to Continue Your Relationships with Those Who Have Died* (Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 1999), 177.

⁴ Prominent among these has been lengthy comments from Anastacia Nutt. I am deeply grateful to her for the detail and poignancy of her observations.

hold, while I continue to research the connection with the so-called dead. Let me explain why.

As the rest of this paper will unfold, the living have a great deal to do with the dead. Rudolf Steiner leads the way in this revelation and its many aspects. However, there are multiple vulnerabilities in this connection through which it can be very difficult for the untrained person to navigate. Though we hear and hope to be true that we can simply throw ourselves into the arms of divinity and all will be taken care of, it is not nearly that simple. Though it is true that “unless ye are as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven,”⁵ yet the child-like openness and positivity must be chaperoned by a mature sense of discernment.

I will here jump past the slower introduction below, and leave the demonstrations of each aspect until then. I’ll simply state what I perceive about lives and past lives, without explaining everything in detail. The diagram helps explain the situation.



⁵ Gospel of Matthew, 18:3.

From spiritual realms in the stars, and in the non-manifest, comes the “I” or “I AM,” the individuality. This sacred individuality works through the Soul in the planetary realms. From the Soul come various emanations in the manifest world, Personalities 1, 2, and 3, and perhaps many expressions of the soul. Each Personality lands in a different cultural context, time of history, hereditary stream from parents. Yet each Personality is linked to Soul. Time progresses in uneven fashion. Evolution as well as a devolution occur.

The Observer – that’s me and you – looks upon a Personality or upon the group and feels an affinity. This can be a connection to an artist or an orator or an inventor because we feel some kind of resonant affinity. In the Tea with Your Mentor project, that affinity came because the Personality died on the same star-date as your birth, in a different year.

Through a connection with a Personality, you can sense a connection with Soul, and through Soul to the “I,” and through the “I” to Spirit. This can be immensely strengthening to the one who travels this path.

This is important because the so-called dead or discarnate have a yearning to assist human beings on this side of the threshold of life-death. Indeed, if you attune to people after they have died, you can sense the deepest regret is that they did not assist others more. In my work, I have repeatedly sensed this yearning, individually and from the discarnate as a whole, to assist human beings in their struggles – both individually and for humanity as a whole.

The Personality is in reality a kind of clothing, a vessel with eccentricities and style and unique expressions. The Soul does not have that coloration of cultural context, costume, language, and so forth. The clothing, like a set of sheaths or coverings, is interesting, but is not the treasure that the Soul of this predecessor offers. Through my own research, I do not see the Personality as an empty sheath, unrelated to the Soul, and discarded by the Soul who has moved on in its evolutionary path. I perceive the Personality as a continued open channel to spiritual realms through the Soul and “I” of the one who embodied

that Personality initially. The Personality still has energy, and empowered patterns, that can affect those who pass closely, as when someone breathes his or her first breath in the same stardate that Personality breathed its last breath.

When you work with this system actively, you can travel backwards through connection to the Personality, then to Soul to “I” to Spirit, and gain a great deal of insight and energetic support from the beings who live in these realms.

And that is the challenge. We live in a sea of beingness, and very importantly, in a sea of beings, self-energized and motile intelligences. Modern materialistic views do not perceive this, and deny it. Observe closely and you will find much evidence this is so. If you take each of Steiner’s statements in the rest of this paper as a hypothesis to test in your own experience, you may well be amazed at how this world opens up.

We can open to the positive genius of these beings, which include the previously human, the so-called dead. However, there’s a problem: There are retarding beings as well. Every place where there is an arrow in the diagram, every place where one mode of being translates into another, you can encounter retarding beings. They seek to distract and delude you. One of the great strengths of retarding beings is imitation; they are able to create look-alikes or similitudes, that function to distract anyone who ventures too close. An entity can, for example, appear as Albert Einstein (indeed a favorite choice for illusion) and demonstrate his new breakthroughs in knowledge of the foundations of reality, and tell you how brilliant you are, and how you are on to something important to the world. Some people like it that Albert Einstein gives them advice about details of their present lives – what a great consultant to have on your team! But so often this kind of intrusion is illusion.

Thus retarding beings slip into the sheaths of personalities and appear to be genuine. It is truly a situation of the wolf putting on Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother’s clothing and appearing as something other.

When you've been burned by illusory advice, you tend to turn away from unseen spiritual realms in general, and therein lies the success for a retarding being. The helpful beings, which greatly outnumber the retarding ones, are thrust into darkness, and your development is slowed or reversed.

These are the reasons that I have put the Tea with Your Mentor project on hold for now, while I research these interferences from retarding beings, and learn how to teach others to avoid them. In the meantime, you can learn from this study through the following.

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Let's start again from the basic questions:

Life and Death

While we live, we have trillions of experiences – sensory impressions, thoughts, feelings, deeds. We receive; we initiate; we build meaning in our activity and in our relationships. We take the stuff given to us and transform it. Then we die. Is that it? Is that the end?

Many argue about experiences after death, or a soul returning in a new birth, that is, reincarnation. I find that predisposition in belief paints over the windows of the senses and the powers of deduction. Few can peel off the paint or open the windows to experience for themselves what the truth of either side might be – death-is-the-end versus death as a threshold to another kind of life. Those who open to the latter possibility also open to the presence of spirit in general as well as to spirits on this side of the threshold of death. The materialistic view sets us all apart from one another, each in isolation, feeling oneself alone in a world of dead objects, all destined to die and disappear. However, we can begin to observe our own experience. Though our senses bring in much more information than we can assimilate, this is still a tiny portion of all

that's taking place around us. When you begin open to more of that information, you begin to crack the façade of isolation.. Then great torrents of new experience rush in. One can feel spirit and spirits permeating all of one's experience. The senses can be attuned to experience these realities.

I have found Rudolf Steiner a helpful guide, an Austrian philosopher who lived from 1861 to 1925.⁶ Because I have found such sense in much of what he has written, and been able to verify his assertions in my own experience, I trust other things that he has written, and have been willing to test his ideas in my own life. For one thing, he noted that the boundary between the familiar physical world of our day-waking consciousness and the mysterious spiritual world can be found not on some mountain top or distant valley, but right in the middle of every human being.⁷ I will work in this paper with ideas from Steiner and others, using lots of quotes to give the details of what was said originally, and then how I have responded to it.

Steiner on the So-Called Dead

Steiner speaks compellingly about communication and communion with the “so-called dead” – so-called because, as we can discover, they are not gone, nor elsewhere, nor devoid of life. In other words, they are not dead in the sense of cessation of existence. They are not bound by physical manifestation, though some are bound to physical places from which they have difficulty exiting. I have heard one tradition that states that you are finally freed from a place when your bones dissolve to dust, that is, when all physical structures that held you here are finally digested into basic constituents. This puts in a different light the distribution of the bones of saints as relics: By that means, the devotees hold on to the saint, which may or may not be good for the progress of saint or devotee.

⁶ Rudolf Steiner: Philosopher, author, lecturer (over six thousand in his lifetime), originator of Waldorf educational models and biodynamic farming methods and much else.

⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Influence of the Dead on Destiny*, hereafter “DD” (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2007, original lectures 1917), 1.

Back to Steiner's main point: The so-called dead have shifted state, to disincarnate, out of physical world, and no longer must cope with metabolism, sleep, or illness.

Here is Steiner's motivation: "The rest of earthly development will not be able to proceed for the welfare of humanity, unless humanity develops this living feeling of being together with the dead."⁸Please read that statement again. And the same idea in a different form: "The age of materialism has estranged men and women from the world of the dead; spiritual science must reestablish the friendship between them."⁹Quotes like this cannot be summarized; their challenge to our normal ways of thinking about things must be experienced freshly, and the words reread.

We should also note the context of Steiner's comments. They occurred at the end of World War I, when so many people in Europe had been killed in the most horrible ways, and as young people, in other words, when their lives would normally have extended out from them for decades. Thus feeling a communion with the dead loomed as important at that time.

Again, speaking of a necessity of our age, Steiner advocated that we "seek in a real way the bridge to the dead, not merely in an abstract way or with abstract faith."¹⁰"In the future, there will be a mutual, one might say, a free exchange between the living and the dead."¹¹

Steiner also advised, "The answer to the question of how we can improve our social life: learn to consult the dead."¹²Traditional cultures where the ancestors are cared for give evidence of how attention to the dead knits the community together. Mostly those observances are duty, and not consultation.

⁸ DD, 38.

⁹ Rudolf Steiner, lecture of March 6, 1917, "The Human Soul and the Universe," in *Cosmic and Human Metamorphosis* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2004), 100.

¹⁰ DD, 88.

¹¹ "Overcoming the Abyss," lecture of February 20, 1913, in *Staying Connected*, op. cit., 33.

¹² DD, 89.

Consulting the dead is another step towards intimacy with those who are not physical yet still in some way living.

One example of one who consults the dead comes from the artist Paul Klee: “I cannot be grasped in the here and now. For I reside just as much with the dead as with the unborn. Somewhat closer to the heart of creation than usual.”¹³ My work with artists of all kinds, including painters, sculptors, poets, and composers, suggests that this is true for all of them. Through art they have found direct connections to the realms of spirit beyond the everyday. Thus they contribute to “earthly development ... for the welfare of humanity.”

We don't have to go looking for this connection too far: “We are only separated from the so-called dead because we are not able to perceive with our ordinary consciousness how the life of the dead, the forces and actions of the dead, play into our own life.”¹⁴ We communicate more frequently than we know: “In the unconscious region of the soul we are speaking continually with the dead.”¹⁵ As you can see, each of these quotes challenges us to find corroboration in our own experience.

Steiner stated this last idea more specifically: “There is a living and perpetual intercourse between the so-called dead and the so-called living. Those who have passed through the Gate of Death have not ceased to be present, it is just that our eyes have ceased to see them.”¹⁶ The dead are coming forward to work with us, a great number of potential allies with whom we can cooperate in the shaping of our lives: “Those who have already passed through the Gates of Death want to work with us in the physical world.”¹⁷ More than many other speakers and writers, Steiner opens up this world past the usual squeamishness

¹³ Cited in Susanna Partsch, *Klee: 1879-1940* (Taschen, 2011), 7.

¹⁴ DD, 38. Also, from the lecture of February 10, 1918, “The Dead are With Us”: “All of you are in constant intercourse with the dead.” (from rsarchive.org)

¹⁵ “The Dead are With Us,” op. cit.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ “The Human Soul and the Universe,” op. cit., 101.

that arises in relation to the so-called dead. That squeamishness can be a healthy caution, and it needs to be overcome through direct experience.

In this, he continued the traditions in both East and West of communion with the so-called dead – from communion and communication with the ancestors as one can find in Bali today to the “Communion of Saints” and the work with the dead as seen in Hildegard of Bingen, Christian Mirabilis, and others. All in a healthy and open way, based on honor and respect between independent beings, and never on manipulation.

Our Capacities and Who Works Them

Steiner emphasized repeatedly that we access the world through three functions: thinking, feeling, and willing. This formulation was not new. Roget’s Thesaurus divided all words into cognition, affect, and volition; others have used the terms head, heart, and hand. However, Steiner went further in pointing out how these functions differ, and how they work with each other. Steiner pointed out that in waking life we are most aware of the thinking realm – perceptions coming from our senses co-mingling with concepts formed from those impressions. He observed that feeling takes place in a kind of dream state, and willing in a deep sleep state. We live through those functions best when in those states. They rise up to us as from a subconscious well to which our waking consciousness is not allowed access. When we move and act in the world, we often do so with little or no thought.

Steiner hinted that the so-called dead function best in those states that we access through dream and deep sleep, namely feeling and willing. But how could that be? Surely we have a rich feeling life, and we are aware and awake as we do deeds! Steiner’s hypothesis was this: To the extent that we live and experience in feeling and willing, we are open to the so-called dead working through us. “What is living in the impulses of the dead juts continually into our feeling life and into the life of our will impulses, and only because we miss it by dreaming

and sleeping through it do we feel separated from the dead.”¹⁸ Thus, we are already intimate with the dead, in realms of ourselves to which we are not fully awake. Steiner’s notion that we are dreamy when feeling, and asleep when performing deeds, deserves very careful evaluation.

“The dead are always there. They live in the waves of our own feeling and will, and they live there in such a way that they experience this life with us.”¹⁹ And, “We should realise that in much of what we do, it is the dead who are working.”²⁰ This is another statement that begs re-reading: Does this new way of seeing our lives accord with experience? How can such a statement and recommendation be assessed as true or not?

From one of Steiner’s biographers, “The dead are more experienced and more mature and see things in a more comprehensive setting ... therefore, a tremendous potential of good influence.”²¹ The word “influence” gives room for both our “I” and the dead within the realms of feeling and willing. In any case, these statements ought to arouse an intense desire to know more about these co-creators within your own being.

As our “I,” our most essential and highest Self, lives in the world of will, it behooves us to learn more about the realm of will with which the dead are much more familiar.²² We can learn to enact “the wisdom of those who have already laid aside the physical body.”²³ Thus on the inside, in our most inner beings, there is a cooperation already taking place, with which we can choose to interact and co-create more fully.

This level of intimacy with the dead strikes the modern human being, thinking of himself or herself as an independent entity, as either strange or intrusive. Only when we realize our growing connection with spiritual worlds

¹⁸ DD, 24.

¹⁹ DD, 31, 88.

²⁰ “The Dead are With Us,” op. cit.

²¹ Roy Wilkinson, *Rudolf Steiner: An Introduction to his Spiritual World-View* (Clairview Books, 2002), 118.

²² DD, 66-67.

²³ DD, 89.

can we begin to understand these statements, and work with the greater powers offering themselves to us for co-creation of our beings in willing activity, feeling, and thinking.

We have to see such ideas from Steiner or anyone else as hypotheses that have to be tested through personal experience, through what Steiner termed “spiritual science,” meaning clear-thinking and observation in realms of spirit.

I have done so, though my affirmation becomes for anyone else merely my opinion, and a repetition of the request to do the spiritual research necessary to evaluate such ideas. The key is to work not through your thinking to get the assistance offered by the so-called dead. Rather you contact these allies through your feeling. When you are related to an inventor, you don’t study her biography and think your way to her. Rather you deeply feel the connection, and permit impulses to arise in your own will-to-do.

For an example, I worked with one client about the location of the Sun, Moon, and planets at the moment of his birth. I told him, “You also share the place of the Sun at your first breath with the place of the Sun at the death of Abraham Lincoln.” He exclaimed, “He is my favorite person period. I have read everything he spoke or wrote. I have visited the Lincoln Memorial [in Washington, D.C.] and tears streamed down my face – I don’t know why.” His eyes were glistening as he related his intimacy with Lincoln, not only with the ideas, but with the feeling of social justice, with Lincoln’s will to serve the greater community. My client had realized that through the work of his life, including large projects built in cooperation with the local community.

I added, “And you should know that the mode of death goes along with the inspiration.” The man turned pale and said in a low voice, “I’ve had a gun pointed at my head three times...” This summarized the karmic connection between the dead and the living through the location of the Sun at the death of the deceased and the birth of the living.

I have many other examples. They show a similar connection through feeling and willing, and occasionally through thought.

Where Does This Lead?

If one begins to accept these ideas, one realizes several things. Here is a kind of summary, as well as exploration of implications.

- The dead aren't dead. "The dead are living but they live in a spiritual world."²⁴ Thus the term "so-called dead."
- You can't think your way to a relationship with these mentors. "The plane of the physical world that we grasp only with our intellect and sense perceptions can never bring us into any kind of connection with the dead."²⁵ One must take one's questions into one's feeling life, thereby into one's soul, then a response may come, and eventually a conversation.
- We are never really alone. Spirits of all kinds work with us. One group of spirits includes the so-called dead, who work through our feelings. They are there all the time and are much more intimate: "The dead live with you, more intensely than was ever possible for them in the life on Earth."²⁶
- We are connected with everyone. "There are scarcely any souls over the whole Earth with whom we do not have at least a distant, indirect connection."²⁷ That includes the living and the dead.
- The so-called dead relate to our future, to what we are to become. "We weave our destiny out of the same realm that the dead inhabit in common with us."²⁸
- We continue our involvement after crossing the threshold that separates the living from the so-called dead: "When human beings have gone through the portal of death, they do not cease to be active within the

²⁴ Wilkins, *Rudolf Steiner*, op. cit., 109.

²⁵ DD, 114.

²⁶ DD, 40.

²⁷ DD, 33.

²⁸ DD, 35.

- human community. They continue to be active, although in a different way than when they were active here in the physical body.”²⁹
- The souls of the so-called dead “becomes accustomed to holding all that is living as holy and permeates the living with more and more life.”³⁰
 - The dead are not like misty shapes of human beings. The physical bodies have dismantled, and the dead must be met as vibration or quality or tone.
 - As one becomes more familiar with the so-called dead, one discerns which ones with whom to interchange. There are dangers to complete openness to the dead (see Cautions below).
 - The dead are extremely aware that their every action results in either joy or suffering, to an extreme.³¹ We are not aware of this in the same way. Thus working with them requires a special sensitivity.
 - Working with the dead requires an attitude of “enhanced devotion, which is also called meditation ... enhanced devotion controlled by our will,” thus a task for discipline of willing and feeling.³²
 - Working with the resource of the dead requires “a feeling of community with everything in existence.” This does not mean a pantheistic happy-thought of “all is one,” but a sincere and genuine feeling of the interconnectedness for all things.³³
 - Working with the dead requires “the common air of gratitude,” a notion of thankfulness with space – “spiritual air” – in between so that one can be thankful for the presence of the deceased, and they of you.³⁴
 - The dead can read the heavens; they are the truest astrologers: “The dead can read what lies spiritually at the foundation of the stars.”³⁵ Thus they

²⁹ DD, 38.

³⁰ DD, 30.

³¹ DD, 31.

³² “The Blessings of the Dead,” op. cit., 93.

³³ “The Feeling of Community,” op. cit., 179.

³⁴ Ibid., 187, 183.

³⁵ DD, 59.

become a resource for understanding the foundations of star wisdom, how the heavens above connect with our personal lives and the events of our world. Dennis Klocek has done this for his work on climate.³⁶

- The dead only rarely appear or speak to us in clear words. Among the hundreds of people with whom she worked, Elisabeth Kubler-Ross noted one such encounter.³⁷ Rudolf Steiner noted one such encounter.³⁸ Louis LaGrand noted several, still rare.³⁹ The real pathway to communication lies in our feeling and willing, as described above.
- Just after a person dies, he or she is most concerned with enlivening the animal world on earth, then enlivening human community, and finally working intimately with spiritual beings – first with angels, archangels, and archai, and later even more powerful spirits. Through these experiences, the person gains in wisdom and powers of will. We can learn from them across the threshold.

Next Steps

Which of the so-called dead becomes available to you? To whom ought you connect? It could be ancestors, old karmic relationships from previous lifetimes with friends or foes or spouses.... Perhaps it's through a spiritual teacher with whom you commune. It could be one of many, or indeed many. The Tea with your Mentor process (from www.StarWisdom.org) was designed to link you with someone intimately connected with the portal of your birth, where you were especially vulnerable and open. It has been my observation that imprints occurred from the dead upon your entry, and these should be addressed before you wander about in realms of spirits. However, the Tea with your Mentor series

³⁶ Dennis Klocek, *Climate: Soul of the Earth* (Lindisfarne, 2010). See his preface. He has also spoken about this at workshops devoted to his climate work in relation to celestial phenomena.

³⁷ Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Life After Death* (Berkeley: Celestial Arts, 2008, second edition).

³⁸ Rudolf Steiner, "An Example of Working with the Dead," from his autobiography, in *Staying Connected*, op. cit., 222-227.

³⁹ Louis LaGrand, *Messages and Miracles* (Woodbury, MN: Llewellyn, 1999). Also note his website on communication with the dead, InvisibleNews.org.

of contacts serves as an introduction to that realm, a focus on a certain group of individuals with whom you are connected by the Sun's position in the heavens, only until such time as you become more familiar with this kind of communication, and then you can widen your scope.

Where do you find the dead? "Between death and rebirth we actually live in the starry heavens."⁴⁰ Thus the Tea with your Mentor process suggests you find these connections through shared locations in the heavens, the same location of the Sun at the death of the mentor and the birth of the seeker.

Initial connections: "As the dead one [the possible mentor] gazes down, a person who has remained behind on the earth only becomes visible for him [or her] when spiritual thoughts live within the soul of that person. The dead person sees these thoughts."⁴¹ Thus the Tea with your Mentor process guides you to think these spiritual thoughts, which means concepts brimming with feeling. Thus you become visible to your possible Mentor.

When is the best time? We experience as quite different our waking life and our sleeping life. A third state exists, that between waking and sleeping, just as we drift off to sleep and the moment we awaken. That momentary gap can be expanded, because it offers a portal between the two worlds. This gap has many names: meditation, reverie, "enhanced devotion," each overlapping the other and slightly different in tone and quality. It requires diminished orientation to sensory experience, and more to one's inner life.

Communication in an Unusual Manner

How do you hear a communication from the dead? In Steiner's view, it was completely unlike a conversation where one person speaks while the other listens, and then you trade places. To learn from the so-called dead in relation to

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *Life Between Death and Rebirth* (Hudson, NY: Anthroposophic Press, 1968, original lectures 1912-13), 44. In addition, "But if one ... raises his eyes to the starry heaven, he will be filled with the feeling of reverence and will know that this is the memory of man's eternal home."

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 267.

your feeling and willing, you watch yourself. “If you speak to or begin a thinking relationship with the dead, your words or the thoughts you send come to you out of the dead themselves, if you consciously perceive your connection with the dead.”⁴² Rather than hearing a voice from the dead person, you hear yourself speak or realize something in a new way. That is the communication. This can be a test of faith as hearing yourself speak or feeling yourself feel or observing yourself act may seem the definition of your individuality, the mark of your own private self. Thus you have to watch for that quality of newness in what you hear, feel, or observe. Reason it through – the beings with whom you are communicating might not have your language as theirs, nor your cultural setting or present situation. They have to move through your feeling and your impulses to act. Watch for their presence there.

Many aspects of relation to the world of spirit bear this stamp of “reversal.”⁴³ What is normal in the earthly world is turned around in the spiritual world. Ponder the following: “We live under the illusion that our actions are our own, because they flow out of our feelings and our impulses of will; in reality they flow right into our daily life out of the deeds of those who have died.”⁴⁴ I have felt the truth of this statement at times, and I feel that it is not a complete possession by the dead of my feeling and willing. Rather my sense of individuality separate from all others seems rightly placed in my thinking and in my senses that tell me that I’m separate. In the realm of feeling and willing, I do sense the presence of others, as well as the working of my own individuality – my own “I” – in a kind of shared space. Thus communing with the dead seems like communing with those who are there already. And it is our service to them

⁴² DD, 40, 57.

⁴³ *Jesaiiah Ben-Aharon, The Event in Science, History, Philosophy, and Art* (Virtualbookworm.com, 2011) emphasizes the role of “reversal” in all of these areas.

⁴⁴ DD, 38-39.

to make bridges of communication for “we ourselves are living books for the dead.”⁴⁵ They read us and, if interested, will help us.

The practical approach is as follows: “We approach the individual through the foreign feeling and willing we find within us, then get closer to the personality by being together with it.”⁴⁶ Steiner poetically gave words to the spirits across the threshold of death in his “mystery play,” *The Souls’ Awakening*, when the audience listens in to a group of souls in the spheres of Sun, then Saturn. Here is a sample from a soul who has become very interested in a living person because of that person’s depth of feeling: “Abiding, I feel blissfulness of stars/ and in the stream of time I enter it./ Beneath its sway of grace I’ll live and work/ in union with this ever-cherished soul.”⁴⁷ The dead thus are drawn to work with the living.

This kind of cooperation requires a method for speaking to the so-called dead, not “merely in an abstract way or with abstract faith.”⁴⁸ Such a method is offered by the Tea with your Mentor process.

Cautions

It takes several kinds of energy in different bodies to realize the life of a human being on earth. When a person dies, his or her various energetic bodies disband. At death these go separate ways. One of these bodies includes the dregs of the life, the sludge of habits, misdeeds, and negativity. Each of us has such a body that we work to improve in successive lifetimes. Some call it the Double, some the Shadow, some the sub-lunar remains of the etheric body. In the Tea with your Mentor process, one must distinguish between the essence of the person and the Double or Shadow. The best parts of a dead person’s life may not be

⁴⁵ “Recovering the Connection,” lecture of October 10, 1913, in *Staying Connected*, op. cit., 69. In his introduction, Bamford adds: “Our thoughts and feelings are the works of art that brighten and instruct their lives.”

⁴⁶ “The Blessings of the Dead,” lecture of May 26, 1914, in *Staying Connected*, op. cit., 95.

⁴⁷ Scene 6, “The Souls’ Awakening,” in Rudolf Steiner, *Four Mystery Dramas* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1997), 4-95.

⁴⁸ DD, 88.

written in any biography. One has to observe and discern. However, though the Shadow may feel like the sludge or dregs of the life, it is not to be dismissed. Each person's Shadow is like the rough clay that they are slowly working into a chalice. Though gross, it is precious, as it comprises the material that the particular soul has gathered over time to work with. The sludge in others, in the process of transformation, deserves respect; at the same time, the sludge in others is best left alone.

Anastacia Nutt, a working priestess founded in western esoteric traditions, has stated this situation very well: "When our understanding of the unseen worlds and their inhabitants is based upon youthful and inexperienced ideas, we can harbor desires and fantasies that lead us to believe that all beings and energies we encounter in adjacent worlds are benevolent in their function and intent. ... [W]e may unwittingly draw to us beings that operate upon falsely sweet premises. ... [W]e may flee from helpful beings whose power we unjustly and irrationally fear."⁴⁹ This summarizes the reason that I have been cautious with the Tea with Your Mentor process at the present time. She offers a detailed meditation to clear the path for one's sacred imagination.⁵⁰

Spiritualism, meaning trance channeling where the "medium" loses all personal consciousness, is not the way to find the dead. We must do it while not giving our awareness over to other beings.⁵¹ This becomes especially muddled when personal cravings for pleasure or power enter the picture, and one seeks to manipulate spiritual realms for gain on this side of the life-death threshold. Paradoxically, to get the greatest benefit for your own life, you have to let go of selfish grasping. Only when you perceive your life in terms of its greater purpose

⁴⁹ Anastacia Nutt, *Unseen Worlds and Practical Aspects of Spiritual Discernment* (R. J. Stewart Books, 2008), 25-26. Anastacia Nutt gives workshops all over the world on spiritual discernment.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 31. The development of the sacred imagination is given in much greater detail in Anastacia Nutt, *The Sacred Cross: A Transformational Spiritual Tool for Life* (R. J. Stewart Books, 2009), 37f.

⁵¹ Steiner spoke about the dangers of spiritualism repeatedly. Wilkins, op. cit., summarizes on page 110.

in relation to the whole of life (the “feeling of community with everything in existence” quoted above) will you avoid dangers, and receive personal benefit.

One way to express this is that the dead are deeply connected with the animal kingdom, protecting and guiding it. Consequently, there can occur an arousal of animal instincts when one is not careful in contacting the dead. “When the intercourse [conversation] is of a spiritual nature, it is not sinful, but when it is not accompanied by pure thoughts it can easily lead to the stimulation of lower passions. It is not the dead who arouse these passions but the element in which the dead live.”⁵²

“For a long period after death, man re-experiences what has happened on earth and has to rid himself of the longing for his physical body.”⁵³ This can lead to yearning by the deceased to live through the physical body of the enquirer.⁵⁴ This is much less true for the more developed deceased. However, it is something to watch out for. As you let the will forces of the deceased work in your inner life, you have to also claim this body as your “I” space, not to be taken over by others. Rather you work in cooperation with these new allies.

Life between Birth and Death

Our side of the threshold is the side of the living, or we should perhaps say the so-called living. As St. John states in his first-century letter to the Christian community of Sardis, “You have a reputation for being alive, but you are not.”⁵⁵ Strong words, scathing in their assessment. Most of the time, we neither sleep nor wake, but muddle in the middle.

We have an opportunity in this time between birth and death to prepare for encountering consciously the so-called dead. Thus the so-called dead can

⁵² Rudolf Steiner, “The Dead are With Us,” lecture of February 10, 1918, Nuremberg, from rsarchive.org.

⁵³ *Life Between Death and Rebirth*, op. cit., 268.

⁵⁴ Martin Prechtel, *Secrets of the Talking Jaguar* (Tarcher, 1999), speaks about this danger especially from grandparents to grandchildren.

⁵⁵ *Revelation to John*, 3:1.

guide us in what we need to learn here on earth. “Only these impulses from the dead can make human beings free.”⁵⁶ I take this to mean that, without awareness of the constant intercourse with the dead, we are not free; when we become aware of this intercourse, and can guide it, and choose the more mature beings to work with, we can then experience freedom.

Ways to Open to the So-Called Dead

The appreciation and practice of art opens channels to the dead, to time spirits, to feeling, to will. Taking the few moments to put pigment to paper or mold a piece of clay can release access to these worlds quickly.

Opening to certain members among the dead can assist. You can open to ancestors, though often I have found this more difficult for people to do than through mature deceased persons connected through Sun placement: This is the premise of the Tea with Your Mentor approach. I have explored this in detail in the life of Rudolf Steiner.⁵⁷ The Tea with Your Mentor process provides other guidelines for encountering the dead in a constructive manner.

What is the most useful attitude for this encounter? You fill your soul with the power of feeling for all of the aspects of your life. You fill your soul with question. You allow to grow in intensity a yearning to awaken more fully.

Some Foundations for the Approach through the Heavens

This list of statements affirms aspects of this entire process, recalling “The dead can read what lies spiritually at the foundation of the stars.”⁵⁸

1. My birth is precious. Its *timing* is not random, but is important to me, and to the others whom I am destined to influence.
2. *Where* I was born *on the earth* has importance – the geography part of the birth story.

⁵⁶ DD, 88, also 120.

⁵⁷ David Tresemer, with Robert Schiappacasse, *Star Wisdom & Rudolf Steiner*, op. cit.

⁵⁸ DD, 59.

3. *Where I was born in the heavens* has importance. The heavens have an impact – sun cycles, moon cycles, planetary positions – in relation to the grand fixed stars of the cosmos.
4. The heavens have 360 gates, as given by wise teachers of the past. Each gate has a certain quality. One of them was the gate where the great Sun lay when I was born.
5. Birth and death are key moments of crossing through these gates.
6. There are divine beings or spirits who assist in the forming of me.
7. I can learn from those who went through the same gate (“star date,” exact location of the Sun in the heavens) as I did: star brothers and star sisters.
8. I can learn from those who exhaled their last breath into the same Sun Gate as the one where I inhaled my first breath.
9. I can begin with a guide (Tea with Your Mentor, First Contact).
10. I can continue with confronting the challenging situations that attached to me in the star-birth canal (Second Contact).
11. I can then align with artists, composers, and brilliant human beings (Third Contact).
12. This process of my personal development serves my family, community, and the entire earth. It also serves those whom I contact in spirit realms.

Epilogue

A poem on behalf of the dead by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, who passed over the threshold in 1898, touches upon many of the themes that I brought forward in this introduction to the so-called dead:⁵⁹

The Chorus of the Dead

O, we the dead, we the dead, far more are we
Than you on the earth, than you on the sea!
We plough the vast croplands with tireless deeds,
You reap with your scythes, what has grown from our seeds,
And what we achieved, and what we began,
It pours still up yonder, in the streams of the sun.
And all of our loving, our hating, our pains,
It beats still up yonder, in death endured veins,
With all the treasures we've gathered and found

⁵⁹ Another translation of this poem, emphasizing different aspects, can be found at <http://angerburg.blogspot.com.au/2010/08/chorus-of-dead.html>

All earthly behavior forever is bound.
With our sounding, our forming, our singing, we fight;
To capture the crown of out-streaming light,
Seeking ever the great goals of humanity become free
So honor and serve us! For many are we!

Conclusion

The Tea with Your Mentor process has gone back to the research laboratory for now, and I am working with a few individuals to understand how to negotiate the dangers of this approach. In the meantime, all of the points in this paper are well worth investigating for each and everyone's personal development.