

BIO-DYNAMIC FARMERS

BACKBONE OF A

SPIRITUAL (R)EVOLUTION

Victor Landa

***May wisdom shine through me.
May love glow in me.
May strength penetrate me.
That in me may arise a helper of mankind
a servant of holy things selfless and true.***

-Rudolf Steiner

Christ's sacrifice as He united himself with the earth made it possible for us to draw cosmic spiritual forces for the up liftment of mankind. The Biodynamic form of agriculture makes use of this gift, but we cannot rely only on the preparations. The system must work as a whole under the direction and by the spiritual nature of the farmer.

SCHOOL OF LIFE / SHANTI YOGA

4217 East-West Highway, Bethesda, MD 20814
301-654-6759; toll free: 1- 888-384-YOGA (9642)
e-mail : spiritualfood@schooloflife.org
web : www.schooloflife.org

CONTENTS

I	FOREWORD
II	INTRODUCTION.
III	THE MESSAGE
IV	ANCIENT PRACTICES
V	CONTEMPORARY SIMILARITIES
VI	SPIRITUALITY AND FOOD
VII	THE BIODYNAMIC FARMER
VIII	MEDITATION - USE O F SUBTLE FORCES
IX	THE DREAM

"By their fruits ye shall know them"

-Matthew 7:20

FOREWORD

It is possible to use the rapidly approaching end of this century as a vehicle for deepening our understanding of the realities that stand as sentinels behind the work that we do. As we gain further insights we will be in a better position to meet the tumultuous times ahead.

Not only must we strive to accomplish our outer and inner work, but, to be effective, we must develop our connections with like-minded people and find those avenues where common endeavor will make the difference. The difference could very well be the healthy future evolution of humanity and the earth.

The following pages could easily serve as a testament to the central role that Biodynamic agriculture needs to play in tomorrow's world and the tremendous responsibilities that Biodynamic farmers have had placed upon them by virtue of the times within which we live. Further, we can infer from these pages the responsibilities we face as consumers and our role in the marketplace in all of its forms.

We need to support biodynamic agriculture; we need to support Demeter certification; and we need to support one another. Thank you very much, Victor Landa, for your work and support in what is truly a spiritual (r)evolution.

Charles Beedy
Executive Director
Bio-Dynamic Farming and Gardening Association, Inc.

INTRODUCTION

"THIS IS A PROBLEM OF NUTRITION..." was the astonishing reply that Dr. Rudolf Steiner gave to Ehrenfried Pfeiffer when he asked why is it that your followers to whom you give so much spiritual impulse seem to be having so little spiritual growth. He continues:

"NUTRITION AS IT IS TODAY DOES NOT SUPPLY THE STRENGTH NECESSARY FOR MANIFESTING THE SPIRIT IN PHYSICAL LIFE. A BRIDGE CAN NO LONGER BE BUILT FROM THINKING TO WILL AND ACTION. FOOD PLANTS NO LONGER CONTAIN THE FORCES PEOPLE USED FOR THIS."

This quote from the inspiring lectures of Dr. Steiner published in the book "Agriculture" speaks very clearly of the role of Biodynamic farming in the process of human and planetary evolution.

The following article is an interpretation of Dr. Steiner's message to the Biodynamic farmer as seen by one who is totally new to the area of farming and is extremely impressed by the scope and depth of the farmer's role in a spiritual process.

Dr. Steiner reminds us of the need for meditation. It seems but natural, then, that the farm become a learning center for the spiritual truth of man.

Victor Landa
October 1997

1. The Message

In 1924, Dr. Rudolf Steiner set the foundation for what would become a process of transformation for all of humankind. [Ref: 1] His lectures on biodynamic farming were guidelines for a spiritual transformation of the broadest scope. First and foremost, his teaching dealt with the soil, initiating this way a reversal of one of the most threatening and harmful environmental damages to the planet. Not only because of the soil itself but because of the consequences.

We are now reaping the effect of a rapacious, absurd behavior towards the soil. Dr. Max Gerson, a German medical doctor came to the same conclusion. His work proved that degenerative diseases as a whole with the corollary of terminal ones are the result of this slow "food poisoning" of the organism that takes years to manifest varying with genetic disposition and with generational degeneration.

Dr. Gerson's discoveries were made through the treatment of lupus but the thrust of his work was with cancer. He demonstrated how the excessive ingestion of protein along with a depleted soil gave origin to the formation of degenerative diseases of deadly consequences. The therapy he developed radically eliminated all animal protein from the diet but the most important component of the therapy was the soil. He realized that the only way he could bring about recovery for the patients was a strict diet based on fruits and vegetables with no trace of chemical contamination - that is, a diet based on organic produce. He determined that a combination of these factors, i.e. exhausted, denatured soil plus the poisonous elements added through chemical fertilizers and pesticides cause cumulative toxification (through successive generations) and weakening of the immune system.

Dr. Gerson submitted many papers in medical journals for peer review and has written a book "Cancer Therapy," [Ref: 2] which includes 50 cases of cancer recovery all of them documented with medical history. In many cases starting with his first one on cancer these amazing recoveries were with people that were considered incurable by conventional methods and whose doctors had said that there was nothing more they could do to help them. Since then, his therapy has saved innumerable lives and continues to do so. We must remark again that his main focus as clearly stated in his book is "the soil".

This is the point of confluence with Rudolf Steiner who, in addition, gives the explanation of why and how to care for the soil from physical and spiritual perspectives.

The reason to mention Dr. Gerson's therapy is that it provides clear confirmation that the degeneration of the soil is bringing about a degeneration of the human species. This is something that should be appreciated in its real dimension. The opposite now needs to be shown: ***Through the soil and its fruits the physical, mental and spiritual health and well-being of humankind can be achieved.*** This is why we need to appreciate, understand and support the role of the biodynamic farmer as a crucial element in the process of the upliftment of humankind, of the evolution and spiritualization of the world, and of reclaiming a healthy land for generations to come.

2. ANCIENT PRACTICES

Ayurveda, the science of life, is the oldest form of medicine and the sister science of yoga and tantra. "Ayur" means life and "veda" means science. "Yoga" means union, from the Sanskrit root "yuj" that means to join. It is considered that Ayurveda deals with the physical body, Tantra with the mind and Yoga with the spirit. Yoga and Tantra use the Ayurvedic principles in order to take care of the body.

Ayurveda considers diet one of the main means of preserving and restoring health. This is very much in line with Dr. Gerson's therapy. There

are Ayurvedic physicians whose sole form of treatment is through diet. It is taught that there are three main classes of food: sattwic, rajasic and tamasic. Tamasic food induces lethargy, apathy, and moves the individual away from its spiritual essence. Rajasic food induces activity and is not conducive to meditation. Sattwic food, on the other hand, is food easy to digest and assimilate and does not use our energy but on the contrary brings into our body the spiritual forces necessary for our development. As Dr. Rudolf Steiner and Dr. Gerson have pointed out, if the soil is not healthy the necessary elements will not be present; ***it is biodynamic agriculture that produces sattwic food.***

3. CONTEMPORARY SIMILARITIES

Dr. Rudolf Steiner said: ...

"IT IS NO TRUE ECONOMY TO EXPLOIT THE SURFACE OF THE EARTH TO SUCH AN EXTENT AS TO RID OURSELVES OF ALL THE THINGS I HAVE HERE MENTIONED IN THE HOPE OF INCREASING OUR CROPS. YOUR LARGE PLANTATIONS WILL BECOME WORSE IN QUALITY, AND THIS WILL MORE THAN OUTWEIGH THE EXTRA AMOUNT YOU GAIN BY INCREASING YOUR FILLED ACREAGE AT THE COST OF THESE OTHER THINGS..."

These prophetic words have been proven true by the assertions of Dr. Max Gerson that degenerative and terminal diseases are a consequence of denatured food grown in exhausted land. Astronomical medical costs are the consequence of this uncontrolled exploitation. The relationship between the content of the soil and human disease is a whole chapter of his book *Cancer Therapy*. He says:

"The familiar expression 'Mother Earth' is justified. Where we take from and rob the earth, we disturb the natural equilibrium and harmony producing sickness of the soil, sickness of the plants and fruits (the common nutrition) and finally sickness of both animals and human beings."

"As a physician who spent much of his life investigating the nutritional aspects of disease, I have often had occasion to observe a definite connection between dietary deficiencies and disease, and between dietary deficiencies and a sick or poor quality soil."

"The relationship between soil and plants on the one hand and animal and human nutrition on the other is to me a fascinating subject."

Amongst other things at the conclusion of this chapter he says,

"We must conclude from those observations that unless the soil is cared for properly, the depleted soil with its abnormal external metabolism will bring about more and more abnormalities of our internal metabolism, resulting in serious degenerative diseases in animals and human beings."

The final sentence:

"Organic gardening food seems to be the answer to the cancer problem."

4. SPIRITUALITY AND FOOD

The following passage taken from the preface of the book, *Agriculture*, by Rudolf Steiner is very enlightening concerning the transcendental aspect of properly grown food. A challenging question posed by Ehrenfried Pfeiffer to him was:

"How can it happen that the spiritual impulse, and especially the inner schooling, for which you are constantly providing stimulus and guidance bear so little fruit? Why do the people concerned give so little evidence of spiritual experience, in spite of all their efforts? Why, worst of all, is the will for action, for the carrying out of these spiritual impulses so weak?"..... He goes on to say, *"I was particularly anxious to get an answer to the question as to how one could build a bridge to active participation and the carrying out of spiritual intentions, without being pulled off the right path by personal ambition, illusions and petty jealousies, for these were the negative qualities Rudolf Steiner had named as the main inner hindrances."* (emphasis added)

Then came the thought-provoking and surprising answer:

"THIS IS A PROBLEM OF NUTRITION."

"NUTRITION AS IT IS TODAY DOES NOT SUPPLY THE STRENGTH NECESSARY FOR MANIFESTING THE SPIRIT IN PHYSICAL LIFE. A BRIDGE CAN NO LONGER BE BUILT FROM THINKING TO WILL AND ACTION. FOOD PLANTS NO LONGER CONTAIN THE FORCES PEOPLE USED FOR THIS."

Dr. Pfeiffer adds,

"A nutritional problem which if solved would enable the spirit to become manifest and realize itself in human beings!"

Dr. Steiner:

"The benefits of the biodynamic compost preparations should be made available as quickly as possible to the largest possible areas of the entire earth, for the earth's healing." (emphasis added)

Only through committed farmers with full conviction of their spiritual responsibility will this task be accomplished, and it is in the hands of the

biodynamic farmers that Dr. Steiner has placed this responsibility. However, this is but one aspect of his teaching. He goes on to say:

"AND NOW, I ASK YOU TO OBSERVE: WHEN YOU MEDITATE, WHAT ARE YOU REALLY DOING?" (I must insert this observation: I want you to see that these things are not coming "out of the blue"). The orientals used to meditate in their way; we in the mid-European west do it in our way. Our meditation is connected only indirectly with the breathing. We live and weave in concentration and meditation. However, all that we do when we devote ourselves to these exercises of the soul still has its bodily counterpart. Albeit this is delicate and subtle, nevertheless, however subtly, meditation somewhat modifies the regular course of our breathing, which as you know is connected intimately with the life of man."

"In meditating, we always retain in ourselves a little more carbon dioxide than we do in the normal process of waking consciousness. A little more carbon dioxide always remains behind in us. Thus, we do not at once expel the full impetus of the carbonic acid, as we do in the everyday bull-at-the-gate kind of life. We keep a little of it back. We do not drive the carbon-dioxide with its full momentum out into the surrounding spaces, where the nitrogen is all around us. We keep it back a little."

"If you knock up against something with your skull, if you knock against a table, for example, you will only be conscious of your own pain. If however, you rub against it gently, you will be conscious of the surface of the table. **SO IT IS WHEN YOU MEDITATE. BY AND BY YOU GROW INTO A CONSCIOUS LIVING EXPERIENCE OF THE NITROGEN ALL AROUND YOU. SUCH IS THE REAL PROCESS IN MEDITATION. ALL BECOMES KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION** - even that which is living in the nitrogen. And this nitrogen is a very clever fellow! He will inform you of what mercury and venus and the rest are doing. He knows it all; he really senses it. These things are based on absolutely real processes, and I shall presently touch on some of them in somewhat greater detail. **THIS IS THE POINT WHERE THE SPIRITUAL IN OUR INNER LIFE BEGINS TO HAVE A CERTAIN BEARING ON OUR WORK AS FARMERS.**" (emphasis added)

Later on in the discussion after the same lecture (Lecture #4), Dr. Steiner was asked: *"Does it matter who does the work? Can anyone you choose do the work or should it be an anthroposophist?"*

Part of his answer was:

"THESE THINGS THAT TAKE PLACE THROUGH HUMAN INFLUENCE, THOUGH THEY CAN NOT BE OUTWARDLY EXPLAINED, ARE INWARDLY QUITE CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT."

"MOREOVER, SUCH THINGS WILL COME ABOUT SIMPLY AS A RESULT OF THE HUMAN BEING PRACTICING MEDITATION: PREPARING HIMSELF BY MEDITATIVE LIFE, AS I DESCRIBED IT IN YESTERDAY'S LECTURE. FOR WHEN YOU MEDITATE YOU LIVE QUITE DIFFERENTLY WITH THE NITROGEN WHICH CONTAINS THE IMAGINATIONS. YOU THEREBY PUT YOURSELF IN A POSITION WHICH WILL ENABLE ALL THESE THINGS TO BE EFFECTIVE; YOU PUT YOURSELF IN THIS POSITION OVER AGAINST THE WHOLE WORLD OF PLANT-GROWTH." *(emphasis added)*

Dr. Rudolf Steiner was entrusting the biodynamic farmers with this extraordinary responsibility of becoming channels and through meditation to bring the spiritual forces into their being to do their work of bringing in the spiritual forces in the plants. His answer becomes very clear that anybody can do the work. You don't have to be an anthroposophist, but you must do your spiritual work. The farmer must be a spiritual being in the first place and must know the techniques as given by Dr. Steiner. On the other hand, who fulfills these conditions? The biodynamic farmers. This is the beginning, the starting point of the spiritual (r)evolution. Dr. Steiner has very clearly entrusted the biodynamic farmers with the greatest responsibility and an enormous task, the spiritualization of the planet through their food and through their being, saving the soil restoring it to its healthy condition and keeping alive the teaching to procure the total regeneration.

5. THE BIODYNAMIC FARMER:

Jesus Christ chose fishermen as his close disciples. Let's think for a moment what are the life conditions of fishermen. Like birds and flowers they rely on God's provision to ensure their daily sustenance. They can not hoard or keep the fish because it spoils. They have to go out daily into the sea. They must go before daybreak and they will spend many hours in quiet and solitude, trusting again in Divine Providence to have a safe return. They must learn to read the skies to decide whether to venture into the sea or not, and to find their way back home.

Let's observe similarities with the farmers' life. To start with, let's remember that many spiritual traditions will consider part of its requirements for their members to rise before sunrise - true for both cases. Also, the need to practice solitude and silence that prepare and are conducive to a state of meditation. Physical exercise and adequate diet also true in both cases. We can see very clearly that these elements of a spiritual life are naturally part of the fisherman and farmer's life. The other similarity is that they both act as

channels to draw the spiritual forces, in one case from the water in the other from the earth.

Every seed that is planted can become an act of worship. Every fruit that is harvested can be a celestial song of gratitude that fills the entire universe.

Farmers, like the birds and flowers, have to rely on God's provision to ensure their daily sustenance. They also must learn how to read the skies, more so in the case of farmers who go a step further since it is in their hands to bring forth new life into the physical plane. They must start from the seed and raise their "children" until they bear fruit. But they are still dependent on the elements even though they have a greater share in the exoteric responsibility of the process. It is their esoteric responsibility that will render the other one effective.

Farmers are also moving one step further since their work favors a sattwic diet. This is a vegetarian diet that fosters the practice of "ahimsa" or non-violence. In the old vedic farming tradition "Homa-farming" played an important role. The practice of Agnihotra, which has a similar effect as the biodynamic preparation, included the element of meditation which Dr. Steiner stresses as a necessary adjunct to the farmers life.

6. MEDITATION - PRACTICAL USE OF SUBTLE FORCES

The practice of agnihotra consists in the burning of cow dung, rice and ghee (clarified butter) in a copper pyramid of exact dimensions. This must be done at exactly sunrise and sundown, preferable in the middle of the field, while chanting the appropriate mantras. It is followed by a period of meditation that has a very powerful effect on changing the cosmic forces in the atmosphere of the farm, the effects reported in recent experiments have been extremely rewarding confirming this ancient technique.

But what is more important is that with the integration of meditation to a healthy lifestyle the farmer is naturally threading a spiritual path that should qualify him/her to become a "beacon of light" for people who are attracted to this life of service. In different mystery schools, the apprentice approaches his spiritual preceptor and receives guidance through the daily work in community. The apprentice not only learns the trade but what is most important, he receives the spiritual knowledge through daily interaction with the spiritual preceptor. The spiritual lessons are learned within the context of this physical plane.

7. THE DREAM

It doesn't seem too outlandish to assert that this was the vision of Rudolf Steiner; that spirituality be infused into the world by means of a healthy soil and food, and that the teaching be kept alive on the farms as schools of spiritual life where the high spiritual nature of the individuals would have its effect on the spiritualization of the food and consequently the planet and all of humankind.

Let's fantasize for a moment to that utopic time when each farm becomes the nucleus or center of a human settlement limited by the radius established by the maximum distance to which the produce can be transported with reasonable means. At the same time, the farm is a center for spiritual education. Remember, the lifestyle of the farmer naturally offers that possibility. Meditation is part of the farming practice and apprentices are being prepared in both aspects: farming and spirituality. In their turn, the apprentices will run a similar concern. The collective meditation that takes place on the farm in which all of the community participates draws in tremendous spiritual forces that are integrated into the food that people are consuming.

To give this utopia an opportunity to come through, as Dr. Rudolf Steiner said: **"ONE MUST WORK IN A BUSINESS-LIKE PROFIT MAKING WAY OR IT WON'T COME OFF."** So, spirituality and practicality must go hand-in-hand. This is a big challenge as well - to raise the price of the produce to its real value, to drop price competition and to acknowledge a quality difference so substantial that competition doesn't even ensue.

My beloved friends, forgive my daring to interpret teachings that are so dear to your heart and for talking so bluntly out of mine, but the beauty of the mission that you have been entrusted by your teacher inspires such a great admiration for your work, that I can only say thank you for your commitment.

"And when you begin to see that you cannot do so it is then that you lose heart. That is the point my dear friends -- do not lose heart: know that it is not the momentary success that matters; it is working on and on with iron perseverance."

- Rudolf Steiner

Reference 1: **Agriculture**, Rudolf Steiner; Bio-Dynamic Agricultural Association, Rudolf Steiner House, 35 Park Road, London, N.W.1; 1974 (first printing 1958)

Reference 2: **A Cancer Therapy**, Max Gerson, M.D.; The Gerson Institute, PO Box 430 Bonita, CA, 91908; 1990 (first edition 1958)