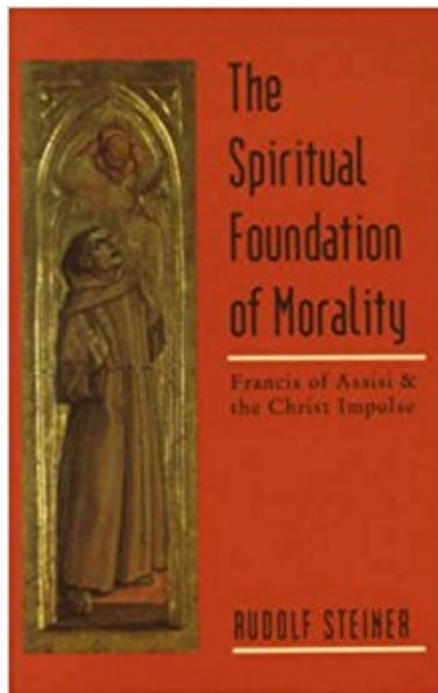




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The Spiritual Foundation Of Morality: Francis Of Assisi And The Christ Impulse (CW 155)



Synopsis

Moral teaching and moral preaching cannot establish morality. It is only by delving into the hidden secrets of life that we can advance not just to moral doctrines but to the moral sources of life, true moral impulses. At different times, humanity has manifested moral life in different ways. To understand these differences, the evolution of consciousness must also be taken into account. Originally morality was a part of human nature, for in their essence human beings are good. But through evolution, there have come errors, deviations, times of falling away. In this small, much-loved cycle of three lectures Rudolf Steiner indicates the sources for the recovery of a living morality for our time. Rudolf Steiner shows the transformation of the virtues through the evolution of consciousness and, above all, through the incarnation of the Christ in the Mystery of Golgotha. Since then, morality works to build up Christ's being. Synopses: Why morality needs to be studied. Preaching morality v. founding morality: examples of ancient India (devotion to wisdom) and ancient Europe (courage). Leprosy in the Middle Ages. The biography of Francis of Assisi; the transformation of courage into love. The reality of moral forces. The caste system; differentiation as to a law of evolution. The betrayal of the Atlantean Mysteries; the consequences for the European population. Racial evolution v. soul evolution. The demons of leprosy overcome by the Christ impulse in Francis of Assisi. Francis's prior incarnation; the mysteries at Colchis and the Buddha. Francis's faith in the original goodness of humanity. Plato's four virtues. The nature of evil and freedom; the teaching of the mean. Interest as a precondition for understanding and moral conduct. Spiritual Science, as divine wisdom, stimulates interest. During the third post-Atlantean cultural epoch, interest was regulated by the instinctive virtue of "wisdom"; today, interest must be regulated by conscious truthfulness. The lack of truthfulness in modern times; theosophy as an educator of truthfulness. Truthfulness as the virtue of the sentient soul. Courage as the instinctive virtue of the mind soul in the fourth epoch; today, in the fifth epoch, it must become love, based on understanding. This is promoted by a theosophical comprehension of the Christ. Temperance as the virtue of the consciousness soul is still instinctive in the fifth epoch; it will be replaced by "life wisdom" in the sixth epoch. The effect of spiritual-scientific wisdom on the body. The virtue of "justice." Knowledge of the suprasensory world through wonder, astonishment, faith. The evolution of conscience. The Christ impulse is naked; it must be clothed by impulses of wonder, love, conscience. Founding v. preaching morality: the reality of the Christ impulse v. abstract ideals of brotherhood. How goodness builds and evil destroys. This volume is a partial translation of *Theosophische Moral* (CW 155).

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Customer Reviews

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Rudolf Steiner (1861–1925) was born in the small village of Kraljevec, Austro-Hungarian Empire (now in Croatia), where he grew up. As a young man, he lived in Weimar and Berlin, where he became a well-published scientific, literary, and philosophical scholar, known especially for his work with Goethe's scientific writings. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he began to develop his early philosophical principles into an approach to systematic research into psychological and spiritual phenomena. Formally beginning his spiritual teaching career under the auspices of the Theosophical Society, Steiner came to use the term Anthroposophy (and spiritual science) for his philosophy, spiritual research, and findings. The influence of Steiner's multifaceted genius has led to innovative and holistic approaches in medicine, various therapies, philosophy, religious renewal, Waldorf education, education for special needs, threefold economics, biodynamic agriculture, Goethean science, architecture, and the arts of drama, speech, and eurythmy. In 1924, Rudolf Steiner founded the General Anthroposophical Society, which today has branches throughout the world. He died in Dornach, Switzerland.

The Introduction and these three lectures are wonderful, beautiful, and very inspiring. They also throw clear light on history and the evolution of humanity--not only in the past but for our future. Rudolf Steiner always has this capacity to help readers gain a clear understanding of life and events.

This is an awesome book. A group of us will be using it together.

I had hoped that Rudolf Steiner's "The Spiritual Foundations of Morality" would contain a sustained discussion on, shall we say, the spiritual foundations of morality. Instead, we get three rambling lectures about pretty much everything. Or everything else? But sure, somewhere in this dense mass of text, Steiner actually does discuss the spiritual foundations of morality. Unfortunately, he simply postulates it, never proving it or discussing it. Steiner says that morality comes from within as a spiritual force, that it's based on faith in the divine nature of every human soul, and that it manifests outwardly as love for all humanity. I suppose you could say that, but it sounds awfully trivial! The faith in the fundamental goodness of man leads to the belief that one day, all humans will be redeemed and find their way back to the divine-spiritual world. Today, the best foundation for morality is belief in the Mystery of Golgotha and the Christ Impulse, since everything we do, we do for (or against) Christ. Every immoral act means that we crucify Christ again. Through the crucifixion, the Christ impulse has entered Earth evolution. Steiner also says that morality means finding the mean, balancing two opposite extremes, which are hence "evil". We can become lost to the world, or the world can become lost to us. This is obviously connected to Lucifer and Ahriman, but they are not mentioned in these lectures. In my opinion, Steiner's "Aristotelian" view of morality is problematic. Are Love, Goodness and Truth means between two opposites? The largest part of these lectures, however, contains Steiner's usual fanciful speculations about this or that. Atlantis really existed. The Indian caste system has a spiritual foundation. Leprosy is caused by demons, which are the lost souls of the worst layers of the ex-Atlantean population. Indians, Italians and Germanic peoples really do have different racial make-ups. Francis of Assisi was a reincarnated member of an occult brotherhood at the Black Sea coast, steeped in both Buddhism and Christianity. Sometimes, Steiner says pretty weird things, as in the statement "When the Jew understands and has compassion for the Christian as a human being, and the Pariah for the Brahman...then one will know how deeply Christian it is to say: There must be brotherliness among human beings without regard to outer confession". When the *Jew* has compassion *for the Christian*? Yeah, those uncompassionate Jews in Germany back in 1912! A real menace to society. I can only hope that Steiner's stenographer misunderstood something..."The Spiritual Foundations of Morality" might perhaps work as a Sunday sermon for Anthroposophists already saved, but I don't think it's particularly interesting for anyone else...

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