Spirituality is a question of consciousness. Consider a deep insight attributed to Meister Eckhart, a mystic of the Middle Ages; “If I were a king and did not know it, I would be no king.” This is exactly how it is. What can it mean to the human being that all the wisdom of divine creation is brought together to create the complexity of his body, soul and spirit if he does not know about it, if he does not have any awareness of it, let alone self-awareness with regard to it?

Outside in the world around us, we are painful witnesses to how much nature has already been destroyed, to how many species have disappeared. Were they thoroughly studied before that happened? Who recognized their task in the whole and who thanked them for it, for their existence? Novalis’ Hymns to the Night culminate in the insight: “We have nothing more to seek - The heart is full - the world is empty.” This means that when all experience of the world has become nourishment for the heart, when it has become conscious inner life, then the purpose of creation is fulfilled. It is this major task of the human being that the word “spirituality” refers to in a comprehensive way (spirituality, spiritualization, spiritual experience). No one can develop this developmental potential for someone else.

Thus the longing for spirituality is always also accompanied by the task of systematic practice and development. The degree of development of consciousness and capacities that can take place depends on the kind of practice.

Placed beside many ritualistic magical forms of practice based on feeling, breathing and mantric syllables stemming from ancient times, the anthroposophical path of schooling is rooted in idealistic philosophy and relies on the spiritualization of thinking. It has the aim of helping the human being become conscious of his independence, uniqueness and also personal responsibility for the entire development of humanity and the Earth.

**The Profession as a Path of Schooling**

It is self-understood that this path contains not only personal schooling of soul and spirit but also above all the desire to achieve spiritualization of professional and daily life. At present, it is only the profession of the priest or minister that takes holy orders, that is, where the priest’s ordination reminds us that actually every profession is a path of schooling which can lead to full awareness of one’s task in social life, one’s task within the whole of humanity. While it is self-understood that the priest’s profession consists in service to God, it is still necessary to develop such awareness for
the other professions. Rudolf Steiner offered essential suggestions for doing this. However, consequential professional training and advanced training that build on these suggestions are still waiting to be developed. Normally, the content, the necessary knowledge and the practical skills are so much in the foreground of professional training that little space remains for esoteric questions.

Often people express the view that these are highly personal inner questions of development that one cannot “demand” within the framework of a professional training. However, I question this! Why is one allowed to demand the external techniques needed while a taboo is made of the inner developmental necessities?

Today people increasingly experience how, through the splitting of consciousness or suppression of it, they fall into exhaustion, get sick or burn out. In contrast, those who recognize and want to practice the holy service aspect of their work are able to make their professional lives into a social path of development. This gives them strength and goes hand in hand with their personal path of schooling.

**Illness as a Threshold Experience**

An example from medicine: The question of how health-giving and illness-causing influences in body and soul relate to each other is central for doctors and patients if — after the illness — healing and (as much as possible) prevention of future illness is to succeed. In one of Rudolf Steiner's notebooks pertaining to his course for young doctors he wrote a verse that places illness in relation to the threshold.

If the doctor can become aware that every illness is a threshold experience, an unconscious encounter with the "Guardian of the Threshold," then a completely new view of not just illness and health but also the relation between soul-spiritual and physiological-physical processes arises. The doctor has the task of "raising up" every unhealthy physiological process into the light of the spirit as he comprehends the illness. Meanwhile the patient, through the insight that something is now at work in his body which he had not been able to maintain in the region of his spiritual light through his own strength, can become aware of concrete indications for his development. Through this perspective he can contribute to his own healing in a meditative way. In addition to external measures to prevent illness he can gain access to inner meditative instruments.


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**Prayer to Saint Joseph, Patron of Workers**

Glorious Saint Joseph, you are the patron of all who work. Obtain for me, please, the grace to work conscientiously and to put devotion to duty before my selfish inclinations. Help me to labor in thankfulness and joy, for it is an honor to employ and to develop by my labor the gifts I have received from almighty God. Grant that I may work in orderliness, peace, moderation and patience without shrinking from weariness and difficulties. I offer my fatigue and perplexities as reparation for sin. I shall work, above all, with a pure intention and with detachment from self, having always before my eyes the hour of death and the accounting which I must then render of time ill-spent, of talents unemployed, of good undone, and of empty pride in success, which is so fatal to the work of God. For Jesus through Mary, all in imitation of you, good Saint Joseph. This shall be my motto in life and in death. Amen.
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