

Honoring Life: Medical Ethics and Physician-Assisted Suicide

By Sergei O Prokofieff, Peter Selg

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A Consideration from an Anthroposophical Point of View

The reflections in this book by Peter Selg and Sergei Prokofieff on the soul-spiritual, ethical, and medical-therapeutic issues surrounding physician-assisted suicide (and suicide as such) will provoke one's thought, feeling, and volition. Its inspiration arises from both Rudolf Steiner and the Hippocratic Oath.

Peter Selg begins by showing how Rudolf Steiner views the principle of life as immanent spirit and the living medium of the "I," or individuality and as inviolable and wise beyond our understanding. It is the sacred task of healing always to attend to, honor, and serve life in this sense?to affirm, enhance, and strengthen the life forces of the sick. As Rudolf Steiner puts it, "The will to heal must always function as therapeutically as possible...even when one thinks that the sick person is incurable." These words were spoken before the full consummation of materialist, technologically enhanced medicine, but Rudolf Steiner, as Peter Selg shows, was well aware of the dangers related to the direction of modern medicine.

Sergei Prokofieff links the initiatory origins of Hippocratic medicine in the Mysteries with the return of the Mystery origin of medicine and healing in Anthroposophic medicine. Turning to Steiner's spiritual research, he considers suicide to be an "illness" of our time and examines the spiritual consequences of suicide for the after-death experiences of those who have taken their own lives?specifically, that suicide results in the soul's profound disorientation. He goes on to show how suicide makes the after-death experience of Christ infinitely more difficult, as it does the "resurrection of the spirit" and the relation to the spiritual world. Far from being a "free" act, Prokofieff concludes, suicide is quite the opposite.

Anyone seeking insight into suicide will find in this book a profound and esoteric introduction to this controversial problem.

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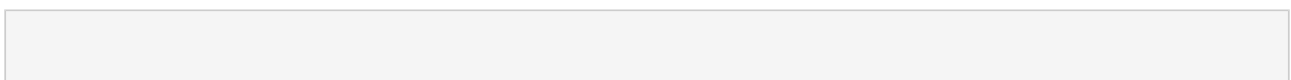
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Editorial Review

About the Author

Sergei O. Prokofieff (1954-2014) was born in Moscow, where he studied fine arts and painting at the Moscow School of Art. At an early age he encountered the work of Rudolf Steiner and quickly realized that his life would be dedicated to the Christian path of esoteric knowledge. He wrote his first book, *Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries*, while living in Soviet Russia, and it was published in English in 1994. After the fall of Communism, he helped establish the Anthroposophical Society in Russia. In 2001, he became a member of the Executive Council of the General Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum in Switzerland. More than 30 of his books have been translated into English. Sergei Prokofieff passed away in Dornach, Switzerland.

Peter Selg was born in 1963 in Stuttgart and studied medicine in Witten-Herdecke, Zurich, and Berlin. Until 2000, he worked as the head physician of the juvenile psychiatry department of Herdecke hospital in Germany. Dr. Selg is now director of the Ita Wegman Institute for Basic Research into Anthroposophy (Arlesheim, Switzerland) and professor of medicine at the Alanus University of Arts and Social Sciences (Germany). He lectures extensively and is the author of numerous books, including *Seeing Christ in Sickness and Healing* (2005); *The Therapeutic Eye* (2008); *A Grand Metamorphosis*; (2008); *The Figure of Christ* (2009); *Rudolf Steiner as a Spiritual Teacher* (2010); and *Rudolf Steiner and the Fifth Gospel* (2010). He is married with five children.

Armin J. Husemann, MD, of the Eugen-Kolisko Akademie, Filderstadt, Germany, is the Leader of the German Anthroposophical Doctors Association. He is author of *The Harmony of the Human Body: Musical Principles in Human Physiology*

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