

ILYA ZILBERBERG

**CONCERNING THE HISTORY OF THE
ANTHROPOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT**

It does not matter how many members belong to a movement founded in the spirit. What matters is how much strength from the spiritual world lives in that movement.

Rudolf Steiner

FOREST ROW – ENGLAND

2020

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About This Work

When, over the years, I realised that there was something fundamentally wrong with the Anthroposophical Society and its place in the world I tried to speak about it with my fellow anthroposophists – privately and publicly, individually and collectively, orally and in writing. *A Discourse on the Anthroposophical Society* placed on my website is one of these attempts. Among those within my reach nobody shared my views and concerns or was willing at least to discuss them, let alone to do anything about the situation.

At the same time I had no means of reaching a wider anthroposophical audience via the only existing channel, the Newsletter of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain. As a non-member I was banned from making any contributions to it regarding any subject, particularly this one. Nevertheless I was of the opinion that views – anyone's views – on such a serious matter had the right to be in the public anthroposophical domain, especially as they had not been shown so far to be wrong. So I decided to outline the issue of the Anthroposophical Society, in its historical context, in the form of an essay for presenting to a wider anthroposophical audience whenever and however it may become possible. The most important thing for me was to put in writing the thoughts and observations which otherwise had not, to my knowledge, been expressed or available in the English speaking anthroposophical world.

I thought that my essay should not be very long and should not take me more than a few weeks to write. When I wrote the opening piece I decided to check its validity by showing it to a friend who was an anthroposophist, but was also deeply involved in contemporary cultural life. The friend was very positive and enthusiastic about my writing, but suggested that I should address it to a general readership rather than to a limited and narrow-minded anthroposophical audience.

It was an impossible proposition by any account – to speak of intrinsically anthroposophical matters, which proved to be problematic even for anthroposophists, to people who knew nothing, and were unlikely to wish to know anything, about anthroposophy. But my friend persisted and even insisted trying so hard to convince me that I finally thought: perhaps it was a challenge which destiny sent me and which I should not reject. So I accepted it.

But this changed everything in my project. In the first instance, my immediate task concerning the content of my writing changed drastically. It now included a presentation of Rudolf Steiner and anthroposophy to the general public. It was not an altogether new task for me. As it happened, there had been quite a few occasions in my life when I had to explain anthroposophy, often spontaneously, to audiences which varied numerically, culturally and linguistically. I even wrote, many years ago and in Russian, an article, Steiner's biography, *Rudolf Steiner – Life, Teaching, Activity*, which many in Russia considered definitive. But those were my responses to people's requests. Now it was my own initiative, and the context and my final objectives were completely different. I was not at all sure whether I would succeed in my task, as I am still not sure of it now, upon completing it.

Then, presenting various aspects of anthroposophy including very specialised ones, required much time for reading and studies and resulted in a lengthy text. Thus what was intended as an essay completed within a few weeks became a book needing months and even years to complete. This necessitated now a note for the discerning reader. This book has not been written, as was expected, in one breath, but in 'several breaths' as it were, over a long period of time with many interfering events, adverse situations and all sort of interruptions. This could not but influence the style and mood of writing preventing it from being homogeneous throughout. Hopefully it will not affect the comprehension of the content.

Explanatory Note

The adjective 'anthroposophical' is a derivative from the noun 'anthroposophy' which denotes the spiritual science of Rudolf Steiner. Anthroposophy, as well as Steiner himself, will be introduced later in the text. But the broad meaning of the term 'Anthroposophical Movement' can be elucidated now, even without a full explanation of its first component.

The Anthroposophical Movement is today a world-wide movement which encompasses various forms of activities, both practical and intellectual, stemming as they are from Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science, anthroposophy. In a wider sense these activities concern the three major spheres of culture – science, art and religion, but, more specifically, they take place in such vital and varied fields of modern life as education, medicine, agriculture, industry, finance, architecture and others. This Movement comprises individuals, groups, organisations, institutions and communities. As such it numbers hundreds of thousands of individuals, but it has no structure, centre or programme, and one belongs to it not formally but by virtue of one's deeds and ideas.

Apart from those who belong to it in the above sense, there are many more, millions in fact, who are the recipients of its fruits – of its services and products. In essence, they are also part of the Anthroposophical Movement, but one should bear in mind that the generic term 'movement' can be misleading here. It denotes, broadly, a coordinated and concerted activity by a group of people guided by a common ideology or focused on a particular issue or goal. It is not applicable in this case.

In the case of the Anthroposophical Movement there are many independent activities, in a variety of relationships with one another, which have one thing in common – their prime source of knowledge and inspiration. So the right collective term for all these activities, its participants and beneficiaries would be 'culture' rather than 'movement'. But to speak of 'the anthroposophic culture' might sound somewhat presumptuous and pretentious. Besides, the issue with which the author is concerned does not require this amendment, so he decided to adhere to the term which is currently used with reference to this phenomenon.

As to the scope of his subject matter, by saying 'Concerning' in the title of his book the author wishes to indicate that in what follows he does not deal with the whole history of the Anthroposophical Movement but only with some of its aspects and events. Furthermore, his approach to the subject is not analytical but imaginative, and his historical presentation is not a strict scientific and systematic exposé but rather a free informal rendering.

Preface

If an historical presentation does not wish to limit itself to just submitting 'a sequence of events' but also aims at their understanding, then it should contain two important ingredients: 'a right context' and 'a right vantage point'. 'A right context', in historical terms, presupposes a proper choice of a starting point enabling the preceding events to shed sufficient light on the events in question. 'A right vantage point' is a way of looking at all these events which afford their comprehensive and correct understanding.

Human history or evolution is the context that was not so much chosen for the subject of the present discourse, but was determined by it. Nothing, however, determined the vantage point apart from the awareness that its choice will determine the end result. If you view human history, say, in terms of the class struggle, as Karl Marx did, you will arrive at a completely different picture and understanding of human evolution than if you view it in terms of the development of human consciousness, as was suggested by Rudolf Steiner. Which one corresponds to reality? – that is the ultimate question and criterion concerning 'a right vantage point'.

On the other hand, there is a difference between viewing an object through a microscope and looking at a picture. While in the former case your vision is restricted and focused, in the latter you are free to choose whatever vantage point you like. In fact you should be encouraged to choose different vantage points for a better comprehension of the picture. It follows from this that there is no 'one and only' or 'the best' vantage point in this case. It is this approach – 'looking at a picture' – that is adopted here.

The initial vantage point of this presentation is neither as ideological and controversial, nor as deep and complicated, as the above two. It is simple, factual, observable, objective, and easily verifiable. It is – *gravity*. And to begin with, it is in terms of gravity, or rather in terms of overcoming it, that human history will be looked at here.

EARTH GRAVITY

We hardly notice earth gravity because 'it has always been there', as have other concomitants of human existence: air, water, warmth and cold, light and darkness, nature with its kingdoms, the earth itself and the space around with its countless celestial bodies. But in our daily life we are much more aware of these than of the former. It might seem strange since it is terrestrial gravity that affects us unceasingly and relentlessly. It imposes itself on us, restricts our freedom and, in fact, enslaves us, making us eternal prisoners of the earth.

It is not only us, human beings, who are affected in this way by the force of gravity. Its unlimited power extends to all kingdoms of nature, indiscriminately, though they react to it differently.

The mineral kingdom does not mind this force of gravity, in fact, it seems to welcome it. Try to move or lift a stone, and it would resist the intervention into the status quo of its existence by exerting its weight on the intruder. If you manage to lift it, against its will, the moment you let it go it immediately returns back to its home on the surface of the earth.

It is different with the plant kingdom. It does not like earth enslavement and with all its might it tries to liberate itself and pushes upwards. To facilitate its war of liberation, the main body of a plant, the stem, or of a tree, the trunk, sends out its army of freedom fighters – branches, leaves, flowers, and petals each fighting its own battle. Every citizen of the kingdom is involved in this war, from tiny plants whose determination is capable of breaking through even solid obstacles, to mighty trees who, in their audacious pursuit of freedom, manage to reach breathtaking heights.

But this green war of liberation is nowhere observable more vividly than in one single battle waged by some huge thick branch stretching out for several meters parallel to the ground. What a beautiful and fascinating sight it is, but one should not be deceived by its majestic tranquillity. A relentless inner battle is taking place there before our very eyes. Strong liberating forces push the branch up and powerful gravitational forces pull it down. What we observe there is a marvellous equilibrium of these forces which can endure for many years. But in the end, earthly gravity always wins, and the courageous but exhausted branch collapses to the ground.

The animal kingdom is more successful in its fight with earthly slavery. It freed itself from the physical attachment to the earth. Though the animals also have to continuously struggle with the force of gravity, they managed to overcome it in their upward posture and growth and, most importantly, in their movements over the surface of the earth. They even manage to temporarily detach themselves from this surface and some of them, like birds and insects, have their existence not on this surface but above it. Other animals, like fish, found a medium of their abode which affords them the possibility of having no physical contact with the earth. Alas, their freedom is both temporary and illusory. All the time the earth keeps them firmly on its leash and at the end of the day all the animals find their resting place in its bosom.

However, whatever liberation wars or battles are fought in nature, all these kingdoms of hers, whether by choice or necessity, reconcile themselves to the imposed slavery and seem to be quite content. But not man.

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It is fascinating how, by observing a little baby grow, we can peep into mankind's past. Just a glimpse of it, but it can tell us a lot about man's struggle with the force of gravity – and of his victories! How a baby learns to lift its little head and hold it and keep it straight; then to sit, and to stand up and to remain standing, first holding onto something and then unsupported. And then the first step, the first walk, the first run,

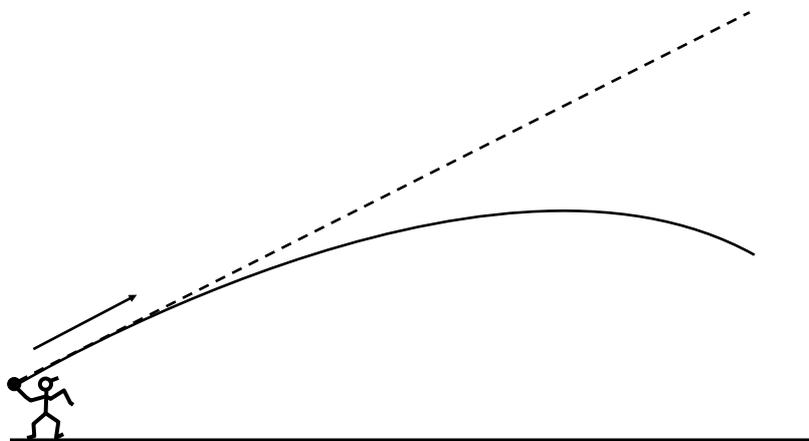
the first jump – it takes only a year to accomplish what lasted perhaps for millennia. But as for a little child now, a stage was reached in human development in the distant past when man, in his physical body, came to terms and learnt to reckon with the forces of gravity.

It all took place unconsciously, of course, as it did for the other kingdoms of nature. But man's consciousness changed in time, and so did his relationship with the outside world and consequently, with the forces of gravity. He started using objects borrowed from nature, thus involving himself in their own gravitational affairs.

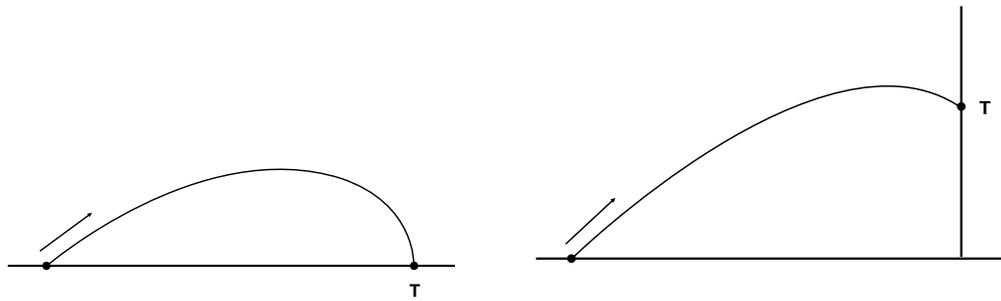
These objects, a stone or a stick to begin with, were of a mineral nature, and as such they put up resistance when being disturbed. Whether man used them as a weapon or a tool or a building material, he always had to take this resistance, their weight, into account. And this required a certain degree of sophistication, if only because this resistance had to be both overcome and made use of.

When a stone is used as a tool or a weapon, it is because of its weight and not despite it. If, for example, it is used as a hammer it is only while lifting that the force of gravity has to be overcome. But when the stone is brought down for a maximum impact, the force of gravity becomes an indispensable helper.

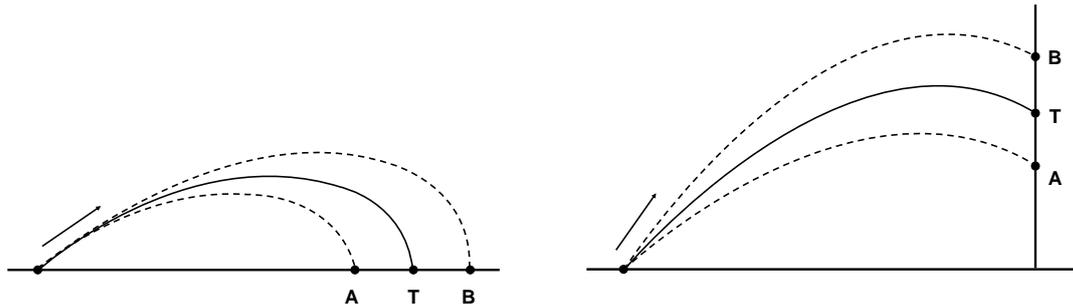
If a stone is used as a missile to hit a distant target, the use of its weight, in this case, requires more sophistication. It is only in the downwards throw of a stone that the muscle force of the body and the gravitational force of the earth combine their efforts. But when the muscle force is used to hurl a stone, the gravitational force works against it all the way. This, one battle in man's eternal war with gravity, becomes observable the moment the swinging arm lets the stone go. Instead of following the direct line prescribed by the launching force, the stone is gradually, but persistently, brought down by the gravitational force forming a curve in its flight:



Ancient man no doubt observed it while hardly giving it any consideration. But a couple of civilizations later, scientists discovered that it was not an arbitrary curve. It followed certain physical laws and could be described in mathematical terms. They gave it the Greek name, *parabola*. They also discovered that to each throw of a stone corresponds a particular parabola. Or to put it another way, for a stone to hit a target, whether at ground level or above it, it has to be sent along a specific parabola:



Now if the target is moved to a new position, A or B, the parabola has to be readjusted:



And if the weight of the stone changes then another readjustment has to be made (we omit other factors which also influence the parabola like atmospheric conditions, the shape of the stone, etc.).

To ordinary perception, a successful throw of a stone requires two ingredients only – the force to cover the distance to the target, and the precision to hit it. These ingredients are at work within a very limited span of time and space, while the man swings his arm with the stone prior to letting it go. After that he has no control over it and, of course, has no notion of the magic parabola of the hit. Science confirms that all the magic happens before – during that very limited span. And it spells out this magic in its scientific terms: in each particular case the right hit parabola is formed if the given combination of the distance to the target and the weight of the stone is matched by the right combination of the force and angle of the launch.

Who would have thought that what looks like a straightforward and ordinary action requires such an elaborate sophistication? Where does it come from? How could it come into the possession of ancient man – or modern man for that matter? At least one thing we can be certain of here: this sophistication of reckoning with the gravity of external objects is the same that sustains man in his coming to terms with his own gravity – it is an unconscious, 'built-in' sophistication of his body. So he can be given very little credit for his first successes in the battle with the forces of gravity.

The next stage of this battle began when, in his earthly adventures, man wished to hit targets at far greater distances than the 'unconscious sophistication' and the muscle power of his body could manage. He realised that in this he needed some external help. And he embarked on a laborious process of using the external objects not only as missiles but as a material to make devices for launching them. Remarkably, this stage has never ended and today's mankind is, alas, still at it. 'Alas' is because it is the development of man's weapons that has been the main impetus here – another example of the unholy origin of some of the outstanding achievements of our civilization.

This stage has been marked by a very important evolutionary change: man developed his 'conscious sophistication' which supplemented or replaced the 'unconscious sophistication' of his body, with the latter being instilled into his

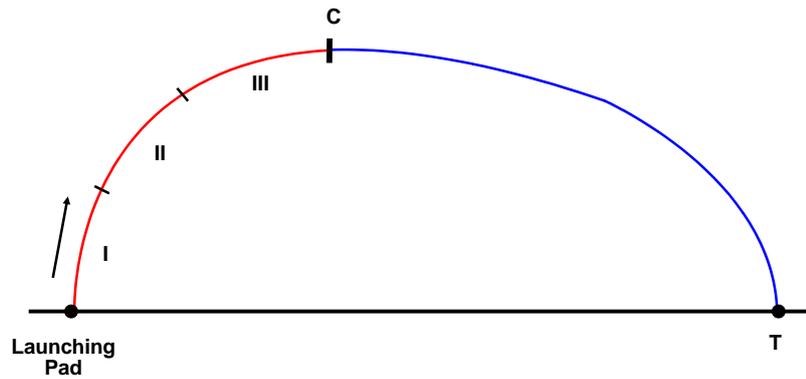
weapons. It was a gradual process, of course. Man's first weapons still required active body participation and its 'unconscious sophistication'. But his latest ones require one bodily function only, a movement of a finger to press a button.

One of man's first weapons, the sling, allowed him to increase the range of his attack by extending his arm and enlarging its swing. As a further development, the elastic power of the bow string and the mechanical power of the catapult lever replaced man's muscle power, and the movement of the string and the lever replaced his arm's swing. But to safeguard a required parabola, man still had to rely heavily on the precision quality of his 'unconscious sophistication'. However, in further developments of his weapons, man sought not only to enhance their launching power but also to improve their 'precision sophistication'.

This became possible with the further development of man's 'conscious sophistication' and the subsequent invention of gunpowder. The bow and arrow were replaced with the gun and bullet, and the catapult and stone with the cannon and shell. The launching mechanical power was replaced with the combustion explosive power. And the overt and observable launch of the missile was replaced with its covert and confined push through the dark channel of the barrel. But this introverted device rendered man a great deal of help by increasing not only the range of his weapons but also their precision. Like a strict disciplinarian while in charge of its ward the barrel gave the shell a sure, straight direction for its subsequent independent progression in space. By further increasing both the pushing power within the barrel and its size, man managed to increase the range of his weapons still further.

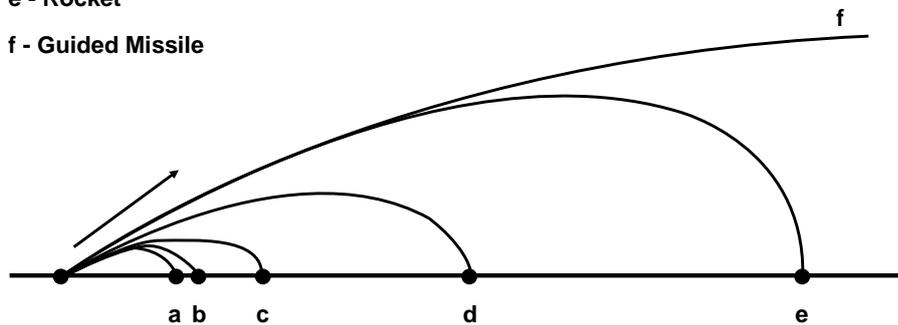
Though the potential of the explosive pushing power was never exhausted, the size of the barrel eventually reached its practical limit. But if it could not be extended by physical means could this metaphorical 'swing of the arm', i.e. the span of the launch, be increased by other means? The answer came with the invention of the rocket engine when the missile is not just launched by one push of an explosion, but is continuously propelled by an engine attached to it. This considerably increased the range of the missile.

It was possible to increase it still further and even make it virtually limitless by the development of a multi-stage rocket with several engines attached to it. When one exhausts its fuel and power, the next one takes over, thus creating a gigantic 'swing of the arm' which sends the missile to its target along its gravitation parabola. In the picture below, the red curve represents the multi(three)-stage 'swing of the arm' and the blue curve 'the target parabola' of the missile after its rocket engines stop pushing it at the cut-off point C. For the missile to follow this meticulously calculated parabola and thus to hit the target, its altitude, vertical/horizontal position, and speed at point C have to be specific and precise. This can only be achieved if the missile meticulously follows the other meticulously calculated red curve, 'the swing of the arm'. This is safeguarded by the rocket control system which guides the missile along it with the utmost precision. The difference between the two meticulously calculated curves is that the one is prescribed and the other anticipated.



But the ultimate success in the missile launching was achieved by rocket science when the two curves were merged into one 'swing of the arm' extended as far as the target and delivering its deadly message spot on. Thus rocket science signified an ultimate replacement of the 'unconscious sophistication' of man's body with the 'conscious sophistication' of his mind in his historic battle with the forces of gravity. This battle and man's gradual, step by step prevailing over the forces of gravity can be depicted graphically:

- a - Arm's swing
- b - Sling
- c - Bow/Catapult
- d - Gun/Cannon
- e - Rocket
- f - Guided Missile



But this graph, as the above description, does not give the full picture of the battle because its major part has been left out so far.

However successful man was in mastering the gravity of external objects, his most cherished dream, and aspiration, and goal, was to be able to overcome his own gravity and hover over the surface of the earth. He always had the birds above him to envy and emulate. It was obvious to him that he could not fly by himself and he needed a device to help him, as in his other battles with gravity. And he had enough conviction, courage and determination – and ingenuity and 'conscious sophistication' – to succeed in the end. This constitutes the history of aviation, a glorious and indelible page in the history of man's battle with the forces of gravity. But going into it would take us too far from the central line of our discourse, apart from one little episode.

It was related to the author many years ago, in Russia, by one of his colleagues who had spent a few years in – out of all countries – Iraq. It was the time of the rapprochement between the Soviet Union and the countries of the third world. Seeking to extend its sphere of influence and secure new international footholds, it

dispatched its specialists to assist them in various fields, not least in the military one. The Soviet Union would supply modern weapons and provide training to use them.

The colleague was part of the team involved in building up the Iraqi Air Force. He worked as a maintenance engineer in an airfield where future Iraqi pilots were trained. A day came when the first successful trainee was ready to make his maiden flight, completely on his own and with no instructor on board. Needless to say, the event attracted quite a crowd of spectators.

It was to be a rather simple flight – a few circles over the airfield and a couple uncomplicated manoeuvres. The pilot did them handsomely following the instructions of his Russian tutor from the ground. Only one manoeuvre was left – a safe landing. However, instead of coming down, the pilot continued to fly over the airfield. He was repeatedly instructed, in no uncertain terms, to immediately land the aircraft but to no avail. The situation became extremely dangerous as the plane was running out of fuel. But the pilot would not relent. In total horror the numerous witnesses watched the inevitable outcome – a fatal crash.

As it transpired later, the pilot was so elated with his first independent flying experience that he wanted to prolong it indefinitely. He did not think of consequences or danger, or of anything else for that matter. He only had one irrepressible desire – to continue flying his plane under his full control (these sensations were later experienced and related by other Iraqi pilots). Whatever the immediate reaction of those who witnessed the event, when this bizarre story was imparted later to a group of young designers in their Moscow office, it evoked a mixture of amusement and ridicule.

But when the mirth subsided a question arose (some years later!): What was really behind that event, at a deeper level, where consciousness was at work? On reflection it became clear that we encounter here two different levels of consciousness which clashed in that case.

One level pioneered mankind's conquest of the material world. Among many other achievements, it gave birth to the whole history of aviation, with all its trials and tribulations, aspirations and fears, hopes and despairs, triumphs and failures. This consciousness developed along with its own creations. Even if in some cases its intentions and actions with regard to them were sinister or malicious, it could never act in the way incomprehensible to itself, which it would have done had it acted in the manner of the above episode.

The other level of consciousness did not take part in this process or any other scientific and technological developments of the modern age, or in the cultural changes that accompanied them. When presented with one of their fruits, one of their most sophisticated products, it was sophisticated enough to be able to master its mechanics but basically it remained outside the wide range of human experience and way of thinking out of which this product was born. More specifically, this product was the result of the long and conscious struggle with the forces of gravity. But when it was made use of at the other level of consciousness, the very essence of what was at stake, the force of gravity was ignored and this resulted in tragedy.

This episode sounds as unbelievable today as it did at the time. Nevertheless it is a true and vivid reflection of a widespread phenomenon which can be called 'a consciousness gap'. Whether we are aware of and perceive them or not, different levels of consciousness participating in the same human affairs live today simultaneously and next to each other. Culturally, socially, ethnically, or in terms of any other differentiation, they cannot always be easily and clearly defined or attributed. But this does not make them, and the resultant 'consciousness mismatch', less real. It takes different forms and guises and affects both individuals and groups of people; it might occur even within one person causing inner conflicts.

In many cases 'a consciousness gap' can be quickly and successfully bridged. In other instances this proves to be more difficult or altogether impossible, especially if people are unaware of it or pretend it is not there. The consequences, though not as immediate and apparent as in the Iraqi episode, might be much more serious and long-lasting. And when 'a consciousness gap' affects not just some individuals or groups but the whole of humanity, with its future at stake, the consequences become very daunting indeed. We shall come to this later in our discourse.

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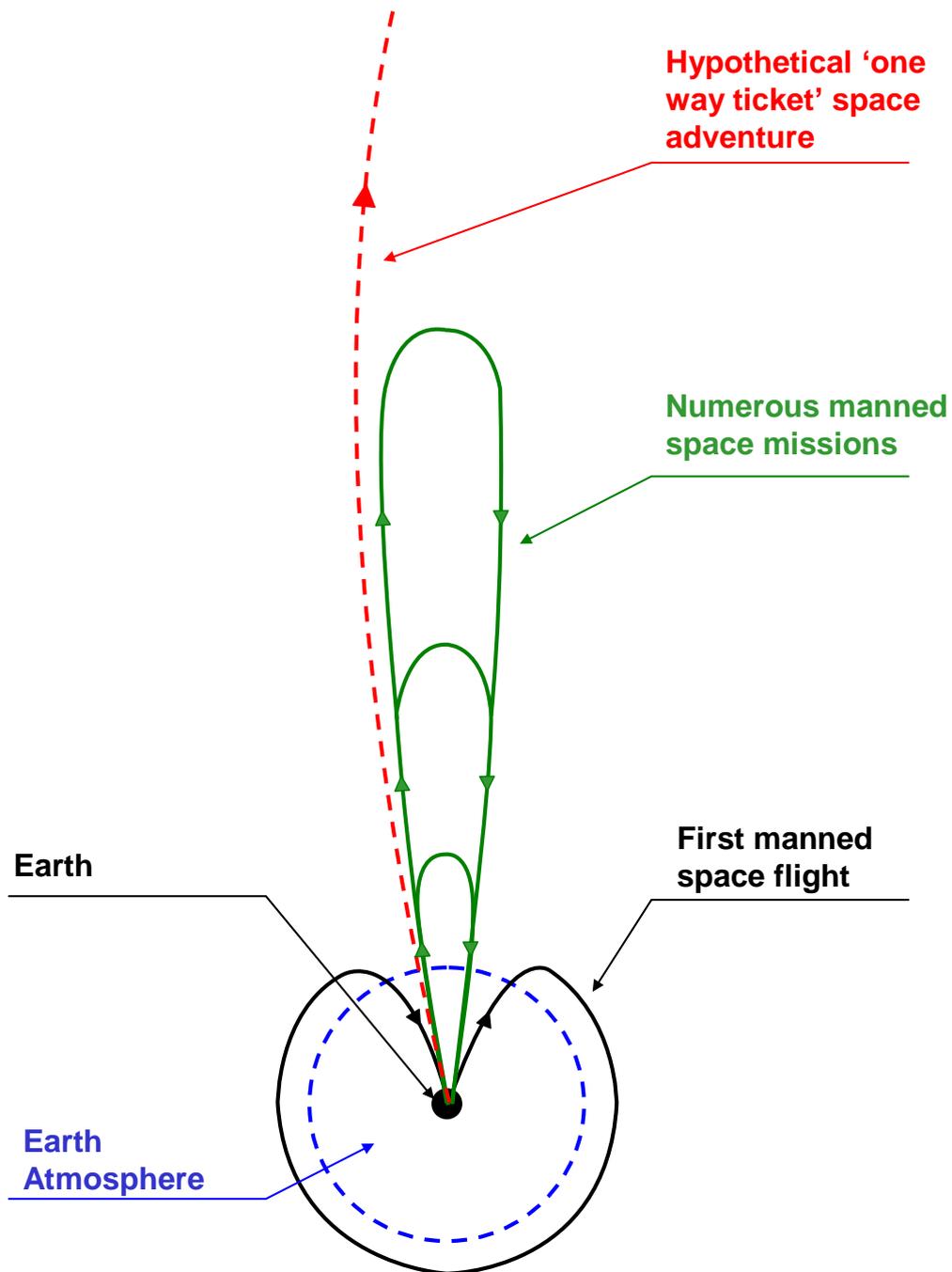
As for man's battle with earth gravity, it did not end with his invention of the flying machine which enabled him to lift himself off its surface and soar over it in all directions and at any distance. In this he even surpassed the creation of nature itself, the bird. Thus he fulfilled his one-time most daring ambition. But man's ultimate dream, his aspiration and his ambition, was to free himself completely from the shackles of the earth's gravity, to be able to traverse its sphere of influence and become a free citizen of the universe.

This 'sphere of influence' is, in physical terms, a specific phenomenon. It is the earth's atmosphere and its gravitational field. However, the higher one goes within it, the weaker the earth's gravity becomes until finally, to all man's intents and purposes, it ceases to exist. As soon as man discovered this weakness and limitation of the earth's gravitational power he became determined to overcome it completely. After the invention of the rocket engine it was only a matter of time before it could be made powerful enough to enable man to traverse the whole atmosphere and cross the imperceptible and, until then, forbidden border of earth gravity.

The Russians were the first to accomplish it with their unmanned device enriching, in the process, international vocabulary with the Russian word *Sputnik*. A Russian was also the first man to defeat the earth's gravity thus, in effect, triumphantly concluding this fascinating, though never overtly declared, millennia-long battle. Now man can leave Earth at will and go into cosmic space, probing it further and further. And he comes back also at will.

Space exploration has breathtaking prospects. But it is also unpredictable and fraught with danger, as was tragically demonstrated by its early history. Here, as in aviation and other fields of invention, a technical failure, force majeure, a human error and even human malicious intent are all potential causes for a disaster, and everything has to be done to prevent them.

But this newly acquired freedom from Earth with a possibility of 'coming back at will' introduces a completely new element in human experience – and a new danger. Because, by definition, this is also a possibility of 'not coming back' when the will to return ceases to exist and is replaced by the desire to remain 'up there', as in the case of the Iraqi pilot. His impertinence was not tolerated by Earth and it claimed him back. But Earth has no power over the crew of a spacecraft who changes its mind about coming home. So what would happen if such an eventuality does take place? (See the picture below)



Of course it is a hypothetical situation and at present it only happens in science-fiction books and films. Besides, if not Earth then the Space Control Centre would have the means, unlike the instructors at the Iraqi airfield, to bring the rebellious crew and their spacecraft back. But what is not hypothetical, as we have seen in the Iraqi accident, is a 'consciousness gap' which nobody could envisage or perceive. And what manifested itself in it was not only parochial and individual but also evolutionary and general.

Every new scientific and technological conquest and invention of man is at the same time an act of liberation, of acquiring a new freedom which requires a new consciousness. If it is not forthcoming, the new freedom might have an intoxicating or even pernicious effect, unmanageable by the old habitual consciousness. This is what has been experienced by humanity, in most cases unconsciously and imperceptibly, for the last few centuries; it manifested itself so many years ago in the

Iraqi episode and it might happen one day with an audacious and reckless spaceship crew outwitting their Space Control Centre.

With this observation we have arrived at the end of the introductory background chapter on Earth Gravity. It also brings us right to the doorstep of the main theme of our discourse.

SPIRITUAL GRAVITY

Earthly gravity, which plays such an important role in man's life on the earth, remains to a large extent an enigma, even for specialists. But how many people are aware of the phenomenon of spiritual gravity, let alone understand it? And yet this phenomenon (the term apart – it was coined for the purposes of the present discourse) is not only less real than its earthly namesake, but is much more comprehensive, profound and fundamental.

Invisible just as the other one is, spiritual gravity cannot, however, be perceived, or felt, or experienced through its manifestations. Therefore, man remains unconscious of the reality of its existence and of its vital presence in his life. But he can understand, recognise and experience it in a different way, akin to its nature. And he can, in fact he must, enter into a conscious and earnest relationship, or better to say, cooperation with, spiritual gravity, as it is crucial for his very existence.

This conscious cooperation has to replace man's unconscious battle with it which has been taking place so far. To understand this battle better, its mirror image, the battle with earthly gravity, was presented first. Now we can look into, and examine, the history of spiritual gravity and of overcoming it by man. As before, pictures will be used to facilitate this process. But readers are humbly requested to bear one very important point in mind.

Previously, pictures were used to illustrate physical phenomena and events. From now on two-dimensional pictures will refer to something which has no dimensions at all and no physical appearance. A healthy imagination and good will are required on the readers' part if they wish to incorporate these pictures into their power of comprehension. It is to stimulate imagination and enhance comprehension, and not to blunt them, that pictures are given here.

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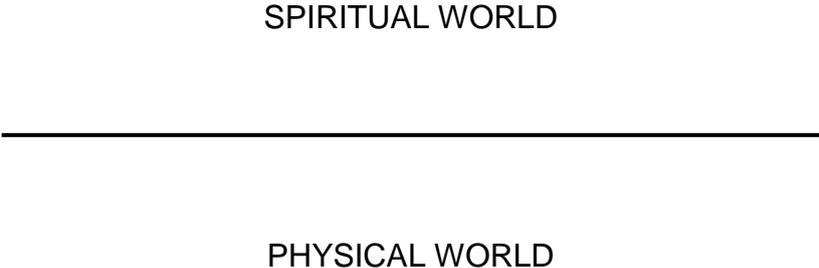
We shall start with the first picture of the chapter, which readers may also regard as the first challenge to their imagination:



The horizontal line does not represent anything tangible or real in the world apart from what lives in the author's imagination, which he will share now with the readers.

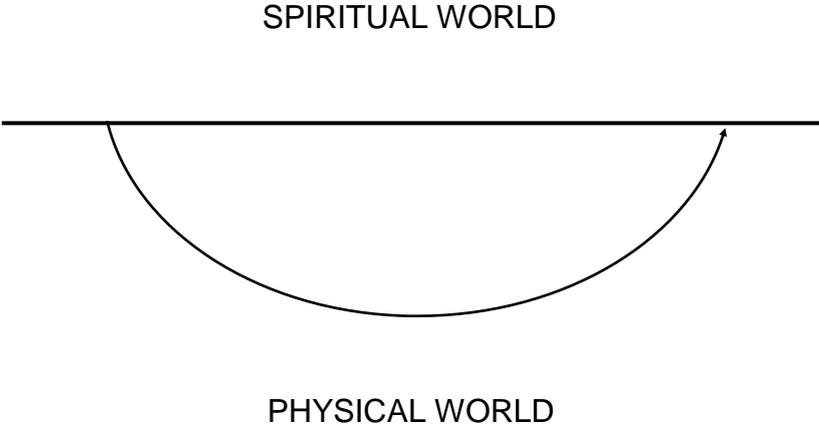
Above the line he places the spiritual world, the abode of gods and other spiritual beings. Below the line there is nothing at the moment, or better to say there was nothing at the starting point of imagination. At its inception it was the place the gods allocated for their new creation.

They planned it as a temporary abode and working place for one of the inhabitants of the spiritual world, with completely different conditions and mode of existence. This new environment, the physical world, would provide that inhabitant – let us call him *Man* – with entirely new and different experiences than were possible in the spiritual world (the picture below). Living in the physical world would have to be a very special apprenticeship for Man. If successful, it would enable him, through the development of a new consciousness, to reach a very high degree of spiritual maturity, freedom and independence, and also to acquire very special qualities such as wisdom and love.

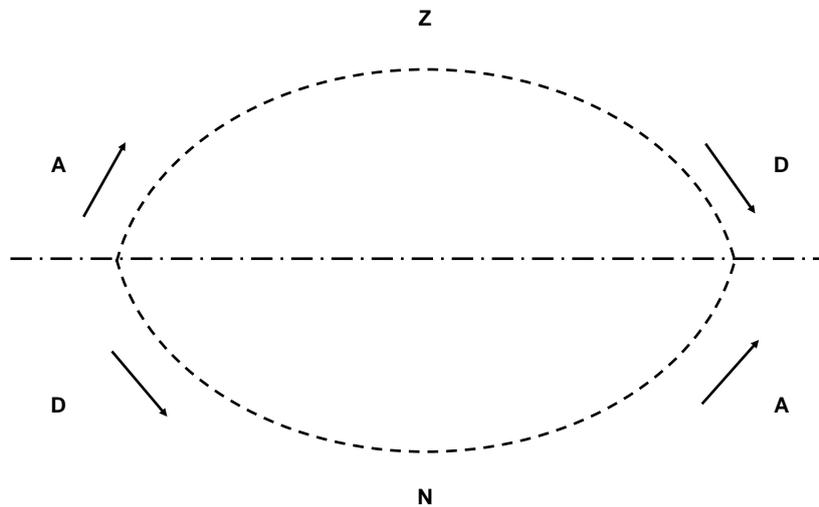


These accomplishments, unachievable by Man in his purely spiritual mode of existence, would be beneficial not only to him but also to the spiritual world and its other inhabitants. As for Man himself, by attaining these qualities he would become 'like God', in fact, 'one of the gods'.

To illustrate Man's sojourn in the physical world graphically in a most simplified way one can depict it as a curve, a mirror image of the one determined by earthly gravity:



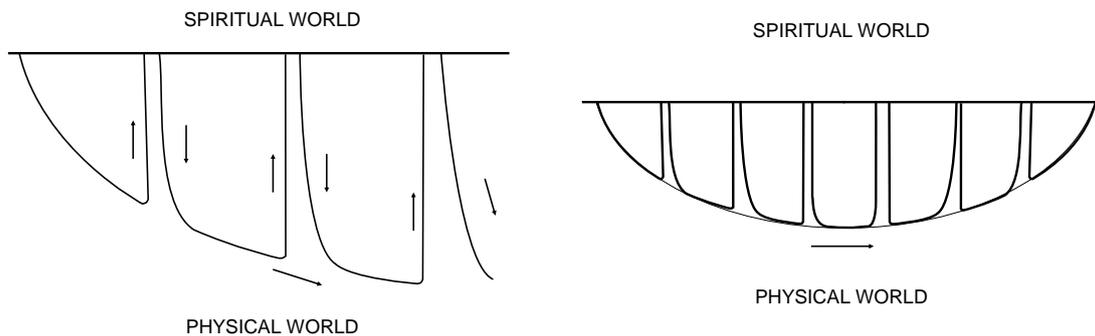
However fantastic this imaginary 'spiritual parabola' and its comparison with the physical one might be, both reflect the objective reality (the picture below): the real processes of the initial ascend/descend (A/D), of passing through the transitional zenith/nadir (Z/N), and of the subsequent descend/ascend (D/A).



The process of Man's descent into the physical world was at the same time the process of creation – of the physical world itself and of Man's physical body to enable him as a spiritual being to live in this world. In fact, we can call this process, risking being accused of plagiarism, *The Creation of Man*.

We can take the above imagery and comparison still further while at the same time firmly remaining within reality. 'The divine launch' of the physical world and Man is, like a missile launch depicted in the top picture on page 10, a multi-stage process. But the way it is executed in each case is completely different. In the latter case, when one stage ends, the next one immediately takes over without yielding a jot to gravity until all stages have been passed through and exhausted (point C). Only then do the forces of gravity make a full claim on their due.

In the former case, however, when one stage ends, 'spiritual gravity' summons back the divine creation into the bosom of the spiritual world and its mode of existence. Then a summing-up, consolidation and recapitulation of what has been achieved are taking place before the next stage of development begins in earnest with a further and stronger push into matter. This stage-by-stage progression is shown in the left picture below. And the curve drawn in the bottom picture on page 16 is a summarizing directional line of this multi-stage process as shown in the right picture below:



This imagery of the outward graphic difference between the ways 'spiritual gravity' and earthly gravity reign in their kingdoms and exercise their power helps us to perceive the very foundation of human and earthly evolution. Earthly gravity resists any attempts by its subjects to liberate themselves and constantly exerts its power to enslave and fetter them. 'Spiritual gravity', on the other hand, encourages freedom, and when it recalls its subjects from their independent pursuit it is to stimulate their further development. In fact, no development at all would be possible without a

constant presence of 'spiritual gravity' and its beneficial summons of physical creations into their spiritual womb.

As for Man, he is subjected to this summons not only at the end of each stage, together with his entire environment, but also during its course. In fact, his withdrawals into the world of spirit are so regular and prolonged that one can speak, conversely, of his periodical and temporary withdrawals into the world of matter from his spiritual existence. During the present stage of Earth evolution, Man comes to it from his spiritual abode numerous times for a comparatively short period which he calls *life*. But even during this period he would have to return daily, albeit unconsciously, to his spiritual home for nourishment and recuperation which he knows as *falling asleep*. Thus throughout his life, Man feels the constant presence of his two indispensable companions, earthly gravity and 'spiritual gravity'. The one he experiences directly as a burden and the other he experiences indirectly, through its fruits, as a blessing.

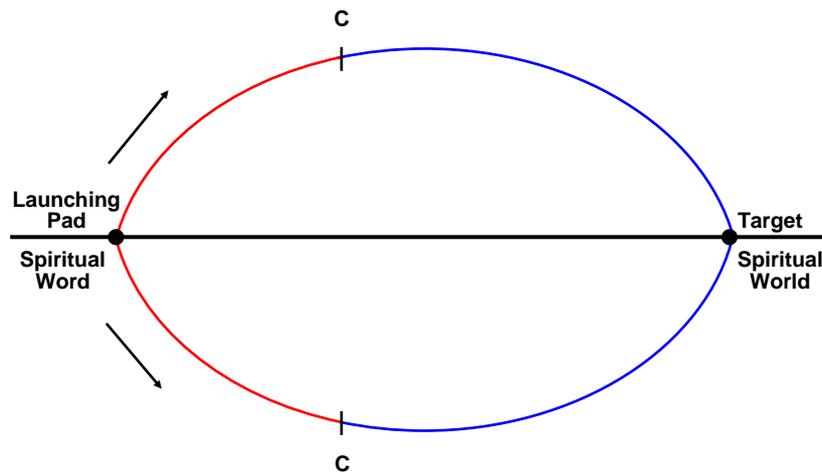
And Man has no experience or knowledge during his earthly life of an even greater blessing bestowed upon him when it ends and he is recalled back into his spiritual motherland. Similar to what happens to the whole material world at the end of each stage of its development, a recapitulation, summing-up and consolidation of what has been achieved by an individual are taking place in close collaboration with and under the guidance of higher beings. This, together with all the necessary preparations and impulses for his next earthly sojourn, is the spiritual gift which Man receives during his stay there.

Though none of Man's earthly achievements, including overcoming the forces of earthly gravity, would have been possible without succumbing to 'spiritual gravity', the overcoming of it was the gods' intended task for him. Because only in this way could he successfully achieve the objectives of his earthly apprenticeship.

But what does this overcoming actually mean? It does not mean, of course, ceasing to be a spiritual being or severing his ties with the spiritual world. That would not have been possible in any case. The divine intention and anticipation was that Man, by delving deeper and deeper into the physical world and developing his material consciousness, would gradually obliterate from it any knowledge and experience of the spiritual world. This would allow Man to become, and feel himself to be, a free, independent earthly being who is fully conscious of his environment and of his own actions, capable of clear, logical and precise thinking and an objective and independent judgement. It was also anticipated that when Man, upon acquiring these qualities, would rediscover the spiritual world, he would consciously unite himself with it, thus fulfilling the mission assigned to him.

To facilitate this process, at the time of Man's acquiring his sense of freedom and independence, he was actually granted them by the gods. Without his knowledge or request, the spiritual world withheld its guidance of human earthly affairs and left them in his own hands. From that point onwards, whatever happened on the earth was Man's own doing and responsibility.

To better appreciate this momentous evolutionary change, we can be helped by resorting once again to our imagery and pictorial comparison of the physical and spiritual processes. Sometimes even a very simple two-dimensional picture can provide an insight into the most complicated spiritual phenomenon. The two curves in the top picture on page 17, the mirror images of each other, can now be further elaborated to their remarkable similarity, in that both have a cut-off point which divides them into two progressions, one prescribed and the other anticipated:



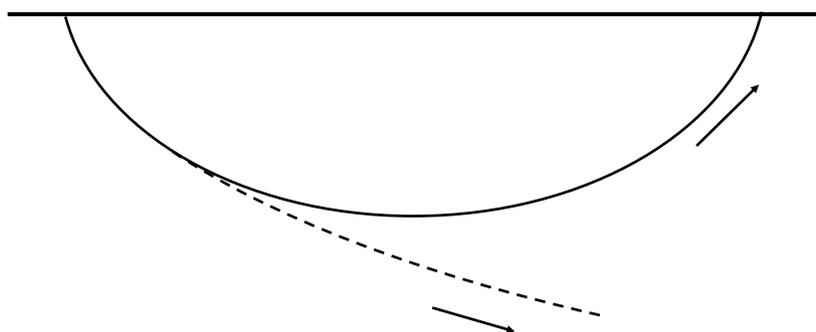
As scientists can reasonably anticipate, on the basis of their knowledge and calculations, that all things being equal (i.e. the correct rocket's parameters at point C and expected weather conditions), the rocket will follow its 'target parabola' to the very end, so the Divine Beings could 'reasonably' anticipate, on the basis of their knowledge and trust in their creation, that 'all things being equal' (i.e. Man's acquiring the intended qualities and ability to beneficially use them), Man would follow his 'target parabola' – the right course of his further development leading to his final and conscious union with the spiritual world.

But here our fantastic similarity and analogy between the two processes comes to an end – not because our imagery becomes too divorced from reality but precisely because it is firmly grounded in it. If the scientists' anticipations do not materialise and the rocket deviates from its 'target parabola', it will still be grounded and made a possession of by relentless earthly gravity. But if Man, empowered by his newly acquired freedom and released from the divine guidance, goes astray on some wayward course ... These dots indicate that we cannot continue our exposition in terms of 'if', but instead should now describe what actually happened and is happening to Man and his evolution in that great divine scenario envisaged for him.

To begin with, Man was a reluctant dweller in the newly created physical world. He found it alien, inhospitable and even hostile. He had to be 'pushed' into it, and once there, he longed for his true home, the spiritual world. But the situation was gradually changing. In time, Man got used to his new environment. Though he still regarded it as less real than the world of spirit, he reconciled himself to the necessity of spending some time in it. But even that changed. He increasingly found the physical world more welcoming and accommodating and his life in it more agreeable.

Then a time came for Man when the spiritual world became like a vague memory of some distant and transient experience. But later even that vague picture which he still retained in his consciousness turned into something unreal and abstract. And it was only a matter of time before not even an abstract contemplation of a mere notion that there could exist any other reality apart from what Man perceived and experienced as his physical environment was possible. His consciousness, thinking, psyche and life became completely void of any trace or vestige of spirit. Not only any considerations of ever returning to the world of spirit, but even a remote possibility of rediscovering it as something real seemed to be far-fetched. In other words, Man, oblivious of his true nature and his world mission, of his

responsibility and consequences of his actions, took the course of sliding further and deeper into matter and farther away from the spirit (dotted line in the picture below).



On this course Man was dangerously approaching the point of no return when in all ignorance he would overcome 'spiritual gravity'. It was the course of death. It was not anticipated by the gods in the sense that they did not intend it to happen, but its possibility was envisaged by them. Now if this imaginative exposition is in any way a true reflection of the great evolutionary events, it poses a number of questions. How could such a situation – a dichotomy between the divine intention and its human execution – come about? If it was not intended why was it allowed to happen, especially if its possibility had been envisaged? And if such calamitous an eventuality had been envisaged and was allowed to happen, was it then inevitable and, further, had there been any 'contingency plan' to save humanity and its divine mission?

The dichotomy and its apparent inevitability were caused by what we referred to earlier on as a 'consciousness gap'. In this case the gap was two-fold. One was between divine consciousness, which conceived and executed Man's apprenticeship, and human consciousness, whose development was an object of this apprenticeship. The other gap was within this developing consciousness between its ability to achieve outstanding material results and its inability to cope with their consequences and grasp the demands and tasks posed by the world and the time in which Man lives. We can also call it a gap between Man's material consciousness and his spiritual and moral consciousness.

There was no need for the gods to envisage this gap as inevitable because it was always there as a reality. It still exists and will be with us for some considerable time. Its reality and seriousness can be experienced by any perceptive observer, day in and day out, and nowhere better than within oneself, given the necessary courage and sincerity. But was the tragic outcome of this gap, the deadly course of Man's evolution, also inevitable? Perhaps an answer to this question might come from another human experience for those who happen to have had it: how difficult, if not at times 'impossible', it is to bridge the 'consciousness gap' even if one does it purposefully and with the assistance of whatever help one can summon including the best help there is, anthroposophical knowledge.

To understand, in the spirit of our discourse, why this tragic inevitability was allowed to happen, perhaps we can be helped on this occasion by some common sayings born, as they are, by human experience and wisdom as a true reflection of human reality. One goes like this: *Man proposes, God disposes*. Now if we can imagine gods reversing this saying into *God proposes, Man disposes* then we shall have a true reflection of divine reality and some comprehension of the genuine, unreserved trust the gods invested in Man. Whatever they conceived, anticipated and envisaged with regard to Man they could not withhold this trust even if Man himself

abused and betrayed it. But neither could they allow it to become a cause of Man's own destruction. Therefore, they did have a 'contingency plan'. What was it?

In keeping with our imagination and on a par with earthly gravity, it might seem that the only way to save Man and return him to the predestined course of evolution was to take the drastic measures of applying to him the full force of 'spiritual gravity'. But if that had ever happened, what would have become of his hard-won freedom? And his consciousness and thinking? And the higher qualities he had not even started developing in earnest? And would his ability to recognise the spirit and his ensuing desire to unite himself with it have been enhanced by such imposition? Had the divine 'contingency plan' been to exercise the gods' will on Man in the most decisive and difficult time of his development, they might just as well have kept him in the spiritual world in the first place. But the 'divine measures' prepared for such an 'inevitable eventuality', and subsequently taken, were entirely different.

To appreciate them better, at the present level of our consciousness, we might use another common saying: *If the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go to the mountain.* And to get some notion of the infinite sacrificial love which the gods bestowed upon Man, we should imagine them reversing this saying: *If Mahomet (Man) will not come to the mountain (the Spiritual World), the Spiritual World must go to Man.* This is exactly what happened at the most momentous time of human evolution.

As Man betrayed the divine trust and failed his divine mission, the Spiritual World, instead of bringing him to heel or abandoning him altogether, set up 'a rescue party' consisting of its highest and most elevated Being. This Being took upon Himself a sacrificial task of descending into Man's physical abode and uniting Himself with him, as this was the only way to save Man without compromising his integrity and mission. But before this supreme act of sacrifice and salvation will be discussed further, a little interlude might be in order by way of a lighter but by no means unrelated narrative.

A Story of a Wayward Spaceship

It was to be a very special space mission and it took a long time and much effort to prepare. Scientists and experts in various fields, from physics to medicine and from agriculture to psychology, collaborated to formulate its various tasks and make all the necessary preparations. The large spaceship crew also consisted of experienced scientists and specialists from many fields. The overall task was to travel 'where no man had gone before' and to discover, explore, and even create, new and different forms of life and existence than those known on the earth. It was not just a scientific quest but a decisive attempt to find a practical solution to some vital problems concerning the earth's future which could not be resolved by its resources alone.

It was the first and perhaps the last mission of its kind. It had quite a few unique and therefore untried and yet untested features. The most important was that it meant to last for a time span of several generations which would be reproduced on the ship during its flight. The food would be home grown and water would also be produced on board. Likewise, energy would be generated on board from various celestial sources. Though there would be a constant contact with the Centre, for all intents and purposes the spaceship was totally self-sufficient. Except for one vital aspect.

The atmosphere within the ship would gradually change and no longer be conducive to human life. Though the human organism would also change and adapt itself to the new conditions, the adaptation could only be limited. The hormones which sustained the life of the human organism would gradually lose their vitality and wither, thus causing the death of the organism. There was nothing they could do on

the ship to arrest this process. It could be done only from the earth: the hormones would be revitalised by the special impulses beamed periodically from the Control Centre. With this provision, there was no innate threat on board to human health or even longevity.

The mission started without a hitch and everything went according to plan. Nobody at the Control Centre or aboard the ship expected any problems or difficulties for many years to come. Most of them had extensive experience of long-term space flights, either as participants or as supervisors, and the accumulated knowledge and experience of such flights was built into the mission itself. The problems might only arise when the ship would reach the uncharted space territory and a new crew generation would emerge and take over.

But the transition was so gradual that it was not even noticed by the crew. By that time they all were quite used to their life on the ship and for many it was the only life they had ever known. They were very busy and content with what they were doing and had no need or inclination to look into the past or beyond their immediate tasks. Of course, those who were in charge, even new leaders, knew of the ship's mission and maintained the contact with the Control Centre. But in time, even for them, this mission became rather vague as compared with the tasks in hand – ever new, challenging and exciting. Because of this, and due to the ship's basic self-sufficiency, their contacts with the Centre did not seem any longer vital or even necessary. Whatever problems they experienced from time to time, technical or human, they always resolved them themselves without asking for the Centre's assistance. As to the vital help and guidance provided by the Centre, they either underestimated it or ignored it altogether. Their enhanced sense of independence and self-confidence encouraged them to set their own tasks for the ship and the crew, which had nothing to do with the mission. Finally they took the ship on a new course which in effect cancelled the mission.

Thus almost halfway through its mission the spaceship severed all contacts with the Control Centre by turning off the communication and vitalisation equipment. By that time virtually the entire ship community was completely oblivious, not only of their mission, but of their very origin or of the existence of anything else in the world apart from their ship. And above all they were blissfully ignorant of their imminent collective death. Perhaps if somebody had spoken to them about all those things it might have triggered something in their consciousness, but it would not have had any lasting effect.

As to the Control Centre they watched all those developments with trepidation, unwilling, to begin with, to interfere lest that might jeopardise the whole mission. They still hoped that the crew and its leadership would awaken to the dangers of the course they recklessly embarked upon before it was too late. But when all contacts with them ceased and all communication and vitalisation equipment was turned off, the situation for the ship and its crew became perilous and irreversible from within. And when the ship abandoned its mission, the Control Centre could no longer refrain from interference and had to do something.

They could not possibly leave the spaceship to its own devices to meet its unwittingly chosen destiny. That never was an option. But what else could they do? One possibility, for which they had all the necessary facilities, was to abort the mission and return the ship home. But the ship was not on some adventure expedition which, if unsuccessful, might cause no more than disappointment. It was a vital mission of survival not only of the crew but of the earth itself. So the mission had to continue to its intended and full success. And there was only one way to secure it now.

The crew had to be awakened to the full reality of their situation: who they were and where they came from; why and how their ship was built as their temporary

home; what their mission was and its importance; the perilous situation they had got themselves into, and the urgency of setting on the right course towards fulfilling their mission; and finally, it was only they who could do it, though every assistance from the Control Centre would be rendered to them as soon as they, in full knowledge of the situation, started to rectify it.

All this could only be done through a personal contact, face to face, i.e. by going to the ship and confronting the crew. It was as arduous a task, if not at all impossible, as the mission itself. To begin with, a specially designed high-speed spacecraft had to be built to go to the far away corner of the universe and catch up with the ship. Though remarkable technological developments and achievements since the original launch of the spaceship made such an undertaking possible, there was no guarantee of success. The problems were not only logistical but human as well.

This high-speed spacecraft could only take one person. That person therefore had to possess knowledge and experience of the whole crew and be versatile and resourceful enough to deal with any potential or unpredictable problems that could be encountered on such a mission. But the predictable ones were difficult enough. The first one, on reaching the ship, would be to dock with it and get inside. Though technologically it was possible, even without assistance from the ship, it had to be done imperceptibly because any intruder would be destroyed by the crew at sight.

But more serious problems would await the rescuer aboard the ship. Its inside atmosphere and the composition of the air had changed so much since the launch, that no visitor from the earth could survive there for longer than three days. So that was the time within which the task had to be accomplished. Another problem was that he should not be instantly identified as a stranger and intruder and should not raise suspicion. And then the first contacts were to be made – but with whom?

The leaders obviously were in the best position to rectify the situation. At the same time they were the very people who created it in the first place by setting the ship on its present course and severing contacts with the Control Centre. And at least some of them did it knowingly, having taken a conscious decision to abandon the mission. So those people were most likely to be at best unreceptive and at worst outright hostile to him and his message. In any case, the situation could not be resolved by administrative measures even if they could be applied to change the course of the ship.

The real problem lay in people's consciousness, understanding and way of thinking. If, despite their newly acquired knowledge and experience, it all was conditioned, as it had been for a long time, by the ship's interior and their daily routine, there was no chance of them fulfilling their mission even if the ship took the right course. They themselves, not only the course of the ship, had to change. It could not happen overnight or even in the three days available for the rescue. What was required and what was possible within that very short span of time was to plant a potent seed, a stimulating impulse in the consciousness of at least some people. If done successfully, it would grow and spread and affect other people until everyone had a possibility to become again an able, conscious and knowledgeable co-worker of the Control Centre, but at a much higher level than before.

To breathe new life in the crew members in this way required a completely new and imaginative approach and very special qualities and skills. In addition to the scientific and practical versatility and resourcefulness mentioned earlier, it would have to be an exceptional person to accomplish the rescue mission. And the Control Centre had such a person. It was its Head.

He was a man of powerful intellect and comprehensive knowledge in many fields. Though he personally did not take part in any space missions, he devised, organised and supervised the most important of them. He was not only an

outstanding scientist but a very practical person with a wide and rich life experience. But above all, he had a genuine love and compassion for his fellow human beings which granted him an exceptional ability to understand and appreciate other people. At the same time, he was a very sincere and modest, even humble person.

The man was renowned throughout the land far beyond the Centre. Therefore, when the plans for the rescue mission were announced, nobody could think of a better person capable of accomplishing it. But everyone was also aware of the dangers with which this undertaking was fraught. So when the Head volunteered and appointed himself for this task, his decision was accepted with a mixture of satisfaction and apprehension. And it was with these feelings, and with confident hopes and expectations, that the rescue mission was finally launched.

Everything went according to plan: the Head successfully reached the spaceship, docked with it and then managed to get in undetected. When inside, without difficulty he found his way into various quarters, observing what was going on and getting accustomed to the new environment. His first and most urgent task was to reconnect and get running the vitalisation equipment essential for life on board. It was kept in a special room which he found locked. Nobody had been there for a long time and hardly anybody, including the leaders, would now know how to operate the equipment. The Head got inside, did what was necessary and left, locking the room again. Then he joined the crew.

Everyone was busy doing some job or another. He also made himself useful and blended with the rest of them effortlessly and naturally. To begin with, nobody took any notice of him. His unassuming manners did not arouse any suspicions or attract any attention to him. It was only when he started to talk to people that they responded to his presence and then to his words.

Though he could easily identify people's jobs and positions, he did not choose his listeners according to these or any other criteria. He would talk to anybody prepared to listen to him, whether they responded to his message or not. Those who responded happened to be less sophisticated folks – manual workers, technicians, low ranking administrators. He addressed them with simple but meaningful words and they understood his message in all its essentials and depth. Before he spoke to them they had known nothing of their mission and its abandonment, but some had heard about the Control Centre though they did not know exactly what it was.

But the message as a whole rang as an absolute truth to them. They imbibed it, and it inflamed their imagination and inspired them for action. They wanted the Head to provide them with the 'know-how' so that they could restore the vitalisation supply and all communications with the Control Centre and turn the ship to its original course. But he had to tell them that no such knowledge could be given them now and, in any case, they would not have been able to make any use of it at present. Apart from genuine enthusiasm they needed genuine ability to fully understand and absorb his message and the new knowledge. It would take time, perseverance and courage to develop. They should embark on this task now, and the 'know-how' would be given them in due course.

In the meantime, rumours about the newcomer and his message started to circulate on the ship and eventually reached the leadership. The Head was apprehended and brought before the authorities. They at once identified him as a stranger, and the interrogation started. But hardly any of interrogators genuinely wanted to know who he was and how and why he had come there. In the first place, they saw the incident as an immediate danger to them personally and a threat to the peace and quiet of the life on the ship. Their only concern was to get rid of the intruder and suppress his message quickly and effectively, without any consequences for them and the ship.

But first they had to go through the motion of interrogation. "Are you from the Control Centre? Are you in fact its Head?" – he was asked repeatedly but he never answered any of the questions. He knew that the interrogation was just a formality and the outcome was predetermined. His answers would not be taken seriously but rather be used to mock and accuse him. "How did you get here?" – this they really wanted to know, if only to forestall such visitations in future. But when he remained silent, one of the interrogators answered for him with a smirk: "The Control Centre moves in the mysterious ways its wonders to perform."

But the mockery and interrogation were of no consequence to him. Neither was it important for him to identify himself or his rank before those people. His only concern was to deliver his message, and he succeeded in that. As his mission was accomplished he was fully prepared to pay the ultimate price for it, his life. Moreover, he was convinced that this sacrifice of his would only advance his message and not obliterate it as his interrogators hoped. Therefore he calmly accepted their verdict: "The intruder, impostor and agitator is to be evicted from the ship through the probe hatch directly!"

As the Head was escorted to the 'exit', the recipients of his message, afraid for their lives, were not among those who, out of curiosity, accompanied him there. As they did so, some of them voiced their doubts as to whether he should be subjected to such cruel punishment. They saw no harm in his rather innocent, if somewhat bizarre, message. If, on the other hand, there was any grain of truth in his words then they all were in very serious trouble. Even if they survived the predicted ordeal, they would be punished most severely by the Control Centre for the death of its Head.

Others refused to be so gullible and naïve. And they had a powerful and pragmatic argument for the doubters: "If he is what they say he is, he'll find the way of returning safely home as he found his way here. And if there is the Control Centre who sent us on our mission, surely it is in its own interest to keep us alive and well."

We have no further information about this verbal exchange or, for that matter, about the final outcome of the story if there was any. The information from the future is patchy and irregular. If we hear more before the end of our discourse we shall append it accordingly.

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Let us resume our discourse with the words which preceded the interlude:

As Man betrayed the divine trust and failed his divine mission, the Spiritual World, instead of bringing him to heel or abandoning him altogether, set up 'a rescue party' consisting of its highest and most elevated Being Who took upon Himself a sacrificial task of descending into Man's physical abode and uniting Himself with him as the only way to save him without compromising his integrity and mission.

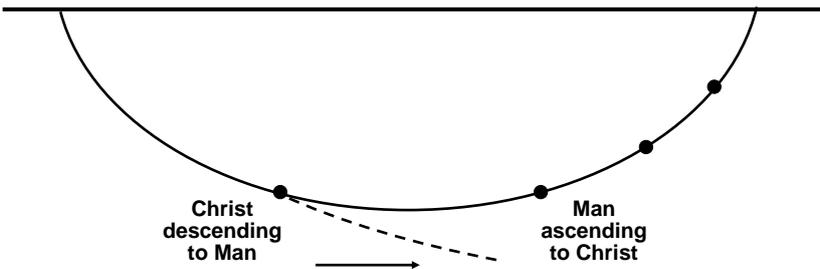
The Christ's supreme act of sacrifice and salvation has been described and discussed for about two millennia so many times by so many authors in so many different ways from such varied points of view that it renders the humble imagination of the present discourse powerless to utter any meaningful comment of its own. Yet if it would aspire to describe that unique event in the most concise, unpretentious and yet essential way, it may do so like this: Christ accomplished His sacrificial deed so that every human being can state as a simple fact: "Not I, but Christ in me."

What Christ planted in Man as a seed of His Own Being not only saved him from imminent death, but allowed him to accomplish his mission and to become a divine being. But it did not change him as such, or put him on the right course, or

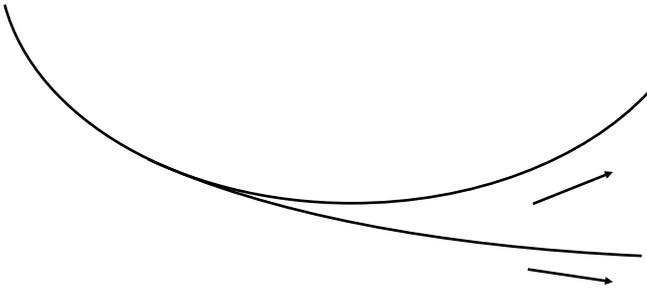
even avert him from the wrong one. Nor did Christ even make Man accept His gift and sacrifice – He left him free in every aspect of his life and being. It was up to Man, inspired by the Christ impulse, to initiate any changes, within and outside himself. And Christ's message to him was to that effect:

I came down to you in order to save you, and to make it possible for you to find the path to the world of spirit. I shall not force this path upon you, but will send you any help you need so that you may find it. I shall be there Myself, as you can reach this world only through Me. But to meet Me again you will have to make your way up to Me even as I made My way down to you. I shall be waiting for you at every stage of your ascent. When you meet Me I shall accompany and guide you on your journey and then welcome you at My Kingdom as Its citizen.

If we come back to our picture of the evolutionary curve we can mark, there, the point when Christ descended to Man and also, tentatively, the points at which Christ will be waiting for Man on his upward journey into the spiritual world (the picture below). But nothing is predetermined here apart from one thing. Every human being in the course of his earthly evolution will be given an opportunity to make a conscious and free choice and decision: to take either the upwards path with Christ leading to Light and Life, or the downwards one without Him to Darkness and Death (dotted line).



And after the decision has been made there would be no dotted line any longer. There will be two unbroken lines reflecting the reality – the division of humanity and its two paths, one going up and the other down (the picture below). Though this process has already started, neither the division nor the downward path is the subject of our discourse. Our present concern is with what is happening along the upward line. More specifically, with that imaginative point on our imaginative curve where its downward direction turned, or is turning, or is supposed to turn, into the upward one. Thus we have come to the core of our discourse.



THE DIVINE KNOW-HOW

By drawing two lines (below) the author invites readers to stretch their imagination still further and follow him in his exploration of the events constituting the subject of his discourse.



The space above the upper line he designates as the spiritual world and that under the bottom line, as the physical world. The space in between is where the events are taking place. This imaginary division of the indivisible reality into three separate realms was prompted by the fact that the unfolding events are going to be examined in their relation to the two worlds of Man's existence:

SPIRITUAL WORLD



EVENTS

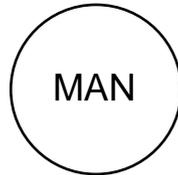


PHYSICAL WORLD

We shall begin, though, by placing in the middle realm not events, but the main culprit responsible for them, Man himself, of whom it can be said that "all events were made by him; and without him was not any event made that was made"

(below). We want to see first how Man, as a conscious being, relates to both worlds and 'makes events'.

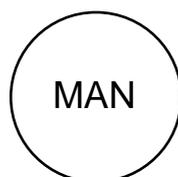
SPIRITUAL WORLD



PHYSICAL WORLD

Starting with Man's relationship with the physical world, we must acknowledge, in all fairness to this creature, that it was not him who started it all or even initiated this relationship with its subsequent events. No sooner does he enter or better to say, is he thrust into, this world of ours, than he is attacked, viciously and without warning, on all his senses:

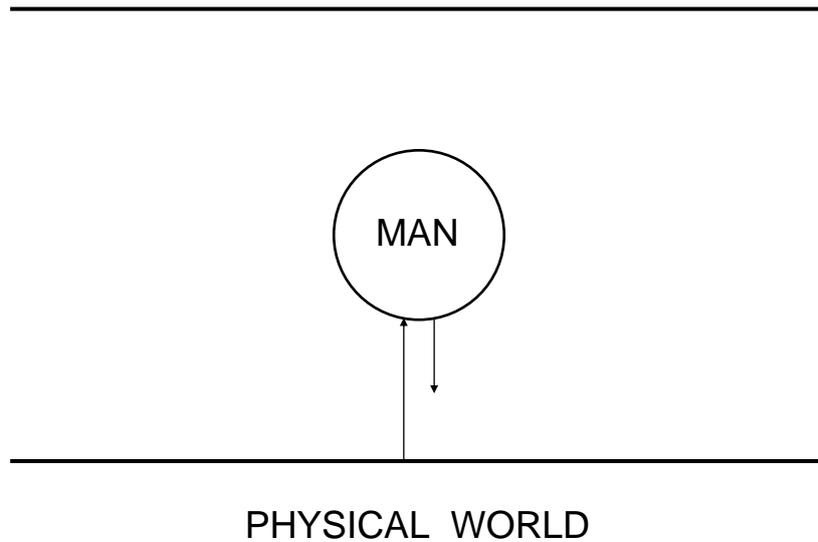
SPIRITUAL WORLD



PHYSICAL WORLD

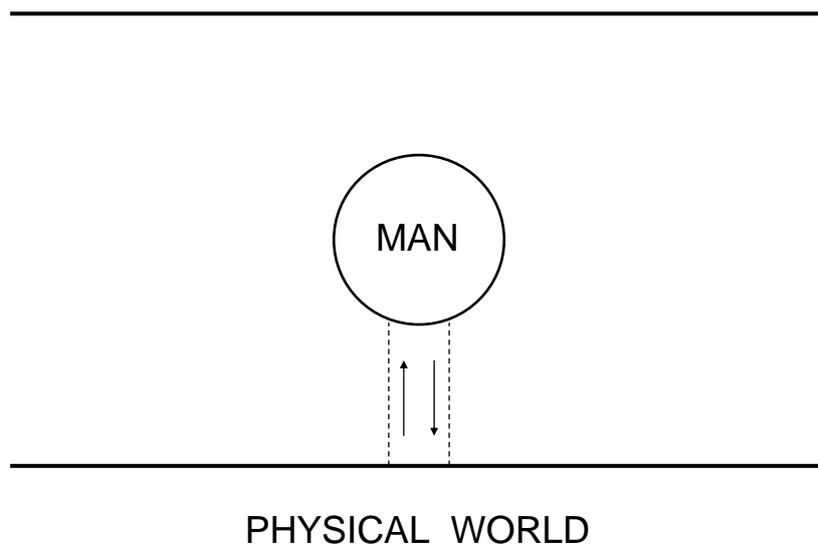
This is the unceremonious way in which the physical world welcomes him: "Hi, you are here now, and I wish to talk to you!" And the baby's first desperate cry is his acknowledgement, and response, and warning: "I know I'm in your clutches now, damn you, and this is the first but not the last word you will hear from me!":

SPIRITUAL WORLD



Thus, a 'channel of communication' between the two is established:

SPIRITUAL WORLD



Man starts conversing with the physical world, and only with his exit from it does this conversation end. (But we should also be fair to the physical world. Having imposed itself on Man and having welcomed him in such a brutal manner, at the same time it provides him with everything he needs to survive in the new environment and adequately respond to its harsh treatment. It even enables him to respond to its first assault. So Man's first baby cry is not his first deed on earth. To perform it he has to do something else first – to inhale the air provided for him by the physical world. And this is truly Man's primal deed on earth.)

To begin with, Man's conversation with the physical world is totally unconscious and very limited. But it changes very rapidly, both in quantity and in quality, as the little child grows into an ever more conscious being. His environment starts to talk to him in a more varied way, and he reciprocates likewise. But he not only *re-acts* and replies, he also *acts* of his own accord, both by word and deed. And

his deeds, also sometimes his words, constitute *events*. At this stage they are no more than family events, but it will not be long before they become something which makes 'the world go round'.

Although the child has no control over most of his two-way communications with the physical world, there are other communications which he learns to control by seeking or avoiding, initiating or suppressing them. As the child grows into an adult and matures and develops further, the proportion between the involuntary and conscious communications, as well as the intensity of the latter, change accordingly. In fact, these are the criteria by which we judge the worth of the individual. How much is he in control of what affects him from without and, conversely, of what comes from him to the outside world? How much of what is worthy in the world does he allow in and manage to absorb, and, conversely, how much of active and genuine interest does he have in the world and how much does he contribute to enrich and improve it? We can find various manifestations of these criteria everywhere – in human history, in our own milieu and even in 'the mirror on the wall'. In some individuals the intensity of the two-way traffic is breathtaking; in some it is just a trickle; in others it is disproportionate in one direction or the other. But they all have one thing in common: each individual is his own traffic warden.

Unlike Man's communications with the physical world, it is impossible to speak of any kind of common experience (unless we wish to point to its absence) with regard to the spiritual world. Of course, individual spiritual or supersensible experiences have been known throughout human history. Some were primitive and vague, while others were sophisticated and specific. Some were involuntary and even burdensome and others were purposefully and consistently sought for. Some were gained effortlessly and spontaneously, and others through special procedures and rituals. Dreams and premonitions, visions and insights, trances and invocations, intuitions and inspirations, revelations and prophecies, initiations and commandments are all well known forms of these experiences and their manifestations. And they had different consequences – from those affecting one or few individuals to those with cultural and social implications, and to some of a universal significance affecting whole nations or even human civilization.

Many, no doubt, would deny any credence to such experiences or even their existence, let alone attributing to them, for instance, such major spiritual events of human evolution as the birth of the great world religions. But even those who would acknowledge their genuine existence and true value, and even those who might themselves have had them, would have to admit that such experiences have always been rare exceptions which could not be shared with, let alone emulated by, ordinary men. Shrouded in mystery, they were one-way communications, from the spiritual world to man, with no fully conscious input from him.

This all changed by the end of the nineteenth century when one otherwise individual, exceptional, mysterious and mystical experience acquired the qualities of being objective, fully conscious, comprehensible and accessible to everyone. It began with the spiritual world introducing itself to a little Austrian boy, as the physical world introduced itself to him, in its usual way, a few years earlier. But the new introduction was painless and so natural for the boy that he did not even know that it came from 'another world'. In fact, there was no 'another world' for him. As is the case for all children and most adults, his world was one indivisible whole. It was only later when he tried to share the messages, which he continued to receive from the spiritual world, with adults as a matter of course and was reprimanded for his 'fantasies', that he became aware, in a childlike way, of the two realities: one was visible to everybody and the other only to him. (Ironically, perhaps it was the only time and occasion in the whole history of human evolution when the imaginary

picture of the two separate worlds offered to the readers at the beginning of the chapter, could have been closest to reality.)

This loss of wholeness, loss of innocence vis-à-vis the perceived reality, and also the sense of loneliness caused by the above dichotomy and the necessity to remain silent about it, was a painful experience for the child – the first in the endless chain of inner trials and battles that accompanied this individual all his life. The name of the individual was Rudolf Steiner. Rudolf Steiner was born in 1861, and he hardly reached the age of eight or nine when he posed to himself the following questions: Why others did not see what I saw? Were the 'visible' and 'invisible' related to each other? Was it possible to make other people become aware of the reality and validity of the 'invisible'?

There was nobody around him who could help him with these questions and he turned them into his own tasks of searching for the answers. The answers did not come easily but when they did come, in time, they were most reassuring and gratifying. As he grew up and matured, his relationship with the two worlds from which the two types of experience originate, and his life in them and their cognition, became more conscious. This also led to new questions and new tasks. But his overall quest and task became to establish, or rather to discover, the correlations between the two worlds in the most specific and concrete way, down to every significant phenomenon, manifestation and event. For this, to begin with, both worlds had to be cognised in their diversity and fullness. Then they had to be brought together conceptually, in human consciousness, into that indivisible unity in which they existed in the actual reality.

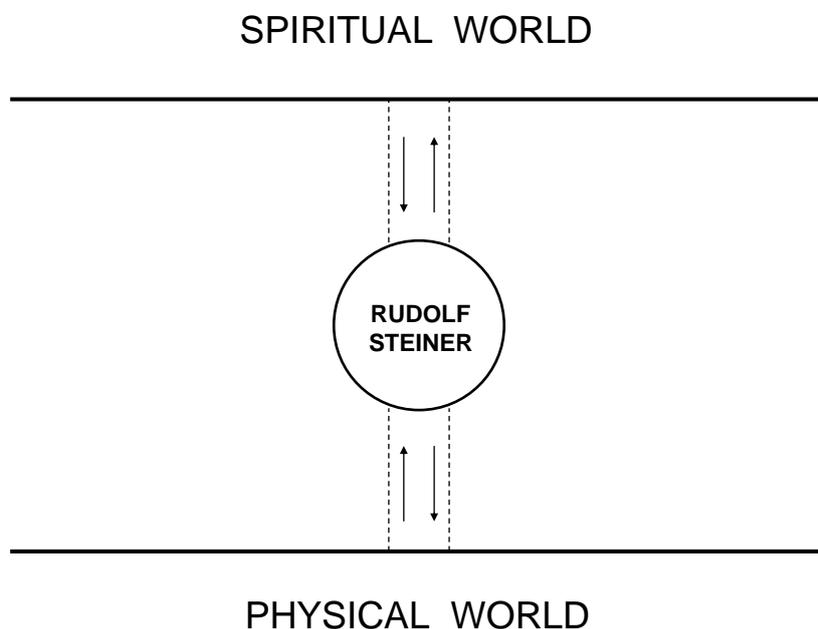
It was a mammoth task and Steiner pursued it to the very end of his life. As far as the physical world was concerned, Steiner decided to cognise and master it as a natural as well as cultural phenomenon, in various fields of human activity – in science and technology, in art and religion, as well as in the social sphere. And he wished to cognise all this, in the first instance, on the basis and through the achievements of the prevailing materialistic outlook without allowing his spiritual views and perceptions to influence this knowledge. (Therefore later on he could strictly follow the principle he set for himself – never speak about any phenomenon of our physical life from the spiritual point of view without first studying it thoroughly and being able to speak about it from the accepted scientific standpoint.)

Steiner's undertaking with regard to the spiritual world, which he carried out in parallel with his other task, was equally comprehensive. There he had, first of all, to establish a conscious and reciprocal relationship with the spiritual world. When this was achieved it allowed Steiner to become not just an involuntary recipient of spiritual messages or revelations, but an active and conscious researcher of the spiritual world, a scientist of spirit. Only then could he accomplish, in its essentials, his task of uniting the two worlds, whereby this life task ceased to be for him just something personal.

Having mastered the heights of materialistic scientific knowledge in the most varied fields, Steiner saw, at the same time, its incompleteness and one-sidedness precisely because it deals with the material-physical world only. But both physical and spiritual are inalienable parts of existence. The ignorance about the spiritual counterpart, the origin of every physical phenomenon, gives man a distorted picture of the world in which he lives and therefore unavoidably leads to delusions and ultimate calamity. Steiner acutely felt that mankind needed the correct, specific and full knowledge of the world as a foundation for its further development. And now he had this knowledge and could give it to others.

In keeping with our image, by the turn of the century Steiner had two firmly established and functioning to full capacity 'channels of communication' (see picture below). Both were unique, each in its own way. And if for the lower one there could

be found some analogies, the upper was the first and only one of its kind in human history – 'conversing with the Gods' was taking place there. As a result of these two 'conversations' a new being was born whom Steiner later called Anthroposophia ('wisdom of man' in Greek). Her birthplace was Steiner's consciousness, but now She was waiting to come out into the world as the Divine Know-How to assist humanity in its evolutionary ascent into the spiritual world.



This was the time when Rudolf Steiner was ready to turn his life's task into his world mission – to deliver to mankind the Divine Know-How. But was mankind ready for it? Was it willing to accept it? Would it be able to comprehend the message whose content was far beyond an ordinary human experience and perception? Those were not necessarily Steiner's exact questions, but they were implicit in that momentous situation which had evolved for him by the end of the nineteenth century. This time, though, the answers could not come from Steiner alone – they also would have to come from 'mankind'.

Even in ordinary life one knows how pointless, wrong or even harmful it can be to give an answer before a question is asked, or to impart knowledge prematurely. It is much more so in the case of spiritual knowledge. Besides, Steiner knew that however urgent and important for the destiny of humanity his message was, in order for it to succeed there had to be at least some recipients with a genuine quest for it. For the same divine principle held sway here: *God proposes, Man disposes*.

And it was also applicable to Steiner himself. At this decisive time of his life he was, as some three decades before, completely alone with his spiritual experience – nobody around him shared it with him, or knew about it, or was interested to know. But otherwise the difference between now and then could not be more striking. Now he was no longer an innocent little boy but a mature adult tempered in inner battles and equipped with the knowledge and experience virtually unparalleled in human history. Then he had an involuntary glimpse of a tiny bit of that omnipresent and supreme reality which now he was ready and eager to present to others. Yes, he was alone and lonely in his immediate milieu regarding the most intimate and precious aspects of his inner life. But at the same time he had the companionship, council and support – nay, the assignment, guidance and trust of the Highest Authorities in the Universe. With the same proviso though – *God proposes, Man disposes* which meant in this case that ultimately the disposition of the Divine Message was a matter of Steiner's own judgement, decision and responsibility.

However this principle was exercised before, it is for the first time in human history that it became possible for ordinary mortals to observe, in as concrete and direct way as possible, how it works and how the guiding divine impulses enter human evolution via man. Some such instances of the past, and perhaps of the future as well, are not destined to become common knowledge. Descriptions of some others can be found, in a symbolic and allegorical form, in the olden accounts, most notably in the Bible. But these accounts are not recognised nowadays as 'historical' and 'scientific', and there are no historical records or documents to corroborate them. Therefore they are designated as myths and legends, the products of human fantasy. Faith, regarded as a superstition by some and as a virtue by others, is the only resort for most of those who assert the veracity of these accounts today.

The situation is entirely different in the case of Rudolf Steiner. His life and activities were witnessed by thousands of people, recorded in numerous documents, reflected in hundreds of volumes and were even related in writing by Steiner himself. So these records and documents are there for anyone to survey, study and contemplate. It is these written witnesses that have been consulted for the present narrative. And as it comes to its pivotal point, to the time of Steiner's crucial decisions and actions, the author feels obliged to let Steiner step in into the subsequent account with his own words.

Rudolf Steiner Speaks for Himself*

Concerning the pre-anthroposophical period of his public life as a whole, Steiner said in his *Autobiography* in 1924:

All that I wrote was based upon the foundation of my view of the world acknowledging the spirit, even if an inner necessity prevented me from entering into much detail about the spiritual sphere itself.

But let us take a closer look at this period, at its beginning, its middle and its end. At the age of twenty one, when still a student, Steiner was recommended to become editor and commentator of the scientific writings of Goethe for the *German National Literature*. This work, which continued for a number of years, resulted, four years later, in the publication of his book, *A Theory of Knowledge Implicit in Goethe's World Conception*. In his preface to its new edition in 1923 Steiner wrote:

Thus my book was guided along the path from sense-observation to the spiritual, which was firmly established in my inner experiential knowledge. ...

Now that I again turn my attention to it, it seems to me to be also the foundation and justification, as a theory of knowledge, for all that I have since asserted orally or in print. It speaks of an essential nature of knowledge which opens the way from the sense world to a world of spirit.

It may seem strange that this youthful production, written nearly forty years ago, should now be published again, unaltered and expanded only by means of notes. In the manner of its presentation, it bears the marks of a kind of thinking which had entered vitally into the philosophy of that time, forty years ago. Were

* So far the author refrained from quoting any sources, resorting to his own knowledge and understanding of the subject and to his imagination. However what he wishes to convey in some instances or passages is so intimately connected with the individuality of Rudolf Steiner that, the author feels, it has to come from him directly rather than by way of rendering, paraphrasing or interpreting. He also quotes some other individuals whose words seem indispensable in the given context. As this discourse is not an academic work the author decided not to overload it with the references to the quotes' sources. However, in his archive he keeps their full list.

I writing the book now, I should express many things differently. But the essential nature of knowledge I could not set forth in any different light. Moreover, what I might write now could not convey so truly within itself the germ of the spiritual world-conception for which I stand. In such germinal fashion one can write only at the beginning of one's intellectual life.

In 1894, at the age of thirty three, Steiner wrote his definitive book which he himself considered as perhaps the most important of all his writings, *The Philosophy of Freedom*. His own comments on the book can constitute a sizable volume, but in the context of our discourse one short quote (dated 1923) will suffice:

There are two basic points made in *The Philosophy of Freedom*: first, that there is a spiritual realm and, second, that the innermost part of a person's being is connected to this spiritual realm.

At the very threshold of the anthroposophical stage of Steiner's life, in 1900 and 1901, appeared two volumes of his fundamental *Conceptions of the World and of Life in the Nineteenth Century* which was later enlarged and published under the title *Riddles of Philosophy*. In his *Autobiography* Steiner wrote about the book:

Looking back, this book appears to me symptomatic of my inner way. Contrary to the belief held by many, I have not gone through a series of contradictions. If that were the case I would willingly admit it. But it is not true of my spiritual path. I advanced from one stage to the next by adding new insight to what I had previously attained. And I made a particularly important discovery in the spiritual realm soon after I had finished my book, *Conceptions of the World and of Life in the Nineteenth Century*.

In this connection I would stress that I never approached the spiritual sphere through mystical feelings, but always through crystal-clear concepts. My conscious experience of concepts and ideas led me through the world of ideas into spiritual reality.

...

Thus my book is an objective presentation of the pre-anthroposophical insight that has to be reached and thoroughly experienced before it is possible to rise to the higher stage. The person who is striving to reach the spiritual world with clarity of thought, and not merely through a nebulous mysticism must attain this insight as a stage on the path to higher cognition. Therefore, a description of what is attained through this insight is something the striving person needs as a preliminary stage before reaching the higher stage.

But let us now go a few years back, to the year 1897 when an opportunity opened up for Steiner to implement his crucial decision mentioned above. This is how Steiner described later this event:

Must I remain silent?

My inner experience in relation to this question obliged me to introduce an entirely new note into my external activity.

For some time I had considered the possibility of bringing to my contemporaries' attention – through a periodical – the spiritual impulses I felt should be made known publicly at that time. I would not "remain silent": I would say as much as it was possible to say.

To start a periodical myself was out of the question. I had neither the means nor the connections necessary for such a venture.

Therefore I seized the opportunity offered me to become editor of the *Review of Literature*.

The editorship of this weekly magazine brought Steiner to Berlin. In this world city he found himself in the very heart of its throbbing cultural and social life. It could not be otherwise, for here again his personal disposition worked harmoniously with his spiritual task:

My conscious experience of the spiritual world put upon me the obligation to participate fully in all the relationships I now entered.

And they were wide-ranging and numerous. Editor of and contributor to his own *Review* and other periodicals, active member of various cultural and learned societies, public speaker regularly delivering lectures and lecture courses, theatre critic and producer, teacher at the Workers Educational college and lecturer at various trade union venues, to say nothing about personal contacts and friendships with many leading personalities of the time and numerous public and private discussions – these and other activities gave Steiner a direct first-hand experience of what lived in various strata, fields and individuals of his contemporary society. This not only provided him with an opportunity to listen, observe and learn, but also confirmed him in his decision not to "remain silent".

But far from 'plain sailing', Steiner's activity in Berlin was fraught, as usual, with inner and outer battles, obstacles and misunderstandings. And, as usual, it did not deter him from pursuing his chosen and destined path. Indeed (Steiner again, apropos some of those difficulties):

Problems of this kind need not trouble a person who is in a position to pursue his spiritual path independently [... and who] has clearly recognised his inner path and has accepted it so completely that he *cannot* deviate from it in anything essential.

A few specific examples of Steiner's experiences at the time are very indicative of his life in Berlin which "**was both inwardly and outwardly extremely eventful**". First, there was his immediate job which involved him not only with the *Review*, but also with the Independent Literary Society whose organ the *Review* was:

It was to be my task to give lectures to the Society and to speak personally about the *Review* as an organ of cultural life.

Thus for the *Review* I had a readership with whose cultural needs I had to familiarize myself. And in the Independent Literary Society I had a membership who expected something quite specific along the lines of what they had always been offered. In any case, they certainly did not expect the kind of thing I could offer them out of my innermost and deepest concern. ...

Soon I had to ask myself whether I could justify to myself and to the spiritual world, my work among this group of people. For though many of the persons concerned were my friends and very dear to me they, too, belonged – so far as my inner experience of the spirit was concerned – among those who made me ask: "*Must I remain silent?*"

But there were other absorbing engagements, the theatre being one of them:

... I was elected to the board of the Drama Society as soon as I came to Berlin.

...

The work with the Drama Society proved very congenial, particularly the actual staging of the plays. ...

I have often had cause to be glad of the experiences I had in this field at the time.

....

Furthermore, the task fell upon me to precede the performance with a short introductory talk [... which] gratified me; it afforded opportunity to convey a mood of true spirituality, and I was glad to be able to do that in an environment which normally had no ear for the spirit.

At that time it was important for me to work intimately with dramatic art. I myself wrote the theatre critiques that appeared in the *Review*.

Other activities came Steiner's way quite unexpectedly, and from unexpected quarters at that:

During this difficult time of my life, the directors of the Workers' Educational Association in Berlin approached me with the request that I teach history and public speaking in the College of Association. The Socialist background of this institution did not concern me. I visualized the interesting task of teaching mature men and women of the working class. There were not many young people among the 'pupils'. I made it clear to the directors that if I accepted the task I would present history according to my own view of mankind's evolution and not according to the Marxist interpretation as was customary in Socialist circles. They still wished me to give the courses.

Having made this reservation, it did not matter so far as I was concerned that the College was founded on a Social-Democratic basis by the elder Liebknecht. For me it consisted of men and women of the proletariat; the fact that the majority of them were Socialists was not my business.

However, the mental outlook of my 'pupils' was my business. I had to find a completely different way of expressing myself. In order to be understood in some measure, I had to become familiar with the conceptual outlook of these people.

Soon to the above subjects was added natural science, with the following result:

It so happened that just through the science courses my teaching activity within the working class expanded. Numerous trade unions invited me to lecture on science. ...

At the celebration of the Gutenberg Jubilee, I was entrusted with the festival address to 7,000 typesetters and printers given in a Berlin circus. From this can be seen that what I had to say to the workers was favourably received.

....

I saw that many a person benefited from my lectures. They accepted even what contradicted materialism and the Marxist interpretation of history.

But Steiner also benefited from his diverse experiences at the time as he later related in his *Autobiography*.

Thus, in connection with the *Review*, I had to enter completely into the heart and mind of the bourgeoisie, and, in connection with my activities with the workers, into the heart and mind of the proletariat. I had indeed a wide scope for being aware of the impelling forces of the time.

What these forces were telling him was reflected in his following observations:

To speak of any kind of 'spirit' would have been of no avail at that time. No one would have understood me ...

... The darkness that enveloped the divine grew ever deeper for human consciousness. ...

It seemed to me that the turn of the century must bring new spiritual light to humanity. A climax had been reached in the exclusion of the spirit from man's thinking and willing. A complete change of direction in humanity's evolution seemed an absolute necessity.

Many expressed similar opinions, but they ... sought merely a change in man's subjective disposition. It was beyond the scope of men's vision at that time to recognise that another, real and objective world could be discovered.

But as Steiner had already discovered it, many years ago, and came to Berlin with the decision not to "remain silent" about it, he sought every opportunity to realize his decision. One example was his lecture, also published as an article in the *Review*, delivered just a few months after he took his new post:

It was far from the rejection of the Divine-Spiritual, but a plea for it to be restored to *this world*, that I expressed in a lecture given at the Independent Literary Society ...

Soon another opportunity presented itself which Steiner could not possibly miss:

The decision to speak publicly about esoteric life from my own research and experience impelled me to write, on the occasion of the one hundred and fifty anniversary of Goethe's birth (August 28th, 1898), an article for the *Review* on Goethe's fairy tale, *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, under the title Goethe's Secret Revelation. – This essay, it is true, was not very esoteric. But to say more would have made too great a demand upon my public. – I experienced the fairy tale as esoteric in the deepest sense. And I wrote the article out of esoteric insight.

Little did Steiner know at the time that before long there would be yet another opportunity for him to speak on the same subject without any reservations concerning its esoteric aspect, which turned out to be **the** opportunity he had been waiting for all along. But in the meantime some other decisions had to be taken in connection with his resolve not to "remain silent". They concerned the spiritual knowledge per se.

Decisions, not altogether easy, have to be taken in connection with speaking publicly about knowledge of spiritual facts such as those contained in Anthroposophy.

The nature of these decisions is best described through certain historical facts.

Corresponding to the completely different soul-constitution of early humanity, a knowledge of the spiritual world always existed right up to the beginning of the modern age, approximately up to the fourteenth century. But this knowledge differed in character from anthroposophical knowledge, which corresponds to mankind's present mode of cognition.

After the above-mentioned point in time, mankind was no longer able to produce direct knowledge of the spirit. Only *ancient knowledge*, originally received by human souls in the form of pictures, was handed down, preserved in symbolic form.

In very early times this ancient knowledge was cultivated within the *Mysterries* and imparted only to those who through training had become mature enough to receive it, the *initiates*. It was not available to the public because of the danger of abuse. The personalities who in later times gained insight into the ancient knowledge, preserved this custom. They cultivated it in small circles of people whom they first prepared to receive it.

This has been the situation up to the present day.

...

If I wished to become active before the public on behalf of spiritual knowledge, I had to decide to break with this tradition. I was faced with the modern conditions of cultural life. The possibility no longer exists of keeping things secret the way this was done as a matter of course in ancient times. We live in an age which demands that what is known should be made publicly available. The viewpoint that things must be kept secret is an anachronism. The only possibility today is to introduce spiritual knowledge by stages, admitting no one to a stage at which the higher knowledge is imparted if he is not yet acquainted with the lower stages. This, in fact, corresponds to the arrangement of higher and lower education.

Besides, I was under obligation of secrecy to no one. I had taken nothing from *the ancient wisdom*; my knowledge of the spirit is entirely the result of my own investigation. When I have attained some item of knowledge I relate it to what is already publicly known, through one source or another, from the ancient knowledge, in order to show the agreement between the two as well as the advance that is possible for present day investigation.

Thus from a certain moment it was absolutely clear to me that it was right for me to present spiritual knowledge publicly.

And then, in the summer of 1900, came yet another invitation to give a lecture, to yet another new audience, as had happened many a time before:

About this time I was invited by Count and Countess Brockdorff to give a lecture at one of their weekly meetings. People of the most varied interests attended these meetings. The lectures that were given related to every field of knowledge and life. I knew nothing of these events until I was invited to lecture, nor had I heard of the Brockdorffs. I met them then for the first time. It had been suggested that I should speak on Nietzsche. And so I did. However, I noticed among the audience people who had great interest in the world of spirit. And I suggested, when invited to give a second lecture, that the subject should be *Goethe's Secret Revelation*. In *this* lecture I spoke about the fairy tale from a purely esoteric point of view. It was an important experience for me to be able to speak in words coined directly out of spirit, for the circumstances in Berlin had so far compelled me to do no more than hint at the spiritual.

The Brockdorffs were the leaders of a branch of the Theosophical Society founded by Blavatsky. My lecture on Goethe's fairy tale led to an invitation to

give lectures regularly to the members of the Theosophical Society with whom they were connected. I explained that I could speak only about what I experienced through my own research as the science of spirit.

And in actual fact, I could speak on no other basis. I knew very little of the literature published by the Theosophical Society. I met Theosophists in Vienna and I had met others since. These acquaintances led to my adverse comments about theosophists in the *Review* in connection with a publication by Franz Hartmann. What theosophical literature I had otherwise met was for the most part distasteful to me in style and attitude; never was anything presented to which I could relate my own work.

... Within this Section [of the Theosophical Society] it became possible for me to pursue my anthroposophical activity before a steadily increasing audience.

In the Theosophical Society *no one was left in any doubt* that it was my intention to bring forward solely the results of my own direct, spiritual investigations. This fact I stated at every appropriate moment. When the Theosophical Society was founded in Berlin ... and I was elected General Secretary, I had to leave this inauguration meeting in order to give a lecture to a non-theosophical audience; I spoke to them about the spiritual evolution of mankind, and I properly added to the title of my lecture the words: "An Anthroposophy". ...

... There was no longer any reason why I should not bring forward knowledge of the spirit *in my way* before theosophical audiences; they were at that time the only audiences that were truly interested in knowledge of spirit. Thus I pledged myself to no sectarian dogmas; I was simply a person who said what he thought himself entitled to say according to his own experience of the world of spirit.

At long last Steiner found the audience before which he could start unfolding the task and mission of his life. But there was no question of abandoning his current duties and commitments. As can be seen from the above quote, they took priority even over such an important event in the life of any person and organisation concerned as a General Secretary inauguration meeting. But there was a great difference now between his former and new audiences:

But it was also a fact that these non-Theosophical audiences were inclined to be merely stimulated by my lectures, to accept them as 'scholarly'. There was no understanding for what for me was all-important: to introduce into life impulses from the world of spirit. This understanding I found gradually in people who were interested in Theosophy.

Still in spite of all misunderstandings and a lack of understanding, could Steiner now, equipped with a new experience of speaking openly and directly about the spirit, try and address those audiences in the same way? He could and he did as, for instance, with his lecture on *Monism and Theosophy* in October 1902:

Despite all this, I was later able to give my very first anthroposophical lecture in the Giordano Bruno Union; this was the point of departure for my anthroposophical work.

The lecture caused uproar, with the members of the audience still fervently discussing it, in the streets, into the small hours of the morning. And if from now on Steiner's activities within non-theosophical circles gradually diminished, it certainly

was not because of his decision to 'withdraw' or even due to the ever increasing amount of his anthroposophical work and commitments. The reason did not come from him.

Those three years in Berlin, which turned out to be 'preparatory', were very fruitful and important for Steiner in more ways than one. He reflected on them a quarter of a century later:

I look back upon things I said between 1897 and 1900 as to something which had to be said at some time in view of the trend of thinking that was prevalent; but I also look back to what was for me an intense spiritual test. I learned to recognise thoroughly where the disintegrating forces of the age appear which urge men away from spirit and destroy culture. This insight gave me much of the strength I needed henceforth to work directly from the spirit.

And he summarized that period and the advent of the new stage of his life like this:

... I felt an inner necessity to speak about the world of spirit ...

I entered this new activity, the impulse for which stemmed from spiritual insight, as into my predestined element.

In a personal and more intimate communication Steiner thus described this transition:

Eventually, in harmony with the spiritual forces which stood behind me, I was able to say to myself:

**you have provided the philosophical foundation for a world conception;
you have shown your comprehension of current directions of thought by treating them as only someone who fully supports them would treat them;**

no one will be able to say: this esotericist speaks of the spiritual world because he is ignorant of the philosophical and scientific developments of our time.

By this time I had also reached my fortieth year. Before this no one must present themselves publicly as a teacher of esotericism in the sense of the Masters.* (Every instance of someone teaching earlier has been an error).

* These are exceptional individuals who play a very special and significant role in human evolution. Steiner, who was in close contact with them since he was still a young man, spoke about them on a number of occasions. The following quotes should shed sufficient light on the subject: "[...] the Masters, as a rule, are not personages known to history; they sometimes incarnate [embody] themselves, when it is necessary, in historical personalities, but this is in a certain respect a sacrifice. The level of their consciousness is no longer compatible with any work for themselves, – and preservation of a name does after all involve work for oneself." "When in the world [...] the modern leaders of men go about in human garb, they are unrecognised by the world. When from the standpoint of Spiritual Science we talk about 'The Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings' people would often be surprised to know in what simple, unassuming human form these Masters are to be found in all countries. They are present on the physical plane. But they do not impart their most important teachings on the physical plane, but [...] they impart them on the spiritual plane. And anyone who wishes to listen to them, to be taught by them, must have access to them not only in their physical bodies of flesh, but in their spiritual forms." "These sublime beings have already completed the path which the rest of humanity still has to tread. They are now active as the great 'Teachers of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Human Perception'. They are already engaged in work on higher planes to which the rest of mankind will evolve during the course of the next periods of development [...]. They do their work on the physical plane through their 'messengers' [...]. The Masters never

Now I was able to devote myself publicly to theosophy [anthroposophy].

As we shall see from the pages that follow, the above "predestined element" was not only decisive in Steiner's own life but it has also changed and affected, and continues to do so, the destinies and lives of hundreds of thousands of people. But before proceeding further, the author wishes to offer to the readers, at this juncture, another fable.

A Story of the Daily Guidance

Once upon a time there was a tribe (we would call it community nowadays) who lived in a remote and isolated area. The area was a beautiful valley by the sea surrounded on all other sides by dense impregnable woods. Further inland, at some distance and in the direction opposite to the sea, there were a few huge and steep rocks with no visible vegetation on them.

The people were a simple unsophisticated folk. Their main occupations were agriculture and fishing, but always by the seashore, for the sea was very rough at all times, irrespective of the seasons and weather. And they also knew some primitive crafts. As for the hunting, there were no animals in the valley apart from birds. There were, however, wild animals in the woods, but the people did not hunt them, for two reasons.

As was already mentioned, the woods were impregnable, and the animals did not venture out of them. The people were only aware of them because they heard roaring or other sounds of their activities. Nobody actually came face to face with these animals, but there were terrifying stories about some horrible beasts living in the woods which were passed from generation to generation. Perhaps, in old times, people did see and confront those beasts to their peril, which gave rise to these stories. Also in every generation there were people who, despite these horrific tales and real dangers, did venture into the woods, but none of them had ever come back.

Because nobody had ever visited them, and they themselves were prevented from leaving the valley even if some might have been tempted to do so, the people were hardly aware of other humans inhabiting the earth. They felt themselves part of nature and also closely related to the celestial bodies – the Sun, the Moon and the Stars. From them they received their guidance, and according to their movements and positions in the sky they did their seasonal work and conducted their rituals.

But it was not the only guidance they followed and obeyed. This celestial guidance of their yearly routine was supplemented by the terrestrial guidance of their daily routine. The latter was administered from the top of the highest of the rocks towering over the area. The side of the rock's peak facing the valley was flat, with two objects moving over its surface. As with celestial bodies, it was the movements and the positions of these objects that constituted the guidance according to which the people would get up and go to bed, start and finish their work, have their meals, etc.

But unlike the celestial bodies, the objects were not round but looked like sticks. They were of a different length touching each other at one end. Also, they did not move in a straight line but rotated round that touching end, and at different speeds (the bigger one, as if being older and stronger, moved faster). And unlike the celestial bodies in the sky, the guiding positions of the two objects were clearly marked and visible as the objects moved from one to the next.

But the people hardly noticed, or rather, noted these differences and never questioned them. They did not question anything in the world around them, nor did

found an outer organisation of society, nor would they administer one." "The powers who live on the higher planes and who live for the sake of mankind's evolution, outside of the physical body, never interfere in [external] affairs. They never impart anything other than impulses."

they distinguish or differentiate its various parts according to their functions or significance. The world was a totality for them, and they accepted everything in it, including their yearly and daily guidance, as naturally as they accepted their own life and the bodily functions of breathing, eating and sleeping.

What we may call their social life was simple and orderly. They did have families, but it seemed to be the only structure, with some form of hierarchy, that they had. They did not even have rulers or leaders. Instead, they had regular community forums where matters in hand were discussed and decisions taken. They had their elders, of course, but if their suggestions were taken up more often than the others', it was not because of their age or position in the community but because they made more sense. The forums, as other regular events, were also held according to the double guidance.

Thus these people lived for many years and generations. Nothing much changed around them in all these years, neither their environment, nor climatic conditions. Also, the life of their community and its structure did not undergo any noticeable change. But being humans, they themselves started to change, with the gradual change of their consciousness, inner life and perception of the world. If we are to characterise the result of this change in a more concrete and tangible way, we may put it like this: in the old days queries, doubts or problems were unknown to them; now they became part of their life as something which they consciously experienced.

Naturally, these things found their way into the people's forums and even occupied the best time of them. Being good-natured and friendly, they never quarrelled when discussing their affairs or problems, and always managed to arrive at amicable and satisfactory solutions. In fact, they enjoyed the process of discussion, particularly when it concerned their queries. Now as they became more observant and inquisitive, they were querying an ever increasing number of things around them. Their questions required answers and, as they were the only ones who could provide them, the search for answers gave birth to *thoughts* and *ideas*. And they liked nothing better than to exchange and discuss their thoughts and ideas at their forums.

Nature became the first object of their observation and query. They made some remarkable discoveries that increased their knowledge and understanding of it, though they themselves would never put it like this. For them the main thing was to have ideas and discuss them, and not to accumulate or classify them or put them to any practical use.

The sky with its 'inhabitants' was also of tremendous interest to them. As before, they duly followed the guidance from there, of course, but they also made some interesting and new observations. For instance, they thought that to have daytime with its light for carrying out various activities, and then to have night with its darkness for rest and sleep, was a good idea. To have the moonlight at night, just in case, was also a good idea. Likewise, the people found 'good ideas' in many other things. But they never asked whose ideas they were, or who made all these things and made all these clever arrangements in the world.

Lately the guidance on the rock became a focus of their particular interest and scrutiny. By now they knew that this guidance belonged to that part of the world where they lived and which was familiar to them, while the other one came from the unknown and mysterious part of it. But the former was as inaccessible as the latter. On the other hand, it was easier to observe and it had some features which were easier for them to identify. What was more, they could even imitate it to a certain extent.

The people noticed that the flat surface of the guidance had a round form – and they drew a circle on the sand. The two objects of a different length were

touching at one end just in the middle of the round guidance – and they fetched two such sticks and arranged them likewise in the middle of their circle. Now there were marked positions by the border of the round surface at equal distances from each other – and they put stones in the likewise manner at the perimeter of their circle.

They were very pleased with their creation, which we may now call a model, but it brought them new questions. They did not question the reason for the movements of the objects on the rock, as they did not question the movements of the celestial bodies. They realised that the latter was beyond their comprehension, but for the former there could be some explanations. For instance, wind could cause the objects to move, and it might be some sort of a permanent whirl up at the top of the rock that moved them round in that particular way.

When they tried to reproduce these movements on their sand model, it did not work. They pushed the bigger stick manually, but when it caught up with the smaller one, it just pushed it forward so that the two would now rotate together. But it was not what they observed on the rock. There, the bigger object would always overtake the smaller one. And in the process the latter would gradually disappear and then reappear again. It puzzled them.

The people also noticed by now that that the objects of the guidance not only rotated at different speeds, but that there was a correlation between the two rotations: as the smaller one moved from one position to the next, the bigger one ran the whole circle. This they found also to be a very clever idea but without ever asking why, how and what for.

But for the questions they did ask they knew that they could get answers by way of contemplation. They did not use the word, of course, but they experienced and liked this new activity as much as they liked their forum discussions. In fact, for many of them it became now like another occupation. But it was a solitary occupation for which they would find some quiet and isolated places in the remote parts of the valley where they might stay even for a few days. Besides, it was a very respectful activity which was not to be disturbed or interrupted by others. The more time one would spend in such a retreat, the more respect one would earn, though the highest respect would be won by ideas and not by the time one spent in developing them.

There was one particular person who was held in the highest esteem within the community. They did not put labels on the members of their community, but nowadays he would be called an exemplary and all-round personality. He was an excellent manual worker in whatever jobs or crafts they practiced there, as well as a man of most interesting ideas of which he had plenty on every matter they discussed. He was also distinguished for his kindness and honesty, and this was in a community where these qualities were taken for granted.

But once the most dreadful thing happened – the man disappeared. At first people thought that he was just contemplating for an unusually long time in some new remote place he had discovered. But he could not be found anywhere. Some people even tried to look for him on the outskirts of the woods, though everyone realised that the man would not be so reckless as to search there for solitude. Some feared that he might have drowned, as such things happened there from time to time. In such cases the bodies would be invariably brought to the shore by the tide. But weeks and months passed, and neither the man, nor his body were ever found.

The life of the community went on, of course, though for a long time the people would remember the man and miss his contributions at the forums. His ideas would still be remembered and discussed and passed to a new generation. He became a legend on a par with other outstanding members of the community who had preceded him.

But then, one day, when the people were having their forum, he suddenly appeared there. They spotted him standing in the background, by himself, and listening to their discussion.

The shock of seeing him was so profound that at first nobody could utter a word, and some people even left the forum. They did it on an impulse and would not be able to explain their spontaneous action. But their shock at witnessing something which had never happened before translated itself into an uncontrollable fear of what this new, unfamiliar and strange occurrence could bring in its wake. It was too much for them to bear though they did not even know what exactly it was that they fled from.

The man approached the forum and greeted the people. They returned the greetings, as was their custom, but otherwise remained silent. Anticipating their questions and understanding their inability to spell them out at the moment, he said: "I've been to the woods." Nobody said anything, but more people left the forum now, being more conscious than the previous lot why they did it. Nobody ever came from the woods alive, or dead for that matter. Nobody in their right mind would go into the woods in the first place, least of all someone like that man. So either he was lying to them which was incomprehensible and unbearable, or he was telling the truth and then ... then it was even more incomprehensible and unbearable.

But many remained, and one of them could even manage a question: "Well?" "I went through the woods up to the rocks." At this point more people left, but those who stayed behind remained silent. The man realised there would be no more questions, at least for the time being, and decided to go ahead with his story, making pauses in case people wanted to ask or say something or just leave. He was right. When he said, "And then I climbed up to the top of the highest rock," many more people left some of them grumbling and shaking their heads.

And the situation repeated itself many times, at every new turn of the man's story, at every pause he made. Some people were confused and could not understand what he was talking about, some found it outrageous, and others just did not want to know. But behind these various reasons for leaving the forum there were overall discomfort and unease at hearing something which might shake or even shatter the security and harmony of their accustomed way of life. Many people were uncharacteristically angry with the man for doing it to them, though other 'rejectionists' were more forgiving, attributing his story to some mysterious illness that had afflicted him. But there was something else which none of them noticed at the time. The man's story apart, the very fact of his disappearance and then reappearance much later, posed some new questions – *and they did not wish to pursue them*. It had never happened before.

But the man continued his story for those few who were prepared to listen to him. He told them that when at the top, he closely examined the guidance. He related to them the difficulties he had experienced in doing it and those he was experiencing now in conveying his findings to them. The only mechanical device they knew was a lever, but he had to explain to them the workings of a most sophisticated mechanism. Not only their knowledge and comprehension were inadequate for this task, but their language did not contain the words which could describe his findings.

As the man had to adapt their language the best he could, coining, as he did, new words, he also introduced some names which he learnt while there. The guidance itself was called CLOCK, the moving objects – HANDS, the flat round surface – FACE, and the marked positions – HOURS. He explained that there was a profound reason why there were twelve marked Hours on the Clock and gave them some indications of an inner connection between the Clock and the other guidance.

When the people heard that the Hands were rotated not by the invisible wind as they had thought but by the visible CLOCKWORK, they asked the man why they

could not see it from the valley. The man explained that the Clockwork was behind the Face and could be only seen from the other side of the Clock. But these *behind* and *the other side* were incomprehensible to them. Their perception of reality was simple and straightforward: *What You See Is What You Get. If you do not see it, it is not there.*

But the most difficult thing in the man's story to relate was his encounter with the CLOCKMAKER and his ASSISTANTS who were so different to them in every respect and yet were related to them in some profound way. He repeated again and again to those few who were still listening to him that what he was telling them now was just a general and brief account of his long journey and many discoveries. They needed many more meetings and discussions together for him to be able to relate and explain all the facts and for them to understand them.

The people found it sensible. But before ending this extraordinary meeting and deciding on any further discussions with the man they wanted him to answer some of their inevitable questions. How did he manage to get to the top of the rock when everybody knew that it was impossible to make even a few safe steps into the depth of the woods? Why was he telling them all these new, difficult and confusing things? Why did they have to know about them? And, finally: How could they know, without actually going there themselves which they knew was absolutely impossible, that he was telling the truth? How could they verify it?

The man was delighted with these questions. They showed him that these people took his story seriously, and all his strivings and ordeals were not in vain. But when he was about to give his answers a few individuals stepped forward and declared their wish to address the gathering first. And what they said astonished everyone – they *had already known* about the Clock and its Clockwork!

Their knowledge constituted an ancient and secret tradition, and it was passed from generation to generation. Though the recipients of the knowledge did not know its origin or understand all the details, they knew and understood perfectly well why it was necessary. It was an indispensable guidance and safeguard for the welfare of the community. It could not be given openly and to everyone because of the danger of being misused or abused through ignorance or even ill intent. Therefore only very few and special individuals in each generation could be entrusted with it. And those few guarded it with their lives.

Therefore, at the forum, they listened to the man first with apprehension and then with dismay. Irrespective of the man's adventures in the woods and on the rock, which might or might not be true, how could he betray the secret and precious knowledge whatever the way he came by it? Did he understand what he was doing? He must shut up immediately, for the sake of the community if he still cared about it!

The others listened to these revelations and the impassioned plea with disbelief and concern, but the man understood the appellants' anxiety. He knew these distinguished individuals though he had no knowledge of their special status before his journey to the rock. There he learned about the secret tradition and its significance (and that it was inaugurated by the Clockmaker himself!). But he also learned that it had run its course now and should be replaced by a new knowledge about the Clock, open and widely available, and more detailed and comprehensive.

However unpalatable it could be for the bearers of the old tradition the man had to say it to them, and to all others. Then he added: "What I've been telling you so far and what I intend to tell you further, is the result of my own experience and work, my own aspirations and endeavours. The knowledge I'm imparting to you is my own; I'm not indebted or accountable for it to anybody here. What I do with it – is my own responsibility." After hearing all this more people left including all tradition bearers but one who was determined to get to the truth whatever it took him. And now the man

could address the posed questions, and his answers can be rendered nowadays as follows.

"For a long time prior to my endeavour I had felt that it might, in fact should, be possible to explore the woods. Even the history of our community taught us that what was impossible yesterday becomes possible today and even becomes desirable or necessary tomorrow. I examined the woods from the outside very carefully and discovered a hidden opening. I decided that with appropriate preparations I could make the first few steps into the woods quite safely. And this I did. I directly came back but later ventured a little bit further, and then still further, coming back every time. I found a precarious but passable path throughout the woods and managed to negotiate it without disturbing the beasts. When I reached the rocks I started looking for a way to the top of the highest one, my ultimate destination. I did find it, equally perilous, *on the other side* of the rock (therefore you couldn't see me climbing it).

"I didn't wish to tell anybody of my plans and preparations. I didn't want to cause any controversy (as we witnessed tonight) prematurely, especially as I wasn't at all sure of the success. I also knew that my endeavour was fraught with danger, and I didn't want to involve anybody in it. Besides, I suspected, and I was proved right, that this journey could be successfully accomplished by one person only. In fact, it is impossible to carry it out otherwise, even in the company of one. In due time I shall tell you of my journey in every detail and even draw a detailed map with all the pitfalls and dangerous places and with the instructions and advice on how to overcome them for those who would like to follow in my footsteps.

"As to your second question, the answer is very simple and complicated at the same time. You know how important this daily guidance, the Clock, is for our community. It is our lifeline, without it we wouldn't be able to conduct our daily life properly and would have lost all orientation in the world. Therefore it was made for us in the first place by the Clockmaker and his Assistants. All these hundreds of years they have been maintaining and repairing it and winding it up (I'll explain later what it means), so that it could serve us properly.

"When I met the Clockmaker and spoke with him he surprised me by saying that he had expected a visitor from our community. And he has a message for us which he asked me to convey to you. He and his Assistants have been given a new and important task and they want us to take over looking after the Clock. They are sure that we are capable of doing it, though not yet at present. But we'll have to start preparing ourselves for this task immediately. The first step in this preparation is to familiarise ourselves with the details and intricacies of the Clockwork, as I shall gradually relate them to you. Then you should prepare yourselves for your individual journeys to the top of the Rock. There you should learn how to communicate and converse with the Clockmaker and his Assistants so as to undergo a clock maintenance apprenticeship under their guidance.

"Now the question of verification. There are different ways in which you can ascertain the truth of my message. But tonight I'll mention just one, the most telling and dramatic. As I told you, the Clockmaker and his Assistants have already started to withdraw from their task of looking after the Clock. They are not winding it up any longer. It means that the Clock started gradually slowing down and it will stop completely if not rewound again. You can observe this process for yourselves. At the moment it is very slow and hardly perceptible and it doesn't yet affect our life very much. But it won't be long before the process becomes noticeable and pernicious. It would be better not to leave it that late."

The silence, after these words, was palpable. Nobody wished to break it. And it was in this quiet and contemplative mood that the man and his few listeners left the forum.

THE ANTHROPOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

The Theosophical Stage

The lecture on Nietzsche given by Steiner in the summer of 1900 before a theosophical audience can be considered the beginning of the Anthroposophical Movement, though it took some years and many events before the phenomenon, let alone the term, came into being.

As destiny had it, at the inception of what was to become the Anthroposophical Movement Rudolf Steiner did not stand alone. By his side stood a person without whom the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, and the Anthroposophical Movement itself if it ever at all came into being, would have been different, even after Steiner's death. This person, of a noble German-Baltic stock and a Russian by birth, was a remarkable woman, Marie von Sivers. So different in background, upbringing and personality, they formed a truly harmonious, fruitful, lifelong relationship – a unity, in fact, and at times she was the only person who really understood him.

Marie von Sivers was Steiner's trusted and faithful co-worker, assistant, friend, comrade, confidant, his future wife, heiress to his literary estate and publisher of his works. The combination of a sensitive artistic nature and sharp insightful mind, purposefulness and strong will, organisational skills and level-headedness made her indispensable for pioneering and establishing, together with Steiner, a new spiritual movement. In fact it was the profound question she put to him about the urgent necessity to have a scientific-spiritual movement in Europe that confirmed him in his decision not to "remain silent". And when Rudolf Steiner, entering his "predestined element", became the General Secretary of the German Section of the Theosophical Society (1902), it was Marie von Sivers who became its Secretary and who, according to Steiner, was destined to take its leadership into firm hands. For Steiner it was of paramount importance as "Marie von Sivers was *the* person who, through her very nature, would protect our work from sectarianism, enabling it to find its rightful place in the general stream of cultural life".

For Steiner that period of two years signified a fundamental change. At the beginning of it he was, with his spiritual mission, a lonely figure without any definite prospect of ever realising it. Now he not only had a keen though small audience for his spiritual message, but found himself in a prominent official position within a well established international spiritual society and movement. Though he never sought that position and even at first declined to accept it, nevertheless it afforded him some practical possibilities and advantages which are particularly helpful at the initial stages of one's pioneering enterprise. But was he not at the same time sacrificing his independence and compromising his own cause which he had been so faithfully and consistently pursuing for so many years? After all he had to place himself within the structure and framework of the entity created by somebody else out of different impulses and for different purposes, had to accept their tenets, speak in their name and even use their terminology (one of his seminal books published in 1904 he called *Theosophy* – he probably would have called it differently a few years later).

To understand Steiner's motives and actions in that matter one should see them also in a wider spiritual evolutionary context. In the previous chapter it was described, by way of quoting Steiner, what the situation was in the world with regard to knowledge of the spirit up to the end of the 19th century. It still existed within "small circles of people". They no longer could be called Mystery Centres but became known as Lodges or Orders, Brotherhoods or Communities, Societies or Leagues. The difference in names, new and old, reflected much deeper differences in substance. In the Mystery Centres the spiritual knowledge was received and

confirmed through a direct contact with the World of Spirit and was a matter of personal experience. Now that ancient knowledge was preserved and cultivated as a precious heritage and was conveyed, explained and assimilated through symbols. But for those who had access to it, it was still sacred and real, something to be treasured and guarded.

At the same time, as materialism reached its peak obliterating any notion of spirit, many of those initiated in this sacred knowledge felt, as Rudolf Steiner did some fifty years later, that it was their duty towards humanity to do something about it so that man should become aware of the reality of the World of Spirit, both outside and within him. But they were also conscious of the danger of this knowledge, upon becoming public, being misunderstood, ridiculed and abused. So to safeguard its passage into the public domain it was decided not to make it available as such, but rather demonstrate and prove the existence of the spiritual world through some of its manifestations in the physical world; so that people could see the working of spirit, as it were, 'with their own eyes'. To this end mediumship and spiritualism were to be employed. Used as agents, the mediums were supposed to reveal and demonstrate true spiritual laws working in nature. And if that endeavour proved to be successful, further and more substantial revelations concerning the World of Spirit could be shared.

But the endeavour failed completely. To begin with, the mediums, with their atavistic clairvoyance, lacked proper methods of entering the spiritual realm and reliable means for discerning and understanding their supersensible visions. Also they added subjective elements to both their distorted visions and their accounts of them. Besides, the mediums themselves were influenced by the environment and by other people especially by those who used them for bringing communications from the spiritual world. Among the latter happened to be individuals, and groups, who manipulated the mediums in order to use them for their own ideological objectives which had nothing to do with the original genuine and selfless intentions. Thus the noble endeavour became corrupted by those who executed and misused it to their own ends.

On the other hand the attempt was also failed on the part of those for whose sake it was undertaken – the supposed recipients of spiritual knowledge, 'mankind'. Though spiritualism aroused great interest at the time, became very popular and widespread and even turned into an international movement, there was very little genuine understanding of whatever spiritual phenomena did manifest themselves through it. Materialistic attitude had such a firm grip on people's perception and way of thinking that it did not allow anything else to exist in the world apart from what was material. Yes, people could acknowledge the existence of some phenomena that could not be perceived by our senses. But then these 'spiritual' phenomena would be nothing other than a finer form of physical matter which one day would be detected by a more sophisticated man-made instrument. To talk about 'the spirit' in any other sense would be superstitious and unscientific.

Eventually the failure was recognised and deeply regretted by the sincere guardians of the ancient knowledge, and their gallant attempt to enlighten mankind had to be aborted, at least for the time being. However, they continued to use mediums for their own purposes, as their only means to enter the World of Spirit to amplify their knowledge of it. They simply did not have, nor did they ever conceive of, any other means, and whatever new information they received in that way, it was accepted at its face value.

At the same time, outside those circles, there were individuals who genuinely sought the spirit. In their quest some of them turned to the spiritualist movement only to become disappointed and disconcerted by what they found there. Among them was a person who herself was a very special medium – Madame H.P. Blavatsky. She

was a genuine and powerful clairvoyant, honest and with a formidable memory capable of retaining, unlike most of her fellow mediums, her wide-ranging and in many cases correct supersensible visions. It was on those visions which she made available, along with oral communications, in books and articles, that she founded, together with her associates, the Theosophical Society. (The title came from the name 'theosophy', 'divine wisdom' in Greek, under which the ancient knowledge of the spirit was known and which Blavatsky also adopted for her teachings. Bringing this knowledge into the public domain for the first time, as she did, required no small amount of courage for which Blavatsky should also be credited.)

The Theosophical Society was both public and esoteric, and what distinguished Blavatsky and her colleagues from their predecessors was that they made public not their internal mediumistic work but its results. It was a correct procedure. Unfortunately, Blavatsky's perceptions which were not sustained by rigorous scientific training, precise thinking and clear consciousness were fraught with many mistakes and distortions. While her personal bias, sympathies and antipathies also distorted and made one-sided the powerful message she delivered. As the message was not her but that of Higher Spiritual Individualities she conveyed it without often understanding its content. Besides, she became a victim of some occult powers who in pursuance of their own interests were able to use and manipulate her and her remarkable occult gifts. As to her earthly creation, the Theosophical Society, it was not free, during her life and after her death in 1891, from internal strivings and problems.

Steiner was acutely aware of all those things. They were of no concern to him as he was pursuing his own path quite different from what was taking place within the Theosophical Society. He had never thought of joining forces with it or becoming its member, let alone its official. But he was happy to have theosophists with their genuine interest in the spirit as *his* audience to whom he could deliver *his* message. Nevertheless when a proposal was made to him to join the Society as leader of its German Section he declined it. However, he had to reconsider his refusal, not so much because of the persistent requests to accept, but because of the reality of the situation. Without Steiner as its head there might have been no German Section at all with inevitable adverse consequences for the spiritual work he had just begun. So in the end Steiner accepted the offer – on exactly the same terms on which he became a few years earlier, and still was at the time, a teacher at the College of the Workers' Educational Association: he would only do things, and do them in the way, he considered right (as the reader will have remembered, he speaks about both arrangements in the previous chapter).

The fact that made the decision to work within the framework of the Theosophical Society easier for him was that at the time vestiges of the living spirit were still discernible in it (notably, among the English rather than German theosophists). And though Steiner could not subscribe to many things that were taught and practiced in the Theosophical Society, there was no reason why he could not develop and teach, alongside of what he found objectionable, his own mode of spiritual science. There is also a spiritual principle of succession and continuity according to which a new impulse should be linked, if possible, to something which already exists before being developed further and independently. Besides there was a hope that wider circles of the Theosophical Society and even its leadership would, in time, recognise and accept, as did those few around him, the genuine spiritual message he was bringing to the world. Thus it happened that Steiner began his inaugural work on the creation of a new spiritual movement within the one that already existed and that he could not fully embrace.

If the unacceptable theosophical tenets were something Steiner could ignore or circumvent, at least for the time being, there emerged other adverse factors which

could not be ignored and which were much more difficult to deal with. Admittedly, they were not specific to the Theosophical Society, and Steiner would have encountered them even if he had started building his movement outside it. In fact, he had never been free from them until the very end, and they have always been the main undoing of his work, even today. But at the initial stage they presented an almost insurmountable obstacle to the extent that Steiner was on the point of giving up his public spiritual work even before he started it in earnest. These phenomena, collectively, were nothing other than what goes under the name of 'a human factor'.

Its manifestations varied depending on individuals, circumstances and time, but they all had one common denominator: people were not up to the task and responsibility that the new spiritual knowledge entailed for them. This new knowledge required not just an ability to accumulate new facts and information; it required primarily new consciousness, new understanding and new attitudes. Otherwise one would end up with the proverbial new wine and old bags.

What was more, at the inception of his work with theosophists Steiner observed how the sublime knowledge he divulged to them turned some individuals into worse human beings and, in fact, into "the worst materialists", than they would have been without it. This painful personal experience was confirmed by the admonition from the higher Spiritual Authorities of which he wrote to Marie von Sivers in 1905: "And not a day passes when the Masters do not give a clear warning: 'Be careful, think of the unpreparedness of your time. You have children before you and it is your destiny to reveal elevated secret teachings to children. Be aware that through your words you are raising wrongdoers.'" So his decision not to "remain silent" brought in its wake a new burden of responsibility, new pain and, most importantly, new doubts. They were only allayed by a further counsel from the same source as Steiner revealed in his extraordinary confession made in the selfsame letter: "I can only say that had the Master not convinced me that, in spite of all this, theosophy is necessary for our age, I would only have written philosophical books and lectured on literature and philosophy even *after* 1901."

But having resolved to carry on with his mission Steiner wished to convey to his closest and destined collaborator not only his own determination, but also the encouragement and support both from himself and from those lofty and mighty Powers that stood behind him. So he concluded his letter with the following words: "My dearest, remain strong ... only through our *strength* are we sure of the help of the exalted Masters. You know I say *this* as soberly, as collectedly as if it were the most ordinary thing in life. 'Stay *strong* and *lucid*', this is what the Masters say every day."*

Thus we can see how very fragile, how truly touch-and-go the situation was concerning the most important evolutionary event of our time. And it could not be otherwise for it touched the very nerve of the present God-Man relationship, of divine providence vis-à-vis human freedom, of *God proposes vis-à-vis Man disposes*. Steiner spoke a lot about human freedom – not only civil, but above all spiritual and moral. And he showed that this type of freedom takes precedence over everything, even over loftiest principles and divine commandments. But how does it tally with

* A few years later, when the Anthroposophical Movement was well established, Steiner spoke to his followers in the same spirit and of the same Spiritual Powers albeit in different words: "[...] we must continue what has been already attempted for some time in our anthroposophical movement. What we are doing in this movement has not arisen from any arbitrary spirit – not from any programme drawn up merely by this or that man. Spiritual life is traced back ultimately to those sources which we seek in the individualities whom we call the 'Masters of Wisdom and of the Harmony of Feelings'. Through them, if we search rightly, we shall find the impulse which will enable us to work as we ought to work, from epoch to epoch, from age to age."

one's "predestined element", or, more specifically, how was this apparent collision resolved in his own case?

In one of his expositions on the correlation between what man brings into his life as his destiny and his freedom Steiner drew a simile of someone living in a house: the house was designed and built by somebody else, but how the person lives in it is up to him. In Steiner's case it may be said that the following pivotal events in his life, to name just a few, – his first contact with the Master of whose existence he did not even know prior to that, an offer to edit a magazine in Berlin, an invitation to speak to theosophists and then to become their leader, his meeting with Marie von Sivers and her profound question, – all those events were "predestined" as the bricks of which the house of his destiny was built for him. His decisions to take upon himself the Divine Mission, not to "remain silent", join the Theosophical Society as leader and embark on building a spiritual movement – all those were free deeds of his life within his 'destiny house'.

Nobody could, would or did force him into any of those actions. Even the Master did not *tell* him what to do, but had to *convince* him – again not about his actions which belonged to the sphere of human freedom, but about spiritual facts where spiritual knowledge rules. Had the Master failed to convince Steiner there would have been no Anthroposophical Movement and no Anthroposophy, the Divine Know-How, at least at that time.

As it happened, this extraordinary council at the inception of the Anthroposophical Movement was mirrored by another one nearly a quarter of a century later which marked a turning point in its history. We shall speak about it in some detail in due course, but it might be mentioned at this point that on that occasion the situation reversed itself: it was Steiner who undertook an action affecting the spiritual world without its prior consent and approval. It was Steiner's turn now to try and convince the Spiritual Powers That Be that his action was necessary, appropriate and prudent.

Remarkable and unique as they were those occurrences show what extraordinary trust the spiritual world has in man. Of course in the case of Steiner this trust, as everything else connected with him, was exceptional. But the trust as such, the reliance on man, even dependence on him, and the profound effects his earthly actions have on the spiritual world, are not exceptional. They are everyday reality, 'a spiritual commonplace', of which man is blissfully unaware at present. And it is the task of Anthroposophy to turn this ignorance into awareness which might not at all be blissful but rather painful, at least to begin with.

This general and universal task of giving spiritual knowledge to all humanity spells something very specific for each and every individual – *change, transformation, renewal*. It is a threefold renewal: of the individual himself, of his relationship with the spiritual world, and of his environment. Had there been no individuals with a reciprocal threefold aspiration, however nebulous and modest, there would have been no Anthroposophical Movement. The turbulent relationships between these tasks and individual endeavours – being now their fruitful convergence and now their reprehensible mismatch and resulting both in superb achievements and in abysmal failures – constitute its history.

The first renewal task signifies "a new attitude of soul" which presupposes both the moral development and the development of a new consciousness and thinking. The second renewal task requires entering into a conscious and reciprocal relationship with the spiritual world by developing the latent organs of supersensible perception. The third renewal task concerns the arrangement of one's life and activities, whatever their scope and nature, in accord with the spiritual reality, so as to facilitate a renewal of culture and the social fabric of the society.

It must be emphasized that these tasks are not some declared precepts or principles, let alone a 'programme' or 'manifesto', issued by Steiner. They are the consequence of the Divine Message and are present today as an objective reality and the demands of our time, though the way they are perceived, formulated and presented here is the author's own.

As for Steiner, he had, in this respect, his own three major tasks. The first one was, of course, to deliver to mankind the Divine Message, Anthroposophy. Another was to help those around him with their individual evolutionary tasks described above. And the third was to partake, as everyone else, in practical renewal of culture.

In fulfilment of his first task, Steiner had to lay the foundation of Anthroposophy, i.e. to give basic facts about the spiritual world and its inhabitants; about the origin of life, of man and the world and about their past, present and future; about a true physical-spiritual nature of man, his life in the spiritual world and its connection with the earthly life; and about other essential aspects of man's and the world's existence. For this purpose he and Marie von Sivers founded a monthly periodical. Steiner was its editor and main contributor, and she did the correspondence. His series of articles and monthly instalments were published later, by their own Publishing Company founded again by Marie von Sivers, as his fundamental anthroposophical books.

Though the conditions under which that work took place were very primitive (for instance, they did themselves all the packaging and posting of the printed copies which they took to the post office in laundry baskets), the circulation of the magazine increased very rapidly. Some editions had even to be reprinted, and every issue would bring new subscribers. Yet an extraordinary thing happened – at the peak of its popularity the publication of the magazine ceased. The reason for it was no less extraordinary in the history of mass media – editor's lack of time.

But lack of time – for what? For the most important thing in his life for which all the previous years had been a preparation, expectation and yearning? What could possibly be more important for him than his Divine Mission and at the time when it just started to receive a tangible recognition and understanding? Extraordinary as that occurrence was, Steiner's reason for it might seem equally peculiar, but for him it was straightforward. It was the selfsame Mission, which required now a shift in its mode of delivery. As there was an ever increasing demand for Steiner's written word, the same was true for his oral one, for his lectures, to the extent that it became impossible to cope with both. Why he yielded to the latter at the expense of the former, why his oral word took precedence for him over his written one, we shall speak about later. In the meantime let us see how Steiner's lecturing activity developed.

The reader will have remembered that it was his lecture given on their invitation that marked Steiner's first contact with German theosophists. And it was on the strength of his further lectures to them that they requested him to become their leader. And it was again through lecturing that he, in his new capacity, started to build up a spiritual movement.

The beginning was very modest indeed. Even the inaugural meeting of the German Section of the Theosophical Society gathered only fifty people from the whole of Germany, which at the time was considered a very good number. There were about twenty active members, but even with the public audiences taken into account Steiner sometimes had to lecture to just a few individuals. Also the lectures were held at the premises not always suitable for the purpose, like, for instance, private homes. But there were more peculiar venues, one looking like a stable, another having precarious gaps in the floor, and sometimes the most sublime communications from the world of spirit would come to the listeners against the background of the outside traffic or clinking beer glasses.

Almost from the beginning, in parallel to lecturing to the members of the Theosophical Society, Steiner started to give public lectures with the explicitly spiritual content. Those different audiences shared a genuine interest in the spirit and desire to know more about the spiritual world. If his written word was meant to meet the general and objective spiritual needs of the present time, in his listeners Steiner encountered spiritual needs which were specific and subjective and which he had to satisfy by the appropriate content of his lectures. Thus Anthroposophy had this objective-subjective origin, though its content came, of course, from the same objective source.

Those inner needs to see what light the spirit can shed on various cultural and life phenomena gave birth to the most diverse anthroposophical subject-matter. It also happened that certain needs and interests, whether artistic, scientific, philosophical, or religious (later many practical ones were added to them), became predominant at one place or another, or would be shared by one or another group of people. Often one single lecture led to a series of lectures on a particular subject, and those to the creation of a study group or a centre. To address all those diverse needs Steiner very soon became a peripatetic lecturer going on his lecture tours first to different towns in Germany and then all over Europe.

Both his theosophical and public audiences grew very rapidly. So did the size of the venues required for his lectures. In later years, according to Marie Steiner, "whenever he spoke the most capacious halls were filled to overflowing" (with the audiences of several thousand), and at times the street with the lecture hall "had to be closed to the wheeled traffic, because of the enormous concourse of people." If even with regard to the general public "the attention of the widest circles became centred upon him, he was everywhere the topic of the conversation", one should be hardly surprised at the enormous demand upon Steiner and his message by his followers. His lecturing to them intensified to the extent that in its final stage, before his grave illness put an end to it, Steiner was giving four-five lectures a day – not just odd ones, but concurrent lecture courses on completely different subjects.

All in all, Steiner gave some 6,000 lectures most of which had been recorded (he always delivered them ad-lib). He never intended them for publication and when asked, was against having them printed as he found the mode of oral presentation inappropriate for written rendering. Besides, he did not have time to check and correct the transcripts of shorthand records of his lectures. But in the end he consented to the members' numerous and persistent requests to have his lectures in written form as a study and reference material. Also, even with inevitable inaccuracies, omissions and imperfections, these transcripts presented a lesser evil than all manner of unavoidable amateurish substitutes which would have started circulating otherwise. At the same time Steiner stipulated that a clear distinction should always be made between his books and printed lectures.

Steiner's Complete Works number over 350 volumes of which less than ten percent constitute his written works. One might wonder whether it was the most efficient use of time and energy on the part of someone who had so much to give and who had such a strong sense of the importance of his message. This discrepancy between the magnitude of the message and the paucity of the recipients was evident from the very beginning when Steiner had to lecture to the audiences which numerically were at best modest and at worst just meagre. Also Steiner often fell a victim to bad local organisation of his lectures which contributed to poor attendance and other problems. But if this could be accepted as an inevitable and temporary stage of development, there was another aspect of his lecturing activity which was not limited to that period only. By lecturing to different and new audiences Steiner often had to go over the same material again and again (or to give the same lecture twice if the lecture hall could not seat all the listeners at once). Though no

presentation had ever been identical, still those repetitions consumed valuable time and efforts which otherwise would have been used for advancing new knowledge. But these factors apart, whatever was the intensity of Steiner's lecturing activity and the size of his audiences, the latter could never come near that of the readership of his written word.

Also, on a personal level, a peripatetic lecturer could not be an easy life occupation when trains and cars (serving also as 'reading' and 'study' rooms), hotels and other people's homes, irregular meals and various inconveniences (including cold rooms!), became part of one's life. To say nothing about a punishing schedule of lecturing, especially for someone who sustained a loss of voice on a number of occasions. To that should be added Steiner's other simultaneous major activities: an intensive and deepening spiritual research, an extensive reading and studying, writing and editing, creating new artistic and architectural forms, working with groups and individuals, issuing instructions and providing personal advice to a never ending stream of visitors, giving interviews and conducting conversations, even at meals, – with a consequent necessity to often work the whole night through and yet remain forever active and creative. Could lecturing, then, be reduced if not altogether stopped?

But personal factor aside, would it not be better, for posterity and for Steiner's mission, if instead of 6,000 he gave, say, 1,000 lectures and wrote another several dozen books, with systematic presentation of material and without any errors and unnecessary repetitions? Especially bearing in mind that had Steiner's wish for his oral communications to remain just that been adhered to, we would have had now, as a tangible result of his titanic work for a quarter of a century, only a few basic books. Indispensable as they are, any serious student of spiritual science would be horrified at the mere thought that the inestimable wealth of anthroposophical knowledge contained in Steiner's lectures might not have been available now. But even writing of these fundamental books competed with lecturing. The publication of the most seminal one, *Occult Science*, which for the reader contains 'the whole of Anthroposophy' and for Steiner represented "a sort of compendium of everything which had been put forward" by him to date, was delayed by five years! The reason? Steiner gives it to his readers: "Only the absolute necessity of uninterrupted lecturing activity by the author has delayed the publication of this book for so long." And in acknowledgement of book's importance he continues: "Now it is to be made available to the public whatever the cost."

Surely Steiner did not wish to deprive humanity of this wealth when giving it was a sole purpose of his life. So why then did he arrange it as he did? What did he have in mind? Why transient oral communications, his lectures, were so important to him that they took precedence over the indelible written word? Is not the pen mightier than the sword?

One can take this line of questioning still further, to the ultimate question: Why at all did Steiner need a live audience, or any audience for that matter? We know, as was outlined earlier, that he did need a quest for his message before he could start delivering it. But as soon as Steiner ascertained the need for his message, or even in anticipation of this need as an evolutionary necessity, why, instead of making the delivery of his message dependant on external arrangements, circumstances and potential audiences, did he not make it dependant, as everything else in his life, on himself alone? Why did he not deliver it in writing, in the quietude of his study away from the commotion and distractions of modern life, systematically and consistently, as he thought fit, gradually developing it in scope and depth thus creating a sort of a comprehensive 'Encyclopaedia of the Science of Spirit'? These are not idle or hypothetical questions – an answer to them is of no less profound significance than the content of Steiner's message.

Steiner referred to his lecturing activity as his “spiritual calling”. As an answer to the above questions this designation from the lips of any other person would have been rather whimsical, if not altogether irresponsible. But in Steiner any significant personal trait was in keeping with his mission, and the only reason for that calling of his being there was that it was called for. Personal though it was, its objective necessity was confirmed by Steiner himself: “This way of working for the Anthroposophical Movement through the word will always be the most important, the most significant, the most indispensable way.” Why? Here is the answer: “When spoken in the right sense each word in anthroposophy is a request that the spirit may descend to men.” And when this happens, it stimulates the change, the transformation, the renewal spoken of earlier.

When giving what was meant for the whole humanity to but a handful of individuals, Steiner realised, of course, that the time he had for delivering his immense and profound message was limited and that after the end of his activity his communications from the spiritual world could only be found in his few basic books. But though each of these books was capable of setting the required *change-transformation-renewal* in train, they were to contain but a part of Steiner’s message. The other part was to live in those individuals to whom ‘the spirit descended’ through Steiner’s word and who would take it further and pass on in a likewise manner, perhaps even supplementing it with their own spiritual insights. It was vital for Steiner’s mission to succeed that he left as his legacy not only written words of wisdom but also the largest possible number of individuals who would carry this wisdom within themselves as a living reality, or even as a direct spiritual experience.

Hence Steiner’s tireless peripatetic lecturing – he wished to reach with his word every individual who wanted to hear his message. Obviously those individuals were not confined to the modest membership of the Theosophical Society; therefore lecturing on spiritual matters to the public was for Steiner not less, but in a certain sense even more important. Though he could not address the audiences unfamiliar with esoteric knowledge in the same way in which he spoke to theosophists, those audiences were the main source of the appreciative listeners who understood and accepted his spiritual message. Some of them joined the Theosophical Society and many became later part and parcel of the Anthroposophical Movement.

At the same time the small but consistent and ever increasing theosophical audience provided continuity and allowed Steiner to build up and develop anthroposophical knowledge on a par with any scientific knowledge promulgated in any academic establishment. His serious students gradually but steadily deepened and widened their knowledge and comprehension of spiritual facts and were taken by him ever further along that never-ending path.

But some older members felt uncomfortable vis-à-vis this new knowledge. It was not so much the spiritual facts presented by Steiner, some of which they did find at odds with their own notions of the spiritual world or altogether unacceptable; it was Steiner himself, his source of spiritual knowledge. They knew of the ancient spiritual knowledge preserved throughout millennia, and of a new one, obtained, through a special mediumistic procedure, by such an exceptional personality as the founder of their Society who was inspired by some holy men of the Orient. And now there stood before them a comparatively young man with enormous knowledge in various fields, who did not look like a medium but who divulged most sublime and profound spiritual knowledge with confidence and authority.

What was the source of his knowledge? Who was the medium behind it? Such questions were actually put to Steiner, and he answered them, publicly, by a series of articles in the aforementioned magazine. The articles were later published as a book with that poignant question as a title, of the book itself and of its first chapter – *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?*

With the publication of this book Steiner, in the first instance, presented to the world his credentials by stating who he was – a spiritual scientist, what he was doing – investigating the spiritual world, and how he was doing it – by the scientific methods of observation and verification identical to those used by natural scientists investigating their fields of research. (Though the methods are identical the tools are different since they are determined, as in any field, by the object of investigation.) Everyone can now see what is involved in spiritual investigation and whether its methods, and the results they yield, can be considered credible. But, above all, by presenting these modern methods of spiritual investigation, most suitable for our time, Steiner invited every individual to follow in his footsteps and see and *experience* for himself what hitherto had been granted to a very few exceptional individuals only. This invitation is, in fact, an admonition from the spiritual world which was designated above as the second anthroposophical task. And Steiner felt duty bound – as his own second major task – to do his utmost to help those who responded to it.

He formulated it in the following succinct way at the very outset of his spiritual enterprise: “I wish to build on that force that allows me to set esoteric pupils on their path of development. That alone will be the significance of my inaugural deed”. The force he is referring to is Anthroposophy, his Divine Message, and the path of development is the path to the spiritual world, the source of Anthroposophy. No wonder, especially in the light of what was said earlier, that Steiner attached to that task of his such significance.

As such, those tasks did not signify anything new in human evolution. As long as the ancient spiritual knowledge existed, there existed ways of acquiring it. As well as those who knew how to do it and how to instruct others in this. But in the essence everything was new: the knowledge itself, the way of acquiring it, and, most significantly, that both should be accessible now to every human being living on earth. Hence Steiner’s inaugural deed resulted, in the first instance, in his inaugural book, *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?*

Nothing signified the transition from the old to the new better than the fact that such a book was written and made widely available. On the one hand, it serves as an esoteric 'manual', an occult know-how, for building a bridge and communication channel between the two worlds. On the other, it is a wise and caring teacher, whose instructions are both universal and personal. And a guardian and teacher it must be for the path to the Higher Worlds is fraught with enormous difficulties and dangers. The dangers might affect not only the aspirant himself but, via him, the spiritual world and humanity.

The difficulties are twofold. Some stem from the fact that one has to create in this case not something external, however hard that might be, but one's own internal skills and abilities. The others are that simultaneously, or even beforehand, one should acquire some *moral qualities* as stated by Steiner with all clarity: “For every *one* step forward that you take in seeking knowledge of occult truths, take *three* steps forward in the improvement of your own character towards the good.” Thus, this book shows that man’s two evolutionary tasks, the renewal of one’s inner being and of one’s relationship with the spiritual world, are virtually inseparable; and it also is an indispensable source of help for both of them.

Those around Steiner who wished to follow the inner path of development became his pupils receiving from him personal advice, instructions, special exercises or texts for meditation. Those were individual, one-to-one contacts and tuition. But there was also a different schooling, of two types.

M-me Blavatsky, in keeping with the ancient tradition and out of her own impulse, set up, within the Theosophical Society, an Esoteric School for a limited number of individuals. To those she imparted some esoteric knowledge which, in her

view, could not be given to the general public. That profound knowledge had always, and in that case as well, been kept in strict secrecy from the outside world.

When Steiner joined the Theosophical Society its Esoteric School was still in existence, and he was immediately admitted to it and made its leader in Germany. Soon he was granted a high rank within it with the right to admit new members. His reason for joining the School was, firstly, to apprise for himself of what was taking place within the organisation in which he now held an official position; secondly, he again followed the principle of linking the new with what historically was already there. But as with the Society at large, the contents, practices and objectives of the School were of no interest and even alien to him. He did not wish to promulgate some secretive antiquated knowledge and practices. Instead he wished to turn the German part of the School into a higher section for advanced anthroposophical knowledge which would enable him "to set esoteric pupils on their path of development" along the lines delineate in the above book.

In the Esoteric School which Steiner inherited there were four or five members in all Germany. But similar to the development of the Theosophical Society and the whole movement after Steiner joined it, the membership of the School grew very rapidly. Various groups were formed in different towns in Germany and other countries, and Steiner, apart from individual tuition, was giving to them lectures, talks and lessons. The connection of his newly established Esoteric School with that of the Theosophical Society was only external and was amicably severed in 1907. Steiner dissolved his own Esoteric School at the beginning of World War I in 1914.

Another type of esoteric schooling undertaken by Steiner at that time was connected with another esoteric tradition, that of a symbolic, ritual, cultic way of experiencing the spiritual world. Like some of the ancient Mystery knowledge, it survived until the modern times and was practiced in various Orders, the Freemasonry being one of the most prominent. And as the ancient imagery was devoid now of its original spiritual knowledge, so here too it was a form without content when people used words, symbols, objects and rituals completely unaware of their true spiritual meaning. Nevertheless that practice and tradition reflected a real inner need of some individuals, including theosophists, who wished to experience the spiritual reality right in their feelings and more immediately than laborious studies or persistent meditating could afford.

Some of those theosophists, members of various Orders, upon hearing Steiner's lectures on the subject, realised how shallow their practices were and who should be their real teacher in this sphere as well. So they asked him to renew the original ritual and found an independent organisation for this purpose.

Steiner recognised that need and responded positively to the request. But for him there was no question of reviving something old however valuable and beneficial it was in its time. For him a renewal meant a new spiritual content appropriate for a new stage of development and new tasks. Thus he intended to create a 'Cognitive Cult' uniting the earthly with the heavenly, the visible with the invisible. Or, to put it more specifically, it would be a visual and pictorial demonstrations of the experiences on the path to the spiritual world.

Just at that time he and Marie von Sivers were offered a leadership of one of the societies which cultivated the symbolic practice. They declined, but again out of the sense of historical continuity and "occult loyalty" Steiner agreed to link his nascent Cognitive Cult with that organisation. The link, like in the cases of the Theosophical Society and its Esoteric School, was to be not through the content but exclusively external. And formal, through the established procedure of issuing and signing a certificate and paying a fee. When all that was done, it was the end of the matter as far Steiner was concerned.

For him those formalities meant nothing, but the arrangements misfired. They were later used maliciously by some individuals to slander and falsely accuse Steiner. Distasteful and unpleasant as those consequences were, the episode itself was of no significance whatsoever for the Anthroposophical Movement and its history. It is mentioned here for a completely different reason. For two reasons, in fact.

One concerns Steiner. The episode can prompt, and apparently it did prompt, a question why he could not, with his supersensible vision, see through those individuals with whom he associated himself, see their true motives and foresee the consequences of the arrangements he could easily do without. Such questions concerning his supersensible abilities were put to Steiner also apropos some other, much more serious and far-reaching, events. Therefore it is important to know an answer, at least in that case when it was given by Steiner himself.

It is wrong and forbidden for a clairvoyant – we may add, let alone for a spiritual investigator of Steiner's rank, an Initiate, – to use his spiritual vision in 'earthly affairs' and for 'earthly purposes', particularly to 'investigate' other human beings (it would be like an unauthorised opening of a letter). Like any ordinary human being, in his daily contacts with other people Steiner had to use his normal faculties of perception and judgement. And like any decent person he had to presuppose decency and honesty in every human encounter unless the facts told him otherwise.

Apropos that particular episode it can be said that with hindsight Steiner should not have done what he did and that he misjudged some individuals – something each one of us does routinely in life. So that episode, if anything, can help – and this is the other reason for citing it here – find a right attitude to what came from Steiner an Initiate and from Steiner a human being. Neither should be accepted out of blind faith, however venerable one finds his supersensible and human qualities; but otherwise a clear distinction should be made between the two. Though the results of Steiner's spiritual investigation can and should, as he urged his followers to do, be scrutinised by our objective thinking powers, their ultimate verification can only be done through developing the same supersensible organs of perception which he possessed. While for evaluating and judging Steiner's human deeds and views, like those of other human beings, we already have, or at least should have, necessary faculties. This allows the present author to suggest, with all humility, that as a human being Steiner had his share of erroneous opinions, judgements and actions, and had, as all of us, to live in their consequences.

To come back to the Cognitive Cult Section of Steiner's Esoteric School, its membership grew on a par with his other enterprises. When it was dissolved in 1914 (and the abovementioned certificate was torn up) it had about 600 members.

The Split with the Theosophical Society

While Anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Movement were growing, developing and thriving, Theosophy, in parallel and comparison, was stagnating, diminishing and withering. But it was hardly surprising. Theosophy received its main substance and impetus from Blavatsky who was long since dead. Whereas Anthroposophy was coming into the world from its spiritual fountainhead with vigour and abundance, daily, bringing new incredible knowledge, opening new horizons, satisfying people's inner needs and quests, nurturing their souls and enriching their lives.

It goes without saying that Steiner did nothing to undermine the original theosophical teachings whatever his views of them were. The things simply took their natural course. As far as Steiner was concerned, Theosophy per se did not interest him before he began his anthroposophical activity, nor did it cause him any problems now. But theosophists did.

When they challenged and questioned Steiner about his source of spiritual knowledge, it was a legitimate enquiry, not a problem. While 'a human factor' mentioned earlier, that nearly forced Steiner to abandon his spiritual enterprise, continued to cause serious problems. They were in addition to those that he could expect and did encounter when presenting his spiritual message to the general public. Some are worth mentioning here since they still persist today and are most likely to be there for the foreseeable future.

To begin with, Steiner had to reckon with the genuine difficulties people usually experience on encountering something entirely new and different to what they are accustomed; especially if this new and different concerns something so far removed from their daily life and experience as spiritual facts. Still it is one thing to hear or read about these facts and another to fathom and assimilate them. The steady growth of the Anthroposophical Movement was a sure sign that many overcame those difficulties, but for some they proved insurmountable or even translated themselves into prejudice, rejection, animosity or even an open hostility. While for members of the clerical and scientific communities Steiner's message presented a 'professional' challenge threatening the very foundation of their value-system. Of course such a challenge is a healthy thing and a good opportunity to verify the worth and reliability of one's knowledge and beliefs. But not for those who are deeply entrenched in their dogmatic ways. When faced with a challenge they do not accept it but prefer to ignore or attack it. With regard to spiritual knowledge, that was the case for such people when Steiner introduced it, and it is still the case today.

But that was, to some extent, to be expected. However, encountering a lack of understanding, or a rejection, or an outright opposition to Steiner's message among theosophists was a different matter. Still some such attitudes were of a general nature and could be found in any group of people or community, but perhaps more so in those with a spiritual leaning: dogmatism and fanaticism, sectarianism and personalities' cult, triviality and dilettantism, insincerity and false sentimentality, stupidity and arrogance. But others were directly related to what Steiner tried to bring about.

Although his lectures and talks were mainly given in response to his audiences' wishes or inner needs, sometimes Steiner chose the subject matter out of his perception of the objective needs of the time and of mankind. But it did not always work – there were some spiritual facts and knowledge his theosophical audience did not want to hear or know about, and Steiner had to stop divulging them however important and timely he deemed them to be.

For some he was like an impostor who invaded *their* spiritual territory with his arbitrary communications. Many treated with suspicion his assertion that the spiritual world should be investigated with the fully awakened consciousness which for them was only appropriate when dealing with the physical world. Steiner's scientific approach to the spirit and the notion of spiritual science were alien to them. (Not to them alone and not only at that time. Also today, some people who might have a highly intelligent and scientific mind and believe, at the same time, in the supersensible reality, subscribe to the view that any knowledge of it can only be acquired subconsciously or in some kind of a 'poetic', 'meditative' or 'mediumistic' state of consciousness and not, at any rate, 'scientific'. In other words, this knowledge cannot be acquired as any other human knowledge, but can only be 'revealed to' or 'bestowed upon' man. Thus it cannot even be called knowledge but revelation or vision.) At the same time, with all their mistrust in human capacity to penetrate, through individual conscious effort, the spiritual reality and to understand it, the theosophists wished to prove to contemporary science the existence of the spiritual world and justify its investigation. But they intended to do it not through

illuminating the physical by revealing the spiritual behind it, but by dragging the matter into the spirit and explaining the latter by the means of the former.

Another sphere where the differences in understanding and attitude became soon apparent was art. In the Theosophical Society traditionally prevailed the view that art, as part of man's physical existence and activity, was void of the spirit and was therefore of a transitory nature and importance vis-à-vis the eternity of the spirit and man's life in the spiritual world. That perception might have been right about most of the contemporary art but not about art as such and its role in life and culture. True art always stems from the spirit, is permeated by it and is, in fact, its physical expression and revelation. As such it is capable not only of redeeming man's corrupted sense of aesthetics but also of bringing harmony to his soul life and even of healing social ills. And if, in the course of human evolution, art, on a par with everything else in man's life, has lost its spiritual substance, restoring it only makes it more urgent a task.

That was the view, and conviction, and aspiration of both leaders of the Anthroposophical Movement, and they were determined to undertake that task. And as they were in a position to do it, the renewal of art, very modest to begin with, was for Steiner the first opportunity of practically applying Anthroposophy to life. For Marie von Sivers art was her life, and thanks to her artistic background and earnest striving to renew contemporary art out of the living spirit incessantly streaming now via Rudolf Steiner, the results of their collaboration in this field were particularly fruitful. They started by cultivating poetry, recitation and declamation, i.e. developing the art of speech and speech formation, with Marie von Sivers giving recitations at various events and as supplements to Steiner's lectures.

Then followed the dramatic performances and a further development of the dramatic and performing art. Other artistic activities and innovations belong to a later stage with the artistic element becoming, as Steiner put it, a *vivifying power* within the Anthroposophical Movement. But one earlier event saw the first powerful manifestation of this element which also marked a watershed between the two movements.

The event was the international Theosophical Congress held in Munich in 1907 and organised by the German Section. Its arrangements and atmosphere were in patent contrast to solemn and sedate procedures of the previous Congresses held in different European cities. To begin with, the concert hall hired for the occasion exhibited a collection of paintings and sculpture and its interior was decorated in a special way. Steiner's intention was that its colour and form were to be an artistic reflection of the mood conveyed through the spoken word, and artistic surroundings were to form a unity with the spiritual activity taking place within them. Then the performance of *The Sacred Drama of Eleusis* by a French dramatist Edouard Schuré, with Marie von Sivers playing a major rôle, was included in the programme to evoke a connection with the ancient Mysteries. There was also a musical performance.

The decorations became the focus of the participants' interest and scrutiny, and Steiner conducted a special tour giving explanations on various visual artistic aspects of the created interior. The innovations caused different and even opposing reactions. Some greeted them with approval and enthusiasm while others, notably the old theosophists, did not hide their embarrassment, antipathy and hostility. That dichotomy between the old and the new went much deeper than what manifested itself outwardly in emotional attitudes to the novelty of the artistic element.

The Congress was attended by the newly elected President of the Theosophical Society, Annie Besant, who arrived from the Society's headquarters in Adyar, India. When she and Rudolf Steiner spoke at the Congress, it was evident that they represented two different spiritual streams. The difference in the

geographical location of their respective leaders and their activities, one being a backwater of modern life* and the other its very hub, was only an external expression of a more fundamental divergence. The origin and nature of the teaching Mrs Besant divulged was oriental and ancient belonging to the past. Its substance, even that part of it which was genuine, was getting fossilized and dogmatic. Steiner, on the other hand, was a modern European scientist of the living spirit, daily bringing out ever new and universally beneficial results of his investigations. One stream had only its rich past to resort to; the other, apart from the vibrant present, had a challenging and exciting future unfolding before it.

It was during that Congress that the aforementioned separation of the two Esoteric Schools was agreed upon. And not too soon, as Steiner clearly saw that by that time no vestige of real esotericism was left in the Theosophical Society. Also any hope that its leadership would understand the nature of his teachings, let alone accept them, had long since gone. But then why the separation of the Esoteric Schools only, why not of the two Movements themselves? Was it the case, as Steiner's enemies and slanderers were later asserting, that he needed the vehicle of the Theosophical Society for building a firm foundation for his Movement before he could become fully independent?

The answer is a categorical no. Neither at that time, nor five years later when the two Movements did part company, was it Steiner's intention to leave the Theosophical Society. Originally, after some hesitation, he made a historic link to it remaining a separate spiritual entity with his own tasks and objectives unconcerned and undeterred by what was taking place within that organisation. And he intended to continue in that vein as long as his own work was not obstructed or interfered with. That his intention was genuine and consistent was evident from a number of occurrences, some of which were mentioned earlier.

The first of them, 'a human factor' of the die-hard theosophists, caused Steiner a host of problems which he had to take on board, as he did the unfavourable reception of his artistic and other impulses and intentions. But there was one matter of contention which went to the very heart of his teachings, of his mission and, most importantly, of the world evolution. It was the understanding of the true nature and Mission of Christ, of which there was none in the Theosophical Society and its leaders, past and present, including its founder.

With Blavatsky, in fact, it went much further than lack of understanding. It was a deep antipathy and contempt for Christianity, a clear anti-Christian stance that she adopted. No wonder that this attitude was deeply ingrained into the Theosophical Society and its subsequent leaders. As for Mrs Besant she was honest enough to tell Steiner, privately, at the Congress in Munich, that she was not qualified to handle Christianity, therefore leaving it to him to deal with within the Theosophical Movement.

In all other circumstances, among ordinary believers or even clerics of different confessions, such an amicable resolution of differences would have been a good example of honesty, tolerance and common sense. In that case, however, the differences concerned not one's beliefs, opinions, ideas or even values, but what one knew as a fact. And not just any fact but the one central to human existence. The theosophical teaching did not contain, did not recognise and did not acknowledge this fact. An astronomer oblivious of the existence of the Sun and its significance for the Earth? Making use of a telescope capable of depicting the most remote stars but failing to register the presence of the Sun? These are the questions that come to

* That was no reflection on the complex personality of that remarkable woman who never shunned the hubbub of modern life including politics. But it was an objective situation and the state of the organisation whose leader she was at the time.

one's mind when one tries to fathom this extraordinary failure of the Theosophical spiritual teachings.

It should be noted, however, that Blavatsky's attitude to Christ and Christianity stemmed not from her spiritual vision but from what she assimilated from the material sources and influences. With Steiner it was the other way round. As it happened he did not know much about Christ, even what could be read in the New Testament and other books, until he started his spiritual investigations. Those investigations yielded the facts, some of which he later discovered in the books as well. So he knew the truth because he saw it and not because he read or was told about it.

The fact that others did not know or did not want to know the truth, even the most fundamental, did not make Steiner intolerant of them. He learned to live with people's ignorance and misconceptions, and the only remedies he could offer were knowledge and objectivity. But there was a limit to Steiner's tolerance, and Annie Besant overstepped it a few years later regarding that very fundamental truth.

She proclaimed the Hindu youth, Jiddu Krishnamurti, to be the bearer for Christ's new incarnation as World Teacher. For this purpose a special organisation, 'Star of the East', was created, and many theosophists all over the world joined it. Steiner immediately rejected that absurdity, which was both a spiritual untruth and sacrilege. The membership of that organisation and of the German Section of the Theosophical Society was considered incompatible and each existing or future member would have to make a choice between the two. In response to that decision the leadership of the Theosophical Society in Adyar expelled the German Section with all its 2400 members who refused to support the proclamation. Those members, in anticipation of the inevitable outcome, created a new organisation – the Anthroposophical Society. All those events took place from the end of 1912 to the beginning of 1913, a landmark in the history of the Anthroposophical Movement.

The New Beginnings and New Arts

So what did that landmark signify, what changes did it bring about? How did it affect the living entity which, in all but name, had already existed as the Anthroposophical Movement? Its life, as far as its essence and content were concerned, did not change at all in the wake of those events. The inner development of a spiritual organism has its own laws, rhythms and landmarks which do not always coincide with external events. But outwardly things did change and that, in its turn, had inevitable internal consequences.

The main such change concerned Steiner himself. He renounced not only the leadership of and any official position in the new organisation (save for the title of Honorary President granted to him), but even his membership, confining his role to that of teacher and advisor. No more administrative and organisational functions, duties and responsibilities and no formal connections and ties to any organisation. From now on he could concentrate exclusively on spiritual matters, on his message, without the distraction – and destruction! – of the external undertakings which were never organic or fruitful, and no longer necessary, for his main activity. He would continue to deliver his message to the world, directly and via the Anthroposophical Society, exactly as before, and now it would be up to that Society to make good use of his teachings, to cultivate and disseminate them.

For the newly formed Anthroposophical Society, for its membership, those changes also brought freedom and liberation, but of a different type. If the separation from the Theosophical Society had no substantive effect and consequences for it, the separation from Rudolf Steiner most definitely had or, at least, should have had. For now Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical Society acted in the world as two separate and different entities, with different tasks and paths. At the core of those

differences lay the fact that anthroposophy was inseparable from and identical with Rudolf Steiner but not with the Anthroposophical Society. Anthroposophy was now coming not from within but from without the Society. The latter was, therefore, no different in this respect from any other group of people, or single individuals, who wished to be the recipients of Steiner's message. It was standing now on its own feet, without Steiner as its mainstay or even frontispiece, without any special spiritual rights, claims, privileges, or dispensations regarding him and his teaching. If it wanted to be something in the world and contribute to its well-being, this would have to come exclusively out of its own resources.

Another major development of the time, completely unrelated in its initial impulse, was the creation of a main anthroposophical centre. After the successful staging of the mystery dramas in 1907 and in subsequent years in hired theatres in Munich, a need arose, both practical and artistic, to have one's own theatre whose design and interior would meet practical requirements and would be in harmony with dramatic performances. Other cultural events such as festivals and some other activities, would also take place there. A group of enthusiastic and dedicated individuals was formed who, using the contributions to the project, acquired a piece of property in the centre of Munich, which was a vibrant cultural city at the time. Steiner designed the central building, and the architectural plans were completed and submitted to the municipal authorities in September 1912.

However, strong objections were raised on the part of clergy, some artists and others, and in February 1913 the plans were rejected on the ground that the proposed building did not fit in with its surroundings. Earlier a Swiss friend offered his land on the hill at Dornach, near Basel, to Steiner, for the needs of the anthroposophical cause. Now some other Swiss friends bought the adjacent plots of land for the same purpose. The combined area had ample open space for the project and there was no danger of it being objected to or blocked by the authorities. Steiner inspected the site and accepted the offer. For the new location he designed a completely different building for which the foundation stone was laid in September 1913. The work, helped by further donations, began henceforth, and Steiner urged it to be finished by July 1914.

Ironically, the building permission in Munich was granted in the end. Also a German friend, who knew nothing of the Swiss arrangements, made a very generous offer of his private estate. However both came too late to change anything, but the hindsight allows us two observations. Steiner never explained his reason for the above deadline. But the World War I began on August 1, 1914, and as the work on the building had, alas, not been finished, its completion became only possible many years later. At the same time that very War and the concomitant and subsequent turbulent events confirmed the even unfinished building in the consistently neutral Switzerland as an international centre and home for the Anthroposophical Movement. What a stroke of luck the refusal of the Munich municipal authorities was, without which the Anthroposophical Movement would have been homeless for many years!

Now, the mystery dramas for which the new building was intended were not only those by other authors, but primarily the ones written and staged by Steiner himself. Beginning in 1910, he wrote and produced four Mystery Dramas, one each year, and the fifth one planned for 1914 to be performed in the new building. But this triple intention of opening the building, of writing the play and of staging it therein, was thwarted by the outbreak of the War. (The other time for which this glorious combined festivity was envisaged was Christmas 1923-4. The failure of it to materialise, and of the building to see within its walls any of the Dramas for which it was purposely built, belongs to most tragic events in the history of the Anthroposophical Movement of which we shall speak later. But these events

notwithstanding, lack of time and more pressing tasks prevented Steiner from writing the intended fifth Drama.)

Steiner's Mystery Dramas had been ripening in him for over two decades. In some way they are reminiscent of the Greek tragedies and are spiritually connected to the ancient Mysteries, but otherwise they are in every respect modern, or better to say, contemporary. Their focal point is our time and their principal characters are our contemporaries with their spiritual strivings and experiences. But then these characters transcend time and space, finding themselves now in the Middle Ages, now in the spiritual world where their encounters with each other and with Spiritual Beings take place. All the spiritual events and Beings are not symbolic or allegorical but real – it is the spiritual reality as it reveals itself to a clairvoyant vision that Steiner depicted in his Dramas. This was his sole objective. Otherwise, Steiner said, he would not have bothered writing them.

The Dramas show, apart from earthly events, relationships and experiences, their spiritual counterparts of which we normally are unaware. They also depict the spiritual influences, both benevolent and malevolent, on earthly affairs, and the working of the spiritual laws of reincarnation (repeated earthly lives) and karma (destiny). Above all, the Dramas provide an opportunity to experience the reality of the spiritual world and the actuality and specificity of its interrelationship with the physical. It was as if Rudolf Steiner was saying via them to his audiences: "For many years I've been telling you about and explaining the spiritual reality – now see it for yourselves." And he did actually say, and many a student of spiritual science did experience it, that the whole of Anthroposophy is contained in his Mystery Dramas in artistic form. Steiner wished people to discover Anthroposophy in them rather than in his lectures and even went as far as saying that had these Dramas been taken in properly there would have been no need for him to give more lectures.

If the spiritual reality constituted the contents of these Dramas surely it should also permeate the environment in which those contents were to unfold. To create such an environment, both as an interior and an exterior, provided Steiner with a new opportunity for a practical and creative application of anthroposophy to life. But for him it was not a matter of just designing one building or even a few (there were 18 in the end). What Steiner intended was to renew architecture itself out of the living spirit which would ultimately lead to the birth of a new architecture, a new style in architecture. With this in mind he undertook the Swiss project, and as a result his architectural creation was, in more ways than one, truly unique. The usage of this superlative word in our discourse yet again might smack of pomposity and threatens, at the same time, to render the word itself trite and meaningless. Yet its usage is appropriate and inevitable in a description of any successful pioneering enterprise, whatever its nature and whoever it concerns. In Steiner's case, however, unlike in the case of many ambitious artists and innovators, it had never been his objective to create something different and unique for its own sake. Such results of his activities lay in their very nature and not in their purpose.

The Dornach building which Steiner called *Goetheanum* to emphasise the inner connection of his work with that of Goethe, was a case in point. He spoke about the Goetheanum on numerous occasions, explaining its novel, unusual, remarkable features, but he always was factual about it. Even while the building was still under construction Steiner emphasised that as far as a new architectural style was concerned, this first attempt was only a beginning and far from being perfect at that. And when the Goetheanum was finished in all its essentials and its uniqueness was patently evident and indisputable, it did not stop Steiner from saying: "If I had to put up this building a second time, it would be out of the same background and out of the same laws, but in most of its details, and perhaps even totally, it would be different."

Also, on another occasion he expressed the sentiment that there should be many Goetheanums all over the world (obviously designed by other people).

One of the most striking features of the Goetheanum was that its entire structure, apart from the foundation, was made of wood. And if it was unique for the building of that type and size, the idea to use wood cannot be attributed to Steiner, who had a different, more durable material in mind. Wood was suggested by his followers and Steiner assented to their proposal. However, the fact that he managed not only to accommodate someone's scheme into his architectural ideas but translate it into the most amazing architectural, sculptural and artistic details can be attributed solely to the richness of the ideas and to the creativity in implementing them.

The structure consisted of two intersecting unequal domes, the smaller one over the stage and the other over the auditorium for 1000 seats. The domes were supported by columns, each made of a different timber, with pedestals, capitals and architraves all having their individual motifs. The auditorium had engraved coloured glass windows, and the ceilings of the cupolas were painted in colours and pictures. At the back of the stage was a place for the 9 meter high wooden sculpture which acquired the name of The Representative of Man. All other elements of the interior and exterior, like portals, staircases, window recesses, etc., were individually carved and modelled. The domes were covered in Norwegian slate.

The War considerably curtailed Steiner's lecture tours, which allowed him to spend much time on the building site. He oversaw the entire construction of the building which presented some unusual mathematical and engineering problems needing solution. As he was not only responsible for the overall design but also designed all individual elements and features, he supervised their execution, giving advice and instructions. There were only a few professionals working there, the majority being unskilled volunteers from 17 countries eager to learn and help. Steiner initiated them in their new activities and demonstrated the required skills. While professional architects, artists and sculptors helped Steiner develop and implement his artistic ideas, which he conveyed not only verbally but visually as well, in numerous sketches, models and forms moulded in plasticine and wax. For the coloured glass of the windows Steiner introduced a new engraving technique. But his involvement in the work was not just theoretical but very much 'hands on': he could be seen working silently for hours on end with a brush or a hammer and chisel in his hands.

So it was a community of different individuals and nations, of different skills and abilities that made the construction possible. But it was also a community of different visual arts combined and integrated into the Goetheanum building that produced the intended result. The building, with its numerous details of exterior and interior, was an organic whole, a living organism whose plasticity conveyed the development, metamorphosis and growth intrinsic in everything living. Though every feature and detail had its meaning and purpose, they were not symbolic or allegorical but the visible expression of the invisible spirit, of the spiritual experiences, exactly in the same way as Steiner's Mystery Dramas were. The free standing sculpture group, The Representative of Man, had its own content and meaning but they were in harmony with what lived in the building. The major figure of the group was Christ surrounded by His two adversaries who tear humanity apart, and whose one-sided influences and activities in human evolution He checks, balances and redeems.

All in all, the building conveyed a powerful artistic message, though this again was not Steiner's main objective. The building, with its various forms, shapes, pictures and colours, was to serve as a means and facilitator for the beholder to have inner experiences which in themselves would be a work of art. But the building, as "the embodiment of the spiritual element", also conveyed "the spirituality so needed by the human race today" Its outward effect, however, was more conspicuous: with

the construction of the Goetheanum, anthroposophy became demonstrably visible and public.

Over the years Steiner delivered many lectures and gave lecture courses on art and its various forms, on its nature, origin and mission. But its spiritual renewal and redemption he could not undertake on his own. Even for the very modest first steps and tentative attempts he needed, apart from propitious circumstances, facilities and helpers, a genuine quest for renewal coming from someone who would be prepared to carry out a new impulse. And if Steiner managed to initiate beginnings in the renewal of speech, drama, painting, sculpture and architecture it was because there were such individuals around him.

But in its arts department, anthroposophy has in store not only remedies for the old and well established arts, but also sources for the emergence of new ones. Needless to say that for their birth and development new arts also require, like old ones for their renewal, a quest, determination and ability. But even for those few who may carry these qualities, it is much more difficult, as compared with the renewal of the old, to anticipate, let alone aspire to, something new and nonexistent, even if spiritually it might be ripe and ready to enter our culture. Steiner felt that the appearance of one particular new art was apt and timely, but his midwifery had to wait patiently for a number of years before the right person came on the scene.

This complicated and uncertain way of delivery might seem strange, even bizarre, especially as our time witnessed the appearance and establishment of quite a few new art forms – photography, cinema, television, the computer, etc. – in the most natural, almost predictable, way. But to appreciate the difference we should remind ourselves of the origin and nature of these new art forms. Their emergence was brought about by scientific and technological developments whose objectives were not artistic. But they produced new media and tools, which became a challenge to creative and artistic individuals. And they made good use of them, whatever the merits of their varied efforts. (The diversity of merits applies, of course, to practitioners of the old arts as well, though the arts themselves are not subject to this diversity.)

When Steiner spoke about the *spiritual* nature of the arts – dance, acting, sculpture, architecture, painting, music, poetry – he meant exactly that: that they are a manifestation and expression of various aspects of the *Spiritual World* and its processes, and of the *Spiritual Beings* and their activities. These aspects, in one form or another, have their existence also in man, a spiritual-physical being; therefore he is capable of reproducing this spiritual reality in a physical, visual and audible, form, which is art. But man can only do it if he is attuned and receptive to the spirit living in him. All true artists are, each in his own way. In ancient times this capacity lived in man quite naturally, almost like an instinct, but in the course of evolution and with the materialisation of our life and culture it progressively waned. It was still very much alive in the great masters of old, but generally, especially in our time, artists, divorced from the living spirit, have, in their genuine creative strivings, to increasingly rely on the inconsistency of their intuition, on the subjectivity of feelings, and on the uncertainty of the insight.

Now the time has come, with the advent of spiritual science, to create works of art not out of some instinctive subconscious impulses, however inspirational, but consciously working with the spirit, and this is the essence of the renewal of art. This process, however, is also fraught, apart from the difficulties one can expect, with a potential danger – of throwing the baby of creativity out with the bathwater of the subconscious spontaneity. Can imagination and consciousness, creativity and knowledge, art and science not only coexist but collaborate within one person – work on the same project as it were? Or does the one inevitably kill the other in the end? Steiner was fully aware of this real danger, addressed it head-on and showed the

way – and example – for overcoming it. Indeed, far from stifling creativity and imagination, working with and out of spiritual knowledge opens for the artist new horizons, strengthens his intuition, ennobles his feelings, and focuses his insight.

The process of renewal of the old arts is that of transition. With any particular art and artist it can only be gradual, as a new understanding and creativity are trying to find their footing and a way of working together. Though the development of a new art cannot be achieved overnight either, one would imagine that in Steiner's case its birth required from the outset, apart from Steiner's inaugural act, a fully conscious and highly artistic participation of a would-be artist. Whether or not this general supposition was in any way a reflection of the real situation, the task of finding the right human catalyst for the inauguration of the new art was not straightforward. But when this new art did make its tentative appearance, it did not take long to become a fully fledged, well established and widely recognised – but ever developing – form of art.

This new art is that of movement. Marie von Sivers christened it "eurythmy" (Greek for *beautiful* or *harmonious rhythm*) and it is also known as 'visible speech' and 'visible song'. Created originally as a performing art, two more forms were soon added: pedagogical and therapeutic, i.e. educational eurythmy and curative eurythmy. And in later years yet other forms evolved: social eurythmy (for the workplace), recreational eurythmy (as a pastime) and eurythmy for self-development (personal enhancement).

Though as a new art eurythmy is the youngest and least developed as yet amongst its siblings, its spiritual pedigree is no less immaculate and noble. To understand its nature one has to go all the way back to the origin and nature of speech, language, sound, tone, man's speech organs and of man himself. Steiner did it comprehensively, in many lectures and conversations, but a few essential points might suffice here just to get the gist of what eurythmy is.

When a human being utters a sound its audible effect reveals only part of what is actually taking place. The picture of this occurrence, as of everything in the physical world, remains incomplete without its spiritual dimension. But the one who has eyes to see the whole perceives in this utterance something else in addition to the vocal phenomenon.

It was Goethe's observation that the leaf contains within itself, in a metamorphosed form, the whole plant, and a plant, in its turn, can be seen as a metamorphosed leaf. The same is true for the human being with regard to his major organs. Thus in relation to man's speech organs, his whole body is a speech organ in its own right, with the ability and desire to speak – in the way it can perform this function, i.e. through movements of its limbs. But man developed in such a way that now only the audible part of speech, the product of its respective organs, takes full physical prominence. Yet the yearning of the body to speak is still there, and it does find its expression, as, for instance, in involuntary movements of baby's limbs or in gestures which we use to accompany our speech (mainly as an aid but sometimes as a substitute).

Now, man's organs of speech, in their turn, accomplish much more than what is revealed to ordinary perception. While producing audible sounds, they create in the air the sounds' invisible counterparts perceptible to the supersensible vision. These counterparts – we can call them gestures – are not arbitrary. They each correspond to individual sounds and tones, syllables, words and whole phrases, and have their specific form and character exactly as their audible twins. Nor are these gestures superfluous. They are bearers of the 'soul' or feeling element of the sound and speech (and of man himself) and together with the audible component give them their wholeness and life. In primordial times men, in their communication with one another, were able to convey and receive this wholeness and life. But in time they

lost this ability and were left with just the dry intellectual content of the words they speak. However, this spiritual component having been ousted from man's experience and perception did not abandon him altogether. Every time a man speaks it appears as an air-gesture patiently waiting to again be recognised, accepted and made manifest. When this happens and the invisible air-gestures are translated by a competent interpreter into the movements of arms and hand and other bodily movements, the result is a new art – eurythmy.

As every art contributes to human culture in its own unique way, so does eurythmy. But eurythmy not only makes it possible for us to see speech and experience its wholeness and life. It not only allows us to enjoy its aesthetic qualities and benefit from its salutary properties. Eurythmy has another profound significance for man.

To supersensible perception, movement as such is the prime force of life, of creation. Everything living is in the state of continuous motion, whereby everything comes into being. When anything becomes momentarily quiescent or assumes a distinct outline of a posture or form, it is none other than an arrested movement. The human form, spiritual to begin with, was also created by movements – of the divine beings, and it incorporated those movements into itself. Today this form is an intrinsic part of man's being which sustains his life. In those invisible air-gestures which are created by the organs of speech, man unconsciously recreates his invisible spiritual form which he can then recreate consciously and visibly in eurythmy movements. And these human movements also recreate and even continue those which God performed when creating man. Thus God was the first eurythmist. So when one does or even beholds eurythmy in the right way, one follows, as it were, in God's footsteps. This enables man to experience his relationship to the spiritual world and the divine more vividly than through any other art of spiritual origin.

It is their spiritual nature and origin that distinguishes the 'old' arts from those 'modern' ones whose origin and inspiration, guidelines and values come from the material domain of human life. Subsequently the impulses that motivate their practitioners, from crass naturalism to abstract intellectualism, are earth-bound. It is taken for granted today that through art one expresses something personal and subjective, be it emotions, views or attitudes. Art as something suprapersonal and objective is for most people a contradiction in terms, and art as 'the expression and manifestation of the spirit' is an empty and fanciful phrase.

This is an inevitable and therefore legitimate outcome of our culture. Thus it would be wrong to dismiss or belittle modern art and artists from whatever sublime high grounds. As with the other arts, this is the field of a true dedication, talent, creativity and hard work, the fruits of which are appreciated by many of those who are also genuine admirers of the 'old' arts.

Nevertheless the difference remains, and it cannot be ignored as something purely 'theoretical'. It is real, objective and consequential. It is rooted in the fact that art, beauty, aesthetics, goodness, morality and truth all have the same origin. When they meet in the course of evolution through man, by man and within man, they recognise and attract one another. There is nothing arbitrary in it, as there is nothing pretentious in the fundamental question concerning art: Is it there to merely entertain us or, above all, to *maintain* us – aesthetically, spiritually and even physically?

Steiner's Christology

Steiner's educational anthroposophical task, that of giving knowledge, was two-fold: one was to lay the foundation of anthroposophy, the other to explain every significant phenomenon of life and culture from the spiritual point of view. If the reader still remembers, from the earlier discourse, *A Story of the Daily Guidance* with its

metaphor of the Clock as the enigmatic world of ours, we can extend this simile to all the world's phenomena. We can imagine the world consisting, for us, of just the endless number of clocks ticking away and showing their individual local time. We learned how to use them for our own purposes but largely remain ignorant about their origin, true nature and inner working.

So Steiner's task was, after unravelling the mystery of the main Clock, to do the same with as many individual local clocks as was humanly possible, that is, metaphorically speaking, to pick them up, turn around, open the back cover, expose the clockwork and explain its intricacies. Art was one of these clocks; another was religion.

Steiner spoke extensively on the subject touching upon various faiths, world religions, cults and rituals from the ancient times to the present day. He showed their rightful place in human spiritual history as a reflection of Man-God relationship at any particular time and place and for any particular people. He also shed light on the documented spiritual heritage of mankind such as Bhagavad-Gita and the Bible. Steiner devoted a special lecture cycle to the Genesis and also spoke about various aspects of the Old Testament on many occasions.

But the focal point of Steiner's teaching, its main thrust and 'magnum opus', is his Christology. This should come as no surprise given the pivotal role Christ plays in human and cosmic evolution. However, in trying to comprehend this mighty phenomenon known under the general name of 'Christianity', one should first distinguish between its various aspects as they evolved in human history and perception – Christ as a Divine Being, Jesus Christ as "the Son of man", Christ's teachings as reflected in the Gospels, Christ's spiritual deeds, and the Christian civilization and culture as they emerged for the last two thousand years in their diverse ramifications. All this one can find in Steiner's Christology – as single details and an organic unity, as divine deeds and human actions. But, most importantly, in its relation, significance and consequences for those who live today, for our time.

Steiner devoted to the Gospels and the Apocalypse special lecture cycles, in which he translated the authors' occult language into that comprehensible to contemporary consciousness, and vastly enriched their content by the results of his spiritual investigation. Besides, he gave a special series of lectures known as "The Fifth Gospel", which contained completely new facts of Christ's life on earth as well as purely spiritual facts pertaining to that event. Far from contradicting or superseding the other Gospels, this new knowledge and understanding complimented and elucidated them.

Speaking of the physical and spiritual events of two millennia ago Steiner put them in their evolutionary context and showed their significance and relevance for the present time and the future. Most importantly, he threw light on the true meaning of the so called "second coming of Christ", a real event, though bearing no resemblance to the one pictured by popular religious beliefs. In the first instance, Steiner refuted the materialistic misconception of Christ coming again in the flesh, which would have meant that nothing had changed in the human and spiritual evolution since the Golgotha and that Christ failed in His original mission and would have to have another go at it. It was not at all the case, and consequently this event – or rather a lengthy process of some 2500 years – would take place in the spiritual realm now, in the form of a meeting between individual human beings and Christ. And it would be coming not *of* Christ but *to* Christ, the first of man's encounters with Christ on his upward path to the spiritual world as was referred to earlier in this discourse.

It is crucial for individual human beings, and for humanity as a whole, not to miss this encounter and to experience it in clear day consciousness. For this, man has to have the knowledge of its nature and of the time it will take place, as well as special qualities enabling such an encounter. Addressing his anthroposophical

audiences with these revelations, Steiner indicated that only a few decades separated mankind from the time when such encounters would become possible, necessary and imminent. If, for whatever reasons, these encounters, as individual and public experience, did not take place it would be a great misfortune for single individuals and for mankind as a whole, with very serious consequences. Therefore it was a direct and immediate task of anthroposophy to prepare humanity, and Steiner's own task to prepare his own followers, for this momentous event.

But its imminence is unilateral and determined by *God proposes* – Christ will be there at the appointed place and time waiting for man to *dispose* to meet Him. But is man of today in a reciprocal mood, is he *disposed* to this meeting? With what frame of mind and with what deeds did he approach its commencement which was 'scheduled' for the end of the first third of the twentieth century? We do not know what has been happening at the spiritual level since then but we do know what has been happening at the human level – before, during and after that time: two World Wars and many other wars and conflicts; two most evil and poisonous dictatorships and various other forms of brutal tyranny; Holocaust and Gulag, mass killings and tortures; fanaticism and extremism, terrorism and hatred; the enormous material distraction and the creation of the weapons of mass destruction; the world economic and financial crises and mass famines and poverty – to mention just the major conflicts, calamities and tragedies of the past and current centuries. These events, all man-made, betray a frame of mind not very susceptible to the spiritual dimension of life. Of course there have also been other events and developments, the products of a positive and creative mind. But the latter is not the opposite of the former, let alone its adversary, deterrent or healer. If anything it is its twin brother in that it too is deeply entrenched in the material stratum. And this materially oriented mode of thinking is dominant in modern life, both in scale and influence.

And yet its dominance is neither total nor fatally determinative for the future of humanity. Within it there should be an entirely different frame of mind, negligible at present in its scale and influence, but which will eventually lead humanity out of its present spiritual demise. And it is the few bearers of this different mode of thinking, to begin with, who should be receptive to the Divine Message and determined to act upon it. This is the divine premise, and it allowed and encouraged Steiner to embark on his mission. Were such individuals among those who listen to him or among his followers ever after? Have they *heard* the Divine Message? If they have, what have they done or are doing about it? The answers to these questions belong very much to the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, the subject of this discourse. We shall have an occasion to come to them later.

The First World War

Of the disasters mentioned above Steiner witnessed, lived through and experienced the consequences of only one, the First World War. For him, for his followers and for the Anthroposophical Movement as a whole it was the time, over and above the general trials and tribulations, of the first serious test: how would they, with their 'out-of-this-world' ideas and lofty ideals, fare in the face of the destructive world events? They knew from Steiner of the true causes and consequences of the past cataclysms; and of future ones, some avoidable and some imminent; and of the contemporary social and cultural flaws and evils which were also fraught with disastrous consequences. But now the disaster was real and here affecting each one of them, their countries and their movement.

It was also the first – and only – time when this spiritual movement had the benefit of the wisdom of its creator and teacher to enlighten, guide and steer it

through the calamitous events of modern times. And it was quite natural that people turned to Steiner both for a personal advice and for his insights into those events.

On a personal level Steiner, immediately upon the outbreak of the War, gave publicly a strong advice, which he then repeated in numerous private conversations: "With respect to what each individual is called upon to do, the only thing to say is that every one must do his duty!" Concerning the majority of male helpers at Dornach it meant, in actual terms, that they would have to return to their warring countries and, perhaps, would meet again confronting one another on the battlefield. Neither was it easier, in this respect, for those who remained in the neutral Switzerland. As the War unfolded, it was becoming increasingly difficult for people to suppress their national emotions and continue their daily cohabitation and collaboration with their 'enemies'. Nevertheless the community spirit prevailed and the work on the building slowly but steadily continued during the war years, despite unavoidable human and material difficulties and even "fantastic poverty", as one of the co-workers remembered later.

Another thing that Steiner did in the first days of the war, as a public duty, was to give to those around him a course in the first aid. It was not an empty gesture. Nobody knew how events might develop, so people had to be ready for any eventuality. Even the neutral Switzerland mobilised its army, just in case, and the pounding cannons could be heard and even felt during all years of the War. In the course of it prisoners of war and grievously wounded were interned in Switzerland, and on one occasion some of them were allowed, on humanitarian grounds, to come to Dornach where two Christmas plays were performed for them by the members of the anthroposophical community. The plays were preceded by the welcoming addresses given by Steiner, in which he spoke on the human and artistic aspects of the event. It turned out to be quite memorable for those for whom it was arranged.

The War was the first confrontation of modern times whose enormity and cruelty, whose senseless human and material destruction put an end to the old values and world order, for whatever they were worth, and brought in its wake 'a brave new world' with no new values and order to replace them. One telling sign of this transition was a remarkable event, still possible during the First World War, when enmity and confrontation were overcome by sublime values, by true humanity, in the enemies' fraternal Christmas celebration at the battlefield. A quarter of a century later, during the Second World War, such an occurrence was simply unthinkable – by that time 'true humanity' became a meaningless notion.

Steiner not only clearly saw the transition, but had foreseen it and its aftermath. He also warned his listeners almost from the outset – in fact, this warning was part of his message – that calamities and disasters were awaiting humanity unless man woke up to the spiritual reality and changed his perception of the world, his attitude to his own role in it and his way of thinking. But despite the foresight, when the War broke out Steiner experienced it as a great shock and tragedy – more strongly than most of the people exactly because he knew the reasons and the consequences.

Addressing his followers on the subject of the war, he did not resort to some sentimental laments or edifying admonitions like "I told you so", but gave them a precise analysis of the current situation and, most importantly, its historical and spiritual background. Lessons had to be learned from this collective failure to avoid similar disasters in the future. To facilitate a better comprehension of the development of mankind and a better mutual understanding, Steiner gave lectures – he also spoke on the subject before the War – on the national identity, on the destiny, mission and contribution of various nations. But whatever was the subject of his lectures – and they were as diverse as ever – and however sublime it was, Steiner never allowed his listeners to forget that at that very time people had been getting maimed and killed. He often preceded and concluded his lectures with a special

prayer or meditation for the fallen victims and for those on the battlefield, as well as for the better future of mankind which should come out of the current sufferings.

Needless to say that Steiner did not take sides in that tragic multinational conflict and did not distinguish between its victims. At the same time neither did he shun from telling the truth pertaining to the events as he saw it. Some, even among his devoted followers inflamed by the patriotic fervour, found this truth unpalatable which even led to some animosity towards Steiner, though later they had to admit their misjudgement. As was mentioned earlier, it was not always easy for those members of the 17 nations working at the Goetheanum to overcome their emotions and national feelings when their countries and countrymen, their relatives and friends were fighting and dying in the War the presence of which they heard and felt daily. But on the whole the Goetheanum anthroposophical community managed during the long war years to maintain the spirit of higher ideals and fraternity – the one that some of their compatriots on the battlefield were fortunate enough to experience only for a few short hours during Christmas festivities.

However tragic and overwhelming the war events, even during those times Steiner concerned himself with the future, with what humanity, at least its European part, was going to build on the ruins of the old world order. But of course his concern with the future, though affected by the war, did not originate with it. For him there was no need to create the ruins first and to allow the calamity to happen, in order to realize that 'the good old world' was not that good and was in an urgent need of rebuilding. The writing was already on the wall for everyone who was able and willing to see it. Steiner was one of them. Only a few months before the War broke out he spoke the words the grave reality of which took so much suffering to appreciate: "Someone able to see through social life with the eye of the spirit will see the terrible foundations of social cancers, social ulcers springing up everywhere, and the seer feels deep concern for our civilization."

But seeing social cancers, being concerned about them and expressing this concern was only a starting point for Steiner. The next step was to find a cure and then to administer it. Steiner started looking for a remedy as soon as he discovered the disease which happened long before he spoke the above words. He had been concerned with social, economic and political issues all his life and spoke on the social question within the Anthroposophical (then Theosophical) Movement as early as 1903. In 1905 he wrote an essay entitled *Anthroposophy and the Social Question* which showed not only his deep concern with this question and thorough knowledge of it, but also all signs of a sound answer with which he intended to respond to it. It was in that essay that Steiner formulated what he called "a fundamental social law" which we shall come to later. In subsequent years he continued to work on the remedy for social ills, and during the War this work came to fruition. So when the need for such a remedy was experienced by others as well and Steiner was asked for help and advice, he was ready and responded with comprehensive and far reaching, and at the same time specific and practical, proposals.

The Threefold Social Order

The War was approaching its fourth hapless year. One of Steiner's followers, Count Lerchenfeld, who occupied a high position in the German political establishment, clearly saw the incompetence, impotence and hopelessness of the country's leadership not only in dealing with the current situation, but also regarding any ideas as to what might replace the existing unworkable economical-political system when the War would eventually come to an end. Desperate and without seeing any answer to the present malaise he turned to Steiner.

But before relating Steiner's response and further events some explanation should be offered as to what motivated Steiner's followers to appeal to him for help – such appeals never ceased until Steiner's death. Did people treat him like a guru who always had an answer up his sleeve and who always knew best? Some no doubt did, but for the majority, especially for people like Count Lerchenfeld, such an attitude was out of the question. To understand what prompted him, and others who sought Steiner's advice, it might be helpful to draw a parallel between his appeal for help and the question Marie von Sivers put to Rudolf Steiner sixteen years earlier which led to the creation of the Anthroposophical Movement. Both quests were similar in their origin in that they came as a result of direct personal experiences and genuine concerns regarding the situation in the world. They were also similar in their far-reaching consequences. At the same time, there was a substantial difference between the two. Asking the question was like planting a *seed*, while appealing for help was like craving for *fruits* one expected to reap from a mature and fertile tree.

But what fruits, precisely, could one expect to reap in that case? What miraculous solution to the world's calamitous situation could Steiner possibly have that nobody else had or thought of? Could Steiner perceive here something no other social thinkers, reformers and enlightened individuals had recognized? What could he possibly add to the wealth of ideas, knowledge and experiences accumulated by mankind in the social sphere up to that time? It is doubtful that Count Lerchenfeld contemplated these questions. For him, in his situation and especially at that time, they would have been far-fetched if not altogether bizarre. But for us, for our time they are quite legitimate. We should try to see the past, with its events and their participants, quite objectively, should try to understand them and, as far as it is possible, to draw some lessons for our own time.

Besides, the social sphere of life is not some specialized field which can only be fathomed by experts. We all are part of it and it concerns us all. Therefore with regard to its actual functioning everyone should have some understanding, a possibility to form a judgement and the right to have a say. This is what Steiner expected from others when he formulated and made public his social ideas. And this is how he explained their origin and nature: "Nothing I published [regarding social issues] has grown out of theoretic thought work. In the course of more than three decades I have followed up the spiritual, political and economic life of Europe in its most varied branches. The result has, I believe, given me an insight into the tendencies to which this life is pushing, in its road towards a recovery. These thoughts are not the thoughts of one individual, but they express the unconscious volition of European mankind."

But if that was the case why those vital thoughts dwelled unconsciously within the majority of Europeans? Steiner gave the following answer: "The special conditions of modern life ... did not permit this volition to appear in the full consciousness of a sufficiently great number of people in clear outline and connected with the striving after practical execution. It is the tragedy of the present that innumerable human beings obstruct their own view into what is really necessary by illusions about the things for which they strive. Party conceptions, completely obsolete, spread a mist of thought over what is really necessary. People indulge in unpractical, unaccomplishable tendencies; the actuality they may undertake becomes a barren utopia, whereas they regard, on the other hand, as utopian the proposals which are made from the true practice of life."

The author will not be surprised if the reader feels that not much has changed since then in this respect and that the above words could have been said today. But will the reader also feel, upon familiarising himself with Steiner's social ideas, that they are applicable today? In any case the best way to view and examine them is the one, in which they were born – not out of theoretical musing but out of

practicalities of life. As a starting point we shall choose the very centre of the body social – the human being and his needs.

It is a simple fact of life that every human being has his needs, which he is striving to satisfy. As a societal being he can do it only within the society in which he lives and by the means and facilities provided by it. Though in actual life situations the individual interacts not with the society at large but with other individuals and organisations, ultimately it is the state of the society that determines the wellbeing of the individual, i.e. the satisfaction of his needs. To see specifically how this determination works, we have to examine more closely both the needs themselves and the body social from which their satisfaction comes.

All numerous and diverse individual human needs fall, by their very nature, into three distinct categories. One embraces human material needs – to sustain our physical existence, as well as our activities and interests. Another category of needs distinguishes us as human beings and individuals; these are our spiritual needs – cultural, educational, religious, etc. The third type is determined by the fact that we live in a community with our fellow human beings; hence our needs for some rules and regulations to safeguard our healthy communal relationships with one another.

Now the satisfaction of these three categories of needs comes, respectively, from three different sources, which constitute three distinct spheres of the body social – the economic sphere (the production, distribution and consumption of commodities), the cultural sphere (education, science, art, religion, etc.) and the legal-judicial sphere (the province of legislature, government and politics). As it happens, in the course of life we neither note nor even notice this distinction either in our needs or in the body social. But we have to if we wish to understand what is wrong with our society and to put it right. Because, as there is a fundamental difference between the three categories of our needs, there is a similar difference in the ways they should be satisfied and in the principles, on which the three spheres of the society should be based and function.

The products that satisfy our material needs, be they goods or food, come from nature. But the nature products, before they become commodities suitable for consumption, undergo a process of transformation known as a production process. A modern production process is characterised by a division of labour where each participant fulfils only some functions and represents only a part of what constitutes a coherent whole. Without individual contributions the whole will not work. Thus the whole depends on every part, however small, while separate parts are useless by themselves. This creates interdependence of all participants of the production process in their collective work towards a common objective.

But the production process is, in its turn, only a part of the whole economic sphere of the society. The main feature of this sphere is that nobody produces anything for himself but uses the products produced by others. The recognition of this not only as a fact but also as a necessity allowed Steiner to formulate the aforementioned fundamental social law which goes as follows: *"The well being of a community of people working together will be the greater, the less the individual claims for himself the proceeds of his work, i.e. the more of these proceeds he makes over to his fellow workers, the more his own needs are satisfied, not out of his own work but out of work done by others."* This again signifies an interdependence of those involved in the economic process at large. Since everyone is involved in it – some as producers and sellers of goods and all as consumers – this interdependence is total and even global nowadays. If this fact of life is recognised and appreciated in all its significance and consequences, then it will inevitably lead to the realisation that the guiding principle and practice of the economic sphere and life should be *cooperation* – of all its participants, at all levels and in all situations. To use

a more elevated but no less appropriate term for this principle, it can be called *fraternity*.*

If in the sphere where we satisfy our material needs interdependence is the main factor, with the spiritual needs the opposite is true. Our individual spiritual needs do not, and should not, depend on other people and their spiritual needs. As we all are intrinsically different as individuals, so are our spiritual needs which spring from the unique individuality of each of us. Our individual spirit is free and so should be its needs and aspirations – nobody should determine them for us. Whatever practical difficulties might arise in satisfying them (exactly as with the material needs), the guiding principle in the spiritual-cultural sphere should be *freedom, liberty*.

Again the situation is completely different with our needs pertaining to our relations with our fellow citizens. Here everyone should have the same rights, the same opportunities and the same civil obligations irrespective of the multitude of individual differences, interests and needs. In a word, all should be equal before the law and the same law should apply to everyone. Thus the guiding principal in the legal-judicial sphere should be *equality*.

Liberty, equality and fraternity (*Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité*) – this tripartite motto of the French Revolution reflected, and has been reflecting ever since, people's aspirations and ideals. A lot has been done in the attempts to realise them, but their meaningful implementation can hardly be achieved when people have different views and are even confused about their exact meaning, applicability and compatibility. This is due to the lack of clarity regarding the nature of human needs and their satisfaction. Steiner brought this clarity about. Thus, *fraternity* should have no political, social or sentimental connotations. It simply denotes an attitude and mode of conduct of people doing something together where the common goal and interdependence are the innate factors. This applies equally to a single enterprise, to a branch of industry, to producer-consumer interactions, and to the whole economic sphere. *Liberty* does not mean freedom to do whatever one likes regardless, but only freedom to express one's views and ideas and to pursue and develop one's spiritual interests and aptitudes, both spiritual and physical. *Equality* applies not to human beings themselves, but to what takes place between them, i.e. to their relationships. As to the society at large, Steiner explained that for it to be healthy, not only each sphere is to function properly, according to its intrinsic principle, but also all three should be autonomous and independent from one another and yet form a harmonious whole.

As it happened, at the very time of Count Lerchenfeld's appeal, Steiner successfully concluded his research of thirty years in another very important sphere of human existence. Though its connection with the social sphere seems most improbable, the analogy between the two might prove very useful for the understanding of the latter.

The other sphere of research was the human organism, its extraordinary complexity and the mystery of its harmonious functioning. Steiner discovered that the latter was due to the fact that all numerous parts, different substances and various processes which constitute the human organism are ordered in a particular way which is most functional, efficient and propitious. All these components are arranged in three distinct systems. One is the nerve system including sense organs and head

* Economy as such, with its various aspects, was an object of special studies by Steiner and a subject of his lectures and articles. In 1922, on a request from students of Economics, he held the National-Economic course of fourteen lectures and seminars where he dealt with such issues as money and capital, value and price, wages and interest, production and trade, land and labour and others. The course was translated into English as *World Economy* with the subtitle *The Formation of a Science of World-Economics*.

(brain); another is the rhythmic system which comprises the organs of blood circulation and breathing; and the third is the metabolic system consisting of the limbs and the digestive system.

Each of these systems functions according to its own inherent principles unsuitable for the other two. And, being autonomous in themselves, these systems depend upon, penetrate and support one another, thus constituting a healthy and harmonious whole, the human organism. It becomes ill not only when one of the systems malfunctions, but also when the harmonious relationship between the systems breaks down, and the working principles and processes of one system illegitimately invade another.*

Like the human organism, the social organism consists of three intrinsically different systems, which should at once be independent and support one another, be autonomous and yet form a harmonious whole. Likewise, they work together not only within the organism as a whole, but in every part of it. Also, the social ills, like human ones, happen when within the systems their inherent principles are violated, as well as when one system or another, instead of supporting the others, imposes itself on them.

So for the social organism to be healthy its three spheres should support, fructify and safeguard one another. The forms of their fruitful cooperation and contributions may be outlined as follows: The economic sphere 'feeds' the body social sustaining it materially and financially. The spiritual sphere is its 'brain', the source of ideas, values, mores and morality. The legal sphere, the state, is its 'guardian'; it makes sure that the society as a whole, its institutions and citizens live and function orderly, without being disadvantaged or themselves causing harm to others.

That is, in a nutshell and in the author's own rendering, the essence of Steiner's response to the desperate appeal of Count Lerchenfeld for help. Upon familiarising himself with Steiner's ideas, his mood changed completely. Now he saw the light at the end of the tunnel. In fact he became so enthusiastic about these ideas that the proverbial tunnel turned for him into a road with a clear direction. Though it was bumpy and uphill, nevertheless it led to a definite destination which seemed realistic and within reach. Count Lerchenfeld further asked Steiner to set forth his ideas in a memorandum which he and his like-minded friends would circulate among influential political figures and present to some of them personally for discussions and elucidations. Steiner preferred, however, before presenting his ideas to the country's leadership as some plan of action, to have them first examined and discussed by all strata of society. But in the circumstances he had to follow whatever path was available. In any case, he did not share his associate's fervent optimism.

It was not scepticism on his part but realism. As has been stated before, Steiner's main purpose in life was to renew the culture and society in all their aspects. As soon as there was a real opportunity for a renewal he would immediately use it. Sometimes the nature of a renewal was such that it would require only his own efforts, like, for instance, his spiritual research. In other instances, notably in the realm of art, it required participation of other people as well. While in the case of social renewal the whole society and millions of its citizens would have eventually to be involved. The changes in the society and in people's attitude and thinking would have to be fundamental. Such things do not happen overnight. So being convinced that his social ideas were both realistic and necessary Steiner was also realistic about their implementation. But this did not mean that no attempts or even first steps should be made when and if an opportunity presented itself. Count Lerchenfeld's

* This discovery and its implications for medicine will be discussed in more detail on page 97.

appeal was exactly such an occasion, and Steiner's proposal, depending on the response it was to receive, was an attempt or the first step to realise his ideas.

In the circumstances it turned out to be an attempt rather than a tangible beginning. The various individuals in leading positions who were approached with the new ideas were too preoccupied with the War and too overworked and tired to concern themselves with something as serious and fundamental as that. And even when some of them went into the matter somewhat deeper, they could at best grasp and appreciate one idea or other and not the whole concept of the threefold membering of the society with all its consequences. Besides, their will at the time was paralysed to the extent that it made it impossible for them to undertake new initiatives or anything going beyond their immediate daily tasks. Also there was fear in some of them of something which was so fundamentally new and at odds with their customary way of thinking. So the attempt to introduce the threefold social ideas from above – not the best but the only way possible at the time – failed.

But it did not deter the enthusiastic protagonists of these ideas, whose number rapidly grew among both anthroposophists and non-anthroposophists, from making another attempt after the War ended. This time the situation was different. The devastating consequences of the War and a need for a new direction in the life of the society at large became apparent to many. Steiner again played a pivotal role in this new attempt. In the first instance he wrote two important papers which launched, this time, a social movement – the Threefold Social Order. The first was the appeal *To the German People and the Civilised World*. Steiner's analysis of the current calamitous situation and the reasons that led to it, and the remedy he suggested, can be summarised by the following quote: "The forces of the times are pressing for knowledge of a social structure for mankind which is completely different from what is commonly envisaged. Social communities hitherto have, for the most part, been formed by human instincts. To penetrate their forces with full consciousness is a mission of the times." He outlined the social structure required by the times and concluded: "Either people will accommodate their thinking to the requirements of reality, or they have learned nothing from the calamity and will cause innumerable new ones to occur in the future."

These were prophetic words, but very few realised it at the time. Nevertheless the appeal was signed by many prominent personalities from Germany, Austria and Switzerland, many of whom were not anthroposophists, and was distributed in a number of European countries. Soon after that Steiner's fundamental book on the social question, *Basic Issues of the Social Question*, was published (translated into English as *The Threefold Commonwealth* and later as *Towards Social Renewal*). Here are rendered some of its main points.

The social question is not something which has suddenly emerged in our time and which can be conclusively resolved by some enlightened individuals or by an act of parliament. The social question is an integral part of modern life and society and as an ever changing and developing phenomenon it cannot be resolved once and for all. Just as a living organism passes from the state of satiation to inevitable hunger, the social organism has a tendency of passing from the state of order to disorder, while social institutions are predisposed to producing anti-social tendencies. As there is no food that permanently stills hunger; there can be no universal social panacea. Thus the social question and anti-social tendencies have to be addressed and resolved anew each time as they inevitably arise at particular junctures in the development of the society and its institutions.

Therefore this book does not offer any hard and fast theory or a quick and final solution. Rather it intends to show a direction towards what is needed in the social sphere at present and in the near future. It wishes to stimulate people in their collective efforts to bring about what is socially desirable and what reflects the

realities and necessities of our time. Having introduced to the reader the tripartite structure of the body social Steiner indicated that in the past the workings and integration of the three spheres of society were carried out by social instincts in accord with the human nature as it was at the time. But nowadays the social instincts have to be replaced by conscious social thinking, determined social will and purposeful social actions.

However it is not happening yet. In the interim period in which we now live we witness an inability of the persistent old instincts and habitual way of thinking prevalent in our society to deal with the demands of modern mankind. Most perniciously this inability manifests itself in the current state of spiritual life and of the cultural/spiritual sphere as a whole. Spiritual life provides the spiritual and moral nourishment for the society and is the source of ideas and impulses that guide and advance the human civilization. Its pivotal role puts it at the very centre of the social question, and if the society becomes ill it is due to the impotence of spiritual life.

The contemporary spiritual life is undermined, to begin with, by the fact that its value and significance are neither recognised nor appreciated. It is viewed as something abstract and theoretical, but when it finds a practical application it takes the form of ideology; as such it is used as a political and economic weapon by some and is shunned and mistrusted by others. On the whole, within the body social the attention is diverted from spiritual forces to economic processes which are considered the prime driving force of our life and society. What is more, the spiritual life, and education as its essential part, became increasingly influenced by and even to a large degree dependant upon political and economic forces and institutions.

For the spiritual life and education to be able to fulfil their vital role, also with regard to their current 'oppressors', the recognition of this role has to be restored in the first place. Then they have to be made completely free as far as their content, functioning and administration are concerned. Therefore the essential social task today is to liberate them from any extraneous constraints and external influences of the state and economy. Social tendencies are innate in free spiritual life; once liberated it will, of necessity, develop social understanding while the cooperation of individuals active within it will, through its own essence, acquire a social form. This strong and healthy spiritual life will send propitious and salutary impulses into the political and economic spheres and provide the guidelines for the recovery of the social organism.

Similarly, the economic sphere, despite its domineering position and influence in the life of individual and society, is not healthy in itself. It is due to a number of factors, both external and internal. Externally it is not autonomous as it should be, but is subject to the influence of political forces or even a direct interference by the government. Internally, as it comprises three inseparable and yet different areas of activities – production, distribution and consumption of commodities, their relations are far from being harmonious and cooperative. Rather than being guided by true economic and social considerations, they, as well as such vital factors as wages and prices, are determined by self-interest and by obscure and unpredictable market forces. Also the unrestrained economic forces of the modern economic process tend to subjugate everything within their reach to their voracious power turning, with the dire consequences, land, labour and human rights into commodities.

So the political state and economy should be completely separated from each other – for the benefit of both. If the economic interests are carried over into the legislation then the latter inevitably becomes the expression of the former rather than of what is innate in it as an awareness of human rights. Equally, if the political state assumes economic functions it loses its ability to safeguard these rights in the economic sphere and to legislate properly the economic activities. To say nothing about the damage done to the economic process by the interference of those who

are not an organic part of it. The relationship between the economic and legal spheres should be similar to that between sovereign states. Each should develop according to its own nature and principles enabling their beneficial cooperation and mutual support.

However the liberation of human labour power from its commodity character and status is the most important task. While labour remains part of the economic process this cannot be done – it is in the nature of this process to turn everything within it into commodity. So labour should be liberated not *within* the economic process but *from* it. As labour power is an integral part of the human being and not of the economic process, it should be extracted from the economic sphere and its jurisdiction and placed where it belongs – in the realm of social forces, human rights and equality which will cleanse it of its commodity character.

What the economic life itself requires is associative work of those involved in it as producers, distributors and consumers. They together should form associations where their different interests, concerns, insights, experience and expertise will be represented. Their cooperative work would comprise such important tasks as the regulation of the production and circulation of goods and of their prices. The size, the working and the number of associations in any particular area would be determined by those concerned in accord with the local conditions. A network of such associations, whose interrelations would be prompted and determined by practical necessities, would underlie the economic life as a whole and organise it from within.

The last chapter of the book is called 'International Relations between Social Organisms'. Steiner envisaged that when social organisms of individual countries formed themselves on the threefold principle their relations would also be threefold, i.e. they would be between the identical spheres and institutions of those countries. These three types of relations – spiritual, economic and legal – would be, as the spheres themselves, independent from one another.

The international relations and cooperation within each sphere of activity would emerge naturally and derive from the reality which is experienced by mankind as a whole at the present stage of its development. This reality, notwithstanding the national and regional particularities and differences, comprises the common spiritual life, the world economy and the shared perception of the essence of human rights (in our day the latter is even inscribed in the United Nations document *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights*).

This type of relationship between the nations – between institutions and individuals with shared understanding of fundamental principles and values of their spheres of activity – would replace national, political and economic conflicts. In case of conflicts it would be much easier to address them with a conciliatory understanding and appreciation of the common good and of the value and dignity of each component comprising mankind. Perhaps the most important consequence of this cooperative work for the international relations can be seen in the following observation by Steiner: "The resulting complex of mutual interest among the individual social organisms will make national frontiers seem inconsequential for human coexistence."

Over eighty thousand copies of the book were sold in the first year and it had several editions. The book was followed by many articles, lectures (over a hundred), talks and discussions. Steiner met with leading politicians and industrialists, with various groups and individuals, with workers' councils and ordinary workers, addressing at times thousands of them. The discussions often presented a tough challenge to Steiner, be it the inhospitable environment like smoke-filled taverns, or aggressive questions, or even hostile confrontations. Also he was besieged by endless invitations to speak on the subject and appeals for help and advice. Though none of it was new to him, nevertheless, bearing in mind his other wide-ranging and

very intensive activities, the new ones placed a tremendous burden on his time and life forces (and his voice!).

But this time he had many enthusiastic and committed supporters and collaborators, anthroposophists and non-anthroposophists, both ordinary and prominent members of society. Special organisations under the title "The Union for the Threefold Social Order" were launched in Germany and Switzerland, as well as weekly and monthly periodicals, with the expressed purpose of establishing such an order. There were many other purposeful actions and activities, both collective and individual.

Alas, all those sincere, earnest and resolute efforts did not achieve the desired results, and the Threefold Social Order had not been established in any shape or form anywhere in Europe. The obvious question arises: Why? Inevitably one reason for the failure was, despite enthusiasm and dedication of many, the notorious 'human factor', i.e. 'human imperfection'; in this case it was incompetence, lack of knowledge and understanding, personal and group interests, selfishness, mistrust, rivalry or even an outright hostility.

But in an historical discourse one should consider not only human but historical factors as well. And this brings us to another obvious question, of an historical nature: Were the proposed changes really needed and possible? Steiner, with his insight into contemporary events and evolutionary forces, answered it with the most emphatic "Yes!" which was why he introduced the threefold social ideas in the first place. Some of his contemporaries, lacking his insight but not the concern for the state of affairs, echoed his answer. But the majority, judging by the end results, responded to the proposed changes with the equally unequivocal "No!", whether it was voiced explicitly, or was implicit in a lack of understanding or in mere apathy. So what was it that manifested itself through those events – wishful thinking or a missed opportunity?

It is not an idle question for the simple reason that it is as relevant for our time as it was ninety years ago. In many respects we live today in a completely different world but the human being with his vital needs, and the society with its inadequate means to meet them, and the consequent problems are still the same. More specifically, the basic structure and functioning of the body social, with which Steiner's ideas were concerned, have not changed, and the social question remains unsolved.

Though the Europe of the WWI and its aftermath was in a particularly critical situation, it was only the beginning of the modern time's calamities and crises which since then have plagued Europe and the world. The present affluence of the Western society might have eased or obscured some deep-rooted social abnormalities and ills but it has neither rectified nor cured them. And most certainly it has not precluded new ones. But when nowadays any of the social problems, old or new, is recognised and addressed the proposed solution is almost invariably of a make-shift nature. Hence the above question. One does not have to be a historian or sociologist to try and answer it. One only needs to be concerned with current social issues and ask oneself whether the society in which one lives is in need of a fundamental overhaul along the lines proposed by Steiner. A mere contemplation of this question may help the reader to understand what happened, or is happening for that matter, to Steiner's social ideas historically. In any case the fact remains, that in the emaciated post WWI Europe an historical endeavour was made to solve the social problems of modern humanity in a fundamental and healthy way.

Two Challenges to the Ideas of the Threefold Social Order

What follows does not belong, strictly speaking, to the main theme of this discourse, the Anthroposophical Movement. But it does belong to the theme of the Threefold Social Order which is an integral part of the Anthroposophical Movement, and, in a wider sense, to the evolutionary context of the discourse. Therefore the author decided to place it here.

When something fundamentally new appears in the public arena, like Steiner's social ideas, it inevitably encounters resistance and even hostility. We spoke about it earlier. But now we shall speak of two phenomena that challenge Steiner's social ideas quite differently, though each in its own way. One challenge took place in Steiner's time and was also in the sphere of ideas which proposed serious changes. As its ideas were political we shall call it a political challenge. The other did not exist at the time; it is a modern phenomenon which challenges the threefold social ideas in the practical sphere, but its challenge is quite different from what Steiner and his supporters experienced at the time or from what any other modern phenomenon might suggest. As it emerged historically we shall call it an historical challenge.

A Political Challenge

When Rudolf Steiner and his supporters were trying to implement his threefold social ideas, a virtually parallel public endeavour, with equally far-reaching implications, took place. It was the peace proposals for the post-war Europe by the US President Woodrow Wilson known as the Fourteen Points. Obviously Wilson's proposals received much more attention and publicity than Steiner's, but it was not the only difference between the two. Despite Wilson's personal humanitarian and idealistic motives his proposals did not address the wider social issues but only the problems caused by the War. But even then he sought only political solutions which alone can never solve the deep-seated problems of social and human nature.

However, Steiner's main objections to those proposals, which he voiced on many occasions over the years, concerned their substance rather than scope. Not being based on a proper understanding of the true reality they led the European nations, and the world, into a wrong direction (while Wilson himself was led, or better to say – *mised*, by backward spiritual beings, as was revealed by Steiner's spiritual research). Wilson advocated self-determination, autonomy and freedom for individual nations which seemed at the time, and still seems to many today, an honourable objective, a prerequisite for a national wellbeing and a right and sound basis for international relations.

However, to apply the concept of freedom to nations is wrong. Freedom, as a universal principle and the main component of the social triune, can only have a spiritual meaning. As such it is applicable only to individual human beings, to the spirit within them. If applied in a political sense, especially collectively, it inevitably leads to sectarianism, separation and enmity. Applied to nations it encourages nationalism and chauvinism, dividing nations and setting them apart and against each other – a sure recipe for ever new calamities and disasters. From the spiritual viewpoint the notion of national freedom is not based on reality but *individual freedom* is, and it should be pursued as a human and social ideal and objective. When it is truly attained then *free individuals* will find a right form both for their national secure existence and for proper inter-nations relations.

Alas, only a few can see the truth of it even today despite all the evidence readily supplied by our troubled time. Even if people are alarmed by the rising nationalism with its insidious problems, they do not see its real causes let alone

remedies for them. As to the notion of national autonomy, independence, self-determination and sovereignty, for most people it is synonymous with that of *freedom*. It is for them a historically evolved necessity, a worldwide reality and a valid international principle. Furthermore, they can confidently affirm that at least for some modern national conflicts characterized by hostility, discrimination and even violence, to apply and safeguard this principle is the quickest and most effective way of putting an end to xenophobic injustice, humiliation and persecution. While Steiner's ideas, even given their spiritual and social validity, can only offer a hope of a faraway solution. Too faraway for many victims of national animosity to benefit from it.

One has to admit the strength of these arguments born out by a number of real events. Urgent and extreme situations require urgent and effective measures, especially if it concerns human life. No doubt that prevention is preferable to treatment and treatment to surgery. But where would we have been today without the latter? So separation and autonomy are the forms of social surgery.

Accepting this, the following considerations, though, should be taken into account when attempts are made at solving national conflicts. As such measures can evidently bring some people certain tangible benefits, they are achieved, as a rule, at the expense of others, whether this expense is of a material, cultural or psychological nature. In other words, some wounds are healed – new ones are inflicted.

Then, a national, ethnic and racial distinction is only one source of conflicts between people living together. There are many other sources which take prominence from time to time – religious, ideological, social, cultural, territorial or even sexual. If we wish to be consistent and resort to the 'separation and autonomy' principle for solving such conflicts as well, then we shall end up with a society which would be unable to function and in which it would be impossible to live.

Further, urgent and effective 'surgical' measures, as necessary as they are in some circumstances, are far from always being lasting, secure or even right solutions. Therefore after applying them, long-term and *right* solution should be sought. To give a rather crude example, if one is marooned on a desert island and is dying of thirst, it is only natural that to quench it he would resort to drinking sea water. It might sustain him for a while, but to survive he would have to find fresh water. Rudolf Steiner proposed his social ideas as a reliable source of fresh water for human society in our time.

An Historical Challenge

Though at the time of their inception Steiner's social ideas came rather close to it, they were never put to the test by being realised. No nation has ever even contemplated their implementation. But if we are to contemplate it now and look for a suitable candidate, we can hardly find a nation which is more in need of it and at once more challenging to it than the one of which the great Russian philosopher Vladimir Solovyev spoke in the following way: "Passing through the entire history of mankind, from its very beginning and up to our days (which cannot be said about any other nation), the Jewry represents, as it were, the axis of world history."

"Its very beginning" we know from the Bible. Creating the Jewish nation as "his people", giving them the land (which became known as the Land of Israel), endowing them with his guidance and protection and even establishing with them his covenant, God wanted to make his 'chosen people' special and great, a paragon for other nations. Because special was the task intended by God for "his people". Blissfully unaware of this task and finding God's methods of perfecting them rather uncomfortable, the Jewish people resisted and frustrated God's efforts at every opportunity.

One example of disobedience of the young Hebrew nation is of a particular interest to us. They wanted to be "like all the nations" and to have their own king. God was not very pleased that *his people* wished to have not his spiritual reign over them but a secular one. In the end he conceded. As it happened, thanks to this concession in the Jewish history was written one of its glorious pages, with its illustrious personalities and captivating events, which became part of the world cultural heritage. But for the Jewish people it meant that a *political* element entered their life which until then had only *spiritual* guidance and leadership.

The first national statehood lasted for several centuries. Glorious at the beginning the former kingdom of David and Solomon split into two, a big one and a small one, each desperately fighting for its independence. Both lost it. The bigger one was conquered and destroyed first, with its ten tribes taken captive by the occupiers and never heard of since. The smaller one, with its two tribes, was conquered and laid waste by the Babylonian invaders. Its capital Jerusalem with its magnificent Temple built by Solomon was destroyed, and the Jewish state ceased to exist. The population, apart from most poor and unskilled, was taken prisoner and deported to Babylon. It was the beginning of the Jewish Diaspora, a dissipation of the Jews all over the world, which even up to now remains their principal abode.

This forced exile betrayed no signs of what the future had in store for the Jews. In Babylon they were granted religious and professional freedom and allowed to prosper, thus benefiting their captors. Despite the prosperity, all their years in captivity they were longing for their homeland which was reflected in the famous Psalm:

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept,
When we remembered Zion.
.....
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget her cunning...

Amazingly, as if their lamentation was heeded, half a century into captivity they were permitted, by their new masters now, to return home together with their possessions and the holy attributes stolen from their destroyed Temple. Only a small part of them returned to the country which for all intents and purposes was no longer theirs, politically and ethnically. But it was theirs spiritually and emotionally.

Those who returned were the first 'Zionists' – and the last for the next two and a half thousand years. And they were the only large group of Jews in the whole history of their Diaspora who returned to their historic and spiritual homeland because they were pulled and not pushed to it. Their objective was to restore and rebuild their spiritual centre rather than their national state. But soon they had to fight for their national and spiritual survival, and in the bloody and prolonged war they finally succeeded. But the hard-won independence and the second national statehood did not last long – less than a century. Then followed two millennia of the Diaspora which culminated in the third, current, attempt at the Jewish independent statehood.

During this long Diaspora the Jews mainly lived, or were forced to live, as communities which eventually became known as *ghettos*. There were times and countries when and where the Jews were treated well, and their communities prospered. But mostly they were ostracised, threatened and persecuted, and lived in extreme poverty. Everywhere they were aliens either by legislation or by the attitude of the indigenous population. Often the only way to survive or succeed was to assimilate and be baptised, and some accepted this option while many were baptized

by force. But the majority kept their Jewish identity, faith and tradition. They accepted their Jewish fate as that of suffering until the Messiah would come one day and save them, as was promised to them by their God.

As to their return to their lost homeland, their prayers contained poignant and powerful words expressing both a vow and hope: "Next year in Jerusalem". But for the most it was a tradition, a pledge of faithfulness to their God, a spiritual rather than physical aspiration. If they moved, as a community, from the place of their current abode it was because they had to, but their destination was virtually never that of their prayers. This went on for many generations and for many centuries. But the situation started gradually to change, as the world around them was changing. New enlightened and liberal ideas and social and political changes in the Western World at the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th century initiated in their wake the process of emancipation of the Jews. Though slow and halting, it did bring some tangible improvements to their situation, and promised more.

But the situation changed again, for the worse this time, in the second half of the 19th century. Characteristically, at that time the term 'anti-Semitism' was coined – by someone who advocated it. The new term did not designate a new phenomenon of course, but it did signify a new phase in the old one. Before the animosity towards Jews was of a religious or xenophobic nature and was rooted in base instincts and ignorance. But now, in addition to this, it became an Ideology – a racist Ideology, according to which the Jews belong to a physiologically, intellectually and morally inferior race. Also towards the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century the Jews were subjected to particularly ugly persecutions and vicious atrocities, notably in Russia.

But now these persecutions and atrocities were widely reported and became part of common knowledge and consciousness. They were detested by many ordinary people and publicly condemned by some distinguished personalities. Most importantly, however, the changes occurred not only around the Jews, but in them as well. Those who were emancipated inwardly more than they were allowed to be outwardly, said enough was enough to their persecutions and persecutors. They not only, for the first time in the history of the Jewish Diaspora, took a firm stand against their offenders, but were determined to find a radical solution to the tragic impasse of the Wandering Jew. And the solution was found: it was to stop wandering and become again "like all the nations" and to have their own home – their own territory, their own country, their own state, their own nationhood, and their own sovereignty.

Though most of those resolute Jews were not religious or traditionalists, they knew that once upon a time the Jews had their own land, state and independence. And the return to this land, which over millennia was under the rule of various occupiers but never a seat of any nation or state and was now virtually barren and sparsely populated, was for them the only solution of 'the Jewish question' worldwide. So the "Next year in Jerusalem" became for those new Zionists, with political, national or spiritual aspirations, a powerful inspiration and a concrete objective.

But the world was not ready yet either to grant the Jews this solution or to offer any other. It took the horrors of the Holocaust for the world to realize the need of the Jews for a national home. The rest, as they say, is history apart from the fact that in this case it is still very much with us and is going to be for the foreseeable future. Thus, since the extraordinary and ever evolving destiny of this "axis of world history" is observable from its very inception to the present day, there is every reason to try and see whether anything can be learnt from it that might be of a universal value applicable to other nations, to the mankind as a whole.

Before making this attempt, however, the author wishes to mention one particular vision of the destiny and history of the Jewish people. This vision seems to some to be so convincing and even self-evident that it virtually renders all other views

on the subject irrelevant. According to it the destiny and history of the Jewish people are unique. This uniqueness is not limited to the fact that Jewish is the only ancient nation which, despite being tiny, scattered and persecuted, survived to the present day. It is the only nation in human history with whom God established his covenant. And the present State of Israel is a miraculous fulfilment of that covenant. Nothing like this has ever happened or can ever happen in human history. But if something is unique and one-off it cannot contain anything universal, i.e. applicable, in this case, to other nations. The only thing that could be universal here is the acknowledgment by other nations of the uniqueness of the Jewish destiny and history.

This vision is of a religious nature. As such it is quite justified and legitimate within its own parameters which by definition cannot include all mankind. Besides, its main premise of the uniqueness of the Jewish nation does not in the least contradict our attempt. For the uniqueness of the Jewish history and destiny does in no way negate the fact that they bear within themselves what is common to all humanity – spiritual, social and national aspects of life, relations and problems. It is for this reason that the history and destiny of the Jewish people are of a special interest to us here.

The national statehood was never a prerequisite and *raison d'être* for their coming on the world arena and for their subsequent existence. According to the Bible, God gave them the land of their abode and their nationhood, but never statehood. Whatever were its merits, when they eventually got it, it did not last very long. In the end, they lost their land as well, and after that, for the next two millennia, it seemed that the main principle of their existence was not *where* to live but *how* to live, or rather how to *survive*. Only when to follow this principle became impossible for them almost anywhere in the world, a need for a shelter, secure and their own, arose. This need was so urgent that even the location of the shelter was considered by some Jews as unimportant. But the historic, national and spiritual connections were too obvious and powerful to ignore, and they all pointed in one direction – the Land of Israel which once belonged to them. While the past dictated the location of their shelter, the present dictated its form – a national state. Thus, it can be safely asserted that their modern statehood was imposed on the Jewish people.

But can it be equally asserted that all other nations are of a different nature and their own statehood eternally inscribed into their national character and destiny and is a vital need of their individual members? There are no grounds for such assertion whatsoever. Whatever subjective feelings and thoughts of these individuals, the objective and spiritual reality cannot be like this. The fact that the mankind perceives itself today as "a family of nations" – or, to be more precise, as an assemblage of national states – is a historic necessity. But this necessity is temporary by its nature, and its evolutionary significance belongs to the past and not to the future or even to the present. The problem is that in the transient and uncertain present people feel more comfortable living by the habitual past than treading towards the unknown new.

The creation of the modern Jewish state was the same historic necessity. But however vital this necessity was at the time or is now this does not change its temporary character. Now the fulfilment of that necessity created a completely new reality. By establishing their national state the Jewish people solved, or partly solved, some of their problems, but at the same time created new ones, both for themselves and for others. Even if some of these problems stem from the specific Jewish destiny or local conditions, they are, in their essence, not specifically Jewish or regional, but common to all mankind. Therefore their solution can only have a universal character and should be based on some universally human principles. The realization of it is the first step towards this solution.

This brings us straight to the Threefold Social Order which postulates such principles and which is an evolutionary necessity for mankind today. No people of whatever country or nation have experienced yet, collectively, the true meaning of freedom, equality and fraternity. Nor are they anywhere near to experiencing it or even to creating prerequisites for such an experience. The Jews, as unwelcome guests of other nations, were direct victims of this state of affairs. For centuries they were at the receiving end of what was wrong in the communal and spiritual life of the societies in which they lived. But now they are, after a very long time, the prime movers of their own affairs and even affect those of others. This double, and unique, experience of the Jewish destiny as a victim-master should allow them to recognise and understand the wrongs of this world. But, most importantly, it gives the Jewish people a unique opportunity to correct, or at least to try to correct, these wrongs – to accomplish something where the others failed.

This "something where the others failed" is the creation of the conditions of life in society for each individual which would allow him to experience fully the reality of the implemented principles of liberty, equality and fraternity. If as a victim the Jewish people felt more acutely than others the lack of these vital principles, then as a master they should no less intensely feel and recognise the necessity of their implementation. But the internal and external conditions of life in Israel and in the Israeli society are such that one would be hard pressed to find more difficult application for it. This ancient-new nation is trying to come to terms with itself and with its new identity. The various religious, cultural, ethnic and political differences and interests vibrate through the life of the country where big groups of population have values and ways of life incompatible with one another. While nearly one fifth of its citizens do not recognise Israel as their state. To say nothing about a virtually permanent state of war in which the country has existed since its creation. And it is not easy for this nation to find its footing in the world which is still unable to forgive it its own centuries-old injustice towards it.

Yet if the history and destiny of the Jewish people, as well as its present, teach us anything in the sphere of human coexistence and social life, it is exactly this, that the Threefold Social Order is the only way out of the hopeless entanglement in which mankind, and Israel and its people in particular, find themselves today.

The Waldorf Pedagogy

When Rudolf Steiner inaugurated the Anthroposophical Movement he wanted it to become an integral part of the civilised world and its culture, to imbue them with spiritual renewing impulses and to take practical actions of turning these impulses into concrete deeds. We saw how this enormous and long-term task began, how the spiritual knowledge and renewing spiritual impulses entered, almost imperceptibly, our civilisation, and how the first few modest but concrete and practical steps of renewal were made in the sphere of art. But as Steiner led his Movement further and deeper into life, the life, in its turn, was increasing making its presence felt to the Movement and was challenging it. The Threefold Social Order attempt was a result of that reciprocity.

Compared to those modest steps this attempt was a gigantic leap, and while the former were successful the latter failed. The reason for the success lay in the fact that those steps were organic. The impulses behind them, their nature and scale, the abilities and possibilities of those who carried them out all fitted in and formed a workable and working unity. But with the Threefold Social Order endeavour, its scale and its comprehensive and far-reaching objectives, the available human and material resources, the prevailing conditions and mode of thinking, made it anything but organic. Hence its failure despite considerable and sincere efforts stimulated by

genuine impulses and intentions. While for Steiner the single underlying reason was that the right way of thinking required by our time had "not been living strongly enough within even a small number of human beings."

But that failure on a wide-ranging scale did not invalidate other social impulses and needs and did not discourage dedicated individuals from pursuing them. One of those individuals was Emil Molt, an industrialist and anthroposophist from Stuttgart, owner of the Waldorf-Astoria tobacco factory and a leading figure in the Threefold Social Movement. A very conscientious and caring employer he looked well after his workers and even established a school to enhance their education. And now, prompted by his workers, he approached Steiner with an idea of having a school, financed by the factory, for the children of his employees: would Steiner underpin this school with a pedagogical and educational foundation?

It was again a repetition of the same pattern which marked Steiner's outward activities throughout his life: a right person asking him a right question at a right time thus generating a far-reaching and vital response. In this particular case Steiner's response had been eagerly waiting for many years to be claimed. Its significant feature was its intimate connection with Steiner's personal life which endowed him with a rich pedagogical experience coupled with his vast educational knowledge. Even as a schoolboy he coached his fellow pupils and from the age of fourteen, for many years, had to support himself financially by giving private lessons in all conceivable subjects to a variety of people – children, adolescents and adults, some of whom were in education, from school to postgraduate, and some in full employment, even in the army. But the most difficult pedagogical task, which also proved to be the most rewarding, he faced at the age of twenty three. Since this experience was extremely beneficial to Steiner and his now widely applied pedagogy and because its overall human value goes far beyond just one individual or one field of activity, it may be permitted to relate it here, in full, in Steiner's own words.

Destiny brought me a special pedagogical task. I was recommended as a tutor to a family with four boys. Three of them had only to be given preparatory instruction for the elementary school and later supplementary tuition for the secondary school. But the fourth, who was about ten years old, was entrusted to me for his entire education. He was a sorrow to his parents, particularly to his mother. When I came into the family he had hardly acquired the rudiments of reading, writing and arithmetic. He was considered so abnormal in his physical and mental development that the family doubted he could be educated at all. His thinking was slow and dull. Even slight mental exertion caused headache, lowered vitality, pallor, and there would be alarming emotional behaviour.

After I had come to know the child, I felt certain that an education adapted to this particular constitution of soul and body would awaken his sleeping capacities, and I proposed to the parents that they leave the method of his education in my hands. The boy's mother met my proposal with confidence, and thus I was able to set myself this special pedagogical task.

I had to find access to a soul that was in a kind of sleeping condition and that gradually had to be brought to master the bodily functions. First, the soul had to be helped to fit, as it were, into the body. I was convinced that the boy had great intellectual capacities, though this was not apparent. And this made my task deeply satisfying. After a short time I succeeded in gaining the child's love. This had an awakening effect upon his sleeping soul faculties, merely through my being with him. I had to devise special methods for teaching him. Even a quarter of an hour over and above the specific length of time allotted to

lessons caused danger to his health. The boy could find a relation to most subjects only with great difficulty.

This pedagogical task became a rich source of learning for me. The educational methods I had to adopt gave me insight into the way man's soul and spirit are connected with his bodily nature. It became my actual training in physiology and psychology. I came to realize that education and teaching must become an art, based upon true knowledge of man. I had to adhere to a carefully planned program. In order to make use of the boy's intellectual capacities to the best advantage in the shortest possible time, and with the least strain on his mental and physical forces, I had often to spend up to two hours preparing the material I taught for half an hour. The sequence of the subjects taught had to be carefully arranged, and the day divided into definite periods. I had the satisfaction of seeing the boy catch up with the Primary School curriculum in the course of two years, and successfully pass the entrance examination for the *Gymnasium*. His health also improved considerably. The hydrocephalic condition was rapidly diminishing. I could advise the parents to send the boy to the public school, for I thought it essential that he should grow up with other children. I remained with the family as tutor for several more years, devoting myself particularly to this boy, whose successful progress through school depended entirely upon the fact that at home his activities continued in the same spirit in which they had begun. This was the occasion to which I referred earlier, when I continued my study of Greek and Latin, for I had to help this and one other boy in the family with these subjects, since they were required for the curriculum of the *Gymnasium*.

I am grateful that destiny brought me such a vital task. I gained insight into man's nature, in a living, practical way that would hardly have been possible otherwise. The family accepted me with exceptional kindness. The friendship that developed lasted throughout life. The boy's father was agent for Indian and American cotton interests. I was able to gain insight into the running of such a business and the many things it involved. This was again something from which I learned much. I saw the workings of an extraordinarily interesting branch of the importing business, including transactions between business associates, interlinking various commercial and industrial activities.

My "foster-child" was successfully helped through the *Gymnasium*; I remained with him till the last grade but one. By then he had progressed so far that he did not need me any more. After leaving the *Gymnasium* he entered the School of Medicine, became a physician and in this capacity was later killed in the (first) World War.

Steiner's personal educational-pedagogical experience and knowledge of what had been accumulated by mankind in this field would have been more than enough to inaugurate an original and comprehensive educational system. But Steiner also possessed a spiritual knowledge of man and his development which allowed him to create a pedagogy that was not only innovative but revolutionary. If the knowledge of the spiritual dimension of the world and all its constituents enriches one's experience, enhances comprehension and helps to find a solid footing in life, then in education and medicine (of which we shall speak later), it is simply indispensable. Here its application and implication are direct and immediate.

Like with the social question, Steiner declared that anthroposophy had a contribution to make in the field of education very soon after starting his Movement. But he also realised that it was impossible to change or replace the existing educational system without changing, first, its prime vehicle, the teacher: "One should rather speak of an education of the educator". At that time it was beyond his

reach, but now, when he was approached by Emil Molt, the situation was different: Steiner could "educate the educator" and equip him with a new system of education. That was exactly what he started doing – systematically, step by step. He devised the school curriculum and appointed the teachers giving them preliminary instructions and guidance. Then, before the opening of the school, he returned to Stuttgart and for a fortnight gave to the new teachers, daily and concurrently, three different pedagogical courses – in the morning, in the afternoon and in the evening.

From that time onwards he, despite his various other commitments and an enormous amount of work, supervised the teachers' work and school's development, paid numerous visits to it attending classes and even giving lessons, took part in many teachers' meeting giving advice and discussing with them the whole scope of issues, from general pedagogy to specific problems or children. The school was, pedagogically and socially, a new word in education in more ways than one which was recognised even by the state authorities. But not only by them. When the school opened it had some 200 pupils (three quarter of whom were the children of the factory's employees). A few years later there were already 1,100 pupils (and 76 teachers) with many hundreds of eager applicants who could not, alas, be admitted. It was only a matter of time (and available resources) before other Waldorf schools, as they became known, appeared in various countries. Steiner, in the meantime, continued to give his inspirational lectures on education in different places and countries.

Thus, the year 1919 saw the birth of the first Waldorf School, of a new pedagogy and a new educational movement. A lot has been written about the Waldorf pedagogy, and a few sketchy lines here can only offer but a pale glimpse of this cultural phenomenon. The education of the whole child as a spiritual, soul and physical being and the knowledge of what, how and when to teach him is, in a nutshell, the essence of the Waldorf pedagogy. This specific knowledge stems from and is based on a wider knowledge of man and the world and of their development. But this general knowledge has its true value in education only if it is applied also specifically, to every individual child. While any good and conscientious teacher always tries to discover and develop his pupil's abilities and capacities, a true Waldorf teacher endeavours, furthermore, to perceive and recognise the aspirations which his pupil brought from the spiritual world so as to equip and direct him along the path of their realisation.

The main body of the Waldorf pedagogy consists of Steiner's contributions contained in his lectures and lecture cycles, recorded discussions and conversations with teachers, notes, memoirs, etc. There he speaks of the true nature of man, of child development and various aspects of education, including actual classroom situations. But in this field, more than in any other, Steiner's works have been supplemented, over the years, by many other contributions whose authors speak out of their own experience, knowledge and understanding. As to the Steiner Waldorf movement, as it is known under this double name, it is the biggest, steadily growing and most credible educational movement today in the world. At the time of writing (circa 2010) it comprised some 900 schools and over 1600 kindergartens in 60 countries worldwide.

The Newcomers

The rages of the War that caused countless human casualties and an enormous material and social destruction, caused also turmoil in people's souls and minds, especially among the young. Many of them, and not only those who experienced the War firsthand, realised or felt that they could not live in the post-war world in the old way – something in it had to change or to be changed. Having thus rejected the old

they did not necessarily know what they wanted to replace it with, but they were looking for something different and new. In their quest they turned, as could be expected, in various directions and were attracted to various causes and organisations, mostly political. But some young people, especially those who sought nourishment for their souls or, as students, were dissatisfied with what they were getting at their universities, found their way to the Anthroposophical Movement which they embraced with great enthusiasm. They took active part in the Threefold Movement and in other initiatives, but also undertook their own like, for instance, organising anthroposophical discussion groups at universities; some of them, became teachers at the Waldorf School. They even found, within the Anthroposophical Society, their own German Youth Movement.

Now the underlying, but not consciously perceived by them, reason why this younger generation wanted the post-war world to be changed and made different, was that they themselves were "totally different people" vis-à-vis their older contemporaries. Many of them might have felt it, but Steiner knew it for a fact. The proverbial 'generation gap', known from the times immemorial, had never been so wide and deep. And it could not be otherwise for it reflected a turning point in human evolution, that very turning point which is at the heart of this discourse and its *raison d'être*. In keeping with its spirit and vocabulary we can say that the generation born around the turn of the twentieth century was the first one who came from the spiritual world with longing, in the depth of their souls, for the Divine Know-How.

But they needed help so that they could bring this longing to their full consciousness and be able to realise their spiritual impulses into the deeds beneficial to all humanity. Otherwise their good impulses might turn into something harmful, to them and to the society at large. Steiner, being very much aware of it, was tireless in giving the young people his help. He had many meetings with them, individual and in groups, discussing their personal needs, problems and aspirations as well as general cultural, social and scientific issues. He also gave them talks, lectures and courses some of which were arranged at their specific request. One such course, which is as valid today as it was at the time, appropriately bears the title *The Younger Generation*. By its content summarised in its subtitle, *Education and Spiritual Impulses for Life in the Twentieth Century*, it was indeed what those young people aspired for and what one of them called a modern "cultural pedagogy."

But there were also older newcomers, from all walks of life, and for many of them the reason for coming to the Anthroposophical Movement was connected with their profession. They were specialists in various fields such as science, medicine, education, art, agriculture, etc. which, they felt, exhausted their vitality and were in need of revitalisation and new ideas. Anthroposophy was for them such a salutary source, and for Steiner this new interest presented a long-awaited opportunity to diversify the Anthroposophical Movement into all these and other vital realms of life and culture. In a more fundamental way, it was in fulfilment of what Steiner saw as the major task of the Anthroposophical Movement – the renewal of culture and society in all their aspects.

The Renewal of Science

We already spoke earlier on of what was done in this respect in the fields of art and education and also in the social sphere. When it came to science, its renewal was of a particular importance because of its pivotal role in our civilisation. On a personal level, having had a scientific mind, disposition and training, Steiner was a scientist by his permanent life occupation which was scientific research. But unlike other scientists who researched the natural (physical/material) world, which Steiner did as

well, the main field of his research was the spiritual world, and the pioneering science he inaugurated was *spiritual science*.

What the spiritual science has in common with the natural sciences are the scientific method of observation, a clear conceptual thinking and the necessity of verification. This *modus operandi* of natural science is the very foundation of the spiritual science. Even long before Steiner inaugurated it, he presented his major philosophical work, the abovementioned *Philosophy of Freedom*, as "Some results of introspective observation following the methods of Natural Science". Therefore he urged his followers, many of whom could not understand why he wrote so much about natural science even before publishing anything regarding spiritual science, to learn the discipline and strict methodology of modern natural science, "to cultivate a scientific habit of mind". It is indispensable if one wishes to transcend the boundaries of natural sciences into spiritual realms of knowledge.

Being very well versed in the vital and manifold realm of natural science Steiner appreciated, and praised on many occasions, its outstanding achievements. But to understand fully its significance for our time, as well as its limitations and how to overcome them, i.e. to renew it, one has to see it in the context of human evolution. Therefore Steiner spoke profoundly, as he did with regard to art, of the origins and history of natural science.

Natural science is a comparatively modern phenomenon. There was no science in ancient times as there was no need for it. In the first instance, there was no need for comprehension because everything inside and outside man was subject to his direct experience. What he experienced was spirit which permeated everything, and this everything was thus a unity, spiritual unity. For man there was no division and contradiction, as happened later, between spirit and nature or between his soul and body.

But by the Eighth Century B.C. the situation changed. Man could not perceive the spirit directly any longer, though the ancient knowledge was still retained as a tradition. What man perceived instead in nature, and in his body as part of it, was not the spirit but a force, forces, a complex of forces. As a result, "The concept of force emerged," observed Steiner. Though man was aware that those forces were flowing out of the spirit, their substance was different. The corporality appeared in the body (and in nature) which was much denser than the spiritual substance of the soul. And man experienced the contrast between his body and soul, and between himself and nature which was not there before.

Then further changes took place in man's consciousness and his perception of the world. He lost any perception of the spirit whether as such, or in his soul, his body or nature which led to his denial of it altogether. The body acquired a spatial corporality, and the soul could no longer feel any kinship to it. The soul, in its turn, ceased to be experienced by man as something concrete, as a bearer of the spirit, but became instead the bearer of concepts and ideas. As a result, instead of feeling itself akin to everything around, it saw itself as a subject confronting alien objects. It was precisely because man's connection with nature was lost and it became an object of need to cognition, a need for a science of nature emerged. Our modern era of thinking began (in the Fifteenth Century).

Apart from science as such Steiner also spoke about the development of various domains of scientific thought and of various sciences including mathematics and its special role in scientific thinking and discoveries. For this development to be successful and to lead, as it did and is still doing, to many extraordinary discoveries and achievements, a sacrifice was to be made unbeknown to its subject, man. Man lost his direct experience of nature. In the process of acquiring new knowledge of it, man has lost true knowledge and understanding of his own nature and, among other things, of specific relationships between himself and his environment and of the

essential difference between himself and animal. Thus the nascent powerful science became at the same time 'dehumanised'.

But, evolutionarily, now is the time – in fact, we may call it an evolutionary necessity – for man to gain those knowledge and understanding again but at a higher level of consciousness. This he can only do with the help of spiritual science, for natural sciences are powerless here. What distinguishes spiritual science from natural sciences is not just different fields of investigation like, for instance, one has in biology and astronomy. And not only that its tools of observation, mode of thinking and method of verification are different. The spiritual science, by its scope and nature, by virtue of the universal and fundamental knowledge it yields, is that 'science of sciences' which embraces and underpins them all.

But what it most definitely does not do, it does not 'cancel' other sciences. On the contrary, spiritual science can fructify them and raise their values by shedding light on something which remains unattainable and unknown to them. When natural science reaches its limits and ends up with questions, these are the starting point for a spiritual researcher. Whether it investigates a particular world phenomena or attempts at a comprehensive picture of the world, natural science can only know its derivative component – the matter, while spiritual science investigates its prime component and source – the spirit.

Therefore, whatever results the modern scientific thought brings about, be they discoveries and achievements or impasses and riddles, they all need the insight, elucidation and input of the spiritual science. In other words, natural science is to be supplemented by the spiritual science in such a way that new sciences based on the spiritual knowledge, like 'anthroposophical physics' and 'anthroposophical chemistry', would come about. Steiner was the only spiritual scientist at the time, i.e. the one capable of the direct experience and research of the spiritual world. But he could not do all this work by himself, and he pointed to this obvious fact with some irony: "A single person might accomplish this if a human life spanned six hundred years. But by that time, other tasks would confront him and his accomplishments would long since be outmoded."

Luckily this impossibility was not the only option. By that time enough anthroposophical knowledge was given for dedicated and competent students of anthroposophy to carry out their own anthroposophical scientific research and contribute, individually and collectively, to the enormous task of the renewal of science. For this purpose a research institute was founded in Stuttgart in 1920 (in the fields of physics, chemistry and biology) and the publication of some scientific papers resulted from its work. Later the institute was transferred to Dornach.

The aim of this new research in science and other fields of renewal was the same – to disseminate its results as widely as possible. Steiner did it in his usual way by giving lectures and courses, often followed by discussions, to specialists, students and general public, going from town to town and from country to country. But at that time he also thought of something more fundamental and permanent – an anthroposophical centre of higher education, the University of Spiritual Science. That was a natural development in itself and also a fitting progression from the school education to the higher education; from the education whose content was the fruits of anthroposophy but not anthroposophy itself, to the one where anthroposophy was to be not only the foundation of the curriculum, but its part and parcel. This was for Steiner a very important extension of knowledge. However, his overall intention went far beyond just introducing new subjects or imbuing the old ones with a new knowledge and understanding.

As we have seen from the earlier discourse, even as a young child Steiner became aware of the one-sidedness in people's perception of the world. Later he also experienced a dichotomy in his own knowledge of the world and the difficulties

of overcoming it. But when he eventually succeeded in this he was eager to make the result, the comprehensive knowledge of the world as an organic whole, available and beneficial to all mankind. This became his life task and his message to the world which he unceasingly and consistently conveyed in various modes – philosophical, natural-scientific, spiritual-scientific, and artistic. Long before his anthroposophical activities which at the time he neither envisaged nor was yet ready to undertake, Steiner wrote in the Preface to his *Philosophy of Freedom* (1894): "The realms of life are many. For each one, special sciences develop. But life itself is a unity, and the more deeply the sciences try to penetrate into their separate realms, the more they withdraw themselves from the vision of the world as a living whole. There must be a knowledge which seeks in the separate sciences the elements for leading man back once more to the fullness of life. The scientific specialist seeks through his findings to develop awareness of the world and its workings; in this book the aim is a philosophical one – that knowledge itself shall become organically alive. The separate sciences are stages on the way to that knowledge we are here trying to achieve."

To give now this holistic and organically alive knowledge on a public arena in an academic scientific environment was the objective and the task of the University of Spiritual Science. But though Steiner was, no doubt, in a position to inaugurate it there was no suitably qualified academic staff to teach in such a university alongside him. It is hardly conceivable to have a university with one person teaching all subjects, giving all lectures, conducting all seminars and supervising the entire research and all scientific experiments. Thus it became essential here, like in the case of school education, "to educate the educator" first.

Steiner's need for colleagues in teaching spiritual knowledge was the same as for spiritual research. As was mentioned earlier, luckily there were eager and capable aspirants around Steiner some of whom undertook, under his guidance, new scientific research and experimental work, gave lectures and wrote scientific papers. And there were those, with a rather orthodox knowledge and conventional attitude, who were also willing to work with Steiner. In other words, the situation was not much different from Steiner's other pioneering endeavours, artistic and social. But then Steiner never expected to find a ready-made body of competent colleagues. Such co-workers could only gradually evolve in the process of their work and development under Steiner's guidance. This schooling lay in the nature of all his activities carried out in collaboration with other people.

The Renewal of Religion

So Steiner made, with his collaborators, the first steps in renewing art and science. But what about the third constituent of the omnipresent triumvirate of our culture – religion? Did it also need renewal? And not only this. When we consider these three modes by which man tries to comprehend and know the world in which he lives and to find his place in it, it is not just their renewal that might concern us. These spheres of man's activity and experience exist side by side, yet tread their separate paths and are alien to one another. Does it have to be like that? Can their powerful and vital presence in our life be reconciled and harmonized?

To these two questions Steiner gave unequivocal answers: 'No' to the first and 'Yes' to the second. To the above three spheres he added the fourth one, morality. Apart from trying to get knowledge of the world through science, to give expression to his inner experiences through art and to seek the meaning of his life and of the existence of the universe through religion, man also tries to establish in his life some values which distinguish him as a moral being.

All four have common origin, in spirit. When art, religion and morality first emerged, they were based on man's knowledge of the spirit (which was experienced inwardly rather than acquired by external perceptions as is the case today). Therefore in primeval ages they constituted one organic whole. However, in the course of human evolution these ancient spheres of man's activity underwent considerable changes not only in themselves, by losing their spiritual foundation, but also in their relationships with one another. Thus, talking about science and art Steiner explained that the prevailing intellectualism in modern scientific thinking eliminated art from knowledge causing a schism between them. Similar schisms appeared between these two and religion and between religion and morality.

However, their gradual separation from their source of origin and from one another was an evolutionary necessity which has now run its course. The consequent destruction of the original unity is now causing also the destruction of man himself and of the social fabric of his life. Therefore this negative trend, having served its purpose, should be reversed and the unity of the four should be restored. This can happen, again, only on the basis of the true knowledge of the spirit, but not primitive and instinctive as in old times, but conscious, modern and scientific. The anthroposophical spiritual science provides such knowledge, and Steiner had no doubts in its efficacy: "If man again achieves spiritual knowledge, he will be able to do what is needed, to link his further evolution to an instinctive origin. He will find what must be found for the healing of humanity: harmony between science, art, religion and morality." The Goetheanum described above was Steiner's attempt to achieve and express, through its forms and colours, the unity and harmony of art, science and religion "in a truly universal sense".

A few words have to be said about Steiner's understanding of morality. Traditionally morality is associated with religion, even as being its province. It indeed was the case until the time when religion started losing its inner and outer authority which coincided with a general decline of spiritual values and social mores. However, morality as such and moral principles and norms have not disappeared or lost their significance and practicable applicability even among those who consider themselves liberated from 'the shackles of religion' and 'outmoded values'. Such people might regard moral values, whether old or new, as being, say, no longer Judeo-Christian but human, civilized and liberal; or they might not be conscious of them altogether in their daily life. But the main thing is that the majority of people, irrespective of their creeds or beliefs, continue to live by certain moral premises even if they themselves are unaware of it. Had it been otherwise human cohabitation would have been impossible even under the strictest rule of law.*

This fact can serve as a proof, if one is needed, that within human being morality can live quite independently from any external authority, be it other human beings, society or religion. Because, as Steiner showed in his book mentioned earlier, *The Philosophy of Freedom*, the origin and source of morality are not in these authorities but in the spirit. He also showed that every human being today has access to this source through *pure thinking* unconditioned by sense-perceptible content. This thinking is the foundation of what Steiner called *ethical individualism* which denotes individual moral ideas, impulses and actions derived by each individual, for each particular situation, out of the universal spiritual content. In other words, one should be guided in life not by some general moral norms and principles applicable to all and for all occasions, but by one's own which are individual in their

* Perhaps the author should explain what he means by "moral premises". For him it is an ability or instinct which allows people to distinguish between 'good and right', on the one hand, and 'bad and wrong', on the other, and to choose the former rather than the latter. Despite numerous individual, collective and even mass aberrations, with their tragic consequences, the majority of people retain and share the basic notions of what is 'good and right' vis-à-vis 'bad and wrong'.

content and application. And in the process of searching for, discovering and executing such content lies the true nature of human freedom. Thus, true morality and true freedom originate in the same source and presuppose each other. They are the pinnacle of the spiritual development of man.

But are such freedom and ethical individualism, if pursued consistently by each individual, not a sure recipe for a universal chaos and strife? Not at all, replied Steiner, because their source is the universal spirit. If originated from this source, human impulses, ideas and actions – and in this case they cannot be anything but moral – are both individual and universal. Not only do they come from the same source, they also advance mankind in the same direction and towards the same ultimate and sublime goal. Therefore they cannot contradict, or impinge upon, one another or those great universal principles which were given to mankind – from the same source! – in the past. Perhaps the author can illustrate this by one natural and extraordinary phenomenon which might be familiar to the reader.

It is a flock of birds, thousands of them, who form themselves into a dense cloud where individual birds are indistinguishable. In this way they soar over one place, up and down, right and left, constantly changing direction and the shape of the cloud. It is the most beautiful and fascinating sight, like a collective dance of accomplished ballet dancers under the guidance of a superb choreographer. Perfect harmony, sense of direction and space, and not a single collision either in flight or in a graceful and sudden landing when the invisible choreographer gives an invisible sign to end the dance.

Having considered religion a major factor of life and culture Steiner devoted to it a considerable amount of his lecturing activity. And he also thought that it, along with everything else in our culture, should be renewed out of the new spiritual knowledge "in order that what today is mere heritage, mere tradition may spring again into original life". But he did not see it as his personal task. However eager was he willing to initiate and take part in a practical renewal of whatever facet of culture and life within his reach, religion was not one of them. His task was to give a new knowledge and not a new faith and to renew what was universally applicable to every individual which clearly did not include religion. So he expected its renewal to be initiated and undertaken by those capable 'practitioners' of religion who felt the need for such a renewal out of the spiritual science. That was exactly how it happened.

A group of young theologians, who were about to conclude their studies and embark upon their professional pastoral work, approached Steiner with their concerns. They were dissatisfied with what they received at the University as being arid and bereft of life. It left their hearts cold and empty and they felt they did not have firm ground under their feet to start their ministry. They also felt that to keep Christianity alive a renewal of entire theological and religious impulses was necessary which could only come from the anthroposophical spiritual science, from Steiner. And they asked for his help.

When Steiner brought his spiritual science into the world he hoped that it would lay hold of people in various spheres of life who, then, would try to renew these spheres out of their new knowledge. And that would be the case with religion as well, and its renewal would take place within the existing institutions and denominations. But this had not happened so far, and what the young theologians intended was to found a new religious movement. To this Steiner responded by saying that religious renewal could not be based on the enthusiasm of single individuals but should originate from a wider circle of people sharing the same impulse. His young visitors accepted it and left, but some time later came back, this time representing a large group of fellow theologians who were in the same position and shared the same concerns and intentions. That satisfied Steiner, but before

rendering them his help he found it necessary to explain and clarify some important points pertaining to the matter.

It was obvious that religious renewal concerned not only those responsible for religious instructions, but, primarily, those who received them, i.e. those individuals who were not satisfied with the existing religious practices and were looking for their renewal. Anthroposophy did not concern itself with religious renewal as such – its evolutionary task was to impart to man the spiritual truths *directly* and as *knowledge*. However, had such individuals discovered and accepted it, they would have found there everything they needed to enable them, out of their individual anthroposophical knowledge, to pursue and develop their religious aims and ideals.

But at the time those people, for one reason or another, could not find their way to anthroposophy and anthroposophical knowledge. Nevertheless their spiritual quest could not be left unanswered and they should be given an opportunity to tread a religious path to the spirit suitable for our time. Therefore Steiner decided to offer his help to that group of theologians by giving them, first, two courses of lectures on theology and holding a number of discussions with them, answering their numerous questions and, finally, giving them sacraments and rituals for their new services. Later he gave them two more courses of lectures. Steiner's help allowed them to launch what they called The Movement for Religious Renewal which later became known as The Christian Community.

However, Steiner emphasized from the outset that in all those arrangements his role was that of advisor and helper. The Christian Community was neither his initiative nor his responsibility nor did it constitute part of his anthroposophical task. He never intended to establish a new religion or a Church. Even while giving instructions and rituals he personally performed none of them. He just gave help as an individual to individuals, outside his Anthroposophical Movement as it was at the time. In fact he admonished all concerned to keep these two Movements separate – they were treading two different paths.

The Christian Community was founded in 1922, and the original priesthood consisted of forty five persons three of whom were women. It was headed by the prominent and very popular Lutheran pastor Friedrich Rittelmeyer. Its headquarters were in Stuttgart and it soon spread to other cities in Germany, then to other countries and now it is a worldwide movement with some 350 congregations (at the time of writing, circa 2010). Unlike in Steiner's time it can be considered nowadays, for all intents and purposes, a part of the Anthroposophical Movement, on a par with all other practical initiatives which sprang from the anthroposophical knowledge. As to the 'two different paths', spiritually it continues to be the case, but it is no longer reflected in the composition of The Christian Community congregation which consists predominantly of anthroposophists. However they constitute only a small minority of a wider anthroposophical community. For others the old anthroposophical dictum seems to be holding sway: "Every anthroposophist should be his/her own priest".

(The author wishes to conclude this chapter with some musings, in parentheses.

It is obvious that the above Movement for Religious Renewal concerns only Christianity. But what about other religions? Surely the world evolutionary processes involve the whole humanity, the whole culture and not just parts of it. What affected, in this respect, Christianity could not have left unaffected, for instance, Judaism or Islam. They too, no doubt, have been subjected to the process of fossilisation, and surely at least some of their followers feel it. But what would have happened if such people had approached Steiner saying that their religion had turned into a set of dry dogmas and required renewal and asking for his advice? What would he have said to them? This hypothetical question might be real and vital today for those followers of

their respective religions who experience their decay and look for a revival of their beliefs.

One cannot know what Steiner's answer and advice would have been. We can be absolutely certain, however, of one advice Steiner would never have given to such people: convert to Christianity and join The Christian Community. On the other hand, one can be equally certain, from the anthroposophical perspective, that no religious renewal is possible without the Being of Christ, the very principle of man's spiritual development and world evolution. As was said earlier, in the chapter Spiritual Gravity, every individual will have to face this Being and make his choice regarding Him and his own future. Admittedly, it is extremely difficult, if not altogether impossible, to accept this fact for followers of the non-Christian creeds. Nevertheless, neither Steiner nor anybody else would have been able to offer them the world and reality other than those we all live in.)

OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Virtually all practical anthroposophical activities started in this way, when someone approached Steiner with a question or initiative, or a right person was around to start a new initiative. In addition to those already described two more initiatives will be outlined below. They belong to two very different but equally vital spheres of life – medicine and agriculture.

Anthroposophical Medicine

It was mentioned earlier that Steiner mastered the heights of materialistic scientific knowledge in the most varied fields. Medicine was one of them. But he studied it not as a profession but as science, as a source of knowledge, in the same way as he studied, for instance, anatomy, physiology and psychiatry including psychoanalysis. This, coupled with his spiritual knowledge in this field, allowed him both to speak publicly on the subject of medicine even in 1901, before he started his public anthroposophical activity, and to render practical advice and help to a physician regarding his work and medical problems as early as 1906, just a few years after he started this activity.

But anthroposophical medicine as such was born in 1920. In response to the request by a group of physicians and medical students, accompanied by lists of questions, Steiner gave a course of twenty lectures, *Spiritual Science and Medicine*, which served as a foundation for the practical development of anthroposophical medicine. There followed, over the next few years, a number of other courses and lectures, numerous conversations and various forms of help and advice. But despite his extensive and unique knowledge on the subject of medicine Steiner was not a medical doctor and therefore could not, by himself, develop anthroposophical medicine as a practical professional activity. It could be done only by professional physicians, with his help. Steiner insisted that no amateurism was allowed here and only fully qualified, in an established way, medical specialists could embark on developing and practising anthroposophical medicine.

There were such specialists, among his followers and around him, who were ready and eager to take this pioneering path. One of them was a Dutch doctor Ita Wegman who later headed the Medical Section of the General Anthroposophical Society. In collaboration with her Steiner wrote the book *Extending Practical Medicine (Fundamental Principles based on the Science of Spirit)*. In 1921 Dr. Wegman opened in Arlesheim, near Dornach, the first anthroposophical clinic, which was followed by another one opened by Dr. Otto Palmer in Stuttgart. Whenever his

very busy schedule permitted it Steiner visited both clinics, saw the patients, had discussions with the doctors and gave advice,

It was not long before anthroposophical medicine found its way into other places and countries. Now (at the time of writing, circa 2010) it is practiced worldwide in 80 countries. There are some 3,200 fully trained anthroposophical doctors and some 16,000 doctors with various levels of anthroposophical training, and over 770 anthroposophic therapists and nurses. Anthroposophical medicine is provided in 24 hospitals and in some 180 outpatient centres while anthroposophic medicinal products are prescribed by more than 30,000 physicians. Also anthroposophical medicine is taught, and full training provided, at universities of 15 countries.

The new medical practice necessitated the development of new remedies which went in parallel with the development and growth of anthroposophical medicine. From the outset for the production of anthroposophical remedies a pharmaceutical company, Weleda, was founded which had two factories, also in Arlesheim and near Stuttgart. Nowadays it is a multinational company which produces not only anthroposophical homeopathic remedies but also natural and organic cosmetics. It operates all over the world, has 20 direct subsidiaries, partnerships in 53 countries, and about 2,000 employees worldwide.

Having explained how anthroposophical medicine came into being its essence will be outlined now.

* * *

Medicine is, perhaps, the best sphere (another is education) to show how indispensable the anthroposophical knowledge is and how vitally it can supplement the ordinary knowledge. In this sphere, more than anywhere else in life, Man, the human being, is the focal point. The prerequisite to any diagnosis and treatment, to any knowledge of diseases and medications is the knowledge of the human being himself. The conventional scientific knowledge of man, of human organism is vast, elaborate and ever developing. So let us see now what anthroposophy can add to it.

Man, according to Steiner's spiritual investigation, consists of four constituent members. People, with their ordinary senses and consciousness, are aware of, perceive and can study only one of them – man's physical body built of material substances, like minerals, plants and animals. The other three members are spiritual and therefore imperceptible to our sense organs. The first of them is the 'Life Body' ('etheric body') which gives life to the otherwise lifeless physical (mineral) body. Plants and animals also have etheric bodies. The second one is the 'Body of Emotions' ('astral body' or, to use a popular term, 'soul'), the bearer of our emotions and feelings. Animals also possess astral bodies. The fourth spiritual member is unique to man – it is his 'Spirit', his 'Ego', the 'I', the bearer of his individuality, consciousness and thinking.

All three are very complex spiritual entities; they penetrate one another and the physical body and are in the state of continuous change and development. The knowledge of them is particularly important in education, but is essential in medicine, because a disorder in their relationships with one another and with the constituents of the human organism causes unhealthy conditions in it.

In his books and lectures Steiner described the origin, nature and functioning of the spiritual members of man in many details. Here only a few will be mentioned, in connection with some unhealthy conditions. Also two states of man's existence are incomprehensible without the knowledge of these members. One is the state of death when the physical existence of man ceases. It happens when all three spiritual members leave the physical body which henceforth becomes a corpse. The other state is that of unconsciousness when only two of them, astral body and the Ego,

depart from the otherwise living human organism (physical and etheric bodies). In fact it is not single but various states some of which, like faint and coma, are unhealthy. But one is not only healthy but is indispensable for human existence – sleep. All these states were thoroughly investigated and described by Steiner.

But he investigated not only the spiritual members of man. Earlier in the book, while discussing Steiner's social ideas, his major discovery in another sphere was described – the threefold nature of the human organism. Rather than referring the reader back to its description, it is given here again, but now for a different context:

The other sphere of research was human organism, its extraordinary complexity and the mystery of its harmonious functioning. Steiner discovered that the latter was due to the fact that all numerous parts, different substances and various processes which constitute the human organism are ordered in a particular way which is most functional, efficient and propitious. All these components are arranged in three distinct systems. One is the nerve system including sense organs and head (brain); another is the rhythmic system which comprises the organs of blood circulation and breathing; and the third is the metabolic system consisting of the limbs and the digestive system.

Each of these systems functions according to its own inherent principles unsuitable for the other two. And, being autonomous in themselves, these systems depend upon, penetrate and support one another, thus constituting a healthy and harmonious whole, the human organism. It becomes ill not only when one of the systems malfunctions, but also when the harmonious relationship between the systems breaks down, and the working principles and processes of one system illegitimately invade another.

These findings, given here just in an outline, form the foundation of anthroposophical medicine which Steiner started to develop a few years later. It is easy to see how invaluable this knowledge of the human organism is for diagnosing and curing various illnesses. But it is no less beneficial for understanding human psychology because of the intimate connections, again discovered by Steiner, between these three physiological systems and the human faculties of thinking, feeling and willing (where the nerve system is the bearer of thinking, the rhythmic system – of feeling and the metabolic system – of willing).

One example of the pernicious consequences of the disturbed relationship between the systems is when the metabolic-limb system penetrates too deeply, with its own processes, into the system of nerves and senses. It results in an inflammatory condition in the organism, one manifestation of which is hay-fever. When the opposite happens and the nerve-sense system 'unlawfully invades' the metabolic system, it results in a swelling condition, the extreme case of which is cancerous growth.

Steiner identified yet another intimate connection of man's three physiological systems, but this time between them and the three spiritual members – a connection of the Ego with the nerve-sense system, of the etheric body with the metabolic-limb system and of the astral body with the rhythmic system. The knowledge of it is very important for the understanding of normal and abnormal processes in the human organism which also depend on this tripartite connection.

Steiner's further spiritual investigations revealed, irrespective of the conventional scientific findings, that there are two opposite types of forces at work within the human organism. They are responsible for two opposite processes taking place continuously and concurrently within human body, in its every organ. One process is of evolution, integration and upbuilding and the other of devolution, disintegration and destruction. It is thanks to the latter that the spiritual can enter the

material, take hold of it and become active within it. Thus man becomes a being of body, soul and spirit.

Normally these anabolic and catabolic processes within a human being are in a state of balance which allows a proper development of the soul and spiritual elements. But, as with everything living, this vital and balanced interplay of the opposite processes sometimes goes wrong when anabolic or catabolic forces have upper hand in a particular organ. Then this organ becomes ill.

Anthroposophical research can detect such pathological states and it did, but it did not stop there. Diagnosing an unhealthy condition was for Steiner inseparable from finding a healing for it. He surveyed nature to discover there the substances containing, in this case, the anabolic and catabolic forces which are akin to those in the human being. Then these nature-products, used as remedies, are transformed into a healing factor. They enhance, as required, either anabolism or catabolism in the affected organ thus equalising them again. As an example of such a remedy, the common horsetail, *Equisetum arvense*, contains anabolic forces which exactly correspond to those working in the kidneys. So the debilitated anabolic forces of the kidneys are strengthened by the preparation from equisetum made and administered in a right way. Alternatively, if the catabolic forces in the human being need strengthening, the preparation is made from the fern plants, which have this property.

But apart from knowing what remedial plants are needed one also has to know *when* to gather them, because in different seasons they contain different forces working in different ways on the human organisation and its organs. It follows from this that the beneficial properties of the anthroposophical remedies are not ascertained by tests, experiments or statistics – they are discovered by the precise spiritual knowledge of the human being and nature.

One such discovery was particularly remarkable. It was mentioned earlier that an improper intrusion of the system of nerves and senses into the metabolic system causes cancerous growth. Steiner explained that this growth is nothing other than an attempt by the overactive nerve system to create another sense organ. To combat and reverse this activity Steiner searched for a substance, if it existed at all, which survived from those distant times of the evolution of the Earth and man when neither his sense organs nor even the minerals which constitute them existed yet. He did find such a substance which is contained in the plant called mistletoe. The remedy prepared from the mistletoe, Iscador, has been successfully applied ever since.

Within the human being his physical and etheric bodies are 'builders' and his astral body and Ego are 'destroyers'. But this destructive activity is vital for man, in two ways. We already know of one: thanks to it man is a being of soul and spirit. However there is a constant tendency in man's two higher members to press too hard on the other two which creates the condition of illness. This continual illness requires continual cure and it is provided by the presence of iron in the blood, which constrains the excessive activity of the astral body and Ego. In effect, iron regulates the connection between the two pairs of man's members. Any disturbance of this connection is due to an increase or a decrease of the iron-content in the organism which has to be rectified by external means.

The other purpose of this destructive work is connected with man's physical organisation. All external substances, processes and conditions which enter man as food and air, or affect him like warmth or cold, have to be transformed into his own inner substances, processes and conditions. And this is done through the destructive work of man's two higher members. Otherwise man would have been filled with foreign substances and processes making his existence impossible. On the other hand, these two members may become too active in their transformative work speeding-up the incoming processes and over-spiritualising incoming substances. This creates an unhealthy condition in man, which has to be rectified. Needless to

say, all these destructive activities and their consequences require precise spiritual knowledge.

It also can happen that the three spiritual members of man cannot function or develop properly due to the conditions of the human organism or some other reasons. In this case, when the problem is ascertained, these members may be helped and strengthened by appropriate substances exactly in the same way the human organs are helped and strengthened.

On the other hand, the opposite is also possible when the two higher members go too deeply into the physiological systems. For instance, they can work too strongly in the nerve and sense system, in the head, which causes sclerotic condition in the organism. Or the astral body and Ego are working too actively in the digestive organs, and this causes excessive digestive activity leading to diarrhoea and similar symptoms. The remedies, which Steiner suggested in such cases, came this time not from the plants but from the minerals – substances containing lead in the former case and silver in the latter.

Now while applying anthroposophical remedies it is important to know not only what substances to use but also how to apply them. The crucial thing here is to make sure that the remedy is not just applied, but that it reaches its destination, i.e. the organ to be treated, and works in the most effective way. So the remedy can be administered either by mouth, into the digestive system, and in this case it works as a substance. Or it can be introduced by injection, directly into the rhythmic system, and then it works as a process. Or, thirdly, it may be applied externally either as an ointment to a particular place, or as a bath.

Apart from natural remedies anthroposophical medicine uses other therapeutic means like curative eurythmy, therapeutic art, special massage (named Hauschka after the doctor, a Steiner's associate, who developed it) and even a special gymnastics (again called after its inaugurator Bothmer). But all these remedies, as all the diseases they are treating, have one thing in common. Diseases are caused by an imbalance – of forces, processes, substances, or when something which is quite legitimate at one place occurs somewhere else where it does not belong. So the anthroposophical remedies have one purpose – to restore the balance. To do this they are not directed at diseases as such or their symptoms but help and stimulate various processes, functions, substances, organs, the whole organism and the whole man.

It seems appropriate to conclude this brief description of anthroposophical medicine with Steiner's own words about it: "At the present time we have a very serviceable science of healing, and as I have said again and again, what anthroposophy has to give in respect of an art of healing must certainly not come into opposition with what is given by the recognised medicine of today. Anthroposophical medicine will stand firmly on the foundations of modern medical science in so far as these foundations are justified. But something more has to be added, namely spiritual insight into the being of man."

Biodynamic Agriculture

Though medicine and agriculture belong to two completely different spheres of life and human activities, the anthroposophical impulses which motivate people working in them have the same objective – healing. In the former case it is healing of the human being, of his organism, in the latter – of nature, or more specifically, of that part of it that is used for agriculture. Healing in this case means making agricultural land, plants and animals healthy, and the food derived from them nutritious.

Anthroposophical agricultural impulses emerged from different sources and at different times. The earliest were not even agricultural as such. For instance Steiner

was asked for advice on making wholesome bread. Then two young scientists decided to investigate the etheric nature of plants and formative forces in general (the role of the etheric was discussed above) for which purpose they set up in 1921 a research laboratory in Dornach where they could carry out experiments under Steiner's guidance. Very soon their results led to practical agricultural applications. At the same time Steiner was approached by farmers who, in the first instance, sought his specific advice on plant and animal diseases, but were generally concerned about the increasing impoverishment of the land and degeneration of seeds. These were the earlier results of the industrialisation of agriculture and the introduction into it of new methods and chemical products. Also already at that time the farmers felt the pressure of the increasing commercialisation of agriculture with its destructive subjugation to financial and economic factors. All this had an adverse effect on the ultimate purpose of agriculture – its produce.

The increasing numbers of persistent requests to help to develop a comprehensive agricultural practice based on anthroposophical insights persuaded Steiner to find time in his extremely busy schedule and give the Agricultural course of eight lectures, with subsequent discussions, for farmers and agriculturists. There were 130 participants. The event took place in the summer of 1924 at the big agricultural estate of Count Karl von Keyserlingk at Koberwitz in Silesia. (Speaking of Steiner's busy schedule, concurrently with giving the Agricultural course he had various discussions and conversations, gave esoteric guidance to his pupils, saw doctors with their patients, wrote contributions to anthroposophical periodicals and travelled every evening to nearby Breslau to give there esoteric lessons, a speech course, a course of karma lectures and to meet and address young people – all this while being, even visibly, tired and unwell.)

The Agricultural course laid the foundation for what subsequently become known and practiced throughout the world as Biodynamic Agriculture. The term, which refers to biological dynamic forces, came not from Steiner but from members of so called Research Ring (also known as the Experimental Circle) consisting of scientists and people with practical agricultural experience which was formed during the conference. The objective of this circle of dedicated individuals was to research, develop and implement the practical indications and ideas given by Steiner. Some results of the work and experiments carried out prior to the conference were demonstrated there.

As was characteristic of Steiner, his approach to agriculture in general and to a single farm in particular was both holistic and detailed. Agriculture is not only what the farmer is dealing with directly – land and soil, crops and fertilizer, livestock and fodder, water and weather conditions. It is also invisible substances and forces which are at work there both beneath and above the earth surface, and the spirit which works throughout nature. There are, furthermore, vital cosmic influences and effects on all kingdoms of nature, and it can be truly said that "agriculture lives in the totality of the Universe." All this has to be taken into account and as a practical knowledge incorporated in the agricultural process. In ancient times the farmers had this knowledge and later, as instincts and traditions, it still sustained agriculture.

But nowadays this knowledge and traditions are gone. What came instead as a modern scientific knowledge can at best, and one-sidedly, deal only with what is visible and tangible and can neither facilitate nor sustain healthy agriculture and its products. Only true spiritual knowledge can. Without such knowledge which allows to enter into the inwardness of nature, not only agriculture but nature itself, and the life of man as well, will degenerate and die. The anthroposophical spiritual science is in a position to provide such knowledge, and with regard to agriculture it takes its starting-point from "an insight into the *underlying* facts and conditions."

According to it, a farm is a living organism where all its components influence one another and constitute an organic whole. A single farm organism is also individuality by virtue of not only its unique size, components and conditions, but also the intimate relationships between its soil, plants, livestock and the manure they produce. When the cosmic influences, of which various forms Steiner gave a detailed description, are active within the Earth they rise up and affect the vegetation growing there. The vegetation, thus becoming rich with the cosmic influences, is then eaten by the grazing animals. On the basis of this specific fodder they produce the very manure most suited for the soil on which the vegetation is growing. Thus every farm should, ideally, be a "self-contained individuality" which can be achieved if there is a harmonious balance between all farm's components like the numbers and types of stock, different types of plants, the size of pasture and arable land, woodland, etc. Self-sufficiency is one of prerequisites for the farm's health. Unfortunately, in reality, it is not always possible to achieve this, and one should not be dogmatic about it. Nevertheless if there is a need to bring manure to the farm from the outside it should be regarded as a remedy for its sick condition.

In the course of his lectures Steiner dealt, as far as their scope allowed him, with all those elements, both material and spiritual, which comprise the farm organism or are relevant to agriculture. But his presentation was different from a conventional scientific exploration. In the first place, he never examined a single element in isolation, by its own, but only in conjunction and relationship with other elements as they exist and function in reality. Then, even when he spoke about common and well-studied elements, be they minerals, plants or animals, he always revealed those inaccessible and therefore unknown to ordinary science substances, forces and influences which, in fact, determine these elements and their significance for agriculture. All this was placed and presented in a wider context of "the great cosmic relationships."

More specifically, some things Steiner spoke about are as follows: the soil, "the foundation of all agriculture", and its inner life; the influence of the siliceous substance and lime and the role of the 'five chemical sisters' – nitrogen, carbon, oxygen, hydrogen and sulphur; the role of water, air and warmth and their different qualities above and beneath the surface of the Earth; various plants and their role in agriculture; the stimulation of a strong reproductive or nutritive power in cereals; the cultivation of vegetables; the right distribution of wood and forest, orchard and shrubbery, and meadow-lands with their natural growth of mushrooms as "the very essence of good farming"; the structure and formation of the seed which is "an image of the Universe"; agricultural animals and the role of other animals like birds, insects and earthworms; the intimate relations between the animal and plant kingdoms and their significance for agriculture; the nature of the plant and animal diseases and remedies for them (plants in themselves can never become diseased but for their unhealthy environment, especially the soil, while their health and resilience result from biological balance and cosmic influence); the weeds and plant and animal pests, and remedies against them; the nature and vitalisation of manure and the adverse results of modern methods of improving it: the fodder, in the light of the relations of the animal organism to the plant, and the essence of the animal feeding process.

Steiner also spoke about various external influences to which the Earth in general and agriculture in particular is subjected. These are of course the atmospheric and seasonal changes and influences which Steiner, in addition to conventional scientific knowledge, elucidated with his spiritual insights. But he particularly emphasized the cosmic, planetary influences and forces working in all kingdoms of nature both above and beneath the surface of the Earth. He spoke, very specifically, of the different influences of the Moon and the Sun and concerning the

latter he indicated that there are quite 'different Suns' with their different influences depending on the Sun's position in the Zodiac and in the vernal point. Then there are again completely different influences of, on the one hand, the celestial bodies near the Earth – the Moon, Venus and Mercury, and, on the other hand, of the distant ones – Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Later, on the basis of this information, further research and experience, Biodynamic Calendars have been produced annually for various agricultural works.

As the *raison d'être* and the end product of agriculture is food for human consumption Steiner could not ignore this aspect in his Agricultural course. In fact he spoke on the subject of food and nutrition and various food products on many occasions, but in this case it was directly linked to the cultivation of plants and vegetables. Steiner spoke here of the nature of man's nutrition as it was revealed by his spiritual research. The common notion that the foodstuffs we eat are then deposited in our bodies is wrong. The greater part of the food we daily consume is transformed not into substances but into the forces of the body which allow it to be mobile and active. But what the body needs as its substances (which are expelled and renewed every seven or eight years) it is constantly receiving in very tiny doses and in a highly diluted state through the sense-organs, the skin and the breathing.

Steiner indicated that different parts of the plant – root, flower and foliage – relate, respectively, to the head, metabolic and rhythmic systems of man's threefold organism which was described earlier. While the salt-substance – its quality rather than quantity – is important for the whole organism. Steiner also spoke of people's eating habits and of vegetarianism, as well as of the effects of specific vegetables like tomatoes and potatoes. But whenever he spoke about food, at this course or elsewhere, Steiner refrained from giving any instructions as to what people should eat, or do, invariably emphasizing that anthroposophy is about WHAT IS and not about WHAT SHOULD BE. At the same time he emphasized no less emphatically the crucial importance of the truly nutritious food not only for the physical but also for spiritual health and development of the human being.

The above exposition of the very specialized Agricultural course has been, of necessity, general, brief and sketchy. But perhaps a more detailed description of one of Steiner's suggestions will give the reader a glimpse of some intimate knowledge of the Biodynamic Agriculture. The author's choice fell on the description of what Steiner called "spiritual manure".

Steiner started with the question which might be attributed to a child and which, nevertheless, has far-reaching practical consequences for agriculture: "Why do cows have horns?" Any organic or living entity has streams of forces pouring outward and inward, and the horns are the organs through which the inward spiritual streams come into the cow. These streams carry the vital astral-ethereal formative powers which penetrate right into the digestive system and stimulate its work. But their significance does not stop there.

When food is digested by the cow and then discharges as dung, it is permeated with this life engendering ethereal and astral content. If it is then given as manure to earth it vitalises the soil and the vegetation growing there. But this beneficial effect of natural manure can be enhanced by the above "spiritual manure" which is prepared in the following way.

One obtains a cow horn which is hollow, fills it with manure and buries it in the earth for the duration of the winter. In winter-time the Earth is most alive inwardly, and the horn now is doing exactly the same job it was doing when being part of the cow – is directing inward, this time into its hollow filled with manure, the life-giving forces that come from its surroundings. Thus the manure which already had such forces becomes further saturated and quickened with them.

In the spring one digs out the horn and extracts the manure. By this time it becomes very potent with the life-forces – in fact the life is stored up in it. Then one dilutes this highly concentrated life-giving substance with water by vigorously stirring the mixture for an hour constantly reversing the direction. After that the mixture, which became known as Preparation, is ready for application and should be sprayed over a desired area enhancing the vitality of its soil and plants.

For another Preparation suggested by Steiner one fills up a cow horn again but with a paste of a mineral substance (quartz) and also buries it in the earth, this time for the summer months. The spray is prepared in the same way but is applied on the growing plants. Thus the two substances with their different but equally beneficial forces work on the plant from two directions – from below upwards and from above down having "a wonderful effect". Six more Preparations suggested by Steiner and made of various herbs and plants with their individual planetary connections and influences are mainly applied to a compost heap. All these Preparations have been tested, developed and successfully applied ever since in the Biodynamic Agriculture all over the world.

During this Agricultural course a 'non-agricultural' issue was raised by one of the participants which warrants being related here. As was mentioned earlier, apart from lectures there were some questions-and-answers sessions. Among many agricultural questions which arose out of the lectures (and some 60 questions were submitted to Steiner long before the course was even confirmed) one older and conscientious farmer, an anthroposophist, expressed his concern prompted by Steiner's indications and recommendations. If one followed them, i.e. used occult (spiritual) means, to achieve some specific practical results, wasn't it, reasoned the farmer, like using black magic and therefore doing something immoral?

Steiner was only too well aware of the dangers connected not only with applying spiritual knowledge but even with acquiring it. Hence his admonition when he just made this knowledge public that every step in obtaining this knowledge should be accompanied by three steps in moral development. In this case his answer to the farmer was as follows: "Yes, morality is required in all such things. This is why I assumed that all who took part in this course did so with the entire moral stance of helping humanity and agriculture. This is why one should also regard the Agricultural Circle as a moral body which takes upon itself the task of applying these things in the right way", i.e. "in a moral way, selflessly, while black magic does so in an immoral, selfish way. ... The most important thing here is to strengthen one's sense of responsibility."

Steiner also appealed to the participants not to be hasty in publicising or even applying straightaway his indications and recommendations before, first, thoroughly testing them and verifying their validity. And after they, the farmers, were satisfied with the results, then this new knowledge and practice should be offered to the agricultural world at large to become common agricultural practice. He also hoped that the true nutritional knowledge of various agricultural products would relate agriculture, in an objective way, to the social life as a whole. Needless to say that this new agricultural practice should be firmly based on a sound economic foundation: "One must work in a businesslike, profit-making way, or it won't come off."

That was basically how the biodynamic agriculture has been developing since then. The Agricultural course gave a new impetus to the intensive research and testing which started earlier and allowed the advent of biodynamic farming and gardening. A close cooperation between the research and practical work led to what eventually became the worldwide biodynamic movement. From Germany it quickly spread to Austria, Switzerland, Italy, England, France, the north-European countries and the United States. Today it is a worldwide movement encompassing thousands of successful gardens, farms, vineyards and agricultural operations of all kinds and

sizes on all continents, in a wide variety of ecological, climatic and economic conditions – be it arable or dairy farming, orchards or vegetable gardens, growing bananas in the Dominican Republic or vineyards in France, cultivating tea plantations in India or silkworm breeding in China, the production of meat and wool in New Zealand or cotton and medicinal herbs in Egypt.

At the time of writing there are Biodynamic Agricultural Associations in 36 countries with the objective to promote biodynamic farming and gardening and to give help and advice. They also publish journals and newsheets, organise conferences, seminars and workshops.

There is also Demeter-International – "the only ecological association that has built up a network of individual certification organisations world-wide." Through a very rigorous and comprehensive verification process it insures strict compliance of biodynamic products with the International Demeter Production and Processing Standards, covering every step, from agricultural production to processing and final product packaging. Demeter is the brand for products from Biodynamic Agriculture. Only strictly controlled and contractually bound partners are permitted to use the Brand. At the time of writing (circa 2010) there are Demeter certified operations in 18 member countries and in 35 other countries. All in all they cover 153,246 ha of land, 4,800 farms, 596 processors and 204 distributors.

Many books, research materials and practical recommendations have been published over the years. There are ten dedicated biodynamic research institutes and centres in: Germany, Switzerland, USA, Sweden and Denmark and 23 training centres in 13 countries. Unfortunately there is no statistics for those involved in the Biodynamic Agriculture or those who benefit from its products.

In conclusion, the essence and the key objective of the Biodynamic Agriculture can be expressed by just one word – to *vitalise* the Earth; more specifically, to bring life and life-forces into the soil, plants and animals and into the food they produce for human consumption. When this type of food is dissolved within the human organism it releases these life-giving forces as man's physical and spiritual nourishment.

THE THREE EVENTS

This discourse about the history of the Anthroposophical Movement is confined to the first quarter-century of its existence, which coincided with the first quarter of the 20th century. But most of the events described above belong, by virtue of their significance and consequences, not only to the Movement's history and its past, but very much to its present. While such events as led to the emergence of Waldorf Education, Anthroposophical Medicine and Biodynamic Agriculture, which themselves became Movements, constitute its very essence. In fact, without them there hardly would have been the Anthroposophical Movement as such.

Also at that time three other significant events occurred, two tragic and one very special and momentous, which stand apart from all others. It cannot be otherwise because by its very nature each of them was one-off and had its own stamp of uniqueness. Yet they were causally connected and took place within the span of 27 months at the end of that period. In fact, they signified this very end. But whether they also signified a new beginning and had, and still have, any consequences for the Anthroposophical Movement – this is the subject of the final part of the present discourse. These events, in their sequence, were as follows: the destruction of the Goetheanum (New Year's Eve 1922), the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society (Christmas 1923), and the death of Rudolf Steiner (30 March 1925).

Now the proposition that such 'in-house' events, whatever their magnitude at the time for those concerned, might have any consequences, nearly a century later,

for the busy public life and activities of thousands of individuals, – such a proposition might seem improbable. Especially as there is nothing outwardly perceptible, or inwardly experienced by those individuals in their daily life and work, that points to any such consequences. Yet from the spiritual standpoint, on which the author bases his discourse, the matter looks different. In what follows he will try and show this.

The First Event

The physical life of the Goetheanum building was trying, short and had a tragic end. The ten months between the laying of the foundation stone and the beginning of the War turned out to be insufficient for its completion. And the following decade in Europe was anything but favourable for any cultural innovation or venture let alone building a cultural and spiritual centre, especially of such magnitude, complexity and cost as the Goetheanum. Nevertheless the process of building, despite many difficulties and problems, continued, and in 1920 the Goetheanum, though still unfinished, became usable enough to accommodate a public event (a conference).

During the following two years the Goetheanum became more functional and was regularly used for Steiner's lectures and artistic activities. It was even envisaged that at Christmas 1923 it would be formally opened with the performance, as part of the event, of Steiner's fifth Mystery Drama which he intended to write. But this never happened. On the last day of 1922, on the New Year's eve, the building was set on fire by an arsonist. All desperate attempts to save it failed – its majestic wooden structure played, in this case, into the hands of evil.

There are many ways in which one can describe this terrible blow inflicted upon the Anthroposophical Movement as a whole, upon individual anthroposophists and particularly upon Steiner himself even affecting his physical health. And there are many testimonies to that effect by those who lived through this event which can be fittingly quoted here. But perhaps Steiner's words, both emotional and factual, spoken soon after the fire will suffice to convey the essence of its tragic consequences. Speaking of the significance of the Goetheanum "whose ruins are now so painful to behold" and of one's "feelings that defy expression" he then said: "Anything that could be reported of the work and worries of the past ten years falls into insignificance beside the irreparable loss of this vital means of showing what the Anthroposophical Movement [i.e. anthroposophy – /Z] is."*

Rudolf Steiner explained that it was vital because people nowadays "find it easier to approach things with their eyes than to rouse themselves to inner activity through what they hear." Therefore, though "the medium of the spoken word will always remain the most important, significant and indispensable means" to communicate the spiritual truths, "additional ways opened up to us with the building of the Goetheanum.... In its visible forms and as a visible work of art, the Goetheanum spoke of the secrets of the spiritual world to an immeasurably greater

* It is important to note, and it will become more important later, that what Rudolf Steiner means here by the Anthroposophical Movement differs from how it has been defined and described in the Explanatory Note and elsewhere in this discourse. It is due to the fact that the content of the Anthroposophical Movement in the first two decades of its existence, to which Steiner refers, was different from what it became in later years. To make this difference clear, here is Steiner's own – not so much a definition as a description – of the Anthroposophical Movement as it was at the time: "The Anthroposophical Movement represented a flowing into human civilization of spiritual knowledge and wisdom, and of spiritual life impulses which for our present age can, and indeed must, be drawn directly from the spiritual world. This Anthroposophical Movement exists, not because human beings so wish it, but because the spiritual powers who lead and guide the world and who bring about human history consider it right to let flow into human civilization, in a manner suitable for today, the spiritual light which can come through Anthroposophy."

number of people than had previously been able to learn of them through spoken words." Of course to be able to receive an artistic and spiritual message which emanated from the Goetheanum a beholder needed a receptive and unprejudiced eye. But then it was possible to say to such an enquiring beholder: "You wanted to know what anthroposophy is? Have a look at the Goetheanum – this is anthroposophy!"

Not any more. Though its physical life was tragically short, it was long enough for its cultural and spiritual significance to be evident even to its enemies – and to the extent that prompted its destruction. But why did it have enemies in the first place and who were they? Obviously it was not bricks and mortar, or timber in this case, that caused enmity, but what it expressed and represented – and also its creator, i.e. anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner.

As to the question 'why?' it can be said, in the first instance and as a general observation, that something genuinely new almost invariably encounters in some people mistrust, suspicion and even hostility. But when the new takes the form of a teaching, especially as singular and challenging as anthroposophy, this attitude becomes more apprehensive. Also, apart from personal negative sentiments, anthroposophy called forth a hostile reaction for professional or ideological reasons on the part of those who thought that it undermined and threatened their interests or views.

Originally, when anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Movement were confined to a tiny group of individuals pursuing their spiritual interests privately, nobody knew about them and they were of no interest to anybody. It was only when they entered the public domain that they became noticeable and were noticed by others. This happened in the last years of the WWI and particularly after it ended. The main feature of the anthroposophical public activity were Steiner's, lectures, but there were also artistic performances (eurythmy) staged by Marie Steiner. And there was of course a prominent public campaign, the Threefold Social Order Movement. Though manifestly non-anthroposophical, it was originated by anthroposophists and had Rudolf Steiner at its very centre.

All this led to Steiner's enormous popularity at the time of which we spoke earlier. But it was short-lived. With regard to the above Social Movement it is understandable, as the Movement itself waned rapidly. But the Anthroposophical Movement, on the contrary, grew and flourished and yet the public interest in it and in its creator still declined.

The main reason for this change was that Steiner's vast popularity and the excitement around his lectures were not caused by a genuine interest in anthroposophy or by an inner quest for the meaning of life and its spiritual dimension which anthroposophy might have satisfied. In many cases it was just curiosity or sensationalism. When people came to Steiner's lectures they either had no clear idea about their subject matter or, conversely, had some preconceived ideas or wrong expectations. Whatever was the case they were disappointed in the end, both in what they heard and in Steiner.

Steiner saw the false reasons for his swelled audiences perfectly well. Populism and fame, let alone sensationalism, had nothing to do with his objectives, and he just ignored this type of interest in his listeners. Instead he addressed himself, when giving public lectures to full houses, only to those few individuals who came there with their genuine spiritual quest albeit it might have been totally unconscious or subconscious. The content of his lectures, even public, required on the part of the recipients not only genuine interest and unbiased attitude, but also concentration and contemplation. Only a few were capable of this, and all others were purposely disregarded and discouraged by Steiner even as they listened to him.

But disappointment, or a lack of interest or understanding, though regrettable, are, after all, commonplace occurrences that are mainly harmless to others. While open hostility and attacks, being ill-intentioned, are hurtful and harmful to their victims (and, we might add, are also inwardly destructive for the perpetrators themselves). The attacks to which anthroposophy and Rudolf Steiner were subjected might puzzle one by their intensity and ferocity especially as they were directed at a very tiny movement which had, virtually, a negligible public impact. Those attacks took different forms and came from different quarters, were both oral, launched from the pulpit, and written, by means of various publications. But what was common to most of them was not only their perpetrators' ignorance with regard to the object of their attacks. It was also the fact that they found it necessary to resort to outright lies, fabrications, personal abuses and slander.

As if that was not enough, the attacks were not only verbal but also physical. There were disruptions of Steiner's lectures and of eurythmy performances some of which were banned while Steiner's public lecture tours arranged by a leading concert agency had to be cancelled altogether. Furthermore there were outbreaks of violence and even attempts on his life by some extremist groups. But setting the Goetheanum on fire and its destruction was the ultimate manifestation of the acute enmity towards anthroposophy and its creator.

In a twisted and malicious way it mirrored another ultimate manifestation – the one that Steiner called the stepping of anthroposophy into the limelight. Ironically and tragically this glorious manifestation, the building of the Goetheanum, brought in its wake, apart from what had been intended, also the unwelcome and unhealthy attention anthroposophy could do without thus playing into the hands of its opponents and enemies. Before the existence of the Goetheanum they were unable to draw people's attention to their attacks despite those attacks being unrestrained and public. But the appearance of that special building created for them an opportunity to find their audience.

Now whatever reasons for this enmity have been given in the present discourse, or might have been given elsewhere by other narrators of those events, one is bound to ask what Steiner himself thought about it. Steiner referred to this enmity on various occasions giving specific examples and comments. But most important are his spiritual insights, like this one, which no other person is in a position to have and to reveal: "... modern humanity suffers from two evils ... One is fear of the supersensible. This unadmitted fear accounts for every enemy the Anthroposophical Movement has. Our enemies really suffer from something that resembles a fear of water."

Further on Steiner speaks of the 'scientific aspect' of this fear: "Fear of supersensible knowledge, then, is one characteristic of the human race. But this fear is made to wear the mask of the scientific approach ... with the limits of knowledge it accepts..." This acceptance allows a modern scientist to reject outright the spiritual science and its findings as something a priori unattainable and unknowable – even if he personally allows for the existence of the spiritual dimension of life. What is more, his blind and stubborn belief in the limits of knowledge remains unshaken even if his fellow scientist shows it to be a delusion. This unscientific attitude makes unscientific not only the scientist himself but also the science he represents.

A Rare Exception

It seems appropriate at this point, for the sake of objectivity, to pose the following question: Was enmity the only outcome of both the "unadmitted fear" of anthroposophy and the readily admitted negative attitude to it? More specifically, were there, apart from unscrupulous enemies, also conscientious and honest critics

of anthroposophy who seriously studied it and understood its tenets and, as a result, either accepted them and recognised the merits of anthroposophy or refuted it on the basis of the selfsame tenets and not out of some arbitrary considerations?

With confidence the author can report one such, well known, case of a distinguished personality who originally had a strong apprehension about anthroposophy and whose uneasy undertaking of methodically investigating it had finally led him, along a thorny and lengthy path, to becoming one of its best adepts. This person, a renowned Protestant priest, preacher and theologian Dr. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, was already mentioned in this discourse as the one who headed the Christian Community.

His original interest in anthroposophy was purely academic. He intended to give a public lecture about contemporary spiritual life in which he would also speak about theosophy under whose umbrella anthroposophy was presented at the time. Prior to that, due to "a pronounced lack of sympathy", he had no interest in it and "a decided antagonism" prevented him from making any enquiries. But as a conscientious person he could not allow himself this attitude if he decided to broach this subject publicly. So he embarked upon his studies of it by reading anthroposophical literature, having discussions with a prominent pupil of Steiner's, attending Steiner's lectures and then meeting Steiner himself and having numerous conversations with him. His studies, which included his desperate and unsuccessful attempt to find "a flagrant mistake which cast suspicion on all the rest!", were a continuous struggle not only with the subject matter but also with himself. He "experienced all the feelings of contradiction and resistance" and "the feeling of alienation – not unmixed with apprehension". But through all this he was led by his guiding principle: "The question you must ask above all others is: What is *true*?" And he finally found the truth both in anthroposophy and in Steiner personally.

Therefore he was especially pained by all those attacks on Steiner and anthroposophy, and even one of them, "a particularly vicious attack on Rudolf Steiner as a personality, in a leading periodical, has given the final impetus to the writing" of his book *Rudolf Steiner Enters My Life*. Having traversed all the way from ignorant rejection of anthroposophy to its conscious and total acceptance, based purely upon his studies and its merits, he naturally wanted others too to benefit from this extraordinary wisdom or at least not to be ignorant of it. Especially those from the world of academia among whom he had many friends and acquaintances.

So he decided to arrange a meeting between one of them and Rudolf Steiner so that the former would be able to ask the latter some questions regarding his ideas and writings and they could have a free discussion. The one whom Rittelmeyer approached for this purpose was chosen by him for the reason "that in the whole of Germany at that time it would have been hard to find a Professor more deeply schooled in philosophy and psychology, or a man of greater candour, purity of character and freedom from prejudice." When both parties agreed to meet Rittelmeyer furnished the Professor with some essential books by Steiner. However, upon familiarising himself with them the Professor declined to meet Steiner. Rittelmeyer's thoughts apropos this episode are worth quoting here:

"It is a strange chapter, this behaviour on the part of orthodox science. Thick volumes were being written on the Mystics of the past; people were journeying to India in search of Yogis in order to converse with them. But they did not see that in the very heart of European civilisation there was something far greater, something that would have given them the most living understanding of the Mysteries of the past and the Yogis in far-off India. Eyes were being strained down microscopes and telescopes; every beetle and every comet examined. But scientists did not trouble about the rarest phenomenon of all and yet so near to hand, in the shape of one who could have shed such many-sided light on what is more significant than anything else

– the nature and being of man. Never once in Rudolf Steiner's life, so far as I know, did it happen that a recognised scientist went to him saying: You write such remarkable books. May I ask you about them? – Nothing that he wrote was taken seriously. Men would not let themselves be attracted by his other work nor be compromised by contact with something unfamiliar and unrecognised."

Unfortunately these observations by Rittelmyer are still relevant today because the attitude he described, which has accompanied anthroposophy since it came into being, has not changed so far. But this lack of interest in anthroposophy and of any desire to investigate it on the part of the academic and scientific community is only one side of the coin. The other one seems to be more encouraging, but only at first glance. It is when on some occasions members of this community do not ignore anthroposophy and decide to investigate it and even produce their critical appraisals. Alas the results invariably show a lack of two crucial ingredients – objectivity and a real understanding of the subject.

A notable example of this concerns some outstanding Russian scholars and thinkers – philosophers and theologians – of the last century, who not only studied Steiner's writings but in some cases even attended his lectures. Yet their learned articles about anthroposophy, with proper quotes and references, did neither justice to the subject nor honour to the authors who, amazingly, displayed in this case prejudice and ignorance. What they wrote about anthroposophy reflected their own interpretation of it, their subjective feelings and their biased choice of criteria against which they judged anthroposophy. So if anthroposophy proves to be such a stumbling block even for its critics of this calibre what can be expected from others? Even a few non-anthroposophical sympathetic authors who, out of interest in anthroposophy and in Rudolf Steiner, wrote his biographies describing his life and works for which they had to study both, even they did not grasp the essence of anthroposophy.

This situation prompted the author of this discourse to suggest a methodology for investigating and judging anthroposophy which is based on its own premises – the only legitimate way of doing it. His starting point is his simple, concise and factual definition of anthroposophy: *Anthroposophy is the results of Rudolf Steiner's investigation of the spiritual world.* It follows from this that the whole body of anthroposophy rests on five pillars:

- The existence of the spiritual world
- The possibility of cognizing it
- The existence of the right method for cognizing it
- The ability to use this method to obtain the correct results
- The ability to make these results comprehensible to ordinary human consciousness

These pillars are the only criteria whereby anthroposophy can be investigated, verified, judged, accepted or contested. If someone wishes to refute anthroposophy it is enough to demolish one pillar only and the whole edifice of anthroposophy will collapse. The only thing one has to do is to show that either

- There is no such thing as the spiritual world, or
- It is incognizable, or
- Steiner used a wrong method of its investigation, or
- He used the right method but in a wrong way thus obtaining incorrect and false results, or
- His results were correct but he failed to correctly translate them into human language and convey to their recipients

Equally if those who accept anthroposophy wish to be on firm ground they should take the same five steps, but as questions, and see whether they can confidently answer them in the affirmative. These criteria are indispensable both for

critics and adherers of anthroposophy as long as they approach it with their ordinary consciousness. But in these pillars/criteria there is the one in the middle that points to a different approach to the issue of anthroposophy. It points to the development of one's higher consciousness and organs of supersensible perception which are latent within every individual with a possibility of being developed. Then one would be able not only to ascertain the existence of the spiritual world but to cognize and investigate it and even make the results of this investigation into one's own 'anthroposophy'. But in the meantime the author hopes the methodology he suggested might serve as a useful tool for serious investigators of anthroposophy.

After the Fire

After the fire of the Goetheanum, apart from the two questions which such acts of vandalism usually arouse – Who? and Why? – there was another one on every anthroposophist's mind if not on their lips: What now? For many of them this question was a reflection of their acute sense of loss and of being lost themselves. But for those living and working in Dornach who spent the night trying to extinguish the fire and salvage from it whatever items they could and who were now facing the ruins, this question had the full weight of immediacy and urgency. Their anxious eyes turned to Steiner, and his response came with the speed and resolution required by the situation: We shall continue with our work regardless.

As soon as the fire was extinguished, on the 1st of January 1923, and while the ruins were still smouldering, the biggest workshop which survived the fire was turned into an improvised hall where two events took place as scheduled for that day: a play at 5 o'clock in the afternoon and Steiner's lecture in the evening as part of his course on science. Steiner's example, leadership and guidance played of course a pivotal role, but the extraordinary act of will and determination shown on that day by the performers of the play was at the same time a reflection of the general mood of the entire anthroposophical community in response to the disaster that befell them. Specifically that determination found its expression in one purposeful wish – to build a replacement for the destroyed Goetheanum.

That was Steiner's resolve as well of course, but it was fraught for him, unlike for other members of the anthroposophical community, with some serious problems and responsibilities. It was not only a question of scarce financial and human resources which did not even allow to bring the construction of the Goetheanum to completion when it was still intact. Nor was it a problem of creating now a completely new design of the building (the issue of a new design of the Goetheanum will be discussed later).

Those and other practical problems would have been addressed and dealt with, had a decision to build a new centre for the Anthroposophical Movement been taken. But the main problem for Steiner was the decision itself. What ten years ago was for him a reason and motivation for action, now turned into a question: For whom shall this new building be built? The obvious and only answer – 'For anthroposophists and for their Anthroposophical Society' – could no longer prompt Steiner into action because of the disappointments and pains those two prospective recipients of the new building caused him over the years. Now was the time to take stock of this – of the sad fact that they did not come up to Steiner's expectations. If viewed from the spiritual perspective and expressed in anthroposophical terms, it can be said that: they proved to be inadequate to what was needed by the spiritual world and required by the Spirit of the Time. Or if viewed from the human perspective and expressed in terms of human endeavours, it can be said that anthroposophists, collectively, failed the three renewal tasks which were outlined earlier; as to their Anthroposophical

Society, it was, as any organisation can ever be, only as good as its members and leadership.

Perhaps it is from the latter perspective and in the context of the three renewal tasks that Steiner's concerns about anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society can be better understood. So let us first reiterate these tasks and then have a closer look at them:

The first renewal task signifies "a new attitude of soul" which presupposes both the moral development and the development of a new consciousness. The second renewal task requires entering into a conscious and reciprocal relationship with the spiritual world by developing the latent organs of supersensible perception. The third renewal task concerns the arrangement of one's life and activities, whatever their scope and nature, in accord with the spiritual reality, so as to facilitate a renewal of culture and the social fabric of the society.

Though these tasks, as they emerged at the beginning of the last century, concern each and every individual, to begin with only a few, i.e. the recipients of anthroposophy, were, and still are, in a position to become aware of them. But not as some commandments to follow. Rather these tasks exist, in the first instance, purely spiritually both as a challenge and a potential objective for every human being today. It is only if an individual consciously perceives them, takes them into his will and decides to pursue them that they become an actuality of life.

As such they have one feature in common – though they have definite objectives, they are open-ended. Unlike some other tasks or problems, these cannot be solved once and for all so that one can tick the box and move on to the next task – they are a life-long occupation. In pursuing them one can be successful and feel fulfilled, but one can never apply this word to the tasks themselves. Conversely, the tasks can be ignored, or given up, or failed, and this is the reason why we are talking about them now.

The first two tasks, on their part, have some important features in common and are, in fact, closely related. Steiner's emphasis that the right entry into the spiritual world is inseparable from moral development has already been mentioned twice in this discourse. Both tasks concern one's inner development and belong to the intimacy of one's inner life. But there is also a significant difference between the two, apart from their specific objectives. However intimate, the development of the organs of spiritual perception and the conscious entry into the spiritual world are verifiable; while moral development and "the improvement of one's own character towards the good", i.e. one's 'goodness', is not. At least not in the way that can unequivocally and objectively demonstrate one's success or underachievement. There are no clearly defined criteria, no task-setters, no supervisors and no judges apart from the task performer himself – it is purely 'self-assessment'. That makes this task and its verification very difficult indeed. However, the end results, whether achievements or failures, ultimately manifest themselves in what one does and says, in one's conduct and in the intercourse with one's fellow human beings. In other words, they do have effect on one's environment and on other people.

While the pursuing of the first two tasks is confined to the intimacy of one's inner life when only its results might manifest themselves outwardly, that of the third task is explicitly outward and visible, with tangible external results and consequences being its objective. As to its scope, even in the case of anthroposophists it would be wrong to equate this task with, or to limit it to, such anthroposophically based public activities as Waldorf Education, Anthroposophical Medicine, Biodynamic Agriculture, eurythmy and others. Though the value of these activities for the contemporary life of humanity cannot be overestimated they do not exhaust this life and thus the applicability of the third task.

But apart from the public arena there is the no less important personal level at which everyone can and should be engaged regarding this task. To put it succinctly it means to live one's life – whether private, social or professional – in keeping with the spiritual reality. Here again one is on one's own with regard to how one understands and implements this aspect of the third task.

It should be obvious to the reader that the pursuance of these tasks, especially successful, is a tall order. However, the consequences of ignoring them are much more daunting. Nobody knew it better than Rudolf Steiner. Therefore he did his utmost to help his followers both in their personal inner development and in their cultural and social endeavours.

We spoke earlier of his help to others on their spiritual path as one of his own major tasks, and he commenced it almost simultaneously with the beginning of his anthroposophical mission when there was yet neither an anthroposophical movement nor even anthroposophists as such – just enquirers. Apart from his personal advice and instructions we also spoke about two powerful tools provided by Steiner which, in their different ways, were indispensable for true seekers of spirit – his book *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?* and the Esoteric School. All those facilities were meant as a help for developing important inner qualities of personal, spiritual, moral and social value.

But even the best help in the world is no substitute for personal efforts, however modest. So their forthcoming, in sufficient quantity and quality to match the tasks in hand, was the main factor for achieving the desired results. However it is not the personal efforts, achievements or failures that we discuss here, but the results as they showed themselves in life, both anthroposophical and public. As such they, on the whole, were of great disappointment to Rudolf Steiner causing him concern and pain. In our further deliberations we shall try to convey Steiner's thoughts and feelings on the subject as much as possible by his own words. It is important for the reader to know them so that he can understand better Steiner's subsequent decisions and actions which came as a surprise even to his closest associates.

Anthroposophists and the State of the Anthroposophical Society

When giving lectures on education and on other occasions Steiner spoke of seven-year periods in human life which have different soul, spiritual and physical characteristics. The knowledge of these distinctions is particularly important for a teacher so that they should be taken into account in the educational process. For example, the end of the first seven-year period which is physically expressed by the change of teeth, is also signified by deeper changes which mean that only now it is appropriate to teach a child to read. Again the end of the second seven-year period is physically characterised by puberty, but deeper changes that occur at that time make it suitable for some subjects to be introduced now into the school curriculum and be taught in a particular way.

But in human evolution there are some remarkable similarities between organic and social spheres. We spoke earlier about one of them, the threefoldness of the human and social organisms,. There is another one: a micro social organism, an organisation, in its development also goes, like the human organism, through distinct seven-year periods. In later years the knowledge of this and other similarities has been used, developed and successfully applied by anthroposophical specialists and consultants for solving various organisational problems and industrial disputes. But Steiner, in this respect, was concerned with one organisation, the Anthroposophical Society, as a servant of anthroposophy. Therefore he saw its progressing existence, in the first instance, in terms of its specific tasks which were related to its developmental stages.

Speaking about the development and unfolding of anthroposophy in the first two decades of its existence Steiner noted three phases each lasting for approximately seven years. Then he spoke of the different tasks of the Anthroposophical Society during each of these phases which had never been those of publishing his work and arranging his lectures. In the first phase the Anthroposophical Society served as a sort of a community of the recipients of anthroposophy, of those who needed and sought it. In the second phase its task became to cultivate anthroposophy and bring it into the world. In the third phase its task was akin to the third renewal task of the individual discussed above: to bring into the world not just anthroposophy but its fruits, its practical applications in various fields of life.

But anthroposophy and anthroposophists, the Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society had, above all, one principal task of which Steiner spoke on many occasions and in different ways. Two years prior to the Goetheanum fire he expressed it like this: "The particular task given to the anthroposophical movement for decades now has basically been to shake humanity out of its sleep, to point out that humanity needs to be given something today that truly changes the present state of soul to the same extent as the dreamer's state of soul changes to being fully awake and alive for the day, when he wakes in the morning."

Now Steiner preceded these words by the following observation: "The sad thing is that people today have been given great tasks and yet would most of all like to sleep through those tasks." But this sad thing becomes truly tragic when it applies, as it actually does, to anthroposophists as well. For how can sleepyheads wake others from their slumber and alert them to the realities of life? It was in the light of various tasks given to anthroposophists that Steiner viewed their activities. What he saw was not very encouraging. It was foremost anthroposophists who needed awakening – not only to their tasks, but, in the first instance, to the state of wakefulness in which those tasks could be undertaken. Here is an example of how Steiner tried to do that five years earlier:

"The year 1916 is not far off. We shall then have the second seven years behind us. If with this second period of seven years behind us we think of our Movement as an organism, this organism will then have reached maturity; it must steer its own course and be able to achieve something by itself. After all that has been given, it ought to be possible for the work to go on effectively even without the teacher... The danger that things go well only as long as something comes from me week after week, must be surmounted. We have now reached the years when the Society ought to be able to show that it can quietly continue to cultivate what has been given, to cultivate it as if I were no longer there. This is an absolutely necessary thought. The teachings which have been given are of such a nature that if they now work in souls, a great deal can be done for which I am no longer needed. I am not saying that I will not remain, but the test will consist in my becoming more and more superfluous... What would happen if one day I were no longer there? The Society would at once fall to pieces! We shall only attain what we ought to attain if, after fourteen years, we have really come to the point of having a life of our own which can in turn bring forth new life."

That was neither the first nor the last admonition with which Steiner addressed anthroposophists in order to help them. Alas, he was not very successful, and their inaptitude did not allow Steiner, among other things, to reinstate after the end of World War I the Esoteric School which he dissolved at the beginning of the War. In 1920 he made a couple of tentative attempts to resume esoteric lessons, but had to abandon his intent.

The Esoteric School was not the only enterprise that Steiner, despite deeming it necessary, did not bring about. Though each case was different, there was also a

common factor – unpreparedness of his followers, as he explained with regard to another important venture: "Why has it not yet arisen? As firmly as I will insist that this ... must emerge from the core of the anthroposophical movement, nevertheless I will equally firmly hold it back until the strength is there to [do] it in a worthy way. The times are too grave to do this shallowly... This is why we must wait until the strength to do it exists."

But while not reinstating the Esoteric School Steiner, on the other hand, republished in 1918 his fundamental book *The Philosophy of Freedom*. When it was first published 25 years earlier Steiner was an obscure young scholar trying to interest with his ideas and strivings a rather narrow intellectual circle in the Europe untroubled as yet by the challenges and upheavals of the 20th century. Now the situation, both his personal and in the world, was different. The new edition of the book appeared at the end of the WWI when it was evident that the old world with its established order and values was no more and there was nothing to replace it with. The development of the thinking promulgated by Steiner was no longer, as it might have seemed to some people 25 years ago, 'an intellectual luxury', but a dire necessity. He hoped that the book would reach a wider audience this time, its main recipients being his followers and disciples for whom it was a powerful facilitator for the development not only of the urgently needed new type of thinking, but also of true freedom and morality.

However, it was apparent that neither the personal efforts, whatever they were, nor various forms of help had the desired effect. Even Steiner's hopes for *The Philosophy of Freedom* being properly read were dashed: "The trouble is that *The Philosophy of Freedom* has not been read in the different way I have been describing." And it was not only with regard to their vital tasks that anthroposophists revealed their weakness, unpreparedness and immaturity. They also betrayed such features as narrow-mindedness, complacency and untruthfulness, as well as the tendency towards sectarianism, dogmatism and cliques formation. No wonder that when new enquirers came to the Anthroposophical Society they often did not receive the help they needed and asked for; while what came from the Society to the world was often a distorted or diluted anthroposophy. The failure in those two main spheres undermined the very foundation of the Anthroposophical Society, the *raison d'être* of its existence.

After the War, and as the result of it, many changes were taking place in Europe and in the world at large. At that time the Anthroposophical Society also experienced some changes two of which were positive and welcome. But they turned out to be fraught with problems.

One of those changes was mentioned earlier: a keen interest in anthroposophy from a wide circle of people, mainly young ones, but also from others, especially professionals in various fields. Unfortunately many of them, as much as they were attracted by anthroposophy, were repulsed by what they encountered in the Anthroposophical Society.

Steiner spoke of young people who have been longing and searching for a deeper meaning of life and who "came to know of anthroposophy and felt at once that it led to the primal sources of their seeking, to the deepest origin of humanness. They then approached the Anthroposophical Society. And ... they had received a shock on approaching it, ... the contrast between the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophy had startled them." It was not the experience of young people only, and Steiner explained why: "The way the Anthroposophical Society has been developing in recent years has tended to keep out people who might otherwise have joined it. ... In spite of all the outstanding congresses and other accomplishments we have to our credit, the Society's orientation has made people feel that though anthroposophy pleased them well enough, they did not want to become members."

Despite this the membership of the Anthroposophical Society grew rapidly after the War. The new members differed considerably from the old ones. They were mainly young people, with different life experiences and different aspirations. They were inspired by anthroposophy almost immediately upon encountering it. Many of them were university students who formed their groups and were very active on the campuses. But basically the young members of the Anthroposophical Society were not prepared, like old anthroposophists, to devote many years to study and contemplation. They were impatient to act upon their newly acquired knowledge and change the life and society around them, which were indeed in the need of an urgent change. Whatever the capacities of those young people to exercise this change were, the older ones were not in a hurry, or in a position, to turn their knowledge into practical deeds. The conflict between those two groups of dedicated anthroposophists was unavoidable, with no prospect of a happy resolution, and it inevitably meant Steiner's involvement. But even his physical presence and influence had little effect as he spoke of "two separate groups of human beings sitting in this room, neither of which in the least understands the other, neither of which is able to take the first small step towards mutual understanding."

But there was another problem connected with the new influx of members – adverse influences caused by some of them. Among the newcomers attracted by anthroposophy there were those, scientists in particular, who did not grasp the spiritual science in its essence and who did not change their habitual way of thinking and their materialistic attitude and understanding. And now they were bringing those alien elements into the Anthroposophical Society threatening to contaminate and undermine the spiritual knowledge that had been given there.

And there was something else. Science, scientists, scientific research were very close to his heart and mind because he himself was, in the first place, a scientist, through and through. And he also knew the importance of science, of a scientific method and attitude, both for our time in general and for his mission in particular. Therefore he was so happy when scientists, or people with a scientific mind and inclination, embraced anthroposophy and joined the Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society. He had given them tremendous help in the form of lectures, courses, seminars and personal advice, and on top of that "repeatedly assigned [scientific] problems that needed solving" His hopes and expectations in this respect were very high. And so were, subsequently, his disappointments.

For example, with a very few exceptions (perhaps even only one piece of research!), Steiner was highly dissatisfied with the scientific work being done in Stuttgart at the institute *Der Kommende Tag* founded for that purpose. He expressed his dissatisfaction in the following lamentation: "Recently I have really not held back from giving positive proposals and suggestions. None of them have been pursued. One gives advice in relation to a particular question, but this is simply thrown to the wind." Even the anthroposophical physicians, to whom Rudolf Steiner had given numerous courses and much personal instruction, deeply disappointed him as far as further elaboration of and responsibility for the new medicine was concerned.

But those were, so to speak, internal anthroposophical affairs and concerns. Unfortunately, there were also some external anthroposophical activities when anthroposophy was presented to the world by the Anthroposophical Society via its members, again notably via scientists, which caused Steiner serious concerns. Thus, he was very disappointed with the unnecessary and fruitless polemic – and the way it was conducted – by anthroposophical scientists with their conventional colleagues which took place on the pages of the anthroposophical journal *Die Drei*: "the battle over atomism that the journal *Die Drei* has been waging can only mean the death of fruitful scientific exchange. This debate should not be carried on with resort to the

same kind of thinking practised by opponents and with the failure to see that in certain vital points their assertions are correct."

When Steiner spoke about the tasks of scientists coming into the Anthroposophical Movement he used even stronger words pointing to their failures: "They should not only make it their goal as scientists to develop a different picture of the world than that striven for by external science, but should also be aware that their chief responsibility consists in bringing an anthroposophical frame of mind and an inner aliveness to bear on the various scientific fields they enter. This would keep them from resorting to polemics against other types of science, and instead help them to proceed in the direction of developing aspects of those sciences that would remain undeveloped without anthroposophy. I must stress this in a time of crisis for our Society, a crisis due in no small measure to the way scientists have been conducting themselves in it."

Scientists also took part in a significant anthroposophical event – the public conference at the Goetheanum in the autumn 1920. In that year the Goetheanum, though still incomplete, became usable, and some enthusiastic anthroposophists, including Waldorf teachers, wished to arrange a public conference in it. Steiner understood their enthusiasm and also their impatience of having that event in the Goetheanum even in its unfinished form. The money being scarce as it was, new anthroposophical ventures diverted both attention and resources away from the Goetheanum. The time of its completion and formal opening was uncertain and seemed to be far off, while the building itself, after seven years of hard work, was there to be used as it was. So Steiner gave his consent for the conference and even agreed to give daily lectures there, but he did not take any part in organising it and did not want that occasion to be treated or seen as an opening of the Goetheanum.

The conference, with a thousand participants from various European countries, lasted for three weeks. The invitations to the conference were sent to several hundred people from conventional academic institutions who had nothing to do with anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Movement. Thirty-two speakers covered a variety of subjects such as philosophy, theology, history, linguistics, physics, mathematics, chemistry, biology, medicine, jurisprudence, pedagogy, economics, and others.

The opening of the conference, with Steiner's address, musical features and coloured lights, was a very moving experience for those present. For Steiner himself, to be able to speak for the first time in this very special place which he also called "The House of the Word", was, no doubt, a poignant and special occasion. It was at this conference that he gave, apart from other lectures, his first collegiate course, *The Boundaries of Natural Science*, as a preparation for the future University of Spiritual Science.

Apart from Steiner's lectures, some other presentations and also the eurythmy performances were in full harmony with the interior of the building. But many other events were not. Particularly those in which non-anthroposophists took an active part. Their participation resulted in some unsuitable and misplaced presentations and prolonged and fruitless discussions. Materialistic views, a polemical attitude and individualistic style of presentation were out of place there, both in content and in spirit.

But impropriety and discord came from the anthroposophical quarters as well. One event was particularly inappropriate. Every effort was made to enable young people from the anthroposophical Youth Movement, especially University students, to attend the conference. It was hoped that this would be a special and beneficial experience for them. And it undoubtedly was. But on one occasion an older anthroposophist who welcomed them urged them to pledge their loyalty to Rudolf Steiner, and in response they rose from their seats as one man. Such fanatical

attitude was gathering momentum in Germany at the time, and its tragic consequences were to be experienced soon by the entire world. But within the Anthroposophical Movement and to Steiner himself whose aspiration, appeal and credo were: "I do not want to be revered! I want to be understood", such a stance was totally unacceptable and even repulsive.

Reflecting on the conference Steiner observed that "one could readily become aware, by feeling out the way the architectural style harmonized or failed to harmonize with what went on in the building, that an inorganic element had indeed insinuated itself into the pure ongoing stream of the anthroposophical spiritual movement." His overall experience of the conference, despite many positive impressions, made him think hard on the readiness of anthroposophists to represent and present anthroposophy to the world and even on their ability to make it live within the Goetheanum. But it took two years for his grievous doubts to be resolved in that unthinkable, tragic and violent way. However unwelcome this 'resolution' was Steiner had every reason to say: "Resuming work on [the Goetheanum] depends entirely on strengthening the Society and freeing it of misunderstandings that sap its very lifeblood."

At the same time the active participation of anthroposophists and of the Anthroposophical Society in public life in general and in the Threefold Social Order movement in particular, which started after the end of the War, was very welcome. This participation was not only theoretical and verbal, but practical with the launch of various enterprises and institutions in the fields of science, education, curative education, medicine, publishing, economy and theology. However, very soon many of them were in trouble and in 1922 numerous anthroposophical initiatives were in crisis, both financially and with regard to people's practical capacities and sense of commitment. Some enterprises were subjected to liquidation with considerable financial losses. Even the financial situation of the Stuttgart Waldorf School was precarious.

Of course a very difficult political situation and severe inflation in Germany were not conducive to any entrepreneurial activity, but when Steiner said that "it is the various single enterprises that are causing our troubles", he did not have any doubts about the true causes of that: "Thus, the difficulties that have proliferated are a consequence of what I must call the exceedingly premature steps taken since 1919, and, in particular, in the circumstance that people founded all sorts of institutions and then didn't continue sharing responsibility for them – a fact that must be stressed again and again. These difficulties have given rise to the problematical situation now confronting us."

But highly desirable as it was, the ramification of the anthroposophical activities turned out to have another unfortunate consequence: new ventures became self-important at the expense of their very foundation and source of nourishment, anthroposophy. Steiner put it metaphorically: "Since 1919 anthroposophy has given birth to many children, but the children have been exceedingly neglectful of their mother." Of course anthroposophy as such, as spiritual science, was not affected by this negligence, but its cultivation and working in the world was, while the immediate victims of this were the ventures themselves and their initiators.

That also led to the Anthroposophical Society falling in its development behind anthroposophy. Steiner had no doubts about the consequences: "If it does fall behind, anthroposophy's conveyance through the Society will result in its being completely misunderstood, and its only fruit will be endless conflict!" Nevertheless this falling behind was actually happening and Steiner, again, put it metaphorically: "Anthroposophy has grown, and its suit, the AS – for the Society has gradually become that – has grown too small. The sleeves scarcely reach to the elbows, the trousers to the knees."

All that was part of the state of the general crisis and weak public status in which the Anthroposophical Society was at the time. To see it in perspective and especially to see and understand Steiner's own situation in and vis-a-vis the Anthroposophical Society, we should remind ourselves of what changes its emergence from theosophical constraints brought about both for him and for the Society. This is how it was related earlier on in our narrative:

The main such change concerned Steiner himself. He renounced not only the leadership of and any official position in the new organisation (save for the title of Honorary President granted to him), but even his membership, confining his role to that of teacher and advisor. No more administrative and organisational functions, duties and responsibilities and no formal connections and ties to any organisation. From now on he could concentrate exclusively on spiritual matters, on his message, without the distraction – and destruction! – of the external undertakings which were never organic or fruitful, and no longer necessary, for his main activity. He would continue to deliver his message to the world, directly and via the Anthroposophical Society, exactly as before, and now it would be up to that Society to make good use of his teachings, to cultivate and disseminate them.

For the newly formed Anthroposophical Society, for its membership, those changes also brought freedom and liberation, but of a different type. If the separation from the Theosophical Society had no substantive effect and consequences for it, the separation from Rudolf Steiner most definitely had or, at least, should have had. For now Rudolf Steiner and the Anthroposophical Society acted in the world as two separate and different entities, with different tasks and paths. At the core of those differences lay the fact that anthroposophy was inseparable from and identical with Rudolf Steiner but not with the Anthroposophical Society. Anthroposophy was now coming not from within but from without the Society. The latter was, therefore, no different in this respect from any other group of people, or single individuals, who wished to be the recipients of Steiner's message. It was standing now on its own feet, without Steiner as its mainstay or even frontispiece, without any special spiritual rights, claims, privileges, or dispensations regarding him and his teaching. If it wanted to be something in the world and contribute to its well-being, this would have to come exclusively out of its own resources.

Alas, the Anthroposophical Society, as an organisation and living organism, failed, like so many individuals in our time, to use its freedom for its own proper development and for fulfilling its life task. Its crisis, that we have been describing so far, was a direct result of that. At the same time, Steiner's own liberation from his involvement in the Society's affairs was not very successful either, but the reasons for that had very little to do with him personally.

Though Steiner had no formal and administrative ties with the Anthroposophical Society he had other ties with it which were no less binding though in a different way. These were, in the first place, spiritual ties stemming from the Society's task as a vehicle to carry anthroposophy into the world. Even if Steiner had nothing to do with the day-to-day running of the Society he could not be indifferent to its functioning pertaining to its task. There were also human ties which had various aspects and took place at different levels. These ties, by their very nature, are sensitive to what we called earlier 'human factor', which can have a pernicious effect in its sphere of influence. In the case of Steiner this sphere included not only him personally, but also the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophy itself.

The reader will have remembered that at the inception of his anthroposophical activity Steiner was deeply perturbed by the fact that through imparting spiritual knowledge he was "raising wrongdoers". Though the personal and public effect of it

was rather limited at the time, it was a foretaste of various forms and causes of 'wrongdoings' that Steiner would encounter in some of his followers in the coming years.

Such occurrences should come as no surprise to anyone. When you have a big enough group of people, even brought together by common interests and shared ideals, it is bound to comprise a variety of characters and motives including some 'rotten apples' or 'wrongdoers'. The Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society are no exception. Moreover, their spiritual dimension, particularly in the first period of their existence, attracted some people with nebulous mysticism and unhealthy ambitions and people susceptible to misconceptions and aberrations. Thus alongside the majority of genuine seekers for spiritual knowledge with a high sense of moral responsibility; the Anthroposophical Society had in its ranks its share of renegades and conspirators, slanderers and plagiarists, ambitious egotists and simply unscrupulous characters.

The First Crisis

As we are now discussing the crisis in the Anthroposophical Society in the post-war years we should mention an earlier one which took place in 1915. It was originally caused by a female member of the Anthroposophical Society who was then supported by other two members, a married couple, but it also involved, in one way or another, some other members of the Society.

The woman in question misguided by her misconceptions, delusions and unhealthy imagination, was disturbed by the marriage between Rudolf Steiner and Marie von Sivers which took place in December 1914. She neither could control her dubious emotions and ideas, nor wished to keep them private. She expressed them in her letters to both Rudolf and Marie Steiner and also shared them with others. The above couple supported her by writing a long letter to Rudolf Steiner accusing him of dishonesty in his relations with the members, of manipulating them and even of using black magic for this purpose. All three also circulated rumours and gossips to that effect.

Upon receipt of the above letter Steiner, that very day, instead of delivering his planned evening lecture decided to bring the matter into the open by reading it to his membership audience. He was disturbed not only by the totally unjustifiable and ungrounded personal accusations, but also by the shameless vanity of their motivations: "It astounds me that in these difficult times, when our interests should be focused on the development of a major portion of humanity, someone should have so little interest in the events of the day as to drag such highly personal interests into our Society."

But his main concern was the state of the Anthroposophical Society and he left his listeners in no doubt about the connection: "a letter like this cannot be seen in isolation; it is a symptom of what is going on in our Society ... [this affair] touches on many fundamental issues I have been pointing to for months in many discussions." But alas: "many things I have said to members in lectures here in the course of the last few weeks and months have had no effect at all."

At the same time people burdened Steiner with their often trivial personal problems or other unnecessary things without showing any understanding or regard for what was involved in his spiritual research: "Not only this letter, but also many other things that have come up in the Society intermittently down through the years and with increasing frequency lately, show that many people simply do not make an effort to understand the kind of responsibility carried by someone communicating esoteric truths. It seems that many of our members don't want to try to understand what it sometimes takes to speak even a single sentence of that sort."

Nor did they appreciate how detrimental that burdening of Steiner was for anthroposophy and their own Society: "The fact of the matter is that the way things have been going, I could truly have done much more if I had not had to get involved in a lot of things that actually did not warrant my involvement. ... If what I want to do is to be accomplished on behalf of the Society, then please allow me the time to do it."

Of course there were those who clearly saw the problems that Steiner faced at the time, as well as those who tried to help him and also who selflessly stood by him throughout all the tumultuous events. This is how one of them, the Russian poet Andrei Bely, described Steiner's predicaments in the midst of that crisis: "From the end of July until the middle of November 1915, Rudolf Steiner fought on a number of fronts simultaneously: he fought against our indolence; he took steps to insure that the Swiss government did not acquiesce to the demands of certain intelligence agencies to have us deported; he fought against various spiritual streams that were undermining his "Dornach" with both open and veiled accusations (Jesuits, Protestants, various esoteric societies); he battled with the middle-class thinking that threatened to encircle him and with the specific pathologies of the Anthroposophical Society; he struggled with the lack of money and people who were able to finish the building; he fought for the young against the old, and he brought a measure of restraint to our challenging approach "in spite of the old" – I will spring over the period during which these Augean stables were cleaned."

But all those difficulties, struggles and problems were a reflection of what was for Steiner the major issue and concern: the state and future of the Anthroposophical Society. He expressed it like this: "I have also often pointed out that if certain signs and symptoms continue to appear in the Society, finding another form for it will become inevitable because the present form and present arrangements are not serving the purpose." Steiner's exasperation reached its peak when, after listening for a while to what members had to say upon hearing the letter and his subsequent address to them, he had to leave the room together with Marie Steiner saying: "I cannot have anything more to do with a society like this!"

What the vast majority of members thought and felt about those events was expressed in their letter to Steiner written that very day and certified by over 300 signatures. For a better comprehension of the situation, here is its full text:

"Dear Dr. Steiner,

As members of the Anthroposophical Society, we wish to express our righteous indignation and our feeling of shame that someone of mendacious and immoral outlook, as evident in Mr. Heinrich Goesch's letter, has dared to address you in a fashion dictated by the most despicable delusions of grandeur.

We must painfully reproach ourselves for not having understood how to prevent what has happened and for having proved unable thus far to create a circle of people in which the thoughts and feelings expressed in this letter could not have arisen.

We ask your forgiveness as our loved and respected teacher. We also ask that you not retract your confidence in us, or rather, that you trust in us again, because we are firmly resolved to better realize the ideal of the Anthroposophical Society and to be more aware of our responsibility in future.

It is a matter of course that, given the point of view they represent, we no longer wish to consider Miss Alice Sprengel, Mr. Heinrich Goesch, and Mrs. Gertrud Goesch as having a place in our midst.

We ask you, dear Dr. Steiner, to take our signatures as an assurance of our unconditional and constant trust and our sincerest gratitude."

This letter is an extraordinary document in that it acknowledged a collective and individual failure of virtually the entire membership, as it was at the time and place, in something so essential that it undermined the very existence of their organisation. But this acknowledgement did not answer the key question: how could that failure happen in the first place? What was lacking or, conversely, present in all those people, collectively and individually, that had allowed such a failure to take place? Why did they fail to recognise what was wrong in its embryonic state and only reacted to it when it reached a ruinous proportion?

These are important and relevant questions even today and even irrespective of a particular organisation and people. They are applicable to many a human situation where obvious and unjustifiable – with hindsight! – failures occur. And we should bear in mind that in this case the individuals concerned were, on the whole, not worse than any other group of people and perhaps in some ways even better than most.

Whether those individuals had actually asked these or similar questions, they had to answer them with their deeds. So they wrote the above letter in which they, apart from sincerely repenting and apologising, tried to rectify the situation by expelling the trio and making pledges for the future. Steiner, in the circumstances, accepted all this knowing perfectly well that "expulsion cannot resolve any concern of the Society." The three might have triggered the crisis, but they were not the main culprits. And yet Steiner also saw a very valuable quality in those who failed on that occasion: "It remains a reality that a certain wealth of wisdom, a sum total of things that really exist, are present in the hearts and minds of people who have belonged to the Anthroposophical Society until now. That cannot be taken away from them even by dissolving the Society." So Steiner had to continue working both with those people and with their organisation hoping for the best.

As to the people themselves, did they learn their lesson and how to forestall something similar happening again? More specifically, could they fulfil their pledges given to Steiner which required, in fact, the fulfilment of what we called earlier the first renewal task of the individual, i.e. the development of a new consciousness and thinking? It is an academic question now because we know the answer. It was given by the state of the general crisis in which the Anthroposophical Society found itself a few years later. The reasons for the crisis and the crisis itself were different, but the organisation and the people were the same.

The Further Crisis

It was in the middle of this new crisis that the fire of the Goetheanum took place. Steiner saw a direct connection between the two. It was not a physically evident or perceptible connection; it belonged to the spiritual, cultural and moral realm. The Anthroposophical Society and its members failed to make a stance in this realm, to declare and manifest their distinct presence in it so that others could feel and experience its positive and beneficial effect. With regard to the Goetheanum they failed to be spiritual, cultural and moral protectors of their home. Its physical destruction was for Steiner a manifestation and result of that failure.

So the implications of this new crisis were much deeper while its scope was considerably wider. We interrupted our discussion of it to give an account of its predecessor in the year 1915, but now we can come back to it viewing it, as much as possible, through Steiner's eyes.

Speaking of the Goetheanum ruins that anthroposophists had to face now in Dornach Steiner used that gloomy image to describe the current state of the Anthroposophical Society saying that it "lacks inner stability and itself therefore

somewhat resembles a ruin." The Society's lack of inner cohesion and of communal spirit was echoed by a lack of understanding that all anthroposophical activities – practical and in the spheres of knowledge and art – belong together and form a unity.

The Society's attitudes and conduct were reminiscent of a sect while it was, at the same time, divided by various conflicts, particularly by that between the two generations of anthroposophists who could not work together, anthroposophically and humanly. There also developed a gulf between the so called "leading personalities" and rank-and-file members. As to the official leadership of the Anthroposophical Society, which at that time was in Stuttgart, it was weak and unable to cope even with its immediate duties, to say nothing of other far-reaching tasks and demands as was observed by one of the contemporaries: "The executive in Stuttgart could no longer keep control over the storm of activities which surged towards them from all sides." Whenever the conflict became too acute Steiner had to step in to smooth out the situation.

The problematic inner state of the Anthroposophical Society was reflected in its public status and in its perception by those outside it. Indeed, how could it be otherwise? If, for example, it acted as a sect it was inevitably seen by others as such. Steiner was also deeply concerned by the failure on the part of anthroposophists to bring into the world the distinctly anthroposophical impulses, intentions and deeds: "As far as those who are not involved with anthroposophy are concerned, nothing can do more profound harm to the Anthroposophical Society than the failure of its members to adopt a form which sets out in the strictest terms what they are trying to achieve, so that they can be distinguished from all sectarian and other movements. As long as this does not happen, it is not surprising that people around us judge us as they do. It is hard to know what the Anthroposophical Society stands for, and when they meet anthroposophists they see nothing of anthroposophy."

The situation was not helped by what Steiner referred to as "a mood which arose in the Society and which ran counter to the conditions governing the existence of the anthroposophical movement!" While addressing his anthroposophical audiences with such serious problems Steiner had to be blunt – they "have to be stated in a direct manner, otherwise they will not be understood."

The situation seemed to beg the same familiar questions: How could those problems have arisen in the first place? Why was it necessary for Steiner to speak about them again and again trying to impress their seriousness on those who created them? Were they capable of rectifying them?

To these can be added another important question which seems appropriate to consider at this stage: Steiner's own situation – within and vis-à-vis the Anthroposophical Society. It had several aspects. His official position was clear – he had none. His spiritual role was equally clear – he was a teacher and advisor. And his moral status was also patently evident – it was that of the highest authority. Though only the first one was formally defined, all three were factual and indisputable.

But then, with the expansion of the Anthroposophical Movement, there emerged the fourth domain – a practical one. The increased public activities of anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society inevitably involved Steiner in them. Whether his involvements were willing or reluctant they burdened him with additional work and various forms of responsibility, including legal and financial. Some of those responsibilities were imposed on him – not physically of course, but by circumstances or in virtue of his reputation or position as an acknowledged leader. Most of them he could do without especially when he had to pick up the pieces left by those responsible for them. All in all, speaking of the situation as a whole, Steiner had to admit: "as things are now, the whole weight of everything connected with anthroposophical activities is burdening my soul"

Apart from this involvement of Steiner's, some of which was unavoidable or even desirable, there was another kind which was quite avoidable and certainly undesirable. It was brought about by people abusing, in many cases, Steiner's good will, his position, and authority. While before, as we mentioned earlier in connection with the 1915 crises, people often burdened Steiner with trivial personal problems or other unnecessary things, now that burden was disproportionately increased by what stemmed from anthroposophical activities. With a very few exceptions people shifted on to Steiner various tasks, problems and decisions.

This inability or unwillingness to act for themselves and be responsible for the consequences was paralleled by some irresponsible actions under the banner of anthroposophy without sufficient competence and any wish to be accountable. The extent of it and impact on Steiner forced him to speak out on the issue quite categorically: "I want to make it fully clear as a matter of principle that everything that is done in the name of anthroposophy cannot be laid at my door!"

To understand better the nature of the problems caused by anthroposophists and faced by Steiner we might look at them as manifestations of what we termed 'a human factor'. As a general observation it can be suggested that some harmful results of human conduct might occur due to two types of deficiency in their character: either an absence of some positive qualities or a presence of some negative ones. Anthroposophists are no exception and it appears that Steiner, unfortunately, experienced both. The problems we discussed so far seem to belong to the first type, but some others firmly point to the second.

On several occasions and in different contexts Steiner spoke of the same problem – the opposition he encountered within the Anthroposophical Society. He expressed it very clearly: "an inner opposition to what I sometimes must advocate from the core of anthroposophy exists within the Anthroposophical Society." On another occasion he spoke again of "a certain inner opposition to the tasks I had to fulfil in the Anthroposophical Society." And later, looking back at the last few years, he used even stronger words: "My real intentions were constantly being blunted by the Society. The inner force and impulse was taken from them – especially after 1918."

In this respect we might mention even more ominous occurrences which took place earlier, during the war years, and which were conveyed by Marie Savitch, a close collaborator of Marie Steiner and a fellow worker with Rudolf Steiner, in her book *Marie Steiner-von Sivers*: "There arose from many souls, like a dark vapour, ill-will towards the position which Marie Steiner occupied in the society. And there was yet another current of which Rudolf Steiner said, speaking of himself and Marie Steiner: *Then we should be separated from the building [the Goetheanum], exiled from the building.*"

All those and other individual problems amounted to what appeared to become a general crisis of the Anthroposophical Society. But talking of the problems or about the crisis itself was not an end in itself for Steiner. His purpose was to alert anthroposophists to the seriousness of the situation because at the end of the day it was them, and them alone, who should rectify it. And it had to be done without delay. The year 1923 was decisive in this respect and, in fact, it turned out to be fateful in the history of the Anthroposophical Society.

At the time Stuttgart not only accommodated its headquarters, but was home to various anthroposophical institutions and other anthroposophical activities becoming virtually the centre of the Anthroposophical Movement. So Steiner travelled there again and again to attend numerous and lengthy meetings and discussions concerning the current situation with the Anthroposophical Society and also the problems of various anthroposophical enterprises. Many anthroposophists also travelled to Stuttgart to take part in the meetings. But unlike them, while attending

these discussions some of which lasted into the small hours of the morning, Steiner's main intention was not to make contributions or suggestions, but to listen and observe and, most importantly, to learn what anthroposophists had to say about those issues and what they intended to do to resolve them. Later he reported the discussions and his impressions of them to anthroposophists in Dornach: We shall reproduce some of them here.

The seriousness of what had to be discussed and ultimately resolved was evident from the very beginning: "So we faced extraordinarily difficult problems at the preliminary meetings. An incalculable weight of worry burdened one's soul." It could be expected therefore that this would set the appropriate content and tone of the subsequent discussions, but what followed instead were "debates reminiscent of the ordinary, everyday kind of rationalistic considerations ... dragging in anthroposophical theories in an artificial, sentimental, nebulous way, as has so often happens."

Steiner asked in amazement: "Would not these same discussions, identical as to content, have been just as conceivable sixteen or eighteen years ago as they are today, when we have two decades of anthroposophical work behind us? Does it not seem as though we were back at the founding of the Society?" But it was not the content of the discussions alone that perturbed Steiner, but also their atmosphere: "One could only wish that something positive would be spoken about with true warmth! That is what we need. And it is what is missing. A certain coldness rules here, a terrible coldness. This entire gathering has been excessively cold. There was no warmth to be felt."

Steiner, as could be expected, was approached for help and advice, but on this occasion he refused to give any because the solutions had to come from the individuals concerned: "It makes no sense for you to say that I should give you counsel. All that happens is that what I say is repeated. I'm not accusing you. It just doesn't help. All that helps is what is rooted in the soul of the individual, rooted well enough to become reality and permeated with will." And that was what he wanted to know at the time, to know what anthroposophists, members of the Anthroposophical Society, intended to do. What he found out and learnt as the result of the lengthy process of meetings and discussions can be summarized by the following single impression: "This was an assemblage of human beings and the speeches all dealt with realities, but there was no living reality in the meetings, just abstraction; they were a classic example of life lived in the abstract. By Tuesday evening real chaos reigned. Everybody was talking past everybody else."

Steiner felt disappointed and frustrated that no specific suggestions were made concerning any issue under discussion and in particular that he heard nothing positive, concrete and constructive with regard to solving the problems of the Society and undertaking specific tasks and steps to regenerate it. However he also knew that no regeneration was possible while the Society was torn apart by the two incompatible groups represented mainly by young and older members and representing "two types of feeling, two different viewpoints, two sets of opinions." They simply could not and would not work together. So regeneration had to be preceded by reorganisation. It was an immediate problem which required an immediate solution. And Steiner suggested one: to divide the Society into two independent groups each absorbing people from each of those different streams – or from both of them if that might be the case: the "old Anthroposophical Society" and an "alliance of independent anthroposophic communities" (the "Free Anthroposophical Society").

Steiner's realistic proposal was not immediately understood and accepted. He himself saw abnormality of the proposed division of the Anthroposophical Society. But his forced pragmatic proposal was not at the same time negligent of true lofty

principles: "Unity upon a spiritual scientific foundation comes about through differentiation, individualization, not centralization." And there was nothing dogmatic about it as "nothing can be set up for eternity" Reporting on this development at Dornach Steiner said: "So, my dear friends, we made the reported attempt to set up looser ties between the two streams of the Society. I hope that if this effort is rightly understood and rightly handled, we can continue on the new basis for a while. I have no illusion that it will be for long, but in that case we will have to try some other arrangement."

Steiner's comments on Stuttgart debates and his proposal to divide the Anthroposophical Society were not his only contributions towards its revival. Though he mainly abstained from the debates themselves he spoke on other occasions about what had to be done and of the new and urgent tasks for anthroposophists and the Society in that critical time and situation.

One might argue that all times in human history are plagued with problems, crises and even disasters, but nobody can deny that the first quarter of the 20th century, the time of Steiner's principal public activity, was exceptionally troublesome. And it was in the very nature of his activity that he addressed those troubles and crises, both in his immediate environment and in the world at large. When doing so there were two focal points for him: the causes and the remedies. Both being as varied as the situations and the problems themselves, Steiner always looked beyond what was externally observable and what was partial and secondary, for what was lying deeper under the surface of events and what was fundamental and primary.

In the post-war years Steiner spoke of three entities which found themselves in deep crises: the world, or Europe, as it had developed in the last few centuries; Germany, or the German empire at the time, as it had developed in the last fifty years; and the Anthroposophical Society as it had developed in the last decade. The primal cause for all three crises was people's lack of wakefulness to the true missions of their respective entities and their lack of understanding of the events unfolding round them. This inadequacy resulted in inevitable disasters for all three: WWI and its consequences for the first two and the destruction of the Goetheanum for the third. And Steiner's immediate remedy for all three was also the same: to use the disasters that befell them as a wakeup call for self-reflection and self-examination.

Then, when addressing the specific issues, Steiner further elaborated his thoughts and insights. Speaking to anthroposophists in Stuttgart a month after the Goetheanum fire he said: "Let us hope that the terrible misfortune we have had to face will at least have the effect of curing members of their illusions and convincing them of the need to concentrate all the forces of their hearts and minds on advancing of the Anthroposophical Movement. For now that the wish to build another Goetheanum is being expressed, we need to be particularly conscious of the fact that without a strong, energetic Anthroposophical Society in the background it would be senseless to rebuild. Rebuilding makes sense only if a self-aware, strong Anthroposophical Society, thoroughly conscious of what its responsibilities are, stands behind it."

And Steiner reiterated again and again, throughout the year and in different places, what those responsibilities and tasks were. But we should see his words in their proper context. It is one thing to speak of the tasks and responsibilities of an organisation and its members while launching it. Everything is still ahead and is full of hope and promise. However, when the novelty and excitement of the pioneering stage have worn off and the daily work is supposed to be well under way, but the former promises and hopes do not come up to expectations, people have to be reminded again of their tasks and responsibilities, perhaps even in the form of an admonition. That was Steiner's unenviable undertaking with regard to the Anthroposophical Society and its members.

In one way or another that admonition was a reoccurring theme until a crisis took place in 1915 which nearly led to Steiner's severing his relations with the Anthroposophical Society. The current crisis, unlike the former, had no personal element in it, but in essence it was more severe. As such it again posed a question of Steiner's relationship with the Society and of its re-founding. The Stuttgart debates alone made Steiner so frustrated that he had to state: "if I had made my decision on the basis of what happened at a certain moment there in the assembly hall in Stuttgart, I would have been fully justified in saying that I would have to withdraw from the Society and try to make anthroposophy known to the world in some other way."

In a private letter he was more outspoken: "As far as the society goes, I have only one thing to say: I would prefer to have no more to do with it. Everything that the executives are doing disgusts me." But in public as well he was no less forthright saying that if the situation did not change it would make it "necessary for me to cease my activities for the Anthroposophical Society, to focus on my own personal work; I could no longer consider the Anthroposophical Society, which can't seem to decide to take up any real task, to be the context for my work."

However, neither of those options – leaving the Anthroposophical Society or re-founding it – seemed to be possible for Steiner. The former was quite possible until 1918 because at that time the Society as such "could have stopped existing any day without affecting anthroposophy itself." But since then "the activities going on in the Society developed into projects that are now binding upon us. They exist and cannot be arbitrarily dissolved. The old Society must go on seeing to their welfare." In no way could Steiner in those circumstances disassociate himself from the Anthroposophical Society and abrogate any responsibilities, formal or moral, apropos those projects. And as if summing up the situation, for himself and for others, he stated: "one can't withdraw from something that exists not just in one's imagination but in reality; one can't withdraw from the Anthroposophical Society!"

Concerning a possible re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society, as a resolution of its crisis, Steiner was equally clear about it: "we should not forget ... that the Society has been in existence for two decades; that a considerable number of people have undergone experiences in their common work and efforts; that the Society is not something that can be founded all over again. For history, real history, history that has been lived and experienced, cannot be erased. We cannot begin something now that began twenty years ago." Despite its many faults "we must still take into account the fact that the Society has been effective and done things."

So the only option Steiner, and anthroposophists, had was to rejuvenate and regenerate the existing Anthroposophical Society. And it is in the light of this that Steiner's new emphases on the same task and responsibilities, both for the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists, should be seen.

For the Society which needed "fostering and development" its main task was to have tasks per se in the first place: "it is necessary for the Anthroposophical Society to give itself real tasks, that it serve a real societal function, that it is thus something special in conjunction with the anthroposophical movement.... As long as this task is not present, the situation... will not change. On the contrary, it will continue to get worse."

More specifically, the Society was to be "made the nurturing ground of everything that anthroposophy is working to achieve" and had to stop being "a mere onlooker at really anthroposophical work going on elsewhere ... It needs to focus consciously on anthroposophical work. This is a completely positive statement of its mission ... If this positive task is not undertaken, the AS can only do anthroposophy more and more harm in the world's regard."

It is notable that while talking about this vital task Steiner simultaneously points to the dire consequences should it fail. So, on the one hand, the Society's "urgent task is ... to see to it that the various disciplines are reborn out of anthroposophy." For this it should, to begin with, start supporting various anthroposophical initiatives and the truly active and creative individuals.

On the other hand, not only the Society's activities, but its inner nature as well should change, otherwise it would not be able to provide anthroposophy with a proper vehicle: "our success in that depends entirely on creating the right atmosphere" and there was "the pressing need for community building in the Society" It should also aspire for developing the universally human values and moral qualities some of which Steiner described as six virtues in his book *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?*: "the Anthroposophical Society as a whole needs to cultivate these six virtues, and it is essential that it strives to acquire them."

But the Anthroposophical Society could not be inward looking, its prime task, function and mission being in the world – it "has to act as a vanguard in an ever wider disseminating of those elements that are so needed under the conditions that prevail today." And speaking of this task more specifically Steiner made it clear that it should be preceded by some fundamental changes: "it is immediately obvious that we must change our course and start bringing anthroposophy to the world's attention so that mankind has a chance to become acquainted with it."

But even with this noble and weighty task, or rather because of it, the Society could not be arrogant and sectarian or narrow-minded and dogmatic. It should be open to the world with its many problems and needs and should realise "how important it is for the Society to be able to meet life's challenges."

It should be obvious to the reader that when Steiner spoke, in this context, of the Anthroposophical Society, or even addressed it, he meant its members, anthroposophists. On many occasions, when the message warranted it, he addressed them directly. Like in this case when he spoke of personal responsibilities and qualities: "When limited numbers are active in the vanguard of a movement they have to show commitment of a much higher order. It means that they are obliged to show greater courage, greater energy, greater patience, greater tolerance and, above all, greater truthfulness in every respect."

The sense of urgency was palpable in his personal calls: "I appeal to you: start tomorrow, start tonight for it would not be a good thing if the Anthroposophical Society were to collapse." But when speaking of the inner life and spiritual nature of the Anthroposophical Society Steiner even expressed this urgency in terms of time: "It is necessary to develop a certain sensitivity to these points. And it is necessary for anthroposophists to develop this sensitivity in a matter of weeks. If that happens, the way forward will be found as a practical consequence. But people will only be able to think in this direction if they radically discard the petty aspects of their character..."

But would they be able to do it and how soon? In the questions of tasks and targets concerning the inner development of human beings, or even organisations, it is difficult to talk of any timescale let alone deadlines. Nevertheless in that case there was a kind of 'closing date' – the end of the year. It would not only conventionally close the calendar year, but was meant to end the tragic and critical stage in the development of the Anthroposophical Society.

As the manifestation of this end it was envisioned the founding at the Christmas Conference in Dornach, on the basis on the nascent national anthroposophical societies, the International Anthroposophical Society. In the event, which will be described later, the society founded at the Christmas Conference was called the General Anthroposophical Society. This piece of information revealed now, ahead of the event itself, allows us to introduce, at this stage, another momentous deed of Steiner's.

The Second Goetheanum

At the Christmas Conference for the foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society, one year to the date after the fire of the Goetheanum, Steiner spoke to its members about his design of a new Goetheanum building. But the reader, like many anthroposophists at the time and in subsequent years, might be wondering why a new design of the Goetheanum was needed in the first place. Nobody but its designer alone could answer this question. Unlike those who wanted to see the perished Goetheanum rebuilt in its former glory, for Steiner it was out of the question which he made abundantly clear on a number of occasions. Thus referring to its sorrowful site soon after the fire he said: "Ruins occupy it, leaving us only one possibility, that of cherishing in our hearts everything we hoped to realize there. For while another building might conceivably be erected in its place, it would certainly not be the one we have lost. In other words, it will never again be possible for a building to express what the old Goetheanum expressed."

A few months later, when what was conceivable became possible due to the payment of the insurance money for the destroyed building, he said: "I would like to repeat here something that I have often said since the Goetheanum conflagration, and I hope that you will understand it completely. I have often said that the first Goetheanum in its outer form, the building as it once stood there as the home of anthroposophy, cannot be built again; this is not possible." The reasons were much deeper than what might be suggested by the proverbial 'You cannot step into the same river twice': "For the statement that the first Goetheanum cannot be rebuilt not only has an aesthetic, expedient and outward historical background, it also has an anthroposophical and moral background."

Explaining what he meant by the latter Steiner, first, referred to the way in which the Goetheanum came into being. It was organic, healthy, spiritually consistent and true to reality. It was a unity of intention and execution, of a spiritual ideal and its physical realisation. To implement the inspiring idea of having their own, purposefully created and built, centre required on the part of anthroposophists a tremendous sacrifice, not in the least financial. And they made it which achieved, apart from some evident and tangible results, also a remarkable invisible one noted by Steiner: "The building that gleamed down from the hill in Dornach had anthroposophical will and anthroposophical willingness to sacrifice built into every cubic centimetre of its wood and stone. This moral substance was built into the first Goetheanum." Those will, sacrifice and moral substance had the surest foundation also noted by Steiner: "The Goetheanum was built out of a real inner understanding – every franc flowed out of an inner understanding."

But the situation was different now. The intent of anthroposophists to build a new Goetheanum, their determination and willingness to sacrifice were the same, but the means which were to be used to achieve this goal did not match their lofty aspirations. This discrepancy, as the harmony before, would also lead to some invisible result. But this time it would be – from the anthroposophical and moral point of view, so important for Steiner, – negative and wrong, and that perturbed him.

The worrisome means that caused the discrepancy and Steiner's aggravation was the insurance money which was to be used, along with other resources, to rebuild the Goetheanum. That insurance money came from society at large which as a whole had no understanding of what the Anthroposophical Movement was about. More specifically, it came from various individuals who were at best indifferent and at worst hostile to anthroposophy and its objectives, with all the spiritual and moral consequences that would follow from their inner attitude and involuntary contributions. It is only for the material outlook, with its ambiguous morality, that

money has no smell. But from the spiritual perspective from which Steiner viewed the material world and acted in it, money does have a smell, i.e. moral value. And now 'the insurance value', which in that case meant indifference or hostility towards anthroposophy, was to be built "into every cubic centimetre" of the new Goetheanum. Therefore Steiner, unlike many of his followers, was far from jubilant at the insurers' decision to pay compensation for the lost building (it was over three million Swiss francs, which in fact was two million short of the actual value of the building). Quite the opposite: "For me, this fact that some would call very joyful is actually an extraordinarily painful and sad fact."

Nevertheless Steiner had to reconcile his personal emotions, his spiritual perceptions and moral imperatives with the facts of life. The way he did it is of a particular interest to us because the specific and single issue that he faced was part of a much wider and general question: how to resolve the dichotomy between one's lofty principles and aspirations and the realities of daily life in this far from perfect world of ours? This question can be made more specific and poignant through its various ramifications, like this for example: how can one live in the modern world if one wishes to base one's actions, both individual and collective, on these renowned and ever challenging precepts – 'Love thy neighbour' and 'Turn the other cheek'?

As it is, for most people this dichotomy does not exist or does not present a problem as it is not experienced by them. For modern man the notions 'morality' and 'reality' are incompatible in most spheres of life and life situations and in some, like, for instance, in politics, this incompatibility is taken for granted. For him the real life requires pragmatism and not preaching. Even people who profess to have religious and spiritual values and principles accept, at least de facto, the limits of their applicability to the occurrences of daily life.

Regarding anthroposophy in this respect, as a teaching, as a spiritual science, it does not have any dichotomy between morality and reality, but as a practice, as the Anthroposophical Movement, it cannot escape it. That is, anthroposophists, like their conscientious contemporaries around the world, cannot escape it. Neither could Steiner. But while in their perception of it anthroposophists do not differ from anybody else, Steiner did. He perceived and faced it not only as a conscientious person or one with strong moral values and principles, but as someone who consciously lived and acted in both worlds, spiritual and physical, from whence this dichotomy comes about. As we know, his life task and mission was to explain these worlds and to show their correlation and unity. But the dichotomy, as it occurs, shows the opposite – it is a manifestation and reflection of their contradiction. When faced with that Steiner could not possibly dismiss or explain it away, but had to address and try and resolve it. That was what he did in this case. Though he did it in his own individual way, others – not only anthroposophists – can learn and benefit from it.

The first thing we can learn from Steiner's example, even if we can't emulate him, is that the ability to perceive and recognise a moral dichotomy depends on the level of one's spiritual and moral development. Therefore Steiner was apparently the only one who was able to identify the discrepancy between the insurance money and its suitability for the rebuilding of the Goetheanum. What Steiner did further required at least two other qualities – honesty and courage. Having identified this discrepancy he accepted it as a personal problem and challenge. But as it concerned not only him alone, but the whole anthroposophical community, he made his perception public. Addressing his followers he declared, without any hesitation and to the surprise and disappointment of many, that the insurance money was not a blessing or good fortune, but a misfortune that had befallen the Anthroposophical Movement.

Now a moral dichotomy, when it occurs, is identified and acknowledged, calls for a resolution, or at least for an attempt to resolve it. In this particular case the above uncompromising statement made by Steiner required equally decisive action,

and Steiner knew that in the first place it had to be his decision and his action. But if the spirit and logic of his statement were to be followed he did not seem to have many options. There was only one way to avert the befallen misfortune and eliminate the dichotomy – to remove its cause, the insurance money, which, with regard to the anthroposophical cause, had a combined smell of miscomprehension, indifference and hostility.

This could be done either by refusing to claim the insurance money or, better still, by donating it to some worthy charitable cause. While the rebuilding of the Goetheanum would be based only on consciously donated gift money and on "people's willingness to sacrifice." Of course this would make the actual rebuilding extremely difficult, if not at all impossible in the near future, but then, when the circumstances eventually allowed it, it would be done in the right way.

The necessity to distinguish between doing things in a 'right' or 'wrong' way became particularly relevant and important for the Anthroposophical Movement when its practical activities entered the public arena. Steiner called the first way anthroposophical which defines actions that "emanate from the core of the Anthroposophical Movement"; and the other he called non-anthroposophical, i.e. a conventional way which is customary in the society at large. If their anthroposophical activities in public life encountered problems and required actions he admonished anthroposophists to act, as far as possible, in the first way. The fire of the Goetheanum and its consequences was just such a case.

Immediately after the fire it was suggested by some anthroposophists that a good lawyer should be engaged to negotiate and secure the best insurance payment possible. But Steiner had always insisted that anthroposophists should take their affairs in their own hands: "We immediately reveal our impotence in the face of individual problems if we say that we cannot take care of our own affairs in a way that is true to the heart of anthroposophy." It applied even to that very specialized and consequential matter. At the same time he realised that by suggesting that anthroposophists themselves should take care directly of all negotiations he was taking on a great burden and responsibility; and should negotiations fail to produce the desired results he would be accused of incompetence and blamed for the consequences.

But now, when the insurance money was there, should he act again in an anthroposophical and morally right way and reject it thus eliminating what he called "an extraordinarily painful and sad fact"? Indeed: "That would have been the easiest, the most painless path" choosing which "would have been the most comfortable thing" for Steiner. Yet he rejected it in the most categorical way: "Of course we cannot even think of doing that which in the most radical sense would actually have to be done". Why?

This 'Why?' can be preceded by another one: If Steiner knew of the pernicious effect of the insurance money why did he wish to pursue it and insisted that it should be done by anthroposophists in an anthroposophical way rather than by professionals in their own way? Or we can go still further and ask: Why was the Goetheanum insured in the first place?

All this seems to be rather contradictory – saying and professing one thing and doing something different or even opposite. Isn't it a typical example of a failure to resolve a moral dichotomy of which we spoke earlier? Indeed, it was contradictory and it was a failure, though not to resolve the dichotomy but to eliminate it, which seemed to be the only option available to Steiner. However, that contradiction and failure were the result of something that was far from being contradictory and uncertain, but, on the contrary, was consistent and conscious – Steiner's thinking and decisions. That was the key note of his constant appeal to anthroposophists – to be

conscious about what was going on around them and of the problems they encountered and take conscious decisions when actions were required.

His own conscious and purposeful actions were the resultant of two factors. On the one hand, they were motivated by his moral principles and were "true to the heart of anthroposophy"; on the other, they had to take into account the considerations of practicality, feasibility, possible consequences, impacts on others and suchlike. This necessity to modify lofty intentions by reality Steiner expressed in the following words: "We should not always be saying that we are doing the best and most beautiful things (one cannot in the earthly world, especially not in our present times)." Steiner's decision to use the insurance money for the rebuilding of the Goetheanum was an example and manifestation of that.

More specifically, the ultimately right decision to reject the insurance money would have been, according to Steiner, "impractical" and even "egotistical". Although it also would have been, to repeat Steiner's words, "the most painless path", but in the real world one cannot, and should not, always shun the pain and avoid doing things which one deems wrong.

But if this is the case, is there then any difference between a conscientious person motivated by moral principles and the one who lacks them if they both end up doing the wrong thing? And, most importantly, what about the consequences of their wrong deeds – are they not the same? These are important and practical questions not only for the performers of wrong deeds, but also for those who are on the receiving end. We can get insightful and helpful answers if we are to follow Steiner's guidance in these matters. As we already know, he spoke, in the first instance, of the necessity for one to be conscious about what is going on in life and of taking conscious decisions regarding one's actions even if they happen to be undesirable and flawed. But one does not leave them there to take their pernicious course, whether physical or spiritual. One has to compensate for them, to counterbalance them with other deeds which are moral and beneficial.

Steiner illustrated it by an example of scales, one pan of which is outweighed with negative deeds. You restore the balance not by removing them, which is often wrong and impossible, but by adding the counterweight of positive deeds on the other pan. That was what had to be done by anthroposophists following the decision to use the insurance money, as he admonished them: "One should know that there are spheres in which we cannot do things anthroposophically, and must therefore compensate for this by being even more anthroposophical elsewhere... We will have to create a counterbalance by being even more anthroposophical, so that this can counteract what we will have to do in a tragically unanthroposophical way". That was also how Steiner dealt with the moral dichotomy which he faced in that case – not by eliminating it altogether, which he unfortunately could not do, but by resolving it by way of a counterbalance.

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Now after we have discussed the vital financial and moral questions pertaining to the rebuilding of the Goetheanum, we can come to the question of its new design. We have to begin, however, not with the design itself, but with some external factors which influenced it. Of course external factors, like, for instance, utilitarian needs and environment, are always there for an architect, and their influence also manifested itself in the difference between the first Goetheanum built in Dornach and its prototype intended for Munich. But otherwise in both cases Steiner was guided exclusively by his artistic and aesthetic sense and spiritual understanding of what such a building should serve and convey.

With the design of a new Goetheanum Steiner did not have such luxury, as other considerations had to be taken into account. In the first instance it concerned the way in which the Goetheanum had been destroyed – the conflagration. The new building had to be less vulnerable which could be achieved by using a different material for its construction, i.e. concrete instead of wood. But there was a price to be paid. Being more durable and resistant to some forms of destruction, at the same time it is inferior in terms of aesthetic qualities and artistic possibilities. Steiner had no illusions about it: "... to give a concrete building a truly artistic character in keeping with the material is exceedingly difficult; the solution to this problem is very demanding."

Others understood it as well and there was no shortage of suggestions and offers of help, ideas and advice coming Steiner's way – all with the best intentions of course. But Steiner had to reject them and state quite categorically that he alone was "allowed to work on the artistic creation of the Goetheanum" to ensure the desired result: "If the Goetheanum building is to come about in concrete, it will have to emerge from an original idea, and nothing that has so far been achieved in concrete can serve as a basis for what is to come into being here."

Another external factor influenced the design of the future building in a different way. It reflected the developments and changes that took place within the Anthroposophical Society and the Anthroposophical Movement since the creation of the first Goetheanum. The new building was to accommodate what collectively could be called new anthroposophical activities. They included artistic activities such as, for example, the new art of eurhythm which required space for both rehearsals and performances. The space was also needed for the functioning of the new General Anthroposophical Society (GAS) – both for its activities as was stipulated in its Statutes and for its administration. The intention was "to have a really practical building in which every cubic foot of space can be used to the full. A great deal will be able to go on in this building all at once" without activities interfering with one another or one being in another's way.

But those very activities constituted another external factor which influenced the construction of the new Goetheanum – urgency. They had to be set in train as soon as possible for which they needed the premises provided by the future building. The speed of its erection became the priority even at the expense of its appearance as was stated by Steiner himself: "... there is no other way but to proceed as rapidly as possible to the construction of a Goetheanum here, even if externally this Goetheanum cannot present the image we would dearly have liked to promise ourselves."

Another constraint imposed on the design and construction of the building was financial. Steiner insisted that the actual building cost should not exceed the sum paid by the insurers and should not consume other funds and donations which would be badly needed for the aforementioned anthroposophical activities and for the running of the Goetheanum. The solution seemed inevitable: "So we shall have to restrict ourselves somewhat."

Thus those various factors and considerations impacted, in their own ways, on the design of the new Goetheanum, both its interior and exterior. The main feature of the new design, apart from the material, was the shape of the building and the forms of its various elements. What was circular and round in the first Goetheanum became now rectangular and angular. As for the most dramatic change, there was no more cupola and intersecting double-dome crowning the old building. It was replaced but a completely different roof which Steiner described as follows: "I am endeavouring to create a design for the roof which will consist of a series of planes arranged in relation to one another in a way which will, I believe, be no less aesthetically attractive than a cupola." And to alleviate the heaviness of concrete, as it might be

perceived by the beholder, Steiner aspired to attain "the harmony between the forces of support and load [so that] every part must reveal the indwelling character of the totality."

In designing a new building Steiner was not hampered by some nostalgic and sentimental emotions, but was inspired instead by new possibilities and challenges: "The old forms of the Goetheanum ... will have to belong to history... Forms moulded in concrete will have to be something entirely different. Much will have to be done on the one hand to force the intractable material of concrete into forms which the eye of the human soul can follow artistically and on the other hand to mould seemingly decorative features, which are actually a consequence of the concrete itself, in an artistic and sculptural way, so that the material of concrete can for once be revealed in an artistic manner."

The contrast between the two buildings cannot be more obvious as anyone can see from their photographs. Of course the perceptive and knowing eye can see through this contrast and discern in both buildings an evident spiritual and artistic consistency and metamorphosis of the forms. But taken apart and at first glance the first Goetheanum looks like a temple while the second more like a fortress. Perhaps this perception of the protective element in the new building is not that far off the mark bearing in mind the destiny of its predecessor and Steiner's new designation of the building: "... the Goetheanum is to be a kind of shelter for the one who seeks the spirit within it." Anyhow the Second Goetheanum, as it became known, is an architecturally innovative and artistically aesthetic building and it is recognised as such by specialists and appreciated by lay people. It even received an official seal of approval from the Swiss authorities who have granted it protected status as a national monument.

Perhaps it should be said in conclusion how uncharitable was destiny to Steiner by not allowing him to see either of his creations in their complete form and to celebrate their opening. But while the First Goetheanum was finished in its essentials and functional when Steiner was still alive, the Second was opened, still incomplete, only in 1928, three years after Steiner's death. Not only could not Steiner see its completion and opening, but its erection and construction took place without his participation and supervision. Also in later years the building was subjected to some renovations and changes which involved other architects and artists. Though all this work was instructed by Steiner's "original idea" it cannot be said that every feature of the Second Goetheanum is related to Steiner as directly as it was the case with the First Goetheanum. Nevertheless the Second Goetheanum, like the First one, remains an outstanding creation and achievement of Steiner's spirit.

The Second Event

Throughout the whole of 1923, despite all those tragic and unhappy events and their consequences, despite numerous and lengthy meetings and discussions, despite his anguish and disappointments, Steiner continued, unabated, his relentless lecturing and other activities. He also continued to observe the whole anthroposophical scene in its various forms and activities hoping for, and anticipating, some positive developments. Indeed, he expected at least some changes following, in the aftermath of the fire, the subsequent period of shock, grief, self-reflection, intensive discussions and his serious admonitions, as outlined above.

There were some positive developments, like the founding of national Anthroposophical Societies (fifteen altogether by the end of the year). But though that development reflected a certain expansion and consolidation of interest in anthroposophy, Steiner's experiences of the new societies and their members were in no way new, as, for instance, those in Austria: "our Austrian members are also

asleep" or in Holland: "the society here is in terrible shape – dissention, lack of identity, etc."

But with regard to the long-awaited inner changes both in the Anthroposophical Society and in anthroposophists, we can learn about them from Steiner's observations as he made them throughout the year, almost until its very end:

In **March**, as was quoted earlier: "As far as the society goes, I have only one thing to say: I would prefer to have no more to do with it."

In **May**: "The Anthroposophical Society sleeps on; there is no way to awaken it." With a bitter irony Steiner also remarked that if before the division into two societies those two groups of individuals disturbed each other's sleep, now they peacefully sleep next to each other.

In **August**: "things are unbelievably terrible in the society. Impossibilities appear in every corner."

In **September**, after attending a conference of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany: "The four days were terrible."

In **November**, Steiner's sad musing aloud as witnessed by one of his close collaborators: "He spoke sadly, as though to himself. His words showed how difficult the experience was for him of the lack of understanding among the members, in spite of their personal good will, of the actual spiritual necessities. 'The members do not want to... They have good intentions, but...What should I do...? Should I form an order?!'"

Those questions addressed to nobody but himself – with only a month left before the crucial time of the Christmas meeting – were not only full of sadness but also of despair. Indeed, regarding the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists Steiner ran out of options – of those very few which were conceivably available to him. Nor could he leave things as they were – it was no option at all.

If we take only one aspect of the overall problematic situation, there was an evident contrast between Steiner's aspirations for what is universally human and the strong tendency of "the Anthroposophical Society to be something like an extended family that isolated itself from the outer world". Hence his constant appeal to anthroposophists: "Try to become one with the world! That would be the best, the most important 'program!'" He repeatedly emphasized the need "to overcome the sectarianism. Otherwise the Anthroposophical Society will sink ever further into sectarianism.... What should concern us is how to avoid sectarianism. I wanted to let this tone resonate again, because it is enormously important."

This tendency was coupled with the inability to bring anthroposophy into the world – the main function and task of the Anthroposophical Society. And Steiner knew the consequences: "Anthroposophy will certainly not disappear from the world. But it might very well sink back into what I might call a latent state for decades or even longer before it is taken up again. That, however, would imply an immense loss for the development of mankind." So he had to do something – if there was anything humanly possible and plausible.

And he had to do it really quickly as he ran out of not only options, but he was also running out of time with the end of the year relentlessly approaching. As it happened, at the eleventh hour (the end of November – the beginning of December) Steiner conceived of what he saw as a potential solution – the only one in the circumstances. So he decided to act upon it, as his last resort.

This solution and the deed that followed, as all Steiner's deeds, had a profound spiritual foundation and consequences which will be discussed later. But it also had a strong human element, universally human, which we choose here as an introduction to that deed in the form of a tale, the third and final one in this discourse.

A Story of a Teacher and His Pupil

It was a small town somewhere in the country, but not too small or far away to be considered provincial. It did not have a cathedral to be called a city, but it had a university. And it had one particular feature which distinguished it from any other town or city. But this distinction was not in the public domain. It existed only in the eyes of those few who knew about this feature and appreciated it (even its creators did not think of it in terms of public value).

It needs to be explained from the outset, that this feature was not a physical object or some eminent deed or event, nor was it a work of art or science, or something meant for public consumption. Rather it was a social and human phenomenon which came about spontaneously and yet consciously and was a product of the human spirit. This is what it was and how it came into being.

In places like this town where there is not much of a cultural and public life, people whose interests go beyond their private and professional lives, tend to pursue them by socialising and to find an outlet for their otherwise unsatisfied cultural needs in personal contacts with likeminded individuals. In the town in question this general propensity led, over time, to the formation of a group of individuals who found each other's company very congenial and fulfilling.

There happened to be twelve of them, men and women, married and single, some were there with their spouses and some without. They were of a different age, occupation and background. Some were born in the town and others were brought there by different circumstances. Also as individuals they were completely different as were their personal relationships with each other. But they had a few important things in common which formed strong ties between them and united them as members of that group.

First, most importantly, they had a genuine interest in other people, particularly in the other members of the group. This interest embraced not only their views and professional life, but also their personal life. Then there was their open-mindedness and tolerance of others' views and opinions even if they contradicted their own. But this tolerance went further and extended to a genuine desire to understand unfamiliar or even unacceptable views. The third very important common feature was the versatility of their interests, their craving for knowledge in various spheres of life.

All this manifested itself in the most prominent way during one of their gatherings which lasted into the small hours of the morning and even then no one felt like leaving. Then one of them had a sudden inspiration and addressed the others with the following words:

"Friends! I've been thinking... These meetings of ours – what are they? Of course we derive much pleasure and satisfaction from them because we love to be in each other's company and because we learn so much. And what we learn is not just utilitarian knowledge or some interesting facts or mere information. It, I feel, changes us, makes us inwardly richer and, hopefully, better people. And still there is more to it than that. Through what we experience, encounter and learn in life the world is talking to us trying to tell and teach us something. But it talks to us in different, individual languages – to each in their own language. More often than not we find it difficult to understand the message. But when we share it with others, with each other in this group, it makes this understanding easier for us, individually and collectively.

So may I suggest that we meet more regularly, say once a month, and share with each other what happened to us since the last meeting which we thought was important: it might be events, or something we read, or our thoughts, etc. By taking it into our consciousness and then discussing it and trying to understand not only on its

own but in a wider context of the world's conversation with us, we would have a wider picture of the world itself, of the reality we live in and of our own lives. In a way we've been already doing it, but I suggest we do it more regularly and consciously."

They appreciated their friend's idea and the thinking behind it. After discussing it further and agreeing some practical aspects of its implementation they left the meeting happier than ever. And since then they had their gatherings regularly, once a month, even if on occasions not everyone could attend. But the harmony and cohesion of the group was so great that they always felt the absence of even one of them. This only confirmed for them that what they were doing was right and made them feel more responsible towards their common task and to each other.

The members of the group were very open about it and were happy to relate their work and experiences to others – to their spouses, relatives, friends or colleagues. But it never occurred to anyone that somebody else might join them. Even those outside the group who appreciated its existence and activities felt that it all worked for that particular constellation of people and a newcomer, regardless of their qualities or relations with other members of the group, might impair or even ruin the special atmosphere of those special meetings. Besides, nobody stopped other people from forming similar groups, but in any case the general feeling was that what had been achieved by those twelve individuals should be cherished and protected.

The venue of those meetings since they became regular monthly events was the home of the one who suggested them. The reason was convenience – he was a bachelor and his house was available at any time without inconveniencing anybody else. Besides you could not have a better host. Very sociable and hospitable and always the life and soul of the party he was loved and respected by everyone who knew him. But not only for his social qualities.

By his knowledge and abilities he stood out among his contemporaries. In old times such people were called universal geni, but this modern genius had another feather in his cap – he was very humble and his omniscience was as great as his modesty. Even his occupation puzzled many by its modesty – he was an ordinary school teacher. At the same time he was renowned for his outstanding scientific and artistic contributions to many a field of knowledge and culture which were acknowledged and awarded while he himself was honoured and offered various university and academic positions. So far he had declined those offers, but it was not out of modesty this time. His desire to be a teacher, a school teacher, had profound reasons which went as far back as his childhood.

The Teacher, let us call him that, was born and spent his childhood in a little town which was truly provincial. But it also had a distinguished feature which in this case was known and acknowledged throughout the town. This feature was a human being – none other than the teacher of our Teacher. He was an old Jewish man who taught in the local school for several decades and through whose hands passed several generations and perhaps half of the town's population. He never retired and died a very old man still teaching the children.

His main quality was love, for everyone and everything, which radiated from him almost visibly. But he particularly loved children especially those he taught. And he loved teaching them. Teaching itself was not for him an occupation or even a calling. It was like his second nature inseparable from his love for children. In fact he thought that love was the only quality one needed to be a teacher.

Apart from being a brilliant teacher and a benevolent man he had this characteristic Jewish wit which is both insightful and funny. Thus he divided his pupils into four categories according to the conditions of the two opposite parts of their human anatomy – head and bottom. There were two such conditions which he called in Yiddish **sharf** (sharp) and **shtumpic** (blunt). To have a **sharf** head is a gift and a teacher's delight while a **shtumpic** head is a curse for both. With the bottom the

situation is the opposite: when it is sharp it is a clear sign that you cannot expect much attention and application from such a pupil, but a shtumpic bottom is helpful for learning.

So there were four categories of pupils according to their head-bottom conditions: sharp-sharp – not so bad as the first sharp can compensate for the second; sharp-shtumpic – the best combination possible for the pupil and a teacher's dream; shtumpic-shtumpic – manageable as the second shtumpic can somewhat compensate for the first; shtumpic-sharp – the worst combination possible for the pupil and a teacher's nightmare. Needless to say that these categories and divisions did not affect the teacher's attitude to his pupils, but only enhanced his awareness of their dispositions and made him adjust his teaching methods according to their individual needs and capacities.

Unsurprisingly our future Teacher belonged to the sharp-shtumpic category. Not only that. When still at school he surpassed his beloved teacher in the knowledge of some subjects and was assisting him in giving lessons to his own classmates and peers or even substituting him altogether when there was a need. Their affection and respect for each other was mutual. In the case of the teacher it was the only occasion in his long career when he allowed himself to have a favourite pupil. Of course outwardly he treated him exactly the same way he treated all other pupils, but what he felt in his heart was a different matter.

He never said it or even hinted at it to his beloved pupil, but he cherished a secret dream for him to become a school teacher – a teacher of children in his mould. He had all the qualities needed for this and more. But he also saw how multitalented his pupil was, that it would take him only a few years to become an accomplished scholar who would enrich humanity with his extraordinary discoveries and contributions. So his future was never discussed. But it should have been.

Then he would have known of an inner battle going on in the soul of his pupil who also, out of the fear of hurting his beloved teacher, never shared it with him. His heart, like that of his teacher, was in teaching, in teaching children. Apart from it being his natural inclination the following observation of his old teacher left an indelible inscription in his soul: *A good teacher is always a healer as a good doctor is always a teacher for his patient. These are the most important professions – the world and mankind need them to be healed and to be taught.* But his mind was in scholarly pursuits, in research, in making new discoveries. In the end he arrived at a compromise – a happy one. Until his fortieth year he would be a school teacher doing his scientific, philosophical and literary work in his spare time. But after that he would leave school and devote himself to the spiritual quests which would be occupying him at the time.

Now it was just that time in his life. It was his last year at school which was coming to its end. So what was ahead? In a word – a new life. The Teacher had been preparing for it for some time and now everything was in place. For the last few years he had been developing a new science which was difficult to define because of its innovative and unconventional character. It opened up a new vista of knowledge which made it possible to harmonise science, religion and art while its explicit aim was to serve as a foundation not only for all sciences but for knowledge itself, to become a new epistemology. Therefore it acquired the name of Fundamental Science which was not pretentious but factual.

Several universities offered to create, under his leadership and Professorship, a special Department of Fundamental Science where he could develop and teach it. He accepted the offer from the university of the small town where he lived and worked and where he had a special circle of friends. But before starting his new job he decided to take a sabbatical year for travelling around to meet his colleagues, to visit universities and research centres and to give lectures and seminars. He also

intended to visit some historical and cultural sites which he had no time to visit before. It went without saying that his main priority would be intensive studies and research which he always did in parallel with his other engagements and duties. He was used to this unprecedented working regime, but others wondered how he could find time and energy for it. And did he ever sleep?

It should come as no surprise that in the year prior to his sabbatical much of the time of their group's meetings was devoted to the Teacher's work, to his plans and aspirations. The other group members felt as if they were part of it all. And in a certain way they were because it had been shared and discussed with them at all stages. The Teacher insisted that during his absence they should continue to meet in his house. Apart from their private correspondence he would send them regular reports on his activities, and they would reciprocate by reporting on their group's work. They were even looking forward to their reunion after their friend's return from his sabbatical.

However before going any further with our story we have to admit to one important omission. So far we have said nothing of the other character of our story named in the title – the Pupil. We are now going to correct this omission by introducing him as a favourite pupil of the Teacher, exactly as the latter was of his elderly Jewish teacher. But here all similarities ended, as would be expected with different individuals.

Even on the first day that the Pupil appeared in his class the Teacher noticed that this little boy was different from other children. First it was his glance – the way he looked at people or at something that caught his attention. It was pensive, thoughtful and even penetrating as one might encounter, not very often, in some adults but not in children. Then there were his questions which again were different from the ones typically asked by children. Most such questions are naïve and asked out of curiosity though some of them, inadvertently, can be very difficult or even embarrassing for a teacher. But the Pupil's questions were mostly of a different kind; they were like the quests of an enquirer. And the Teacher knew the difference. He knew how important it is to ask the right question in any situation, be it in everyday life or in scientific research. A wrong question can easily lead you astray with some serious consequences. So for a child to be able to ask a right question as naturally as he did was remarkable.

If that was unusual so were other qualities and abilities of the Pupil concerning, for instance, his learning and studies. Thus if the Teacher were to follow his old teacher's humorous-perceptive categorisation of pupils he would undoubtedly consider his Pupil as belonging to the sharp-shtumpic type. But he would not put him unreservedly into that category. Not because the Pupil was insufficiently bright or industrious, but because these qualities did not come to the full in him. They were there all right, but as if in a dormant state.

Therefore the Teacher hoped that as the boy would grow and develop, all his abilities would blossom in due course. But somehow it did not happen. Of course over the years the boy became more mature and advanced in various ways, but this condition of his of 'not quite being there' was still very perceptible. This puzzled and perturbed the Teacher as he clearly saw that the boy was not a typical late developer or a dreamer. It seemed that he lived in a world of his own and was somewhat reluctant to come out and fully embrace the world and life around him.

Over all the years that he taught him the Teacher became attached to the boy and even felt affection for him. He felt like the boy was his own son. Besides he saw some special qualities and enormous potential in him which, he was sure, would manifest themselves one day. Then he would be able to make his unique contribution in whatever field of human endeavour to which he decided to devote himself. And he wanted to prepare him for that. He spent a lot of time with him not so much teaching

and tutoring him, but advising him, giving him direction, encouraging and even admonishing him. He felt that the resolving of his problems depended to a large extent on the boy himself, on his own efforts, on his decisiveness and resolve. And he often urged him: "Wake up, boy! Wake up!"

Now it was the year when the Teacher was leaving the school and so was his Pupil as he had completed his secondary education. He was a fine youth now, accomplished in many ways and, despite still 'not quite being there', ready for higher education. But both the Teacher and his Pupil had something different in mind for him. The following year should be a time of preparation for both of them: for the Teacher to prepare his new university course and for the Pupil to prepare himself for becoming a student on this course.

In their last year at school the Teacher frequently spoke with his Pupil about his new science, in the way that would be comprehensible to him and would not distract him from his main studies. Those conversations were very encouraging for the Teacher. He found the Pupil's inquisitive mind to be at its best at those times. And then his questions! They had always been astute, but in this case they astonished the Teacher by their piercing precision. They were not just to the point, but had a quality of indicating the direction for further fruitful research. If somebody capable of asking these questions, thought the Teacher, is also capable of pursuing them until they yield positive results, then it is impossible to overestimate the contribution such a person can make to the realm of knowledge.

Therefore the Teacher's aspirations for his Pupil went much further than him becoming a student on his academic course. Like his old teacher wanted him to become a teacher, in his mould, so he now also wanted his Pupil to become a scientist in his. He wanted him to further develop the Fundamental Science, so much needed by mankind, and apply it to various branches of knowledge and to the practical realms of life. So far he saw no one capable of doing this and going beyond just grasping the basis of the new science which in itself was a great spiritual achievement. But to change and revolutionize our way of thinking and, ultimately, our culture required people with the capacities of his Pupil and he hoped he would become a pioneer on this path.

But those were just the Teacher's thoughts and aspirations concerning his Pupil, his potential and his future. For the moment, however, the Pupil had to prepare himself for the new course. Not everyone could, upon completion of a secondary education even with distinction, enrol on this course. To be accepted on it as a student the applicant had to show some basic knowledge of this new field developed by the Teacher and outlined by him in a number of papers. The Pupil did not have this knowledge yet. But, like other applicants, he had a year to acquire this requisite knowledge and, hopefully, even to augment it. The Teacher helped him to work out a schedule of studies and told him that the coming year would be a real test of his ability to do the research on his own at a level which required independent thinking.

They would regularly correspond of course, but not on the subject of his studies – the Pupil would remain in this respect on his own throughout the year. The Teacher said to him: "You will naturally have questions, some very difficult, which you won't be able to answer, at least as quickly as you would like. Don't worry about it. Learn to live with your questions and learn to struggle with them. Very often the struggle is more important than the result even if it is the correct answer to your question. So what you and I are going to discuss when we meet at the end of the year will be your struggles rather than your answers and even your knowledge of the subject. And don't be afraid of making mistakes – they are our best fiends if you know how to treat them. My own mistakes taught me so many things and I owe them a great deal!" On this instructive note they bid each other farewell.

Needless to say that the Pupil and everything related to him was the subject of the group's discussions on many occasions. None of them, apart from the Teacher, had met the Pupil personally, but they felt they knew him intimately. And at times they felt as emotional about him as the Teacher did. They also gave many a piece of advice to him and sometimes had very heated discussions. When finally their friend left for his sabbatical they were looking forward to hearing his report on the boy in a year's time almost as eagerly as they were looking forward to seeing him and hearing his account of the year.

At this point we have, regrettably, to interrupt the flow of our story for a year and come back to it at the time of the Teacher's return to his hometown, to his home, to his new job, to his friends and to his Pupil. When it finally happened and the Teacher came back, his encounters with his friends and with his Pupil were full of joy and tearful emotions. When these emotions subsided there came a time for that part of their meetings which they had impatiently anticipated for the whole year.

For the Teacher it was particularly exiting because he was to share with his friends and with his Pupil some very important news which he could not communicate to them via correspondence. After long and thorough considerations and when his sabbatical was near its end he had taken a decision to cardinaly change his university course. He thought that the conventional way of teaching and studying it was not good enough while there was nobody else, apart from himself, capable of developing his Fundamental Science. It was not enough to have scholars of the new science – it needed its active developers. Therefore his course should not just convey the new knowledge, which after all could also be done through books and public lectures, but primarily nurture its researchers and developers. Those were his thoughts and decision. He did not have time yet to fully work out the details of the new curriculum, but he hoped to be able to do this in the near future in parallel with running the course.

But in the meantime he was eager to hear what his friends and his Pupil had to say about this fundamental change. Their opinions were very important for him, in their different ways. We shall follow the events in their chronological order and start with the Teacher-Pupil meeting. As always, it took place in the Teacher's house, but not, as usual, in the sitting room but in his study where all the books and materials they might need for reference were readily available. The Teacher expected his Pupil to come laden with books, folders, notebooks and perhaps with rolls of diagrams and was surprised to see him virtually empty-handed, apart from the gifts which he brought for his Teacher. But perhaps the Pupil thought it was not the right time to talk about his work at their first meeting which should be devoted rather to the Teacher's account of the past year.

Anyway after spending some time giving these accounts to each other the Teacher, before telling his Pupil anything about changing the course, asked him to give, to begin with, a brief overview of his work over the last year. That would suffice for the first meeting and they would talk in more detail at their subsequent meetings. But when he saw that the Pupil was hesitant in responding to his invitation and even visibly embarrassed he thought that his sudden change of subject in their conversation was perhaps too abrupt and formal. So he suggested to the youth to take his time and then say just a few words about his work, anything that he liked, simply to pave the way for an in-depth conversation later on.

The Pupil still remained silent and then said, very quietly: "I tried..." Silence again, then: "Many times..." Silence. "Tried what?" "Tried to work as we agreed..." Silence. "And?" "I couldn't..." "And then?" "I couldn't... but I tried..." "And then? Then?" Silence. "Tell me in a word: what work have you done?" Silence. "Any work, at any time during the year?" Silence. "Then for the whole year." Silence. "Am I to understand that you've done nothing whatsoever?" "I tried... Many times... But I

couldn't..." "Why?!" "Because I needed help... I needed a teacher... I needed you..." "You needed a teacher?! Oh no, what you needed and need is a nanny!!" – roared the Teacher and stormed out of the room slamming the door.

Never ever in his life had he been so angry and permitted his emotions to become so visible. But equally he had never been so upset in his life. No, the word 'upset' is wrong here; it does not convey what he felt at the time. He was devastated. It was a shipwreck of his most cherished aspirations and hopes. It was the end of ... he was unable or unwilling to name what it was. He knew now only one thing: he had to summon all his strength and willpower to face not only this situation, but his new life, his future. And his friends...

It was agreed in advance by the members of the group that upon their friend's return from his sabbatical they would not have their customary monthly meeting, but instead a series of meetings to be able to fully exchange and discuss their news and experiences. For the Teacher it was a relief not to talk about his Pupil straightaway, at their first meeting. He wished to postpone the account of their meeting for as long as it was possible. And anyway his priority now was to share with his friends his decision about the course.

When he did so the response was mixed. All of them understood and commended his intentions, but some had reservations about carrying them out at this stage. They saw his priorities at the time as those of developing and deepening the Fundamental Science itself, which was vital for our culture. Nobody else could do it and his changed university course would inevitably be a distraction from this main task. Preparing the Fundamental Science researchers was also a very important task, but he had already done a lot in this respect: wrote books and gave lectures on how to become a researcher, issued specific exercises and instructions, gave advice and guidance, etc. Everyone who wished to pursue this path could do so on their own, relying, at the same time, on the Teacher's personal help which had been always readily available.

The Teacher appreciated his friends' concern and reasoning. He replied that he also considered this aspect and admitted that there might be some temporary slowing down of his research as a result of his new undertaking. But there was another aspect which he had to consider as well. Despite so much knowledge based upon or derived from the Fundamental Science being already available, there had been so far very few signs that it had been fruitfully used and utilised by the scientific community. Though it welcomed and appreciated it, there had been no fertilisation by it of conventional sciences, no new developers and researchers. Nor were there any signs that the situation might change soon. There were limits to what the Teacher, as one individual, could do on his own. And he was not immortal. He was very much concerned that after his departure the Fundamental Science might, if not disappear or wane, then turn into a dogma which would be no better. Therefore he was determined, while it was still not too late, to devote his time and energy now to trying to prepare his true successors.

These considerations were fully appreciated and supported by his friends. And now everyone remembered their friend's prime potential successor, his Pupil, and they wanted to know what had been happening with him. Thus the time came, quite naturally, when he had to give them an account of his meeting with his Pupil. It was received in and followed by complete silence. Contrary to previous similar occasions when worrisome events were shared in the group, nobody offered any comments or advice and there was no discussion. Everyone understood the seriousness and sensitivity of the situation so as not to interfere without their friend's explicit invitation. The only thing they allowed themselves was a question: "Have you decided anything?" And when a reply came: "Not yet", that was that.

Again at their subsequent meetings nobody said anything, only looked questioningly at their friend and after him shaking his head proceeded to other matters. But the academic year was about to start in a few days and they knew that the decision had to be taken before that. So when only one day remained and it was their last meeting before their next one in a month's time, the Teacher was asked the same question: "Have you decided anything?" This time his answer was: "Yes, I have." "So what is your decision?" His reply came after some hesitation, but it was loud and clear: "I have decided to make him an Assistant-Professor to teach the new course alongside me." "What?!" This response came simultaneously from several people. The others were speechless. The ensuing silence lasted for an embarrassingly long time until somebody said in a barely audible voice: "Are you mad?" Their friend's reply, after a pause, was equally low: "Perhaps I am..."

After a while he proceeded to tell his friends of his decision which he had finally taken only that morning. In all honesty he could not expect them to fully understand and appreciate it. With all their good will and ability to understand other people's situations they were outsiders to this one and there are always limits as to how deep an outsider can penetrate the inside of a situation. Nevertheless he felt duty bound to share with his friends the actual facts and thinking behind his decision.

The serious failure of his Pupil was an undisputable fact and a devastating disappointment to him. At the same time he did not believe that the youth was irredeemable. And he knew that there was a lot to be redeemed which would not just benefit the Pupil himself, but would eventually be beneficial to mankind. And the Teacher felt that he had not exhausted all the means at his disposal to help his Pupil. To begin with, he did not even know what those means might be. But now, after deep and intensive contemplation, he thought he had found them. Besides he knew of no others or better ones. They were his last hope.

The Teacher had no illusions that his Pupil was not up to the task he was giving him. He had put him into a situation in which the Pupil, or any other person for that matter, should only be through his own efforts and achievements. But he had thought and hoped that by placing him, unprepared but with his guidance and help, in the sublime realm of higher knowledge and enormous responsibility, would stimulate and intensify the Pupil's efforts and enhance his achievements.

This would not happen overnight. It would take time, perhaps a very long time, but if time was to be given them and there would be no serious obstructions or setbacks, there was a good and realistic chance of success. The Teacher, now the Professor, knew perfectly well what a vulnerable and even risky situation he was putting himself into; he might also become an object of ridicule and attacks. Finally, by embarking on this enterprise he might even jeopardise the cause of his life, his Fundamental Science. But he believed that what he was doing was right and the overall potential benefits outweighed all possible dangers and risks.

There was not much his friends could say after his elucidation apart from wishing him good luck. But they were very much concerned about him, about the whole situation, about his enterprise which had not even commenced yet. However they did not want to burden their friend still further with their concerns. They assured him of their full support whatever way events might develop. In any case they would be following them closely and would always be by his side. That was the end of their meeting that night, one of the most disquieting that they ever had.

At the University, on the first day of the course, it was difficult to say who was more excited, the Professor or the students who filled the auditorium. He had met and interviewed every one of them personally before they were admitted on the course. They were ready for it, they knew why they were there and they were full of expectations. But now he would have to tell them of this dramatic change in the

nature of their studies. How would they react? Would they enthusiastically accept the challenge or, conversely, feel despondent and disappointed?

After greeting and welcoming the students the Professor announced and explained the change: to turn their study course into that of research. The key element of both the proposed course and the Department itself would now be the newly established School of Fundamental Science whose objective would be the preparation of the researchers into the realm of Fundamental Knowledge. The students' personal objective would be to become capable of conducting their own research into the field of the Fundamental Science to acquire and develop further the Fundamental Knowledge. The School thus would become a research centre and the actual source of this Knowledge.

To be able to be a student of the School and then to become a researcher would require not only an advanced knowledge of the Fundamental Science itself, but the development, as prerequisites for mastering the methods of its research, of special faculties, abilities and skills as well as some moral attributes. It would be a long process of gradual evolvment and development consisting of three stages that would correspond to the three Classes of which the School would consist. To facilitate this process the Professor would devise and introduce, one by one, so called Lessons consisting of special exercises and instructions for acquiring the required spiritual and moral qualities. He also would decide, in each individual case, not only on the admittance to the School, but also when a student was ready to move to the next stage or Class. So, unlike on conventional courses, the progression would be determined not by tests, course work or time, but only by personal achievements verified by the Professor. But nobody would be rushed and those wishing to persevere with their efforts would be allowed to remain as students of the School in any Class for as long as they wished and needed to be.

Those students who did not wish or were unable as yet to become researchers, but wished to pursue their studies of the Fundamental Science to widen and deepen their knowledge of it, would be able to do so. To help and guide them in making the right choice the Professor was available for consultation and advice.

Then he introduced to the students his Pupil as the Assistant-Professor who would assist him in these new developments and in teaching the course. This was received by the students with some bewilderment. They had never heard of anybody who had come as close to the Professor in their knowledge of the new Science as to be able to perform those functions. And being of the same age as they were! While those of them who knew the Pupil as their schoolmate could not understand his elevation to the status of a scholar and their tutor. At the same time these, as they thought of them, administrative arrangements did not worry them much since the Professor was there – the only reason why they themselves were there. Besides their immediate task and priority now was to decide which course to take – studies or research.

(To be continued)

After our introduction to Steiner's deed based on fictional events we are now coming back to factual ones on which that deed was based and on which our understanding of it should also be based.

But before proceeding with his narrative the author wishes to forestall a question which might rightly arise at this stage in the reader's mind: why should we base our understanding of Steiner's deed on anything else rather than on his own explanations? Has he not given them or have they not been exhaustive and definitive enough? The author can assure the reader that Steiner has indeed given all the necessary explanations which will be presented here in due course and as much as

possible in Steiner's own words. And yet the author decided to precede these explanations by his own – for the following reasons.

Steiner's deed was a public event and now it became an historical one. As such it is a legitimate subject of investigation by anyone who is interested in it, and if it has any objective value it should be comprehensible to everyone. Furthermore, if it was based on the facts and considerations which are now in the public domain, others may view and describe it in their own way beside what its originator had to say about it. This is how historical events are treated by those investigators who wish to understand them independently, on the basis of the available facts.

This author is no exception. He struggled to understand Steiner's decision and deed on the basis of the same facts on which they were originally based and which have been presented here. The author does not presume to know all the facts and Steiner's considerations, only the relevant ones. He used, and quoted when appropriate, Steiner's own words concerning his intentions and actions regarding the Anthroposophical Society which were said publicly and are now available in various publications. The fact that he also spoke on the subject elsewhere, including in private conversations, does not change anything because he could not have said anything fundamentally new or different to what he said in public. He wanted to make his momentous deed as transparent, as comprehensible and as accessible as possible. There were no hidden, or mysterious or 'confidential' intentions which could only be shared with and understood by a few 'initiated' individuals – it would have defeated the object.

Now the author wishes to take the readers through his process of understanding of Steiner's deed because its outcome is crucial for this discourse. This will not preclude in any way the reader's own understanding or any other view on the matter. On the contrary, it would widen his possibilities of an independent critical assessment of the same facts and events on which the author based his own understanding and conclusions. So now we can return to the facts and events themselves.

It was the end of 1923. All Steiner's hopes that the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists would reform themselves by this time to be able to fulfil their essential tasks were dashed. The situation was not new to him – it had been like this for years. By the means available to him – help, advice, appeals and admonitions – he had been unable to change it. A few other potential options to resolve the situation he had to reject as unsuitable. To continue as before – to carry on his mission and his own tasks leaving the Anthroposophical Society in crisis and to its own devices plodding on alongside him – this Steiner could not do any longer especially after the destruction of the Goetheanum and in view of continuing failures on the part of the Anthroposophical Society and its members. Something had to be changed.

Whatever this 'something' could be Steiner knew that it was he, and nobody else, who would have to find and implement it. Here again, as many times in the past, he was on his own and totally alone. But the difference was that this time he was entangled in external affairs and, using the blunt language of reality, was trapped – by circumstances, by events, by people. He was left no choice but to act, or rather to re-act. However, being 'trapped' and having 'no choice' in Steiner's case did not mean to be forced into action, let alone into any particular one. He of course had no control over the situation which imposed itself upon him. But how to deal with it and whether to act in response to it and how to act – that was exclusively Steiner's own free choice and decision.

Steiner's entire life consisted of such choices and decisions and subsequent actions. Some of them were described here like, for instance, his decisions "not to remain silent" or to continue delivering his spiritual message despite "raising wrongdoers." Many others are known from his autobiography and from other

testimonies. And now Steiner faced one of the most serious challenges of his life. In his *Philosophy of Freedom* he elaborated how one arrives at decisions and actions based on free will – through the development of one's moral imagination which is "the source of the free spirit's action". So we can assume that now Steiner was listening to what his moral imagination was telling him and deciding whether to act or not to act, and if to act, what his action was to be. In the end Steiner had decided to act and chosen his action, and our task now is to try and understand it by ascertaining, in general terms to begin with, its nature.

Let us briefly remind ourselves of the three options Steiner had as a solution of the problem he was faced with. One was no action which was also no solution for him. So there were two other possibilities: either to extricate himself from the source of the problem, namely anthroposophists and their Society, or to address it. Steiner had chosen the latter despite previous unsuccessful attempts in this direction. But he did it differently this time.

When people, and their enterprises, are in trouble and they cannot cope, they need someone else's assistance to help them to deal with the problem. If they still cannot manage and thus become doomed to failure, then to be saved they need another type of help which is called a rescue. That was the essence, in this respect, of what took place in this case. For years Steiner had been trying to help anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society: to enable them to resolve their problems, and when this failed leaving them hopeless and helpless he decided to rescue them. This was the nature of his deed. Now to understand the nature of his rescue we have first to understand the nature of their failure.

When we speak of the Anthroposophical Society as an entity with its specific activities and tasks distinct from those of individual members, we should not forget that at the same time it is only a tool in their hands for certain objectives and that its state is a reflection of that of the members. So when it was said that the Anthroposophical Society failed in its tasks and was in crisis, this actually referred to anthroposophists, its members. And though in Steiner's deed the Anthroposophical Society was the named and direct object of his rescue this could only take place via the hearts and minds of anthroposophists making them the true object of the rescue.

The failure which prompted the rescue was the inability, with a very few exceptions, of anthroposophists, and consequently of the Anthroposophical Society, to live and work in the world out of anthroposophy, out of the spiritual knowledge. This poses a question: why was it like this after twenty years of receiving anthroposophy directly from the spiritual world, of being genuinely inspired by it and of intensely working and living with it? Was there in this long-term serious engagement with anthroposophy something intrinsically wrong, inconsistent, contradictory or false? We think none of it was the case, but rather something was lacking.

It has to be said from the outset that it was not anthroposophical knowledge or understanding that those anthroposophists were lacking. In fact many of them could be considered 'anthroposophical scholars' and could even teach anthroposophy as it was given to them by Steiner. But while they could present anthroposophy to the world and speak about it, they failed to represent it and speak in its name, to be the face and voice of anthroposophy in the world. Why?

Our explanation might be too simplistic for some readers, but hopefully they will not find it wanting in clarity. Modern science tells us that our brain consists of various 'compartments' each responsible for our particular mental or physical activities. We shall not discuss the merits of this, but instead borrow and enlarge this picture by adding to it another very important organ whose existence is dismissed and ridiculed by the selfsame science – a soul. We shall endow it with similar 'compartmentalisation' and suggest further that the 'compartments' in both organs are

the storage spaces of our various experiences, interests, abilities, intentions, knowledge, etc. In the course of life we consciously or subconsciously work on our 'compartments', modify them and change their content. But when something affects us causing our mental or physical activities, it does not involve our brain and soul in their entirety, but only those 'compartments' whose content responds to it with sufficient interest and comprehension. It also follows that in different people the same input might cause a different reaction and different mental or physical activities, as it might engage their 'compartments' and their contents, which are different in any case, in a different way.

The same takes place when people encounter anthroposophy. It might leave them indifferent, without finding or touching any sympathetic or responsive 'compartments' and content, or might even touch some negative ones causing their hostile attitude. But with those who, upon encountering anthroposophy, decide to pursue it and who finally even become anthroposophists, the opposite takes place. The receptive content of some of their 'compartments' prompts them to take anthroposophy seriously, to investigate and study it and then, sometimes after undergoing a lengthy process of inner struggle and transformation, their thinking and heart convince them of the anthroposophical truths. Such people have the anthroposophical outlook and the anthroposophical understanding of life and the world in their various ramifications.

In the process of becoming anthroposophists they transform their 'compartments', change their content and add a new one. This accounts for their ever increasing anthroposophical knowledge and understanding. But some of them go further. They wish to take this knowledge and understanding into their professional life or into some practical field, like medicine, education, art, science, agriculture, etc. This involves other content and 'compartments' of their inner being which eventually leads to their practical activities in those spheres. When this happens it signifies their great personal achievements which also have a beneficial effect on society and culture.

At the same time all these great achievements will not, on their own, teach them how to act and behave in numerous other life situations and human encounters. All those problems and crises, which caused Steiner disappointments and frustrations and which were discussed above, are examples of this. But what was the difference between the situations in which anthroposophists excelled and those where they failed? We shall try to answer this in terms of our adopted notion of 'compartmentalisation'. In the former situations there was, as their focal point, a certain object of personal interest, theoretical or practical, and in such cases it is easier to fill one's 'compartments' with the content capable of providing the appropriate aptitude, guidance and motivation. The latter situations did not have such objects of personal aspiration and therefore were much more challenging and more difficult to grasp and address. At the same time the very special content in one's 'compartments' required for dealing with them was lacking, was not sought for persistently enough and was much more difficult to obtain. So the respective 'compartments' of anthroposophists were filled with conventional consciousness, stereotyped thinking and habitual attitudes all of which were inadequate for the situations in hand. As a result their responses to them, or a lack of any, were a failure.

But what was this very special content? In a word it was anthroposophy – not in the form of theoretical knowledge, but as a new consciousness and thinking and the qualities of a universal nature such as goodness, love, morality and truth. It is a purely spiritual content, and it takes many years of dedicated work to build such 'compartments'. We referred to this work earlier under the different name of the three renewal tasks. But whatever we call it the task for anthroposophists was, and

remains, the same: to permeate with anthroposophy, with the spiritual content their entire being and not only those parts or 'compartments' which they found appealing or easier to do. The inability to fulfil this task was the nature of the failure for which anthroposophists required a rescue and which Steiner decided to undertake for them.

His rescue did not consist of course of building for them those special 'compartments' and filling them up with the spiritual anthroposophical content – this job was and is for each individual to do. But Steiner's rescue was to enable anthroposophists to do this by bringing the spiritual world much closer to them than he had done it so far through his lectures, books and, in some cases, personal advice and guidance. To perform his rescue he now used completely different means.

Before describing them it should be noted that Steiner's rescue was not physical but a spiritual one and that a spiritual rescue is distinguished by three features. First, the act of rescue and its ultimate results are two separate things. They are the responsibility of different individuals, they do not coincide in time and the success of the former does not presuppose the success of the latter. Then the process of rescue is for the rescuer not something external – he becomes an inseparable part of it with his entire being. Finally, a spiritual rescue is always a sacrificial act.

In this respect it seems proper to mention – not as an example, or analogy, or comparison, but as a fact – the ultimate, unique and yet archetypal spiritual rescue which was described in this narrative earlier in the chapter SPIRITUAL GRAVITY. It was a description of Christ's deed of rescue of mankind and the Earth. Any genuine spiritual rescue since then has to contain the aforesaid three features however different the external circumstances and the means of rescue may be.

As to Steiner's they consisted of the following major steps. First, he became a member and leader of the Anthroposophical Society. By this he established a direct link between the Society and the spiritual world. He also put the Anthroposophical Society firmly on a spiritual footing by creating within it, as a focal point of its existence, a modern initiation centre, the School of Spiritual Science, to train the aspirants to conduct independent spiritual research. Finally, he elevated the members of the Anthroposophical Society to a higher spiritual level doing it in different ways. To begin with, he made them conscious of the role and function of the School of Spiritual Science by stipulating that the membership of the Society is conditional on the endorsement of the School. Then Steiner made it possible for them to join the School of Spiritual Science for gaining a direct personal access to the spiritual world. Furthermore, he invited some members to share with him the spiritual leadership of and responsibility for the Anthroposophical Society.

Those fundamental administrative and organisational changes had a profound spiritual purpose and meaning. Together with some other, purely spiritual undertakings, they meant to immerse anthroposophists in an atmosphere of spirituality, to enable them to see and experience, at their level and in their daily anthroposophical life, how to do things out of anthroposophy. In other words, to enable them to participate in the reality called 'anthroposophy in action' – something that they had failed to accomplish thus far. This might have finally woken them up to their tasks and responsibilities – that was Steiner's hope and purpose of the rescue.

This rescue, however, contained an element of contradiction. Though it was insignificant in comparison with the rescue itself, in this discourse it should not be overlooked or ignored. So we shall address it now. For all intents and purposes what Steiner did was the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society, i.e. he did something that only recently, as we mentioned earlier, he had categorically rejected as unacceptable: "the Society is not something that can be founded all over again." And now he did exactly that. But he did it in the way which nobody, including himself,

envisioned at the time. And, most importantly, it was for him the only practical way forward and, as he said in his letter to Marie Steiner, "my *last* hope for the Society". After this clarification it is now the time to hear what Steiner said when he introduced and explained his deed at the Christmas Conference 1923 to 800 multinational delegates.

But before that the author wishes to share with his readers some personal sentiments – his feelings of excitement mixed with a degree of trepidation in expectation of Steiner's words on that occasion. It was nearly thirty years ago that the author read the proceedings of the Conference with those words by Steiner and they are no longer vivid in his memory. He read them at the time with different thoughts and intentions, focusing on different aspects of the situation and having no particular expectations. But now he has come, with his readers, to this point of his discourse via a particular route plotted by particular past events and his understanding of them. Will he and his readers find Steiner there or discover that they have lost their way?

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It is difficult to imagine – but we have to try to visualise and experience this – the "stark contrast" between the content of Steiner's spiritual message and the physical environment in which he delivered and his auditors received it. It was so acute that Steiner had to speak about it at the very inception of the Christmas Foundation Conference, simultaneously with announcing "the founding of the Anthroposophical Society in a new form".

Indeed, on their way to the Conference venue on Dornach hill the delegates had to pass "a heap of ruins" of the First Goetheanum – a burial place of many years of hard work and sacrifices, of aspirations and hopes of anthroposophists throughout the world. Being inwardly chilled by that sight, they then entered the venue itself which was the least suitable for the inaugural event to which they had been invited: it was a wooden shed of a carpentry workshop extended by "a temporary structure we have hurriedly put up over the last two days ... a shack erected amongst the ruins", with meagre heating in the middle of the winter where the participants "felt the cold dreadfully". Even today we cannot help asking the question: Were they in a position, even physically, as well as emotionally, to receive and comprehend a message which was as profound, new and unexpected as Steiner was about to deliver?

Steiner, no doubt, understood the difficulty and pointed out to his audience that this outer destruction, which was also a reflection of what had been happening in the world at large, had its antidote in what had been given in the last twenty years as anthroposophy (or the Anthroposophical Movement as he often referred to it). He therefore suggested to disregard the former and take the latter as a constructive reality in order to "establish a mood of soul appropriate for this our Christmas Foundation Conference", i.e. to "develop that mood of active doing which we shall need here over the next few days, a mood which may not be negative in any way, a mood which must be positive in every detail."

This could lead to the much desired results, both at present and in the distant future: "Now, a year after the moment when the flames of fire blazed skywards out of the dome of our Goetheanum, now everything which has been built up in the spiritual realm in the twenty years of the Anthroposophical Movement may appear before our hearts and before the eyes of our soul not as devouring flames but as creative flames. For everywhere out of the spiritual content of the Anthroposophical Movement warmth comes to give us courage, warmth which can be capable of bringing to life countless seeds for the spiritual life of the future which lie hidden here in the very soil of Dornach and all that belongs to it. Countless seeds for the future can begin to unfold their ripeness through this warmth which can surround us here,

so that one day they may stand before the world as fully matured fruits as a result of what we want to do for them."

The above "mood of soul" was a prerequisite for the success of what Steiner intended as the Christmas Foundation Conference. It is important to note that from its outset he appealed to people's hearts and souls, to their feelings, moods and imaginations rather than to their minds and mental capacities. Even when he spoke directly of knowledge his appeal was the same "Let us inscribe deeply within our hearts ..." It was not only for the duration of the Conference, but from now on anthroposophists should develop their hearts as an organ of perception and comprehension – they should learn to think with their hearts.

Further as an introduction to the main content of the Conference and as its spiritual foundation Steiner emphasised the divine origin of anthroposophy and its task which "is not born out of any earthly or arbitrary consideration", but is "a revelation of the spirit" – "as a service to the divine beings, a service to God." As such, it "desires to link the soul of every individual devoted to it with the primeval sources of all that is human in the spiritual world"; furthermore, it "desires to lead the human being to that final enlightenment" which allows him to know and feel: "Yes, this am I as a human being, as a God-willed human being on the earth, as a God-willed human being in the universe." It was with regard to this knowledge and understanding that Steiner made a heartfelt appeal to his audience – again to their hearts rather than to their intellect: "let us take it into our hearts ... inscribe deeply within our hearts ... at the very beginning of our Conference."

Thus, by indicating the divine origin of anthroposophy and its task Steiner was telling those who were an integral part of it, of their own vital task and, of their direct connection and responsibility to the spiritual world, the source of their guidance and inspiration.

And then Steiner came to the crux of the matter, to what that Conference was about – to the Anthroposophical Society. So let us see what he had to say at this point to his auditors:

"We shall take our starting point today from something we would so gladly have seen as our starting point years ago in 1913. [The Anthroposophical Society was founded on December 28th 1912 after the split from the Theosophical Society – /Z] This is where we take up the thread, my dear friends, inscribing into our souls the foremost principle of the Anthroposophical Movement, which is to find its home in the Anthroposophical Society, namely, that everything in it is willed by the spirit, that this Movement desires to be a fulfilment of what the signs of the times speak in a shining script to the hearts of human beings.

The Anthroposophical Society will only endure if within ourselves we make of the Anthroposophical Movement the profoundest concern of our hearts. If we fail, the Society will not endure. The most important deed to be accomplished during the coming days must be accomplished within all your hearts, my dear friends. Whatever we say and hear will only become a starting point for the cause of anthroposophy in the right way if our heart's blood is capable of beating for it. My friends, for this reason we have brought you all together here: to call forth a harmony of hearts in a truly anthroposophical sense. And we allow ourselves to hope that this is an appeal which can be rightly understood."

It was a very significant appeal by Steiner especially in view of his reference to the year 1913. When the Anthroposophical Society was founded in that year Steiner made no such appeals to the Society's members, but its task was the same – to become a home for anthroposophy. They failed this task. Now Steiner set it up again for anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society, but with new emphases on their connection with the world of spirit, with the divine. Whatever was to be done

now, within and by the Society, should come "not from any arbitrary earthly considerations, but in obedience to a call resounding from the spiritual world."

Steiner's appeal, both profound and emotional, was also an expression of hope – and a warning at the same time. He wanted to instil in the members' hearts the importance of the situation and of what was in store for them even before fully elaborating it. He was, as it were, entering into a spiritual partnership with anthroposophists and he wanted to make sure that this time they would keep their side of the 'bargain' even before he divulged to them his side, his rescue deed. Because he knew it would not succeed without their full cooperation.

Then Steiner reminded his audience of how anthroposophy "came into being" and what it brought into the world: "In many and varied ways there worked in it what was to be a revelation of the spirit for the approaching twentieth century." Anthroposophists were the recipients of it and "the many and varied forms of spiritual life ... genuinely entered into [their] hearts." This allowed Steiner to advance anthroposophy further and to show in his Mystery Dramas "how intimate affairs of the human heart and soul are linked to the grand sweep of historical events in human evolution." But the most important for him was this: "I do believe that during those four or five years ... when The Mystery Dramas were performed in Munich, a good deal of all that is involved in this link between the individual human soul and the divine working of the cosmos in the realms of soul and spirit did indeed make its way through the souls of our friends."

Thus Steiner again and again, at the very beginning of the Conference, reminded anthroposophists of the importance of their connection with the spiritual world and of the presence of the spirit in their hearts. Even when he had to speak of the negative experiences as, for instance, of the fact that the Anthroposophical Society "has emerged riven from the War", he followed this by addressing them with the same forward-looking spirit-imbued message: "Today, however, I want to dwell mainly on all that is positive. I want to tell you that if this gathering runs its course in the right way, if this gathering really reaches an awareness of how something spiritual and esoteric must be the foundation for all our work and existence, then those spiritual seeds which are everywhere present will be enabled to germinate through being warmed by your mood and your enthusiasm. ... Prepare your souls, dear friends, so that they may receive these seeds: for your souls are the true ground and soil in which these seeds of the spirit may germinate, unfold and develop. They are the truth. ... Today, of all days, let us allow the profoundest call of anthroposophy, indeed of everything spiritual, to shine into our souls: ...inwardly there unfolds the fullness of truth, the fullness of divine and spiritual life. Anthroposophy shall bring into life all that is recognized as truth within it."

All those appeals and messages of Steiner's were aimed at creating a special receptivity in the hearts and souls of his auditors before he could lay the Foundation Stone of the re-founded Anthroposophical Society planned for the following day. And before he could proceed to the substantive part of the Conference which he introduced with the following words: "In recent weeks I have pondered deeply in my soul the question: What should be the starting point for this Christmas Conference and what lessons have we learnt from the experiences of the past ten years since the founding of the Anthroposophical Society?"

To begin with, he reminded his audience of his vital decision ten years back: "In 1912, 1913 I said for good reasons that the Anthroposophical Society would now have to run itself, that it would have to manage its own affairs, and that I would have to withdraw into a position of an adviser who did not participate directly in any actions." About the ability of the Anthroposophical Society "to run itself" and about "the experiences of the past ten years" from which lessons had to be learnt the

reader knows from our narrative. Of all the experiences, Steiner referred to one only, but it sufficed for him to learn his lesson.

At the time the new spiritual revelations in the form of anthroposophy came to the earth at the turn of the twentieth century great changes were taking place in the spiritual world in preparation for this. As the reflection of those changes was the incarnation at that time of some people who brought within them new spiritual impulses and who were looking for places – for homes! – where they could satisfy their spiritual quests and realize their impulses. But there were no organisations or associations which could provide such a home for them. And even when they discovered the Anthroposophical Society they were repulsed by the sectarian attitudes they found there. As we know, to save the situation Steiner suggested the only possible solution at the time – to split the Society into two, for elder and for young anthroposophists. Now, at the Christmas Conference, Steiner had the following to say about this:

"Let me tell you, my dear friends, that the decision to give this advice was difficult indeed. It was so grave because fundamentally such advice was a contradiction of the very foundations of the Anthroposophical Society. For if this was not the Society in which today's youth could feel at home, then what other association of human beings in the earthly world of today was there that could give them this feeling! Such advice was an anomaly. This occasion was perhaps one of the most important symptoms contributing to my decision to tell you here that I can only continue to lead the Anthroposophical Movement within the Anthroposophical Society if I myself can take on the presidency of the Anthroposophical Society, which is to be newly founded."

What Steiner was telling anthroposophists was this: In the ten years of its existence the Anthroposophical Society has shown its inability to be a home and vehicle for anthroposophy; it has failed its anthroposophical tasks and it cannot be entrusted with anthroposophy; anthroposophy and I can only associate ourselves with the Anthroposophical Society if I become its leader and change it from inside.

Steiner knew perfectly well what had to be changed in the first place: "And it cannot be denied that within the Anthroposophical Society it is proving difficult to cast off this sectarian way of carrying on. But cast it off we must. Not a shred must be allowed to remain within the new Anthroposophical Society which shall be founded. This must become a true world society. Anyone joining it must feel: Yes, here I have found what moves me." And it should be reflected even in the name of the new society which should contain not a hint of anything separate, exclusive, insular or divisive, but convey the underlying universal humanity: "Dear friends, it is to be neither an international nor a national society. I beg you heartily never to use the word 'international society' but always to speak simply of a 'General Anthroposophical Society' which wants to have its centre here at the Goetheanum in Dornach."*

Then Steiner spoke of the Statutes of the new Society which "are formulated in a way that excludes anything administrative, anything that could ever of its own accord turn into bureaucracy. These Statutes are tuned to whatever is purely human. They are not tuned to principles and dogmas. ... All that is stated is the fact that a Goetheanum exists, that human beings are connected with this Goetheanum, and that these human beings do certain things in this Goetheanum in the belief that through doing so they are working for human evolution."

Steiner suggested to his audience: "Look carefully at the people who will make suggestions with regard to what is to be founded here over the next few days. Ask

* It is interesting to note that only a month before, on the 23rd of November 1923, in the first lecture of the lecture course *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres*, which immediately preceded the Christmas Conference, Steiner referred to the same self Anthroposophical Society as *international*.

yourselves whether you can trust them or not." This was the key question every individual should consider before joining the new Society, because "those who join should feel at home in being linked to what is going on at the Goetheanum." While "every group which comes into being within this Anthroposophical Society will be truly autonomous."

"In order to reach this truly human standpoint", said Steiner, it was necessary to overcome two difficulties "so that in future they will no longer exist in the way they existed in the past history of the Anthroposophical Society." One concerned the lack of openness. If persisted, the Society "will surely find itself in conflict with contemporary consciousness" and "the most dire obstacles for its continuing existence will ensue. Therefore, dear friends, for the General Anthroposophical Society which is to be founded we cannot but lay claim to absolute openness."

Steiner continued: "Another very great difficulty, dear friends, is the fact that the impulses of the Anthroposophical Movement are not everywhere thoroughly assessed in the right way. Judgements are heard here and there which absolutely deny the Anthroposophical Movement by seeing it as something that is parallel to the very things it is supposed to replace in human evolution." In other words, some anthroposophists, for 'pragmatic' reasons, shied away from using in public the name anthroposophy or introducing some anthroposophical premises, or they substituted them with conventional ones, or mixed the two. "This is something that has been done by a great many people for many years, and it could not be more false. Whatever the realm, we must stand in the world under the sign of the full truth as representatives of the essence of anthroposophy," concluded Steiner.

And now, before introducing to his audience the Statutes proper, Steiner concluded his introduction to the Conference with the following words: "Herewith I have at least hinted at the fundamental conditions which must be placed before our hearts at the beginning of our Conference for the founding of the General Anthroposophical Society. In the manner indicated it must become a Society of attitudes and not a Society of statutes. The Statutes are to express externally what is alive within every soul."

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After that Steiner proceeded to read the draft of the Statutes (their printed copies were given to each participant) commenting on them as necessary. The following day, on the 25th, at the meeting of the Leadership of the General Anthroposophical Society and the General Secretaries of the National Societies and their Secretaries, Steiner answered questions from the officials of the Societies on various Paragraphs of the Statutes. On the 26th they were read aloud again* and on the 27th and 28th a discussion of them took place at which every Paragraph was thoroughly discussed and voted individually. In the process some changes were introduced. Then the Statutes were read again, en bloc, for a final vote and were accepted.

In general terms, the Statutes fulfilled the functions that statutes of any other organisation or learned society fulfil: they stated the organisation's purpose and tasks, as well as functions and practical arrangements. But these Statutes also reflected a great difference between the Anthroposophical Society and other

* It might be of interest to note the procedure for discussing the Statutes that Steiner suggested at this point: "Not in order to be pedantic but so that we can be as efficient as possible there will first be a kind of general debate on the Statutes, a debate in which first of all the whole attitude, meaning and spirit of the Statutes in general is discussed. Then shall I ask you to agree to the Statutes in general, after which we shall open a detailed debate in which we take one Paragraph at a time, when contributors will be asked to speak only to the Paragraph under consideration. There will then be a concluding debate leading to the final adoption of the Statutes. This is how I would ask you to proceed tomorrow when we discuss the Statutes."

organisations – not only regarding the nature and content of its activities which were spiritual, but some external aspects as well. The reasons for the latter, however, were also spiritual.

There were 15 Statutes altogether. The first one defined the Anthroposophical Society which "is to be an association of people whose will it is to nurture the life of the soul, both in the individual and in human society, on the basis of a true knowledge of the spiritual world." The second one spoke about how the Society came about, of its task and objectives: "The persons gathered at the Goetheanum in Dornach at Christmas, 1923, both the individuals and the groups represented, form the nucleus of the Society. They are convinced that there exists in our time a genuine science of the spiritual world, elaborated for years past, and in important particulars already published; and that the civilisation of today is lacking the cultivation of such a science. This cultivation is to be the task of the Anthroposophical Society. It will endeavour to fulfil this task by making the anthroposophical spiritual science cultivated at the Goetheanum in Dornach the centre of its activities, together with all that results from this for brotherhood in human relationships and for the moral and religious as well as the artistic and cultural life."

The third Statute stated that "The persons gathered in Dornach as the nucleus of the Society recognise and endorse the view of the leadership at the Goetheanum" concerning, basically, the value of anthroposophy for modern life: "Anthroposophy, as fostered at the Goetheanum, leads to results which can serve every human being as a stimulus to spiritual life, whatever his nation, social standing or religion. They can lead to a social life genuinely built on brotherly love. No special degree of academic learning is required to make them one's own and to found one's life upon them, but only an open-minded human nature. Research into these results, however, as well as competent evaluation of them, depends upon spiritual-scientific training, which is to be acquired step by step. These results are in their own way as exact as the results of genuine natural science. When they attain general recognition in the same way as these, they will bring about comparable progress in all spheres of life, not only in the spiritual but also in the practical realm." Though Steiner spoke about all this many times, both in his books and lectures, he found it necessary to make it now a declared view of the leadership of the new Society and to emphasize its endorsement by the membership. Furthermore, this was so important for him that was included in the Society's official Statutes.

The next Statute postulated some premises befitting any modern organisation, apart from one passage which we shall discuss presently: "The Anthroposophical Society is in no sense a secret society, but is entirely public. Anyone can become a member, without regard to nationality, social standing, religion, scientific or artistic conviction, who considers as justified the existence of an institution such as the Goetheanum in Dornach, in its capacity as a School of Spiritual Science. The Anthroposophical Society rejects any kind of sectarian activity. Party politics it considers not to be within its task."

The passage in question is this: "... who considers as justified the existence ... etc." What is its meaning? If something factually exists and is fully functioning why should anybody justify its existence? Who needs this justification? What form should it take and what validity has it? Especially as such a justification, even if given, is not verifiable. These or similar questions were never raised during the discussion of the Statutes and Steiner did not volunteer any explanations. But this passage, the only stipulation for the membership of the Anthroposophical Society is still used today though "an institution ... in its capacity as a School of Spiritual Science" does not exist any longer. Rather the "institution" as the name does still exist but "its capacity" ceased to exist with Steiner's departure. Therefore, in keeping with his narrative, the author decided to share with the reader his understanding of this passage.

Let us, to begin with, focus our understanding not on the activity – "considers as justified", but on its object – "an institution", i.e. a School of Spiritual Science. What such an institution is about we learn from the further Statutes and from other sources – it is to investigate the spiritual world. Thus its endorsement (to consider as justified) implies the following:

- The existence of the spiritual world
- The possibility of investigating it
- The ability of the School to do this
- The validity of the results of such investigation for modern humanity

Now the endorsement has substance and makes sense. But still, who needs it? One person only – he who "considers as justified". Because he is to decide whether to join the Anthroposophical Society or not, and if he cannot endorse the above premises there is no point in joining. Still one very important question remains unanswered at this stage: Why the School of Spiritual Science has been chosen as a criterion for joining the Society? This we learn from the next Statute: "The Anthroposophical Society sees the School of Spiritual Science in Dornach as a centre for its activity." And, more specifically, in Steiner's own words: "This will make it possible for the esoteric impulses that ought to be given to the Anthroposophical Society to actually be given to it."

This and the subsequent Statutes elaborate the issues pertaining to the School as follows:

"The School will be composed of three classes. Members of the Society will be admitted to the School on their own application after a period of membership to be determined by the leadership at the Goetheanum. They enter in this way the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science. Admission to the Second or Third Classes takes place when the person requesting this is deemed eligible by the leadership at the Goetheanum."

"The organising of the School of Spiritual Science is, to begin with, the responsibility of Rudolf Steiner, who will appoint his collaborators and his possible successor." We shall speak later about the appointments of collaborators (Steiner never appointed his successor).

"All publications of the Society shall be public, in the same sense as are those of other public societies. The publications of the School of Spiritual Science will form no exception as regards this public character; however, the leadership of the School reserves the right to deny in advance the validity of any judgment on these publications which is not based on the same training from which they have been derived. Consequently, they will regard as justified no judgement which is not based on an appropriate preliminary training, as is also the common practice in the recognised scientific world. Thus the publications of the School of Spiritual Science will bear the following note: 'Printed as manuscript for members of the School of Spiritual Science, Goetheanum, ... Class. No one is considered competent to judge the content, who has not acquired – through the School itself or in a manner recognised by the School as equivalent – the requisite preliminary knowledge. Other opinions will be disregarded, to the extent that the authors of such works will not enter into a discussion about them.'"

"The purpose of the Anthroposophical Society will be the furtherance of spiritual research; that of the School of Spiritual Science will be this research itself. A dogmatic stand in any field whatsoever is to be excluded from the Anthroposophical Society."

The author hopes that readers would not consider as impertinent his musing that had he been present at the discussion of the Statutes presided by Steiner he would have suggested their different sequence. Of course when one knows the

document as a whole the sequence does not matter very much, but a 'right' sequence can help the flow of the train of thought.

In any case the author is sure he would not have been chastised by Steiner for his initiative, as Steiner encouraged any form of suggestions regarding his Statutes. But other participants might have felt differently. In the middle of the discussion one of them made the following statement: "I believe it cannot be our intention to improve on these Statutes. Dr Steiner has put so much effort into them and they are truly all-embracing. It seems to me that any debate on the various points should serve the purpose solely of asking any questions there might be about the meaning or the extent of any of them." It was followed by 'lengthy applause' and then: "The suggestion is made that the Statutes should be adopted by acclamation."

It showed how deeply the motto "Herr Doktor hat gesagt" ("The Doctor said") was engraved in the anthroposophical psyche even at that time, even in front of Steiner himself, even at such a special event with its declaration of individual freedom and renunciation of dogmatism, sectarianism, etc.! But Steiner would have none of it and the discussion continued.

The other Statutes concerned procedural matters, membership, communications, etc. and, very importantly, spoke of the functioning and tasks of the leadership of the Society, the Executive Council, known throughout the anthroposophical world by its German name, the Vorstand. The procedure of setting up of the leadership constituted, in this case, another unusual feature which distinguished the new Anthroposophical Society from other public organisations. To begin with, there is nothing conventional in the situation when someone comes along and says to the existing organisation: I'm going to be your president and leader. There were deep reasons for this which were explained in detail earlier but which would be unknown to anybody unfamiliar with the history of the Anthroposophical Society.

Steiner was a teacher and advisor to the Society that was born out of his teaching which it was supposed to nurture and bring into the world. To be able to do this it had to be permeated by spiritual impulses coming from the spiritual world. These indeed were coming to the members of the Anthroposophical society, for ten years, but not directly. They were coming via their teacher, and it proved to be insufficient. It did not work. So Steiner decided to make the impulses as direct as possible by going inside the Society, transforming it and trying to elevate its members spiritually.

His message to the membership was direct and simple: To re-found the Society on the new basis is my initiative, not yours. These are my plans, my tasks and the new arrangements. I have initiated them but I cannot implement them without your agreement, support and cooperation. Please decide and let me know.

Whether the anthroposophists grasped Steiner's offer and its consequences in full, it was for them a blessing – in the long run. But for Steiner it was a sacrifice – in the short run, immediately. He made his offer on the basis of 'take it or leave it' with multiple strings attached. One of those strings was the leadership of the Society. Steiner would choose and appoint the members of the Vorstand and the membership would confirm his decision by their vote. A cynic might say that this amounted to rubber-stamping. But in fact there converged in this case two modes of operation known as democratic and aristocratic.

In the former the decisions are made collectively by the majority vote and in the latter by individuals. (Another mode, by consensus, which some consider more progressive, is a veiled variation of the majority vote.) In earthly affairs the democratic mode is considered most suitable and fair, but it is totally unacceptable and inapplicable in spiritual affairs. To take a crude example, it cannot be decided by

the majority vote that one person is 'more clairvoyant' than the other. Here only individual knowledge and experience rule the day.

Let us see what Steiner said regarding the Vorstand to decide for ourselves whether such matters belong to the majority collective judgements or to the exclusive individual discernments. We begin with the only stipulation which was not of a spiritual nature – all Vorstand members should reside in Dornach: "Instead of a bureaucratic Vorstand scattered all over the world ... [it] will be located in Dornach. The work itself will have to be taken care of by the Vorstand in Dornach."

Their geographical location apart, "the members of the Vorstand must without question be people who have devoted their lives entirely, both outwardly and inwardly, to the cause of anthroposophy. So now after long deliberations over the past weeks I shall take the liberty of presenting to you my suggestions for the membership of the Vorstand/"

"It does not consider itself to be an elected body. It considers itself to be a group of people which says: Here at the Goetheanum we want to do something and we shall communicate about the different things we do with those who so wish, either individuals or groups; we shall recognise as a member every individual or every group who can accept these Statutes and be in agreement with them." Thus it was not the membership who chose and nominated their leaders, but the other way round, the leaders who offered to members to join them on certain 'terms and conditions'. Nevertheless the Vorstand was part and parcel of the new Society as was emphasised by Steiner: "I regard this Vorstand as being absolutely bound up with the whole constitution of the Statutes. ... So the Vorstand is in the first place the Vorstand of the Society."

Steiner continued: "In doing this, the Vorstand declares that it places itself within the Society in the freest manner possible: it wants nothing else but to be a group of people with initiative for the cause of anthroposophy. To live fully in initiative for the cause of anthroposophy will have to be the heart's blood of this Vorstand. It is not a representative of people in the abstract; it is a representative of the anthroposophical cause here at the Goetheanum. Its task is to represent the cause of anthroposophy here at the Goetheanum. And to declare one's membership of a society for which this Vorstand wants to have meaning means to join in the promotion of the cause of anthroposophy. The membership and the Vorstand, and their relationship with one another, is thought of as being quite generally human in an entirely free way in the future. We have not achieved this as yet; we must make it obvious to all the world. ... From the start we must stress forcefully that an election as such is impossible in the Anthroposophical Society and that only initiative is possible." This was the crux of the matter: the Vorstand represents not the members but the spiritual world to which it is responsible and accountable.

After speaking of "somewhat aristocratic method I have adopted with regard to appointing the Vorstand" Steiner said: "We could ask whether the Vorstand I have suggested would be elected or not. This would give us a democratic basis, for I do consider their election to be a necessary condition, otherwise I myself would also have to withdraw! Freedom must reign of course. But, dear friends, I too must have freedom. I cannot allow anything to be imposed on me." He further said: "You must understand that I do not regard this as an election, and that is why just now I did not suggest: 'the leadership at the Goetheanum which is represented by the Vorstand *elected* by this foundation gathering' but '*formed*'." So the members' vote for Steiner's Vorstand was not an election in a conventional sense but a confirmation.

This point was so important for Steiner that he came to it again and again expressing it in different ways: "We are only concerned here with the fact that the Vorstand has been formed. It has been formed in the most free manner imaginable. I said that I would take on the leadership of the Society. But I shall only do so if the

Society grants me the Vorstand. The Society has granted me this Vorstand, so it is now formed." And then: "The total Vorstand is 'formed', which is an indication of the fact that it is neither elected nor nominated but that it is a self-evident Vorstand which is designated as a result of the reasons which have been given; it is a Vorstand designated by the facts themselves and receives the ground on which it stands at this Foundation Meeting."

But the most important thing was this: "I have not suggested this Vorstand as a group of people who will merely do my bidding but, as I have said, as people of whom each one will bear the full responsibility for what he or she does. The significance for me of this particular formation of this Vorstand is that in future it will consist of the very people of whom I myself believe that work can be done with them in the right way."

When the last Paragraph of the Statutes, the one that contained "the constitution of the Founding Vorstand", was presented to the delegates Steiner addressed them as follows: "I would now ask you to give your consent, not by voting in the sense of the votes conducted for the other Paragraphs but with the feeling that you acknowledge the justification of this fundamental manner of leadership of a true Anthroposophical Society. I would ask you to give your agreement that this Vorstand be constituted for the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society." 'Long applause' followed which expressed the requested agreement, and then Steiner spoke again: "My dear friends, I believe I speak also on behalf of those who stand here beside me, the members of the Vorstand who are not unprepared but more than enough prepared, when I express the most cordial gratitude for your consent and when I give the promise that the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society will be conducted in the sense of its spiritual foundations and conditions."

The Founding Vorstand consisted of Dr Rudolf Steiner as President, Albert Steffen as Vice-President, Dr Ita Wegman as Recorder, Marie Steiner and Dr Elisabeth Vreede as Members and Dr Guenther Wachsmuth as Secretary and Treasurer. Steiner introduced every one of them and their acceptance was confirmed by applause in each case. Of all those people only Marie Steiner and her work were well known to everyone present. The others were known much less and to various degrees. Steiner was given his Vorstand, but it is difficult to say to what extent his choice was genuinely approved or even understood. In some cases it might have been even resented. But that was in the nature of things and it in no way undermined the validity of the procedure.

And then came the turn for Steiner to nominate the leadership of the School of Spiritual Science, i.e. the leaders of the sections formed within the School. Here again Steiner's approach was not theoretical or based on 'ideas', but practical and human, i.e. based on human beings available for the job: "... for the leadership of the School it is naturally necessary to call those who are most suitable. And the leadership of the School is likely for the most part to consist of members of the Vorstand." But there was a great difference between the Society and the School which was fully reflected in the difference between what was required of their respective leaderships. In the case of the School the leadership just based on spiritual impulses and guidance was not enough. It also required an ability to provide spiritual training, an ability to be a spiritual teacher. None, apart from Steiner, was in a position to be one – all other members of the Society were pupils, or potential pupils.

Steiner was very clear about it: "That is why simply out of spiritual empiricism I thought that the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach should be led by me with regard to all esoteric matters and that I should be supported in this leadership by those people who have shared spiritually in the work of bringing about the building of the Anthroposophical Movement. What I am now going to say

therefore arises naturally out of the situation in Dornach at the moment. First of all it will fall to me to maintain an overall view and to administer the School as a whole, while also taking on the leadership of the general anthroposophical and pedagogical aspects. I would carry out the leadership of the other aspects by placing at the head of the different Sections those persons who are in a position, from what has gone before, to run a particular branch of the work of the Anthroposophical Movement." In other words, Steiner was, and continued to be, the factual leader of all Sections, but he would administer them via the individuals whom he chose as their leaders. As he himself said with regard to one Section: "My leadership of this realm will be through ..." and then followed the name of the chosen leader.

As in the case of the Vorstand, here also Steiner introduced every Section leader giving his reasons for choosing them, and in each case his choice was approved by applause. So the leadership of the School of Spiritual Science consisted, apart from Steiner, of Albert Steffen (leader of the Section for literature), Marie Steiner (speech and music), Ita Wegman (medicine), Elisabeth Vreede (mathematics and astronomy), Guenter Wachsmuth (natural sciences) and Edith Maryon (sculpture). She was the only one who was not a member of the Vorstand. Unfortunately she was seriously ill at the time and died the following year. Her Section ceased to exist as there was no other suitable person to replace her.

Again it is difficult to say what the delegates thought of the suitability of these individuals for their additional roles. Unlike being a member of the Vorstand, being a leader of the Section of the School required specific spiritual and professional qualities which suppose to distinguish the leader from rank and file members. Did they have, or better to say, were they perceived as having such qualities? With the exception, perhaps, of Marie Steiner, there is no evidence to suggest that they were more advanced even professionally, never mind spiritually, than the potential members of their respective Sections. Of course Steiner had his own criteria for choosing these people, but this could not have cancelled what others might have felt about them in these roles.

But as was said earlier, such discrepancies were in the nature of things. Uncertainties are bound to happen at any beginning especially in the case of such a serious undertaking. Only time, the great adjuster, would show things in their right light and whether Steiner's arrangements proved workable. In the meantime people trusted Steiner and went along with what he suggested and wanted. Their approval of the Statutes concluded the establishment de facto of the new Anthroposophical Society which constituted one major part of the Christmas Conference. Now we come to another major part – the laying of the Foundation Stone.

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Unlike in our narrative, at the Christmas Conference the laying of the Foundation Stone took place not after the founding of the new Anthroposophical Society, but after the Statutes were read to the audience and before they were discussed, let alone adopted, i.e. before the Society itself had been actually founded. Apparently it did not remain unnoticed by the delegates, but despite being surprised nobody asked Steiner about it. Nor did Steiner offer any explanations. But nothing should stop those who examine those events now, even many years later, from reflecting on this matter.

A foundation stone as a physical object, whether a construction material or a symbolic item, is laid, ceremoniously, at the foundation of a future building to be erected on this foundation. Thus the foundation stone of the First Goetheanum was a symbol, "an emblem of the striving human soul immersed as a microcosm in the macrocosm" according to Steiner; it was a copper double pentagonal dodecahedron

cemented into its foundation. Its form was not arbitrary but had a cosmic-spiritual origin.

The Foundation Stone of the new Anthroposophical Society was not a physical object. It was a text, a verse, a meditation, a mantra. But it was not like a prayer that one says at the beginning of an enterprise for its successful completion or at the end of it for its long-lasting endurance. This Meditation did not belong to any of these categories. It was something that was meant to be there permanently; its aim was to sustain and deepen. But if it referred to a society it had to be, so it seemed, an existing society, which was not the case when Steiner read the Foundation Stone Meditation to the delegates for the first time. Hence their puzzlement. But on Steiner's part, was the 'premature' presentation of the Meditation the result of his assumption that the Society would definitely be formed? Did he take the delegates' consensus for granted? In reply to this it might be said that even if Steiner was confident of the positive response to his intention to re-found the Anthroposophical Society, he had good grounds for this. But in our opinion this was not the reason for presenting the Meditation before the new Society had been actually formed.

To understand Steiner's intentions regarding this Meditation we have to know first of all its content which we shall do shortly. But before that, let us have a look at some relevant external events which were documented. The programme of the Christmas Conference was printed and distributed well in advance of the Conference, and according to it the laying of the Foundation Stone was scheduled for the next day after the opening of the Conference at which Steiner gave his opening lecture. This was exactly as it actually happened. With one discrepancy though. In the programme there was no mention of a very important event – the reading of the Statutes which Steiner did immediately after his opening lecture. While in the records of the Conference published later by Marie Steiner these two events were reported as one: *Rudolf Steiner's Opening Lecture and Reading of the Statutes*. Was it an omission in the programme or were there some other reasons for this?

We do not wish to speculate about it. Let us, instead, return to the programme once again and examine it carefully. Then we shall find another discrepancy as the programme said: *Foundation Meeting of the **International** Anthroposophical Society and Laying of the Foundation Stone of the **International** Anthroposophical Society*. There was no mention in it of the **General** Anthroposophical Society which was actually founded. But the reason for this discrepancy is obvious: the General Anthroposophical Society had not yet been conceived by Steiner when the programme was printed. While the Foundation Stone Meditation was already conceived and intended by Steiner to be used for the foundation of the International Anthroposophical Society. Thus Steiner was happy to use the same Foundation Stone Meditation for both Societies which were so different in nature that Steiner pleaded never to use the name International with reference to the newly formed General Anthroposophical Society. Was there any inconsistency on Steiner's part? None whatsoever! We can go even further and suggest that had it happened that no society was founded or re-founded at the time, this Meditation would still have been introduced to anthroposophists. Because it was meant, in the first instance, not for an organisation but for the individual. As soon as its content was revealed to Steiner in spirit and sufficiently developed by him for making it public, it was inconceivable that he would withhold it. The re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society, International or General, was the most suitable occasion for introducing it, but there is no doubt that "as the most important findings of recent years", it would have seen the light of day in any case, on a par with Steiner's other spiritual revelations as an integral part of his anthroposophy. Now we can go to the Meditation itself.

The reader familiar with verbal meditations would agree that even stylistically, in literary terms, they might be considered as a special genre. They have their own

language which is often different from what we know as prose and poetry. Going further, regarding their content and intended effect, they really constitute their own world and to find one's way into it one needs a special disposition of the soul. But the Foundation Stone Meditation is, in this respect, a world of its own. To understand even the 'easiest' parts of it one needs, in the first instance, a thorough knowledge of anthroposophy. But this is not enough. It still requires explanations and elucidation. Its creator understood this perfectly well and at the Christmas Conference Steiner read and explained the Meditation every day and on the last day he even read it twice, at the beginning and at the end of the day's procedures. He also continued to work on its wording during the Conference and its full text was published only after the Conference. So let us now acquaint ourselves with what Steiner said to the delegates about the Meditation.

"My dear friends! Let the first words to resound through this room today be those which sum up the essence of what may stand before your souls as the most important findings of recent years." – these were Steiner's opening words on the Christmas day of 1923 with which he introduced something "most important" unbeknown as yet to his audience. He continued: "Later there will be more to be said about these words which are, as they stand, a summary. But first let our ears be touched by them, so that out of the signs of the present time we may renew, in keeping with our way of thinking, the ancient word of the Mysteries: 'Know thyself!'"

Alas, the framework of this discourse does not allow the eyes of our readers to be touched by these words. But it allows their minds to be touched by the essence of what these words contain when it is made known to them. However, even Steiner's few introductory words above give a clear indication that such a message is not easy either to convey or to grasp and that the ability to accomplish either should not be taken for granted.

To begin with, Steiner explained to his audience how the content of the Meditation had come about. For the last few decades, as the spiritual world revealed its secrets to Steiner, he managed to perceive the facts concerning the threefold nature of man as a being of spirit, soul and body which he made available to mankind. But in the last decade, "while the terrible storms of war were surging across the earth", Steiner was able to discover and "to bring it to full maturity" another threefoldness – "how man lives in the physical realm in his system of metabolism and limbs, in his system of heart and rhythm, in his system of thinking and perceiving with his head." We had an opportunity to discuss it in our discourse as an essential knowledge of man which should be available to all as it has very important practical applications in our culture. But now Steiner's message regarding it was addressed to anthroposophists only: "Yesterday I indicated how this threefoldness can be rightly taken up when our hearts are enlivened through and through by Anthroposophia." Please note that on this occasion he spoke of the Being – Anthroposophia and not of the teaching – anthroposophy.

The double threefoldness constitutes the cornerstone of Steiner's teaching of man. But man is not an isolated being but an integral part of the cosmos, of the universe, of the spiritual world. And so is the threefoldness of his physical organisation which, as a whole and its every part, has a spiritual origin and nature and forms a threefold connection to the universe. Having explained it Steiner then summarised it and indicated the significance of this knowledge for man today: "Thus he becomes the threefoldness of all existence: universal love reigning in human love; universal Imagination reigning in the forms of the human organism; universal thoughts reigning mysteriously below the surface in human thoughts. He will grasp this threefoldness and he will recognize himself as an individually free human being within the reigning work of the gods in the cosmos, as a cosmic human being, an individual human being within the cosmic human being, working for the future of the

universe as an individual human being within the cosmic human being. Out of the signs of the present time he will re-enliven the ancient words: 'Know thou thyself!'"

Steiner then elucidated this threefold connection still further: "In the substance of the universe there works and is and lives the spirit which streams from the heights and reveals itself in the human head; the force of Christ working in the circumference, weaving in the air, encircling the earth, works and lives in the system of our breath; and from the inmost depths of the earth rise up the forces ("the creative activity of the Father") which work in our limbs."

To make all these revelations available not only as knowledge but also as a powerful stimulus and guidance for the anthroposophical work Steiner expressed them in verse form in the Foundation Stone Meditation. But its content was more than revelations. As Steiner explained to his audience, the words of the Meditation "were spoken to you ... in accordance with the will of the spiritual world" while "the words of self-knowledge of man [come] from the spirit of our time." There was nothing arbitrary even in the structure of the meditation: "our verses ... are inwardly organized through and through in accordance with the realm of spirit and soul." It had to be rightly taken in and understood: "Then you will have in the inner rhythm what ... the spiritual world is bringing to us to raise our hearts, to illumine our thinking, to give wings and enthusiasm to our willing."

The Meditation was concluded by the reference to "the turning point of time, when out of the darkness of night and out of the darkness of human moral feeling, shooting like light from heaven, was born the divine being who had become the Christ, the spirit being who had entered into humankind." And it ended with the direct appeal to this being:

*O Light Divine,
O Sun of Christ!
Warm Thou
Our Hearts,
Enlighten Thou
Our Heads,
That good may become
What from our Hearts we would found
And from our Heads direct
With single purpose.*

Steiner called this Meditation "that dodecahedral Foundation Stone of love which is shaped in accordance with the universe and has been laid into the human realm." And he made it absolutely clear as to where specifically it had been laid and for what purpose: "Let us ever remain aware of this Foundation Stone for the Anthroposophical Society, formed today. In all that we shall do, in the outer world and here, to further, to develop and to fully unfold the Anthroposophical Society, let us preserve the remembrance of the Foundation Stone which we have today lowered into the soil of our hearts."

Thus by laying the Foundation Stone into the hearts and souls of the members of the future Anthroposophical Society through reading to them the Meditation, Steiner considered the Society actually formed. Now we can understand his intentions and thinking behind the whole process of founding (re-founding) of the Anthroposophical Society. For him the Statutes and their acceptance were necessary, both administratively and spiritually, matters without which the Anthroposophical Society could not be founded. But laying a foundation stone for a future enterprise, in this case a vital spiritual foundation for what the Anthroposophical Society wanted to be and without which all other arrangements would not work, was a completely different matter. It was "the strong foundations of

our soul existence ... so that in the future working of the Anthroposophical Society we may stand on this firm Foundation Stone."

This Foundation Stone was, in this case, a prerequisite and as such had to be a starting point of the foundation process. Whether a future enterprise would actually be built, completed and become fully functional, was, again, a different matter which depended on many factors. For instance, the first Goetheanum, as we know, was never completed before it met its violent and final end, but this did not negate the necessity and significance of the Foundation Stone which was laid in its foundation.

In the case of the Foundation Stone Meditation, as we noted earlier, it was not limited exclusively to the Anthroposophical Society. Its prime object was a human being whose soul was the soil into which it was laid and where it was supposed to be cultivated and become effective for the goodness of mankind, as Steiner wanted it to be: "On this Foundation Stone shall be erected the building whose individual stones will be the work achieved in all our groups by the individuals outside in the wide world."

Steiner summarized this inner work with the Meditation as follows: "Let us seek in the threefold being of man, which teaches us love, which teaches us the universal Imagination, which teaches us the universal thoughts; let us seek, in this threefold being, the substance of universal love which we lay as the foundation, let us seek in this threefold being the archetype of the Imagination according to which we shape the universal love within our hearts, let us seek the power of thoughts from the heights which enable us to let shine forth in fitting manner this dodecahedral Imagination which has received its form through love! Then shall we carry away with us from here what we need." And then: "With it let us warm our souls, and with it let us enlighten our souls. Let us cherish this warmth of soul and this light of soul which out of good will we have planted in our hearts today."

As we see, this inner work with the Foundation Stone Meditation is highly individual and its success depends entirely on one's abilities and dedication. Steiner was very clear about that: "We can work rightly with words such as these, which are heard coming from the Cosmic Word, if we arrange them in our own soul in such a way that they cannot depart from us again." He also gave specific advice regarding this work and pointed out some results it might bring: "You will find, my dear friends, that if you pay attention to the inner rhythms that lie in these verses, if you then present these inner rhythms to your soul and perform a suitable meditation within yourself, allowing your thoughts to come to rest upon them, then these sayings can be felt to be the speaking of cosmic secrets in so far as these cosmic secrets are resurrected in the human soul as human self knowledge."

But the main thing for Steiner was, as always, that any success and effectiveness of inner individual work should result in universal goodness as he pointed out to his auditors after he read to them the Meditation once again before the end of that vital meeting on the Christmas day of 1923: "My dear friends, hear it as it resounds in your own hearts! Then will you found here a true community of human beings for Anthroposophia [another reference to this Being! – IZ]; and then will you carry the spirit that rules in the shining light of thoughts around the dodecahedral Stone of love out into the world wherever it should give of its light and of its warmth for the progress of human souls, for the progress of the universe."

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So the Statutes constituted an external framework of the new Anthroposophical Society and their acceptance signified its formal and actual foundation. While the Foundation Stone Meditation was a spiritual foundation – both for the new Society and for all future work to be carried out by anthroposophists from now on. Its laying in

the hearts of anthroposophists – ultimately by anthroposophists themselves! – had no formal or external features as it was put forward to them as an appeal and food for their souls. But apart from this Meditation there was another spiritual ingredient of the Christmas Conference which also constituted its integral part.

It was a course of evening lectures given by Steiner and entitled *World History in the Light of Anthroposophy*. He characterised it as follows: "In the evening lectures during the Christmas Conference I have spoken about manifold impulses present in historical development so that your hearts might be opened to take in spiritual impulses which still have to stream into the earthly world and are not taken from the earthly world itself." Steiner wanted to put the Anthroposophical Movement with all its events into a proper historical-evolutionary-spiritual context for anthroposophists and also, in line with the main intention of his rescue deed, to enhance the awareness of their connection to the spiritual world.

Now we can come to the final part of the Conference which concerned the future tasks, intentions and actual work. Steiner made it abundantly clear that what he had intended to do was not limited to the Christmas Conference. At the Conference only the foundation was laid and some prerequisite conditions were created but the main work would have to start after the Conference. From Steiner's perspective it can be said that at the Christmas Conference the first rescue deed was performed which started a long-term rescue operation. His next major task and deed was the creation of the School of Spiritual Science, among many other tasks and undertakings that his rescue operation entailed and that he continuously set for himself. However their ultimate success depended on the contributions which anthroposophists and their newly founded Society would have to make into their common and now inseparable task and work. So it was natural that Steiner spoke about what is required of them on various occasions during the Conference but particularly as it was coming to a close.

The anthroposophical work had always been a two-prong activity – outward, external and inward, internal, and in this case too Steiner addressed himself to both. The main pending external task and undertaking was of course the building of the new Goetheanum of which Steiner spoke on the day of the first anniversary of the tragic destruction of the old one. Chronologically, we should have reported it now, but as it happened we discussed it much earlier in our discourse. Sometimes the narrative prevails over the narrator and dictates to him the course of events. That is what happened in this case which caused the chronological discrepancy in our reporting of this event. But we shall come to it now again conveying what Steiner said at the end of that day regarding the Goetheanum – not its outer form this time but its Spirit.

Speaking of how the old Goetheanum was "snatched away from our physical perception by a Herostratos-deed" he said: "The Spirit of this Goetheanum, if our will is truly upright and honest, cannot be taken from us." He then appealed to his audience to vow "to keep faith with that Spirit for whom, over ten long years, we were permitted to build this abode. Then, my dear friends, when this inner vow flows from our heart in all honesty and uprightness, when we can transform the pain and suffering into the impulse for doing deeds, then shall we transform the sorrowful event into a blessing. The pain cannot diminish because of this, but it behoves us to find out of this very pain the incentive to act, the incentive to do deeds in the spirit."

Then came a moment which was filled with true pathos and which was introduced and accompanied by Steiner's solemn words: "My dear friends, you greeted me this evening by standing in memory of the old Goetheanum. You are living in the memory of this old Goetheanum. Let us stand once more as a sign that we vow to work on in the Spirit of the Goetheanum with whatever best forces we can find in the image of our inner human being. Indeed, so be it. Amen."

These words were followed by the exhortation which concluded that memorable penultimate day of the Conference: "Thus let us continue, my dear friends, as long as we are able, in accordance with the will that unites our human souls with the souls of the gods with whom we wish to keep faith in the spirit, in the spirit out of which we sought this faith with them at a certain moment in our lives, at that moment when we sought the spiritual wisdom of the Goetheanum. Let us understand how to keep this faith."

What follows now can be called Steiner's appeals, admonitions, exhortations or expectations addressed to the delegates of the Christmas Conference. Many of them were repeated, or added to, on various occasions after the Conference, when Steiner spoke to anthroposophists in different places about what took place there. They all amounted to the new tasks for anthroposophists and for their new Society. We convey them here for three reasons. In the first instance, they have to be reported as an inseparable part of the events which we describe. As such they are important for understanding what Steiner expected from anthroposophists to make it possible for his intentions and deeds to bear fruit.

Then, historically, it is important to know what happened to those tasks and expectations following the Christmas Conference. Have they been fulfilled and what fruit have they born? If not, then why? Finally, how do they relate to the present? How do anthroposophists of today treat them? Do they have any relevance for them and for the current Anthroposophical Society or have they become obsolete and part of history? All these questions go beyond the remit of our discourse and therefore no attempt to answer them will be made here. But they should undoubtedly be of great interest to historians of the Anthroposophical Movement and most definitely to anthroposophists themselves.

So we shall begin reporting Steiner's appeals to anthroposophists with the one that concerns what should be now their prime task: "we must reach the point at which we can feel in all our deeds that we are connected with the spiritual world. This is the very aspect which must be different in the Anthroposophical Society from any other possible association in the present time."

If anthroposophists failed in their responsibility towards the spiritual world by not permeating with the spiritual impulses their deeds in the world this would be evident to the world and reflected in its attitudes towards them: "We shall only be taken seriously if at every moment in whatever we do we feel responsible towards the spiritual world. We must know that the spiritual world wants to achieve a certain thing with mankind at this particular moment in historical evolution; it wants to achieve this in the most varied realms of life, and it is up to us clearly and truly to follow the impulses that come from the spiritual world. ...it is the only beneficial way. Therefore we shall also only come to terms among ourselves if at every opportunity we steep ourselves in whatever impulses can come out of the spiritual world." And Steiner reminded his audience of the role these impulses had played in the earthly evolution: "The proper impulse for what must now go forth from Dornach must, as I have emphasized from various angles over the last few days, be an impulse arising not on the earth but in the spiritual world. Here we want to develop the strength to follow the impulses coming from the spiritual world. ... Everything that has hitherto borne the earthly world in the right way has had its source in the spiritual world. And if we are to achieve something fruitful for the earthly world, we must turn to the spiritual world for the appropriate impulses."

This necessitated a new task which was of a particular concern to Steiner: "We must be absolutely clear about the fact that our Society, before all others, will be given the task of combining the greatest conceivable openness with true and genuine esotericism." And he pointed out the reason why the Anthroposophical Society was uniquely placed to fulfil this task: "The difference must be that out of the strength of

anthroposophy itself it is possible to combine the greatest conceivable openness with the most genuine and inward esotericism. And in future this esotericism must not be lacking even in the most external of our deeds. There is in this field still a lot to learn from the past ten years." And Steiner was not hesitant to be more specific: "How can we combine full openness with the profoundest, most serious and inward esotericism? To achieve this it will be necessary to banish from our gatherings in the future anything which smacks in any way of the atmosphere of a clique. Anthroposophy does not need the atmosphere of a clique. When hearts truly understand anthroposophy they will beat in unison without the need for heads to knock together."

Openness is not some lofty declaration but a demand of our time even where it concerns profound esoteric matters: "Even if [the Anthroposophical Society] wanted to, it could not reject this characteristic of openness which I have been emphasizing so strongly. ... For if out of some leaning to sympathy we were to decide today to work only inwardly with our groups, ... if we were not to concern ourselves with the public at large, we would discover that there would soon be an increasingly inimical concern for us on the part of the public."

Both openness and esotericism of the new Society were declared and reflected, as we know, in its Statutes, as a public nature of all its publications and as the establishment of the School of Spiritual Science. Steiner emphasized the latter on various occasions and in different ways, like "This [the School] will make it possible for the esoteric impulses that ought to be given to the Anthroposophical Society to actually be given to it." and "The fundamental feature of what will be at work with regard to the three Classes, which are built on the foundation of the Anthroposophical Society, which in its turn is entirely public – this fundamental feature in the working of the three Classes will be, of course, the spiritual-scientific content."

In this respect the development by anthroposophists of a scientific method of work was of a particular concern to Steiner: "it will be of the greatest importance that a truly anthroposophical method should be made customary in the different branches of scientific life by those individuals who are called to these branches within our anthroposophical circles. Indeed, seen from a certain point of view, this is of the utmost importance." And he explained why: "If it should become possible for anthroposophy to give to the different branches of science impulses of method which lead to certain research results, then one of the main obstacles to spiritual research existing in the world will have been removed. That is why it is so important for work of the right kind to be undertaken in the proper anthroposophical sense." Very importantly, this work should be apparent to those outside the Anthroposophical Society: "A scientific impulse will have to emanate from the Anthroposophical Society. This must be made evident at the moment when we want to take the Anthroposophical Society into entirely new channels."

But to develop a scientific method of spiritual research was not the only quality that was required of anthroposophists: "An important role will have to be played by the capacities that lie in the feelings and in those of direct perception of the esoteric and occult, and by moral qualities and so on." And at the end of the Conference Steiner spoke of the need to develop the same inner capacity, inner quality of which he spoke at the very beginning: "The most important thing of all is the mood of soul we bear away with us, a mood of soul for the spiritual world that gives us the certainty." And this certainty would be based on a firm foundation: "In Dornach a central point for spiritual knowledge will be created."

Now this working out of the spirit, in collaboration with the spiritual world, required another important quality of which Steiner spoke as follows: "My dear friends, this encourages me to point out that the impulses we are to bear away with

us from this Conference must be linked to a great sense of responsibility. ...the great responsibility that is now incumbent on us as a result of this Conference." This responsibility had several aspects and one of them was connected with Steiner's wish to divulge to anthroposophists some spiritual truths which were consequential and even sometimes tragic. After one such occasion at the Conference Steiner said: "Thus a glimpse like this into the spiritual world bears witness to a strong sense of responsibility for the task of man. And here in Dornach there must be a place where it is possible to speak, to those who wish to listen, about every important direct experience of the spiritual world. ... If Dornach is to fulfil its task, then it must be a place where human beings can hear openly about what is going on historically in the spiritual world and about the spiritual impulses which then enter into the world of nature and govern it. Human beings must be able to hear in Dornach about genuine experiences, genuine forces and genuine beings of the spiritual world. This is where the School of true Spiritual Science must be. ... In Dornach it must be possible to win the strength, spiritually, to look the spiritual world in the eye, to learn about the spiritual world." And this most definitely would bear fruit: "If we can face up to this in our soul in all earnestness during this Conference, then this Christmas Conference will send a strong impulse into our souls which can carry them away to do strong work of the kind needed by mankind today..."

But at this Christmas Conference Steiner also had to speak about more mundane matters concerning the Anthroposophical Society which, however, were not less important. At one point he made a remark which could apply to the whole Conference: "Now that we are making a new beginning, should we not start afresh with new arrangements and disregard the old ones? Could we now give up the old ways and reorganize things starting from the roots?" At another point he was more specific: "So in future here in Dornach we shall fight for the truth, not fanatically but simply in an honest, straightforward love of the truth. Perhaps this will enable us to make good some of what has so sinfully been made bad in recent years." The following remark was also based on the past experience: "We wanted to make this particular Christmas Conference as fruitful as possible and do as much as we could to prevent everything from being watered down in general discussion."

One recent unfortunate episode prompted Steiner to address himself even to the issue of human behaviour and conduct: "... I count courtesy as something that ought to exist extensively within our Society. We need courtesy. ... We shall very urgently have to make it our task that courtesy is not the least of the unwritten paragraphs of our Statutes. We shall have to make very, very strenuous efforts in this direction. ... we shall succeed gradually in being truly courteous in every way ..." But human factor and human relations had always been of paramount importance to him. Thus when the issue regarding reports on local events that people would send for publication to Dornach was discussed, Steiner observed: "For us here the most interesting thing will always be the people themselves. We want to cultivate a human relationship with human beings and out of these human relationships we want to create something that will shine out even after it has gone through the process of being dipped in dreadful printer's ink." At the social gathering at the end of the Conference in his words of welcome Steiner said: "There will always be a need in our Society for human being truly to find human being, for heart to find heart, and for soul to find soul."

Concluding our report on this Christmas Conference, we have every reason to believe that Steiner's experience of it was positive and he was satisfied both with its content and outcome. This was how he summarized it for the delegates: "Every day we have had to walk past the sad ruins of the Goetheanum. But as we have walked up this hill, past these ruins, I think that in every soul there has also been the content of what has been discussed here and what has quite evidently been understood by

our friends in their hearts. From all this the thought has emerged: It will be possible for spiritual flames of fire to arise, as a true spiritual life for the blessing of mankind in the future, from the Goetheanum which is being built anew. They shall arise out of our hard work and out of our devotion. The more we go from here with the courage to carry on the affairs of anthroposophy, the better have we heard the breath of the spirit wafting filled with hope through our gathering."

Steiner again reminded anthroposophists of their unique position regarding the spiritual world which should inwardly empower them: "In hearing the voice from the land of the spirit you must develop the strong courage to bear witness to this voice, for you have begun to awaken; courage will keep you awake; lack of courage alone could lead you to fall asleep." And even the pain, past or future, should not weaken them but make them stronger: "Certainly it should never occur to us to feel anything but the deepest pain and the deepest sorrow about what happened to us a year ago, But let us not forget that everything in the world that has any stature has been born out of pain.* So let us transform our pain so that out it may arise a strong and shining Anthroposophical Society by dint, my dear friends, of your work."

Steiner concluded the Conference with these encouraging words: "And so, my dear friends, bear out with you into the world your warm hearts in whose soil you have laid the Foundation Stone for the Anthroposophical Society, bear out with you your warm hearts in order to do work in the world that is strong in healing. Help will come to you because your heads will be enlightened by what you all now want to be able to direct in conscious willing. Let us today make this resolve with all our strength. And we shall see that if we show ourselves to be worthy, then a good star will shine over that which is willed from here."

Now in our reporting on the Christmas Conference we presented mainly Steiner's views and position. It should not surprise the reader as the Conference itself was Steiner's initiative and deed. But now we can ask: What about the recipients of his deed? What was their attitude and reaction to it? What were their thoughts and feelings? What took place in their hearts and souls to which Steiner appealed so passionately? And, most importantly, what was their perception and understanding of what took place there?

What happened in this respect outwardly we know from the Conference proceedings, the end result of which was an overall approval and acceptance of what was suggested by Steiner and, finally, the foundation of the new Anthroposophical Society. It is much more difficult to assess what was taking place in people's hearts and minds. Of course some of the participants wrote, years later, their recollections of the event, but it is rather difficult, perhaps it was as difficult for their authors as well, to distinguish between hindsight and what really took place in their souls at the time. So we decided to quote just one testimony for its [sober and objective approach to the subject](#). It is not so much a recollection as it is a reflection written twenty years after the event by the closest and most trusted collaborator of Steiner's, Marie Steiner:

"To give a description of the Christmas Foundation Conference is perhaps one of the most difficult tasks one can set oneself. It is barely possible, with our limited

* This and Steiner's earlier statement that "we can transform the pain and suffering into the impulse for doing deeds" were based not only on his life experience but also on deep spiritual insights. However, to those unfamiliar with Steiner's teachings these and similar statements might sound like some platitudes or preaching. Therefore, the author is always pleased when he comes across instances of Steiner's statements being corroborated by ordinary life experiences of other people, particularly by renowned personalities. In this case such a personality is a great British actor Laurence Olivier: "I learnt that great suffering could sometimes implant in some mysterious way an unexpected strength. I have managed to cling to that belief throughout my life, and in any really appalling circumstances it has given me a small, narrow shelf that could afford me a moment's rest, a borrowed moment of strength like the loan of oxygen that we feel on taking a deep breath."

insight, to gain an overall view of the impulse and power behind that event. It represents the most mighty endeavour of a teacher of mankind to lift his contemporaries out of their own small selves and awaken in them a conscious will to be allowed to become tools serving the wise guides of the universe."

And there was one contemporary, even instantaneous, account which we cannot ignore. It took the form of words of gratitude addressed to Steiner 'on behalf of the members' by one of them, Herr Werbeck, at the end of the Conference. This is of a particular interest to us because of its immediacy. We shall quote from this address those words which can be construed as answers to the above questions:

"Dear and greatly respected Dr Steiner! Dear friends! There is no other way for this Conference, so immensely meaningful for our Society and our Movement, to end except in an outpouring of deeply moved gratitude to the one whose work of love on the earth has brought us all together here. ... Words, addresses, resolutions and all the rest are, measured against our Conference, nothing but outdated, cheap requisites of the cultural life that is collapsing all around us. ... If we understand him [Dr Steiner] aright, then we know that for us anthroposophists the hour has come when we must set the deed of gratitude in the place of the word of gratitude. We must requite his great, his immeasurably great deed of love with whatever deed of gratitude our puny strength can muster. ... We know that this has been a turning point for our further destiny. What we are permitted to experience through his deed of love is incalculably significant. ... And we know, however weak our forces, that our deeds of gratitude can flow into his great deeds. And therefore we also know that they can flow into the plan for salvation that is given to mankind today."

It would have been unjustifiable and unfair to expect from the participants to grasp the content of the Christmas Conference, in its totality or in details which were, from beginning to end, unexpected and profound requiring time and contemplation for their true understanding. Perhaps it is even less justifiable to find concrete signs of such understanding in the above address, heartfelt and almost spontaneous. It is more justifiable to ask whether such understanding came later, from the participants themselves or from later generations of anthroposophists. However, hindsight allows us to make one observation. What Herr Werbeck expressed in his words was sincere and true for all anthroposophists, present and future. But it was also true in a different sense: They saw and see their "deeds of gratitude" mainly as external ones and not directed at themselves, and "the salvation that was given" at the Christmas Conference as mainly given to mankind and not to them.

Let Steiner's pregnant reply to Herr Werbeck, which concluded the Conference, will also conclude our reporting of it: "My dear friends! I could not have said many of the things I have had to say during this Conference in the form in which I said them, and similarly I could not accept the kind words of our dear friend Werbeck, if I were to relate all this to a single weak individual. For actually in our circles these things should not be related to a mere individual. Yet, my dear friends, I know that I have been permitted to say what has here been said, for it was said in full responsibility looking up to the Spirit who is there and who should be and will be the Spirit of the Goetheanum. In that Spirit's name I have permitted myself over the last few days to say a great many things which ought not to have been put so forcefully had they not been expressed while looking up to the Spirit of the Goetheanum, to the good Spirit of the Goetheanum. So allow me, please, to accept these thanks in the name of the Spirit of the Goetheanum for whom we want to work and strive and labour in the world."

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Before proceeding with his discourse, the author wishes to discuss one relevant issue which perturbed him in the past and made him struggle with it till he finally resolved it to his satisfaction. He now wishes to share it with the reader who will be familiar with it, but might not consider it to be an issue. It is Steiner's membership and presidency of the Anthroposophical Society.

Let us start with some general considerations. When a person develops some ideas or even teachings and then an organisation is formed to promote them, it seems only natural that this person becomes its leader. Often such a person himself creates an organisation to promote his ideas. There are many examples of this in public life, and we can refer to the ultimate case of international proportions when an individual, Lenin, became head of the Soviet government with the whole country, Russia, at his disposal to impose and realize his political, social, economic and cultural ideas. The main factor in all such examples is that the creator of ideas is in charge of their promotion and implementation.

With Steiner it was the other way round. He became a leader of a spiritually based (theosophical) organisation before he developed his own spiritual (anthroposophical) teachings, and it was while being a member and leader of this organisation that he developed them. But as soon as he did it, i.e. laid the foundation of anthroposophy – wrote basic anthroposophical books, gave major courses of anthroposophical lectures and built up a receptive audience and faithful following – the Anthroposophical Society was formed but without Steiner even being its member, never mind its leader!

The author did not have any problems with this because he knew that conventional notions, particular here, were not applicable to Steiner. Even for ordinary understanding it is clear that spiritual research and an administrative leadership of an organisation are incompatible due to their nature and to the amount of work each task requires. It is obvious that the former which can be done only by some special individuals should not be sacrificed to the latter which can be carried out by other people as well. Not only is it unique, but the importance of the spiritual research is overwhelming compared to any other earthly activity. Besides, without the results yielded by this research there would have been nothing to nurture and administer.

But from the spiritual perspective, even with our ordinary comprehension, the objections against combining these two activities are even stronger. If an initiate has a spiritual task, and particularly a mission like Steiner, he should not involve himself in earthly affairs. They are not part of his task. Besides they might entangle him in such situations that might impair or even compromise his task. In Steiner's case his mission was to deliver the Divine Message and not to administer it. His role was that of a teacher and not of an administrator.

When the author learned of the circumstances of Steiner's becoming a member of the Theosophical Society and the General Secretary of its German Section in 1902 which he described earlier in his discourse, he understood them and Steiner's decision raised no questions. While his non-membership of the newly formed in 1912 Anthroposophical Society was, in view of the above considerations, only natural. The question arose when Steiner became its member and President at the Christmas Conference of 1923.

The author did not know sufficiently the history of the Anthroposophical Society to understand this move which contradicted all he knew and felt as being right for Rudolf Steiner and his mission. Especially after he came across Steiner's dramatic testimony in his letter to Annie Besant, the President of the Theosophical Society: "One thing I should like to say to you. It is your trust alone which enables me to hold out in my post of general secretary of the German section; for what I have had to endure for years in this position is bitter, and it is only to avoid being called

sentimental that I do not say, it is martyrdom." This was a new factor which added to the author's miscomprehension causing him to ask, again and again, the same question addressed to Steiner: "Dr Steiner, why have you done this?"

But Dr Steiner was not around to answer this question so the author tried to answer it himself. How? Obviously Steiner had his reasons for doing what he did. But what were they? What motivated him? The author tried to understand Steiner's thinking behind his action – not by trying to speculate about it but by basing his understanding on the facts. But at the time he did not have any relevant facts which could help him and did not even know where he could get them. So he continued to live with his question.

However the situation gradually changed as the author became more acquainted with the issue. But nothing prepared him for reading, for example, the following astounding statement by Steiner: "Since 1912, particularly since 1918 my real intentions were constantly blunted by the Society." "Since 1912" was virtually from day one of the existence of the Anthroposophical Society, and "particularly since 1918" was when after the WWI anthroposophy ventured into the world with its social and other innovative ideas which opened a new phase in the development of the Anthroposophical Movement.

Of course every phenomenon, especially the statement as drastic as this, should be seen in its proper context; nevertheless it reflected a factual situation which required action, or reaction. And it could only be as drastic – either to distance oneself from this paralysing obstacle to the task in hand or to transform it into a helpful tool to facilitate it. It took the author some time to ascertain the relevant facts pertaining to the situation and to understand Steiner's corresponding considerations and actions which he subsequently shared with the reader in this discourse. And he was satisfied that Steiner, in taking his drastic actions in this new situation, neither forgot his former bitter experiences nor underestimated any possible consequences of his actions: "It has been an extremely difficult decision to make, for thereby in reality all things will have to become different, nor will it be very easy to make these thorough changes, after many of the habits that have crept in during these years."

Those difficulties may be termed practical. However serious and enormous they were, there were other consequences of Steiner's decision to which he referred in quite a different way: "I clearly see the risk to which I am exposing myself, and I believe I have to expose myself to it." Steiner spoke of this risk, or perhaps of only one aspect of it, publicly when he divulged that he took his decision of the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society without prior consultation with the spiritual world and its consent, whatever form this should have taken. The consequence of this, or risk, might have been that this action by Steiner would not have been approved by the Spiritual Powers, with one tangible result – the spiritual revelations coming to Steiner might have been curtailed both in scope and in depth.

Earlier we ventured to suggest a possibility of another type of risk an initiate might encounter by involving himself in earthly affairs: there is a danger that they, by their very nature, can compromise the spiritual mission entrusted to him – they can 'contaminate' it. What is meant here is that there might be some adverse influences which are beyond control by even an exalted individual and which he cannot stop. But now we wish to suggest the possibilities of such adverse influences which can and should be controlled by an individual, especially of a high spiritual standing, but might not be adequately done by him.

This brings us to almost the beginning of our discourse, to the chapter *The Divine Know-How*, where we spoke of Man's two-way communications with the physical world and of the need to have a control over them. In other words, everyone should have an ability to consciously control what comes to him from the world and what comes from him to the world.

This ability can be likened, perhaps in a rather crude and simplistic way, to a special technical device which performs a particular function. This device, a check valve, also known by some other names, allows fluid (liquid or gas) to flow through it in only one direction and prevents any back-flow. It is a very useful device which has wide industrial and domestic applications; for instance, in our toilets it prevents flushing water from getting into the clean water supply thus protecting it from contamination.

But, like many other useful devices, it is not a human invention – we have stolen this idea from nature. Long before contriving to do this, we had been supplied with check valves as integral parts of our organism. These are our heart valves which allow the flow of blood in one direction only. But apart from this biological type we also have another one. It is a mental valve; we are unaware of its existence and use it subconsciously and instinctively, to a greater or lesser extent. This valve is an ability to regulate the mental content which we let into our soul and also allow to go from us into the world. It develops and works differently in different people, but in most cases unsatisfactorily. But like with all other human activities, it has to become conscious in our time, i.e. what has been so far subconscious and instinctive we have to develop into a soul quality – a moral one.

This becomes infinitely more important if one also has an ability to communicate with the spiritual world. In either case we bear moral responsibility for the two-way traffic between us and these worlds, but at the same time we cannot ignore the different nature, consequences and responsibility whether it is limited to the physical world only or involves the spiritual as well. In the latter case there is a danger of not only distorting or compromising the spiritual content, but also of contaminating it with the improper physical one. Not to allow this to happen, an initiate has to have a very special quality which is different from that of clairvoyance. Everyone who is bestowed with the ability to communicate with both worlds should have highly developed mental, spiritual and moral check valves.

Steiner had them developed to the highest degree. But now, with the Christmas Foundation Conference, he included in his direct relationship with the spiritual world some other individuals – the members of the leadership of the General Anthroposophical Society and members of the School of Spiritual Science. He included them not because they had developed a clairvoyant ability, which would have made them personally and directly responsible to the spiritual world. Steiner included them for his own reasons, at his own risk and on his own responsibility to the spiritual world. Their own personal responsibility, which they undoubtedly had, was, in this respect, qualitatively different from his. Now any faults and imperfections in their mental check valves would inevitably have adverse consequences on those spheres of activities which were either exclusively Steiner's own or which he now shared with them. In any case, if something wrong came from those people it would adversely affect Steiner and his own work. What was more, if somebody who was publicly granted the status of 'esoteric' working directly out of the world of spirit and then did something wrong, it would inevitably tarnish and 'contaminate' this world.

This can be illustrated by a picture which we used earlier (page 32) and which we are going to reproduce here in a slightly modified form.

always had many tasks and most of them had been main. Of course there were new additional tasks now, which have to be spoken about in this discourse. And it would have been more comprehensive a picture if we were to speak also of the anthroposophists' new tasks as *they* saw and intended to pursue them. But in all fairness, they were hardly in a position to comprehend and formulate them at that stage, though Steiner expected them to be able to do so very soon. And one thing we know for sure: whatever their individual and collective tasks in connection with their membership of the General Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science were, their prime tasks did not originate from these organisations or from anything earthly, not even from Rudolf Steiner himself. They came from the spiritual world as it decreed that new spiritual impulses were to come now to mankind, and it was up to anthroposophists to decide whether they were willing and able, and to what extent, to facilitate this process.

As to Steiner's new tasks, which stemmed from the Christmas Conference, they were basically aimed at anthroposophists, but, organisationally, they were of course: to reform the Anthroposophical Society, on two levels: human/social and spiritual, both of which were mentioned by Steiner at the Christmas Conference.

The human/social sphere characterised by openness, direct human contacts at all levels of the Society, particularly between the leadership and rank-and-file members, and communication on all matters of common interest and concern should be the basis of the anthroposophical community whose aim was to serve humanity. To quote Steiner: "To this end it will be necessary that the needs which make themselves felt among our members should also really flow through the whole Society and finally unite in what is expected from the Executive at the Goetheanum." As to the latter, "it will make it its task to have an open heart and an understanding mind for all that the members strive to achieve." Furthermore, it "desires to establish a connection with the working in the Society as little as possible in paragraphs and programmes; it desires that the direct human element which can work individually even in detail, should come to quite general validity within the Society." The doors of 'the esoteric Vorstand' would be always open to the representatives of the national societies for taking part in its proceedings. The underlying human nature of even administrative matters was emphasised by the fact that every membership card of individual members was personally signed by Steiner. Communications and reports from local groups were of a particular importance and were encouraged – they would be published regularly in the new periodical *What is happening in the Anthroposophical Society* for circulation throughout the Society.

The spiritual level of reforming the Anthroposophical Society involved multiple tasks. To present some of them Steiner found it necessary to give, succinctly, both orally and in writing, a general background to the Conference which was, in a way, a summary of the history of the Anthroposophical Movement to date. He reminded the members of its initial stage of "small beginnings" when a few individuals "within the framework of the Theosophical Society came together to share in what was then presented in the special form of anthroposophy. All they wanted, to begin with, was to learn of anthroposophy and enable it to become fruitful in their lives." Hardly anybody outside this small circle of people concerned themselves with or had any knowledge of what was going on there. Many of those who made their way there found what they were looking for; others just left. "It all proceeded quietly and without disturbance from outside."

This peaceful and very fruitful existence continued for many years which enabled ardent anthroposophists "to rise from basic to higher truths." At that time "the fundamentals of anthroposophy were laid not only as a spiritual scientific system of knowledge but as a living impulse in many human hearts. ... Therefore it was natural for its activities to spread by-and-by to a wide variety of spheres of human life and

work." In the first instance it was art, and the most tangible and rewarding results were Steiner's mystery plays when anthroposophists were able to see in the outward artistic form what they hitherto only knew inwardly through their studies. But here again no one outside knew anything about this.

But then the situation changed with two major developments. First was the erection of the Goetheanum which declared to the world, loud and clear, the arrival of anthroposophy on the world stage. This declaration could not go unnoticed, whether for better or for worse. Then came to anthroposophy people from various walks of life, from the world of science and academia, who sought it not only for their personal spiritual needs but also for applying it to the fields of their professional activities. Thus anthroposophy, in one way or another, became known outside the small anthroposophical community.

But as anthroposophy walked into the world, anthroposophists were ill prepared to accompany it as its wise guardians or to respond adequately to the instances of adverse reaction of the world to this new arrival. Basically during the ensuing inevitable, unavoidable and, ultimately, necessary battles they behaved like inward looking pacifists who wanted to continue their untroubled existence in the backwater of the gratifying anthroposophical contemplations.

Steiner did not blame them for this. On the contrary, he showed every understanding of this attitude: "And who can say they were not fully justified in so thinking? ... They feel disturbed in their search if they encounter on all sides attacks on anthroposophy." At the same time the spiritual life of the present day required a different attitude and different activities which the Anthroposophical Society, whose task it was to promote anthroposophy in the world, was unable to deliver. Most importantly, it needed, if we may put it like this, 'anthroposophical warriors', spiritual, Michaelic* companions of anthroposophy capable of standing with, by and for it in the world. Past experience showed that knowledge of anthroposophy, even a profound one, that being 'very well versed' in its tenets was not enough for this task. One needed to develop very special spiritual and moral qualities and be brought into more intimate relations with the spiritual world. These could only be achieved through esoteric training. Hence Steiner's ultimate decision to reform the Anthroposophical Society under his presidency with the Esoteric School at its centre.

The Christmas Conference was the first step in that direction. Further steps were under way, but the success of the entire enterprise depended on the reciprocal actions of anthroposophists – on their concrete deeds and not just words. But deeds had to be preceded by full comprehension of the new situation which was not there yet as Steiner observed soon after the Conference:

"The full content of the Christmas Conference for the Founding of the General Anthroposophical Society was certainly not yet grasped in what the members experienced while they were gathered together at the Goetheanum. Only if, in the future, all those everywhere who love anthroposophy begin to feel that it is through the very fact of their putting into effect the inspirations coming from that conference that new anthroposophical life is coming into being, only then will its content really

* Archangel Michael, to whom there will be further references in the text, is a very important Being both in the Divine Hierarchy and in his relationship to humanity. Here we will only point to two aspects of his activity relevant to our discourse. His present mission, from 1879 for about 350 years, is the spiritual guidance of mankind and to be its Time Spirit. His task is to help Man to develop new consciousness, individual freedom and a new way of thinking – with heart. Also at the beginning of the 15th century he founded his supersensible School whose members are both spiritual beings of various ranks and human beings, incarnate and discarnate. The teachings of the School received their culmination at the beginning of the 19th century in preparation for the beginning of his rule. Many of discarnate human souls who were pupils of the School were thus prepared to find their way to anthroposophy during their next incarnation on earth.

have been grasped. If this were not so the conference would not have fulfilled its task."

That notwithstanding, "The very least part of all that took place can be counted as complete; rather must it be that new content continually flows into this Christmas Meeting through all that happens further in the Anthroposophical Society." To this end Steiner resolved, among other things, to send to the members, via the aforesaid periodical, apart from the reports of his activities, special weekly communications which were of two types. One was *Letters to the Members*. They were devoted mainly to the anthroposophical matters as they arose from the Christmas Foundation Conference, specifically to the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science. They also spoke of purely spiritual matters, of self-development and of the right way of working with anthroposophy in the world. But their overall objective, according to Steiner, was to "give a picture ... of the will that lived in this Christmas Meeting. This is our particular intention in the Letters to the Members."

The second type of communications were so-called *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*. These two different types of messages which in some cases were connected thematically but were otherwise united by their common source, the spirit, were Steiner's immediate actions to fortify the Society on the spiritual level.

The aim of the *Leading Thoughts* was to deepen anthroposophical knowledge and give anthroposophists guidance and help in their studies and anthroposophical activities. Another task was to contribute to a spiritual cohesion of the Anthroposophical Society when its members in different parts of the world would work, in their individual ways of course, with the same spiritual content. The *Thoughts* took the form of short aphoristic paragraphs which were numbered and published weekly in groups of three or four and were sometimes accompanied by an explanatory and facilitating letter.

When the *Thoughts* were later published in a book form, they were given two subtitles, *Anthroposophy as a Path of Knowledge* and *The Michael Mystery*, which reflect their contents. While the former might embrace the whole of anthroposophy, the latter points specifically to the mission and activities of the Archangel Michael. Thematically they were not new to what had been given by Steiner hitherto, but the spiritual depth of the contents was perhaps unparallel to what Steiner divulged previously. It was fully in keeping with his intention – to bring 'more anthroposophy' to anthroposophists and to immerse them in it. And that was what he was doing now through his *Leading Thoughts* – "the soul has been directed to the Beings of the spiritual kingdoms with whom man is connected from above" as it had never been done before.

Apart from these written communications to the members, Steiner gave a few lecture courses which were also related to the evens of the Christmas Conference. To begin with, we would like to mention two consecutive ones. The first one, *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres*, was given prior to the Christmas Conference – the last lecture took place just the day before the Conference commenced. The second one, *World History in the Light of Anthroposophy*, was concurrent with the Conference – in fact, it was part of it. And three days after the Conference Steiner gave the third course – *Rosicrucianism and Modern Initiation*.

These three different courses had one common theme which was of a particular importance in the context of the Christmas Conference. The theme can be given the title of the first course – *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres* which in a certain sense paved the way for the forthcoming School of Spiritual Science. Under this theme Steiner spoke about ancient and medieval Mysteries and about various Mystery Centres throughout human history up to the modern times where primeval and consequent spiritual knowledge, in one form or another, was given, cultivated and preserved. At one stage of human evolution this knowledge was lost to mankind,

but now came the time when it had to be revived, renewed and made, unlike in old times, publicly available. This process had already begun but, as it transpired at the Christmas Conference, it would now be taken a step further by the creation, for this purpose, a modern Mystery Centre.

One thing has to be clarified from the outset. The connection between those glorious and sublime phenomena of the past and what takes place today might seem to some readers far-fetched, and calling the School of Spiritual Science a modern Mystery Centre – pretentious and pompous. But there is no need to be distrustful or sceptical about this. Steiner himself never used this term with regard to his School of Spiritual Science (only his followers did, after him) and was very factual about it. So should we be in describing it. And we believe we are by being guided by the essence of the phenomena and not just by the names given to them. Mystery Centres are also known as Initiation Centres where initiates were prepared in the way that was appropriate at the time. Now the purpose of the new Anthroposophical Society and its School of Spiritual Science was, according to Steiner, absolutely the same: "through the work of the would-be active members, the Anthroposophical Society may become a true preparatory school for the school of Initiates." We hope this explains and justifies our usage of this ancient, lofty and somewhat 'mysterious' term in our modern context.

In preparation for the School to commence Steiner spoke about it on various occasions and of course some of his *Letters to the Members* were devoted exclusively to the School. But unlike with the Anthroposophical Society or the Goetheanum there was no official ceremony of inauguration of the School. Far from being jubilant or ceremonial but being thoroughly factual, Steiner was very realistic about it. Speaking a month later after the Christmas Conference about conditions for admission to the First Class of the School he said: "A great deal of what has been brought about by the Christmas Meeting has not yet come to clear consciousness. It remains to be seen whether this First Class can be established in actual fact."

Nevertheless Steiner laid the conditions for joining the School and invited members of the Anthroposophical Society to apply for membership of the School if they so wished and were prepared to take upon themselves the responsibilities it entailed. Then Steiner announced, as a matter of fact, that First Class studies would take place on such and such days, and the first lesson of the First Class was given on the 15th of February 1924. That was the beginning of Steiner's esoteric training of potential Initiates. This date and event may be considered as a commencement of the School of Spiritual Science to which 2190 members were admitted by Steiner. One of its important features was the obligations which its members took upon themselves and a sort of contractual relationship that they entered into with the School's leadership, a serious violation of which would lead to expulsion. This relationship and agreement was not formal of course but based on an understanding which one would naturally expect from the advanced anthroposophists aspiring for direct access to the spiritual world. Yet it was not forthcoming from "many who have applied for membership and have then become members" of the School, to the extent that Steiner had to admonish the members even while giving his esoteric Lessons. These admonishments were "repeatedly mentioned", sometimes with specific examples. The situation with the Anthroposophical Society seemed to be repeating itself with the School: "The attitudes hitherto frequently prevalent in the Anthroposophical Society can on no account be allowed to prevail further." Indeed: "A School as seriously esoteric as this can only be maintained if its members really do adhere to what has to be asked of them in the name of the spiritual powers who lead it." Twenty individuals were expelled from the School in the first seven months of its existence, but this failure to take seriously even intrinsically esoteric obligations was the manifestation of those, mentioned earlier, potential risk and danger to which

Steiner exposed himself by undertaking his 'rescue deed' without prior consent of the Spiritual Powers. But he was determent to persevere.

Now, historically, the School as such had its predecessors, and not only in ancient times but within the scope of Steiner's own spiritual activities. The latter were his Esoteric School which he had before Word War I and, in a different form, his seminal book *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?* This book is, in fact, an esoteric school for those who seek their way into the world of spirit on their own as it is a foundation for proper esoteric training. But in any case the School of Spiritual Science, with its three Classes and various Sections, was a completely new departure not only for Steiner but historically. This manifested itself most clearly in the fact that its physical existence, its objectives and functioning were announced publicly, that it was not secret or exclusive and was, ultimately, accessible to everyone who seriously sought to pursue the path to the spirit.

As to the content of the First Class Lessons, the author is not in a position morally and spiritually, to discuss it in any detail beyond what he, or rather Steiner, had already said in this discourse about the School of Spiritual Science. It is clear that they were aimed, on a par with the above *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?*, at individual's inner development and esoteric deepening or, as Steiner put it, "in short, cultivating the esoteric in these meetings."

When Steiner made an announcement about the First Class Lessons he also announced the commencement of another course of lectures, *Anthroposophy: An Introduction*. This title might be somewhat misleading. Judging by it, one might have an impression that Steiner wished to introduce anthroposophy to the enquirers as he did many times in his public lectures or, more fundamentally, in his earlier books. One might even assume, as he mentioned the gap that existed now between the 'old boys' in anthroposophy and the newcomers, that these lectures were aimed at the latter. But no, while announcing the course Steiner insisted that the members of the School of Spiritual Science, who, as a precondition of their membership, should be very well versed in anthroposophy, should also attend it. So it is important to know, even in a nutshell, what this course of lectures was about and why it was given at that particular time.

Steiner said about it: "I shall not, of course, read or recapitulate the book *Theosophy or Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, but I shall nevertheless endeavour to set before you the first principles, the foundations of anthroposophy." He did indeed do just that, but on a different level and with the different content that in the above or other earlier books or lectures. This new approach was necessitated by two changes – we may call the one external and the other internal – which took place in the passed two decades. The former was of the world and its attitude to anthroposophy which required a reciprocal change in presenting anthroposophy to it. The latter concerned the bearers of anthroposophy in the world, anthroposophists, First Class members. That change had not taken place yet and was not even nascent, but was necessary and expected by Steiner. It was with this in mind that Steiner delivered these lectures. We can put it like this: his earlier introduction was to anthroposophy as spiritual science for those who wished, in the first instance, to *know about* the spiritual reality; the present introduction was to the spiritual world as such for those who wished to *experience* the spiritual reality.

In respect of his intentions regarding the Christmas Conference Steiner gave another very important cycle of lectures. In fact it was eight lecture courses given in different countries and places under the common title *Karmic Relationship*. Karma as a spiritual phenomenon is central to human evolution and consequently should be investigated and studied in all its aspects. Therefore at the very inception of his anthroposophical activity, in the framework of the Theosophical Society, Steiner tried to introduce this subject not only theoretically but as a practical life tool. However, the

members at the time rejected his intention and endeavour. Still in the following years, he broached the karmic theme on different occasions and from different angles, but now, after the Christmas Conference, Steiner felt it necessary to present the subject in full scope.

The most extraordinary content of these lectures is the revelation of the incarnations, karma, intentions and deeds of numerous personalities some of whom are well known historical figures. In his descriptions Steiner was, as always, factual and impartial. He, literally, wrote new biographies of these individuals, so different from the ordinary ones written by conventional historians. If we compare the two, the latter look like they were written by the authors who decided to choose and describe one year in the life of their subjects as its totality, as if there had been nothing before or after. While Steiner depicted a succession of individuals' lives showing and explaining how things pertaining to them changed and metamorphosed from one to the next in a way unpredictable and unimaginable by our earthly thinking. This change includes individuals themselves – their abilities, interests, occupations, etc. Of a particular importance are karmic relationships between the individuals who repeatedly incarnate together, and these are subject to sometimes dramatic changes – sworn enemies might become best friends. There are always good and spiritually justified reasons for these changes and Steiner made the underlying factors behind them transparently clear; as well as revealing some deep driving motives and impulses which guide individuals through their successive lives.

It is not only that this karmic knowledge of individuals' lives makes them fascinating personalities in a new and deeper way. In many cases it gives us a true understanding of human history and, on the other hand, of our fellow human beings and even of ourselves.

Apart from individual karma there are karma and karmic relationships concerning collective entities and even spiritual phenomena. Of a particular importance and interest to us is what Steiner said in this respect of anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Society. Its members have come from different spiritual streams and it was important for them to be fully aware of this. We can now speak about it with some hindsight. Their different past influenced their present disposition of soul, attitudes and even behaviour which in many cases made it difficult for them to work together. These differences were historically predestined and necessary, but what united them in the course of anthroposophy was much higher than what divided them. But would even full knowledge and recognition of this make it easier or at all possible for them to overcome the 'human factor' in themselves? We shall speak about this at the end of our discourse.

However important the Christmas Conference and everything connected with it was, Steiner never stopped his 'normal' activities – giving lectures and lecture courses, meeting numerous people, giving help, advice and instructions, writing and keeping abreast with relevant current events in the world. In fact, his activities intensified to the level unparalleled not only to his usual punishing schedule but to any conceivable amount of work humanly possible. Let us have some statistics. In 272 days of his public activity in 1924 he gave 338 lectures and 68 addresses, took part in discussions and meetings giving suggestions and answering questions. At one time Steiner daily gave four completely different concurrent lecture courses (*Speech and Drama*, *Pastoral Medicine*, Lectures for the Priests of the Christian Community on the Apocalypse of John and *Karmic Relationships*) receiving at the same time numerous visitors. Speaking of which, just in the last three weeks of his public activity Steiner received about 400 visitors who came to him with their problems and questions.

Steiner was under tremendous pressure coming from two sides. From the outside it was not so much circumstances as before, but people. We do not mean in

this case their personal problems and requests, but their spiritual quests. Scientists, artists, doctors, teachers, farmers, theologians – all needed and wanted spiritual knowledge to nourish themselves and revitalise their professions. The Agricultural course, which we discussed earlier, was virtually imposed on Steiner and squeezed in by him between his other commitments. In addition to those scheduled, new lecture courses were promised and planned.

The other source of pressure was Steiner himself whose demands on himself were relentless. It is impossible to list here all that he had done in 1924, but three of his engagements should be mentioned here. One were the lectures given to the workers of the Goetheanum which might be better called question-and-answer sessions. Altogether they comprise eight volumes and cover extraordinary range of most interesting and diverse subjects dealt with by Steiner in a simple and illuminating way. The other two undertakings by Steiner involved him alone. In response to many requests Steiner started to write at the end of 1923 his autobiography which was published by weekly instalment in the periodical *Das Goetheanum*. He continued writing it even on his sickbed till the very end of his life. The other engagement was his work on the model of the second Goetheanum.

All in all, Steiner was stretching himself to the limit – to his limit. It is clear that such a 'lifestyle', especially of someone who was unwell, fragile and 63, as Steiner was at the time, could only be sustained by a special disposition of spiritual powers. Though in themselves they are unlimited their sphere of influence has its limitations. They do not interfere with the earthly, physical and physiological laws which they themselves set up. Physical immortality was not on their agenda – not yet at any rate. So there came a day when Steiner's physical forces snapped.

It happened on the 27th of September 1924. At the time more than a thousand members came to Dornach to attend Steiner's different courses. Those who came to his lecture on that day could not believe their eyes when they read a note saying that the lecture had been cancelled – nothing like this had ever happened before. But the next day, to everyone's relief, Steiner was again on the podium addressing his audience despite being visibly weak and fragile. As it was the Michaelmas Festival the lecture was devoted to Michael and was profound and full of meaning. When Steiner finished it and was leaving the room everyone stood up and watched silently as he left the room. Most of them had never seen him again as it was his last appearance in public. For the next six months, till his death, Steiner was confined to his bed in his studio where, by the still unfinished statue of the Representative of Man, he continued to pursue, against all odds, his tasks and his work.

The Third Event

Exhaustion was the main feature of Steiner's condition. But he was also seriously ill – he had a digestive disease, the first signs of which showed themselves at the very beginning of that year. It was clear that apart from treatment he urgently needed rest. Now he was forced into it against his will while before his will had forced him into action. He had very few visitors apart from daily visits by his doctors (Dr Ita Wegman virtually nursed him) and his secretary Guenther Wachsmuth. Though he was mostly alone in his room he was not isolated from the world, either the anthroposophical or the larger one.

On entering the studio Wachsmuth would find Steiner sitting in his bed reading or writing. Wachsmuth would read to him correspondence from all over the world and Steiner would dictate his replies, giving, in many cases, advice or instructions. He would also deal with various matters concerning the Anthroposophical Society, including the Second Goetheanum, and his relentless work, concerning mainly spiritual matters, continued even in the condition he was in. At the same time he

never stopped apprising himself of what was going on in the world and in various fields of cultural life. One way of doing it was giving Wachsmuth every few days an uneasy errand of going to bookshops which sold new and second-hand books and choosing for him those which were unknown and of interest to him. Upon receiving the books Steiner would go through every one of them selecting those which he would read later and sending for new ones if their quantity was insufficient.

Steiner was very much concerned that the anthroposophical life should continue uninterrupted by his illness and his inability to be among anthroposophists. Marie Steiner was a good example in this respect. Despite being not very well herself (she could hardly move because of the problems with her legs), she tirelessly continued her artistic work going on tours with eurythmists performing at different venues and countries.

Steiner's condition was unstable, with its ups and downs. At times Steiner firmly believed that he would recover, spoke of his future work and made plans. But destiny decided otherwise. On the 30th of March 1925 Steiner died.

His death ended the most remarkable life of a unique personality. As a human being and a teacher of humanity he was and is respected, loved, admired and even worshiped by a handful of his followers. To the rest of humanity he remains virtually unknown even today. Mankind as a whole is yet to discover Steiner and when, one day, it will grasp the significance of this individual and his unparalleled contribution to our civilisation – it will gasp. However, the author of this narrative, who allowed himself this involuntary remark, does not pretend to believe that his prediction might materialise anytime soon. In the meantime he will continue with his discourse in which Steiner's death has been intended to mark its chronological boundary. As its third significant event it deserves to be considered as fully and comprehensively as possible.

Steiner's death, as his life, had various implications, on different levels. But it immediately poses the questions highly relevant to our discourse because answering them is one of its main objectives: What did Steiner's death mean for his followers and what were its consequences? To have a more comprehensive picture of Steiner's death we shall look at it from three perspectives: from the perspective of those who live today, from Steiner's own perspective and from the perspective of anthroposophists who were Steiner's contemporaries.

* * *

To clarify today's perspective, it is that of those who, irrespective of their attitude to anthroposophy, observe and try to understand those hundred-year old events objectively, factually and impartially. Thus, death being a common and natural phenomenon, we shall address, specifically, two aspects of Steiner's death, or rather of its consequences, which in themselves are also common but in the case of Steiner they were anything but.

The first one is Steiner's legacy which, as would be true for any creative person, consists of three parts: of the person's actual work which he brought into the world during his lifetime; of the work that he started but was unable to complete; and, finally, of what we may call his potential work which is twofold: the ideas and intentions which he conceived and hoped to develop and implement in the future, and those not yet brought to his full consciousness but which his genius contained as its potential and would have undoubtedly been able to realise had he lived long enough (we can think, for instance, of music or poetry which deceased composers or poets took with them into the other world). It is the third part which is of interest to us here.

In the first instance, it constituted in Steiner one complete whole, indistinguishable, unlike in other people, between actual and conscious and potential and yet unconscious, ideas and intentions. What he was able to contribute to world culture was present in his consciousness as its special content ready to be imparted at any time if an opportunity was there. This was possible because, apart from the extraordinary amount of conventional knowledge which was not the main source of his contribution, Steiner had won a permanent access to its main source – a boundless spiritual wisdom which he knew how to use and deliver in the form of human knowledge. Thus if, hypothetically speaking, it would have been possible for Steiner to convey that content for 24 hours every day we would have had today, in addition to the 350 volumes of his published works, an unimaginable amount of further spiritual wisdom of incredible variety. So all this Steiner took with him into the spiritual world on the 30th of March 1925 as an undelivered part of its gift to mankind. But this would have been the case whenever Steiner would have died, at whatever age.

However, with the second aspect which we wish to consider, the time of Steiner's death is important not in potential or hypothetical terms but in those of concrete earthly affairs. For our second aspect is to explore what impact, if any, the time of his death, whether it was 'timely' or 'untimely', had on the living world.

But let us begin with some general considerations. Thus, generally speaking, death in most cases is always untimely for those who experience it as a loss. But we are talking here not of an emotional or private effect of death but of its public impact. When death, which has such an impact, happens naturally or expectedly and we understand its public consequences, even if they were unpredictable and unexpected, we accept as inevitable. But if they do not visibly follow from the death, we regard them as a coincidence unconnected with it. However, when death is not inevitable and happens unexpectedly we regard it as untimely and its public consequences, whatever their nature, as 'a stroke of fate'. It means that though we can clearly see the causal connection between the two, the timing and reasons pertaining to them remain a mystery to us.

These considerations of ours might seem convoluted and far-fetched, but they are not. They are necessary if we wish to stand on firm ground with our understanding of Steiner's death and its consequences. To facilitate this we shall illustrate them with some examples before finally coming to our focal point, i.e. Steiner.

Our examples are well known and had a significant impact, but the readers, no doubt, can supplement them with their own. The author has chosen his from the public life of the countries where he happened to live and which he knows best – Russia and the United Kingdom. The first is the death in 1924, at the age of 54, of the founder of Russian communism and of the Soviet state and its first leader Vladimir Lenin. It can be defiantly said that had he lived longer, even for one more year, the history of Russia, and consequently of the world, would have been different. In what way, is another matter, but definitely different.

Another example is the death in 1953, at the age of 74, of Lenin's most unlikely successor who never would have become one had Lenin lived for at least another year. The successor was Joseph Stalin, and his death averted, virtually by a few days, another, within a decade, tragedy of the Jewish people – their second Holocaust which he had prepared and intended to carry out. As death of a dictator and despot, it perforce had other positive consequences, both national and international, changing the course the country was treading under his leadership. But it is a remarkable example of how just one 'stroke of fate' delivered on time can so drastically and dramatically change the course of events and, in this case, avert the barbaric act of elimination of the Soviet Jews. (it is interesting to note that Hitler's

death when it occurred had no consequences for anything or anyone apart from himself.)

The reference to these two Soviet leaders prompts the author to mention one historic fact which is, perhaps, not totally irrelevant to our discourse, at least to its spirit. For someone who not only lived under Russian communism, but also deeply experienced its nature, it was clear that it could not be overcome and demolished from the outside – it could only be done from the inside. And this is exactly what has happened. Russian communism has been destroyed by three outstanding communists and country's leaders in three stages: Stalin killed its spirit, Khrushchev killed its soul and Gorbachev killed its body.

Our British example is the tragic death in 1997, at the age of 36, of Princess Diana. To those who followed her life in the preceding period – and with its ubiquitous media coverage it was impossible not to – it was clear that it inexorably led to one particular outcome which, had it happened, would have had serious consequences for the British public and political life. The outcome was – if not a complete destruction of, then at the very least serious damage to the Royal Family, tarnishing its image and undermining and changing its role in British life and society as we know it.

We are not passing any judgements on Diana's life, or on her character, or on that situation as a whole. We are just stating the facts pertaining to one particular aspect of it. Pertaining to it was also a mixture of unconscious and irrational emotions and conscious and concerted efforts of various individuals. But while observing it at the time one could not help asking a question which went far beyond this or that individual: Is it all just a means whereby British history is saying goodbye to one of its prominent players, the British Monarchy? Diana's sudden and tragic death brought the answer: Not yet.

Now we have to ask some other questions. What is behind the timing of these three deaths in our examples? What was the reason for it? These questions only make sense if one believes, or still better – knows, that there should be a reason and that it had a spiritual origin. Such a conviction can only be based on the anthroposophical understanding of world events of which those deaths – any deaths – are a part. As was Steiner's death, which is our main concern here.

From what we know of its physical causes – a severe fatigue as a result of overwork without proper rest and sufficient sleep, of constant pressure of responsibilities and concerns without any relief and of a serious illness – it is more than enough not to regard Steiner's death as totally unexpected and, in medical terms, 'untimely'. But in the context of the anthroposophical life at the time, of what was conceived and started, was given direction and was afoot at full speed, of what was expected and aspired to – in this context Steiner's death was most tragically untimely because it stopped all this in its tracks. In this sense we can say that it was 'a stroke of fate' and ask with regard to it the same questions we asked about our three examples.

Of course one can, and should, ask questions but it does not make one any wiser in trying to answer them if one does not know the relevant facts – the spiritual facts in these cases. But in one of them, in the case of Steiner's death, we are lucky thanks to Steiner himself, because he gave some indications in this respect. As early as 1907 he wrote in his Will referring to Marie Steiner (von Sivers at the time): "She herself is to look on my death as being in accordance with the wishers of higher powers and should on no account look on it as a riddle. These things occur in a context which must be respected, even if it is not understood at the time."

This should not surprise us. There has been nothing 'accidental' in Steiner's life which was devoted to his spiritual mission and thus was under the guidance of the higher spiritual powers. This included the major events of his life and most

definitely his death. So what can we learn about it from these words of Steiner's? One thing only: that it was not 'accidental', 'untimely' or 'a stroke of fate'. It was meant to be as and when it happened. As to the question 'Why?' Steiner's words also give an answer, of a sort; "Ask the higher powers." This we do not know how to do. But we can try and give our own answer. There is an ample scope of facts and information for both unrestricted speculations and for reasonable, logical and educated assumptions. Some anthroposophists indulged in both and gave their respective answers. But the present author shall not do this. He prefers to stay with the facts as they are known to him and understood by him. The reasons behind higher powers' decisions are not among them.

But one fact crucial to our discourse transpired with all clarity from Steiner's death: All that he intended to do through the Christmas Conference and by the following actions – whether we call it a rescue operation, or founding of a modern Mystery Centre, or define it in some other way – all this was not meant to be carried out and brought to completion and fruition. We are not going to discuss it in this part of our discourse, which is devoted to today's perspective on Steiner's death. It was anthroposophists, Steiner's contemporaries, who faced this fact, and we shall discuss it when we consider their perspective. But our next theme is Steiner's perspective.

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By Steiner's perspective we mean not his reflections on his own death of course, but our perspective of his death through his plans and intentions for the future, or to be more precise, through the time-span he needed to realise them. But was there any time-span involved and was it important? Generally, it is important in two cases: either when one knows that he might not have enough time to accomplish his undertaking and therefore should consider the prudence of starting it in the first place or the consequences of its being uncompleted; or when one has to complete his undertaking by a certain time determined by circumstances or events. As it happened, all these hypothetical possibilities were applicable to Steiner and therefore have to be considered by us.

When we speak about a time-span in this case we should be clear about what exactly it was needed for, and then we can speak about the duration. If we summarize the Christmas Conference in terms of Steiner's intentions, his objective can be expressed in one word – change. And change, any change, requires time. From the start Steiner introduced some significant procedural, organisational, administrative and other changes. They were external changes, though their essence and the considerations behind them were spiritual. The main among them was the inauguration of the School of Spiritual Science which required time to be fully developed and to achieve some tangible results with its pupils. Besides, Steiner did not create the School for the duration of his life only. When fully functional it was there to stay – permanently, i.e. as long as the need for it was there. As part of its development Steiner needed time to prepare his successor whom he intended to appoint in due course

But the main changes which he wanted to take place and which were essential for his rescue deed he could not effect because they did not depend on him. They were internal changes, in the hearts and souls of anthroposophists, i.e. they concerned the development of their spiritual, soul and moral qualities and an ultimate ability to attain knowledge of the higher worlds – to become clairvoyant. Steiner could only facilitate these changes and emphasize their importance. But for all intents and purposes, at the time they were only potential changes and to become factual they needed very hard work on the part of those who were to implement them. As the old saying goes: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make

him drink." Steiner flooded anthroposophists with spiritual water, but he could not make them drink it and turn into the above qualities – only they could.

But Steiner also knew that one could not rush such things, that even given all the work that was required, this development to bring fruit needed a long time. How long? The proverbial: how long is a piece of string? We can only be sure that Steiner knew that what he intended with the Christmas Conference would take many years to materialise and he often spoke to that effect, like this for example: "We must not think that our ideal in the Society can be attained from one day to the next. Time will be needed, and patience too. If we imagine that what lay in the intentions of the Christmas meeting could be brought into existence in a few weeks' time, this again would be harmful."

We know of no instances when Steiner was more specific on the matter. If it can be of any help, speaking, a few months before the Christmas Conference, of what the Anthroposophical Society should become to enable anthroposophy to live in it, Steiner said: "It requires a sense of alliance in every living moment with the invisible being of Anthroposophia. If that became a reality in people's attitude, not necessarily overnight but over a longer time-span, the required impulse would certainly develop over a period of perhaps twenty-one years." And he reiterated it a few minutes later: "If it is to thrive, anthroposophy has to be alive in the Anthroposophical Society. And if that happens then something significant can develop over twenty-one years."

However, the author of this narrative feels obliged to tell his readers that he does not regard this exact figure as defining anything in whatever context it was used. Rather it was an indication, in terms of progressive development, of what one might hope or expect to happen but it might never happen. In fact, that was the case in the above situation the description of which Steiner concluded with the following sentence: "By my calculations, the Society has already existed for twenty-one years" meaning: but where are the results?

The development of the above personal qualities is exclusively a matter of individual abilities and individual karma. There have always been clairvoyants through human history and they are there now, also within the Anthroposophical Movement. But we might just as well note the following. From the very inception of the Anthroposophical Movement and throughout its over one hundred year history there have been individuals who for many years, and some all their lives, pursued the path of esoteric development, some under Steiner's personal guidance and others under the guidance of his books and other indications. And there are not very many known cases when somebody achieved tangible results especially those which can be turned to public benefit and subjected to public scrutiny.

Coming back to Steiner, we do not know whether he pondered the question of the time-span in connection with this, one of the major undertakings of his life, but time was, objectively, an important factor for him. He was not a young man, nor was he in the best of health, when he took upon himself this arduous task and ventured into this far-reaching enterprise. And this was in addition to what had already been an unbearable, by any standard, amount of work. What was his thinking in this respect? We do not know exactly what it was apart from one thing – it was not conventional. But on the basis of what is known and can be understood of how matters with a spiritual dimension work, we can suggest some considerations.

In the first instance, as we noted earlier, Steiner had no alternative, but to act as he did. As we also noted, he did not even consult the higher powers. He acted in the best sense of a free deed. When such a deed becomes a necessity it overrides all conventional considerations like pondering its pros and cons, assessing one's abilities and possibilities, making a feasibility study, etc., etc. Considering a time-span would belong to the same category. Nor did Steiner have what is conventionally

called 'a contingency plan' in case he was unable to finalise his intentions. Thus, while stating that he would appoint his successor for the leadership of the School of spiritual Science, he never said what should happen if he was unable to do this before he passed away. This lack of 'a contingency plan' has kept haunting anthroposophists ever since the time of Steiner's death as we shall see later.

All that was an expression of Steiner's own position. But he also knew that the success of his undertaking depended, ultimately, on the reciprocal actions of those at whom his courageous deed was directed – on anthroposophists. And here again we have the same polarity – conventional versus spiritual. The conventional wisdom was not only telling Steiner, it was yelling to him: Don't do it! You have two decades of experience of working with these people – look at the results, those very results which forced you now to undertake this drastic measure of a rescue!

But what did the spiritual wisdom tell him? Steiner revealed it himself, on the pages of his aforementioned book *How is knowledge of the Higher Worlds achieved?*, so let it speak here as well: "We must know how to tear down the veils of memory that surround us at every moment of our lives. Otherwise, if I judge today's experiences by those of yesterday, I become subject to many errors. This does not mean that we should deny our prior experiences. On the contrary, as far as possible, they should always be present. But initiates have to be able to judge each new experience on its own merits and let it work upon them, untroubled by the past.

In other words, I must always be ready to receive a new revelation from each and every being and thing. To judge the new on the basis of the old only leads to errors. Yet the memory of past experiences is useful precisely because it enables one to see new ones. That is, without a given past experience I might never see the characteristic feature of the things or beings I encounter. Past experiences should help us to see what is new, not to judge it. As initiates we develop quite specific faculties for this. Thereby many things reveal themselves that remain hidden from the uninitiated."

Translated into the existing situation these words meant the following: Yes, anthroposophists failed dismally all the tasks which they had in the past. But they should be given another, new chance in a new situation, and it will be up to them now how they will use it. And Steiner gave them this new chance, as never before, and went ahead with his momentous deed against all odds. The rest, as they say, was in the hands of the gods, in this case literally.

Now we are coming to the final consideration in this part of our discourse which most anthroposophists might find unusual and unexpected. By it we link the Christmas Conference, specifically the creation of the School of Spiritual Science, to the two events which Steiner predicted should happen in the 20th century. These events were of a universal spiritual significance and therefore highly relevant to what took place at the Conference, as they required the Anthroposophical Movement and anthroposophists to be fully ready for them. In fact, what Steiner inaugurated at the Christmas Conference was the best way to prepare them for these events. We can even go as far as saying that had there been no other reasons for the creation of the School, these two events were more than justified, or perhaps even necessary, for this act to take place as a means of preparation for them. Now to the events themselves.

We spoke of the first event earlier and referred to it by its popular but misleading name, the so called "second coming of Christ". It consists of some spiritually developed individuals meeting Christ in the spiritual world and being fully conscious of this meeting while in their current earthly abode. Though the event itself was to unfold and continue for a long time, its beginning, tangible and perceptible inwardly and publicly, was due in some ten years from the Christmas Foundation Conference. Not very much time in terms of what was expected to happen. Now

quoting from page 70: "If, for whatever reasons, these encounters, as individual and public experience, did not take place it would be a great misfortune for single individuals and for mankind as a whole, with very serious consequences. Therefore it was a direct and immediate task of anthroposophy to prepare humanity, and Steiner's own task to prepare his own followers, for this momentous event." And what could be a better way of doing it than through what followed from the Christmas Conference with its major outcome, the School of Spiritual Science!

The second event lay a little bit further away, at the end of the 20th century. Steiner spoke of two groups of individuals who belong to what he called Platonic and Aristotelian streams. Their task is to further and facilitate the spiritual evolution of mankind, and they do it both during their earthly life and from the spiritual world when discarnate. But they do it in different ways and they never lived on earth simultaneously. At the same time they closely cooperate with each other whether when they both are in the spiritual world or one of them is on the earth, Steiner also spoke of the two streams and the different times and experiences of the previous incarnations of those individuals who in their present incarnation found their way to anthroposophy. And at the end of the 20th century all these individuals and streams would reincarnate together as part of the Anthroposophical Movement.

This is how Steiner described it:

"It matters not, that some of them are working here on the earth, while others cannot yet descend to the earth. They are working together now, intending a new spiritual epoch in earthly evolution. And their great purpose now, is to collect the souls who for a long time have been united with them, – to gather together the souls with whose help a new spiritual age can then be founded. Their purpose is, in one way or another and within a comparatively short time, in the midst of an otherwise decadent civilization, to make possible a renewed cooperation in earthly life between the spirits of [the above streams – /Z]. Their purpose is to prepare, so that they will be able to work together in an earthly life, cultivating spirituality once more within the civilization which, apart from this, is sailing on into destruction and disintegration."

And then Steiner spoke specifically about anthroposophists in this respect:

"And today, my dear friends, we may look up to what is working in spiritual realms, and we may know how anthroposophy stands in relation to it. ... Here upon earth, striving honestly towards anthroposophy, there are numbers of souls... Added to this, in the supersensible world, are numbers of souls who have remained behind... And between those who are here in the world of sense, and those who are above in the spiritual world, there is a decided tendency to unite their work with one another.

...

Taking all these things together it does indeed emerge that those who receive anthroposophy in a sincere way at the present time are preparing their souls to shorten as far as possible the life between death and a new birth, and to appear again at the end of the 20th century, united with [those] who have remained behind.

We should receive into our souls this consciousness: That the Anthroposophical Movement is called to work on and on, and to appear again not only in its most important, but in nearly all its souls, at the end of the 20th century. For then the great impulse will be given for a spiritual life on earth, without which earthly civilization would finally be drawn into that decadence, the character of which is only too apparent.

Out of such foundations, I would fain kindle in your hearts something of the flames that we require, so that already now within the Anthroposophical Movement we may absorb the spiritual life strongly enough to appear again properly prepared. For in that great epoch after shortened life in spiritual worlds we shall work again on earth – in the epoch when for the salvation of the earth the spiritual Powers are

reckoning in their most important members, in their most important features, on what anthroposophists can do.

I think the vision of this perspective of the future may stir the hearts of anthroposophists to call forth within themselves the feelings which will carry them in a right way, with energy and strength of action and with the beauty of enthusiasm, through the present earthly life; for then this earthly life will be a preparation for the work at the end of the century when anthroposophy will be called upon to play its part."

On a different occasion, again addressing anthroposophists, Steiner said:

"This, my dear friends, shall now rest in your souls. You may say to yourselves: Those who out of these great decisions feel in themselves the impulse to come to the anthroposophical life today, will be called again at the end of the 20th century, when at the culminating point the greatest possible expansion of the Anthroposophical Movement will be attained."

These words belong to the realm which we earlier in our discourse called 'God proposes'. They were immediately followed by those which we called 'Man disposes': "But it will only happen if these things can really live in us, – if there can live in us the perception of what penetrates cosmically, spiritually, into the earthly physical domain." And these words were followed by Steiner's admonition which was filled now, after the Christmas Conference, with a new content:

"This impulse must be the very soul of our anthroposophical striving. The soul itself must have the will to stand fully in the midst of the Anthroposophical Movement. Then we shall find it possible, my dear friends, for a certain time to come, to carry in our souls thoughts of a great and far-reaching nature. But we shall not only preserve them, we shall make them living in our souls. And through these thoughts our souls will grow and develop anthroposophically, so that the soul will *become* what it was intended to become through its own unconscious impulse to come to anthroposophy. I say again: So that the soul may be *taking hold of* by the mission of anthroposophy."

From these quotations alone, which were by necessity long, we can clearly see that the preparation of anthroposophists for the second even was in full swing. The same was true for the first one as well of course, though without Steiner's explicit reference to it.

So these were the two exceptionally important events which were to happen, in historical terms, almost simultaneously and just after the Anthroposophical Movement reached its spiritual peak with the establishment of the School of Spiritual Science. Everything seemed to be in place for the best preparation for these events. And yet these peak and preparation never materialised because Steiner was suddenly taken to the spiritual world. Nor did those events ever happened, at least not in the way Steiner predicted – evidently and with a public impact. We feel there is some connection between these two unfulfilled expectations. Though none of them – neither Steiner's premature death, nor the absence of the two events in public life – can be directly attributed to anthroposophists, nevertheless this connection, however tenuous, should, in our opinion, live in the anthroposophical consciousness.

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Now we are going to view Steiner's death from our third, perhaps most difficult perspective – that of the anthroposophists who were Steiner's contemporaries, who were 'the children of the Christmas Conference'. Here we have to finally answer our original questions: What did Steiner's death mean for his followers and what were its consequences for them? We might as well add another one to them: How did they react to it – not emotionally, which is very obvious, but by their actions, if any? The difficulty in answering them lies, in the first instance, in the fact that one would have

to answer for twelve thousand different individuals, with different attitudes and views, who occupied different positions within the Anthroposophical Society and lived so many years ago. Nevertheless we shall try to overcome these difficulties to the best of our ability.

But first we wish to go back to our unfinished but very relevant *Story of a Teacher and His Pupil*. If the reader forgot it we kindly ask him to return to it (pages 136-145), or at least to the end of it because we are going to present now its continuation, conclusion and even an epilogue.

A Story of a Teacher and His Pupil

(Conclusion)

We interrupted our Story at a decisive moment when the Teacher, now the Professor, introduced to his students a new course and they had to decide, with the Professor's help, the direction of their further studies. There was also another surprise for them – the Professor's choice of his Assistant-Professor. But at the time it was not of much importance for them while the question of their future studies was, and we are happy to report that within a few days it was settled to everyone's satisfaction, and a new phase of life began for everyone concerned.

In both the study and research courses, particularly in the latter, the Professor put special emphasis on self-study. What was very unusual and new, he asked the students not to take notes of his lectures, particularly of his special Lessons. He wanted the students to fully concentrate on his presentation and to absorb the content not only with their minds but with their hearts and souls. Rather than trying to remember it, let alone writing it down, they should try to live with whatever content they manage to grasp and make it their own. If they missed anything, there would be other opportunities to come back to and recap it; there would be seminars and tutorials, but their inner work was of prime importance.

Alas, as is well known, old habits die hard, even with young people, and some students could not help taking notes of every word the Professor uttered. But others did follow his advice and soon were able to appreciate its value. They could not say that they experienced the eagerly expected 'first results'. Far from it. What they experienced were rather the first glimpses of the first results. Those were completely new experiences of the reality of their inner life which gave them confidence and the desire to persevere. All in all, everyone was happy with what they were doing and considered themselves lucky to be pioneers in exploring the new vistas of science and human possibilities under the guidance of their Professor.

As to the Assistant-Professor, he accompanied the Professor everywhere – at lectures, seminars and even, on the Professor's insistence, at private tutorials. The student still did not know what his official functions were. He was not doing any teaching but there was no need for this as so far all teaching was done by the Professor. However he turned out to be very helpful to the students in other ways.

Despite their aptitudes and efforts most of them found the new knowledge and methods of study and research very difficult, and as a result had many questions or problems. But they found it equally difficult and embarrassing to bother the Professor with every query they had. So they approached the Assistant-Professor and were amazed by his knowledge and understanding of the new and complicated material they all had just been given. Almost as amazing was his ability to explain it lucidly and simply. He was also very useful as a source of information and reference materials. But where the students found him almost indispensable was in his capacity as a mediator between them and the Professor on the matters which they found

awkward to discuss with the Professor directly. Besides, he was very approachable, friendly and unpretentious, and the students liked and respected him.

This, to say nothing of the Professor's own charming demeanour, contributed tremendously to a very happy academic and social atmosphere in the Department, which was, with its two courses, like a community, like one big family. At the same time, as the first term was coming to an end, everyone knew that it was only the very beginning. However hard it was, much harder work lay ahead with never-ending new challenges and tasks. Everyone knew that it would be a very long time before there could be any tangible results of their work. As the Professor kept repeating: "We are only planting the seeds now, and we need a lot of hard work and patience to see them becoming fully matured fruit."

It was at this time that something unusual happened one morning – the Professor was late for his lecture. It had never happened before – he was always there first to greet and welcome them. This time the auditorium was full, the time was far beyond the schedule, but there was no Professor. There was silence in the room, nobody talked or asked any questions, but everyone was looking at the Assistant. He was also silent and visibly worried. Finally he said: "I'll go and check at his home." But before he could leave the room the door was flung open – the Professor?! No, it was the secretary of the Vice-Chancellor – he urgently wanted to see the Assistant-Professor.

When, a minute later, he saw the Vice-Chancellor he was shattered by the news: the Professor had a massive heart attack, was now in hospital and doctors were fighting for his life. The Assistant-Professor was speechless and could hardly control himself. It was only the thought that the students were eagerly waiting for him and for news that made it possible for him to somehow collect himself and return to the lecture hall. Still he stopped before the door unable to open it. When he finally did it, his countenance conveyed the tragic message before his words could.

After he told the students of what had happened not much was said – there was not much to be said or asked. There were many tears and the students avoided looking at the Assistant – it was unbearable to see the shock and suffering written on his face. After spending some time sitting in silence they started gradually leaving the room. Some, together with the Assistant-Professor, went to the hospital to learn the latest news, some went home to await the news there, and some just wandered aimlessly around the town.

Alas, they did not have to wait long for further news, and when it came it was devastating – the Professor could not be saved despite all the efforts of the best specialists. The news of his death swept the town and created a shock virtually in every household and institution because every one in the town knew of the Professor, who was their treasure and pride. Life stopped in the town, and it only started gradually coming back to normal some time after the funeral.

The people who were mostly affected by the Professor's death were, obviously, those who were closest to him – his Pupil and his eleven friends. For the Pupil the death of his beloved Teacher was the end of his life, of what was meaningful and valuable in it. Throughout his short life he was led, guided, nourished, encouraged and helped in every way by his Teacher. Without him nothing was left for him in his life – that was how he felt now; he felt lonely, desolated, abandoned and completely lost. In fact, he was desperate. But then, at this nadir point, new feelings and thoughts made their way into his heart and mind, and for the first time in his life he experienced the sense of responsibility. Out of it he asked himself a question which presupposed action on his part: "What does my Teacher want me to do now?"

The answer came almost instantaneously: "He wants me to preserve, to continue and to develop what was for him the cause of his life." That was the

Fundamental Knowledge, the Fundamental Science and his latest undertaking, the University Department with its School. This undertaking was most tangible and urgent. It was a living organism comprising of dozens of people including himself, in a key position now. Therefore it was his obligation towards the Professor – and towards the students – to keep it going and he was determined to do it at any cost. But his own determination was not enough – it had to be matched by that of the students, and he did not know yet whether they would wish to continue their studies without the Professor which could never be the same. However he would know their intentions the following day when they would get together to commemorate the Professor's life and also to discuss their own future.

The next day when the Assistant-Professor stopped in front of the familiar door with the double sign – "The Department of Fundamental Science" and "The School of Fundamental Science" beneath it – his usual dual feelings of joy and pride were replaced by another pair – pain and a tremendous burden of responsibility. After a few seconds of hesitation he opened the door and entered the auditorium. It was absolutely quiet as only empty rooms could be. But this one was full of people. They stood up as one the moment the door opened. This was how they used to greet the Professor whenever he entered the room. This time they greeted his memory. And some sounds began to be heard now – those of suppressed sobs.

The reader will excuse us for not divulging the first part of the meeting overwhelmed with emotion. It was only after they somewhat subsided and the Assistant-Professor felt it was the right time that he addressed the students, very tentatively, with the words: "As to our future..." But he could not finish the sentence as he was interrupted by the chorus of voices coming, it seemed, from the entire audience: "We want our courses to continue!" In the subsequent discussion, also emotional, the students expressed their commitment to their studies, their devotion to the late Professor's teaching given to mankind and their confidence in the Assistant-Professor and in his ability to lead them along the path set by the Professor. The general consensus was to continue in the Professor's footsteps, and any deviation from this path or change would be a sacrilege and a betrayal.

After the meeting the Assistant-Professor felt tremendous relief and joy – and an enhanced sense of responsibility. But now he was not alone, they were together again – as a community, as a family. And yet there remained one unknown – the University's Authorities. Would they now close the Department or would they allow it to continue and to use the University's premises and facilities? So he went straight to see the Vice-Chancellor.

The Vice-Chancellor met him very warmly saying that he had been expecting him. He wanted to know how the young Assistant-Professor was coping without the Professor and what his plans were for the Department. The Assistant-Professor was encouraged by these words to speak frankly about his concern lest the Department might now be closed. But the Vice-Chancellor said that the University's Authorities had never intended to close the Department provided there were enough students and there was somebody capable of continuing the very valuable work started by the Professor. And he asked straightaway: "Are you such a person?" The young man replied: "I can't give you a definitive answer to this question. But I can assure you that I have an unshakable resolve and enough resources to continue the Professor's work at this University to the best of my abilities. And," he added, "we just had a meeting in the Department and all students are eager to continue their studies." In this case, said the Vice-Chancellor, the Assistant-Professor had nothing to worry about and assured him that he would have all he needed to continue the two courses started by the Professor. Thus they both felt assured, for the first time after the shock of the Professor's death, that his valuable undertaking was safe and had future.

The young man was tremendously cheered and encouraged by these two meetings, but then he unexpectedly received an invitation to another one which made him excited and also somewhat anxious. It was a meeting of the Professor's eleven friends. The young man knew of course about them and their regular meetings from his Teacher. He never met them personally save, very briefly, at the funeral where he recognised them as a group and came up to greet them and introduce himself. They said, as people usually say in such situations, that they should meet again, and that was that. And now this written invitation.

It said that it would be a memorial meeting, and he knew that for him it would be something special – to speak about his Teacher with his closest friends of many years. The sheer thought of meeting these people face to face and of talking to them in an intimate setting excited, but at the same time slightly worried him. He knew that at the meeting they would talk not only of the past but also of the future and that might turn into a test of his resolve and even of his ability to deliver it. Thus facing these people might be for him, in this respect, like facing his Teacher himself.

But when, at the appointed time, he came to the venue of the meeting the young man was very touched by the way his Teacher's friends met and greeted him. This welcome allowed him to relax and be fully tuned to what was been said about his beloved Teacher. And to the way it was said! He had never been among people like these and he was fascinated not only by what they said about their friend, his Teacher, but also by how they talked to one another on various subjects they touched upon in the course of the meeting. At times it seemed they had forgotten about him, about his presence there, but he, listening to them, often felt out of his depth. His Teacher also had serious conversations with him, which were deep and lofty, but they were always geared to his level of comprehension and he never felt inferior.

But now he felt it, for the first time, and it made him aware again in what protected environment he had lived under his Teacher's wing and how much he had to learn to match the level at which his destiny – his Teacher! – had placed him. His interlocutors were unaware of these feelings of his. The more they talked to him the more they liked this young man and the more they understood their late friend's sentiments towards him.

After spending much time talking about the Professor they inevitably came to the question which was on everyone's, save the Pupil's, mind: what now? The 'what' encompassed the Professor's lifetime work, his Fundamental Science with its fruit, the Fundamental Knowledge, and his newly born baby, the University Department of Fundamental Science with its centre piece, the School of Fundamental Science. Their concern was only natural as it was natural too that they addressed this question to their friend's Pupil.

When asked the young man said: "I thought a lot about it. Of course the loss we all sustained, not only personal but cultural, is irretrievable. Nobody can do what the Professor did or continue his work in the likewise manner – he did not have time to prepare his successor or Fundamental Scientists in the true meaning of the word. But there is something that we not only can but must retain and continue to the best of our abilities as our obligation towards him, towards science, towards mankind. It is his Department and his School."

"The Department? The School? But how?!" – "Well, I know what he intended and planned to do. There also are his books and other materials. There are, despite his original objection, notes of his lectures and I even got the notes of his special Lessons. This is enough to sustain the courses and it's simply unthinkable to stop them. To continue them is also the students' express wish – I spoke to them the other day. I can't possibly let them down. And also the University's Authorities gave us their full support." Nobody said anything to that. For them the sudden cessation of the

Professor's work and of the cause of his life was also inconceivable. On the other hand such things did happen in life and had happened throughout human history – a unique person, a genius departs and there is nobody to take over.

There was nothing they wished for more than the continuation of their friend's work. But they were equally concerned about its quality which depended on who would carry it out and how. The last thing they wanted, that it be profaned or just failed. They knew enough biographical details of this charming young man to have their doubts about his abilities to fulfil such a task. Could it be that a couple of months of close collaboration with the Professor changed him to a considerable extent and turned him into a person of sufficient initiative, creativity and responsibility with a considerable amount of the very special knowledge necessary for fulfilling the task?

They were doubtful about it despite the very positive impression the young man made on them. Whether he could be a teacher of the Fundamental Science, and what kind of a teacher, he most definitely could not be a teacher and leader of the School of Fundamental Science. That role could only be fulfilled by a scholar of their friend's ilk. But if there was none, then this School could not exist. If the young Assistant-Professor felt that he could teach the former students, why would he not do it under his own steam even while using the Professor's materials? It would have been a different educational institution, but most definitely not the School of Fundamental Science which was uniquely linked to the Professor. Why had he decided to retain something which did not exist any more, especially under such a meaningful name? The Professor's friends felt it was misleading and disrespectful to the Professor's memory.

But they did not express their doubts and concerns aloud. They were sure that the young man meant well and his intentions were noble. He had just not recovered sufficiently from the Professor's death to think straight and did not have enough life experience to judge such things correctly. His burden was too heavy for him at the moment. They were sure that before long he would see things more clearly and would make all the necessary adjustments. In the meantime they should give him their full support, help and encouragement. This was what they pledged to the young man and offered to meet him again, regularly if he wished, to follow the development of what now became his undertaking.

This is all we have to report at present regarding these events and their participants. If in the future we hear more about them we shall pass this information on to our readers. But in the meantime we have to conclude our story at this very point.

Epilogue

Some years went by without any news coming from the town about the events described above, so that those familiar with them second-hand did not know any longer whether they were real or fictitious. And after some more years the story became to be regarded as an unusual and captivating legend. Then, nearly a hundred years later, someone who knew the story and was very impressed by it, went to the town on business. While there he decided to visit the University, where the last events of the story took place, and to see the real prototype of a fictitious place. To his amazement he discovered there an auditorium with the double sign on the door: "The Department of Fundamental Science" and "The School of Fundamental Science" beneath it. What was more puzzling, people of all ages were going through the door, in and out, individually and in groups. The visitor was so intrigued that he decided to make enquiries. Was it a museum to commemorate the famous story or was it real? If it was the latter, as it turned out to be the case, he

wanted to know what happened there since the Professor died and the Assistant-Professor took over. And this was what he learned.

After gradually recovering from the shock caused by the death of their beloved Professor and realising that now they would never achieve what they would have achieved under his guidance, everyone in the Department and the School, under the leadership of the Assistant-Professor, was determined not only to make the best use of the Professor's spiritual inheritance, but to preserve it for posterity and try to keep it alive. As to the Department and the School of Fundamental Science, it was decided that they should remain exactly as they were left by the Professor as his most treasured legacy.

The subsequent period was not trouble-free and it was not easy to maintain unity. But they persevered along their chosen path. Then the newcomers came – those who did not know the Professor personally but who also accepted his teaching as their path in life. And then there came others and others after them while at the same time the Department was losing people for various reasons, and this modest two-way traffic continued unabated. The pioneers had long since gone now, but the original arrangements and structures were still there – they were taken for granted and it did not occur to anybody to change anything. Why would they need to change anything anyway if they were quite content with what they had? And who would dare correcting what was set up by the Professor? Also every new generation of the University's Authorities, despite some misgivings, continued with their administrative and financial support of the Department – out of their respect for the late Professor and for his extraordinary spiritual contribution.

The visitor to the town was fascinated by all this and by the fact that the legend turned out to be real and had endured in this extraordinary way. At the same time he could not help having some reservations and doubts regarding what was taking place there. He spoke to many students who seemed to be very busy and happy with their studies benefiting from them personally and hoping to contribute through them to culture and to society at large. They were sincere and determined and the visitor was very impressed by them and their noble impulses. But he could not match these with his other observations and impressions.

Whatever they did, individually or collectively, why did they choose for their activities such an inappropriate setting as a university department and especially a school? They had no teachers to teach them, only books, and this type of study could be done anywhere, by anyone. On the basis of their studies they gave lectures, wrote articles and books, had conferences and seminars and did other good things none of which needed the university auspices.

Especially inappropriate was the pretension to continue to be the School of Fundamental Science. The objective of the School established by the Professor was to prepare researchers and scientists capable of researching and developing the Fundamental Science. But only the Professor was in a position to achieve for the School this objective. He just started his work there, gave a few Lessons and then, even before the first term was over, was taken from them. Thus the School lost its very foundation. To maintain its special status the people there kept the content of the Lessons, unlike all other works of the Professor, away from public and appointed from their own ranks special 'holders' or 'readers' for interpreting and presenting them within the School. But even this became meaningless in time as the texts of the Lessons were eventually made available to the general public (not by the School!).

Even in conventional terms a school presupposes teachers and a study process with its escalating stages, with failures and achievements, with criteria of success and progress, with specific tasks and objectives. None of these or other essential attributes of a school were there. "The only tangible thing that is left of the

original School," said the visitor to the people there, "is the copper nameplate on the door."

"No," they replied. "The School itself is a special entity, not just what is visible to the eye. And the Professor did not create it for just his lifespan. The School has a very important role to play in the future and we can't yet foresee or know it." And as they saw the visitor's sceptical look they added: "As an outsider you can't understand it." The visitor admitted that some tenets of the Fundamental Science could be comprehensible only to those who seriously study them and they might have some unusual implications. But it did not change the fact that not only in his eyes, but in the eyes of all 'outsiders' there was an evident discrepancy and falsehood in this heritage of the Professor, and it made him very sad.

(The end of the Story)

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In the anthroposophical literature related to the time of Steiner's death there is a description of the episode which was both mysterious and tragic. Had its true nature been properly understood by its participant who related it, and subsequently by other anthroposophists, the history of the Anthroposophical Movement would have been different.

There were two participants in this episode, Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman. Steiner was lying on his sick-bed, or rather on his death-bed, because he was dying and both of them knew it. This is how she described his departure from this world: "In full consciousness, but without saying anything about the future, without leaving behind any instruction or message for this or that personality, the Master has left us. And a direct question put to him on these matters was consciously answered in the negative. Why was this?" Dr Noll, who also treated Rudolf Steiner and in whom she confided this event, added a few significant details: "Shortly before his passing, Frau Wegman asked Dr Steiner whether there was any arrangement he wished to make in connection with the Society – he looked very intently at her and then turned away!.."

Dr Wegman was puzzled and even dismayed by Steiner's response to her questions. And she had very good reasons to be, better than any other anthroposophists. In later years, particularly after the Christmas Conference, she became, perhaps, his closest collaborator. They collaborated now not only in the medical field but also on esoteric matters. He involved her as much as was possible in his activities with the School for Spiritual Science, introduced her as his "co-leader of the Class" "who will be leading the School of Michael with me." It even seemed as if he intended her to become his successor in due course. Besides, he told her of their past, in their previous lives, human and spiritual connection and collaboration going back many years and reflected even in historical records though without any spiritual background. And then there was an immediate human closeness which was brought about by Steiner's illness as was testified, for example, by one of Wegman's closest friends: "Day and night she was by his sick bed in the Studio. During this period many plans were made for future activity in the sphere of medicine but also for the development of the High School and the general spiritual scientific work."

But there is another way of looking at this episode, and then Steiner's reticence becomes not only comprehensible, but fully justifiable and inevitable. In the first instance, if anything, it was the time for making pledges and not for asking questions. Especially those concerning 'last minute arrangements' which might be appropriate for putting to a businessman leaving behind his commercial enterprise but most definitely not to the Master who was leaving behind his spiritual heritage. What, in effect, Wegman was asking for were Steiner's 'parting words', his final

'punch line'. But how could there be any? Everyone familiar with Steiner's life devoted to the delivery of the Divine Message should know that his every word and every deed was, in this respect, a punch line. And if, especially after what had been given to them in the last fifteen months of Steiner's life, anthroposophists – and Ita Wegman out of all people – still needed his 'parting words' and 'punch lines' to know what to do, then one cannot help wondering whether they learned any lessons, let alone those with the capital L of the School of Spiritual Science.

Furthermore, if we allow, purely hypothetically, a possibility of Steiner's answering Wegman's questions – what effect would his answers have had on anthroposophists? It is not difficult to envisage what would have happened: to begin with, they would have interpreted them each in their own way, some turn them into a dogma, others would doubt their authenticity, and there would be no end to arguing and strife. Most importantly, the worst outcome of Steiner's 'parting words' would have been the paralysis of people's freedom in judgements and actions – could Steiner have ever done anything like this?

These might be harsh words with which to react to Wegman's questions. But they were born out of the pain which this author experienced when he read the description of the above episode. His pain, he felt, echoed that of Steiner's upon hearing Wegman's questions. And Steiner did not know yet that they were a precursor to the anthroposophists' understanding and actions that followed his death. What these were, is the next theme of our discourse.

As to understand Steiner's deeds and intentions regarding the Christmas Foundation Conference was our major task, we viewed the preceding events from his perspective amply quoting his words and trying to penetrate his thinking. But now we should try to view these and following events from the perspective of anthroposophists who were around Steiner, and try to understand what they experienced and had been through during this period of time.

As the essential background to whatever is said about anthroposophists and their activities in the world we should mention one objective fact which is always present there whether it is acknowledged or not. Anthroposophists are that tiny part of humanity who were blessed by the gift of the divine wisdom, the knowledge of the spiritual world in the form of anthroposophy. But simultaneously with this gift came a tremendous burden of responsibility – towards the spiritual world itself, towards humanity and of course to the one who delivered the gift, Rudolf Steiner. Whether they realise it or not, this makes their individual karma more difficult than it would have been without anthroposophy. Those of them who are members of the Anthroposophical Society have taken upon themselves, again whether they realise it or not, an additional responsibility for its activities and standing in the world, which makes their individual karma still more difficult. We should bear it in mind whenever we discuss or judge their individual activities.

Coming to those which preceded the year 1923 and to the events that they accompanied, we can say that it was a rare mixture of most exiting, fascinating, difficult and tragic experiences any group of individuals could experience even in such turbulent times as the first quarter of the 20th century. Then came a shock of a uniquely tragic event – the destruction of the Goetheanum in the wake of which it became apparent that they were not up to the tasks set up for them by anthroposophy, by Steiner and by their own pledges. This nadir of their anthroposophical life was followed, a year later, by another shock, but it was shock-therapy this time – all positive, forward looking, transforming deed of Steiner's leading them to new spiritual heights under his personal guidance and support. It was the time of enthusiasm and new aspirations, of new knowledge and activities – and of hard work. And then, nine months later, came the shock of Steiner's illness and inability to be with and among them which was followed, after six more months, by

the final devastating shock of his death, of his departure from the physical plane, of abandoning of all his earthly plans and undertakings – of his abandoning them.

They found themselves now in an extremely difficult, virtually unprecedented situation. Their Teacher initiated, on the world stage and with their participation, something entirely new, profound and of universal importance and consequences, outlining their role, tasks and responsibilities as well as his plans for the future – and then, unexpectedly, left them at the very beginning of this enterprise without being able to accomplish any of his intentions. As a result, anthroposophists were completely lost. They were part of this extraordinary undertaking which was still much more of a project than a reality, without knowing what to do next. Without their Teacher they could not continue it in the way it was envisaged let alone accomplish its objectives.

Now in our deliberations we spoke so far about anthroposophists collectively, as of one homogeneous group of people. Though it might be correct when speaking of their emotional reaction to Steiner's death, we have to make a distinction when speaking of the practical consequences it entailed. There were three groups of anthroposophists: rank-and-file members of the Anthroposophical Society, members of the School of Spiritual Science and the leadership of both the Society and the School. Steiner's death affected them differently because of the different levels of their engagement with anthroposophy and of their different positions and responsibilities within the Anthroposophical Society. After Steiner's death rank-and-file members could continue with their anthroposophical life, studies and activities as before, according to their individual interests and abilities. The far-reaching arrangements regarding the School did not affect them, but they affected directly the other two groups and their anthroposophical work which now required some fundamental adjustments. And it was mainly at them that our deliberations were directed.

The reader should be aware that our deliberations so far had not reflected the actual thoughts and feelings of anthroposophists, but what one may expect them to be in the situation that followed Steiner's death. But now we shall look at how anthroposophists actually reacted and acted in this extremely difficult situation.

There was a lot of grief, a tremendous sense of loss and then a firm resolve and determination on the part of all anthroposophists to persevere with their anthroposophical work and honour their moral obligations to Steiner to nurture anthroposophy in its standing in the world. But there were no signs of serious, in-depth reflections – collectively shared, as the situation required – on what consequences, both spiritual and practical, Steiner's death might have for them. As to individual responsibilities, it seemed that all thinking, arrangements and decisions concerning the future of the Anthroposophical Society and its work were left by the membership to its leadership to make. And it was accepted by the latter – there was no consultation, sharing, exchange or discussion on the matter within the Society.

But these should have taken place, and in the first instance they should have concerned the leadership itself. Because now, after Steiner's death, there was a discrepancy between the 'aristocratic' manner in which Steiner appointed it for executing his esoteric leadership, and a democratic and now exoteric nature of the Society which required a democratically elected leadership. This discrepancy had never been considered, let alone resolved. It was a failure on the part of the entire membership and leadership of the Anthroposophical Society of which they were blissfully unaware, but which inevitably caught up with them later, with tragic consequences for the Anthroposophical Movement (we might have an opportunity to speak about it later).

That was one aspect where anthroposophists failed en masse. Another failure concerned mainly members of the School of Spiritual Science and in particular its

leaders. The fact that Steiner had not appointed his successor as he had intended, turned out to be an insurmountable stumbling block for them. They could not accept it, its meaning and consequences at their face value, as the obvious fact that there was nobody who could lead and develop the School as Steiner intended to do and therefore it could not be developed any further beyond its initial stage, could not exist in its impotent and unguided form and should be suspended, at least for the time being.

This never occurred to them. On the contrary, the School, in whatever form it was, was something sacred to them which had to be preserved in the way it was left by Steiner. At the same time they did not scrutinise it vis-à-vis their ability to carry it out. They did not ask themselves which parts of what they inherited from Steiner were still relevant and applicable to them and which required adjustments and changes. As far as they were concerned, none of it lost its value and everything was still relevant and applicable to them. And who can blame them for thinking and feeling this way in that very difficult situation? But when it came to turning their inspirational but unsustainable thoughts and feelings into actuality, they did not know how to do this which resulted in inconsistencies, serious errors and outright wrong actions on their part.

For instance, for the sake of continuity and to sustain an 'esoteric' level of leadership, Ita Wegman decided to continue with Steiner's *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* by issuing them herself. There was nothing sinister or ambitious behind her decision, quite the opposite was true – she was motivated purely by the proverbial 'good intentions' which might lead one in the opposite to the intended direction, as happened in this case. She stopped it soon enough, but the damage had been done.

But these various individual and collective failures, which were, after all, understandable and even perhaps unavoidable, were just consequences of what was a more serious and much deeper fiasco. Their main failure was their inability to recognise that Steiner's departure from the physical plane brought in its wake the major challenge of their lives – to act out of moral imagination and inner freedom. To rise to the occasion they needed to summon up the very best that anthroposophy had created in them and out of them – and act accordingly. If their efforts were resolute enough and sincere, even if they yielded very modest results, it would have been a step in the right direction. But this never happened. Instead, at this decisive time after Steiner's death, in their actions and decisions concerning their anthroposophical affairs, anthroposophists were mainly guided not by spiritual but by earthly and 'human, all too human' considerations.

In this connection we should mention Marie Steiner's individual position regarding the situation after Rudolf Steiner's death. In her opinion the Christmas Conference had failed, due to the anthroposophists, with some inevitable repercussions for the members of the Anthroposophical Society and for its 'esoteric Vorstand' which she herself intended to leave. However she was not determined, persistent and consistent enough in her views and, particularly, actions to bring them to a logical and practical conclusion. So her views remained just an opinion – for the record, perhaps, like in this discourse.

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We can summarise the last period of Steiner's life, the period of the three events, and the corresponding period of the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, in the following way:

After the destruction of the Goetheanum it became apparent that anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society continuously failed in their major task in the world: to act out of anthroposophy, to represent it and to be responsible

for it. Steiner decided that the only way to enable and equip them for this task was to establish a direct and permanent link between the Anthroposophical Society and the spiritual world which he did straightaway. But this link lasted for only fifteen months and then it was severed. After that the situation with anthroposophists and their Society reverted to what it had been before, the only difference being that there was no Steiner around to be accountable to and to hear the truth about themselves from.

AFTER RUDOLF STEINER

The author has ended his history of the Anthroposophical Movement, as he intended, chronologically and thematically, on Steiner's death and its immediate consequences for his followers. Thus he has accomplished his task and also the obligation he felt was incumbent on him: to make public the views on the crucial events of this history which, to his knowledge, have not been expressed publicly, at least not in the English language. Having done this now, he felt new obligations, this time towards his readers.

Upon reading the above history the readers who have become interested in or even concerned about the Anthroposophical Movement, but with little knowledge about its further developments, might like to know what happened to the issues which we discussed and which were failed and unresolved by the anthroposophists at the time. How have later generations of anthroposophists, including the current one, viewed and treated them? As to anthroposophists themselves and the Anthroposophical Society, we ended our discourse on a not very cheerful note saying that after Steiner's desperate and courageous, but abortive attempt to rescue them, they were back where they had been before it. But where are they now? Have there been any developments in the direction intended by Steiner but without him?

These fundamental questions, which are central to the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, can be supplemented by others whose purpose is not to widen the theme but to make it more comprehensible. In our deliberations, especially when dealing with such a serious and important theme, we try to approach it not with a rigid thinking fixed on one point or direction, but with flexible and inquisitive thoughts looking at the issue from various angles and using different images. We hope that such a diversity of approach will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of this very complex issue. Thus we can express it in yet another way. To save the relationship Steiner suggested to his partner, the Anthroposophical Society, a marriage. The offer was gladly accepted, but the marriage lasted only for fifteen months six of which Steiner spent in bed. What effect, if any, did it have on his partner, who survived him by many years?

Or, with no imagery, we can express it in a number of theses. Steiner had his specific intentions for anthroposophists and their Society. The Christmas Conference had specific objectives for them. And various new institutions, or entities, – the School of Spiritual Science, the General Anthroposophical Society (GAS), and its esoteric Vorstand – had their specific tasks. What happened to these intentions, objectives and tasks after Steiner's death? Have they played any role in the subsequent history of the GAS and the Anthroposophical Movement? And finally and most importantly – have they yielded any specific results after nearly a hundred years that have elapsed since then?

All these questions point to a big and complicated subject. To explore it fully would require writing another book. It is beyond the author's present capabilities. However, he feels he can still fulfil his obligations toward his readers if he can give them a succinct but adequate picture, even without full details, of how things went after Steiner. In fact, such a picture has already been given in this discourse. It has been incorporated into our fictional *Story of a Teacher and His Pupil*, but the picture

itself is real and reflects truly, though only in general terms, the situation in the Anthroposophical Society after Steiner's death up to the present time. We shall try and elaborate this picture and, hopefully, some of the above questions will be answered in the process.

However, this will not change the main feature of the post-Steiner situation that after his death his assistants, collaborators and followers decided to maintain the status quo regarding the external arrangements of the Anthroposophical Society unsuitable now for its spiritual content which became bereft of direct spiritual nourishment. This inevitably resulted in some adverse and destructive consequences. However, it did not prompt them to review the situation and to make some necessary changes, and the status quo continued. It was inherited by subsequent generations of anthroposophists who had still fewer reasons to change anything and no inclination even to think along these lines.

But some aspects of the status quo were not as durable. It took the discrepancy concerning the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society ten years to ferment, brew, mature, ripen and finally implode causing acrimony, hostility, strife and much pain among anthroposophists, damage to the anthroposophical cause and the schism that lasted for many years. More specifically, two members of the Vorstand, Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede, and their activities were subjected to criticism by the other Vorstand members and also by the majority of the rank-and-file members of the Society. It culminated in the two being expelled from the Vorstand by the decision of the Annual General Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society in Dornach in 1935 de jure (de facto they were excluded much earlier). By the same Meeting about 2,000 Dutch and English members (virtually these two national Anthroposophical Societies) who supported the expelled Vorstand members were expelled from the GAS itself, and they subsequently became independent Anthroposophical Societies.

This is not the place to go into the nature, substance or validity of the accusations levelled against the expelled members. But whether the disagreements were spiritual or organisational, surprising was the level of animosity that flared up between the two opposing 'camps'. As an example supplied to the author by one of the participants of those events, if someone from one 'camp' would spot somebody from the other 'camp' walking towards them, they would immediately cross to the other side of the road not to face their 'enemy'.

Then, thirteen years later, in 1948, the decision of 1935 to expel Dutch and English members from the GAS was annulled by the same body which took it, with the possibility for the expelled members to rejoin the GAS. However, it took another twenty odd years and a new generation of leaders before the final reconciliation took place and all separate groups merged into the original GAS. The reverse decision did not concern the two expelled Vorstand members as they were dead by that time. But in the same year, by the decision of the very same body, another expulsion from the Vorstand took place, this time of Marie Steiner. It was the result of a serious dispute between her and the other two members of the Vorstand about the right to publish Rudolf Steiner's works which belonged, according to Steiner's Will, to Marie Steiner but which the GAS claimed for itself. This time the matter was not resolved, even by a drastic measure of expulsion, and in any case Marie Steiner died at the end of the same year. But the dispute continued, now with the publishing company founded by Marie Steiner to which she transferred her publishing rights. Having failed to resolve it internally, the matter was referred to the courts. We shall go no further into it.

It is noteworthy, however, that the internal disputes within the Anthroposophical Society not only continued even into the 21st century, which, after all, can be a concomitant of its troubled history, growth and development, but that for resolving them anthroposophists had to recourse to legal means. The bitter irony of it

is that this was happening at the time when, according to Steiner as was mentioned earlier, "at the culminating point the greatest possible expansion of the Anthroposophical Movement will be attained."

Some further events will return us again to the issue of the expulsion of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede. But now, to complete the leadership issue, we are happy to report that the present members of the Vorstand, as the leaders of national Anthroposophical Societies have always been, are properly elected by members, through a proper democratic process. But one anachronism still remains – they assume not only administrative but also spiritual leadership in accordance with the Statutes adopted at the Christmas Foundation Conference. This situation is based on obsolete arrangements and not on the current reality. In the anthroposophical community, as it is today, there are no individuals who can undertake the role of its spiritual leaders to set, for instance, "the spiritual goals and tasks of the Society". Even the best anthroposophical credentials do not make the present Vorstand members the leaders in the sense that Steiner was or intended the members of his 'esoteric Vorstand' to be, or, for that matter, just to be spiritual leaders of their fellow anthroposophists. However, it is not only the leaders themselves but thousands of rank-and-file members all over the world readily accept the existing situation as normal, without even questioning it.

But the status quo, and its consequences, was not something that Steiner bequeathed to his followers. No, it was something that they did themselves – fossilised part of his heritage. What he did bequeath to them, in addition to the immensity of what he had given in all preceding years, was the Christmas Conference, his 'parting deed' in which so much had been invested. What has happened to it?

To begin with, the author of this discourse wishes to explain why he cannot incorporate Marie Steiner's uncompromising verdict on the outcome of this event in his answer to this question. As such a prominent figure in the Anthroposophical Movement and from her position as one of the prime participants and movers of those events and on the basis of her intimate and first-hand knowledge and experience of anthroposophists at the time, of their attitudes and conduct, she was fully justified in making her judgement. But the author is in a different situation. In the process of his contemplations on the subject the notion 'the Christmas Conference has failed' has never occurred to him, though he is aware that it was also repeated by other anthroposophists of later generations, Perhaps other people know something that he does not, or they think differently, but to his thinking the Christmas Conference could have been failed either by its executor or by its recipients. To say the former would have been an absurdity. To say the latter, repeating it after Marie Steiner, the author does not have enough facts to substantiate this view and present it credibly to his readers. Therefore he can only repeat his own understanding that the Christmas Conference, or rather the intentions behind it, were curtailed by higher powers.

There is one more aspect regarding Marie Steiner's position that should be mentioned. Despite her strong views on the outcome of the Christmas Conference she did not extricate herself from the ensuing situation and, instead, played an active role in the subsequent events some of which cannot be characterised other than further letting down and failing Rudolf Steiner. How tragic it was for her and other participants of those events! How tragic and also enigmatic is the fact that it happened to the people who were not just 'called' but were 'chosen' – individually, purposely and resolutely. Without drawing any parallels, one is reminded of Christ's disciples who also failed and let Him down. What do we have here, apart from individual karma: some sort of a 'spiritual law' or is it its more comprehensible earthly version – a 'human inevitability'?

Coming back to the Christmas Conference, the author wanted to find, as a credible sign of its survival, some serious echoes of it in those anthroposophists who were not its participants and who did not have a first-hand experience of it. And he did find what he was looking for. It was a lucky combination of trustworthy components: an individual, his seminal book on the Christmas Conference and his knowledge and observations. Besides, and it was very important for our purpose, the book was written some fifty years after the event of the Christmas Conference which gave its author a good perspective on it and on the subsequent developments. Besides, the author, through his biography, and his book can serve as a link between the past and the present, showing the continuity and an uninterrupted relationship between anthroposophists of different generations and the Christmas Conference. As the book was widely read and studied, by individuals and groups, and was often quoted and referred to, we can assume that it reflected the moods and attitudes of a large circle of anthroposophists. The author's name was Rudolf Grosse. He was a very prominent anthroposophist serving for many years in the leadership of both the General Anthroposophical Society, as its head, and of the School of Spiritual Science. The name of his book is *The Christmas Foundation; beginning of a new cosmic age*.

Rudolf Grosse describes how in earlier times, in the first twenty years after Steiner's death when there was no documented proceedings of the Christmas Conference available to anthroposophists, their desire to learn about it as much as possible was to be satisfied only by the testimonies of the participants. However eager the latter were to convey to others their impressions, they consisted mainly of emotions rather than of substance. But when finally Marie Steiner published these proceedings in 1944 they "aroused a burning, undying interest in the event of the Society's founding" and immediately became the object of ardent studies. Their purpose was "the endeavour to achieve a deeper understanding of the Christmas Conference." And Rudolf Grosse had no doubts of the results of such studies whenever they would occur: "Just as was the case at Christmas 1923, enthusiasm and new impulses will be born out of encountering and experiencing the nature of the Christmas Conference." These words were not just an expression of optimism. They were based on a personal experience and knowledge of what lived in the hearts and minds of anthroposophists right after this event took place: "Since then this Christmas Conference has been the focal point of interest for the members of the Society." For them it was "a lofty spiritual event" which they wished to comprehend through their intensive and extensive studies.

In itself there was nothing new in this desire. From the very inception of anthroposophy, studying, individually and collectively, Steiner's works – books, lecture cycles, separate lectures or particular themes, as well as other materials – has been the main feature of the anthroposophical culture within the Anthroposophical Movement. For instance, his book *The Philosophy of Freedom* has never ceased to fascinate and challenge anthroposophists of all generations who, apart from studying it, devoted to it many articles and even books. There have been published several translations of the book into English but some anthroposophists, unsatisfied with them, made their own translations.

However, the Christmas Conference still occupies a special place in this respect. Even at the time of Rudolf Grosse (of subsequent times we shall speak later) there existed what may be called a 'culture of the Christmas Conference' and we are going to look into it now, with his help. He not only conveyed to us the fact of the existence of this culture, but epitomized it by his book which is a comprehensive study of the Christmas Conference. Even its Contents reveal the scope and depth of his study:

- Understanding the Christmas Conference
- Laying the foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum
- Nine Years after the Laying of the Foundation Stone: The Burning of the Goetheanum
- Spiritual Constellations
- The Supersensible Aspect of the Christmas Conference
- Culmination and Sacrifice
- Spiritual Events around the Year 869
- The Rhythmic Sequences of the Year 869
- The Continued Working of the Christmas Conference
- A Possible Successor
- The Foundation Stone Meditation

We cannot give here a detailed analysis of the book and there is no need for this. A brief summary of its essence will serve our purpose. As is evident even from the Contents, and is elaborated and emphasised in the text of the book, Rudolf Grosse views the Christmas Conference as an exclusively spiritual event: "From the very first moment the Conference was a purely spiritual event." As such it is rooted deeply in the spiritual world and goes far back in spiritual history. For us, ordinary mortals, it is, to begin with, an enigmatic and mysterious event full of secrets and riddles, "with the meanings that at first seemed utterly impenetrable". To unravel them requires many years of intensive studies the results of which depend on our individual abilities and karma. Regardless of this, the Christmas Conference requires of all of us not only full dedication but "to develop and increase in dignity" Also, the Christmas Conference is not exhausted by its extraordinary accomplishments "as the loftiest event of thousands of years of human history" – it contains "the germ of a spiritual future." And this future, despite some doubters and deniers (apparently Grosse encountered them), has already been safeguarded: "Someone who in later years might presume to maintain that the Christmas Conference did not succeed cannot possibly have known anything about this moment of initiation with its resolve to faithfulness. Many held absolutely firmly to it for the rest of their lives. And one above all others never wavered, one who stood within the pledge together with the others – Rudolf Steiner." And still further: "So new light is also thrown on the question of how the Christmas Conference continued to endure after it had been formally brought to a close. A short reply is that Rudolf Steiner himself gave the comprehensive answer through his work right up to the day of his death on 30 March 1925."

Grosse undoubtedly spent many years of extensive studies and contemplations to elaborate his vision of the Christmas Conference to which we could not do full justice here. But with all due respect to Grosse's work, knowledge and integrity, we have a serious issue with his vision. In our opinion, his view of the Christmas Conference contains two principal flaws, as well as some other transgressions. First, he removed the Christmas Conference from its earthly, physical environment where it has been enacted and where it primarily belongs, with its task and consequences. Instead, he placed it exclusively into the sublime empyreal sphere where, like everything earthly, it surely has its roots and where it also belongs, though not "purely" but in a distinctly different way. Second, for Grosse the Christmas Conference is not a means, in this case spiritual/physical, for achieving specific objectives, in this case esoteric/exoteric, but an end in itself.

The author of this discourse wishes to emphasise that it is not his purpose to enter into polemics with Grosse or anybody else or to try and prove anything. His task is to present some facts and aspects of the history of the Anthroposophical Movement. Grosse's views of the Christmas Conference, whatever their content, are part of this history. When the author has presented them here he has not verified

them against a spiritual background, i.e. anthroposophy, because, his ability to do so apart, it is not his task. But, in keeping with what is his task, he has verified them against the facts pertaining to the Anthroposophical Movement and found that they contradict some of them, they contradict some of Steiner's words and even Grosse at times contradicts himself. The author has not presented here all these contradictions and inconsistencies because, again, that is not his task. But he shall make one exception and respond to the alleged role played by Steiner in safeguarding the endurance of the Christmas Conference, as quoted above.

Steiner's appeal to anthroposophists at the end of the Christmas Conference "to resolve" and "to remain true" – one of many such appeals before and after – Grosse turns into the "moment of initiation with its resolve to faithfulness." We shall leave this flight of fancy to his responsibility as it causes no harm. But to include in it Rudolf Steiner as "one who stood within the pledge together with the others" – this is not fantasy, this is an aberration. To pledge faithfulness, especially together with others, to one's own deed is bizarre, but to put Steiner on the same level with others regarding the Christmas Conference is an unpardonable distortion of facts. It also puts Steiner outside his own deed which now, in Grosse's version, stands as an idol with Steiner among its worshipers. In the other quote Grosse predicates the future of the Christmas Conference on Steiner himself and on his work which is another transgression. Steiner has not enacted it for himself but for anthroposophists and emphasised on numerous occasions that its success and future depends exclusively on them.

The author promised to the readers to give them some details of anthroposophists' views and actions in the post-Steiner period and this is what he is doing now. If we can use again a little bit of imagery, instead of urging anthroposophists, as Steiner continuously did, to turn up their sleeves, get the spades, dig them deep into the soil of their souls and start cultivating it, Grosse invites them into the libraries and meditation rooms to study and contemplate the manuals of the tools they were given for this cultivation. Of course it is necessary to master the tools to do the job properly and successfully, but not at the expense of the job itself as seems to be the case with Grosse. He knows of course of the job and its importance and he even dutifully refers to Steiner's motto 'one step – three steps' which we also quoted in our discourse. But in the context of his presentation of the Christmas Conference it sounds like lip service to the main anthroposophical task for which this Conference was intended.

Should then we be surprised that fifty years after the event and after having done such a tremendous work on it Grosse still speaks of "the silence that surrounds the Christmas Conference" and ponders the fundamental questions regarding it: "What did actually happen during the Christmas Conference?" ... "Was it his purpose...?.. Did he want..?.. These questions pose us the task of seeking understanding." Did not Grosse know that the answers to these questions had been given by Steiner at the outset of the event and not in response to any questions but as essential explanations of it? He does not seem to take this event and Steiner's words about it at their face value and prefers to look for some mysterious meaning hidden by Steiner somewhere in the spiritual depths. Grosse is drawn to what roughly may be called spiritual/theoretical aspect of the Christmas Conference and seems to be either oblivious of the existence of the earthly/practical one or not interested in it. And this is typical of anthroposophists' understanding and attitude in general.

But having thus characterised Grosse's views and attitude regarding the Christmas Conference as a phenomenon, there is one theme in his book which featured in its Contents and which, being as earthly and practical as any theme can be, seems to contradict our perception. This is the question of Steiner's successor,

another problematic issue alongside that of the leadership, which remained misunderstood and unresolved by anthroposophists. It is to Grosse's credit that he decided to return to it so many years later being apparently dissatisfied either with the existing status quo or at least with the understanding of the issue expressed or implied by other anthroposophists. Let us now see what he has to say about it.

Grosse begins by saying that in the Statutes of the Anthroposophical Society Paragraph 7, which stipulates Steiner's tripartite role in establishing the School of Spiritual Science and in appointing his collaborators and "his possible successor", "is exceptionally significant because the rule it contains is of central spiritual importance within the totality of the Statutes." And he explains this importance: "These three points are entirely the affair of Rudolf Steiner and are reserved for him alone." But then he makes a strange separation and distinction between the points which he never explains: "For a long time the same applied to the third point also." Unfortunately it was not for a long time but only for fifteen months, while Steiner was alive, and it was exactly the same time that applied for the other points. In any case, when Steiner died without appointing his successor, "this fact was accepted in accordance with Paragraph 7. But today it is necessary to express thoughts on this matter which may lead to a discovery in this very clear ruling of something which might allow us to ponder more deeply on the question of the possible successor."

We not only fully agree with Grosse about Paragraph 7 being "exceptionally significant", but we attach the same significance to anthroposophists' views, i.e. their understanding and interpretation of it, because of their consequences for the School of Spiritual Science, the Anthroposophical Society and also for the Anthroposophical Movement and, above all, for the standing of anthroposophy in the world. It is difficult to find somebody who expresses and represents these views better than Grosse. Therefore we intend to provide here enough space for him to present fully his views on the matter, with our corresponding response as necessary.

We shall begin with the above passage which poses a few questions to the reader. First of all, while mentioning the acceptance by the members of the ruling of Paragraph 7 (which was axiomatic for them), he says nothing of what is most important here – of the outcome which followed from it; the status quo, nor does he explain the connection between the two. At the same time he implies that this acceptance was carried out blindly, thoughtlessly, without proper considerations which "today", fifty years after the event, makes "necessary to express thoughts on this matter". Why was it not done at the time when it was not just "necessary" but crucial? Or at least any time later between then and "today"? Grosse does not explain it to his readers. Finally, why "this very clear ruling" of Paragraph 7, clarity being one of Steiner's main objectives for all Statutes, should contain a mysterious "something" which requires "to ponder more deeply" to fathom it?

The answer to our first query came almost immediately but not before we had to overcome another hurdle. In a simple and straightforward situation Grosse created a problem the nature of which it is difficult to comprehend for the one who has no such problem. Grosse seems to be confused by Steiner's use of the word 'possible': "The obvious simplicity of the case is rendered puzzling, however, because even at that time an *eventuality* is expressed, a *possible* successor." Then, apparently applying those very "thoughts on this matter which may lead to a discovery", he indeed makes one, which leaves us as bewildered as the problem itself: "So the word *possible* described a situation that was not as yet resolved." And this, we are sorry to say, meaningless observation allows Grosse to do an extraordinary thing – to change the meaning of the third ruling in Paragraph 7: "The members were thus unequivocally given to understand that a situation might arise in which they would have to continue their work without a designated successor because such a person either did not exist or had not been found. This was sufficient clarification of every

aspect of the succession." That is Grosse's resolution of the problem which never existed apart from in his mind. But what message does it send to others?

That Steiner, in all his multiple capacities, would leave anthroposophists one day, thus creating a tremendous void, and they would have "to continue their work" without him, was such an obvious fact that it should feel awkward to mention it let alone attribute this truism to Steiner. Leaving the School leaderless was only one, though perhaps most difficult to cope with, manifestation of this void. At the same time, how to cope with it belongs to the sphere of individual freedom and in no way, shape, or form could Steiner be prescriptive here as Grosse makes him by his "discovery". So why has Grosse done it? We can think of only one reason why he permitted himself such an indiscretion – to endorse, by the undefined words "to continue their work" (implying "without changing anything"), the status quo that the members adopted regarding the School and the Society after Steiner's death.

However, having thus resolved his problem, Grosse follows his resolution with another puzzling sentence: "As time went on, however, considerations started to appear which clouded the absolute certainty of the situation." First of all, what time is he talking about: after Steiner's death or after his own resolution of his problem? Only a few sentences earlier he said that until "today", i.e. fifty year after the Christmas conference, no thoughts were given to the matter leaving it muddled and unclear until he, Grosse, finally clarified it completely – just now, before our eyes. So when possibly could "considerations started to appear" and whose considerations were they? Grosse does not explain this but, luckily, he speaks of the considerations themselves. In fact, they are questions:

"Two questions in particular demanded an answer. Firstly, why had Rudolf Steiner found it necessary at all to bring up the question of the succession in the *Statutes* if it could not yet be settled clearly and unequivocally? Was it necessary to include an eventuality in the *Statutes* instead of leaving this question to life and coming to grips with it at the point when a direct solution could or had to be found?

Secondly, had the problem of the possible successor really been understood in all its complexity, or had those considering it perhaps become caught in a one-sided train of thought?"

We cannot be responsible for the inconsistency of Grosse's presentation or for those parts of it which are, at least in our view, farfetched or fanciful, but we have to follow them. We shall skip the first question because it is as inconsequential as it is redundant. Even Grosse does not follow it up. But the second one intrigues us by its 'one-sidedness'. Here comes an explanation: "The one-sided train of thought may be outlined as follows: Before his approaching death, Rudolf Steiner would have had to appoint his successor. But this appointment would have depended on whether a person capable of leading the High School was to be found. If no such person could be found then the appointment could not be made and the High School would from then on be without a leader."

We cannot understand why Grosse calls this realistic possibility "a one-sided train of thought", i.e. lacking in fullness and therefore not conveying a full picture. Especially as it actually did happen, in real life, and thus became a fact complete in itself. But apart from this, Grosse, by his "from then on", made an unacceptable assumption infringing upon other people's freedom. It was up to those directly involved in the situation how to deal with it and decide whether the School should continue to exist without a leader which was only one of the possibilities (other possibilities, for instance, were an appointment of a leader by the members or a cessation of the School). But let us allow Grosse to continue his own train of thought.

"The almost incomprehensible situation would then have to be faced in which Rudolf Steiner would have called a Free High School into existence with the utmost seriousness, a Free High School, which, if no successor were appointed, would have

no means of coping with this most difficult situation." We have a grammatical problem here – Grosse's use of the conditional mood of the verb instead of the indicative, i.e. his description of the factual situation as a hypothetical one. The situation not "*would have to be faced*" but *was faced* and not "*would have no means of coping*" but *did not have* them. But this confusion of the real situation with a hypothetical one is exacerbated by Grosse's totally artificial connection of Steiner's act of the inauguration of the School with one of the eventualities which might, or did actually, happen later.

This confusion, however, marks a turning point in Grosse's position regarding the situation. Not in his position alone but in that of all anthroposophists. However, there is a great difference between him and all others. The author of this narrative has never encountered another anthroposophist who so clearly and truthfully – and publicly! – described the situation which resulted after Steiner died without appointing his successor. It was Grosse's true discovery, without inverted commas. Whether this objective and truthful perception of the situation has ever reached other people's consciousness, or they had a notion of the School existing without a leader, or they never gave a thought to this issue, they all, including Grosse, shunned the reality exactly because they had "no means of coping with this most difficult situation." This, in its turn, was and is due to their inability to act as free individuals in Steiner's sense of the word.

But Grosse and the others shunned it in different ways. The others did it in the easiest and simplest manner by taking no action and maintaining the status quo without any explanations whatsoever. For Grosse it was different. He consciously discovered and publicly declared the truth and then decided to eschew it and support and justify the already existing status quo by trying to find some plausible justifications and explanations for it. As there were, and could be, none, his efforts inevitably resulted in inconsistencies, misconceptions and spiritual untruths which we find now in his book as is evident even from his above passage. He wilfully connected a purposeful deed (of Steiner's) with its unintended outcome over which the doer had no control. As a result he ended up with an absurdity: Steiner creating "with the utmost seriousness" the School of Spiritual Science and then, very shortly, left it in the condition in which it could not exist. Instead of recognising this absurdity as a creation of his own thinking, he persists with it thus only multiplying his unsustainable arguments.

Nevertheless we have to acknowledge a genuine predicament in which Grosse found himself as a result of his discovery because it could not just remain a mental notion – it demanded a practical outcome, a physical action. If the School could not exist without a leader, and there was none available, the only practical outcome was to close the School or rather that embryo which was left by Steiner and which was to be developed by him into the fully-fledged School. But that the School, in whatever form, should cease to exist, especially at the hands of anthroposophists, was not only an unacceptable proposition for Grosse, it was unthinkable, incomprehensible, something which could never happen. However he could not possibly say, to himself and to others, as one of Chekhov's characters did in a similar state of bewilderment and disbelief: "This cannot happen because it can *never* happen." So he was now faced with two opposite tasks: first, to show why the situation was factually, and not only subjectively for him, incomprehensible; and, second, as the situation would still be there, to show that in reality, if we overcame "a one-sided train of thought", it was not what it seemed at first – incomprehensible, etc. – but entirely consistent and comprehensible.

But we are still at the stage when Grosse acutely experiences his predicament calling his discovery "actually quite a depressing situation". As such this predicament of his is, in the first instance, a biographical factor. We know nothing of Grosse's life

and his life experiences, but, as a general observation, it is from these that an emotional and first mental reaction comes in response to one's new encounters, particularly dramatic ones. If nothing has prepared one for them, one would be, at least to begin with, incredulous, nonplussed, lost and even depressed. Short of one's own personal experiences, another source could be those of other people, for instance, of Rudolf Steiner in this case. In his life and biography we can find enough instances when things went wrong, contrary to what had been planned, expected and hoped for. A most poignant example in point is the Goetheanum. Was it not also "the almost incomprehensible situation" that anthroposophists and Rudolf Steiner had to face when this very special building which he "called into existence with the utmost seriousness" was unexpectedly and within a few hours raised to the ground before their very eyes? Anyway our past experiences should teach us that 'unbelievable' situations do happen in life, but, thus prepared, we still have to comprehend and unravel them. And here Grosse, in our opinion, made a methodological mistake.

A situation or phenomenon is to be understood out of itself when all facts pertaining to it are known and then a right concept is found and applied. Whereas Grosse for the comprehension regarding one entity, the School of Spiritual Science, involves another, the Christmas Conference. He argues that a cessation of the School would contradict "Rudolf Steiner's call to maintain the *Christmas Conference* and cultivate its spiritual stream" The fact that they are related or even closely connected is immaterial here. In violating thus the principle of cognition he commits in the process some other inaccuracies. To begin with, he measures the life expectancy of the School by the longevity of the Christmas Conference which in itself is wrong. Then he has not specified, which is crucial here, the meaning of this particular call of Steiner's and how it is connected with the non-appointment of his successor. Steiner's well known calls in this respect were addressed to anthroposophists and concerned mainly the cultivation of their inner life to be translated into spirit-inspired actions. How is it connected with the appointment or otherwise of Steiner's successor?

But Grosse persists with this point making some assumptions, again without any apparent connection with the main issue: "in the spirit of this call the Vorstand, without a leader of the High School, would have to guide and administer the Anthroposophical Society as an esoteric Vorstand." How eager he is to endorse every aspect of the status quo! And then comes another formidable statement, in the form of a question: "Also we ought to ask how the consecration of the Society through the spiritual Foundation Stone laid in the etheric hearts of those present in accordance with the will of the spiritual world is linked to the absence of a leader of the High School." The purpose of this rhetorical question, which is never answered, seems to be to bring a powerful spiritual ammunition totally unrelated to the question of a successor, to bear on it though again not in any specified way. Then comes a warning or admonition, again totally unrelated to the issue of a successor but again full with formidable spiritual ammunition: "The spiritual wholeness of the archetypal image of the unity between Movement and Society ought never be called into question, for the Christmas Conference was a *mystical fact*."

Then Grosse takes a courageous step in trying to understand and even to penetrate Steiner's own thinking on the subject. Grosse can only be commended for his attempt, as all anthroposophists should be encouraged to do the same regarding not only Steiner's actions but also his works, such as *The Philosophy of Freedom*. It cannot and should not be done of course regarding the results of his spiritual investigations which were unpredictable and even sometimes puzzling to Steiner himself. Anyway, Grosse's attempt took the form of a question: "Did the consequences of not appointing a successor, with all the fundamental lack of certainty this would lead to, remain hidden from him?" This time Grosse gives a full

reply to his question: "The answer to this can hardly be other than No. All this cannot have lived in this way in Rudolf Steiner's spirit. Only one conclusion is possible: The problem posed right at the start by the question of a "possible" successor must be understood from a new angle!"

Only one thing is absolutely right in this mental exercise: "All this cannot have lived in this way in Rudolf Steiner's spirit." It only lived in Grosse's spirit and in likeminded people, and "the fundamental lack of certainty" was his problem and predicament. And again he was right in saying that it "must be understood from a new angle" – new for him! But whose and what angle would it be? If it is Steiner's and comes from the situation itself then it is the right angle. If it would come from someone or somewhere else then it would be the wrong angle which only would muddle the issue. We shall see.

The beginning of Grosse's search for a new angle was not very promising because again he summoned for help some other situations and events rather than exploring – "from a new angle" – the one in question. He noted that Steiner was very alert and busy, giving instructions, making arrangements, writing, etc. "right up to the last day of his life." In contrast to this: "On the other hand he did not *bid farewell* either verbally or in writing to the founding Vorstand he had formed during the Christmas Conference. He gave them neither guidelines nor good advice. He departed – without a word!" Grosse quotes the same words of Ita Wegman which we quoted earlier and then gives his reaction to Steiner's conduct: "It is not easy to understand this conduct. It is uncommon and poses a difficult riddle. Indeed we may say that without a proper understanding of it, our soul can hardly avoid being burdened by it." And then he continues with very important questions: "What does Rudolf Steiner's silence say to us? Did he expect a different, more mature understanding? Or did he expect to be asked about all this much earlier on?"

The present author gave his answer to these questions after quoting Ita Wegman. But why has Grosse never explored these, his own, questions? Instead he allows himself a flight of imagination, or fantasy, by suggesting a fictitious conversation between a member of the Anthroposophical Society and Steiner in which the former approaches the latter after the Christmas Conference with the following questions: "What do you mean, Herr Doktor, when in point seven of the Statutes you speak of a *possible* successor? Why do you say *possible*? Surely there must always be a successor? The High School must have a leader – otherwise how can it continue to function?" Before Steiner answers, with the help of Grosse, these questions let us look at them closer and see what we can make of them and of Steiner's *possible* (this word again!) replies.

In essence there are two different issues addressed by two different questions. The first one, "Why do you say *possible*?", addresses a linguistic issue because it hinges on the understanding of the word *possible* in this particular context. To our understanding it has only one meaning and therefore should not raise any questions: Rudolf Steiner will appoint his successor *provided* he can find one. If we remove the word *possible*, the meaning of point seven changes completely: there is no doubt that a successor will be there but it will be Rudolf Steiner who will appoint him. There were two reasons why point seven could not be phrased like this: there could be no certainty that a suitable successor would be there; and had Steiner failed, for whatever reason, to definitely appoint his successor as was stated in the Statutes (without the word *possible*), it would have caused real confusion and an impasse which, without Steiner, would have been impossible to resolve. So Steiner had no alternative but to comply with the reality and insert the word *possible*. And if somebody would have had the temerity of asking him this 'linguistic' question, we think Steiner's reply would have been along these lines.

This brings us now to the second issue and the second question which Grosse, on behalf of his imagined member, failed to formulate clearly and to the point. So we have to do it for him: "What will happen, Herr Doktor, when in due course you decide to appoint your successor but will not be able to find a suitable person?" This question, however, is not complete. We intentionally left out one important factor making it implicit. It concerns the reasons why Steiner might find it necessary to appoint a successor. We can think of three obvious ones: Steiner might decide to retire; he might feel infirm and incapable of carrying out the leadership of the School; and, finally, he might become aware of his imminent death. Whether implicit or explicit, this factor alone makes such a question most improper and improbable especially to be asked at the very launch of the most momentous and far-reaching enterprise which needed many years of hard work to succeed. No wonder it could exist only in someone's imagination. Anyway if somebody again would have had the temerity of asking such a question and Steiner would have consented to answer it, his reply most probably would be along the lines: "we'll cross that bridge when we come to it". It would have been most imprudent to answer differently, especially bearing in mind that the responsibility for the consequences in the case of the first two eventualities would have been his and in the case of the third one – that of the members.

Thus we answered the questions that in real life have never been asked and could have never been asked. Let us see now how they were answered by the one who conceived them and who put his answers into Steiner's mouth:

"We must remember that the *High School* is intended to be a Michael School and that it was not founded out of the human will but by the initiative of that being himself, out of the will of the spiritual world. The leadership of the High School is therefore a purely spiritual matter, it is the task of Michael, the Time Spirit. When in the lessons of the First Class instruction is given about special spiritual paths and special spiritual exercises, then the members have to learn something entirely new, something that belongs to the very nature of this Mystery Centre. They will hear the words being spoken by the mouth of Rudolf Steiner, but they will have to experience that in reality the indications stem from the spiritual world and have their source in the being of Michael. This understanding must definitely be one of the tasks of esoteric development. The appointment of a "possible successor" means that such an appointment is not an earthly, human affair but a lofty spiritual matter. Whatever Michael may decide will have to be accepted as a destiny, as a trial of destiny or as a spiritual command. Therefore a clear indication had to be given, even in the Statutes. From the beginning the members had to be made aware of the fact that at the opening of the Christmas Conference it had been clearly stated that the *Foundation Stone Verses* were spoken "with the will of the spiritual world". The way in which the Christmas Conference proceeded from day to day clearly showed the guidance of the spiritual world, for this was present in everything that happened. This could be quite clearly and naturally experienced. The members will have to grow accustomed to taking the guidance of the spiritual world seriously."

We quoted Grosse at length so as to present his views in full on the subject which was for him, and is objectively, of great importance. We made sure that every sentence and every statement reaches the reader in the context given to it by Grosse. On our part, before commenting on Grosse's views, we shall put them in another context, in that of anthroposophical activities within the Anthroposophical Movement. Apart from benefiting from anthroposophy as a source of spiritual nourishment and knowledge, anthroposophists feel it particularly rewarding when they themselves use this knowledge for the two major activities of man, practical and intellectual. For the former they try to apply anthroposophy to their practical activities and professional life. For the latter anthroposophy opens for them new and virtually

boundless vistas of a fascinating world of spirit with limitless possibilities to explore and exercise one's creativity and imagination. Though all knowledge and facts of this world have been provided by Steiner, these very facts by their nature entice, invite, tempt and encourage one to investigate and interpret them, put on them one's individual stamp, discover in them some hidden and yet unrevealed meaning or even enrich them by personal discoveries. The only tools anthroposophists have for this is their creative thinking and healthy imagination, but there is a danger of course of inadvertently allowing one's fantasies and illusions to creep in. This is inevitable with that type of activity though it is no reason to stop the activity altogether which is vital for the development of both the individual and of anthroposophy.

There is however another danger the signs of which can be traced in anthroposophical literature. It is when the writers are sometimes so carried away by their fascination with things spiritual, that they seem to be divorced from the earthly affairs as if they do not matter. Of course they know perfectly well of the overwhelming importance of what takes place here on earth both for man and for the spiritual world, but somehow in their contemplations and writings they lose the right perspective of earthly/spiritual correlations, particularly when it concerns specific events or phenomena. We are afraid that Grosse, in one way or another, became a victim of both dangers.

It particularly concerns his way of portraying the Christmas Conference as "a purely spiritual event" and furthermore as "a *mystical fact*" – nothing earthly, as if its participants were some ethereal beings. Now this most earthly – by intentions, execution and objectives – event contained something which could not be anything but earthly: a stipulation written, or rather printed, in black and white in hundreds of copies, concerning an appointment, or otherwise, of a suitable human being to a particular and already existing position. The potential candidate – his possible successor! – was probably sitting in the audience when this stipulation was read aloud. And now let us see what Grosse made of this stipulation in the quoted passage.

The passage contains an assemblage of highly spiritually charged statements each of which is or may be true in itself but whose relevance or even relation to the stipulation in Paragraph 7 is difficult to detect. Grosse summoned them in support of his wilful interpretation of it along the lines: "Rudolf Steiner will appoint his possible successor as instructed by Michael" – as if Steiner's authority was not enough for the members. At the same time this suggests that after taking his far-reaching decision and implementing it at the Christmas Conference without consulting the spiritual powers, Steiner then became incapable of appointing his own successor thus becoming a mere mouthpiece for these powers. This grossly distorts the real situation and Steiner's position vis-à-vis the spiritual world. Grosse's only 'earthly' sentence in this passage – "Therefore a clear indication had to be given, even in the Statutes" – only muddles things up still further. What is the meaning of "Therefore" here? And it was indeed "a clear indication" before Grosse rewrote it. But the most amazing thing is that this long passage of 'Steiner's' reply has not given any answer to the questions put to him. He only shifted responsibility for appointing a successor from himself to Michael.

Grosse suggested further possible conversations with Steiner and continued making various statements of a spiritual nature of which we shall mention only those that relate to the subject of a successor. Sometimes they do it in a roundabout way. Thus he said that from the Christmas Conference onwards Steiner's work and his being "became one and the same". It was a strange statement to make because this had been the case all Steiner's life. But then Grosse extends Steiner's work beyond the threshold saying that he continued it after his death without revealing, however, its nature. Nevertheless he finds it necessary to provide proof for Steiner's

posthumous activities: "That Rudolf Steiner continues to work can be seen in the fact that the Society persevered and the members found one another again. A kind of spiritual renewal in the initiatives also shows this." Grosse apparently refers to the reunification of the Society after the thirty year split, but his reference to this shameful and tragic period in the history of the Anthroposophical Society is even more surprising than the 'proof' itself. If only because what then does the split itself, its severity and duration, prove – that Steiner was idle? All these ruminations, however, turned out to be only a preamble to what Grosse offers as a final resolution of the problem which we again have to quote in full:

"The continued working of Rudolf Steiner provides the answer to the following question: When he closed his eyes and departed from his body on 30 March 1925, why did he not *take leave* of anybody? The answering question is: If you are not going away, why should you take your leave? Why is it stated in the printed Statutes that it was for Rudolf Steiner to appoint his *possible* successor? Has the word *possible* been mistakenly interpreted? Can it only be taken to mean that he did not appoint a successor because no such person existed? Maybe this *is* what it means. But it could equally well signify that there was no need to appoint a successor because he had taken the leadership of the High School into his own care and had not relinquished it since he had not gone away. At the time when the Statutes were printed, this high dispensation to stay was as yet entirely undecided, so at the moment it was still necessary to speak of a *possible* successor.

Rudolf Steiner's statement that his name must not be separated from his work would then quite concretely apply also to the leadership of the High School which he had been unable to pass on to a successor. In all confidence we may say that it is a spiritual reality:

Rudolf Steiner did not, by his death, separate himself from the High School, the Michael School which is purely a spiritual institution. If he remained connected with anything at all, then it was with the leadership of the High School!"

It is for the first time that Grosse, if not giving equal credence to the physical and spiritual worlds, at least puts them side by side. But then he still mixes them up and gives his preference to the spiritual one. This is the only comment we are prepared to make with regard to the above quote. Quite frankly, at times we feel embarrassed for Grosse's reasoning and also find it embarrassing to comment on it. The reader, we are sure, can clearly see what we mean by saying this.

However, as if taking the issue of a successor from its natural and real environment of the physical world far into the unrelated occurrences in the world of spirit was not enough, Grosse takes us still further in the same direction. Deepening into his anthroposophical knowledge and coming up with a few quotes of Steiner's, Grosse tells us that unlike with ordinary mortals Steiner's death was unique, involved different processes and did not sever his relations with the physical world. As a result, "after laying down his physical body, Rudolf Steiner ..., with regard to his higher powers, was capable to a far greater degree even than before of remaining united with the service of Michael and with the Anthroposophical Movement. The Society, as the vessel for Anthroposophy and as the bearer of the esoteric, spiritual impulses of the Christmas Conference, is the body with which Rudolf Steiner remains united in order to work at his spiritual task."

As we can see, Grosse continues with an unjustifiable mixture of spiritual facts with the earthly activities. But at a certain point he seems to realise that he perhaps went too far even for his like-minded fellow anthroposophists which prompts the following passage: "It is understandable that a particular objection is raised to the above interpretation of certain riddles of the later part of Rudolf Steiner's life. It is objected that the interpretation of Rudolf Steiner's death as something out of the ordinary is something from the realm of mysticism. We ought to remember that we

are living on the physical earth which has laws of its own that are immutable. If somebody has passed through the gate of death, which Rudolf Steiner indubitably did, then he cannot still be the leader of the High School in the same way as he had been before. We must, after all, be sensible." But, for some mysterious reasons, Grosse himself refuses to be sensible and continues: "This objection, right though it may be in the external sense, is opposed to everything we bear within us, first as concept and then as living Anthroposophy, that has to do with the working of the supersensible world and the passage over the threshold. It is an objection that has arisen out of the paradox of materialism." Here, having failed to reconcile what is right "in the external sense" with "the working of the supersensible world" – the major anthroposophical task! – Grosse allows another serious indiscretion by using 'we' instead of 'I'.

To conclude his chapter on the concrete, practical and most tangible issue of Steiner's successor Grosse takes us to where he feels most comfortable to be – to the spiritual world: "In the 20th century the Etheric Christ is moving amongst mankind. And He is accompanied by one who placed into our world the Christmas Conference in the spirit of the Christos-Sun at the Beginning of a New Cosmic Age." It is supposed to be his punch line to finalise and clench his arguments – in the most imprecise way but which is bound to impress anthroposophists as something lofty and true.

To conclude our own comments on his reasoning, we cannot help being amazed as to what length and depth of complicated and redundant arguments such an outstanding personality and anthroposophist like Rudolf Grosse was prepared to go because he was unable to face reality and cope with it. He was unable to face a completely new and unexpected situation; his unidirectional thinking was unable to grasp it while his imagination was not free and creative enough to provide a truthful picture of it. Should we be surprised then that lesser people and anthroposophists all over the world followed suit and eventually turned what was for Grosse 'a culture of the Christmas Conference' into what became today 'a cult of the Christmas Conference'.

For anthroposophists today, more than ever, the Christmas Conference is not a working situation, a desperate rescue operation which was aimed at helping them to transform themselves and reform their Society. It never occurred to them to see themselves as a direct and prime object of that event. As to the Society, as far as they are concerned, it was reformed – by Steiner, there and then. Thus the Christmas Conference is for them an accomplishment and not a process with them at its very centre. They seem to be oblivious of the fact that the changes that were intended were inward and not outward. And that all outward changes that took place as the result of the Christmas Conference were necessitated by the inner changes, i.e. by the new spiritual content introduced by Rudolf Steiner. Their contribution is still wanting but it is not on their agenda.

What they do have on their agenda is the Christmas Conference as a very special festive event. Not only in the history of the Anthroposophical Society and the Anthroposophical Movement but in the spiritual history of mankind. They have good reasons for treating it this way because this event is for them a turning point for both worlds as it established the earthly branch of the supersensible Michael School to which they, at least the members of this earthly branch, indubitably belong. As for Rudolf Steiner, this event was the pinnacle of his life, his highest achievement. Some even assert that all his previous accomplishments paved the way and led to what he had accomplished by the Christmas Conference.

As a clear sign of its cultic status, the present leadership of the GAS has taken a decision to start commemorating the centennial of the Christmas Conference seven years prior to the date starting with, in words of one anthroposophical official, "a most

significant event" in September 2016 which took three years to prepare. This is something unprecedented in cultural and social life and perhaps in the entire human history. It is not to say that there is anything wrong with the commemorative events themselves, but the process of commemoration seems odd, contrived and showy. We have referred to it as a manifestation of a particular attitude which has conceived this process. Apart from anything else, it is simply unthinkable that something like this could have taken place with Steiner's participation or consent.

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To complete the theme of the post-Steiner situation we shall return now, as promised, to the issue of the expulsion of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede. Apropos this we wish to mention an unrelated but relevant phenomenon not only to the issue but to our discourse as a whole. There exists an extensive anthroposophical library which, apart from Steiner's works, contains hundreds of books on anthroposophy and its various aspects, as well as many Steiner's biographies, biographies of other anthroposophists, reminiscences and documents. But is lacking in books on the history of the Anthroposophical Society or the Anthroposophical Movement, at least in the English language. So the later generations of anthroposophists have no knowledge of their anthroposophical past and of what their predecessors have been through. Living without one's history is like living without memory! The only sources of their historical information are some bits and pieces from people's biographies and reminiscences. And, if they are lucky, their personal encounters with the bearers of such information. Alas, the further we go into the past the less it is going to be a direct knowledge and experience and more just hearsay.

The author of this discourse felt acutely the absence of historical sources though he worked mainly with the facts and words which came directly from Steiner and which are readily available. Therefore his discourse is a historical account though he still has not dared to call it 'history' on its own without prefacing it with the word 'concerning'. And his sincere hope is that in time more historical accounts will appear covering the same and other periods and subjects from different angles. But, coming now to our issue, without such accounts later generations of anthroposophists for many years had no precise or any knowledge of the expulsion of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede and even of the split in the GAS. They knew of course these names as well as those of other members of the Vorstand but mainly in connection with the Christmas Conference as described above. But not only names. Those who were interested enough knew of their anthroposophical activities and writings some of which were published. On the whole, all five members of the original Vorstand were held in high esteem by later anthroposophists, and their reputation was undoubtedly enhanced by the fact that they were chosen personally by Rudolf Steiner as his collaborators.

In one particular respect Ita Wegman occupied a special place not only among those five but among all other anthroposophists. At various stages of her life, and beyond it, she had devoted supporters who stood by her and acted on her behalf with words and deeds. As was mentioned earlier, with the exception of Marie Steiner, all other members of the Vorstand appointed by Steiner would not have been the members' choice. Though Steiner explained the reasons for choosing them, not everything behind this appointment was known or could be revealed or rightly understood. This refers particularly to Ita Wegman. She and Rudolf Steiner have a karmic connection which goes back for millennia, through various incarnations featuring some outstanding historical figures. At one point Steiner deemed it necessary to share this information with Ita Wegman which he gradually elaborated

and supplemented with verses and meditations. All this was at the time their 'private property'.

But then a small group of young enthusiastic and insightful anthroposophists managed to perceive this intimate and historically significant connection on the basis of some of Steiner's lectures and decided to confront Ita Wegman with their discovery. Being shocked and without confirming anything she immediately consulted Steiner who advised her to acknowledge the truth. Unfortunately the young men were not discreet and wise enough to keep this knowledge to themselves and their indiscretion did not serve Wegman well, especially after Steiner's death. This information started to percolate as rumours and hearsay causing incredulity, mistrust, suspicion and eventually hostility and even accusations in her address. And this attitude, no doubt, contributed to her eventual expulsion. But she had many faithful defenders and supporters including prominent figures such as the head of the Dutch Anthroposophical Society F.W. Zeylmans van Emmihoven who also was a doctor. In fact, two national Societies, Dutch and British, were on her side and, as we know, were expelled from the GAS at the same time as Wegman and Vreede were expelled from the Vorstand.

Then, many years later, in 1977, a book was published by the official Rudolf Steiner Press with the note "Privately printed for Members of the Anthroposophical Society". The book, devoted to Rudolf Steiner's and Ita Wegman's common destiny as it developed over millennia through a series of simultaneous incarnations and collaborations, was called *Rudolf Steiner's Mission and Ita Wegman* and written by Margarete and Erich Kirshner-Bockholt. They were close friends of hers in whom she confined some important details concerning her and Rudolf Steiner and to whom she bequeathed "a surprising number of communications that had been addressed to her personally by Rudolf Steiner in the form of verses and passages in prose, also in letters personally addressed to her. As indications, and containing supplementary details, they amplify, corroborate and complete the picture of the concurrent incarnations of Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman of which he gives intimations in his lectures." Such was their devotion to Ita Wegman that the authors dedicated "decades of collaborative work" to the book and one of them worked on it till the very end of her life. Their aim was to convey "the historic significance of her individuality in connection with Rudolf Steiner's mission to humanity."

And then, fifteen years later, there took place another manifestation of an extraordinary devotion to Ita Wegman. It was her fundamental biography, in four volumes, titled *Who was Ita Wegman* and written by the son of the above F.W. Zeylmans van Emmihoven, J.E. Zeylmans van Emmihoven. In the context of our discourse the volume 3 is of most interest to us because it gives the documented details of the expulsion and its background. At the same time this information caused an unintended but unavoidable discrepancy between the author's intentions and the readers' knowledge. The author intended to 'tell the truth', i.e. how unfair and unjustifiable the expulsion was, while most of the readers would learn about the expulsion for the first time, never mind about the circumstances that accompanied it.

However, this innocent discrepancy is enhanced by the author's bias which the readers encounter from the very beginning, from the first paragraph of the Preface where the author refers to some anthroposophists at the time, apparently opponents of Ita Wegman, in whom "alien powers could dwell" so that "through the words, thoughts, and deeds ... they were in fact realizing luciferic and ahrimanic impulses." It is not only a bias – it is a very serious indictment. Both, in our opinion, are permissible in a biography provided they are not based on distorted or concealed facts. They reflect the author's views and if other people have different views or information nobody stops them from writing their own accounts and advancing their own views. Nevertheless the readers are left with at least two pertinent questions:

Were Wegman's opponents the only participants of the conflict in whom "alien powers dwelled" and were "luciferic and ahrimanic impulses" the only cause for the expulsion? The author, with his own objectives for the book to which he dedicated so much time and energy, cannot be blamed for not posing let alone answering these questions – it is his prerogative. It remains to be seen whether other people, historians and researchers will address these questions or offer a different perspective on those events.

In any case, the above two books are, in our opinion, ultimate manifestations and examples of true devotion to Ita Wegman, their authors' aims and desire being to show "the historic significance of her individuality" and to restore 'an historic justice' to her. Now the readers of the present narrative can imagine its author's utter surprise when, a quarter of a century later – on 22 November 2017 to be precise – he received the following note from the editor of the periodical *Deepening Anthroposophy* sent to its subscribers: "I am sending information about what I consider to be an important initiative to officially restore the images of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede at the Goetheanum. This initiative is being proposed for the 2018 Annual General Meeting in Dornach. [Society members and non-members alike are invited to support it.](#)" The pomposity of its presentation apart, the note immediately posed the following questions: Why do these images need to be restored, especially "officially"? Who, when and why has distorted them and in whose eyes? How did this distortion manifest itself and why was it not common anthroposophical knowledge and experience? Presumably one could hope to find the answers in the "information" sent therewith to which we shall presently come. But if somebody like the present author who had been an anthroposophist for decades, with keen interest in the anthroposophical affairs and history, found the above "initiative" as coming totally out of the blue and being puzzling and gratuitous, then it must have been something wrong with it. But let us go to the "information" in the hope to unravel this suddenly emerged riddle.

It was a document titled *An Initiative for the Rehabilitation of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede*. Now the word *Rehabilitation* brings more clarity to the intention of the initiative, but not yet to the issue itself. That, apparently, should come from the content of the document. To begin with, it briefly outlines, with appropriate references to Steiner, the outstanding roles the two ladies played in serving anthroposophy. Then it appropriately conveys the facts which created the issue itself: "Through a decision made during the Annual General Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society on April 14, 1935, Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede – two members of the Society's Executive Council appointed by Rudolf Steiner – were removed from their positions as members of that Council." And: "Other prominent Dutch and English national Society members were also excluded from the General Anthroposophical Society. The Annual General Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society reversed these exclusions in a 1948 decision. However, the exclusions of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede remain in effect." Strictly speaking, there is no need to go further into the document because the above passage, or even the last sentence, contains all the information we need and clarifies the issue. So let us try to make sense of it on this basis.

It is a shame that the authors of the Initiative having expressed their disappointment with the outcome of the 1948 Meeting by the emphatic 'However', have not explained it more clearly. What does it mean: "the exclusions remain in effect"? Why do they? We can only conclude that this is the authors' roundabout way of saying that a new decision regarding Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede had not been taken. But why? Why did the Annual General Meeting of the General Anthroposophical Society reverse its earlier decision with regard to the supporters and defenders of the two ladies but not regarding the ladies themselves? Why did

these anthroposophists, or their successors, continue to be so unkind towards them? We shall try to remedy the deficiency of the document which failed to make this clear.

The Annual General Meeting's decision had not extended to the two ladies for the simple reason that both had been dead by that time – for five years. To reverse their exclusion from the Vorstand in these circumstances would have been meaningless, if not altogether bizarre. At best it would have been an empty gesture, at worst – a posthumous insult added to the injury inflicted upon them when they were alive. To commit such an absurdity did not occur not only to the anthroposophists of 1948, it never occurred to later generations and to such devotees of Ita Wegman as the authors of the abovementioned books. But why have some anthroposophists suddenly decided to do it now? What has prompted them, eighty years after the event, to undertake an initiative unthinkable for the rest of their brothers and sisters in spirit both in the past and at present? Something has obviously changed, but what? Is it some new factors that have emerged just now or is it a consciousness shift? Let us see what the initiators themselves have to say about it. Let us hear their reasons and justifications for their initiative.

To this end we shall convey to the readers the rest of the content of the document. Speaking of the expulsions it gives the *Background of the 1935 Decisions* which is followed by a long passage *What do the 1935 exclusions mean for the supersensible anthroposophical movement and for the Anthroposophical Society on the earth?* And now we come to the crux of the document which we relate verbatim: "**The rehabilitation** of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede would require that their individualities and their work in service to anthroposophy and as colleagues of Rudolf Steiner be recognized and their value acknowledged. It would further require that the circumstances and events that led to the expulsions be raised to consciousness and worked through in the broader context of self-knowledge within the Anthroposophical Society. Finally, it would require that what was done to them be recognized as an injustice; and that the decision of 1935 be rescinded. This is the only way that we can stand on a foundation within the Anthroposophical Society that is both attentive and truthful to the form and mood of the consciousness soul. Ultimately these steps alone make it possible for those who actively carry responsibility in anthroposophy to work fruitfully into the future."

To this should be added the best part of the passage *The Background of this Initiative*: "Today, as members of the General Anthroposophical Society we find ourselves legally and spiritually in the same Society in which these judgments were made and the expulsions adopted by its administrative organs in 1935. However, we are able now to acknowledge without reservation that an injustice occurred at that time and that things were done then that run counter to the intentions of the anthroposophical movement. We are thus presented with the following possibilities:

- We can distance ourselves from the events that took place then and make it clear that we want nothing to do with those events and circumstances – that we feel in no way responsible for them. Those of us who are members today were not among those who acted then. However, what occurred then remains an inextricable part of the Anthroposophical Society today. Thus if we wish to distance ourselves from those events, we would also have to withdraw from the Society. Distancing oneself from circumstances that are inseparable from the Society while continuing as a member or even belonging to the leadership represents an inherent contradiction.
- We can unreservedly acknowledge the injustice. Within a Society that wants to "serve the spirit of truth" and in the context of the self-knowledge noted earlier we can penetrate what occurred with consciousness and with our feeling of responsibility. We can then rescind the decision and confront any consequences that may result.

It is the view of those who have signed below that if we want to remain true to Rudolf Steiner's intentions – or become true to them once again – only the second

option offers a just and fruitful way forward. Reuniting the karmic streams that had been separated would make possible an enormous step towards healing karmic fissures and towards self-healing. A powerful, cooperative work would become possible now and well into the future. After decades of living with the taboo surrounding a rethinking of this past, it should at least be possible today – especially in view of the approaching centenary of the Christmas Conference 1923/24 – to illuminate and reintegrate this aspect of the Anthroposophical Society's tragic history. Such a step could serve as the beginning of a process of healing for the whole Anthroposophical Society and might also lead to liberating the personalities responsible for the expulsions at that time. As we approach the centenary this step can be seen as a contribution towards creating what is needed if we are to take up Rudolf Steiner's impulses with a renewed sense of purpose in the Anthroposophical Society."

Before giving our response to the above we find it necessary to offer a broader context to the expulsion of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede. We shall start with what has become a staple and most powerful, in the eyes of those who use it, argument against this expulsion: Rudolf Steiner himself had appointed them Vorstand members. This is, in our eyes, the most unanthroposophical argument. Those who use it today, while starting to commemorate the centenary of the Christmas Conference seven years prior to the date, show how still very little do they understand this important aspect of that event. It is exactly because they were appointed and not elected, all Vorstand members should have felt after Steiner's death as impostors vis-à-vis the membership and should have resigned. They were no longer viable as Vorstand members – not spiritually because they were distinguished anthroposophists, but administratively. After the resignation they could have offered themselves, if they wished to continue in their role, for election, alongside other candidates. But it never happened while the membership remained inactive. So they all faced the consequences that resulted in the strife and expulsion ten years later.

The way the expulsion took place was 'unsavoury' – emotional, incriminatory, tragic. Was it also unfair and unjust? We cannot be a hundred percent sure today because we cannot hear and question both sides of the conflict. But there are still documents and personal accounts that are available to us. Are they all totally reliable, objective and sufficient? Those who wish to rely on them and investigate them fully 'to get to the bottom of it', need perhaps years and dedication for their research. Only few individuals can do that. The others have to rely on their findings. Even if all of them are unanimous in their conclusion that injustice has been committed in this case, it does not change the simple fact that those who expelled Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede – both the membership and the other three Vorstand members – exercised their statutory right. Exactly like our contemporaries who in 2018 dismissed two members of the then Vorstand (which neither, alas, happened without recriminations).

Apart from statutory rights there is also a very powerful human element which might be a serious obstacle for people working together. It particularly concerns, in this case, the Vorstand members assembled by Steiner though they could have been brought together by other means. It is a fact of life that people who have nothing in common find themselves working together as colleagues. If, in addition, there are elements of personal animosity it becomes problematic and, in some cases, might be ruinous for them personally and for the work they do. The problem is exacerbated still further if they are in leadership or decision-making positions. It is difficult for us to imagine what it was like in the 'esoteric' Vorstand after Steiner's death. But we know the facts and they tell a tale. The Vorstand members' incompatibility made the situation intolerable and unworkable. Of course the expulsion was not the best way to

resolve it but it worked – for another decade or so. Until another 'deadly' conflict occurred which was resolved in the same manner and again in favour of the majority. Recriminations? Of course! Even worse – a court of law!

Now back to the Initiative document. Let us first see what we can find in it regarding the timing, reasons and justifications of the Initiative. To begin with, it transpired – and we shall address it first – that the Initiative concerns two separate though related issues: it requires "the rehabilitation of Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede" and "that the decision of 1935 be rescinded" though the latter being one of the requirements for achieving the former. Unfortunately, it is not only one inapt sentence mentioned above but the whole document is vague and imprecise and lacks clarity of thought and diction. Even the key word and notion of the Initiative and its document, *rehabilitation*, is not defined in no uncertain terms. The document speaks of the three requirements of the rehabilitation, but what is its object? We can surmise that it is, or should be at any rate if we are to make any sense of it, a 'bad reputation' of the two ladies. But has it ever existed, even at the time of the expulsions? There were definitely negative opinions of them shared by many members who decided to expel them. But individual opinions and attitudes, even of many, are not synonymous with a reputation. Besides even these negative opinions and attitudes largely evaporated or became insignificant by 1948 to the extent that the friends and supporters of the two ladies were welcomed back to the fold. Perhaps there remained some diehard opponents, but they, most likely, passed away, one by one, by the last quarter of the last century. And if the present author's experience is anything to go by, during his long anthroposophical life he has not heard a single negative word about Ita Wegman and Elisabeth Vreede including from their few contemporaries whom he happened to know personally.

To rehabilitate them and restore their 'bad reputation' it should first exist somewhere and, most importantly, manifest itself. But where is it? Who are its bearers and how and where do they make it public? The readers would waste their time if they try to find any traces of it. For contemporary anthroposophists there is nothing to restore or correct in their attitude to Ita Wegman, and Elisabeth Vreede whose reputation has never been tarnished in their eyes while most of them do not even know that there was, or could be, a different attitude. This 'bad reputation', as well as the need for its rehabilitation, exists only in someone's imagination. This is what is called idiosyncrasy. But why did it express itself in this particular way just now? The authors of the document give two reasons for this. First, they "are able **now** to acknowledge without reservation that an injustice occurred at that time"; and second, "after decades of living with the taboo surrounding a rethinking of this past, it should at least be possible **today** ... to illuminate and reintegrate this aspect of the Anthroposophical Society's tragic history." As we can see, their reasons are also idiosyncratic. They reflect certain individual inner experiences which translated themselves into certain ideas and notions. How such things happen and why they occur at a particular time, nobody knows and it is nobody's business. But when people externalise something internal and intrinsically subjective and then turn it into a public action for others to perform, it does become other people's business. Like in this case.

Why someone becomes "able now" and why something "should at least be possible today" for him, are good themes for a psychological novel. But the authors of the Initiative turned these intrinsically personal perceptions and experiences into a wake-up call for the entire anthroposophical community, an admonition addressed to the consciousness and conscience of their fellow anthroposophists. And to justify and fortify this they subjected their fellow anthroposophists to the barrage of anthroposophical lofty phraseology, platitudes, clichés, truisms, slogans and even demagoguery, to say nothing of some misrepresentations and misconceptions. It would

be an ungratifying and unnecessary job, benefiting nobody, to be more specific by going systematically through the document, sentence by sentence. With one exception, when they speak of a possible effect their Initiative might have: "Reuniting the karmic streams that had been separated would make possible an enormous step towards healing karmic fissures and towards self-healing" and, furthermore, it "might also lead to liberating the personalities responsible for the expulsions at that time."

The authors of the Initiative should know better than anybody else that the only way this can happen – and should happen, and will happen as we sincerely hope – is by the efforts of those individuals who were directly involved in the conflict. They personally, and nobody else, have to resolve and reconcile their differences and to heal the wounds and pains they inflicted on others. Having failed to do this while they were still here on earth, this process then starts in the spiritual world, where they are now, and then continues and comes to completion and fruition in their subsequent incarnations. We are sure they are in the middle of this process now. In the light of all this, these gestures of 'rehabilitating' and 'rescinding' are empty, futile and even harmful because they are spiritually untrue. To summarize the Initiative, we cannot see it other than an indulgence in one's own fancy and an imposition on others.

It is an unenviable task to be critical towards your fellow anthroposophists especially when you know, as the present author does, that they are more knowledgeable anthroposophists than you are. But they placed their views and actions into the public domain and the author feels duty bound to respond to them – in the way that he feels they warrant. At the same time he cannot help asking: how has it happened that they made such an error of judgement? Because this occurrence is not that infrequent in life (even in our discourse we encountered it twice, the first time in Rudolf Grosse) and because it affects even outstanding personalities, we shall try to understand its genesis. In fact, it is not very complicated. Someone has an idea or notion (how they come by it is a different matter) and then becomes infatuated with it or trapped by it unable or unwilling to look at it critically, even when prompted. But when he decides to promote it, he needs justifications for this. If the idea or notion is based on a shaky foundation, so are their justifications – they do not hold water. But the promoter does not see or does not want to see it. He loves his idea and it becomes more important to him than the logic or grounds for its existence. Hence a sad outcome for him when his untenable message encounters a sober and inquisitive recipient. It is particularly unfortunate because in most other circumstances he would not allow himself to use this type of unsustainable reasoning.

But in this case, unlike that of Rudolf Grosse, there was not just one individual behind the idea which we called unsustainable. There were hundreds signatories of the Initiative which was finally adopted by the General Anthroposophical Society at its 2018 Annual General Meeting and became an 'anthroposophical law'. In the light of this the author can easily envisage a rebuff: Surely all these people cannot be wrong especially if their misdeed is asserted by just one individual who is not even a member of the Anthroposophical Society. To this the author has the following to say. He recognises that he finds himself in an unequal confrontation and juxtaposition. But he also knows that the right or wrong of things, the truth, is not defined by a majority vote. Further, he does not know, but he is pretty sure that the idea of 'rehabilitation' and 'rescinding' did not occur to most of those people though they willingly supported it. He further thinks that it is most unlikely that it occurred, simultaneously, even to two individuals – it would have been the most improbable serendipity. Though at the end of the day it really does not matter, but most likely the idea occurred to just one person. But then, when shared, it became infectious. Not because it was spiritually strong, but because anthroposophists have a very weak spiritual immune system.

Therefore the Anthroposophical Society went the whole way through the unholy sequence – from the sublime of the Christmas Conference to the ridiculous of the 'rehabilitation' via the tragedy of the expulsions.

CONCLUSION

We have come to the point at which we have to give a summary of the main subject of our discourse, the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, as it has been presented here. We propose to do it in two versions. The first, a shorter one, has its starting point in the earthly realm, while the other, a longer one, has a wider, spiritual context.

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Any birth, especially of a cultural, social and spiritual phenomenon, is a hard labour. The Anthroposophical Movement, when it emerged at the beginning of the 20th century, was no exception. But once it had come into being, it was here to stay. Its appearance might be barely noticed, its beginnings humble, its size insignificant, its impact tiny and its quality variable, but its foundation is solid and its modest contribution to society is positive. The only real threat to it and its various ramifications are the destructive forces of its enemies – conventional thinking and prejudice, and the inability of its carriers and supporters to defend it.

Our narrative which depicted its background, birth and the first few steps, aspired to do so truthfully. Therefore it had to describe one worrisome aspect of its development which happened to be there almost from the very beginning and still persists to this day. It concerns the prime movers of the Anthroposophical Movement – anthroposophists and their organisation, the Anthroposophical Society. We can summarize the problem in the following way.

The purpose of anthroposophy is to serve not only the few individuals who became its first recipients but the whole of mankind. Therefore their organisation, the Anthroposophical Society, was to become a vehicle to this end. For this to happen anthroposophists had to set clear tasks for themselves and for their organisation and have the sufficient determination and ability to carry them out. This presupposed the development of certain qualities which anthroposophists, as most of their contemporaries, did not have.

However, despite their mastering of the anthroposophical knowledge, they failed to develop those qualities and thus to fulfil, through their organisation, the required anthroposophical tasks. As a result, the Anthroposophical Society went through a series of crises or rather was in a state of a permanent crisis. Steiner admonished them and tried to help them, but to no avail. Then he decided to take a drastic measure, a rescue operation, involving in this not only himself but the spiritual world. This, in turn, required the latter's consent and cooperation.

Originally Steiner had both, but then, very shortly after the rescue operation commenced, he was taken to the spiritual world from his earthly abode. That was the end of Steiner's last, courageous and critical, attempt to help anthroposophists and their Society to change and thus to be able to fulfil their evolutionary task. It cannot be even said that now they were back to square one – they had never moved from it. They remained the same people as they had been before, but there was no Steiner around to tell them this. And to help them.

But there were instead the external arrangements resulting from Steiner's desperate deed of rescue, bereft now of their spiritual content. Anthroposophists occupied these empty premises of the former School of Spiritual Science pretending that it continued to function as before. What was more, though Steiner's abortive

attempt had resulted in no factual improvements in anthroposophists, in their Society and in their contribution to the world, they considered themselves the legitimate heirs of what was regarded by them as Steiner's highest achievement which they celebrate as a festive event. It is this event and not its objective – "three steps forward in the improvement of your own character towards the good" – that has been put on the anthroposophical agenda since Steiner's death. But even assuming that this objective has been there somehow, tacitly or implicitly, there are no outward signs of positive results.

Thus anthroposophists to date have never acknowledged the rescue nature of Steiner's deed and the falsehood of the situation they are in. Such a proposition has never even occurred to them. Even the fact that after Steiner's departure the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists found themselves in a much more serious crisis and schism than ever before, even this fact has not suggested to them that there might be something wrong in their perception of those momentous events and of themselves. There might be deep spiritual reasons for this which are beyond our ken, and we are not in a position to sit in judgement of such matters. But every concerned observer, especially the narrator of those events, has every right to suggest what might be done – not what might have been done! – to remedy the situation. This is what we are going to do now.

The situation contains two aspects that are wrong and which can never be put right unless they are first recognised as being wrong. One, the spiritually illegitimate and false appropriation of Steiner's heritage, which is most harmful, can and should be corrected first of all. If anthroposophists feel the need to have a society, it should be based on their current needs and tasks as they see them. If they wish to have, as part of their society or independently of it, an esoteric school it should be of their own making and responsibility even if they use Steiner's indications and materials as part of it. In whatever they do or say they should be present in the world truthfully, as what they actually are and not as what Steiner wanted them to be, but what they have not become as yet.

This brings us to the second aspect where anthroposophists failed, but in this case nobody is in a position today to tell them to put it right. Because it concerns their inner changes, their abilities and qualities, which is exclusively a personal domain. One can only point to what manifests itself outwardly as one of the consequences of this failure. It is a discrepancy which is evident even to external observation and experience. When anthroposophists contemplate, speak or write about the spirit and the spiritual world they soar high with their lofty ideas and ideals, with their perceptions and thoughts. But when they come down to earth, to their daily life and affairs including anthroposophical, their thinking, attitudes and actions often become conventional, mundane, narrow-minded, bureaucratic, dogmatic, sectarian, egotistical, untruthful, insincere, hypocritical, etc. – all that which one can encounter in mediocre pedestrian people untouched by any sublime ideas or ideals.

As long as this discrepancy persists it is impossible to see how anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society can fulfil their evolutionary tasks which Rudolf Steiner last set for them, most drastically, at the Christmas Foundation Conference.

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The earthly history of the Anthroposophical Movement started at the beginning of the 20th century, but its true, spiritual history began much earlier, in the spiritual world and not by human beings. The Anthroposophical Movement was conceived by the Spiritual Powers when they deemed humanity to be both in urgent need and ready to be spiritualised and take a decisive step from the material world towards the world of

spirit. To enable this, they sent to humanity their messenger with their Divine Message, the knowledge of spirit. Thus at the beginning of the 20th century there appeared on the public arena an extraordinary individual, Rudolf Steiner, who carried within himself an extraordinary spiritual content which he was eager to share with other people, in fact, with mankind as a whole. But in full compliance with the principle, 'God proposes, Man disposes', God now completed what He proposed by making sure that Rudolf Steiner was ready for his task and was strategically placed for carrying it out. It was now up to Man to dispose – to make a claim for the Divine Treasure. Rudolf Steiner was patiently waiting, and when eventually there was a knock on his door and he opened it, that was the beginning of the earthly Anthroposophical Movement.

The spiritual content that Rudolf Steiner downloaded into the souls of its recipients he called anthroposophy. As those people accepted, absorbed and made it the essence of their lives, they became anthroposophists. By the way that the first few recipients of anthroposophy received and absorbed it, it can be said that the Divine Message achieved its initial objective and that anthroposophy was grafted onto humanity, though in a very tenuous and limited way. It was sufficient for the very beginning provided anthroposophy would start establishing its presence in the contemporary culture via its pioneers. They, on their part, formed the Anthroposophical Society both for their own spiritual needs and for bringing anthroposophy into the world – to mankind as its ultimate destination. Rudolf Steiner stayed outside the Anthroposophical Society in his role of a spiritual teacher. In this capacity, apart from delivering his universal message, he ran, for a number of years, the Esoteric School for those who wished to develop spiritually.

Despite the very difficult years of WWI, the Society continued its activities including the work on its centre in Switzerland, the Goetheanum, which was started before the war. After the war there was an influx of new members, young and energetic, which coincided with the beginning of the Anthroposophical Movement when anthroposophy diversified into practical spheres of life – pedagogy, medicine, art, agriculture and others. Then a tragedy struck – the Goetheanum was destroyed by the act of arson. This event, a seemingly isolated act of vandalism, highlighted the serious internal problems the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists had despite their numerical growth. The problems, which occasionally grew into crises, consisted in their inability both to reconcile their various differences and take, with anthroposophy, a resolute stand in the world. The latter resulted in the failure not only to advance anthroposophy but also to defend it from numerous vicious attacks of which the destruction of the Goetheanum was a culmination.

Though anthroposophists were eager to study spiritual science and to widen and deepen their knowledge of things spiritual, they were not very receptive to the important and specific task anthroposophy has for every human being – an inner change in line with the spiritual reality. The spiritual reality existed for them as an object of study and knowledge and not yet as a sufficient motivation for personal and moral development. But without such a change they were unable to be not just keepers of anthroposophy in their intellect, but genuine carriers of it into the world by their entire being. They could not truly bring it to humanity and thus remained its only recipients. The situation with the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists, exacerbated by their inability to find the way forward, became untenable. Something had to be done urgently to resolve it – by Rudolf Steiner, as it became only too obvious. It also was obvious to him that if he wished to persevere with his task in association with the same group of people and their organisation, the only way to do this was to immerse them directly, and not just via his revelations, into the world of spirit. Being a spiritual 'practitioner', his remedial measures and actions had to be

spiritual which in this case, however, went much further than anybody expected or even Steiner himself had envisaged prior to his final decision.

Another unusual thing about this decision was that Steiner had taken it without prior consultation with the Spiritual Powers. But it was unusual for him and not for the members who had no knowledge about intimate relations and arrangements that existed between Steiner and the Spiritual Beings. Unusual for them was the fact that he divulged this fact to them. Perhaps it was a sign of his new relationship with them. At the same time he did not explain why he had acted like this, but intimated further that this was fraught for him with serious risk and consequences: should the Spiritual Powers disapprove of his decision they might have stopped the flow of revelations coming to him from the spiritual world. Steiner's decision was multi-actional and he did not specify which of his actions, if not all of them, might have been met with disapproval. Of these actions, only one concerned Steiner himself while all others concerned the members.

More specifically, the Anthroposophical Society had to be reformed and put firmly on the spiritual foundation which could be done only from the inside. Therefore Rudolf Steiner decided to become its member and president. By this he combined and took upon himself two different roles, functions and responsibilities – spiritual and earthly – which are incompatible and impermissible for an initiate. What Steiner did regarding the members can be called 'an advance in anticipation', i.e. he elevated them to a position for which they were not ready. It concerned both the entire membership who overnight found themselves in a new society with a completely different status, and, within it, those who, also quite unexpectedly, were allowed to become esoteric pupils. Furthermore, Steiner chose and appointed some individuals to be leaders, on a par with him, giving them, again on a par with himself, the status 'esoteric' thus including them in his relationship with the spiritual world.

And finally, and most importantly, he inaugurated the School of Spiritual Science, a modern Mystery Centre or Initiation School. He not just resumed his former Esoteric School but established the earthly branch of the heavenly Michael School. What was more, to enhance their responsibility to what took place at the Christmas Conference, Steiner revealed to anthroposophists their personal connection with this School. Now to appreciate the unpredictability of this momentous deed we have to note the following. Prior to the Christmas Conference there was no indication whatsoever that Steiner intended to resume his esoteric training even within the framework of his former Esoteric School. On the contrary, he was irresponsive to the repeated requests to do so. Further, his knowledge concerning the Michael School was not just acquired before the Christmas Conference; he had been in possession of it for many years, but did not find prudent to talk about it in the way he did now (it should also be noted that prior to this time Steiner was prevented to speak of certain spiritual facts by the Adversary Powers). Nor did anthroposophists suddenly, just before the Christmas Conference, transform to the extent that allowed Steiner to change his mind regarding their esoteric training. No such factors were the reasons for Steiner's premature, as far as anthroposophists were concerned, but anticipatory actions. They were necessitated by the circumstances – sometimes in life some conscious actions do have to be premature. As was said, in this case they were 'an advance in anticipation' that given enhanced awareness, responsibility, dedication and hard work, anthroposophists would in time reach the desired stage of development. What Rudolf Steiner undertook was a long-term and far-reaching enterprise, and not a makeshift arrangement. But then he died, only fifteen months after its inception.

So whatever he intended and hoped for regarding anthroposophists, whether 'in anticipation' or otherwise, never happened – no sufficient time had been given for this. Thus anthroposophists remained, inwardly and outwardly, in the same situation

where they were prior to the Christmas Conference. As to the means that Steiner created and was using to achieve his objectives and which without him disappeared or became unusable, he had left no instructions or indications in this respect even when asked directly. Anthroposophists were puzzled by this, which means they had expected him to make some provision regarding his unique enterprise like he did it, for instance, in his Will, with regard to his few material possessions and his literary estate. The upshot of this is that he intended it to be that way. It was obvious that he left it up to anthroposophists to decide what to do with his 'unfinished business'. And decide they did, unfortunately without proper consideration – to continue with it as if nothing had happened.

Perhaps it will be useful to go through the three stages of the history of the Anthroposophical Movement to see how its composition changed. The first was the pre-Christmas Conference stage. There was virtually no Anthroposophical Movement as we know it today. Steiner used this name to designate his own activity of imparting anthroposophy to the world. There was of course Rudolf Steiner himself, there were anthroposophists and there was their Anthroposophical Society. Outside it there also was, for some years, the Esoteric School. The second stage, from the Christmas Conference to Steiner's death, comprised Steiner, anthroposophy, anthroposophists, the Anthroposophical Society, its esoteric leadership and the School of Spiritual Science. There was also a tangible beginning of the Anthroposophical Movement in the sense that we use this term today. The final stage, after Steiner's death including the present, comprises of anthroposophy, anthroposophists, the Anthroposophical Society and the Anthroposophical Movement. The last two are of a particular interest to us.

The Anthroposophical Movement has grown and developed considerably since Steiner's day, benefiting thousands of people around the world. But it also has its problems, both external and internal. The external ones are basically of two types, though both are due to the unconventional nature of its products and services. There is an ever increasing bureaucratic pressure to comply with conventional norms and regulations, to say nothing of the various restrictions. Also there are attacks on anthroposophy and anthroposophical institutions by those who hate the unorthodox way of their activities. At times their enemies go out of their way to destroy these institutions if not physically, like the Goetheanum, then legally and administratively using slander and false accusations. As in Steiner's time, they have little knowledge of the objects of their attacks, but it does not stop them. Still internal problems are more dangerous for the Movement. The main danger lies in the weakening of the spiritual foundation, anthroposophy, on which various institutions, organisations and enterprises of the Anthroposophical Movement are based. This foundation is sometimes diluted and impaired by other influences, or not taken seriously enough, or ignored altogether as 'difficult' and 'redundant' for the sake of what for some is most important – 'the methods' rather than 'a theory'. This narrow and utilitarian approach, so typical for our time, is most harmful. Luckily it is rather limited and hopefully it will be successfully overcome. All in all, the Anthroposophical Movement might be modest in size and have little impact on general culture, but its foundation is solid and its wholesome contribution to society is positive.

Coming now to the Anthroposophical Society, after Rudolf Steiner's death it went through some new crises, but continued to persevere with its tasks the way its members understood and managed them. As for today, like any living organism the Society is not without problems and it has not grown in numbers and standing as Rudolf Steiner had expected and hoped that it would. Nor has it fulfilled, or is in a position to fulfil, the task Steiner set for it even before the Christmas Conference: "to act as a vanguard in an ever wider disseminating of those elements that are so needed under the conditions that prevail today." Before disseminating them,

anthroposophists first have to have "those elements" which are soul qualities and not accumulated knowledge, even spiritual, which is so far the only "element" that distinguishes anthroposophists from the rest of humanity. Otherwise their attitudes, behaviour, consciousness and thinking are undistinguishable from those "that prevail today."

There are exceptions of course, some of them remarkable, but for the majority of anthroposophists anthroposophy stands apart from their everyday life. They delve into it as one would walk into a church on a Sunday morning. The lofty atmosphere of the church is uplifting and soothing and the Sunday sermon is nourishing and satisfying. And then they walk out into their daily life with its established, habitual and conventional routine and mode of existence of which they are part and parcel. This is the situation with the majority of anthroposophists. Yet the Anthroposophical Society continues to keep the flame of anthroposophy alive thanks to the sincere efforts of dedicated anthroposophists (some, of course, do the same outside the Society). So is this as much as can be realistically expected of anthroposophists in our time? If the answer is in the negative and more can and should be expected of them, then can anybody succeed where Rudolf Steiner failed? Here the answer can only be in the affirmative: anthroposophists themselves can. Even without Steiner's physical presence. But this is a conversation for another day.

There is one issue, however, which cannot be deferred or, worse, ignored. It is like a spiritual thorn which since Rudolf Steiner's death has been sitting in the flesh of the Anthroposophical Society affecting also the Anthroposophical Movement. Because it is spiritual, it cannot be seen and nobody can observe with their eyes how it affects the spiritual/earthly environment poisoning it and causing pain, to Rudolf Steiner in particular. But it is there, in full reality, and can be perceived by other than physical means. However, everyone can perceive and understand how it came about. To facilitate this, an important distinction has to be made. Rather than asking what happened *after* Rudolf Steiner's death we should be asking what happened as *the result* of Rudolf Steiner's death. This question should be asked with regard to two entities which were integral parts of the situation – Rudolf Steiner's enterprise and anthroposophists.

Asking this question about the first entity may seem to be redundant as we know that neither its inaugurator nor its recipients did anything regarding it. This is true, but sometimes things happen without anybody's conscious efforts or participation, and this situation is a case in point. Steiner's death has removed from his enterprise the essential part of its being, its foundation and the *raison d'être* of its existence – the direct link with the spiritual world. And of course the possibility – 'in anticipation' – of making it permanent. The whole structure of the enterprise should have collapsed after that. And it has – spiritually, which is tangible and real for those who recognise the spiritual sphere of existence. For others it became leaderless but otherwise intact. We should now turn to the second entity of our question, to the anthroposophists at the time, and ask: Did they belong to the category of spiritually conscious people? No doubt they did! But did they then recognise what happened to Steiner's enterprise spiritually and if they did why did they behave as if they did not?

It is not an easy question to answer. But an answer to it lies in an answer to our original question: What happened to anthroposophists as the result of Rudolf Steiner's death? This can be answered in one sentence: they faced the greatest challenge of their lives – emotional, intellectual and spiritual. It can be expressed by the question they should have asked of themselves: What should be done with Rudolf Steiner's unique enterprise, which he had just begun and was unable to continue, let alone to complete, and which now lost its leader and its umbilical cord, but in which we are all involved? They were unable to recognise this challenge and to address it consciously and thoughtfully, and consequently they failed to meet it. They

behaved as spiritually blind people. As a result they failed to make the necessary spiritual and administrative adjustments and thoughtlessly moved on into the post-Steiner era creating and carrying with them a spiritual/administrative mess. As part of this mess were two semblances of the originals: the 'esoteric Vorstand' and the School of Spiritual Science. The former did not last long: first evaporated the adjective and then disintegrated the substance. The latter survives to this day but in what form?

Even quantitatively, in terms of mere volume, what Steiner managed to give as a content of the School, constituted only a small part of it. He left no indication concerning the Second and Third Classes, but the 19 Lessons he gave for the First Class constituted only its first chapter with two more to follow. But in terms of substance, to consider the paper version of these Lessons, or even working with them, to be an earthly manifestation of Michael's supersensible School is a travesty. Compared to what Steiner intended to build as "the esoteric School of Michael" here on earth, what we have today is not even a semblance, it is a ghost. The subsequent generations of anthroposophists, including the current one, individually and collectively inherited and accepted, equally thoughtlessly, what came to them from their predecessors.

But let us give some thought to this inheritance now, by viewing it from the esoteric perspective. It will not be our perspective of course but that of Steiner's as manifested through his own words addressed to the members of the School.

Even before the School commenced, and also later, outside of it, Steiner emphasized its supersensible origin. So it was only natural that he spoke about it within the School, on a number of occasions. We refer to what he said there for two reasons. The first reason is that Steiner's words help to understand his role in bringing the School about vis-à-vis the wishes of the spiritual powers, of Michael himself, to do the same. As we saw from the Grosse's example, there is unclarity at least among some anthroposophists as to what extent Steiner was 'his own man' or whether he was just an obedient executor of the Higher Will. It is beyond our abilities to know and understand all aspects of Rudolf Steiner's relations with the spiritual world. For instance, as was mentioned earlier, we cannot know and understand, without his explanations, why he did not consult the spiritual powers before deciding on his Christmas Foundation deed. While no speculations are permitted in this area, in some cases we cannot do without understanding. In such cases we are allowed, in our opinion, to apply our thinking and imaginative powers to whatever facts are available to us in order to obtain that understanding, if only for our own consumption.

Now the facts – Steiner's words: "This School ... came into being through listening to what the spiritual powers who guide the world consider to be the right thing for human beings in our time. So rather than regarding our School as a human institution, let us see in it an institution that has arisen totally out of the will of those spiritual beings who are close to the earth and who work for the welfare of mankind." And here is more and in more detail: "Since the Christmas Conference there goes through the entire Anthroposophical Society an esoteric impulse... this was a necessity, a necessity which, above all, has been given out of the spiritual world out of which, indeed, the revelations that should live in the Anthroposophical Movement flow – it was a necessity which arose out of the spiritual world. With this, however, the necessity was created to bring about a certain kernel for anthroposophical-esoteric life, a kernel for truly esoteric life, and, therewith, the necessity was also given to build a bridge over to the spiritual world itself. The spiritual world, one might say, had, of itself, to reveal the will for the creation of such a school. For an esoteric school can not be created out of arbitrary human intentions, not even out of that intentionality which we call "human idealism". Rather, this Esoteric School must be the body for something which itself flows out of spiritual life, so that in everything

which takes place in such a school one may recognize the outer expression of an effective, creative activity which actually takes place in the supersensible, in the spiritual world. Therefore, this Esoteric School could also not be called into existence without that Will being asked, which, as the Michael-Will, has actually been guiding human affairs since the last third of the nineteenth century..."

So what was the Christmas Foundation Conference – Steiner's free deed or just the dutiful fulfilment of the Michael-Will? How did Steiner's unexpected, unplanned and sudden decision relate to the longstanding plans and intentions of the spiritual powers of which Steiner was not only well aware, but was an integral part of them? If, as Steiner put it, the creation of the School was the outcome of "what the spiritual powers who guide the world consider to be the right thing for human beings in our time" and "was a necessity which arose out of the spiritual world", why had it not been inaugurated earlier, at least when other similar ventures had been undertaken? Instead something different had taken place: "The teachings given in various groups of the former Anthroposophical Society are now intended to flow into what has since become the actual School of Spiritual Science." How can it be explained?

We see here no contradiction and no discrepancy. It is like St. Augustine's: 'Love God and do what you will', because if you really *love* God, what you will to do never contradicts His Will but fulfils it. For the duration of his reign Michael has his plans and intentions to implement. So did Steiner during his 'reign'. And his plans and intentions included those of Michael – to be implemented not as an order but as a free deed. It meant that it was Steiner's decision to take them upon himself and his judgement as to when and how to execute them or even whether to execute them at all. Because he *loved* God and also knew God's 'mysterious ways', his major decisions and deeds had never contradicted the divine Will but always fulfilled it.

What happened at the Christmas Foundation Conference was, apparently, unusual to the extent that Steiner found it necessary to speak about it publicly – he undertook it "without that Will being asked". Or, to be precise, it was asked after the decision was made and the deed performed. Both had been approved by the spiritual powers and as a result "through the Christmas Conference a new spirit has entered into the Anthroposophical Movement inasmuch as it flows through the Anthroposophical Society". The fact that very soon after that they had put an end to this enterprise by recalling Steiner back, is an entirely different matter.

The second reason for quoting here the above words of Steiner's was determined by his own reason for delivering them. When he emphasized the supersensible origin of the School to its members, it was to enhance their responsibility towards the spiritual world. By joining the School they entered into some kind of contractual relationship with its leadership. In the first instance, it is "a free agreement between the leadership of the School and whoever wants to be a member." But there was nothing flippant about it: "it must, so to speak, be a free, ideal-spiritual contract which is undertaken between the members of the School and its leadership. In no other way could the esoteric development be considered healthy and sound and worthy of the fact that this Esoteric School stands directly under the immediate power of the Michel-activity itself." And for members it entailed certain obligations "in the spiritual sense" which did not make them any less strict and demanding:

"Membership of the School, however, requires all the more that a member shall recognize the conditions, the very grave conditions, of this School. The basic condition is that everyone who wants to belong to this School shall take his stand in life in such a way before the world as to be a true representative of the anthroposophical cause in all directions and in every detail." On another occasion Steiner said that the School "requires its members to be truly genuine

representatives of the anthroposophical world movement in every situation of their lives." It is important to note that in both cases Steiner spoke of the representation which included not only anthroposophical ideas and deeds, but encompassed all spheres of life and activities – professional, personal and moral.

With regard to anthroposophy there came another obligation: "To be a representative of the anthroposophical cause before the world must naturally entail, with regard to anything that one does or want to do in any connection with the anthroposophical cause, however remote, that one will first get in touch with the leadership of the School, that is, with the esoteric Vorstand at the Goetheanum." But by 'getting in touch' the issue of representation had not been exhausted: "This is the case to such an extent that the leadership of the School is obliged to exclude a member if in its opinion that member is not a representative in the right way."

The reader might be surprised why Steiner should resort to such strong language and issue this severe warning. Was it justified, voiced as it was, only seven weeks after the School started? To answer this we have to refer the reader to an even earlier date and event, three weeks after the commencement of the School, to Lesson 4, at the end of which Steiner said the following: "This School must live in great earnestness, and what I said ... when I spoke about the conditions of this School must be taken seriously. I have been obliged to withdraw the membership card from a person who – by omitting to do what was necessary – could have brought about a grave misfortune. I am mentioning this here in order to show that the purposes indicated during the Christmas Conference must be carried forward in all seriousness. I ask that in future you do not take it as a mere manner of speaking when I have to emphasize that this esoteric School is desired in all earnestness by the spiritual world and that when someone does not wish to be a representative of the Anthroposophical Movement in the right way this School must reserve the right to withdraw that person's membership card. I wish to draw your attention in all seriousness to the fact that the membership card has already had to be withdrawn from one of the members...We shall only grow into this School in the right way if we turn our backs on all those flippant views about an anthroposophical movement – views that have brought about so much trouble within the Anthroposophical Movement. We must grow into the full earnestness of esoteric life. Once again I have to say that what was meant by the Christmas Conference has not yet blossomed fully in every soul. The leadership of the School will be alert and will take in earnest the seriousness of the School. Let us bear this in mind as a part of today's Lesson."

If with reference to Steiner's previous statement we used the word 'surprise', a more appropriate one, upon reading the above passage, would be 'astonishment'. Indeed, the first members of the School, the pioneers, supposed to be the *crème de la crème*, the best of the best, of anthroposophists at the time, some of whom were personal pupils and even friends of Steiner's. What lofty feelings we might have today reading about those momentous events when the great initiate was standing in front of them initiating them into the grand divine design and taking them with him on a breathtaking spiritual journey, all our sentiments can only be a pale semblance of what those people experienced at the time. That one of them stumbled and slipped when the journey had hardly begun – such unfortunate things do happen in life. But that Steiner had to address them all with the above admonition – doing it "once again"! – this beggars belief.

There is no need to go through it sentence by sentence. It is clear that it was not just one hapless episode, but the members' attitude in general that perturbed Steiner. Of course it can be said that those were the early days of the School yet. But the issue here was not a new institution but the old attitudes and views of the same people which the new institution was supposed to eradicate. One has the impression that Steiner was addressing those people in the old, never-ending days and that the

new momentous events had no effect on them. Would then the new-old admonition have an effect now?

We can only know this from Steiner himself, from his further addresses to the School members. We know already of one when Steiner uttered his severe warning. And we know now the reason for this. He then repeated his appeal for "the most profound seriousness." and his warning throughout the whole course of Lessons, as new members were joining the School and Steiner wished to apprise them of the situation therein. But he also had to refer to the old flaws and problems which were still persisting and obstructing the working of the School: "Negligence in a very marked degree has found its way into the Anthroposophical Society in recent years. The task – one of the tasks – of the members of the School will be to ensure that this negligence ceases. Above all we must make ourselves responsible for feeling that we can seriously stand by every word we speak as being the absolute truth. Untrue statements, even when they emanate from what is termed good intentions, are something that acts destructively within an esoteric movement. We must be under no illusion as regards this fact; we must be absolutely clear about it. Intentions are not what matter, for people frequently take intentions quite lightly. Objective truth is what matters. It is one of the foremost duties of a pupil of esoteric teaching to feel obliged not merely to say what he believes to be true, but to check whether what he is saying is indeed objectively true."

And yet, a few months after the first expulsion Steiner had to make the following statement: "Since, however, the stern character of the School must be taken with the utmost seriousness, it cannot be otherwise than that the leaders of the School must claim the right to cancel membership if they consider it necessary as a result of anything that may have happened. Moreover, my dear friends, as evidence that this is being strictly observed, witness the fact that in the relatively short time since the School began no fewer than sixteen members of the School have had to be excluded... This measure – for we are entering ever more deeply into the esoteric life – this measure will, without question, have to be strictly applied in future, no matter what the personal aspect may be for those whom it affects."

However, at the next Lesson a few days later Steiner had to say the following: "My dear friends, I must remind you of something that was said when the Class was first established and that was emphasized even before that, during the Christmas foundation Conference. People must not keep assuming that something that has been arranged in a certain way entirely for deeper reasons can be altered from the outside, or arranged in a way that differs from what was originally established. ... What has been established right from the beginning must remain in force. Members have once again begun to arrange things as they please, without adhering to what has been established."

Even at the very last Lesson of the most profound course of esoteric teaching Steiner had to complete it by digressing from its content for another admonition: "My dear sisters and brothers, it has to be said that the rules towards which attention has repeatedly been drawn within this esoteric School are unfortunately being kept in a rather extraordinary fashion by many who have applied for membership and have then become members. I was obliged to remind you emphatically about a number of matters... It is indeed hard to believe that members have even been... [an example of negligence – /Z.] As a result it was necessary for me to exclude three members of the School directly before the beginning of the Lesson we have just heard. This brings us to the nineteenth exclusion from this School. One might have expected that a greater degree of seriousness would emerge from souls who had already heard here about the significance of this School. Yet ... [three examples of negligence – /Z.] – making it necessary to exclude three quite prominent members from the School. I must assure you, my dear sisters and brothers, that the rules I told you

about at the beginning and which I have since repeatedly mentioned, must be applied with the utmost strictness. A School as seriously esoteric as this can only be maintained if its members really do adhere to what has to be asked of them in the name of spiritual powers who lead it. This is how things are with truly occult matters. The attitudes hitherto frequently prevalent in the Anthroposophical Society can on no account be allowed to prevail further. Something that is by its very nature filled with seriousness must simply be taken absolutely seriously."

After completing the first chapter of the First Class consisting of 19 Lessons, Steiner started giving the so called Recapitulation Lessons of which he managed to give seven before becoming ill and incapable of his public activity. It is remarkable that in each of these Lessons the presentation of the esoteric content was accompanied by words of admonition. In the final Lesson, just a few days before Steiner addressed anthroposophists for the last time in person, he said to the members of the School:

"Here within this School it must once, and ever again, be said: There is in anthroposophical circles far too little earnestness for what actually flows through the Anthroposophical Movement, and, at least among the esoteric members of this Esoteric School, there must be built up that nucleus of a future humanity which will gradually raise itself to the earnestness which is necessary. Therefore it is necessary that the leadership of this School really reserves to itself the responsibility to recognize only those as rightful, worthy members of this School who, in every detail of their lives, want to be worthy representatives of the anthroposophical cause, and the decision as to whether or not that is the case must rest with the leadership of the School. [...] I need only mention a few facts in order to indicate how little, in actuality, the Anthroposophical Movement is grasped in full earnestness, how little this earnestness penetrates the Anthroposophical Movement. I have mentioned this to some of you individually ... I could enlarge this list in the greatest variety of ways. Again and again it happens that the most dumbfounding incidents occur as a result of the lack of earnestness. Even things which are taken seriously in everyday life are, in the moment when those concerned have to practice the same thing within the Anthroposophical Movement, not taken seriously. These are all matters which must be taken into account in relation to the firm structure which this School must have. It is, therefore, necessary that these things be said, because, if one fails to pay attention to these matters, one can not receive in a worthy manner the revelations from the spiritual world which are given here in this School. At the close of each Lesson attention is expressly drawn to the fact that the Being of Michael himself is present while the revelations of the School are given... All these things must live in the hearts of the members. Dignity, profound dignity, must hold sway in everything which even only unites one in thought with the School. For in all of this there can only live what an esoteric stream today should carry through the world, and in all of this are included the duties which one has as an individual."

Having read all these admonitions, we can only repeat after Steiner: "It is indeed hard to believe". It is hard to believe that they were necessary in the first place; that those whom Steiner wanted to become a "nucleus of a future humanity" needed to be told to be more earnest and honest, truthful and sincere, especially in the most sublime matters to which they, thanks to Steiner, became privy. How, most of all, could they be so deaf to what Steiner was *repeatedly* telling them? Obviously those who personally needed those admonitions were in a minority though they were not limited to those who had been expelled. There were sufficient numbers of digressions to alarm Steiner and justify his collective and repeated admonitions. But they were issued in parallel with encouragements, like this one: "Michael pupils are you all, when you take your place rightly within this School." Unfortunately, many of

them (to say nothing of the later generations of anthroposophists) heed only to the first half of the statement ignoring the other one.

We are writing about it not to judge these people who were not worse but probably better than might be any group of individuals in those circumstances, in their or later time. Our task is to report events as they were and to show, in this case, what an uphill task Steiner had with the School of Spiritual Science. And his difficulties were not limited exclusively to the above problems with the members. It was also the School as an institution: "More and more efforts will be made to seek and finally find the right forms for this." The School was in the state of becoming and needed a long time, under Steiner's strict leadership, to establish itself as what it ought, and what he aspired it, to be. He worked very hard for it and pledged that the School "will increasingly strive to become what a modern Mystery Centre ought to be. It is only to be hoped that circumstances will make this possible very soon." Alas, Steiner's hopes did not materialize.

The events we are reporting and Steiner's admonitions we are quoting do not only belong to the past, but some of them have direct bearing on what is taking place today. There are other similar words with which Steiner addressed the School members which have not been reported yet. We are going to do that now. They concern the esoteric content of the School, more specifically, the strict rules which apply to it because "Something that is esoteric must be handled in this way; this is not an arbitrary procedure." Steiner first stipulated them when he was halfway through the First Class Lessons course: "I now want to conclude by saying that, without first obtaining permission, you must not pass on either the content of what is said here or the mantras. There must be a proper sequence of events. Only after permission has been obtained may information be passed on, either to individuals or to groups." Then, in a more specific form and emphasizing their occult nature, he presented them to the School members during the Recapitulation Lessons, i.e. at the final stage of the School's existence. This is how he introduced them:

"I must now add that the verses, which are given as mantric verses for meditation ... at the behest of Michael, are only for those who are members of the School. Those who are unable to receive them personally can obtain them from someone else who is a member of this School. Permission must, however, be requested in every single instance either from Frau Dr Wegman or from me. This is not merely a bureaucratic regulation; rather it points to the fact that everything in our Anthroposophical Movement from now on expresses a reality. [...] If anyone has taken notes during this Lesson of anything rather than mantras, I would ask that they be kept not longer than a week, after which they should be burned, in order that the content of the School, which only has meaning if the Michael stream flows through the School, shall not go beyond the circle of its members and thereby becomes ineffective. This is not because of any obscure wish to make things secret, but so that the content of the School may not become ineffective. This is a fundamental occult law that must be observed."

The possibility of the content of the School becoming ineffective through an occult law was both crucial and puzzling for its members and required explanation. Steiner gave it, as it happened, at the very last Lesson he ever held: "The mantras lose their effectiveness when they come into unauthorized hands. This rule is so firmly inscribed into the world's order that the following incident once occurred and a whole series of mantras became ineffective, which had been current within the Anthroposophical Movement. It was possible for me to give to a number of people some mantric verses. I gave the mantras also to a certain person. This person had a friend who was clairvoyant to a certain degree. It then came about that, as both friends were sleeping in the same room, the clairvoyant friend, during the time that the other was merely repeating the mantra in his mind, the clairvoyant read it

mentally and then misused it by giving it to others as coming from him. One first had to investigate the incident, which then brought to light why the mantras in question became ineffective for all those who possessed them. You may not, therefore, my dear sisters and brothers, take these matters lightly, because the rules of esoteric life are strict, and no one who has committed such a mistake should excuse himself with the thought that he couldn't help himself. If someone lets the mantra pass through his head in thought, and someone else observe this clairvoyantly, the one who thinks the manta certainly can not do anything about this. But the events occur, nevertheless, according to an iron law of necessity. I mention this incident in order that you may see how little arbitrariness is involved in these matters, and to show how in these matters there is contained what is read directly from the spiritual world, what corresponds with the habits and customs of the spiritual world. Nothing is arbitrary in what takes its course in a rightfully constituted esoteric school. And there should ray out from the Esoteric School into the rest of the Anthroposophical Movement that earnestness about which we have spoken. Only then will this School be for the Anthroposophical Movement what it should be."

This passage concludes our viewing of some aspect of the School of Spiritual Science that anthroposophists inherited from Steiner, from the esoteric perspective, through Steiner's own words. We intermittently interspersed it with our words. And now we wish to summarize it by giving some thought to what this inheritance means for us today.

The first issue to consider is the leadership of the School. In the first instance, as Steiner emphasized on many occasions, it was the Divine leadership without which the School could never have been brought about and would never have had its content. Then, at its behest, there was the earthly leadership, both spiritual and administrative. This was Rudolf Steiner himself. To assist him he appointed a Vorstand which, through his own membership of it, became esoteric. Nothing could be done within the School, or on its behalf, or in its name, without this Vorstand's decision, participation or authorisation. Without it the School could have no members and could not exist. What was meant here was not any leadership, any Vorstand, but this particular esoteric Vorstand. But even this Vorstand had been qualified by Steiner – "as it is at present constituted". In other words, had it been constituted differently, i.e. without its indispensable member, Rudolf Steiner, it would have ceased to be esoteric and a leader of the Esoteric School which, becoming spiritually leaderless, would have directly ceased to exist as a result.

Another issue concerns the handling and use of the esoteric content. Steiner was adamant that it could only be allowed by him or someone authorised by him (it was Ita Wegman at the time). Today there is no such person alive and therefore the usage of this esoteric content by anyone is, in this respect, illegitimate.

The third issue is the effectiveness of this esoteric content in the present. If we trust what Steiner said about it and take the occult law which he referred to seriously, and if nothing has changed in this matter spiritually, of which we have no way of knowing, then we have to acknowledge that the content, including the mantras, has long since lost its effectiveness. This is what we can call, from the anthroposophical point of view, an objective fact. Does it follow from this that people should stop using this content altogether? But there is also a subjective fact which, however, is not less valid from the anthroposophical point of view: some people might feel the need to work with this content, particularly with the mantras; they might feel that they benefit from this work and even achieve some results they aspire for. Should they stop doing this work in view of the 'objective fact'? Which of the two 'facts' should prevail?

In our opinion, it is up to each individual to reconcile the two and abide by their own decision. With one proviso though. Whoever decides to work with the

content of the First Class Lessons, individually or collectively, should do it not only on their own responsibility, but in their own name and not under the guise of the School of Spiritual Science created here on earth by Rudolf Steiner. Even if this School had existed today in its spiritual reality, even then no individual could have been associated with it in any shape or form without the specific and explicit approval of the spiritual world. When he was alive, Steiner acted in this capacity. Following his death there were still individuals admitted by him to the School and authorized to use and present its esoteric content, but can anybody today, anywhere in the world, boast such an admittance and authorization?

Thus the following conclusion is not only the result of a conscientious and diligent investigation attempted by an ordinary individual, but it follows unambiguously from Steiner's own words: the School of Spiritual Science cannot exist on earth without the spiritual leadership designated by the spiritual world. The following is not just a feeble individual judgement, but a powerful message that the above esoteric perspective conveys to us: the former School of Spiritual Science has now turned into a ghost.

To pass a ghost for the real thing is, in this case, pretence and a spiritual lie with which the Anthroposophical Society and its members have been living since Rudolf Steiner's death and which inevitably casts a shadow on the rest of the anthroposophical community including its supersensible part. This thorn has to be removed from its body. But it can be done only by the Anthroposophical Society itself and its members. The removal of the thorn will also liberate and strengthen them spiritually, enable them to look forward rather than backward and help them to learn to stand on their own feet rather than on Rudolf Steiner's shoulders. The sooner they do this the better, for themselves and for the entire anthroposophical community.

It is not an easy task by any means, especially after so many years of slumber with regard to this issue. To be a pioneer and break up the spell under which generations of anthroposophists have lived requires tremendous courage. It also requires a different consciousness than the prevailing conventional collective or even institutional one which has allowed this situation to exist for so long. So will anthroposophists finally be able to recognise, accept and resolve the challenge that Rudolf Steiner's death posed for them: to take a conscious and considered decision to make their society to accord with their own needs and possibilities – to accord with reality?

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To conclude this discourse, it seems most befitting to do this with the same words of Rudolf Steiner's with which it was opened. He addressed these words to the members of his newly formed School of Spiritual Science in April 1924, and for the reader they should be now more meaningful than as an epigraph at the beginning: "It does not matter how many members belong to a movement founded in the spirit. What matters is how much strength from the spiritual world lives in that movement."

ADDENDUM

The fabric of this narrative is weaved from two major components. One – historic events and facts. The author is satisfied that they have not been distorted, or selected or presented with bias. They have been expounded objectively, as they occurred in real life. The other ingredient – the author's views and interpretations. Though these, being personal, cannot be declared to be a hundred percent objective, the author is satisfied that he has made them transparent and seen to be based on

those facts. This makes it possible for the reader to scrutinise them and, most importantly, to form his own views on the matter.

There is one more component, however, particularly in the concluding part of the narrative, with which the author is not fully satisfied. It is the judgements, explicit or implicit, which he passes on anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society. It is not the content of these judgements that concerns him, but the insufficient background given in their support. Therefore they might be even seen by some as serious but groundless indictments and admonitions levelled by one individual against thousands, many of whom have much superior anthroposophical credentials than his, and against their organisation. The author might be challenged further by, for example, the following pertinent questions: Has he presented his views to anthroposophists before making them public through social media? What was their response? What are their own views on the matter? Is there anybody else in the anthroposophical community who has views similar to the author's? If not or if the response to his views was negative, could it be an indication, or even ample proof, of their peripheral nature and irrelevance? Or, alternatively, if the reader shares the author's views he surely should be wondering: whether anybody else in the Anthroposophical Society does and what impact it has on the current situation.

Though he has answers to all, or almost to all of these questions, the author admits that they or similar questions might legitimately arise due to his insufficient background information. But to give such information comprehensively is fraught with a number of problems. First of all, this background would constitute a separate subject. Though it still would be within the framework of the history of the Anthroposophical Movement, it would stretch the narrative beyond the limits the author set for it. Secondly, its volume would require a separate space. Thirdly, the bulk of it would be based on the author's personal experience. Though he considers it to be as legitimate as any other genuine source of information, relating it would require a different genre than that of the present discourse. Thus while it is definitely the time to broach this subject, this is not the place to do it.

However, some limited but representative part of the author's experience has to be given here and now – in this Addendum, as a compromise. He considers his experience regarding anthroposophists and the Anthroposophical Society a legitimate source of information not only because it stretches over several decades. It comprises of many contacts, personally and by correspondence, with different individuals from different countries, of different abilities and interests, private students of anthroposophy and prominent expounders of it, non-members, rank-and-file members and the 'anthroposophical officials' both of the AS in GB and of the GAS in Dornach. Some of those contacts concerned the issues vital for anthroposophy and for anthroposophical activities including those of the Anthroposophical Society, and their content unquestionably contributed to the substance of his judgements.

Coming back to the pertinent questions above and to address, first, the one to which the author has no answer: there is no way for him to know whether there are other anthroposophists who have views similar to his. He has not encountered such views anywhere within his reach, be it from individuals or in the English language anthroposophical literature and periodicals. But the majority and most active anthroposophists use German which the author does not know. In any case, he cannot imagine himself being the only person in the entire anthroposophical community who holds those particular views on the Anthroposophical Society and anthroposophists, whether past or present.

Now to the other questions. Collectively, they boil down to two major questions which are, in fact, issues: Has the author shared and discussed his views on what is for him an untenable situation with those whom it concerns the most and who are the only people in the position to do something about it – with the members

and leaders of the Anthroposophical Society? If there is any grain of truth in the views expounded by the author, is anybody within the Anthroposophical Society conscious of the untenable situation they are in and why nothing has been done about it so far?

By way of addressing these issues the author can offer the reader two fragments from his occasional, over the years, correspondence with the leadership of the AS in GB. Hopefully they would go some way, affordable here, towards throwing light on these issues. (The real names which occur there have been replaced, apart from one case, by the initials.)

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The Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain publishes for its members a quarterly Newsletter which contains information on various events and activities, reports and announcements, articles and correspondence, book reviews and obituaries. Basically, it provides information of what is going on anthroposophically in the country and provides a forum for members to exchange their views and concerns.

For the present author, who is not, and has never been, a member of the Anthroposophical Society, but for whom anthroposophy is his life and who is keen to know how it lives in his country and who wishes to be part of it and in touch with his fellow anthroposophists, the Newsletter is a vital and only link to all this. When he expressed his wish to receive it to the Society's leadership he was told that for this he should become a member. His reference to the Society's Statutes which say: "All publications of the Society shall be public, in the same sense as are those of other public societies", was of no avail. But then a new General Secretary granted the author his wish and he became a paying (voluntarily) subscriber to the Newsletter. This was many years ago. Since then various attempts have been made, by different officials, to revoke this permission, but the author managed to secure it to this day.

He was less successful, however, in his another desire – to communicate with his fellow anthroposophists via the Newsletter by sharing with them his thoughts and concerns or by responding to theirs. Here he encountered an unexpected, to begin with, resistance. He once succeeded in overcoming it thanks to the interference of the same General Secretary who overruled the editor. Alas, his generosity to the author was limited to the initial stage of his leadership. After that his attitude and conduct changed completely and became indistinguishable from the rest of the 'anthroposophical officials'. The years passed, the editors and leaders changed, but their determination not to allow the author on to the pages of the Newsletter was unshakable clothed in the same wording: "You are not a member of the Anthroposophical Society."

All attempts to reason and argue with them had zero effect. When challenged to give spiritual reasons, on which all anthroposophists, especially the leaders of the Anthroposophical Society, should base their attitude and actions, they responded with silence. The only result that the author achieved by his efforts was the leadership's decision to make their ban an official policy of the Society which they announced and published in each issue of the Newsletter. It was extraordinary that this policy targeted just one individual, or rather his thoughts and views. If we are to use the current pandemic situation and terminology to describe this attitude metaphorically, it can be said that this individual is for the leadership of the AS in GB a spiritual coronavirus and to protect themselves and their Society from him they went into a deep self-isolation. But in factual human, social and spiritual terms their position can be described literally, as it is in real life: they systematically, doggedly and for many years have been stifling the voice of their fellow anthroposophist

depriving him of the possibility to address his brothers and sisters in spirit via the only channel available – the Newsletter of the AS in GB.

Herewith we invite our first fragment to give its evidence. It is the letter the author wrote to the Council of the AS in GB on 25 August 2003:

Dear Council Members,

This letter concerns your recently adopted policy not to publish contributions from non-members in the Newsletter. For its background please see the attached copies of my correspondence with the Editorial Team which I also shared with some other people (not included here – *I.Z.*).

For you, and I am sure for the vast majority of members, your policy seems to be so natural, legitimate and right from whatever point of view, that you might very well be puzzled and even annoyed by someone pestering you with demands to explain and even justify it. Yet in my view this policy is so grotesque, inappropriate and wrong that its adoption and implementation seems to me unbelievable.

I have not yet heard a single argument, from the policy initiators or supporters, which convinced me of its validity, necessity or relevancy. But then what chances do I have, being in a tiny and insignificant minority of one, that you would listen to and understand, let alone accept, my arguments? Nevertheless I have to try.

My original intention was to address not only you but a wider anthroposophical audience, with a detailed analysis of this issue. I might very well do this later, while my present letter to you is limited to just a few points. Let me start with some basic premises for you to see whether you can relate to any of them.

As I said in my letter to the Editorial Team, we live today in a time when everyone has to be included and not excluded. I meant it in the most general sense as a basic principle of public life. Exclusion, not inclusion, should be an exception, and for a very good reason at that. I can see just two such reasons: possible harm to somebody or something, and violation of personal privacy. Like someone imparting knowledge of an esoteric nature might exclude from his audience those who are, in his opinion, ill-equipped to receive it or who may use it in a harmful way. Or a group of doctors discussing their patients, or teachers discussing their students, cannot be viewed as an open forum.

These I call 'spiritual reasons' for exclusion though I recognize that the conditions of our modern life impose all sorts of other restrictions: organisational, financial, legal, etc. But this does not alter the main principle of a priori inclusion, particularly of such public activities as meetings and publications.

Speaking specifically of periodicals where restrictions and exclusions are almost always inevitable, they could only be applicable to contributions and not to the contributors. The latter should never be an issue when a question of acceptance or publication is decided; only the former. And whatever the nature, theme or editorial arrangements of a periodical, the two and only criteria on the basis of which a contribution is to be considered remain the same – relevance and competence.

Your *Members' Forum* is a periodical within a periodical, the two having completely different but equally important functions. My concern with the issue of an anthroposophical forum goes back many years and even found its expression on the pages of your Newsletter (those were the days!) when my contribution, *What kind of anthroposophical periodicals?*, was published in its Winter 1998 issue. But many years prior to this I initiated, edited and published (originally with John Gordon) *Forum for the Anthroposophical Community*. Perhaps you will be interested to read its Editorial which was printed in each issue.

I had, and still have, this picture of a spiritual anthroposophical space, in the spiritual world, without any borders, divisions and restrictions, where individual

anthroposophical thoughts, ideas and aspirations flow freely in all directions seeking and fructifying each other. By my Forum I tried to create a physical counterpart to this space.

But what have you created by your policy? An exclusive sectarian zone surrounded by an impenetrable wall with a huge padlock on its gates and a warning sign: "No unauthorised entry". Do you think it has any spiritual counterpart, or even physical for that matter?

In your letters to me you never mentioned anything about the spiritual however hard I pressed you, but you not only happily refer to the physical ones but even model yourselves on them. I once quoted, some years ago, the following words which Nick addressed to me: "With all due respect to your good self, you must realise that you have no rights as far as the publication in the Newsletter is concerned, especially as you are not a member. No organisation I know of acknowledges it as a *right* of non-members to have material published at the expense of the members. Even members do not have that right!"

Well, I never spoke of *my right* to be published or even to know the reason for the refusal; I only asked and appealed. But a lot has changed since then – now I have no right even to be considered for publication. For a good reason of course, as was recently confirmed by S. (a Council member, editor of the Newsletter and doctor by profession – *I.Z.*): "...the situation is much the same for a number of professional medical journals ... I very much doubt if they would have anything accepted for publication unless they (contributors – *I.Z.*) are a member of the relevant professional body".

I am sure other people who support your policy would refer to appropriate periodicals in their professions or in other fields to drive the point home. Like the publisher of all our reading matter S.G. did: "I have no idea for the editors' reason for refusing publication of your piece, but could it be to do with the fact that you are not a member? If that is their reason, then I understand and agree with that position. That situation would actually apply to any club or society. For example, Kennel Club News is for members of the Kennel Club, etc."

It is not at all a comforting feeling and thought that you might be completely out of touch with reality since you not only reject but even fail to understand what is patently obvious to everyone else. To find some footing under my feet I went to my local library to investigate for myself what is really happening in this respect in the 'outside world'. I was handed a huge volume, *Directory of British Associations*. It contains a list of thousands and thousands of organisations and their publications, from a learned journal of a scientific society in London to a newsletter of an automobile club in Scotland.

I did not know where to begin until a librarian helped me out by furnishing me with a copy of their professional periodical *Update* published by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP) for its members. You would not find anything more 'esoteric' than this. But I did. I asked S. to give me some names of the medical journals she had in mind in the above quoted passage. She did, and through the internet I found *International Journal of Obstetric Anaesthesia*, an official journal of the Obstetric Anaesthetists Association (OAA). I wrote to both editors and they replied by return (see our short correspondence below – *I.Z.*):

1 August 2003

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am neither a member of CILIP, nor a librarian, just a member of the public. I have seen your magazine in my local library and found some materials very interesting. I even wanted to respond to them, but then thought it would be prudent to ask you first whether

you accept contributions for publication from people like myself, i.e. not members of your profession or Institute. I would be grateful for your advice.

REPLY

Well thanks for your interest! Yes, by all means feel free to submit something.

Regards,

R.M.
Managing Editor/Production

18 August 2003

Dear Prof. H.,

Do I have to be a member of your Association (OAA) for my article to be published in your Journal, or you employ other criteria for your would be authors? I would be very grateful for your advice.

REPLY

You need not be a member of the OAA to submit material. We are a peer reviewed journal and would be happy to consider your work I am sure. The journal is the official journal of the OAA and several other societies interested in obstetric anesthesia, but the submitted material is reviewed in the same way for everyone and is not linked in any way to membership in a society or group. The quality of the paper is the issue!

Best Regards,

S.H.
Editor

After that there was no need for me to write to Kennel Club News or any of the numerous organisations that exist in the world today. Because I am sure that their replies, however worded, would not differ in substance from the above two. Being conventional, these organisations know nothing of the spiritual worlds, evolution of consciousness, the appearance of Christ in the etheric or *The Philosophy of Freedom*. But they know what common sense, fairness, professionalism and interests of their members are. I suspect that the AS in GB is the only organisation in the world which has this antediluvian policy of exclusion, and I challenge you now to prove me wrong.

In conclusion may I make a suggestion, even two. If you wish I would be more than happy to discuss with you, face to face, this or other issues when you have your October meeting in London. My second suggestion is actually an invitation to you all to take part in the Workshop I propose to have, subject to whatever 'policy', at the beginning of the next year at Rudolf Steiner House (the details were enclosed – I.Z.).

I am looking forward to hearing from you and to seeing you.

The author had neither heard from any of the Council members, nor saw them either at their meeting or at his workshop. The latter was to be organised and chaired by the aforementioned S., but had to be cancelled due to her own manipulations. Going into this, however, would take us beyond our first fragment.

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Our second fragment, which takes us a few years back, has been chosen for two reasons: its subject-matter is relevant for this discourse and it was that rare occasion when the author's words addressed to his fellow anthroposophists met with a response. There are other fragments which the author could use, which were more recent and whose subject-matter was much more related to his discourse. But his words on these occasions, irrespective of the status and position of those to whom they were addressed, remained a voice in the wilderness. Therefore they would have been of no use in this case. In the fragment that has been chosen its first part is a contribution the author sent to the then new editor of the Newsletter in October 2000 not knowing what to expect:

The First Class Lessons

A recent exchange of letters in the pages of the Newsletter concerning the First Class Lessons seems to be pointing to something fundamental in the Anthroposophical Society which remains unresolved, namely, the correlation between esoteric and exoteric. In the Anthroposophical Movement we are so used to these terms and to applying them very widely, that we hardly notice how in different contexts they might mean different things. Also some of their applications are taken for granted. This causes confusion, not only conceptual, but also in practical matters.

Anthroposophy, as a spiritual science, is, by its very definition, esoteric. But Steiner made anthroposophical esoteric knowledge public, thus giving anthroposophy a character of being both esoteric and exoteric. The same can be said about the Anthroposophical Society and all anthroposophical activities which are, in this sense, both esoteric (since they draw their content from the spiritual domain) and exoteric (since they take place in public).

However, there is one anthroposophical activity which belongs exclusively to the esoteric/spiritual domain. This is the process of 'attaining knowledge of the Higher Worlds', a path of initiation and spiritual investigation. Unless somebody knows differently, Steiner was the only bearer of this very specific and special esoteric content within the Anthroposophical Movement. Hence everything and everyone else in this Movement was, in this respect, exoteric.

But when Steiner joined the Anthroposophical Society as its leader, he brought this esoteric content into what otherwise was an exoteric entity, thus making it esoteric as well. What was more, he extended this esoteric content to other people by creating within the otherwise exoteric organisation an esoteric school for the above esoteric training.

Though the process of initiation and spiritual investigation is intrinsically esoteric, inward, individual, private and intimate, its nature, methods and significance are universal and objective. Therefore Steiner made public whatever was possible and appropriate concerning this process. Every human being today can follow his guidelines, on his own or with somebody's help, within the anthroposophical environment or outside it.

The situation was different, in more than one way, for the pupils of the School of Spiritual Science. To begin with, there was a teacher offering his 'personal tuition', but also stipulating his requirements. Specific circumstances and objectives of training required specific methods. 'The Lessons' (of the First, Second and Third Classes) were some such methods. For Steiner 'How' was as important as 'What', therefore the Lessons, even if delivered by somebody else, were to be communicated orally and were not to be committed to paper.

However, this requirement of Steiner was not observed. But this and other deviations and violations notwithstanding, during Steiner's lifetime there had never been any contradiction or inconsistency within the Anthroposophical Society with

regard to esoteric and exoteric elements. The border-lines were very clear, and all external arrangements were based on reality as it was at the time.

With Steiner's death the situation had changed drastically. The specific esoteric content was withdrawn from the Society which henceforth, in this very specific and important regard, ceased to be esoteric. What remained of that esoteric content were the external arrangements without that foundation and reality on which they were based.

There was the School of Spiritual Science - unfinished and without a teacher. There were the First Class Lessons - in the form objectionable to Steiner. There were those whom he entrusted with these Lessons - unable, without Steiner, to carry out the intended tasks of the School. And there was another unsustainable legacy - the name 'esoteric' as it was applied to the School, to the Vorstand and to the Anthroposophical Society itself.

With the years the inconsistency became more apparent, as well, it seems, as the unwillingness to recognise it. However, the fact that people raise the question of the School of Spiritual Science and of the Lessons again and again, is a form of recognition that the problem is there. Another sign of recognition are people's attempts, here and there, to introduce some changes into the Anthroposophical Society. Obviously a recognition of the problem and a resolve to rectify it require, above all, courage. But the difficulty of finding a satisfactory, let alone 'right', solution might have a paralysing effect.

The difficulty lies in the fact that there is, apparently, no such solution; that the inconsistency of the present situation can be resolved only in some equally inconsistent way, before a new, consistent and inwardly sustainable situation, can be created. A few such 'inconsistent' solutions with regard to the First Class Lessons are offered below.

One is to make them fully public, on a par with Steiner's other works. Another is to withdraw them from any circulation and usage and make them unavailable to anyone. Those individuals who have the Lessons in their possession would have an option of either returning them to Dornach, the place of their origin and issue, or to be personally responsible for them before Steiner and the Spiritual World. Still another solution might be the same withdrawal of the Lessons with a possibility of access for individual applicants via a certain procedure.

There is no need to go now into the details, or pros and cons, of these and other possible solutions which can be discussed after the main and most urgent step has been made. It is the realisation of the fact that the School of Spiritual Science, the First Class and the Anthroposophical Society cannot continue to exist in their present, spiritually unsustainable, form.

To his surprise and delight, the author received a prompt and enthusiastic reply from the editor whose intention was to place his contribution in the next issue of the Newsletter. However, he never did it. In a long written and telephone exchange which took place later, the editor tried to explain the unexplainable and to justify the unjustifiable saying, first, that he had discovered that the contributor was "no longer a member" and, finally, that he himself was "only an employee". In other words, he had to obey the order of his boss, that very General Secretary who granted the author a permission to receive the Newsletter and authorised the publication of his earlier contribution there. And that was that.

But the author's real surprise lay ahead. Some time later, in February 2001, he received, out of the blue, the following letter, again from the selfsame General Secretary:

Dear Ilya,

T.R. passed on to me your letter about the First Class. As you say, the correlation between the esoteric and the exoteric is always problematic because – as we both know – it is never automatic or determined by tradition but present practice.

I've noticed you assume that the esoteric content of the Anthroposophical Society was withdrawn when Rudolph Steiner died. This is far from certain, and of course has formed the main basis for disagreement between the Society and the Nachlassverwaltung. I understand Marie Steiner was of this opinion, but the majority of highly gifted Anthroposophists in the last 70 years have thought otherwise, and despite the convenience of so-doing Anthroposophy cannot be divorced from its members without being disincarnated again. Many think it possible to work with Anthroposophy without bothering with “those tiresome members”. It's perhaps worth recalling that they were no less tiresome in Steiner's time, yet he never deserted them! One (definitely non-tiresome) person who was vigorously opposed to the idea that Anthroposophy has ceased to be esoteric is Arne Klingborg, one of the most gifted of our members. And there are many others of such calibre, which is not intended to invoke an authoritarian argument but to endorse the idea that such people connected with the Anthroposophical Society encourage us not to divorce Anthroposophy from its Society of members and their practice.

I don't know how you understand the term “esoteric”, but I do as follows. It should not be confused with the “occult” which is simply that which is hidden but may become revealed. Something is esoteric – I believe – if it cannot be manifested outwardly. For example when Steiner described the intellectual soul on one occasion he said that it reveals those cosmic harmonies “i.e. to thinking” that cannot be revealed outwardly; that is the esoteric nature of the soul, unlike those of the sentient and consciousness souls. Another example: if a Eurhythmy performance has an esoteric basis then someone watching it may be aware that there is more in it than what is perceived with the senses. Indeed a human being is esoteric as their essential nature remains hidden.

Now I embark on all this because to say that Steiner made esoteric knowledge public needs to be viewed in this light. It would not be possible to make public what cannot be given outward manifestation (although much occult knowledge was made public). But what could be accomplished would be to make the manner of conduct of its affairs such that they are “informed” by the esoteric, rather like the Eurhythmy example above. This was Steiner's continual concern in 1924: had the members realised what was accomplished at Christmas 1923? I believe that hinges on what I have been saying.

The School of Michael does, in the experience of many including myself, still retain an esoteric character, but that is hard to discuss outside it. The difficulties you describe are not to be denied, but the conclusions to be drawn from them require care. Perhaps one could say that a series of “childhood diseases” have to be experienced, especially as Steiner died earlier than he wished (at least outwardly; he said to his physician shortly before he died that it was “imperative” that he recovered his health). Tom Jurianse, the then General Secretary of the AS in Holland, saw the reuniting of the split in the 1970's as a clear indication that Anthroposophia was still united with the Society.

None of this is to say the Society or those in it are perfect, and that changes are not urgently needed, but I prefer to follow Christ's example of mixing with the “sinners” rather than standing aloof!

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,
Nick

N.C Thomas
General Secretary

This is the author's reply:

Dear Nick,

Thank you very much for your letter which came to me as a pleasant surprise. It is not very often that I have an opportunity to share my thoughts and ideas with fellow anthroposophists and especially to get a feed-back. And then when I do get a feed-back it is more often than not contaminated with 'political' or 'personal' overtones.

It is not at all the case with your letter which stays within the subject in question. And yet I felt disappointed as I read and reread your letter in conjunction with my article to which your letter is a reply (I noted that you also responded to some other things I had said elsewhere).

It is not that I find the content of your letter disagreeable. It is the fact that it addresses not my main issue, but rather your own interpretations of it or other issues of your concern.

I could have shown it to you very specifically going through your letter sentence by sentence, but I have no desire to do so. I do not wish to prove anything, nor do I want to be involved in any polemics. The only thing I want, if at all possible, is to have a free and unbiased exchange of thoughts and perceptions.

Whatever inner convictions I might have, I have no ultimate way of telling whether my own thoughts and perceptions are right or wrong, let alone them being of any objective value. Therefore I cherish every opportunity to have a meaningful conversation and exchange which, after all, might be beneficial not only to me alone.

If your misunderstanding of my main premises is due to my inadequate way of expressing myself and you are still willing to address them, please allow me another attempt. Let us try to go beyond words, terms and definitions to the very essence of what is at stake. I will rephrase my thoughts completely, put them in the form of theses and in the evolutionary context, and abolish the terms 'esoteric/exoteric' altogether. Then my entire thought structure, with its every element including the final one, can be scrutinised and shown to be either 'true' or 'false'.

1. When gods created the world of matter out of spirit they have also established how the matter and spirit coexist and relate to each other within every phenomenon and event.
2. This included also the organic nature, the man himself and even, as it began to evolve, what took place between man and man.
3. Gradually and increasingly, man is to 'take over' from gods and arrange things in the world, particularly those related to human activity and relations, in his own way.
4. If he does it in disharmony with the spirit and spiritual laws, through either ignorance or choice, the world would end up in calamity.
5. To help man live, act and develop in a conscious harmony with the spirit he has been given the science of the spirit.
6. Unlike other human beings, the inaugurator of the spiritual science Rudolf Steiner, an initiate with a very special spiritual mission, had a unique and very special relationship with the spiritual world.
7. This relationship required of him as an individual some very special external arrangements with regard to some aspects of his life and activities.

8. One of such requirements and arrangements was that he placed himself outside the Anthroposophical Society which came to life as a result of his teachings.
9. However, certain events which took place some years later, led to Steiner's decision to 'disavow' these requirements and arrangements and become a member and official leader of the Anthroposophical Society.
10. This created a completely new situation, and to bring it in harmony with the spiritual reality the Anthroposophical Society was to be put on a completely new footing.
11. Also special external arrangements were to be made to reflect on the physical plane Steiner's special relationship with the spiritual world and his unique personality and activity.
12. With Steiner's death, this unique element of his individuality was removed from the physical plane and from the Anthroposophical Society.
13. This again required different external arrangements in the Society to reflect this changed situation and bring it in harmony with the changed spiritual reality.
14. This never happened, and the old arrangements which did not correspond to the new physical/spiritual reality were left intact.

What are the consequences? Without resorting to some sweeping and thundering statements I can simply point to one little fact which speaks much louder – our present exchange of letters. The issues which concern thousands of people throughout the world and the destiny of what is supposed to be the most important spiritual movement of our time are banished to the confines of a private correspondence between two individuals. And even this is thanks to the fact that, luckily for me, you happened to have a personal messenger who delivered to you my article intended for thousands of my brothers and sisters in spirit.

With my very good wishes,

The reader can imagine the eagerness with which the author was waiting for a reply. He tried to express his thoughts as clearly and simply as his abilities and the subject allowed him. Nick Thomas was an intelligent man, scientist and author, and an experienced expounder of anthroposophy and his views. It was to be expected that all this would be reflected in his reply, particularly to the issue the author raised in the final paragraph of his letter. Here is Nick Thomas's reply, for the reader's own judgement:

Dear Ilya,

Many thanks for your further letter. I feel that my comments about esotericism are relevant to your concerns, but I appreciate your concise summary of where you are with this issue. I am interested in your term “disavow” in point 9. It is hard to express this exactly, isn't it! Steiner originally followed what had always been correct esoterically, but his decision to become a member was a free deed in which, as he explained in lectures in Holland, he had no guidance from the spiritual world, but which was then strongly endorsed after it had been taken.

I know Rudi Lissau, for example, takes the view as you do that the uniting of esotericism with the Society was only because of Steiner's membership of it. While I do not for a moment deny that that did happen, I am convinced that Steiner intended that – to use a crude analogy – as a “pump priming” deed which should result in an esoteric society that would outlast his physical presence. So, we are left with the question how far that changed with his premature death. In your point 12 you say “...was removed from the physical plane and from the Anthroposophical Society”. It is the last assertion that is not to be taken as certain, indeed Herr Grosse wrote that Steiner never appointed a successor because – in his view – he continued to lead

the Society after his death. I quite agree that new arrangements were called for by Steiner's death, and disputes arose because Ita Wegman assumed a certain role in a way unacceptable to other Vorstand members. But I do not think it was as black-and-white as you indicate: to paraphrase cruelly: "Steiner's death robbed the Society of its esotericism". No I do not think it was like that, but very nearly perhaps! So far I have been persuaded by what I have seen that the Society and the Movement have retained a connection, despite the difficulties.

I often think upon these matters, Ilya, but I do feel that the situation too easily becomes "theological" without contemporary esoteric experience to go on, and that seems hard to come by! Steiner is supposed to have said that the difficulties in the Society sprang from the failure of the membership to really work at the development of the chakras, especially the heart chakra.

With warmest wishes,

This letter, concluding the above correspondence, also concludes the second fragment and the Addendum itself. Hopefully the issues it addressed and the reasons for the views held by the author with regard to the Anthroposophical Society are clearer now. It would be very unfortunate if his unavoidable reference to his own situation would be regarded as a personal issue. Of course it is personal so far as it concerns him as an individual, but when it concerns the Anthroposophical Society as it does, there is nothing personal. However, whatever happens within the Anthroposophical Society is also personal because it happens via and by people. And they are responsible for it, personally.

But their personal responsibility is their concern, not ours, not of this discourse or its Addendum. However, their public responsibility, which they took upon themselves voluntarily and willingly, is a different matter. This responsibility is not only to the spiritual world and Rudolf Steiner for which they will be answerable in the world of spirit, but also to their contemporaries, first of all to their fellow anthroposophists, for which they are answerable now, here on earth. Therefore it is a part, explicit and implicit, of this discourse and its Addendum.

As should be clear from the content of this discourse, its main concern is anthroposophy and its main subject is the Anthroposophical Movement, which includes the role and task of the Anthroposophical Society. But will it be helpful to this Society and its members as was its objective and the author's hope? At this stage the author does not even know whether it will reach the membership, or even a small part of it. At the same time he cannot help asking himself: Will it make any difference?

What his experience tells him, and what its two fragments also tell the reader, is that the discourse will be dismissed or ignored by those whom it should concern most and no free, unbiased and thoughtful conversation by them on its content is possible, let alone the serious changes it proposes. A bleak, pessimistic and hopeless but a realistic picture. It is an inevitable outcome of what our earthly wisdom teaches us about our past experience.

But the author had an occasion in this discourse to refer also to what the spiritual wisdom teaches us about it as revealed by Steiner: "To judge the new on the basis of the old only leads to errors. Yet the memory of past experiences is useful precisely because it enables one to see new ones. That is, without a given past experience I might never see the characteristic feature of the things or beings I encounter. Past experiences should help us to see what is new, not to judge it." Allow the author also to repeat his own conclusion which he drew from these words and applied therein: "Translated into the existing situation these words meant the following: Yes, anthroposophists failed dismally all the tasks which they had in the

past. But they should be given another, new chance in a new situation, and it will be up to them now how they will use it."

Will it not be wise, prudent and fair to apply the same to the situation we are considering now? The author wishes to finally conclude his discourse by saying that anthroposophists today, as they did in Steiner's time, face an unenviable but noble task. The fact that they failed it then does not mean that they will fail it today as well.

SUMMARY

Now, that the author has concluded his narrative, he wishes, for the reader's benefit, to recap and summarise its content. He did it of course earlier, even as two versions, in his Conclusion. But now he wishes to do it in a different and unconventional way by excluding all real names, dates, places, etc. leaving just the facts. The purpose of this is to allow the reader to grasp the content conceptually, in its essence, without any 'accessories' interfering with the process of thinking. It allows one to view and consider the components of the summary, whether phenomena or events, in their pure form, as ideas. After they have been grasped as such they can be easily grounded in their concrete reality by adding to them the 'accessories' which are well known from the content of the narrative. So here it is:

- Apart from the perceptible, cognisable and known world in which we live, there is another one which is inaccessible to our sense organs and incognizable by our ordinary consciousness.
- However, every human being has latent organs of perception and the potential to develop both these organs and his consciousness to allow him to perceive and cognise this world.
- This world is not only as real as the one in which we live, but is its birthplace in which all its phenomena and events ultimately originate.
- Therefore it is essential for modern man to know of this world, of the way it functions and of its intimate connection with our world in the most concrete and varied details.
- There lived an individual, a scientist and scholar, who had these latent organs of perception developed to the highest degree and who devoted his life to the investigation of the invisible world and its interrelationship with the visible one.
- The results of his investigation were obtained by strict scientific methods and therefore they constitute a science, a science of the invisible.
- His second task was to bring his findings, in the form of teaching, to the attention of mankind.
- Though his teaching is available in all major countries and languages of the world, it is largely an unknown phenomenon in modern culture.
- However, some individuals became aware of it, took it seriously and applied it to practical aspects of life which is the ultimate objective of the teaching.
- Despite their comparatively small number, the collective activities of these individuals in such vital spheres of life as education, medicine, agriculture, art and some others, which benefit many thousands of people all over the world, constitute a true international movement.
- The inaugurator of the teaching founded for his followers a society which differed in the most essential way from other societies or organisations of this type.
- Its distinguished and unique feature, round which the society was built and structured, was the school for training researchers into the hidden world and for conducting this research.

- After the death of the Teacher the school was unable to fulfil its main task – nobody could conduct the research along the lines envisaged by him and nobody could train the researchers.
- This necessitated a fundamental change of the society with its school in accord with the new reality which has never been done.
- Instead, it continues to function in its original outer form bereft of its inner content, as if there has been no fundamental internal change, which amounts to pretence and a lie.