

2017/18 Annual Theme for the Year

Light and Warmth for the Human Soul

How can the Foundation Stone Meditation promote peaceability – a hundred years after the birth of the social threefolding impulse? [[PDF link](#)]

Dear members of the Anthroposophical Society, dear supporters of the anthroposophical movement, dear friends!

In recent years we have approached the questions of self-knowledge and world knowledge from various angles in our work, asking also about the mission of evil in the evolution of the spiritual (or consciousness) soul. Current events, with the constant increase of wars, terror attacks, social tensions as well as the concentration of political power in the hands of individuals, affect us in existential ways. The loss of reality that comes with digitalization as well as new technologies which even presage the end of humanity confront us more urgently than ever with the question as to our true inner essence and spiritual destiny. How we think of ourselves – whether we see ourselves as animals or machines – will determine our reality.¹

The experience of the Goetheanum World Conference, which was attended by around 800 people from all over the world who embarked together on a searching, future-oriented process, was permeated by the Foundation Stone Meditation. The positive response we received has confirmed our endeavour to devote our work in the coming years – with annually changing emphasis – on the Foundation Stone Meditation, in the attempt to develop an inner organ of self - and world knowledge. Rudolf Steiner pronounced this “new Apollonian word” of the “Know Yourself” for the first time on 25 December 1923, when he presented the result of his spiritual investigation of the human being, after a maturation period of over thirty years, clothed in the mantric words of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

The radiant light of thoughts

Many members have been working with the Foundation Stone Meditation at a deeper level for some time. A fresh approach to this meditation can help us to embrace the impulses connected with the laying of the Foundation Stone in 1923 in a new way and thus prepare the ground for harmonious and active collaboration. When we work meditatively with the Foundation Stone, a “light of thoughts shines towards us” and enables us to draw new inspiration for our actions from the “spirit holding sway in the radiant light of thoughts around the dodecahedral stone of love”.

In the next years we would like to devote ourselves to the spirit of the Foundation Stone and encourage the striving for a deeper understanding of the threefold human being – of body, soul and spirit – through inner practice. While there is a wealth of spiritual knowledge that has already been passed down to us, it is essential today that each individual ‘I’ finds and experiences the original impulse anew.² For this to happen, self-knowledge must not remain a subjective act, limited to the understanding of one’s own individuality, but we must seek to understand what is universally human in us and in others.

The transformative power of the Foundation Stone

The objectivity of the Foundation Stone’s spirit light can transform the anthroposophical life. Rudolf Steiner saw the Foundation Stone as the ground on which individuals can erect a “building” together.³ In the years ahead we would like to use the three great exercises of “Spirit-Recalling”, “Spirit-Awareness” and Spirit Beholding” as the basis of our working together. Every year we will introduce a new emphasis within this overall theme.

Without neglecting the development of the spiritual (or consciousness) soul, working on the Foundation Stone can inspire elements of a socially effective and healing culture of the Spirit-Self. The three exercises must not be misunderstood as fixed spiritual techniques, however. They inspire spiritual life in three spheres and help us to develop the individual and social dimensions of Spirit Recalling, Spirit Awareness and Spirit Beholding, each of which constitutes a separate whole. Next year we will focus on Spirit Recalling in particular. May the forces we can draw from the source be our guiding star!

Threefold practice

The appeal to the "human soul" addresses us as human beings in a threefold way. The three dimensions, in which we learn to feel ourselves cosmically embedded, connect us with the "Father-Spirit of the Heights", the "Christ-Will encircling us" and the "Spirit's worldthoughts". This sense of being connected can gradually evolve as we respond through practice to the threefold call.

Who is it that speaks to us in this way? Who asks us to carry out these exercises? As we practise we become aware of basic orientations of soul and spirit, and we are gradually led to a knowledge that encompasses our earthly and cosmic being. This knowledge will increasingly form the foundation for new insights, feelings, experiences and actions in the world, with other human beings.

"Practise Spirit-Recalling"

The very first invocation, "practise Spirit-Recalling", inspires a wealth of questions, moods and exercises. Remembering is the central soul activity of the 'I'.⁴ When we focus on our memories, a wide landscape, built up in the course of our life, appears to the inner eye. Memories give us identity: we feel as individualities with our own distinctive biography that began at a particular point in our life on earth and evolves towards a point that is still concealed from us.

In the cycle that accompanied the Christmas Conference ("World History and the Mysteries in the Light of Anthroposophy") Rudolf Steiner looks at the memory of early humanity, inviting us to consider entirely different soul configurations: post-Atlantean humanity needed to set up signs, or memorials, on earth to help them remember. In a later period memory became rhythmic and, with the beginning of Greek philosophy, our present temporal memory emerged. Could it be that even today we may find different forms of memory spread out across the world, and could these forms of memory aid us in discovering and understanding other forms of consciousness? Anthroposophy asks us to give a spiritual direction to our memory through practising.⁵

In the context of the Christmas Conference Rudolf Steiner mentioned exercises for the enhancement of memory. In the lecture cycle "Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres"⁶ he recommends that we meditate on an event in our childhood or youth. This memory exercise can help us to feel at one with nature and to experience the sunrise in a new way. As we enter ever more deeply into this experience, we can meet the first hierarchy in the radiance of the rising sun and establish a new relationship with the world of the Father. A spiritualized form of recall is now possible.

In extending our gaze beyond the boundary of birth we enhance memory. We may ask ourselves what decisions were made before birth that have led to our present incarnation. This is not about speculating or about finding out about our own karmic past, but about awakening to other origins and destinies, because they determine our work, our encounters and relationships in an essential way and confront us with challenges as we try to live and work together, especially when we meet people with whom we don't seem to "gel" or feel an affinity. Within the Anthroposophical Society we are called upon to work together as a community. A rightly cultivated memory can make us open for new ways of working together, for a new "sun karma" that will be a precondition for us to create a new culture of humaneness.⁷

Review and Spirit-Beholding

The review asks us to develop our will and our thinking at the same time. The fourth verse of the Foundation Stone Meditation can therefore be seen as a practical exercise in spirit-recalling that takes us back to the "turning point of time", the original Christ impulse, which gives light and warmth to our souls, keeps the darkness from taking over and enables us to behold the spirit. The review allows us to exercise our will by giving us the opportunity to go beyond the ordinary memory – which is merely a repeating of the past – and to acquire the ability to actually move in time. Recalling then means entering the realm of the timeless ether.

We are not meant to dwell on our own thoughts and views when we look back, but on what comes to meet us in the outside world, in reverse order, so that our will can tear itself away from the physical. We expand into the world around us and experience how this world has formed us and what we have become through it.

This kind of review, which can gradually become spirit-recalling, enables us to meet others in an imaginative way. The will effort involved in the review exercise promotes spirit-beholding. Because we have cultivated spirit-recalling, others can become image in us and express themselves imaginatively in spirit-beholding.⁸ And more than that: we find in this activity the foundations of the modern initiation experience.

How thinking becomes vision

Rudolf Steiner explained the transition from thinking to vision through will application in more general terms. When we make a true thinking effort, by adopting and practising a thought organism as outlined in *The Philosophy of Freedom* (GA 4), our thinking becomes free. At the same time, our will needs to become transparent to us. As long as we are ruled by obscure will impulses and as long as we refrain from gaining clarity about our own will, our thinking will remain philosophical. If we become more and more transparent to ourselves, however, through exercises such as reviews, and if we learn to behold the spiritual world through our will being,⁹ once it has become transparent, our thinking will become vision. By practising spirit-recalling we will become able to achieve spirit-beholding and receive impulses for our actions from the spiritual world. In taking this step of working on the Foundation Stone Meditation together, out of the whole of anthroposophy, we hope to bring these fundamental exercises to life.

| *Christiane Haid, Goetheanum Leadership,*
and Jaap Sijmons, General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands
Anthroposophy Worldwide No. 1-2/17

Notes

1. Rudolf Steiner, *The Karma of Untruthfulness*, GA 173b, lecture of 13 November 1917.
2. Rudolf Steiner, GA 260, p. 65 and 69.
3. Rudolf Steiner, GA 260, p. 280f.
4. Cf. Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science*, chapter 2 (The makeup of the human being).
5. Rudolf Steiner, GA 234, lecture of 10 February 1924 (on the fourfold metamorphosis of recollection).
6. Rudolf Steiner, GA 232, lecture of 23 November 1923.
7. Rudolf Steiner, GA 240, lecture of 25 January 1924.
8. Rudolf Steiner, GA 186, Lecture of 7 December 1918, p. 124-129.
9. See bibliographical notes in Rudolf Steiner, *Strengthening the Will: the Review Exercises*. Edited and introduced by Martina Maria Sam, Forest Row 2010, tr. Matthew Barton, chapter 5

Recommended reading:

Rudolf Steiner: *The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923-1924*, GA 260, Hudson NY 1990, tr. J. Collis, M. Wilson. Lecture of 25 December 1923, 10 a.m.

Rudolf Steiner: *Mystery Knowledge and Mystery Centres*, GA 232, Forest Row 2013, tr. P. Wehrle. Lecture of 23 November 1923

Rudolf Steiner: *World History and the Mysteries in the Light of Anthroposophy*, GA 233, London 1997, tr. G. Adams. Lectures of 24 and 25 December 1923

Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophy and the Inner Life. An Esoteric Introduction*, GA 234, Bristol 1994, tr. V. Compton-Burnett. Lecture of 10 February 1924

Rudolf Steiner: *Karmic Relationships*, GA 240, London 1975, tr. D. Osmond. Lecture of 25 January 1924

Rudolf Steiner: *Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha*, GA 152, Great Barrington 2006, tr. M. Miller. Lecture of 7 March 1914

Theme for the Year 2016-2017:

“World Transformation and Self-Knowledge in the Face of Evil”



2016/17 Annual Theme for the Year

World Transformation and Self-Knowledge in the Face of Evil

While the first part of the annual theme 2016/2017 reflects the themes of previous years, the aspect of evil has been newly added. As last year, several authors will expand on the theme of the year.

Dear members and friends, the purpose of the annual theme is to help establish a horizon of awareness for all those who wish to work together on this issue. In doing so they realize a central endeavor of the Anthroposophical Society in that they connect with others and foster the soul life by striving for spiritual knowledge.

One of the core tasks for members of the Goetheanum Leadership is to come to a realistic assessment of the spiritual situation of our time and of the role anthroposophy has to play in it. On this basis we seek to work together and meet our responsibility with regard to the Goetheanum as a School of Spiritual Science. The annual theme arises increasingly from this work. As part of this endeavor we regularly consult with the general secretaries of the larger national societies and this consultation helps us to arrive at a shared orientation and formulation of the theme.

Creating a conscious connection

The annual theme therefore expresses our assessment of the current situation and of the corresponding tasks of anthroposophy, and this assessment is informed by our individual work, our journeys and our encounters, and our cooperation with many people and institutions all over the world.

We hope that, bearing this background in mind, the branches and groups of the Anthroposophical Society will find the proposed theme interesting and that it can form a meaningful focus for the work in the professional fields and in the sections. Wherever you live and whatever you do, you can, by working on the annual theme, make a conscious connection and work together with the Goetheanum and with many other anthroposophically orientated people in the world. This spiritual connection will enhance the power of anthroposophy to contribute increasingly to creating a more humane world at all levels of reality.

In recent years we have specifically focused on the relationship between self-knowledge and world-knowledge. Affirmation of the world which is increasingly man-made and complex was a particular concern. Since more and more people are gradually working themselves into the annual theme we did not want to suggest an entirely new topic. The events of the last year and the thought of what is to be expected in the near future urge us to work towards a deeper understanding of evil. We realize that forms and dimensions of evil are becoming effective today that are not only shocking but that confront us with ever new riddles of knowledge which are characteristic of humanity in the age of the consciousness soul.

Transforming the world

In his anthroposophical spiritual science Rudolf Steiner discovered and unfolded entirely new aspects regarding an understanding of evil and these aspects lead to a new thinking and new attitudes in individuals as well as in the social life.

Our everyday lives as well as our search for a deeper understanding induce us to ask how the world can be transformed through self-knowledge and how self-knowledge can arise from world transformation when we learn to understand evil in the widest sense.

We would like to recommend two lectures in particular by Rudolf Steiner, where he describes, directly after World War I, a radical new understanding of evil that had gradually emerged in his work but had

never been expressed by him as clearly before. The lecture cycle *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History* (GA 185) culminates in a series of soul exercises that describe the stages of an inner development which can help us transform ourselves and therefore the world – in the face of evil.

In our work we have also experienced the dimensions that open up when one works with the two imaginations at the center of the description of the Michael Mystery: In "The World-Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman" Rudolf Steiner presents two imaginations that express the tension from which an image arises of a true human future that is difficult to grasp. Goethe's *Faust*, which will be performed in full at the Goetheanum in 2016 and 2017, also impressively presents the burningly topical issue of the human struggle with evil.

And lastly we would like to recommend a number of other works that open up essential aspects of the problem, hoping they will inspire you to connect with the theme of the year

| For the Goetheanum Leadership, **Christiane Haid and Bodo von Plato**.
Anthroposophy Worldwide No. 1-2/16

Recommended Reading for the 2016/17 Theme

Rudolf Steiner:

From Symptom to Reality in Modern History (GA/CW 185), lectures 4 and 5

Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts (GA/CW 26), Michael Letter of November 16, 1924, "The World Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman"

How to Know Higher Worlds (GA/CW 10)

Faust and the Problem of Evil (GA 273), lecture of 3 November 1917
[An English translation of this lecture can be found online at <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA/GA0273/19171103p01.html>]

Christiane Haid and Martina Maria Sam (eds):

Rudolf Steiner über Goethes Faust,
volume I: Grundlagen, volume II: Szenenkommentare,
Dornach 2016 (due to be published in German in March 2016)

Friedrich Joseph Schelling:

Investigations into the Nature of Human Freedom

Friedrich Nietzsche:

Beyond Good and Evil

Hannah Arendt:

Responsibility and Judgment
The Life of the Mind

Martin Buber:

Good and Evil

Nancy Huston:

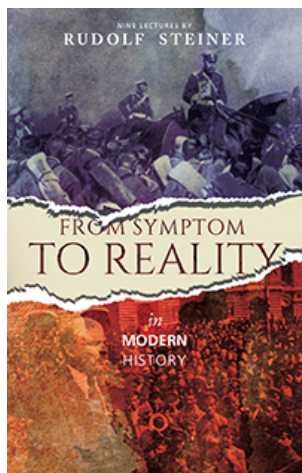
Instruments of Darkness
Fault Lines

Erhard Fucke:

Im Spannungsfeld des Bösen

Hans Werner Schroeder:

Der Mensch und das Böse. Ursprung, Sinn und Wesen der Widersachermächte.



Theme for the Year 2015–2016:

***“The I Knows Itself” –
in the Light of Michaelic
World Affirmation
and World Connection***

“Know your self
and your self will
become the world;
Know the world
and the world will
become your self.”

QUICK LINKS:

- | [Introduction](#) | [Reading](#)
- | [World Affirmation in Knowledge](#), by Helmut Goldmann
- | [From World Affirmation to World Connection](#), by Paul Mackay
- | [Interest in Others as a Principle of World Affirmation](#), by Michaela Glöckler
- | [The 'I' - Bridge and Gateway at the Same Time](#), by Hartwig Schiller
- | [“...the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars”](#) by Jaap Sijmons
- | Of related interest: [Some Reflections](#), by Torin Finser

Initiative:

Articles on the 2015/16 Theme for the Year

by Christiane Haid and Bodo von Plato

It is the first time that the Theme for the Year will not be presented in one article, but in contributions from several authors over the course of the next twelve months. These will be based on Rudolf Steiner’s statement:

**“Know your self and your self will become the world;
Know the world and the world will become your self.”**

Each year the annual theme of the General Anthroposophical Society aims to provide a stimulating focus for the work of those members who wish to engage in a process of common consciousness with the Goetheanum Leadership. During our annual autumn meetings with the General Secretaries (now representing seventeen countries worldwide) we consult on the theme for the following year.

Currently in 2014/15 we are attempting to penetrate, through an attitude of complete acceptance, a core anthroposophical concept, namely “The ‘I’ knows itself – in the light of Michaelic world affirmation.” Through this theme we wish to examine a quality of self-knowledge which can come into being when we fully engage with and accept the world. We suggest that we continue to make this Michaelic quality of self-knowledge a central focus of our studies, contemplation and anthroposophical meetings in 2015/16. In addition to “world-affirmation” we would like to add “world-connection.” By expanding the theme, the fundamental anthroposophical self-knowledge and self-development evolve to an active engagement in the world. In this spirit, we can come to understand the meaning of Michaelic self-awareness in an ever new and deepening way.

Articles on the Theme for the Year

The members of the Goetheanum Leadership, as well as the General Secretaries, intend publishing a variety of contributions on a monthly basis. The first will be an article by Helmut Goldman, the General Secretary of Austria ([below](#)). These contributions will articulate different perspectives, showing how connection to the world can be achieved through self-knowledge, and connection to the self by experiencing the world.

“The ‘I’ knows itself – in the light of Michaelic world affirmation and world connection” can contribute in a calm and powerful way towards a transformation – also in terms of the Anthroposophical Society – of: “Know your self and your self will become the world;/ Know the world and the world will become your self.”

Take Hold of the Future through the Past

The following meditation contemplating the stream of time, given by Rudolf Steiner on 24th December 1920 to Ita Wegman, may serve as a possible deepening of this year’s theme:

We are a bridge
between our past
and future existence;
The present a moment,
the moment as bridge.

Spirit grown soul
in matter's enveloping sheath
comes from the past;
soul growing to spirit
in germinal spheres
is our future path.

Take hold of the future
through the past,
hope for what's coming
through what became.

So grasp existence
through growth;
so grasp what's growing
in what exists

(English translation:

Matthew Barton in *Finding the Greater Self. Meditations
for Harmony and Healing*. Sophia Books, 2002)

| For the Goetheanum Leadership, **Christiane Haid and Bodo von Plato**.
Translation by Joan Sleight, with Sue Simpson and Jan Baker Finch.

Literature for the 2015/16 Theme of the Year

Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* (GA 26), Michael Letter of November 16, 1924, "The World Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman."

Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* (GA 26), Michael Letter of August 31, 1924, "The Condition of the Human Soul before the Dawn of the Michael Age."

Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, vol. 3, Lectures of July 1, 1924 and July 28, 1924.

Rudolf Steiner, *Awakening to Community* (GA 257), Lectures of February 28 and March 4, 1923.

Rudolf Steiner: *Inner Aspect of the Social Question* (GA 193) Lecture of February 11, 1919.

Rudolf Steiner: *Letters to the Members* (from GA 260a), letter of February 3, 1924.

World Affirmation in Knowledge

by **Helmut Goldmann**

Rudolf Steiner inscribed the verse on which the 2015/16 Theme of the Year is based in Elisabeth Vreede's copy of the *Calendar of the Soul*:

**"Know your self and your self will become the world;
Know the world and the world will become your self."**

Helmut Goldmann looks at how self-knowledge and world affirmation are related.

Does not the world produce thinking in our heads with the same necessity as it produces the blossom on a plant? (*The Philosophy of Freedom*, Chapter 5)

World affirmation¹ can never be affirmation of one detail or one aspect of the world. One cannot affirm evil, for instance, but one can learn to affirm, or at least inwardly accept, a world that encompasses evil. The affirmation relates to the wider world context including the human being. Interestingly, we find this world affirmation even in Rudolf Steiner's very early work, in writings that seem to suggest to some people that he is an atheist or even a materialist because he radically rejects any views of the beyond that—from the point of view of Michaelic world affirmation—must be seen as

escapist. Such views often come with the attempt to relinquish responsibility to the world beyond and are therefore, in essence, a flight from freedom.

Affirmation of Modern Humanity

Michaelic world affirmation is affirmation of modern humanity, of our position in today's world and in the world of our thinking, feeling and will. The consciousness soul with the specific developmental potential it holds, especially since the beginning of the Michaelic Age in 1879, opens up new prospects for human self-knowledge: conditions and possibilities that belong to our world reality and form the basis for the freedom we can affirm and accept as our task.

Michael and Human Thinking

In the Michael Letters of 1924/1925 Rudolf Steiner described the cosmic journey towards human reality in which the transition from the intellectual to the consciousness soul is a crucial step. Rudolf Steiner characterized this step in the second Michael Letter:² our thinking loses the inspiration it (still) had in the age of the intellectual soul, and "actively brings [the ideas] out of our own spiritual life." With the old inspiration we lose the "spiritual substance of the world," however, and our (naïve) "courage to use our own mind"³ is initially restricted to "sense perception."

Although this courage cannot be intellectually or theoretically explained, it is justified because an entirely new possibility has emerged within our innermost being. "But while human vision in this era had to be restricted to the outer physical world, the experience of a *purified spirituality that consists in itself* has evolved within the human soul."

Our courage is rooted in this "*spirituality that consists in itself*," but it is not yet conscious of itself, of its inner foundation. The sentences which follow are the essence of Michaelic world affirmation: "In the Michaelic age, this spirituality must not remain an unconscious *experience*; it must become aware of its own nature. *This*⁴ means that the Michael being enters the human soul". We must no longer seek "spirituality" in a traditional "higher" world but *in the world in which we live*: out of the dead thoughts of our object-consciousness we must wake up to this spirituality. This waking up to the oneness of the human being with the world that we need to recreate through our own inner spiritual activity constitutes the challenge we are facing now and in the future. We are free today from the coercive impact of old inspirations and we can look for the wellspring in which our freedom and our thinking originate. *This* is the Michaelic path *in* the world. If we do not take this step, we may be led into luciferic spirituality, or we may end up understanding and creating only dead contents in the world because our thinking has died or become detached. "So much depends on the fact that our ideas cease to be merely 'thinking' but, in thinking, become 'seeing'."⁵

From Dead Thinking to Living Thinking

In his lecture cycle on the "Karma of the Anthroposophical Society"⁶ Rudolf Steiner dramatically described the cosmic origin of our relationship with the world: A "cosmic storm" in the fifteenth century caused "the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones to transfer the cosmic intelligence from the human heart to the neurosensory system or head organization. [...] Before this occurred, human beings were heart beings. After that, they became head beings. Intelligence has become our own." This meant, however, that the true, living thinking was forgotten for the time being. As free human beings we can decide to take hold again of the living thinking at any time; but the results of this thinking—the ideas—at first seem like forgotten and therefore dead.

In the same lecture cycle Rudolf Steiner also outlined the task we have as a result of this cosmic-human evolution. "After this intervening period, during which the vividness of thinking is darkened, humanity must strive to take hold of the living thinking again, for human beings will otherwise remain weak and lose their own reality to the reality of thinking."⁷

Self-knowledge in Thinking

In the first place, this task refers us back to our own selves: an act of freedom is required. We can each of us decide to embark on such inner development: it is our answer to a "question" that the world asks. This affirmation of a situation is not a theoretical step; it is existential and it means and demands our ability to cope with ourselves—it is a dramatic soul event: we must overcome the oblivious selfishness that is fed by dead thinking.

This needs inner independence and autonomy because we now have responsibility and this responsibility we cannot relinquish. But as seekers who bear responsibility for ourselves, we can find each other in a new way: in what Rudolf Steiner referred to as "anthroposophical community building". He described this in the eponymous cycle, especially in the lecture of 27 February in the crisis year 1923: the possibility of a new community-building arises as a result of the first spiritual awakening in group studies where a new, reverse cult can arise from conversation. It seems as if Rudolf Steiner

recommended this path to the members because it would help to consolidate the Anthroposophical Society. —Community building has a foundation and a practical way of application:

Gaining Knowledge as a Community

Its foundation is what Rudolf Steiner often referred to as spiritual idealism,⁸ an idealism that has been acquired and that is based on will activity – as opposed to the kind of idealism that is innate, acquired or intellectually cultivated. In our context here, it means the absolute acceptance of others as they are, absolute tolerance. – Another motif of world affirmation! Its practical application is described by Rudolf Steiner as the true task of the branches and groups: to experience how anthroposophy lives in the other person. “... what is important in the Anthroposophical Society is the life that is cultivated within it.”⁹ The striving of each individual to really understand ideas that are “not restricted to the external physical world” generates life, and the ensuing instances of life can meet each other. In repeatedly experiencing the striving for knowledge of people whom I make an effort to meet, I can awaken to the —initially unconscious—experience of the “*purified spirituality that consists in itself*” and that is the source of all striving for knowledge. It is as if, in community my own initiative to gain knowledge becomes a perceptive organ for this “spirituality”—in others, in myself and between us.

All this lives in every real conversation—if only as a seed. The answer refers us back to ourselves and our creative potential: an answer that merely replicates what has been heard or repeats old thoughts is not an answer. But in the weaving of listening and answering a first awakening can take place—as something one cannot strive for in the ordinary sense, but that is given as a grace. This is why conversation is “more life-giving than light”.¹⁰

| **Helmut Goldmann**, *General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Austria*.

English translation by Margot Saar

1. Rudolf Steiner: *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* [GA 26], Michael Letter of November 16, 1924, “The World Thoughts in the Working of Michael and in the Working of Ahriman.”
2. *Ibid.* Michael Letter of August 31, 1924, “The Condition of the Human Soul before the Dawn of the Michael Age.”
3. Immanuel Kant, “Beantwortung der Frage: Was ist Aufklärung?”, *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (December, 1784) pp. 481–494.
On-line:
www.uni-potsdam.de/u/philosophie/texte/kant/aufklaer.htm English:
<https://archive.org/details/AnswerTheQuestionWhatIsEnlightenment>
4. Emphasis added by Helmut Goldmann.
5. *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, Michael Letter of August 31, 1924.
6. Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, vol. 3, “The New Age of Michael,” Lecture of July 28, 1924.
7. *Ibid.*, Lecture of July 1, 1924.
8. Rudolf Steiner, *Awakening to Community* [GA 257], Lectures of February 28 and March 4, 1923; Rudolf Steiner: *Inner Aspect of the Social Question* [GA 193] Lecture 3, Zurich, February 11, 1919.
9. Rudolf Steiner: *Letters to Members* (from GA 260a), letter of February 3, 1924.
10. Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: *The Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*.

From World Affirmation to World Connection

by Paul Mackay

In *Anthroposophy Worldwide* No. 1/2015 Helmut Goldmann deepened the theme of world affirmation in knowledge. I would like to base my contribution on two lectures by Rudolf Steiner:

1. “Common Ground above Us, Christ in Us” (June 15, 1915; GA 159)
2. “Evolution, Involution and Creation out of Nothing” (June 17, 1909; GA 107)

In the first lecture, Rudolf Steiner describes three characteristics that should be developed in the Anthroposophical Society; they represent a preparation for the next—sixth—cultural period. In the second lecture three realms are indicated in which the human being can become creatively active. Here

I would like to try to relate the three characteristics with these three realms. To the extent this interrelationship succeeds, world affirmation can become world relationship, even world connection. A deepened knowledge of world and self in the sense of the verse is made possible.

Humanity's Awakening to Its Activity

The three characteristics are described by Rudolf Steiner as follows. The first is that the human being will more and more feel the suffering of another as his own suffering. The reality of life will be altered so that the welfare of the individual will depend on the welfare of the whole. Rudolf Steiner indicates that this sort of mutuality can only arise in a healthy way when the modern human undergoes a process of individualization and begins to feel himself meeting the world. From this meeting a new form of world affirmation and world relationship can arise.

The second characteristic is connected with this human individualization, one that makes it possible for complete freedom of thought to arise in the religious area. Religious life is placed into the hands of the individual. What happens then is that a hidden element of the divine can be discovered within each human being. Translated into modern language, that would be: "The dignity of the human being is inviolable."

The third characteristic is connected with the human being's capacity for knowledge. If we are more and more successful in recognizing the spiritual in the world, the world takes on meaning— and it thereby becomes possible to find a deepened relationship to the world.

Rudolf Steiner also describes these three characteristics (to be developed within the Anthroposophical Society) in his lecture of October 10, 1916 ("How Can the Destitution of Soul in Modern Times Be Overcome?" GA 168) and the lecture of October 9, 1918 ("The Work of the Angels in Man's Astral Body" GA 182).^{*} In both lectures, Rudolf Steiner makes clear that these three characteristics are not only a preparation for the sixth cultural epoch—they must also be developed in our present time. The angel beings are even waiting for human beings to awaken to their activity. That means that much depends on whether these three characteristics can be realized in our time.

Qualities of Each World

In his lecture "Evolution, Involution and Creation out of Nothing," Rudolf Steiner notes that it is possible for the human being to determine his relation to the world freely. That also means: to act based on the situation. This possibility is given him through Christ's entrance into our evolution. The relationship with the Christ Being enables a so-called creation out of nothing, which can also be understood as creation out of the I. This creation can take place in three realms: the realm of logic, the realm of the esthetic, and the realm of ethics.

The realm of logic does not end with the sense world. Of course, the sense world has its own logic. But as soon as we enter the world of what is alive we notice that it has its own logic, which means its own quality. Goethe followed the trace of this quality which finds its expression in metamorphosis. The realm of the soul element has its own logic as well. It is not without meaning that Rudolf Steiner inscribed this verse in the *Calendar of the Soul* which deals with the intimate connection between self and world. A process of inversion can be sensed, one that takes place in the soul element as it follows the course of the year: self becomes world, world becomes self. This applies to crossing the threshold of death, as well. Rudolf Steiner also sought to make the quality of the karmic element accessible in his karma lectures.

Human knowledge is lent an esoteric character, enters more and more into the sphere of inner insight. That also means that the types of logic described here open up to the human being only when he takes initiative in meeting them. When the human being grasps these types of logic, he can know the world accordingly. A context of meaning arises.

Inner Openness

In the realm of the esthetic we are not so much concerned with self-referential judgments of taste as with an inner openness to the world so that another form of perception can arise. It is especially social life that needs this inner openness, which can also be understood as an awakening through the soul-spiritual quality of the other person. With this type of awakening the human being begins to develop an initial understanding for the spiritual world. What happens between people is important, but it is also a type of gateway to an understanding with spiritual beings.

In the realm of ethics, the ninth chapter of the *Philosophy of Freedom* describes ethical individualism as human creative activity. I am not led by a generally valid moral precept, but by my love for the act. I perform it because I love it. It becomes good when my intuition—immersed in love—finds its right place within the context of the world as I experience it.

Creating a Context of Meaning

This creative human activity in the realms described here can be related to the three characteristics noted earlier, characteristics that are to be developed. The creative activity in the realm of thinking (or realm of logic) makes it possible for the human being to reach the spirit through thinking. Thus an insight into the spiritual nature of the world is attained; it opens up a context of meaning. It is the task of spiritual science to create this context of meaning.

If the realm of the esthetic is understood so that the dignity of the other person is not only respected but also felt—then a divine element will be found hidden in every person, and every encounter between people will be experienced as a religious act, a sacrament. We have an especially strong experience in our own time of the pressure that is being brought to bear on freedom of thought in the religious area.

Finally, ethical individualism makes possible a type of ethics in which every person sees himself as concretely related to others—which can lead to solidarity in dealing with life. Worldwide activity in support of one another paves the way for human beings to work together in finding a way to live on the earth.

An effect of this creation out of the I is that human beings will more and more become creators instead of creations, and thus become co-responsible for the development of the world. It is moving to see how Rudolf Steiner begins (1915) by describing these characteristics as a preparation for the next cultural epoch, and then—at the end of the First World War—presents them as necessary for the creation of healthy conditions in our own time. They form the inner aspect of the threefold social organism.

A Michaelic connection with the world and relation to the world can arise through this creation out of the I.

| **Paul Mackay**, *Goetheanum*

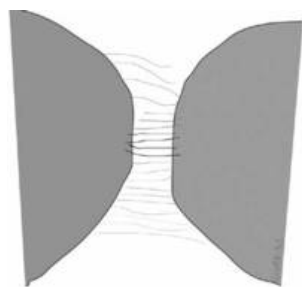
* Rudolf Steiner's three lectures from GA 159, GA 168 and GA 182 are also in *Das Geheimnis der Gemeinschaft*, Stuttgart 2002.

Interest in others as a principle of world affirmation

by **Michaela Glöckler**

In her contribution Michaela Glöckler tries to explain how important interest in others is as a basis for anthroposophical work and she outlines the factors that stand in the way of such interest.

When the German biologist and teacher Ernst-Michael Kranich died, a message from him was read out by the priest at the end of his eulogy to those gathered at the memorial service, "As a researcher I worked intensively on topics but I showed too little interest in the people I met in my professional work." This kind of self-knowledge at the end of a person's life reflects also an essential aspect of the meaning and justification of the Anthroposophical Society. What does it mean?



Interest builds bridges despite growing individualization

In the Founding Statutes of 1923-1924, which have, at Easter 2014, become the legal foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society, this motif is made explicit in paragraph 1: "The Anthroposophical Society is to be an association of people who intend to cultivate the soul life of the individual and of the human community on the basis of true knowledge of the spiritual world" In the last comment Rudolf Steiner made on this, in September 1924 at the Goetheanum, he said, "Esoterically speaking, the Anthroposophical Society can only be founded on and carried by true human relationships Everything must therefore in future be founded on real human relationships in the widest sense, on an actual, not abstract, spiritual life." (GA 260 a)

Real human relationships

The quality of "real human relationships", so clearly outlined by Rudolf Steiner, constitutes the goal as well as the way towards the goal, the path of development, not only of the Anthroposophical Societies in the various countries with their branches and groups, but also of anthroposophical initiatives It is the "anthroposophical way of meeting one another" that Rudolf Steiner explained in-depth in his letters to the members If this meeting is successful, it will contribute in an important way to the thriving of institutions and initiatives.

Day in and day out, we are confronted with media reports that dwell on the conflicts between people and nations Knowing about these conflicts, it is the more shocking to see how, in anthroposophical contexts, our self-knowledge – if we do practice it – points us to the same forces in us, on a smaller

scale, that we find are underlying the catastrophes in the world: forces of polarization, nationalism, hunger for power, lack of transparency in the economic and social life, rejection, irreconcilability, indifference and egotism

Sharing responsibility

If we see through these forces, we pave the way for a form of world- and self-affirmation that is based on the principle of shared responsibility: a sense that whatever happens in the world has to do with me, or with us in the anthroposophical society. And any inner efforts I undertake to overcome them are important in the wider context. In *Anthroposophy Worldwide* 2/2015 Paul Mackay referred to the central motifs of branch work, as Rudolf Steiner explained them to the members with regard to their preparation for the sixth cultural era. They are the motifs that have been most instrumental so far in keeping the worldwide anthroposophical community together. It seems therefore the more urgent to ask how the social skills that are inspired by such motifs are to be developed today.

Rejoicing in the other person

If we consider how much the Anthroposophical Society has shrunk in Germany, the country of its birth, since the 1980s and how much its membership has grown in the still "young" countries, we realize that what enthuses people in the still "young" countries is that they are not alone with their interest in anthroposophy – they rejoice in the others who join in; they are open to everyone who comes along, and they are the more interested in others because they still know so little about anthroposophy, since not much of it has as yet been translated into their language.

But it is characteristic of anthroposophy that life is not only made simpler and more inspiring by it – whether it unfolds its effect in its original country or elsewhere in the world. For wherever anthroposophy is received, it contributes to a stronger individualization process and therefore enhances people's potential to not only say 'yes' to each other, but to also say 'no' in order to experience their individuality more strongly. We need to welcome this fact because it is an essential developmental step. Knowing this may be painful, but it is inevitable. In order to be able to say 'yes' in the right way – rather than join someone or something out of sympathy – we need individual steadfastness. Only then will we be free, also from ourselves and our own preferences or dislikes, so that we can be open to others. If we have not developed enough steadfastness, we will tend towards forms of self-affirmation that arise from rejection and criticism of the world and of other people.

Rudolf Steiner pointed out how, in the course of repeated earthly lives, physical diseases go back to a lack of interest in the world, while the causes of mental illness are the result of disinterest in other people. Understanding, and being inspired by, these relationships unites us with forces in the spiritual world that originate in the sphere of Michael.

| *Michaela Glöckler, Goetheanum*

The 'I': bridge and gateway at the same time

by **Hartwig Schiller**

Anthroposophy Worldwide No. 7-8/15

"Know your self and your self will become the world; know the world, and the world will become your self." No one can avoid the question of self-knowledge and world knowledge. Since Oedipus solved the riddle of the sphinx, it has become the existential problem of human beings which resonates from Delphi into our lives.

The theme of self- and world knowledge permeates Rudolf Steiner's work from its very beginning through to the foundation of the School of Spiritual Science and it affects readers in individual ways. In pursuing it we look from the far distant past to a future we can only surmise.

In *An Outline of Esoteric Science* Rudolf Steiner traces human evolution from old Saturn to the far away future. Humanness manifests differently on Saturn in the Archaic, the spirits of personality, from how it manifests for modern humanity under earthly conditions. The generally human aspect – on Saturn or Earth – consists in having an 'I' and knowing it. The Archaic on Saturn as well as human beings on Earth have 'I'-consciousness. [1]

Seeking the unity of I and world

Rudolf Steiner very frequently elaborated on the cognitive relationship between human beings and the world and addressed the relationship between self-knowledge and world knowledge widely: in his *Philosophy of Freedom*, at the Philosophy Congress in Bologna, in the meditations for teachers and

special needs teachers and on numerous other occasions. In his *Philosophy of Freedom*, Rudolf Steiner describes the history of consciousness as a continuous seeking for the unity of 'I' and world.

"Religion, art and science follow, one and all, this aim. The religious believer seeks in the revelation which God grants him the solution to the universal riddle which this 'I', dissatisfied with the world of mere appearance, sets before him. The artist seeks to embody in his material the ideas that are in his 'I', in order to reconcile what lives in him with the world outside. He too feels dissatisfied with the world of mere appearance and seeks to mould into it that something more which his 'I', transcending it, contains. [2]

A striving for knowledge that is the subject as well as the object of this process will meet with immense difficulties. This is why the search for self-knowledge and its realization usually diverge widely. The discrepancy between expectation and actual achievement shows itself even at the slightest attempt. We can see this even in very banal examples. The adolescent who asks himself whether he is good-looking or ugly; is his nose too short or too long? We cannot even look at the outside of our body without prejudice.

Consider this case of a Waldorf teacher whom all his colleagues have down as a 'typical' melancholic: slender and tall, with slightly drooping shoulders, eyes hooded by noble eyelids, and other characteristic features. During a teachers' outing he leaps over the barrier at the end of a forest path. His colleagues are speechless; he turns to them and says, "I told you I was sanguine!"

Subjective experience, objective constitution

All that makes judging others so difficult, becomes even more so when we look at ourselves. Each level of our organization poses its particular challenges. The configuration of our soul life is closest to consciousness and therefore most easily accessible to it, because the soul mood is relatively exposed. It is already more difficult when it comes to the constitution of our etheric life. Its diverse manifestations do not communicate themselves directly but have to be identified and for this we need to call on the spiritual. Growth, reproduction, memory, temperament, conscience, enduring habits and character are such highly differentiated challenges for our knowledge. When we are to judge our own wellbeing, we waver between subjective experience and the organism's objective constitution.

Self-experience

In looking at ourselves we make the subject of our observation part of the outside world, opening the arena for a number of preconceptions. If it is to look at itself, the self needs to become selfless. The exercises of esoteric training help to create the right conditions for this. Concentration, willpower, serenity, affirmation, openness and integrity are qualities that need to be acquired.

Looking at one's biography objectively can be fruitful. The perceiving of details might widen into the perception of the whole. As a result not only the sum of greater and smaller details becomes apparent, but we gradually grasp the whole picture, the details in their coherence. The further we go back and the more clearly we see the past, the more we can become conscious of the overarching characteristic traits in our life. We become aware of something essential and we inwardly perceive our life's configuration. We may have an inkling of our incarnation, karma may become apparent. Rudolf Steiner said that this experience could be accompanied by a bitter, bitter-sweet or sour sensation. [3]

We might even gain an impression of what went before. We look to the point of our birth and its karmic situation. Every incarnation is preceded by a decision we make before birth and by the temptation to ignore this decision. The more aware we become of this situation and the more we realize that we meet it occasionally again during life, the more strongly we can perceive the forces that are directly connected with the 'I'. They give us the strength to remain faithful to our decision and to take on our earthly journey.

As the self becomes aware of itself, the 'I' finds itself in a world that has grown to immeasurable dimensions, and the isolated objective 'I' experiences the higher levels of 'I'-evolution.

Another 'I' experience

We can also look at 'I' experience in terms of self-efficacy. In this case we do not look to the past but to the future. "What do I want to achieve?" "What gives value to my life?" are questions that can be the starting point to this journey. Attributes such as "concrete", "practical", "economic" or "efficient" are often heard in this context. The 'I' wants to achieve something. It becomes active, plans and organizes, and gives order and direction to life. If moral aspirations are involved people often use terms like "progress", "development" and "being modern" and associate the envisaged projects with "cultural progress" or the "good of humanity". In the "Philosophy of Freedom" Rudolf Steiner calls attention to a problem that can occur when one strives for "cultural progress". This problem is not at first apparent and often overlooked. The striving person "will have to take into the bargain the decline and destruction of a number of things that also contribute to the general good." [4]

If we focus on goals in the outside world we become caught in the realm of decline and dying. We connect with elements that are subject to the destructive stream of the transient.

The 'I' can therefore find itself in a doubly desolate relationship with the world. It approaches unbornness, the life not yet lived, on the one hand and the continuously dying, the dead, on the other.

The bridge

The following verse was given by Rudolf Steiner to Ita Wegman at Christmas 1920:

We are a bridge between our past and future existence;
The present a moment, the moment as bridge.
Spirit grown soul in matter's enveloping sheath comes from the past;
Soul growing to spirit in germinal spheres is future path.
Take hold of the future through the past,
Hope for what's coming through what became.
So grasp existence through growth;
So grasp what's growing in what exists." [5]

Words cannot describe what a moment is, for as soon as we direct our attention to it, it is already gone. Yet, past and future can both stream towards us or we can take hold of both. The moment is the bridge, presence of mind its building material.

As long as our interest in knowledge rests on ideas – or relationships – that are based on particular perceptions and experiences, it is subject to the destructive stream of the dying. As long as they evaporate into lifeless abstractions they are lost in the un-lived.

"The highest conceivable moral principle [...] springs from the source of pure intuition and only later seeks any reference to percepts, that is, to life." [6]

Our relationship with the world is that of a bridge to past and future. The bridge is the 'I' in which 'I' and world merge into a new unity. But it is also a gateway: bridge and gateway at the same time.

| **Hartwig Schiller,**

General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in Germany

The annual theme is taken from GA 40 (*Wahrspruchworte*, p. 288)

[1]

Rudolf Steiner: *An Outline of Esoteric Science* (GA 13), Hudson NY 1997, tr. C. Creeger, p. 143.

"The Spirits of Personality were 'human' on Saturn. Their lowest component was not the physical body, but the astral body with the 'I'. Although they had no physical or ether body such as ours in which to express the astral body's experiences, they not only possessed the 'I' but were also aware of it because the heat of Saturn made them conscious of it by reflecting it back to them. They were 'human beings' under circumstances different from those of Earth."

[2]

Cf. Rudolf Steiner: *The Philosophy of Freedom* (GA 4), London 1964, tr. M. Wilson, p. 14.

[3]

Cf. Rudolf Steiner: *Reincarnation and Karma* (GA 135), Great Barrington 2001, tr. D. Osmond.

[4]

See footnote 2, p. 131.

[5]

Rudolf Steiner: *Wahrspruchworte* (GA 40), p. 143. Verse translated by M. Barton.

[6]

See footnote 2, p. 131f.

"...the moon under her feet..."

"...the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars"

by Jaap Sijmons

Anthroposophy Worldwide No. 9/15

The Annual Theme "The I knows itself – in Michaelic World Connection" poses the question as to how the self expands into the world. Rudolf Steiner differentiated between diverse world-conception-moods, relating them to the names of the planets. In presenting seven

steps of knowledge acquisition (and will development), Jaap Sijmons describes one of many ways. [1]

The Greek philosopher Democritus was the first to state that "Man is a microcosm". What he meant was that we are a part of the world; the self as a spiritual dimension was lost. In the concept of dark atoms hovering around in the void, the thought of being connected with the world is, in principle, of secondary importance.

One could set against this typical "unconnectedness" a world connection that is – seed-like – immanent in all knowledge and that has the potential to grow into Michaelic world connection. Rudolf Steiner expects us to find a parallel between the outer images of the world and the inner moods of knowledge (between world and self).

The life of the senses as earthly foundation

Our twelve senses open up the world for us and help us communicate with the 'I' of others. But in this process we lose the spiritual world. The newborn child first conquers the spatial dimension by learning to stand up with the help of the three lower physical senses (senses of balance, movement and life). This is how children learn to grow into the world that surrounds them. But then they "breathe out" the physical senses in their soul life and inhale the senses of the middle (of smell, taste and touch). This gives rise to a more contained self-consciousness that hides the inner life. At the other end of the spectrum we have the social senses (of I, thought and word) that allow us to understand others, but hinder us from communicating with the spiritual beings in nature. Our seeing and hearing is rendered spiritually blind. The senses hide the spirits of nature from us. As sensory beings we are therefore connected with as well as separated from the world. This changes when thinking begins to stir.

1 Occultism (Moon)

Just as light is reflected by the moon, the whole sensory world is reflected by our mental images and memories. We are only really in ourselves when we are fully aware of our perceptions, because we are one with our thoughts about these perceptions.

And we deposit the outside world within us; we absorb the world into us with the stream of our mental images. By accumulating memories we continuously separate ourselves from the world. The waning moon is an appropriate picture for the fact that we constantly forget our mental images. They live on in unconscious and hidden (occult) realms as habits, even addictions, or trauma. This mood of knowledge is at the level of occultism.

At around the age of three, with the awakening of 'I' awareness, children begin to remember consciously. With the realization "I am", with this inner force, we embrace the sinking etheric stream of mental images and raise images and memories into our consciousness where we can judge them. This points us to the next stage.

2 Transcendentalism (Mercury)

As a result of our quest for knowledge, our being is split into 'I' and world. "We create this division between ourselves and the world as soon as our consciousness lights up." Our judgment splits the experience of the usually unconscious meeting of mental images (stream from the past) and desires (stream from the future) into inner and outer. The mental images intervene at this point and may stand between us and the world. While our judgment always aims at the world as something that lies outside the soul and finds itself confirmed there, our thinking does the same, but experiences the world as outside. How easily can the thinking be wrong about its relationship with the world if it has not first learned to know the world! All kinds of scepticism and speculation appear at this stage.

Impatient and rash, overestimating its own logic, the 'I' does not yet know the world but rather the difficult relationship it has with the world (scepticism). In ancient Greek dialectic the soul was able to experience itself for the first time, but at the same time thought erected "a wall around the soul." But even within these walls the self knows that there is a world outside: this is the mood of transcendentalism. The experience of oneself in thinking judgement has matured through the centuries and strengthened our I-consciousness.

Immanuel Kant had not yet overcome dualism. Logical judgement, however, does not present us with the truth, it merely educates us for the truth – and therefore for a new connection with the world. The movement of Mercury can serve as a symbol for this thinking that weaves in and out.

3 Mysticism (Venus)

Our being may be split into 'I' and world but "we never lose the feeling that we belong to the world." While our judgment aims from the soul to a truth outside, our feeling has this relationship because it is desire or will which has been rejected in the soul. It scans the world, withdraws immediately and turns into aesthetic judgment, for instance. Our subtle sympathy shows that we never lose the sense of being connected with the world. But it is somehow not affected by our judgment: Rudolf Steiner calls

this mysticism, a mood he ascribes to Francis of Assisi and to Goethe's Faust – in the "Forest and Cavern" scene (verses 3217-3227).

A secret reveals itself here: our inner life is not really "in us", in the body. In the body are our memories of the world, of something outside us. Our true inner being is in the world, ignited by the senses and therefore really in the world. Our feeling experiences this, it experiences the spirit in the things when it learns to wonder and revere in thinking and to feel in unison with the laws of the world. The world phenomena evoke feelings of growing and vanishing, of good and evil. The beauty and radiance of Venus in the morning and evening sky can be an image for the feeling aspect of gaining knowledge.

4 Empiricism (Sun)

Focusing only on objects that are illuminated by the sun is the attitude of the empiricist. While our senses do not provide the spiritual aspect of things, the second, unconscious, part of our soul is already there with them. In the mood of empiricism we expose ourselves systematically to the world and do not lose ourselves in thought. If we live with these experiences, our astral body grows wiser and connects itself with the spirit of things. But if we do not meet people beyond our own narrow circle and if we do not look into the world, we remain dull and destitute, and we fail to create the foundation for wider knowledge. Goethe's objective thinking that sought "subtle empiricism" but also "higher empiricism in the experience" is an example of this attitude.

5 Voluntarism (Mars)

When the astral body unconsciously connects with the world of wisdom, how do we raise such experiences to consciousness? There is a practical tool for this: we need to carefully recreate the images of our experience in our mind. Rather than form a 'logical judgment', we need to develop flexibility in our thinking, "creep through the experiences" as Goethe did in his search for the "archetypal plant". We therefore actively construct concepts, but not out of a mood of passive experience. This is a wakeful recreating similar to the will effort we make in "recall". We reverse the direction of time because we no longer depend on the "consecutiveness" of empiricism. As we actively recreate, we can now also sense that the sensory world does not only consist of lifeless interactions but that it is – as Schopenhauer thought – active will. We look around in the night when there is no sun and among the planets we discover fast moving Mars as our symbol for this mood.

6 Logism (Jupiter)

Behind the will stands the wisdom of the world, which we not only feel now but which is reflected inside, in the ether body. The mental images merge objectively and individual thoughts become a thought organism. Thought structures appear which we do not meet in nature, such as Goethe's colour circle, the metamorphosis of the plant as an overall concept or the threefold constitution of the human being. At a purely conceptual level, categories grow out of one another in the dialectic method (for instance Hegel's Science of Logic). Rudolf Steiner refers to this mood as "logism". Just as wisdom illuminates the mental images that have been actively permeated, Jupiter appears behind Mars, shining more brightly.

7 Gnosis (= knowledge; Saturn)

Lastly, true cognition is not our logically motivated uniting of concept and percept, but the overcoming of the subjective, unreal division of 'I' and world, of concept and observation (the actual conclusion of "Truth and Knowledge" and Rudolf Steiner's refutation of Kant.) The world becomes "inner vision" (self and world become one).

We experience of course that we stand in the world with our true judgment, not with our smaller person. With true knowledge, our will can therefore take hold of and change the world, and in this way we keep proving to ourselves the reality of our knowledge (a positive outcome even of philosophical pragmatism, which, however, combines this view with scepticism). If we act in a truly suprapersonal way, out of the spirit of a cause, we move beyond karma and draw from the karmic void. Here lies the freedom to become more and more human, if one strives in love to make oneself the expression of the world and to stand in Michael's light through one's actions. Michaelic world connection is also a certain freedom (from coercion). Saturn with his rings is a suitable symbol: the self that expands into its surroundings.

World conceptions (the zodiac)

Once one knows, one can let go of everything sense-related. What characterizes knowledge is also the right prediction or – to put it more spiritually – prophecy, without direct vision. Like Faust one stands blind in the end, but the spiritual world opens up. The soul widens and becomes spirit, unites with the spirit-filled world. It is now able to understand the phenomena of the world from the spiritual point of view, "sub specie aeternitatis" (Spinoza). Now there is not just one such eternal aspect but twelve: the

twelve world conceptions. The twelve constellations of the zodiac that the Sun and the planets pass through can be images of these world conceptions – or, in a more concentrated form, twelve individual stars.

Summary of the self becoming world

Let us summarize what has been said in a picture: The human form is a true image of the 'I', which beholds the soul as it gains conscious knowledge. The human being gives birth to itself (as a higher human being) as the mother gives birth to her child. Once the soul has learned to know, it will overcome the outer world within itself: the Moon. Spiritually speaking, the soul contains the world. In its empirical passage through the world, it has Sun-like experience: it is clothed in the Sun. The soul, once it has become spirit, knows the cosmic thought: a crown of stars. The picture for this is "a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars (Revelation 12:1).

| **Jaap Sijmons,**

General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in the Netherlands

Footnotes: GA indicates the volume of the collected works (CW) of Rudolf Steiner {Note: the copy received did not locate the footnotes in the text; they will be added when possible.}

[1] GA 151, lecture of 22 January 1914.

[2] Ibid.

[3] GA 322, lecture of 3 October 1920. Cf. also GA 187, lecture of 21 December 1918.

[4] GA 134, lecture of 30 December 1911.

[5] GA 115, lecture of 4 November 1910.

[6] GA 4, chapter II.

[7] GA 115, lecture of 3 November 1910. Or one has to be able to transform true judgment into existential judgment (GA 108, lecture of 28 October 1908).

[8] For a modern outlook cf. Markus Gabriel: *Die Erkenntnis der Welt – eine Einführung in die Erkenntnistheorie*, Freiburg im Breisgau 2012.

[9] GA 18.

[10] GA 134, lecture of 28 December 1911 (with reference to Kant).

[11] GA 4, chapter II.

[12] GA 115, lecture of 3 November 1910.

[13] GA 137, lecture of 6 June 1912.

[14] GA 134, lecture of 30 December 1911.

[15] GA 134, lectures of 27 und 28 December 1911. Cf. also GA 10, chapter "The Stages of Initiation. Preparation".

[16] Cf. GA 108, lecture of 18 January 1909.

[17] GA 134, lecture of 28 December 1911 and GA 151, lecture of 22 January 1914.

[18] GA 134, lecture of 28 December 1911.

[19] GA 108, lecture of 13 November 1908.

[20] GA 3.

[21] GA 107, lecture of 17 June 1909.

[22] GA 26, lecture of 16 November 1924. Cf. GA 107, lecture of 12 January 1909.

[23] GA 134, lecture of 1 January 1912.

[24] GA 151, lecture of 21 January 1914.

Some Reflections

by **Torin Finser**

from *being human* Michaelmas-Fall, 2015

Some time ago I was sorting out old files in a box of long-forgotten materials when I came across a Christmas card received from Lisa Monges perhaps 35 years ago. On the right side was her Christmas greeting signed simply

L.D. Monges, and on the left was a portrait of Rudolf Steiner standing behind a sofa. In addition to the well-known black outfit and white collar, one cannot but help notice his strong hands and expressive fingers, the serious, well-formed facial contours that are filled with light, and of course the eyes that look both outward and inward at the same time. On the top left hand corner one finds a four-line verse followed by Rudolf Steiner's signature and date: 17, February, 1924 and the two words "am Goetheanum."

Of course one always has to wonder why such a card finds its way into the reader's hands just at this time when the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum has introduced a very particular theme for the year ahead. So I decided that since very few things in life are really an accident, it was the right time to take up this gift from Lisa Monges and work with the verse in a renewed way. (Lisa was a pioneer eurhythmist in the U.S., helped start the Spring Valley School of Eurythmy, and taught eurythmy to a group of community children in her living room once a week. I was one of them. Later, after years of mowing her lawn as a teenager, I turned to Lisa Monges when, at age 18, I heard about an exciting conference for members and I asked her to sponsor me.)

So here in my hands was the Christmas card with her signature, and a verse in Rudolf Steiner's own hand. It begins with the line:

"Suche in der Welt nach allen Seiten..." To seek in the world on all sides, in all dimensions... What a challenge these days. I have met more people recently than ever before who have deliberately decided to tune out, to turn off the radio, CNN, internet news feeds, newspapers, etc., because the current events are so "depressing"—and they are. How many stories of ISIL can one read? When will the random acts of violence in schools and places of work stop? How many natural catastrophes can one ingest? I understand this point of view, and yet I continue to read parts of the Wall Street Journal most days, occasionally catch the evening news, and have given some thought-time to world events. I respect those who need to create islands of sanity, but I feel an inner obligation as yet to stay engaged in world events. Why?

In another context—the founding of the first Goetheanum—Rudolf Steiner used the word *"Weltbejahung,"* one of his terms that is almost impossible to translate. The closest I have come to it is "affirmation of the world," a willingness to say "yes" and not reject what the world has to offer. This is a high order. How can one do that? It may be only part of the story, but my approach is to see it not as agreement with all that is happening, but rather a "living in presence" or awareness of what the world offers us today. It is possible to witness, to be aware, and not immediately to rush to judgment, acceptance (or rejection) as so many are apt to do these days. There are times, yes even months when it is terribly cold in New Hampshire, and there are the warm summer days, and of course we all have preferences. But can I learn to practice *Weltbejahung* to all kinds of weather, as well as the news stories that enter our consciousness?

Some might ask: what is the point of doing this? After all, along with being over-whelmed, many feel totally helpless in the face of world events. What can I do as one solitary person?

The second line of the verse has a clue that helps us with this riddle:

"Und du findest dich" — You will find yourself. What, I can find myself in another atrocious story on CNN? Is that not the last place I would want to find myself? Well, on one level, of course. But if one actually takes a few minutes to think (something that we cannot take for granted these days), the percepts from the world phenomena start to work on the soul, concepts start to arise. For instance, after a series of stories from the Middle East recently, I spent some time thinking about the root causes of fundamentalism. What makes people fanatics? Why do those who outwardly seem to be on a religious path (with all the teachings of peace) turn a corner and become fundamentalists? There are many in our circles who could help with this question (Christopher Bamford comes to mind) but I am not attempting to answer it here. I just want to point out a series of steps:

- We seek to know the world in all dimensions.
- That gives rise to new experiences which can take shape in new thoughts.
- And if we have done some thinking, we have to own our own concepts.

- And in owning our thoughts, and the soul depths from which they arise, we can experience ourselves in a new way.
- Thus the world leads to self.

Then we move to the third and fourth lines of the verse:

"Suche in dir nach allen Tiefen Und du findest die Welt."

Here we have the reverse process! If we are willing to *seek in the depth of the soul, delve into our innermost being*, we can *find the world in a new way*. There are many ways in which this can happen, but one has to do with meditation and reflective practices in general. When we do the inner work, we find our center, our essential Self. One can emerge from strenuous inner work with a heightened sense of integrity, authenticity, groundedness. Like the violinist who practices for hours before giving a concert, when one has done the inner work then one meets the world/audience on a different level. What a difference it makes if one has prepared a presentation or simply tries to "wing it"! When one is rooted in the depth of soul experience, one can then stand in a different relation to the theme or task at hand. And when one does so, one meets others and the world in a new way. So again we have a sequence:

- Seek within in all possible depths of inner experience.
- Let the research and soul exploration give rise to new experiences.
- These experiences become the ground of authenticity.
- When we are authentic in relation to others and the world, we will re-discover the "world" on a new basis.

So this little verse actually contains all of anthroposophy! We have the meditative path, self-knowledge, etc., as well as all the initiatives, schools, farms, etc., that have grown out of authentic deeds of sacrifice. And if there is need of any final proof, one has only to talk with a long-time biodynamic farmer, a seasoned Camphill co-worker, a veteran Waldorf teacher, or learned anthroposophical doctor. Nowhere could one find such depth, insight, and wisdom as one does from these people. They know the world not only from having worked in the world, but by virtue of having worked on themselves. And their inner work has led to new achievements in their respective fields and professional life.

In my travels I have had the honor of meeting many such people who have spent a lifetime working out of anthroposophy in this way. There is in reality no better evidence of the fruitfulness of anthroposophy than to experience such remarkable people. They are successful in an outer sense, but one finds after only a few minutes that at the same time they are also remarkable human beings. And their humanity and work success seem to go hand in hand. Finally, one footnote: the inscription on the card ends with the two words "am Goetheanum"—at the Goetheanum. These words should not be overlooked. It is not just about Rudolf Steiner the historical person, but also about the Goetheanum impulse that continues to work around the world in so many ways. We need to be willing, as he was, to identify ourselves and our work as coming out of this impulse. Our future success will depend on the authenticity of the inner work and the integrity that arises from compassionate engagement with the world. We do not reject, we embrace. We do not criticize, we suggest.

We are here not to judge but to help, servants of all that is good, kind and just.

Our Anthroposophical Society is dedicated to these goals. May we find the strength and the friends to help us realize our aims.

| **Torin Finser**,
General Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society in America

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"The I knows itself"

Theme for the Year: "The I Knows Itself" – in the Light of Michaelic World Affirmation

The arc from Society to individual is continued with the theme for the year: "The I Knows Itself" – in the Light of Michaelic World Affirmation. Like the Society, the individual confronts the same challenges as other contemporaries and must also find a connection to the world—as a basis for self-knowledge.

From the question of the Anthroposophical Society's identity to the foundation stone laying for the first Goetheanum, an event focused on the I in its development—this describes the path we have tried to follow over the past two years. In our time each aspect is affected by two perspectives that represent important questions and context for the Anthroposophical Society.

Between Abyss and Renewal

One is the question about the I in contention with the world as it stands amid the events of our time: the peril for the I, the challenge of life in changing, complex times—fateful for many—and a growing opportunity to understand humanity in a new way and make it real. That we are contemporaries is more than just something we all share; it is the point where mighty abysses and immense possibilities for renewal begin.

On the other hand, for the Anthroposophical Society these themes exist in the context of 100th anniversaries—in a historical as well as a contemplative light from which fresh and renewing impulses for the great questions and challenges of our time can arise.

Both perspectives raise questions for us as contemporaries. Where does a self-knowledge connected with world events begin? The motto: "The I knows itself" is a lens of knowledge for the consciousness soul, the start of a turn toward the spirit in the human being and the world born out of the human being's deep entanglement in matter and out of a thinking that has united itself with the conditions of material phenomena in the world while also creating them.

Understanding for Life

We are still at the beginning of the Michael age that dawned at the end of the 19th century. The path to spirit knowledge and a cosmopolitan existence in the world is being traveled under conditions that are often oppressive, conditions into which we have placed ourselves as humanity and in which new capacities can nonetheless be found. Many people are taken hold of by a deep concern: we know and feel that we increasingly share a deeprooted bond.

The human being possesses capacities for a knowledge that serves life and must do justice to it. Concepts and ideas cited as natural scientific law prove inadequate for understanding the element of life. This understanding arises in an active turn toward the other person. It is no longer a picture of the world, but a compassionate existence in the world, a thinking that brings us into relationship, into connection and an experience of interrelationship. The quality of interrelationship is the human quality. Rudolf Steiner indicates that we belong to the earth only when our relationship to other people is felt, that our connection with the earth is contingent on our connection with the human being.¹ The humanity of the human being—so often doubted today!—arises in his connection with the world: "Man grows ever more Man, as he grows to be an expression of the World. He finds himself, not by seeking himself, but by uniting himself to the World with Will in Love."² This sensitivity makes great possibilities apparent, but great thresholds also appear: The will to make a decision, to act, often becomes a challenge. There is reluctance to make decisions and carry them out because we sense the unpredictable results of acting.

Hope and Expectation

"Uniting oneself to the World with Will in Love" requires affirmation of our world. This affirmation is not just needed; it is done in a knowledge that wills to include the fullness of reality—its spiritual dimension—as well. Rudolf Steiner contrasts the Michaelic mood of affirmation to Ahriman's mood of world negation condensed entirely into Ahriman's own being: "One of the Imaginations of Michael is as follows:—He reigns through the course of Time, bearing the light of the Cosmos as living being of his being, fashioning the warmth of the Cosmos as revelation of his own being. He wends as one Being like a World—affirming himself inasmuch only as he affirms the World—as though from all stations of the universe guiding forces to the earth below."³ Of course, we can experience world affirmation in different ways. The human quality of birth, the fact the human being decides to be born, the fact the will to live on the earth is so powerful that the human being unites with the physical and creates a body—that is perhaps our greatest expression of affirmation. In his address to youth in Breslau 90 years ago, Rudolf Steiner spoke of a Michael festival—the future rings forth from a shared experience of hope and expectation: "We really need to reach the point where the sprouting life of the future we can feel in its embryonic form finds expression in festivals of hope, in festivals of expectation....There should not merely be a vague exaltation through the Michael idea; there should be the consciousness that a new world of soul must be founded among human beings. The Michael principle is actually what leads us. A shared experience is part of working toward a Michael festival in which the spirit of hope, the spirit of expectation, can live."⁴

Affirmation Based on Spirit Knowledge

Hope and expectation as an expression of world affirmation—we would like to place the theme for the year into this context: The I that unites with the world in knowledge, an esoteric life that can serve the human being and world affirmation. Spirit knowledge as the basis for affirmation of a world that has forgotten the spirit but wills to be known in its spiritual element—we wish you a good year of working with this theme!

| Constanza Kaliks, *Goetheanum Leadership*

Notes

1.

"Christ descended for all human beings and only through our feeling related to everyone else do we belong to the earth. The deeper understanding of the Christ derives from our effort to attain a full and complete connection with them." (Rudolf Steiner, *The Karma of Vocation* [GA 172], lecture, November 27, 1916, Spring Valley,, 1984, pp. 201–202).

2.


Rudolf Steiner: *The Michael Mystery*, "World-Thoughts in Michael, and World-Thoughts in Ahriman", November 16, 1924, London, 1956, p. 56

3.

Ibid. p. 55. The continuation reads: "And, in contrast, an Imagination of Ahriman: Ahriman, in his course, from Time would wring Space. Around him is darkness, into which he projects the rays of his own light. The more he achieves his ends, the keener grows the frost around him. He moves like a world contracted into one single being—his own; affirming himself only by negating the world; he moves as though he brought with him uncanny forces from the dark caverns of the earth."

4.

Rudolf Steiner, lecture, June 9, 1924, in *Die Erkenntnis-Aufgabe der Jugend* (GA 217a)



Theme for the Year 2013-2014:

"The I knows itself"

"The I knows itself"

Theme for the Year: "The I knows itself" Dimensions of the Foundation Stone Laying

Following on the question of "The Identity of the Anthroposophical Society" (the theme for 2012), we turn to the development of the human I in 2013. The individual I is both the eye of the needle and the focal point that serves to form our community and society--indeed, all of the circumstances around us.

In the age of the consciousness soul human beings are at work on developing their I, and doing so under special conditions. Until now they seem to have lacked the capacity to penetrate to the true nature of their I.¹ But a process of spiritual self-knowledge is needed if they are to become conscious of this process that must be created out of individual initiative. The age of the consciousness soul brings a new, unique, complete release from every constraint, from every divine or human authority and tradition. Increasingly reliant on themselves, human beings are in danger of "forgetting" the spiritual source of their being. The issue of the I presents itself at every level of human life. Are human beings merely the product of genetic makeup and their environment? Are they responsible for their own deeds and impulses of will, or are these caused by a brain beyond their control? Are human beings free to take charge of their own lives and deaths? Are they the lords of nature, and should nature be made to serve human needs alone? How do human relationships take shape, and should the other person be viewed as an object to serve one's own purposes? How do I find the bridge that leads to other people; can I really grasp some element of the I that lives in another person? How can a community be formed that provides space for the I to develop—how can the I acquire the capability of living in community? These are burning issues for today.

The I and the 1913 Foundation Stone

In the *Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer*, the foundation stone verse for the First Goetheanum, Rudolf Steiner presents an impressive description of the danger that human beings will forget their spiritual source.

He calls this *Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer* "an exceedingly significant formula for meditation"² in which "the secret of human evolution and of embodiment in earthly incarnations"³ is revealed for the first time. Thus we might say that the foundation stone for the First Goetheanum reveals the central riddle of our age: the riddle of the human being's I. During 1913 the motif of the I appears at various levels throughout Rudolf Steiner's depictions. Recalling this period a century later does not simply mean a retrospect on history. At its heart it represents a trust that this temporal rhythm can help us imagine the motif in the sense of a will-driven continuation of what was introduced in an archetypal way in 1913.

"Ich erkennt sich"—Laying of the Foundation Stone—The Fifth Gospel

These archetypal motifs of I-formation live in the laying of the foundation stone and at the heart of the themes developed during 1913, beginning in February with the motif of human self-knowledge in the Berlin lecture on the Being of Anthroposophy.⁴ In May, the London and Stuttgart lectures on the Michael impulse⁵ describe the formation of a new human identity through self-motivated participation in the spiritual world. Then—in August—the fourth Mystery Drama (*The Soul's Awakening*) bears a seal with the words "Ich erkennt sich" [The I knows itself] inscribed within the image of a serpent devouring itself. Here the recasting process in the formation of the I is represented in an artistic way. With their spirit knowledge developed to the point of envisioning, human beings can now recognize karmic tendencies so that individual steps light up, steps that might lead to effective work in the earthly realm. The central question of the fourth drama (how "knowledge of the spirit can be married to sensory deeds") is also the central Rosicrucian question. This question is directed at the content of the *Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer*, but from another standpoint. Depending on each soul's propensity, activity

in the world brings the human being into a dramatic confrontation with the work of Ahriman and Lucifer.

Then the lectures on the Fifth Gospel (October to December) place the *Macrocosmic Lord's Prayer* into the larger historical context of the Mysteries and their connection with the Christ Being. Here the twilight of the old Mysteries meets the dawn of the New Mysteries in the I.



Two Conferences and a Celebration

Two conferences organized by the Goetheanum Leadership connect with the theme for 2013/14. On July 22–28, 2013, all four Mystery Dramas will be performed during the “The Renewal of Rosicrucianism through the Spirit of Michael” conference. On September 20, the centenary of the foundation stone laying for the first Goetheanum will be marked at the Goetheanum with a celebration from 3:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. (organized by the Anthroposophical Society in Switzerland and the Executive Council). The international public Michaelmas conference (September 24–29, 2013) focuses on that centenary; its goal is to make the 1913 motifs current and fruitful for the Anthroposophical Society and the School now and in the future.

We look forward to working with you on these themes this year and we hope to see you at the Goetheanum. | *For the Goetheanum Leadership: Christiane Haid*

1. Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Occult Science* (GA 13), chapter on “The Essential Nature of Mankind,” (Spring Valley, 1972), p. 37.
2. Rudolf Steiner, *The Fifth Gospel* (CW 148), Lecture of December 17, 1913, (London, 1968), p. 124.
3. Ibid.
4. see Rudolf Steiner, “The Being of Anthroposophy,” Lecture of February 3, 1913 in *The Effects of Esoteric Development* (CW 145), (Great Barrington, 2007), pp. 1 –18.
5. Rudolf Steiner, *Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha* (CW 152), (Great Barrington, 2006).

Literature:

Rudolf Steiner’s address for the foundation stone laying at the First Goetheanum

in Rudolf Grosse, *The Christmas Foundation, Beginning of a New Cosmic Age* (London, 1984), Chapter on “Laying the Foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum.”

The Michael Impulse

Rudolf Steiner, *Approaching the Mystery of Golgotha* (CW 152), Lectures of May 18 and May 20, 1913 in Stuttgart.

The age of the consciousness soul, its challenges and perils

Rudolf Steiner, *From Symptom to Reality in Modern History* (CW 185), Lectures of October 20, October 25, and October 26, 1918 in Dornach.

The Fifth Gospel

Rudolf Steiner, *The Fifth Gospel* (CW 148), Lectures of December 17 and December 18, 1913 in Cologne. (Other lectures in this cycle may be helpful, as well.)

Further reading:

Sergei Prokofieff, *Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries*, 2nd ed., Forest Row, 1994.

Sergei Prokofieff, *Das Rätsel des menschlichen Ich* [The riddle of the human I], 2nd ed., Dornach 2013.

Peter Selg, *Rudolf Steiner and the Fifth Gospel*, Great Barrington, 2010.

Wolf Ulrich Klünker, *Anthroposophie als Ich-Berührung* [Anthroposophy as contact with the I], 2nd ed., Dornach, 2013.



The Identity of the Anthroposophical Society

In September 1924, a few months after founding the Anthroposophical Society, Rudolf Steiner spoke about the Society's identity in a remarkably modest and profound way.[1] He described how the spiritual archetype of the anthroposophical movement weaves behind the Anthroposophical Society. The Anthroposophical Society, he said, should be an institution imbued with the esoteric life of a spiritual movement. It should work esoterically and become aware of its esoteric dimension. According to Rudolf Steiner anthroposophy is not just there to be absorbed as anthroposophical substance; it needs to be implemented in practice in all areas of life. Rudolf Steiner described how, esoterically, the anthroposophical society could only be founded and maintained on the basis of living human relationships. Everything should rest on real human relationships in the widest sense: on the actual – not abstract – spiritual life.

Human relationships

There are various aspects to the identity of the anthroposophical society. Its members come together and associate in recognition of the spiritual world as a fundamental reality. Rudolf Steiner indicated in 1923 that anthroposophy was not merely a doctrine but a spiritual being; a being that was most profoundly connected with us as human beings and our relationship with one another. This spiritual being seeks to find a home in the Anthroposophical Society. The aspect of the Society's identity that relates to the being of anthroposophy concerns the potential for development and growth that lives in us and in the relationships we have with each other: an enormous potential that is being explored and experienced.

This leads us to the aspect of karma in the Anthroposophical Society. Karmic processes within the Society have a deeper dimension – the dimension of initiative. We do not accept karma as we find it; we can add new impulses to it as individuals, through our actions and behaviour. This has been possible and necessary ever since the Christ being became master of karma in the twentieth century. We are each of us called upon to consider our own contribution to the destiny of humanity.

It is this Christ impulse that gives the Anthroposophical Society, as a third aspect of its identity, the task to combine the greatest conceivable exotericism with true, genuine esotericism. When Rudolf Steiner founded the Society at the Christmas Conference of 1923/24 he said that we can solve this 'fundamental problem' only in our hearts. Later he added that a truly esoteric approach consisted in the most energetic involvement in life and all its depths.

Spiritual Research

The fourth aspect of the identity of the Anthroposophical Society lies in the fact that it sees the School of Spiritual Science as the centre of its activity. The School of Spiritual Science has the task of cultivating anthroposophy as a spiritual science given by Rudolf Steiner, of developing it further and implementing it fruitfully in the different areas of life. The Anthroposophical Society aims to support this spiritual development or research. From the beginning, the Society took on this task, trying to do it justice. The task involves the creation of an atmosphere that allows people to connect and identify with anthroposophy. Out of this identification grows an inner need to represent anthroposophy. The will to represent anthroposophy to and in the world is a basic condition for membership in the School of Spiritual Science. The various fields of applied anthroposophy, which have emerged as a result of this will, strive to give answers to fundamental questions of our time. To support these fields is the fourth aspect of the identity of the Anthroposophical Society.

This year's Annual Conference will be dedicated to the identity of the Anthroposophical Society. Margrethe Solstad, Ueli Hurter, Sue Simpson and Peter Selg will open the conference with contributions to the theme and the members of the Executive Council will address the theme at the Annual General Meeting. There are further aspects to the identity of the Anthroposophical Society apart from the ones I

mentioned. All these aspects can be deepened in the work groups. How can the being of anthroposophy live more strongly in the Society? What ways of working would enhance its presence? The karmic aspect of the Society implies many questions, too. What did Rudolf Steiner have in mind when he spoke of the important role played by initiative in this context, if we consider that the Christ being can be found in the karma? Views on the relationship between exoteric and esoteric life also differ. Will we succeed in finding common ground without having to exclude either the public or the esoteric life? Rudolf Steiner said that the School of Spiritual Science can be seen as the soul of the Society. How can this become living reality? Is it possible to see the School of Spiritual Science not only as an institution but as an attitude of soul and spirit? The relationship to the various fields of life also needs working on. What kinds of relationship are conceivable?

By deepening these and other questions in the work groups we might come to recognize and experience the identity of the Anthroposophical Society.

Paul Mackay

[1] *Rudolf Steiner: The Foundation Stone/ The Life, Nature and Cultivation of Anthroposophy. GA 260a, Lecture of 5 September 1924.*

Recommended further reading on the theme of 'The Identity of the Anthroposophical Society':

By Rudolf Steiner:

Karmic Relationships III, GA 237, lectures of 1, 3, 4 and 8 August 1924.

Karmic Relationships IV, GA 238, lecture of 5 September 1924.

Karmic Relationships VI, GA 240, lectures of 18, 19 and 20 July 1924.

The Christmas Conference for the Foundation of the General Anthroposophical Society 1923/1924, GA 260

By other authors:

Sergei Prokofieff: Warum wird man Mitglied der Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft? Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 2011.

Heinz Zimmermann: Die Lebensbedingungen der Anthroposophie heute. Ziele und Aufgaben der Anthroposophischen Gesellschaft und der Freien Hochschule für Geisteswissenschaft, Verlag am Goetheanum, Dornach 2007.



Theme of the Year 2011-2012

The General Anthroposophical Society's annual theme 2011/12 explores Christian Rosenkreutz, one of the greatest esoteric teachers of the Occident. Sergei Prokofieff looks at the importance of Christian Rosenkreutz for the potential appearance of the etheric Christ and at his relationship to Rudolf Steiner.

Anthroposophy – Rosicrucianism in Our Time

Following Rudolf Steiner's first proclamation in 1910 of the reappearance of the Christ in the etheric and the artistic production of his first Mystery Drama *The Portal of Initiation* (GA 14) which was subtitled "A Rosicrucian Mystery," he continued this theme in the following years with the disclosure of the secret of Christian Rosenkreutz, the founder of Rosicrucianism and the great servant of the etheric Christ.

Christian Rosenkreutz and the Reappearance in the Etheric

In the two lectures held by Rudolf Steiner at Michaelmas 1911, on the occasion of the festive opening of the Christian-Rosenkreutz branch in Neuchâtel, he presented for the first time the esoteric roots of this mystical stream which are to be found in the unique initiation of its founder in the year 1250. To this day this illustration is of utmost importance for everyone who is looking for a closer relationship to Christian Rosenkreutz. In the same lectures Rudolf Steiner speaks of how Christian Rosenkreutz' mighty etheric body, created through this initiation, continued to be strengthened through the inner work of all true Rosicrucians over the centuries. He describes how, in our time, it plays a decisive role in the increasing ability of man to become aware of the etheric Christ. Those human beings, who are imbued by this etheric body, can achieve this higher spiritual awareness. "It is the work of the Rosicrucians that makes possible the etheric vision of Christ".¹

Rudolf Steiner verified one of the most important research results by modern Rosicrucians, who continue to co-operate with Christian Rosenkreutz, as the discovery of the flow of the etheric blood of Christ which, since the Mystery of Golgotha, flows in every human being from his heart to his head and forms the basis for the perception of the etheric Christ today. This fact shows the current emphasis of true Rosicrucianism on the re-appearance in the etheric as the central spiritual event of our time.²

The Rosicrucian Endowment

Rudolf Steiner also speaks of Christian Rosenkreutz' worldwide esoteric call which re-awakens his pupils at a moment of great biographical crisis to a new life and thus puts a seal on the relationship with him. This is the basis for becoming a direct, inner pupil of Christian Rosenkreutz. "This is how he chooses his community," says Rudolf Steiner. In conjunction with this stood the attempt in 1911 to form an esoteric group with the provisory name "Society for Theosophical Art and Way of Life." If the establishment of this had been successful, the group, in its later development, would have been under the direct esoteric leadership of Christian Rosenkreutz himself.³ It was intended to reflect the esoteric principle of "Interpretation" as something essentially new. This allows complete human freedom and the development of the purest forces of altruism which within true esotericism rest upon a "complete elimination of all that is personal." ?For herein lies the prerequisite for a spiritual cooperation with Christian Rosenkreutz. Rudolf Steiner comments on this at the end of the first Neuchâtel lecture: "If you can become an instrument of Christian Rosenkreutz, then you can be assured that the smallest detail of your soul activity will be there for eternity."

The Link between the Spirit and Practical Deeds

In the same year Rudolf Steiner also carried his message about the etheric Christ to the public in his book *The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind*. Thus he links this event with the current task of a "new esotericism" which has its roots in the initiation of Christian Rosenkruz and which today has the power to receive "new inspirations" from the spiritual world in the form of anthroposophy or Spiritual Science.⁶ These can not only penetrate and spiritualise man's forces of perception but also affect and transform the spheres of practical life. Rudolf Steiner states: "Rosicrucian wisdom must not stream only into the head, nor only into the heart, but also into the hand, into our manual capacities, into our daily actions."⁷ This is how the many fields of activity have arisen out of anthroposophy, where all areas of practical life are to be nourished by the spirit.

This makes anthroposophy into a modern representative of true Rosicrucianism which not only has a historical link but which also maintains and builds on the new spiritual sources from the spiritual world that only today have become available to mankind and which flow out of the sphere of our present time spirit, Michael, into humanity. "Rosicrucianism does not mean carrying forth certain truths throughout all centuries but it means developing a sense for that which each specific era can bring to mankind out of the spiritual world."⁸

A New Relationship to the Spiritual Teacher

We can describe anthroposophy as a modern, Michaelic form of Rosicrucianism which today opens up a new future perspective of this occult stream beyond old traditions. Therefore Rudolf Steiner was able to correctly state in his lecture "What makes us Theosophists and what makes us Rosicrucians?": "We are the Rosicrucians of the 20th century!"⁹

The meaning of this word today can be seen, for example, in the completely new relationship between the spiritual teacher and his pupil, who now becomes a friend and guide to the developing human being. This also applies to our relationship to Christian Rosenkruz. "The less you take on authority, the more understanding you will have for Christian Rosenkruz."¹⁰

Through anthroposophy true Rosicrucianism gains a new force and creative potential which allow it to be effective and fruitful far beyond the 20th century.

Christian Rosenkruz and Rudolf Steiner

Finally, and on the occasion of Rudolf Steiner's 150th anniversary this year, his close spiritual cooperation with the great esoteric teacher of the occult has to be mentioned because it forms a significant part of Rudolf Steiner's spiritual biography. This can not only be seen in the direct messages from Christian Rosenkruz which Rudolf Steiner incorporated in his esoteric lessons,¹¹ but predominantly in the founding of the Society for Theosophical Art and Way of Life which, as already mentioned, was to be under the direct leadership of Christian Rosenkruz. Also the fact that he noted the first and second Mystery Dramas as written "through Rudolf Steiner" speaks of the direct cooperation between these two individualities. One year after the ground-breaking lectures in Neuchâtel, Rudolf Steiner speaks in the same branch about this great Master and his own relationship to him: "And he who is permitted to be close to Christian Rosenkruz looks with admiration and reverence on how accurately Christian Rosenkruz himself has fulfilled the huge Rosicrucian-Christian mission bestowed on him for our time."¹² And to fulfil this important mission in the 20th century, Christian Rosenkruz had his spiritual brother and combatant – Rudolf Steiner – by his side. | *Sergei O. Prokofieff, Goetheanum*

Notes:

1. Rudolf Steiner: *Esoteric Christianity* (GA130), Lecture of 27 September 1911.
2. Ibid. Lecture 1 October 1911.
3. Rudolf Steiner: *Esoteric Lessons 1904 to 1914* (GA 264), 15 December 1911.
4. ibid
5. ibid
6. Rudolf Steiner: *The Spiritual Guidance of Mankind* (GA 15), Chapter III.
7. Rudolf Steiner: *Theosophy of the Rosicrucians* (GA 99), Lecture of 22 May 1907.
8. Rudolf Steiner: *Bilder okkultur Siegel und Säulen* (GA 284), Lecture of 16 October 1911.
9. ibid
10. Rudolf Steiner: *Esoteric Christianity* (GA130),

Recommended Literature:

(adapted to reflect available US and English-language editions)

Rudolf Steiner:

1. *Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkruz*: Twenty-three Lectures (GA 130). Lectures of 28 September & 1 October 1911. Rudolf Steiner Press, 2000. [An earlier edition, *Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkruz*, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1984, does not contain the lecture of 1 October 1911, "The Etherization of the Blood," which is otherwise available in the collection titled *The Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric* (lecture 9), SteinerBooks, 2003.

Lecture of 28 September 1911.

11. See Rudolf Steiner: *Esoteric Lectures* (GA266/1), Lesson of 1 June 1907, Part A.

12. Rudolf Steiner: *Esoteric Christianity* (GA130), Lecture of 18 December 1912.

Conferences at the Goetheanum

The Rosicrucian Mysteries at the Goetheanum:

– Rudolf Steiner's 150th Anniversary:

«Rudolf Steiner in the spiritual history of humanity», 25 to 27 February.

– Easter Conference «Gehoben ist der Stein...», 21 to 24 April

– Christmas Conference 2011.

Previous "Themes of the Year":

2010-2011:

"The Destiny of the I in the Age of the Etheric Christ"

2009-2010:

"Thinking of the Heart as an Organ for Perception of Development and Metamorphosis"

The image at the top of this page is a detail from "The Polish Rider" by Rembrandt.

2. *The Spiritual Guidance of the Individual and Humanity* (GA 15). Anthroposophic Press, 1992 [also earlier as *The Spiritual Guidance of Man*].

3. *From the History and Contents of the First Section of the Esoteric School, 1904-1914* (GA/CW 264). Lecture of 15 December 1911. SteinerBooks, 2010. (Earlier edition 1998).

4. *Rosicrucianism Renewed: The Unity of Art, Science, and Religion* (GA/CW 284). Lecture of 16 October 1911. SteinerBooks, 2007. Also available in a 1920 typescript translation.

By Other Authors:

1. Hella Krause-Zimmer: *Christian Rosenkreutz. Sich kreuzende Lebenswege*, Dornach 2009. Available only in German.

2. Sergei O. Prokofieff: *The Foundation Stone Meditation*, London, 2006, chapters 6 and 11.

3. Virginia Sease: "Das esoterische Rosenkreuzertum als kulturbildende Kraft" in: *Anthroposophie und Kunst: Der Münchener Kongress 1907 und die Gegenwart*, Munich, 2008. Available only in German.

4. Virginia Sease: "Karmische Biografie Christian Rosenkreutz: Durchchristung des Menschen," in: *Das Goetheanum* No. 46/2007, Dornach. Available only in German.

5. Peter Selg: *Rudolf Steiner und Christian Rosenkreutz*, Arlesheim 2010. Available only in German.

Note:

All the above titles, both by Rudolf Steiner and by other authors, including those in German, are available from:

The Rudolf Steiner Library

65 Fern Hill Road

Ghent, NY 12075

Phone: [\(518\) 672-7690](tel:(518)672-7690)

Fax: [\(518\) 672-5827](tel:(518)672-5827)

Email: [rsteinerlibrary \(at\) taconic.net](mailto:rsteinerlibrary@taconic.net)



Theme of the Year 2010-2011

Each year the executive council of the General Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum provides a theme for study in the year beginning at Easter tide. The following is a translation from the German of this year's article by Sergei O. Prokofieff.

The destiny of the I in the age of the etheric Christ

Every person who begins the study of anthroposophy soon notices that at its heart stands the Mystery of the Human I. This central question of anthroposophical Christology is likewise among the most important questions of all anthroposophy.

I Organization

In his book *The Threshold of the Spiritual World* Rudolf Steiner gives a most concise yet strikingly differentiated description of what in later lectures he calls the "I Organisation" of the human being. The book's chapters are divided into three parts, each followed by a "summary of the preceding." Thus a clear three-stage structure is presented and at each stage one aspect of the human I organization is mentioned:

"the human being as independent entity (I)";

"the human being's 'other self' which is brought to expression through repeated lives on earth"—which according to this definition corresponds to the higher I;¹

and "the 'true I,'" which forms the real core of the human spirit.

The present time is distinguished spiritually by the great event of the appearance of the Christ in etheric form on the astral plane. From this, and from the existential relationship of the Christ to the human I, there arises the question of His relationship with the three-part I organization of the human being. Through the Mystery of Golgotha a crucial alteration is accomplished for the earthly I. Since that event, human beings have had the ability to bring I consciousness with them into the spiritual world, and so to engage this spiritual world in full awareness.² But to be able to accomplish this, humanity had to await the full development of the consciousness soul and the elaboration and justification of the science of mind-and-spirit* which addresses the earthly I. In this earthly I, human intellectuality also takes root. Today, following the modern path of development, this intellectuality, in the form of pure thought, can be raised up together with the I consciousness into the spiritual world, where the meeting takes place with the etheric Christ.

This process goes hand in hand with the spiritualization of the earthly I. Rudolf Steiner describes it this way: "Progress is accomplished only when the human being develops heightened intellectuality not just for its own sake, but also bears it up into the astral world. The etherically visible Christ can and will come to meet human beings who have advanced in this sense, through just such an intellectual clairvoyance. He will do so more often and more distinctly in the course of the next three thousand years."³ The raising-up of the spiritualized intellect into the astral world, in order there to meet the etheric Christ wakefully, by means of the clairvoyance in thought—this is the most important deed which the earthly I can accomplish in our time.

Two currents of ether

Rudolf Steiner described an important aspect of this process in his lecture on the etherization of the blood. There he speaks of two etheric streams that rise from the heart to the head, in order to connect the human being with the surrounding spiritual world.

The first stream consists of etherized human blood. In it the "intellectual element" rises from below upwards.

The second stream consists of the etherized blood of the Christ that flows, since the Mystery of Golgotha, in every human heart.

At first these two streams flow parallel to each other. But their coming together is the crucial precondition for beholding the etheric Christ. And how do they come together? Rudolf Steiner gives a surprising answer: the coming together happens when human beings are willing to take the new understanding of Christ up into the soul, and to bring it to life in themselves. In other words, it takes place through the study of the science of the mind-and-spirit,* a study which activates not only the head, but above all the heart, as a new organ for attaining knowledge (see the [previous theme](#) of the year).

The future

The etheric revelation of the Christ will unfold over some three thousand years, starting from the 20th century. It is, however, part of a still greater context. This includes two future and still higher revelations of the Christ:

His appearance in the astral body in lower Devachan,
and still later a great revelation of His I being in the higher spiritual world.⁴

Consider that, according to the above-mentioned book, the environment of the "other self" (higher I) is the spiritual world, and the environment of the true I is the higher spiritual world; elsewhere Rudolf Steiner spoke of them as lower and higher Devachan.⁵ From this we can see a direct relationship between the two future revelations of the Christ and the higher I and true I of the human being, just as the Christ's present appearance is connected with the spiritualization of the earthly I.

From the foregoing it is clear how the evolution of the human I—as the purpose of the Earth—and the ever-higher revelations of the Christ are inextricably linked. To take this into our I consciousness and to further cultivate it in our soul—this is already the beginning of the path which can lead the human being of today to the Christ. | *Sergei O. Prokofiev*

Translation by John Beck.

* = Translator's note:

The word *Geisteswissenschaft* is usually translated "spiritual science" or "science of the spirit" in anthroposophy, or as "the humanities" in general usage. In this particular context where both intellectuality and spiritual being are in question, it seemed desirable to us the expanded phrase "science of the mind-and-spirit" in order to suggest its fuller significance in the German language.

Notes:

1. Rudolf Steiner spoke at length about the relationship of the earthly I to the higher I in his Bologna lecture (see recommended reading).
2. Rudolf Steiner: *The Gospel of Matthew* (GA 123), lecture of 9 September 1910.
3. Ibid.: *Esoteric Christianity and the Spiritual Guidance of Humanity* (GA 130), lecture of 18 November 1911.
4. Ibid.
5. See the final chapter in Rudolf Steiner: *The Threshold of the Spiritual World* (GA 17): "Remarks on the relationship of what is said in this document to the presentation in my *Theosophy and Occult Science*."

Links:

Recommended reading:

In English:

Rudolf Steiner, *The Threshold of the Spiritual World* (GA 17) in *A Way of Self-Knowledge and The Threshold of the Spiritual World*. Great Barrington: SteinerBooks, 2006.


Rudolf Steiner, *The Etherization of the Blood* (lecture of October 1, 1911) in *The Reappearance of the Christ in the Etheric*. Great Barrington: Anthroposophic Press, 1983.

In German:

Rudolf Steiner, *Das gespiegelte Ich. Der Bologna-Vortrag—Die philosophischen Grundlagen der Anthroposophie*. [The mirrored I. The Bologna lecture—The philosophical foundations of anthroposophy]. Dornach: Rudolf Steiner Verlag, 2007. Also in *Philosophie und Anthroposophie. Gesammelte Aufsätze 1904–1923* [Philosophy and anthroposophy. Collected essays 1904–1923] (GA 35).

Wolf-Ulrich Klünker, *Anthroposophie als Ich-Berührung* [Anthroposophy as contact with the I]. Dornach, 2010.

Sergei O. Prokofieff, *Das Rätsel des menschlichen Ich*. [The riddle of the human I]. Dornach, 2010.

 Original German text and English translation
by Anna Meuss.

With the theme for 2009-2010 we shared in *Evolving News for Members and Friends* a report from the North Carolina branch of insights that had arisen in their study and conversations. Groups, branches, and individuals who are working with this year's theme are invited to share suggestions on resources for further study as well as insights and experiences gained which you are willing to share. Please [✉](#) **email them** to the US society's editor, John Beck, or mail them to our office in Ann Arbor.



Charles Darwin, Rudolf Steiner, and a detail of the first Goetheanum building

General Anthroposophical Society

Theme of the Year 2009-2010

Thinking of the Heart as an Organ for Perception of Development and Metamorphosis

This year marks the 150th anniversary of the publication of Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* as well as the bicentennial of his birth. In recognition of Darwin's contributions, the theme of evolution is being discussed around the world. From an anthroposophical perspective, we may associate Darwinism with a brutal "struggle for existence" and a materialistic worldview. But insight into natural evolution was one of three elements Rudolf Steiner referred to as necessary for the emergence of a modern spiritual science (see notes made for Edouard Schuré, September 1907, in what is called the Barr Document [GA 262, *Rudolf Steiner and Marie Steiner-von Sivers: [Correspondence and Documents 1901-1925](#)*]).

During his lecture of October 1, 1913, Rudolf Steiner speaks of "a deeper understanding of Christianity that can actually be found in Darwinism," saying that "right into our own time, Darwinist impulses have been born out of the Christ impulse." (GA 148, [From the Akashic Research: The Fifth Gospel](#)) Thus we would like to take this anniversary as an occasion for a deepened engagement with the theme of evolutionary development so that the different—often-controversial—thoughts on this subject living in our modern culture can be supplemented from an anthroposophical perspective.

There is probably no topic in anthroposophy that does not involve evolutionary development in one form or another—the development of the free human being; the mighty descriptions of the evolution of humanity and the earth; even Rudolf Steiner's last great work, the establishment of the School for Spiritual Science. Ultimately, it is always a matter of evolutionary development and self-development—one cannot be achieved without the other!

It is worth noting here that the modern idea of evolutionary development was first set forth in the late 18th century by [Johann Gottfried Herder](#) and [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe](#) among others. Earlier, the word "evolution" had always been understood in its original sense as the "unfolding" of something already present and predetermined. Its new meaning indicated a striving to change, to achieve something new, something not yet in existence. It is this revised concept of evolutionary development that Charles Darwin took up when he sought to understand the origin of new species in the course of the earth's history. Understood in this way, the idea of evolution is undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of the Christian era.

In recent years, our annual themes have been connected with the question of heart thinking. If we now turn our attention to the way we observe and think about evolution or metamorphosis, there is a discovery to be made. Rudolf Steiner's lecture of March 30, 1910 [GA 119, [Macrocosm and Microcosm](#)] provides a description of [heart thinking](#) that is relevant to this process: Thinking about evolution requires more than a merely logical "if-then" formula; it involves a creative, dimensional co-participation that leads to insight about context. This can easily be experienced by observing the sequence of a plant's leaves, for example. It is in this sense that we want to connect the theme for this year with the larger motif of our earlier work.

Two additional issues can be identified. Evolution, broadly considered, implies that everything is capable of change. We know that Rudolf Steiner even writes in regard to the evolution of spiritual beings: Nothing remains as it was! However, we can speak of the evolution of something only when an element of it remains constant, identical with itself. How else could what has been transformed be

recognized in its new evolutionary stage? For example, how could we speak about the seeds of humanity on Old Saturn? Rudolf Steiner addresses various aspects of the question in his lectures of June 17, 1909 [GA 107, *Spiritual-Scientific Knowledge of the Human Being*] and September 15, 1918 [GA 184, *The Polarity of Permanence and Development in Human Life*].

Another completely different aspect emerges if we ask where Darwin found his concept of the struggle for existence. Darwin himself reports how his thinking was prompted by the economist Thomas Robert Malthus who had sketched out something similar for the capitalist British industrial society of the early 19th century. Hence the idea of selection was not at all derived from nature but from societal and social circumstances, from human behavior! During the 20th century this was reversed and became the social Darwinism used to justify the worst sort of human crimes; it seemed only natural that what was stronger would prevail—indeed, that it inevitably had to prevail. We can also find a connection between social science and natural science in Rudolf Steiner’s work, but along a different route: The capacity for ideas learned and practiced in natural science can lead to fruitful ideas about social forms. This thought, for example, is a fundamental element of [🔗 *The Boundaries of Natural Science*](#), the inaugural lecture cycle held in the First Goetheanum (GA 322).

Thus we are explicitly highlighting a motif connected to the idea of evolution found throughout all of anthroposophy. The future of evolution depends on how human beings shape it in freedom! This is a thought worthy of finding its way into the culture of the present time.

Translated by Marguerite and Douglas Miller

Recommended reading in addition to the lectures cited:

Rudolf Steiner: [🔗 *An Outline of Esoteric Science*](#) [GA 13], especially chapters 4 and 5. {[🔗 Study Companion](#)} {PDF available in the [🔗 SteinerBooks Research Archive](#)}

Rudolf Steiner: [🔗 *Inner Experiences of Evolution*](#) [GA132]

Another possibility is to consider the characters in Rudolf Steiner’s Mystery Dramas from the standpoint of evolution.

Last but not least, the extensive body of Goethean scientific literature on this theme is recommended.