

Group Moral Artistry

I

Reflections on Community Building

by

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Almost from the start, the earth has been a heart-sore, guilt-ridden, blood-stained planet. And though time and evolution have wrought great changes for the better in most aspects of man's living on the earth, his inhumanity to man has not abated, but continues on, adding ever new forms of suffering to the old. The human ingenuity that places space-ships on the moon and makes it possible to sail for weeks beneath the ice of polar oceans appears unequal to the feat of getting inside our fellows' feelings sufficiently to learn how to do by others as we would be done by.

The forms our inhumanity has taken have been myriad: brothers lifting savage hands against their brothers, child against father, neighbor against neighbor, rulers against their hapless subjects. Regions warring against adjacent regions; religions persecuting religionists of other stripes; ideology battling ideology. All over the globe the values most precious to individual life and communal striving have ever and again been subjected to destruction by those who had another set of values. Even those who banded together to advance a common cause have, in almost every instance, found themselves riven by differences of approach, so that instead of cooperating they have all too often blocked the efforts of their fellows. Nor does there seem to be any prospect of an end to these Sunderings which keep on tearing down what men so laboriously build up and render life on earth so much more pitiful and futile than it need be.

Men of heart who have come to the point where they could no longer bear the carnage in which hope was wasted and lofty striving poured out on the sand have again and again tried to change the trend by conceiving and in some cases setting up utopias. These were invariably based on reason and took their appeal to reasonableness in others' minds. Nevertheless, not a single one of them has worked, or ever could work. For the light of mere reason cannot penetrate to the deeply buried root of the social problem.

There is only one sure hope, and it has not been tried: to base

both our understanding and our practice on esoterics. For esoterics alone makes it possible to see man whole, to discover him in his heavenly as well as in his earthly aspect, and, in the light of that total picture, to recognize what makes him worthy of esteem and love.

Anthroposophy provides that esoteric light. But if it is to be made truly fruitful for the earth, those who receive its beneficence will need to address themselves to the fundamental task of discerning and honoring and helping to bring forth the fruits of the eternal spirits of their fellowmen.



If the human race had never left the spiritual world to take up its evolution in the realm of matter, there could have been no such thing as a social problem. Human souls would have remained light-beings in a world of light where each would have been seen and known and loved for its shining qualities.

But in order that sight and knowledge and love be developed in freedom, men had to be separated from the light-world of their origin and plunged into the darkness of the earth. As a result of that separation, the light within them was "hidden under the bushel" of their bodies. Thus, from the time of man's fabled Fall, walls of matter have shut him away from the gods and from his fellow human beings, cast their shadows deep into his soul, and divided him from his own spirit. The words of the reversed, macrocosmic Lord's Prayer† describe the dilemma searingly:

"Amen!
Evil holds sway,
Attendant on the ego's sundering,
The guilt of selfhood not self-incurred,
Tasted in the eating of our daily bread
In that heaven's will no longer prevaieth,
In that man departed from your kingdom
And your names has forgotten,
Ye Fathers in heaven."

†Rudolf Steiner, *The Mystery of Golgotha*, Cologne, Dec.17-18,1913.

At first, the earth seemed alien to these outcasts, their flesh a prison-house they longed to flee. But with time they began to take the earth and fleshly bodies quite for granted. They forgot where they came from and that they had been exiled from the light in order that they re-discover it of their own seeking. More and more they accepted darkness as the normal state. And in their darkened soul-condition it became possible to dislike — yes, even to hate and despise and to try to destroy — their fellowmen because of their dark, body-begotten limitations.

Herein lies the true root of the social problem. Man sundered from God is by the same token also sundered from his fellow human being's spirits.



If, in our conceiving and our seeing, we could discern the light-man through the man of darkness, we would overcome that problem. Most of us are simply not aware that it is the body and the body-shadowed soul rather than the spirit that so irritate us as to prompt rejection and spur us to destroy a fellow being. Therefore, the first task of enlightened social effort must be to recognize and learn to see through the obscurity created by the fact that we are all darkened prisoners of the flesh.

The following reflections may prove helpful in that effort.

When man was first subject to incarnation, his flesh was a new creation of the spirit. As such, it was not only far less dense than it is at present — soft and malleable and flowerlike — but in its light-responsiveness could mirror the soul's true, spiritual inwardness.

Time changed this for the worse in two respects. Matter grew dense in all four kingdoms; it became opaque and ever more resistant to the molding spirit. Then physical procreation introduced a further falsifying element: heredity. Bodies handed down were with each new generation increasingly burdened with the soul and physical attributes of a man's ancestors in addition to those of his own matter-shadowed being. These attributes played distortingly into the individual entelechy. In the light of Rudolf Steiner's indications as to what a heavy load they have become in their accumulation to the present, we can understand his saying

that nowadays even souls most fortunate in their inheritance can bring into incarnation at best only about one-seventh of what in them lies. Therefore, human souls of the present enter the spiritual world at death with most of their capacity unused. Only the more intensely do they long to find still-incarnated souls who will open themselves to their inspiration and serve as channels through which their un-lived-out creative intentions toward the earth may flow.

What a blessing it is to know such facts before we die, that we may cooperate the more consciously with the spiritual world and receive this heritage!

Insight that develops from Rudolf Steiner's comment on the stumbling blocks presented by the body can indeed move us to look compassionately on our fellow strivers, to seek to penetrate to what they are in spirit, to help rather than continue hindering their evolution. Even to know that we would love them if we saw them truly helps us to progress in the direction where we find them unobscured. Social attitudes then become not a vague dogoodism, a generalized Luciferic love of all mankind, but a willingness to work at the hard but rewarding task of seeing through the outer shell of seeming which surrounds those with whom our destiny unites us and to search out the eternal spirit hidden there.

What is the difference between the exoteric and the esoteric way through life if not that the latter awakens the capacity to look behind the veil of seeming with which the former rests content? — that esoterics everywhere seeks the spiritual reality behind the physical? As would-be esotericists we do our striving little honor if, in the face of the greatest challenge to it: man, we abandon our effort at understanding and fall back into the bad exoteric habit of taking the tenth hierarchy just as it appears on earth for real. Here if anywhere is Maya, asking to be penetrated. And the Anthroposophical Society can rise to the performance of its esoteric task and lead mankind to the New Jerusalem only if it attempts and succeeds in that penetration, thereby establishing a new order of insightful, cherishing relationships between human beings.



There is every indication in Rudolf Steiner's plays and lectures that he expected genuinely social attitudes to flower among the Anthroposophical membership as a result of esoteric striving. When one puzzles why this has not yet generally been the case, it becomes clear that though our minds may take in Anthroposophy as concept, earth-habitation is so deep-ingrained in all but our private meditative moments that we do not see esoterics as an all-permeating way of life, which, if pursued, radically changes social intercourse. Until that time, we remain even as Anthroposophists earth-corrupted natures, with the tendency to follow earth's darkened way in our human dealing.

An example of earth-habitation that stands in the way of esoteric practice is disregard of the fact that attendance at Anthroposophical gatherings is the modern form of attendance at the mysteries. Meetings should therefore be conceived as esoteric functions whose purpose it is to enable the participants to cross the threshold and have a common experience of the spiritual world.

To achieve this goal in the midst of earth-life is of course not easy. It requires a complete and deliberate about-face of the soul from attitudes such as obtain in exoteric living, a turning outside-in, a blotting out of mundane perceptions and concerns in order to ready the inner scene for purely inner soul activity.

Yet on the occasions of such meetings our centers ordinarily lack awareness of the threshold. Before the meeting begins they are indoor street-scenes. This was true even when Rudolf Steiner was the lecturer! People bustle about greeting one another, finding the location of their choice, chatting, catching up on news, seizing the opportunity to iron out some piece of business with members whom they happen to encounter. When the occasion's master of ceremonies mounts the podium, he often has a hard time getting attention to begin the meeting, so wholly has the outside world been carried in, so scattered is the mood. There then ensues a hurried shift of emphasis, so belated, so incomplete, that the first part of the occasion continues to feel the impact of only slowing subsiding waves of exoteric stir.

How different are these social scenes from those in which the meditating soul, alone with itself, worthily prepares to enter

spiritual realms! The contrast here is very striking. In his meditative periods, the striver is fully aware of the esoteric nature of his effort and determined to shape himself to its requirements. But in group meetings that understanding and determination are not usually there. Comparing the two, it becomes clear why — though individuals progress, deepen themselves, and make significant contributions to their time — the Society as a group fails to keep pace, remaining for the most part riddled with dissension, undifferentiated from more worldly types of groups, and far less fruitful than it might be. It has simply not developed the esoteric character conceived as its reason for existing, nor has it moved in the direction of becoming the model for a modern mystery school.

These facts may weigh more heavily than is generally realized. Though a truly esoteric society based on Anthroposophy could be expected to serve as a potent spiritualizing leaven in the affairs of the Twentieth Century, so long as its life fails to attain that elevation and assume that character, Anthroposophy cannot have due influence upon the time.

There are two exceptions to that failure from which we might learn much about the method of its remedying. Both are social occasions in the life of the Society: meetings of the First Class, and funerals. In both cases, all participants are aware that they confront the threshold, and take an esoteric tone and attitude for granted. The latter case is particularly instructive. For in the presence of the dead all criticism ceases. Those present seek — how belatedly! — to know the dead man as a spirit, to recognize his striving, and to help lift him into a full realization of his being.

If acquaintances who do this for him as a matter of course were to reflect how much more vital a service — to him and to the world — similar efforts would have been while he yet lived and sought to make his striving count on earth, a new era would be ushered in. The light of the Foundation Stone of the true esoteric society conceived by Rudolf Steiner would shine out from the warm hearts, the illumined heads of its membership for the amelioration of the human future on this planet.



Rudolf Steiner tells us that the mission of the earth is love.

Anthroposophy directly serves that goal. It does so not by commanding individuals who embrace it to change overnight from darkness-ridden, hating attitudes to love, but by the most painstaking search of reality whereby, little by little, reality's true aspect is uncovered. Anthroposophy's immeasurable contribution is that it shows reality in a light that reveals specifically how the spirit works. And to see it in that illumination is to love it.

Not only is this true in the lesser kingdoms when they are beheld with understanding. It obtains even in the case of the *fallen angels*, Lucifer and Ahriman, whom Rudolf Steiner has taught us to regard as benefactors richly meriting our gratitude for their sacrifice, dependent for redemption on our efforts. And if we make the light of understanding real, is there not every reason to expect that in its illumination we shall see our fellowmen bravely struggling up out of the darkness with which earth-evolution has obscured their spirits, — that we shall love their striving and their light-core, and want to support their courageous efforts?



The path of love on which men travel back to the spiritual world carries a twofold obligation with it: to pierce through the *bushel* to the light in others, and to manifest it in oneself. Christ expressed the latter, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works..." For one who pursues the path of light does deeds of light, illumining the way to it for all; he becomes a shining presence in men's midst, whom they love freely. And through the power of light thus strengthened in himself, he is able to perceive the light in others and to love them.

Two thousand years ago, Christ permeated the dark matter of the body with His spirit's light. Since then, Christ-illuminated souls may do the same, and in their efforts become benefactors of the human race. This is the task to which, in his Foundation Stone address, Rudolf Steiner called those who would embrace Anthroposophy in earnest.



Before one can love one's fellowmen in the sense described by Rudolf Steiner in his *Philosophy of Freedom* and in the Foundation Stone address, one must have developed some understanding of what freedom is.

Imprisonment in a body plays a vital role in that achievement. For it is paradoxical but true that to become free one must first become a prisoner. Such freedom as one enjoys before becoming aware of one's imprisonment is egoless, irresponsible: a child's freedom rather than an adult's. And while it remains a boundless shapeless feeling, it is not yet the work of art which the gods intend that man should make it. Freedom, to be the soul's creation, must issue shaped from a core of selfhood and re-issue from it in fresh metamorphosis at each new challenge to moral artistry.

The cause of freedom therefore requires men's enclosure in a bodily housing which sets souls apart from one another to develop an ego-sense in isolation.



When one is cut off from the world about, one exists at first in a vacuum, a painful emptiness that cries out to be filled. All the rich interest which environment held must be replaced with a new content. This can be drawn only from within. So the interior world becomes all-important.

Such has been the course of human evolution. Fellowship with the gods and with other men and nature waned in proportion to man's ever further immersion in dense matter, and as it did so, self-awareness strengthened and a new inner world of self-concern, of absorbed self-interest, sprang up within it.

We see this evolutionary process repeated with each newborn child. The baby, freshly emerging out of universal spirit into an individual, separate body, at once reflects self-interest in his bodily needs — though, for some time to come, his soul still overflows with the loving, giving abundance of its cosmic origin. This native generosity can at times so overmaster self-concern as to prompt him, for example, to take the very food from his mouth and present

it to others — though, he may also ask it back again. Gradually, however, self-interest hardens as the incarnating soul falls ever more strongly under the body's influence; the separate selfhood that is being realized through the body fosters egotism. Only after travelling the long road to maturity can the soul again give freely, this time out of the sense of abundance that comes of conscious union with the spirit.

That maturing may, however, take many incarnations. And until it is accomplished, man's life on earth suffers two major ill-effects of incarnation: First, a staggering proportion of every adult's time, thought, and effort is devoted to caring for the body's needs, as though that were the sole purpose of existence. Second, it lies in the nature of bodily egotism that selves maintain themselves in physical being in fierce competition with other selves who have also exchanged their child-awareness of abundance for an earth-conditioned sense of scarcity. Ego battles nakedly with ego to get and hold its own, which is always conceived materially (though when it comes to those spiritual possessions, thoughts, are not all men typically eager to share what they produce with others?).

Countering the conflict rampant on the earth, however, is another force: the social impulse.

We flatter ourselves that all such impulses are wholly generous. But the truth is that they too spring from the emptiness and selfishness of young egohood. In all but highly evolved Christ-like souls, the social impulse has its origin in the need to fill hollow spaces deep within us, to relieve the oppressive isolation of the self. The more empty and alone the soul feels, the more frantically it reaches out for fellowship in its search for completion from outside itself. Every ego has been in a position to observe this drive in itself and others. It is the victim of a basic hunger which impels it to "seek whom it may devour."

Unpleasant though it is to face these facts which waken us so rudely from the idealistic dream of ourselves which we fondly nurture, very little progress can be made toward the earth's goal: love and understanding — unless we see the stumbling blocks that strew our path and start to remove them. And from start to finish that effort is work of an esoteric nature.

An individual can perhaps test how far he has advanced along the path that changes him from a taker to a giver by feeling out how long he might conceivably remain content alone with his own thoughts and without material tasks to occupy and distract him. If he can commune with the spiritual world in thought, he is a man who knows how to provide himself with content through giving attention to what is beyond him and infinitely greater than himself. His thoughts are then a form of worship of the spirit.

Such a one proves himself a safe companion for his fellowmen. He is no longer an unwitting vampire preying upon others for soul sustenance.

Until that point is reached, however, social hunger can take many forms. All forms typically wear the guise of selfless love to hide the self-seeking motives underneath them. And superficial souls are completely taken in. As Christian Morgenstern put it:

"The lamb-vulture is a bird far-famed;
The vulture-lamb is here first named.
It doesn't say 'baa,' it doesn't say 'boo.'
It just gobbles you up while embracing you.
Then it turns pious eyes unto the Lord,
And is by all revered, adored."

The politician is the most obvious example of the vulture-lamb. But almost everybody sees through his protestations of sacrificial love to the self-seeking that possesses him. The self-seeking in his private life is, however, apt to go unrecognized, so accustomed are we to take the devotion of the parent, friend, lover or spouse, the professional man, the joiner, of fraternal groups, at his face value, — to think he loves and serves because he says he does, and assumes the posture. We should pay more attention to the phrase which besotted parents and the lover use: "You're so sweet I could simply eat you up!" — Psychologists would find few clients had this not actually happened in so many instances.

One might ask why the child or the *beloved* or other victims of devouring impulses submit to being swallowed up; why, indeed, they seem to like it and even to feel grateful. The answer can only be that they were lonely or felt the threat of impending loneliness,

as isolated egos do before maturing. Social hunger prompts them to welcome any kind of joining up with other mortals, whether it be as swallower or swallowed.

There is thus a tacit bargain, usually entered into all unconsciously, between partners in vulture-lamb relationships, and "I'll - scratch - your - back - where - it - needs - it - if - you - scratch - mine" agreement which, though it may never be mentioned, is nonetheless generally adhered to in practice. Many groups have this sort of understanding with their members. It is an agreement founded on the principle that makes tribal belonging and insurance companies work out so successfully: "Our social (or financial) protection for your loyalty (or premium)." Indeed, some churches even trade the protection of the fold and the promise of eternal bliss for the communicant's surrender of free conscience. They have, in short, swallowed him and he has found it expedient to consent.

Such bargains have a negative basis of relationship. This is clearly evidenced in their underlying "we two (or we ten, or we ten million) against the world" hostility of attitude, which causes them to cling together to compete with or resist or attack other groups. In all such, the spirit of separateness lives on; the separate units merely include more than one ego in each *body social*.



One of the most dismaying aspects of this separateness is that intelligence seems powerless to overcome it — for would it not have done so long ago if that were possible? Has it not been more than amply demonstrated that war, whether between nations or private personalities, never *pays off*? For both sides it is a losing proposition, unrelieved destruction with the combatants lucky to come out of it alive. And at war's end they face a future that will long be overshadowed by their losses.

Nor is this true only of warfare on the physical plane. Everyone who quarrels with another or thinks of him negatively sets in motion a widening spiral of destruction that affects the whole

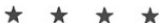
world, and himself with it. Those who observe themselves at such a moment can discern how their own stature shrinks in hostility, feel the shock waves of cold attitudes freezing the soul-ground where fruitful developments might otherwise be taking place, and sense what deprivation, what spiritual starvation, sets in when loving-kindness is withheld.

And this deplorable state of affairs, this incapacity to meet a basic daily challenge, seems to have to occur in the most vital area of human life! In the fields of mouse-trap making or mattress manufacture, such a situation would not long prevail. For those engaged in making articles of use such as mouse-traps and mattresses recognize the fact that they are in that field to *make the thing work*, and they go on studying to improve it until it reaches near perfection. But human beings are on earth (are they not?) for no other reason than to make love work. Why are we not more aware of this and studying our assignment day and night? Why do we go on putting almost everything else before our true business, to our own and the world's obvious detriment?

If it were as easy to see what is happening in the soul-world as it is to be clear on the working of a mouse-trap, we would surely make swift improvements in the social sphere. But without a trained moral eye we do not notice how another's being withers when subjected to the cold wind of our adverse attitudes. We are oblivious of soul-carnage. We do not see soul-starvation all around us. We fail to do with seed-potentialities on the soul-plane what every farmer and gardener does with physical seeds: look upon them as potential burgeoning, and plant and tend them.

Must we not say, then, that we are as blind materialists as other men? That the world of soul and spirit is for us as yet only theoretically primary reality? That we have still to conceive and adopt genuinely esoteric attitudes in the all important realm of social intercourse?

Though the physical world does indeed obscure man's reality as spirit, the vital fact about the human race remains that it is a hierarchy of the spiritual world. Man's and earth's salvation hangs on that fact being recognized and made the basis of our earth relationships.



Again and again Rudolf Steiner emphasizes how essential it is for the esoteric striver to overcome sympathy and antipathy. In fact, he makes their overcoming a foremost goal of esoteric effort.

Among the many reasons why he does so, one stands out particularly. It is that to get beyond sympathy and antipathy means achieving a profundity of inner quiet without which the spiritual word can neither be approached nor known.

Is this not the very same quiet that must be attained before meditation can fruitfully be engaged in and that was called above an indispensable prerequisite to esoteric meetings?

It must be obvious that any and all confrontation with the spiritual world requires complete inner quiet as the basis for perceiving what is being sought there. How, then, can one approach the spirit of a fellow man with the hope of finding his reality in any but the mood of quietness in which sympathy and antipathy are silenced? A state of soul so readied is a sentient mirror, its reflective power undisturbed by the agitation that possesses a self impelled toward another to satisfy its social hunger or withdrawing from it to avoid unwanted contact. Rather is the soul poised, emptied of self and of all self-seeking, conscious of the threshold, ready to experience what lies beyond it.

Only so prepared can one perceive the spirit of another man.



The benefits that would accrue to an esoteric movement from a really rigorous exclusion of sympathetic and antipathetic attitudes are beyond estimating. Two may be singled out below in illustration.

First, it would mean an advance from uncontrolled, unconscious and hence childish reactions to conscious, controlled, truly adult responses. Surely no other single change could be more promising for esoteric schooling?

Second, the harm done by lionizing, which is sympathy-gone-overboard, would be eliminated. And that would be a boon indeed

to all involved: to the lionized, the unlionized and the lionizers. For to lionize means to form a Luciferic clique around supposedly *special* personalities. This not only tends to cut off those so venerated from non-clique members, thus lessening their fruitfulness: it swells heads much better left life-sized while at the same time reducing the clique's members to non-entities. Furthermore, it works strongly counter to the greatly-needed insight that all human beings have unique personalities which deserve and require developing. To fail to develop them leads to waste more wanton than any human enterprise can allow itself and still entertain the hope of prospering. Lionizing is thus in all three aspects illness — illness moving toward a fatal outcome in that it gradually drains away the strength of the organism, while certain of its parts suffer from gigantism. Is this not cancer of the body social?



Esoterics could be said to be the practice of a more than usual degree of attentiveness that leads to more than usual awareness, — to *seeing the thing meant in the thing seen or hearing the thing meant in the thing heard*.

The ear comes more easily to such awareness than the eye does. For the eye is very much a surface organ, set closer to material reality and answering to the light that renders that reality visible, whereas the ear's placement makes for inwardness. It is not, like the eye, *up front* and curving positively out into the physical, but rather largely negative space, a system of hollows and tunnels penetrating deep into the head and set well back where physical form is less articulated. The ear seems to retreat from, rather than advance into externality, inviting impressions to *follow it indoors* into the soul realm. In a lecture given in Stuttgart on December 9, 1922, Rudolf Steiner spoke of the ear as a filter that separates physical sound from the sound's soul content. It is thus far readier for esoteric use than is the eye.

We have only to consider the eye's tendency to remain superficial to confirm this. Its perception of a human being is first

and foremost of that person's body; its attention is prone to become caught up in bodily externalities such as skin texture, or the way the hairline runs or an eyebrow curves, unless it is consciously held to conveying more soul-like aspects of the physiognomy it is studying, to attending to that nebulous thing called an *expression*. Whereas the ear is not so easily beguiled; it tends to go at once to the heart of a matter and has an immediate, whole impression of the inwardness that lives and moves behind an utterance.

The ear is thus the sense organ readiest for use in esoteric schooling. And where esoterics widens to include joint efforts of communities, the ear's cultivation as an esoteric tool becomes doubly vital in that it forms the basis for a new art of listening.

Pointing to eurythmy's social mission, Rudolf Steiner once commented that listening has become a lost art in the present. So isolated is the ego when incarnated that we are all as though spiritually deaf. Or, put perhaps more accurately, the ear no longer *invites impression to follow it indoors*; it lets them stay outside where they cannot be understood, while it turns all its real attention to the self. Nor is this true only when we listen to a voice abstractedly. How often do we not fail to *hear* a thought in reading and have to read it over and over again to *get* it! We were simply not listening. And if one asks why, self-observation makes it obvious that we were attending exclusively to our own thoughts, engaged in a running dialogue between the soul and ego. At such times, one resembles that other category of non-listeners: individuals so egotistical that they never stop talking to hear what other egos have to say — the harsh fact being that no one else's inwardness really holds much interest for them.

Nowadays we blame lack of communication on *semantic* difficulties. But the problem is of deeper origin, and it will require some effort in its curing: nothing less than the development of a *sixth sense* in the ear.



Many ways can be found to bring about this development.

Among them is the practice of eurythmy (of which Rudolf Steiner indicated that it has just this social mission). For to make speech visible the eurythmist must learn to live back into the spiritual world of meaning in which the poet's thought lived before it was uttered. The eurythmist listens not alone to words, but to the spirit which has shaped them. And this is an activity across the threshold in which every listener must engage if he is to understand another.

Choral eurythmy is a further means of social sensitizing in that the eurythmist is required to move in harmony with moving groups. A work of art can be achieved only if all are guided by a common *hearing* in which each performer is aware not just of a dynamic content, but of all the others' share in its projection.

And then there is for the eurythmist the concern with words. Common use dulls human beings to their wonder. We flit over their symbolic shapes on paper and pour them out in speech oblivious of the fact that each is a landscape full of contours, with music flowing through it for the ear. Indeed, these shapes and contours and that music are creative forces of an order second to none in the universe. It has been written that "In the beginning was the Word....And the Word was God....And without it was not anything made that has been made." And we recall to the reader Rudolf Steiner's description of that moment in the life after death when human souls reveal to one another what they are: "There is a time between death and rebirth when a human being becomes a spiritual word — not a word made up of a syllable or two, but a tremendously expressive onecontaining the whole individual in his uniqueness. At this point....man is tremendously and mysteriously knowledgeable, and he reveals to the cosmos and its beings what he is." And he goes on: "In the after-death transforming of the forces of the lower organism into the forces of the upper members of the bodily structure, it is as though one shapes a spiritual-plastic element in feeling as one works. One takes this spiritual-plastic element and re-works it, and it transforms itself into a musical resounding and finally into a speakingAnd now picture what someone (here on earth) expresses in his fleeting words and

imagine its becoming (there) a speaking out of a person's true being, a full revealing of oneself in speech. That is how human beings confront, distinguish between and reveal themselves to one another midway in the life between death and rebirth. Word meets word; articulated word meets articulated word; inwardly enlivened word meets inwardly enlivened word. But it is human souls that are these words: their harmonious resounding is a harmonious resounding of articulated words. Souls really live in one another here. And the word that one soul is lives in the word that is another's being....In such a manner do we talk together, each himself what is being spoken."(cf. Lecture 2 in *Supersensible Man, Anthroposophically Grasped* The Hague, 13,18 November 1923)

Is it any wonder, then, that by learning to listen to each other here on earth we may hope again to know the other's spirit?



During our earth-lives we are obviously not as *tremendously knowledgeable* as Rudolf Steiner reports souls to be midway between death and reincarnating. Not only do we not know others, — we do not really know ourselves except in conscious thoughts and in the surface ripples of our temperaments until such time as we have developed organs for the spiritual world. Meanwhile, so overlaid is our consciousness with earthy coatings that we can neither *speak ourselves out* nor hear others do so, nor do the earth-words we utter bear much resemblances to the cosmic Word.

Perhaps it is past the words and through the voice one should listen, in the same sense that the Druids *looked through* the stone of their cromlechs to discern the light.

If we did that, we might perceive the shaping ego at its work and come to know the man through his activity.



Listening perceptively has social consequences beyond estimating.

First, there is what it does to the soul of the listener. A miracle of self-overcoming takes place within him whenever he really *lends an ear* to others. If he is to understand the person speaking, he must withdraw his attention from his own concerns and make a present of it to the speaker; he clears his inner scene like one who for a time gives up his home for others' use while himself remaining only in the role of servant. Listeners quite literally *entertain* a speaker's thought. "Not I, but Christ in me" is made real in every such act of genuine listening.

Second, there is what happens to the speaker when he is fortunate enough to be listened to perceptively. Another kind of miracle takes place in him, perhaps best described as a springtime burgeoning. Before his idea was expressed to a listener, it lived in his soul as potential only; it resembled a seed force lying fallow in the winter earth. To be listened to with real interest acts upon this seed like sun and warmth and rain and other cosmic elements that provide growth-impetus: the soul-ground in which the idea is embedded comes magically alive. Under such benign influences, thoughts grow full cycle and fulfill their promise. Moreover, they confer fertility upon the ground through the simple fact of having lived there. Further ideas will be the more readily received into such a soil and spring the more vigorously for its life-attunement. And the soul that harbors them begins to be the creative force in evolution for which it was intended by the gods.

One understands how grave *sins of omission* can be when one considers the potential fruitfulness that is lost to man and the universe through every failure to let the sunlight of our interest shine on the souls of our fellow earthlings. Neglect of such gardens of the spirit means for all of us a greater scarcity of nutriment and beauty than there need be, and at the same time an encouraging of weeds, which spring up rankly in all empty ground.

Not only do ideas burgeon in response to listening: when groups reflect and entertain them, they take on the many-sided, cosmic fullness that belongs to thoughts as *universals*.

And there is at least one further miracle attendant on listening, one akin to the miracle of loaves and fishes, in that the proliferating seed of living thoughts falls on the soul-ground of the hearers, as many as are truly listening, and begins in each a fresh evolutionary cycle.

Finally, groups that foster the fundamental social art of listening create a common higher consciousness, able like a Grail cup to receive and dispense the magically quickening lifeblood of the spiritual world. Nor will those who harken perceptively to living men fail to sensitize their listening also to the unseen dead and to those other hosts of heaven who may be seeking to inspire them.



If listening is the art of opening oneself to what lives in another's spirit, dialogue or conversation on the same high level adds the communal art of shaping the life evoked by listening and, through group effort, bringing out its fuller possibilities. One who takes part in this activity can feel reminded of the work Rudolf Steiner describes our doing when, before birth, we help to model the head-forms of those karmically related to us.† Conversing in the Goethean sense is just such a modelling, only this time of the light that lives in heads.

Is it not also love in practice?†



Nowhere, however, is there a more stringent need to rise above the level of sympathy and antipathy than in listening and conversing. We cannot perceive the spirits of our fellowmen if we allow clouds of subjectivity to hang between them and our understanding. That space must be cleared of all obscuration so that we

† Lecture 2 in Rudolf Steiner's cited *Supersensible Man*

may become — like the disembodied — *tremendously knowledgeable*, —able to see with whom we are dealing and what love requires our doing in the situation.

One thing that love requires our doing is to digest not just what is spoken, but the speaker also.

But how different this act is from those in which one hungry ego devours another! It may be called a Manichean deed of cleansing, wherein the sacrificial spirit of the listener blots up, or, as it were, absorbs the speakers imperfections; it is as though the latter's dross were purged away by the manner of his friend's listening. Then what is eternal in his being stands out clearly and can be mirrored back to him for his self-knowledge.

The Manichean service indicated is one not often met with in our time, nor does it come naturally to modern egohood. Yet it has something in common with parental nurture of the highest order. A wise mother performs it for her children when, almost wordlessly, she soothes them in an upset mood and restores them to serenity. She has, as it were, herself absorbed the weaknesses that made them vulnerable to upset, and, in digesting these, transmuted them into her own strength, balance, steadfastness. This product of her spirit's work she then rays back, and it becomes therapy for her environment.

Would forgiveness not remain an empty gesture and change absolutely nothing for the better if it did not imply helping to lighten the dead weight of unacceptable qualities with which every one of us is burdened? We speak of *bearing with* each other. But bearing with is more than passive toleration. It means actively taking up and carrying what the other carries: always a heavy load of unregeneracy. Forgiving, like all deeds of love, has this active quality that transforms both forgiver and forgiven.

It is, moreover, a direct following in the footsteps of the Christ, of whom we are told that he brought salvation by "taking the sins of the world upon himself," that is, digesting them in deeds of Manichean love on a cosmic scale. He "made straight" the path of forgiveness since traveled by those who would be esoteric Christians.

And there is a second service love requires of listeners which even the least tainting by sympathy or antipathy undermines and can render dangerous. That is the group task of reflecting back the speaker to himself as from a mirror.

There need be only a slight flaw in a mirror for it to falsify what it reflects; it must be flawless to produce objective images. Furthermore, unless it is held absolutely motionless, images cannot be brought to focus in it.

Sympathy and antipathy intrude distorting flaws into the mirroring activity of groups, while the stillness needed to focus images is shattered by the movement inherent in these soul reactions.

With proper effort, sympathy's and antipathy's involuntary motions can be eliminated by a circle that feels its responsibility for disciplining itself and fostering self-knowledge in its members. But the effort must be communal as well as individual. To succeed in it, all those present will need to join forces to build a common consciousness of "Christ in me".

This may seem an impossibly high goal to work for. It is certainly not easy to achieve. But genuine esoteric group life is inconceivable without it. It is as much the *sine qua non* of group accomplishment as meditation is in the esoteric life of individuals. Indeed, it is meditation in its purest form: selfless, deliberate, fully conscious inner action which brings souls to experience the spiritual world as it lives in and through the human spirit.



The above proposals for deepening of social life are read from the need of modern times to lift all living from a sentient to a conscious level. The forward push that brought mankind out of the Dark Ages into the Enlightenment advanced only part of the human make-up: the intellect, leaving feeling still almost entirely in the realm of instinct. There is a clearly discernible rift running through every man of the time that splits mind and impulse wide

apart unless he takes deliberate measures for its healing and schools his relations with his fellowmen.

This means making feeling capable of the same largeness of approach, the same objectivity, the same devotion to clarity to which thought advanced when it grew up. At a given moment in man's spiritual history, thinking set itself to eschew prejudice. Now the time has come for feeling to cease indulging sympathy and antipathy and to achieve a maturer basis of relationship.

To take deliberate steps in that direction is to set foot on the esoteric path, and in the way most called for by the period we live in. Anthroposophy confirms this and demonstrates its timeliness by the constant gentle emphasis it lays on disciplining feeling.

It does so in a variety of ways.

First, there is the fact that Christianity forms the very heart of Anthroposophy, all of whose teaching stands in relation to the Christ Event as the central happening in cosmic history. Which is to say that redemptive love, in whose benign presence sympathy and antipathy cannot live on, is shown to be the great gift to — as it is the goal of — earth evolution.

Secondly, there is Rudolf Steiner's picturing of what thinking can be when it transcends intellectuality and comes to full development as intuition. We quote from the *Philosophy of Freedom*, the work in which he most poignantly describes it: "...He who explores thinking in its living essence will find in it both will and feeling and both of these in their deepest reality." (cf. Chap.8)

Thirdly, there is Anthroposophy's nurture of the arts. Not only does it seek to transform the earth by lifting matter above the level of its merely natural ordering that it may receive baptism by the spirit: the Anthroposophically-oriented arts call for the artist's rising to an exceptional height of objectivity as he searches out the shape behind his inspiration. One might say that not he but the spirit of the medium he uses is his guide here. Yet it works through feeling rather than through will or thinking, and this requires a purifying, a making conscious of the feeling life such as really measures up to the time's need.

To sum up, one might say that Anthroposophical schooling sets itself the goal of advancing the student's inner life from mere sentience and intellectuality to the consciousness-soul development suited to the age, and that the Michaelic thought it fosters is as much made up of a pure fire of feeling as it is of clarity.



When people use the term *body social*, they are referring to something obviously pictured as a single organism, no matter how many separate individuals comprise it.

Considering the difficulty human beings have when they attempt to pull together, the term *body social* may seem to overstate the case for social unity. Can and does society ever act with the single-mindedness normally underlying the behavior of an organism? Even the smallest *body social*, the family, is constantly riven by differences, so that it very rarely acts as one. What, then, justifies thinking of much larger clusters: nations, races, devotees of the various religions or philosophies and the like, as organisms?

Anthroposophical research has revealed a most important fact: that feeling has the unifying function in man's soul life. It is feeling that weaves the opposites of will and thinking into one soul organism which reflects its oneness in a single body. And if we explore the element that builds up the organism called the *body social*, we will find it to be a community of feeling. So, to take the smallest social unit, it is common to speak of *family feeling* as of a real force which, to some degree at least, overcomes the splintering effects of thought and will that tend to divide family members from each other. And larger groups than families find themselves contained within a single feeling network that is the *family feeling* of a race or nation, or perhaps of a profession, or, again, of a shared inclination to some particular approach to truth.

These networks in which we find ourselves caught up are woven by spiritual beings, most notably the *Zeitgeist*, the folk-soul, and our angels. And each of us belongs to them by destiny. But a chief means Karma uses to involve us in them is the sentient-soul with its blind impulses, which take the form of predestined sympathies and antipathies. They push and pull us into karmic *situations* where what we need to learn and do can be worked out.

Two questions arise here. The first may be occasioned by surprise that antipathy is lumped in with sympathy as *involvement*, — for how could repulsion draw us to another? Self-observation makes it clear, however, that antipathetic feelings fasten our attention on a fellowman fully as compellingly as love or liking.

The second question leads into depths of esoteric fact which only Rudolf Steiner could illuminate. It is: if sympathy and antipathy must be overcome, yet Karma functions largely through their agency, how are we to be guided to our destiny?

Rudolf Steiner gave the answer in a sublime perspective on the future when he indicated that Karma can be superseded by the man who lets himself be Christ-inspired to deeds of love. Then he performs — with love's and freedom's special grace — the very acts which karmic necessity would have had him carry out, had he waited to be manipulated by it; he travels, seeing and conscious, the same path over which he would otherwise have stumbled, blind and awkward.

If the community building here envisioned has been described as an art of relating, it is because it lifts itself deliberately to the height of love, and wherever love is, there is artistry.

Perhaps it is clear that the social artistry which bases its practice on moral intuition (cf. *The Philosophy of Freedom*) builds a very different body social from that begotten by antipathy and sympathy. It is, in short, a body which man shares with heavenly hierarchies.



From the founding days of the Anthroposophical Society, members have been wrestling with the problem of how to shape the time they spend together. And they have tried everything: lectures, joint reading and study of a Steiner book, panel discussions, artistic presentations, and even the intellectual free-for-all of the forum.

None of these practices has yet been generally or finally adopted. Should the fact that the matter is still unresolved not be taken to indicate that the perfect answer — if there is one — has not been found? And does the question not then become "Have we been looking in the right direction?"

Surely the purpose of any gathering, whether it be worldly or esoteric, is to generate more life (in a professional group, greater life of insight) than one can generate alone; otherwise people would save themselves the wear and tear of going out and use the time alone to better purpose. But how is life generated? What develops it most strongly in the body social? Must it be left to chance or grace? Or can it be planned, as a farmer takes measures to assure a harvest?

The cosmos has not left the development of life to chance; it has planned it, setting a sun and moon into the sky as polarities through and between which (cf. Rudolf Steiner's lecture *Das Tor Der Sonne und Das Tor Des Mondes*) forces of the planetary system enter into life-begetting, life-enhancing interchange — a process without which life of any kind is unthinkable.

In the human soul, too, polarity serves as the life-engendering element. And esotericists discern a sun and moon pole in man's life as spirit as he alternates between active doing and *reflective* thinking.

What may be learned for the shaping of esoteric social life from such considerations? Is it not that interchange is all-important? That too great dependence on the lecture form — which makes the lecturer the sun pole, his audience the moon — scants a balanced life of soul in the listeners and hence in the society? Does our society not suffer drastically from insufficient life through having failed to take a course that would have developed life more vigorously in the *rank and file*? Could there, indeed, be a rank and file if we had based group practice on the recognition that every member is a unique spiritual being, a unique treasure house of humanness, from which the common life might be enriched?

Some individuals to whom such questions have been put have shown themselves so fixed in the lecture concept that they have

countered, "But you can't have everybody lecturing!" Others have felt that the discussion groups which they mistakenly imagined to be the proposed substitute for lectures are not only too *everyday* for esoteric life, but encourage the expression of immature ideas, and tend to subject meetings to domination by neurotic individuals with an urge to talk incessantly. Furthermore, they say, the shy personalities would still not participate, but merely listen, moon-like, as they always do. And finally, "We are not there to say what we think but to study what those have said who really know."

These may be perfectly cogent arguments against having discussion groups on esoteric subject matter. But no such mistaken course has been proposed. For by its very nature, discussion remains an intellectual exercise, and as such takes place on this side of the threshold. It is therefore entirely unsuited to esoteric interchange, which has as its goal crossing the threshold and entering together into spiritual life. What is proposed here, is rather, dialogue in the sense of Goethean *conversation*.

Conversations of the kind Goethe had in mind would almost certainly be made the *modus vivendi* of esoteric group life if the difference between them and discussions were better understood. They are actually a form of shared meditation in which the group as a whole consciously seeks to make itself a vessel for spiritual truth.

To do that, members of the group must know what it is to experience thoughts as living beings. And indeed, idiom reflects wide awareness of the fact that ideas can be living organisms, for we call getting an idea *conceiving*. Everyone who has ever had a living thought knows how apt the term is. He has experienced the fact that thinking begins with the soul's impregnation by a germinal idea. One is aware from the start that it is present there and growing, though perhaps not at first of its shape or fullness. Then it gradually takes on form and substance. Only after an interval of ripening is the child of this spiritual begetting ready to be born as full-fledged insight.

When we speak of thought-activity as *brooding*, we also reflect a feeling for it as an evolutionary process, — even, indeed, awareness of the fact that a thought evolves through warmth of interest and is to be found growing in our consciousness.

That we ourselves are changed as a result of having harbored or nurtured spiritual progeny: ideas, and brought them into *realization* must be obvious. And that the spiritual world also changes through thus sharing its creative purpose with us is most likely. "For that we came": — that just such changes might be brought about.

Groups engaging in Goethean conversations become ever more conscious of the maturing role time plays in a thought-being's evolution. They will find, for example, that it is neither desirable nor possible for ideas to spring full-fledged from the spirits of their members on the very day of their conceiving. Insight can grow only gradually and organically from small beginnings. And the group working patiently with an idea knows this. It recognizes that it is participating in the life-process of the moral universe. All the group's members find themselves caught up in its fruitfulness. A mood of confidence awakens in which even the shyest, no longer dreading to expose intellectual shortcomings, finds himself able to contribute.

The germinal ideas that become the focus of group meditation are given to the group by destiny exactly as a child comes to its parents. They begin their life-course as questions that have taken root in the souls of members, and are then brought to the group for fostering.

Here, too, time plays a vital role. There is no unnatural rush, as with a lecture, to *get an idea across* to listeners who may not have entertained prior interest in the subject, — a process similar to plumping one's child down in another's lap and saying "Here, take it; it's all yours now." In such a course there is a great chance that hearers may not accept or will do little with it. Whereas in the slow-ripening group-nurture process outlined here, ideas are tenderly received as presents from on high and become the whole group's common nursing.

The query "Where is Rudolf Steiner in this?" must be answered "Everywhere, from start to finish." It is he to whom we owe our knowledge that a spiritual world exists and owe any capacity we have to be at home there. It is he, the study of whose works awakens such a wealth of germinal questions in us that life can

never again seem poor or uninteresting. It is he who has mapped the landscape in which the answers to our questions will be found. And though group meeting time may not be spent reading out his lectures, that same lecture material provides a large part of the substance of the meeting. For it is assumed that books or lectures bearing on the subject matter have been carefully studied (not merely read) by the members prior to the meeting. When the group regathers, it thus surrounds Dr. Steiner's thought with the additional life which that thought has generated in each student. Something becomes of his contribution which could never have grown out of a one-time common reading of a lecture. For lectures allow no time either for ripening or for an exchange of ripened spiritual life. Those who accustom themselves to the conversation form of meeting and to its requirement that the members be prepared and active, feel increasingly what a superficial, wasteful use of spiritual substance is entailed in a one-time hearing or reading out of lectures. In fact, the latter method even comes to seem disrespectful to the lecturer, whose germinal ideas fall on largely unprepared and thus largely unresponsive ground.

It may be objected that Rudolf Steiner himself chose the lecture and book form of presentation. But we might remember, first, that this was the beginning phase of Anthroposophy, when it was needful to endow the earth with a great spiritual treasure that could be drawn upon for centuries, and that none of the listeners was able at that time to contribute much more than a receptive consciousness. Secondly, that since Rudolf Steiner's death we have been in a quite different phase, in that none who have followed him have possessed like stature and a like mission to use their fellowmen as sounding boards for mightiest truth. Thirdly, that the spiritual activity to which he sought unceasingly to rouse us would seem to be best served in the present phase by a form of effort that evokes maximum participation in the members, — a criterion which the lecture form cannot satisfy.

And do we not show a lack of confidence in Anthroposophy and in its power to bring human souls to burgeoning when we mistrust the conversation form of meeting? Are we not saying in effect that growth is possible to some, but not in significant degree

to others? Anthroposophy makes it clear that all mankind is involved in a cosmic growth-process, and that every soul brings unique substance to that evolution. Are we in practice really making use of what each individual offers and providing him with the full stimulus of our interest in his further growth?

That growth and evolution come about through the interchange of two kinds of influences: the cosmic and the earthly. Anthroposophy supplies the cosmic element; it is sunlight to souls rightly rooted in the earth. But an earth must be there. And the earth in which the soul takes root is society, associations large and small that feel concern and will accept responsibility for the soul's development. No matter how much sun streams down upon it, the soul cannot flourish if the earth provides too meager nutriment.

Should the Anthroposophical Society therefore not consider it its first obligation to serve as the very model of a true group-process?



Most of us are so habituated to *what has always been done* that we find it impossible to conceive of a leaderless society. Nor do we want one; it seems a condition fraught with far too many dangers. So when a leader goes, we look at once for new ones to arise who will rescue us from our confusion, dispel our nightmares, put the world to rights with their superior capacities, exactly as good parents do for their small children.

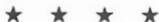
But to yearn for leaders is dependence, — the same trend that makes the lecture form hang on. Of course it is easier to be shown the way than to find it oneself with independent effort, to let oneself be lifted toward the heights than to take part in the strenuous work of lifting. But the challenge of the times is to adequacy, adequacy such as free and loving men develop through their interest. The esoteric path cannot be for children tied as it were to parental leading strings, but for adults who deliberately fit themselves for mature, creative spiritual action.

There can scarcely be a better training for it than conversations. In such activity, the leader — if there may be said to be one — is not a person, but the theme, the spiritual fact under exploration.

Here again, it is vital to distinguish between discussions and conversations. Intellects active in discussion typically *make straight for the mark* of a conclusion; they penetrate fact as though with mental arrows, unaware that the fact may be a living thing that dies when so approached and becomes nothing more than a taxidermist's specimen. Whereas those who engage in conversations see their function as a group-process of inviting truth exactly as they would invite a human guest, and making the atmosphere receptive to it.

But they do not expect thoughts to come to them in the physical world. They must go out to the world of thought to see and shape their understanding to the shape of truth. It is as though they take themselves to the border of the country where the truth lives and there make of their souls a dwelling suited to receive and entertain the question. Or it could be said that a Grail cup is fashioned in a communal exercise of intuition and held up to receive the precious essence of the living thought.

Esoteric groups that approach their task — as they must — intuitively (i.e., in the meaning given the term in the *Philosophy of Freedom*) have neither need nor use for leaders. For, to say it once again, they meet for inspiration not on this side of the threshold, but beyond it, in a realm where the world spirit is their guide and leader.



Why, it is natural to ask, did Rudolf Steiner not advance some such proposals as those set forth above if they really hold the promise claimed for them?

The fact is that he did, again and again and again. We will try to show how everything that has been presented here is taken in essence from his Anthroposophy.

Few who read his *Philosophy of Freedom* for the first time would think of calling it a book on social artistry. Yet this early work which so signally accomplishes the redemption of the thinking process also celebrates in its picturing of free-man-the-thinker, the man who, because he lives in the spirit with his thinking, loves. And (in Chapter VIII) we find Rudolf Steiner most significantly likening moral phantasy to tact, the practice of the highest art of social feeling. Furthermore, he indicates what will bring an end to warring when he shows (in Chapter IX) how harmonious free men's intuitions are, being taken from one and the same world of ideas. He concludes: "Misunderstanding and conflict simply cannot develop between morally free human beings." It is reasonable also to apply the words with which he ends Chapter IX to esoteric societies as well as to society at large: "Social orders exist for no other purpose than to foster the development of individuals."

If the *Philosophy of Freedom* may be considered the mighty groundwork on which Rudolf Steiner based all his further social contributions, surely his address on the occasion of laying the foundation stone of the second Goetheanum may be held to have rounded out and completed his vision of a true society. One has only to read it perceptively to find in it the ripe fruit of the concept seeded in the *Philosophy of Freedom*. Here again he celebrates the free individual who in the whole-souled fulfilling of his duties, tasks and mission in the world comes to know the inwardness of the "all-ruling human and universal love that forms part of the totality of cosmic being...comes to grasp in action ruling cosmic love." "Instilling heart's warmth into his head-organism, he will experience the ruling, working, weaving cosmic thoughts." "And out of this human substance" (the same substance of which groups build the community of soul that forms a common vessel for the spirit) "in which live the spirit of the heights, the Christ force, and the spirit of the depths... let us form in our souls the dodecahedron foundation stone...that in the future working of the Anthroposophical Society we may take our stand on this firm foundation stone." "...Then it will shine out for our soul's vision, that foundation stone built of the substance of universal love." "...And the right ground in which we must set our foundation stone today is

our hearts in their harmonious cooperation, in their goodwill, in their resolve — permeated through and through by love — to carry Anthroposophical purpose through the earth. This will ever be reflected, in a way that keeps our goal before us, by the light of thought, by the dodecahedron stone of love which we lay today in our own hearts.” Then he goes on to show the origin of that light and love in the Christ impulse, which, two thousand years ago, had made its radiant way into earth atmosphere. And he ends the address saying that if we too sharpen our perception to hear the threefold secret of man’s connection with the universe: — “*Ex deo nascimur; in Christo morimur; per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus*” resounding in our hearts, “we will found here a true union of human beings for Anthroposophia and carry to the world the spirit that holds sway in the shining light of thought surrounding the dodecahedron stone of love, that it may provide the light and warmth needed for the advancement of the world, of man.”

Between the above-mentioned early seeding and later flowering of this vision of free man conceived and lived by Rudolf Steiner, he worked unceasingly to share it with his listeners. And the student of Anthroposophy alert to Rudolf Steiner’s social message will gradually come upon an incalculable wealth of comment illuminating all the points presented here and many more (cf. for example, lectures of February 6 and 13, 1923; February 27 and 28, 1923; March 2,3, and 4, 1923). Much of it is so interwoven with material on other themes as to be inconspicuous unless one is on the lookout for it. But for those who seek it, it can be found running through the entire body of Anthroposophy as its heart’s blood, everywhere confronting the student with its radiant life.

It is clear from the Foundation Stone address that Rudolf Steiner conceived this life as something to be realized in the present, not merely as a beacon beckoning from a distant future.

We can do no better than to bring these comments to a close with words of Rudolf Steiner in which he describes how one may relate to individuals and groups in a way that serves the earth’s great mission, love. In a letter to a correspondent who appears to have been sorely disillusioned by a friend he wrote:

"Try to form a really heroic concept of loyalty. What people call loyalty is so evanescent. Try making this your loyalty: You will find that there are fleeting moments in your experience with others when they appear suffused and illumined by the archetypes of their own spirits. And then other periods come — perhaps quite long ones — during which their beings are as though clouded over. You can learn to say at such a time: 'The spirit makes me strong. I think of my friend's archetype, which I once glimpsed. No deception, no outer appearances can ever wrest this picture from me.' Struggle ceaselessly to keep this vision. The struggle itself is loyalty. In the effort to be loyal in this sense, man comes close to his fellow man with the strength and in the attitude of a guardian angel."

And of all of us he could say (in Scene 10 of *The Guardian of the Threshold*):

My pupils have thrown open each, their souls
Unto the spirit light, and in such ways
As fit their individual destinies.
What they have conquered for themselves
Each one shall render fruitful for the others.
This they can only do if now their forces
Here at this sacred place,
In harmony of measure and of number,
Form willingly a higher unity.
This unity alone can waken to true life
What singly must remain a mere existing.
They stand here at the threshold of this temple.
Their souls shall join themselves, one to another,
And sound in unison according to the rules
Recorded in the book of cosmic destiny;-
That harmony of spirits may accomplish
What each alone could never bring about.
They'll carry new impulses to the old
Which here rules worthily since earliest times."

Let us look again at the weighty message:

“This unity alone can waken to true life
What singly must remain a mere existing,”

and....

“That harmony of spirits may accomplish
What each alone could never bring about.”

If our heritage from Rudolf Steiner were not so vast as to have the effect of dwarfing even the most world-shaking single utterances, statements like these — and there are many — would have received more adequate pondering. To give them their due weight in action could still make the Anthroposophical Society a force equal to the task of healing the social body of the human race.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marjorie Spock was born in New Haven, Connecticut in 1904 and attended schools there.

Miss Spock went to Dornach (Switzerland) at the age of 18 and stayed there until the Christmas before Rudolf Steiner died. † She studied Eurythmy and taught it at the Rudolf Steiner School in New York City and at the Waldorf School at Adelphi in Garden City for several years. She also taught various grades at the Dalton School and at the Fieldston Lower School, both in New York City.

Miss Spock entered Teachers College of Columbia University at the age of 38 and there earned her BS and MS degrees, having written her Master's thesis on the subject of Rudolf Steiner education.

She had always been interested in bio-dynamic farming and, on a little homestead she shared with Mary Richards on Long Island, while teaching at the Waldorf School there, gained a great deal of experience which stood her in good stead when spraying forced the homesteaders to move to another part of New York State. There they engaged in farming on a much larger scale in order to supply others as well as themselves with bio-dynamically grown food. Another spraying in New York State forced their further removal to the State of Maine where Miss Spock continues to live and farm.

She has been active throughout her adult life as teacher, lecturer, translator and author. Among the books translated by Miss Spock are the series of lectures by Rudolf Steiner published under the title *Awakening to Community*; the single lecture *Christ in the 20th Century*, and others. She also translated *Nutrition and The Nature of Substance* by Dr. Rudolf Hauschka as well as *Rudolf Steiner On His Book The Philosophy Of Freedom* by Otto Palmer. Miss Spock is the author of *Nature Spirits and Fairy Worlds and Workers*, (both illustrated by Ingrid Gibb); *Eurythmy and Teaching As A Lively Art*.

† Rudolf Steiner's death day: March 30, 1925