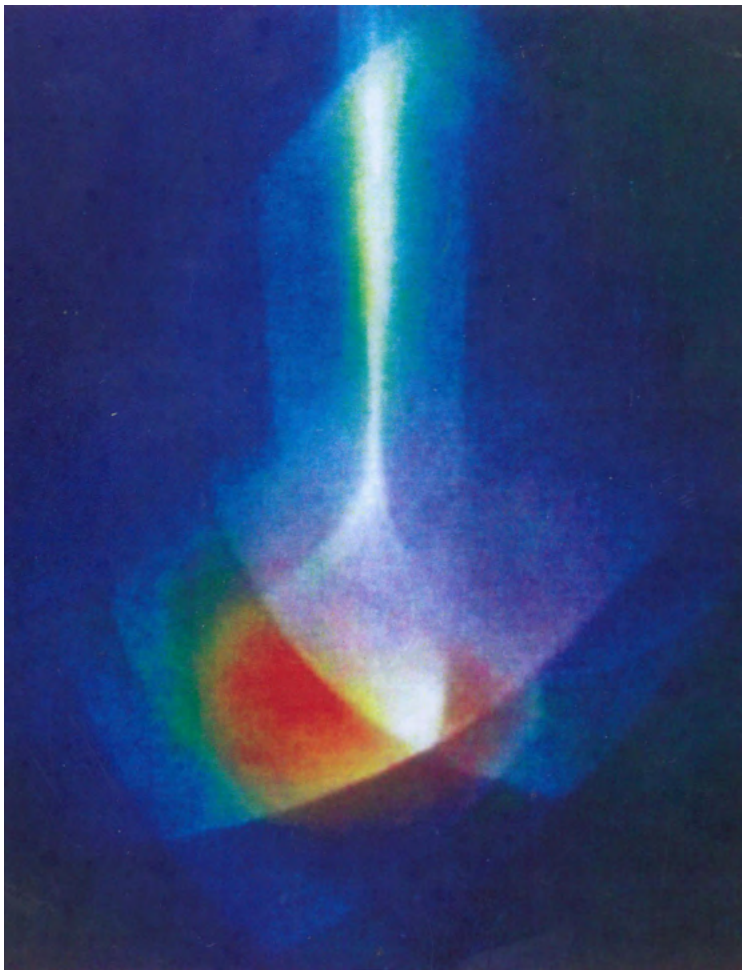


Anthroposophical Society

in the Western Cape & the Basil Gibaud Library
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Editorial

Christmas Issue – 2022



*At the turning of the time
The Spirit-Light of the world
Entered the stream of earthly being.
Darkness of night
Had ceased its reign...*

This Newsletter is enriched by so many deep sharings which address the seriousness of our times, where we are experiencing how the core of what it is to be a human being is under threat. Both Martin Wigand and Al Kaplan, don't shy away from addressing this. One speaks perhaps more as a scientist, the other more an artist. But they both share from such a deeply human place, touching into where we are asked to awaken and with our 'I forces' step towards developing our Life Spirit member, so deeply needed for the future.

Briar Grimley's beautiful sharing on *Active Practical Love in South Africa*, turns our attention towards the task of evolving our earth from a 'planet of Wisdom' towards a 'planet of Love'. While Lorraine Forbes' collage of quotes shows the gifts that can arise from the heart of humanity and serve this 'Mission of Earth'.

You will also see glimpses into the Kairos eurythmy training and the wonderful news of the recent graduation of seven therapeutic eurythmists. How blessed we are with all the initiatives and activity out of spirit that occurs within the Movement in our surroundings. The report on the BAP's Michaelmas Conference being a shining example of this!

As we bring 2022 to a close, we also need to open towards 2023 where we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Christmas Foundation Stone Meeting – the Founding of the New Mysteries. Surely, we need to take this not as a looking back only but rather as a "springboard" for our own activity towards the tasks and life of Anthroposophy that lie ahead. Towards this, a group of us are enthusiastically planning a facilitated process for members, early in the new year. Creative and full of artistic activity, where we can listen into who we are, building our centre and sense of community, letting Life and Warmth Arise amongst us from whence we can then turn our listening out to our Movement and the World. See page 7 with notice of more details and dates to save .

I close with the picture of us standing at the foot of Africa, in the bright outer Solstice light preparing for our Summer Holidays, hoping to recover from the trials of this past year. Yet, knowing that we don't wish to dissolve so far that we pass by the opportunity given to us in the Holy Nights. May we as a community find the strength and the support of each other to awaken - to find that light within our hearts and heads, as did the Shepherds and Kings, "that good may become" in our World.

Warmly

Caroline Hurner

Michaelmas Conference 2022

Exploring Cruelty and Compassion. Hosted by the Butterfly Art Project venue Michael Oak

This Michaelmas Conference was held over three days, 28- 30 September. Fifty-nine Community Art Facilitators from the Western Cape and Gauteng attended the conference and explored the theme of Cruelty and Compassion, led by a faculty of seven experts supported by the BAP team. The conference was a great success with participants deepening their knowledge of healing through art and their understanding of Anthroposophy (an educational, therapeutic and creative system established by Rudolf Steiner, using mainly natural means to optimize physical and mental health and well-being). Everyone left the conference renewed and committed to bringing creativity and healing through art to children and youth in under-resourced communities.



Nonhlanhla Dube, a participant in Project Cocoon, proudly showcased her community art organisation's artwork at the conference

Our participants during the morning ring time sessions and afternoon breakaway practical workshops where faculty offered topics on eurythmy, therapeutic story telling, music, chalk pastel and conversations & clay exercises.

Our morning sessions of the 3-day conference included Goethean observations exercises where CAFs observed a particular item such as a flower (sponsored by Fabulous Fynbos), stones, sea shells and trees.

Active Practical Love in South Africa

'And now these three remain: Faith, Hope and Love. But the greatest of these is Love.'

Corinthians 13:13

Each new phase of development needs preparation in the previous phase. As earth develops from a planet of Wisdom into a planet of Love, through the assistance of the angelic hierarchies and the participation of human beings, we are being called upon to work on our individual contributions to this process.

In 2006 Tessabella Lovemore came to South Africa from England, and offered her first course in Active Practical Love. I was drawn to this work by her words:

'There is a way to develop a capacity to love abundantly, unconditionally and unreservedly. Loving in this way expands our consciousness, changes your life and changes the lives of the people around you. Active love goes beyond the experience of being drawn to love someone or some thing. It can be felt as an energetic expanding warmth flowing from you. Love at this level is not demanding or exhausting. In fact, active love fills the one who loves actively, with a greater capacity to love.'

I have never looked back. For years Tessabella came to South Africa regularly to finish her programme, developing it all the while. We formed a group in Cape Town who worked consistently with the content of her 12 Lessons, and she would work with us when she was here. Tessabella also worked with teachers at the Waldorf schools here and in Johannesburg, bringing this work right into the classroom. When I went to McGregor, I worked there too with a group from 2012. We practiced, shared our successes and failures, and never gave up our striving – this was heart food inspiring every minute of our days. Tessabella joined us a few times in McGregor and also gave public talks there. Her courses consist of presentation, exercises and conversations.

In 2017 Tessabella returned to South Africa for her last visit. In that time, she offered a course for those who wanted to become facilitators of this work. There were close to 30 people there. It was indeed a rich, profound, moving and fun-filled time. Tessabella has two capacities that I have always admired... she walks her talk, and she brings humour into the work.

Out of this course, groups were formed to work and train together to offer this work. Tessabella gave me the go-ahead to start offering



Tessabella Lovemore

"Although I might not have always been conscious of it, I realise now that the content that I was particularly inspired by in Steiner's work, was that human beings have the power and responsibility to intervene in the difficult karma of fellow human beings. What's more, the development of love is the purpose of human life as we know it."

courses and workshops. We continued our group work in McGregor and I offered courses to the Colleges of Teachers in McGregor, Raphaeli Waldorf School and Windhoek Waldorf School... this practice is so incredibly helpful for working with colleagues. I ran workshops at a Waldorf Teachers' conference and an Anthroposophical Society Conference. Cobie Roelvert started to run conversation groups based on the listening skills taught on the Active Practical Love courses. She, Penny Perrin, Shona Saayman, Dennis Shaw, Adrienne Milne, Nina Geraghty and Eastlynn Nelson-Tansley and others continued their group work in Cape Town and have fulfilled their requirements to be facilitators. Penny's main area of interest is to support parents and teachers in creating healthy relationships, and she and Shona are looking at running courses focussed on this next year. Shona is an Occupational Therapist in Mental Health and has been running support groups for the last 15 years introducing her learnings from Active Practical Love into this work.

FAST FORWARD TO 2022...

Tessabella announced her last year of teaching and offered a whole variety of online courses she had by now developed. Several of us have opted to immerse ourselves in this last opportunity to work with her ... and what a toe-curling experience this has, and is, being! What she is leaving behind her as a legacy is truly remarkable.

So, where to from here? Tessabella has invited several people to form an international Foundation that will continue practicing, offering and upholding this work. It is in the process of being formalised and legalised. Cobie, Penny, Shona, and myself are among the founders, who come from all over the world. Members of the Foundation meet every second Sunday morning (8.00am for South Africans!! 7.00am in England...). During this time, we take turns to offer a Lesson to the group, and every third session we focus on practicalities. It is becoming a very bonded group, all of us looking forward to the content and dynamics of a very diverse gathering.

I would like to end with a passage from an article that Tessabella wrote for a publication:

'... For much of my life I was unable to experience a genuine sense of love. I could experience compassion and care, even forgiveness. But I was always conscious of a yearning to love, and for love. I wanted to give unreservedly, and receive it unconditionally. I realise now that in place of being able to love, or feel that I was loved, I tried to do what I felt was 'good'. So, for many years trying to be a 'good person' and a 'loving person' was enough.

'In my search for 'the good' I read all I could by Rudolf Steiner. I became a Waldorf Teacher and avidly read Steiner's insights about the care and education of children, the spiritual nature of all beings and things, the development of the world, the natural world, human soul development, moral issues and social problems. Throughout his working life, Steiner gave many indications of love as the mission of the world development. At the centre of each practical initiative that has developed out of Anthroposophy, is love.

'Although I might not have always been conscious of it, I realise now that the content that I was particularly inspired by in Steiner's work, was that human beings have the power and responsibility to intervene in the difficult karma of fellow human beings. What's more, the development of love is the purpose of human life as we know it. So that looking back now I can see how the more I learned from Steiner to understand human development, the more the essence of what I was drinking in, was love; and how to develop love.'

In September Cobie and I introduced Active Practical Love to the Kairos eurythmy students; our hope is to continue this work with them next year. Penny and I are going to collaborate in offering the full Active Practical Love course at Sophia House over a year, beginning Monday 12 December this year... see our poster in the ASWC Events Sheets. I am running a year-long course in McGregor beginning this November – 2 lessons every second month.

In the meantime, Tessabella has asked Cobie, Penny and myself to set up and offer a Listening course here in South Africa. We will meet soon to begin the preparations. And towards the end of November all those who have done the training and want to carry forward this work, will be meeting at Sophia House to do some study and share our experiences and aspirations. And Penny has developed a beautiful website in support of this work, do take a peek: www.learningtolove.co.za.

Sharing this work is indeed a blessing. We would love you to be able to participate and experience these blessings with us over the next years...

Tessabella received her Doctorate in Waldorf Education at Gloucester University in England. You can find out more about her and the variety of courses she offers by visiting her website: www.tessabellalovemore.com

Briar Grimley



Southern Cross Eurythmy Therapy Training

It is with joy that I share with you the news of the Graduation of the past students of SCETT, on 30 September 2022, after 4 years of training.

Each one excelled in their presentations showing a wonderful dedication to this path of Eurythmy Therapy and a remarkable maturity in their work and being.

Each received a Diploma from the Medical Section of the Goetheanum in Eurythmy Therapy: Alice Mnguni, Aniela von Maltitz, Laura Engelke, Noriko Kawabata, Ponego Mosige, Myriam Gonzalez and Emma Stotko (who must still complete her practical work).

Hana Adamcova, the International coordinator of Eurythmy Therapy at the Medical Section Goetheanum, gave an encouraging address and I expressed gratitude to all those who have played a role in this training. It has been such a collaborative working amongst Eurythmy Therapists - Ursula Browning, Patricia Orange, Carola Adam-Roetig, Christiane Wigand and myself, and Doctors - Pieter Wildervanck, Marco Ephraim, Donald Palmer, James Dyson, Raoul Goldberg, Anita Druhfagel, Angelika Schuetze, as well as our special nurse Judith Tabberner. Christiane Janowski carried the Study and Michelle Kaplan the Speech Formation.

Hana Adamcova has given the Go Ahead for Accreditation and this will make our training one of 6 Eurythmy Therapy accredited trainings in the world. Our local holding group consists of Judith Tabberner, Christiane Janowski and myself with our two mentors, Patricia Orange and Ursula Browning, being our guiding lights. What a delight to be able to continue our work into the future for the future.

Much gratitude to Hana Adamcova for her enthusiastic support and encouragement.

I too would like to express my gratitude to the Anthroposophical Society for the use of Sophia House and the support given, to the Centre for Creative Education and to Christine Mueller for giving us her beautiful Manor House at Buitenverwachting Estate. These venues were much appreciated.

MUCH LOVE

Julia O'Leary
on behalf of SCETT



Humanity at a Crossroads –

A talk given by Martin Wigand at Sophia House

Martin led us in his uniquely relaxed and light filled way into this challenging topic. His own living thinking and embracive research shone. Here follow the notes he made in preparation for this talk.

Forty years ago, as a young man, I started as a Waldorf teacher in Germany and read about Rudolf Steiner's predictions for the end of the Millennium, the climax of the Anthroposophical Movement, and the incarnation of Ahriman, and an uncle had also earlier told me about The Beast, Sorat, and 666.

I was intrigued at how all this would play out. I felt safe in the Waldorf school movement, because what could this Beast possibly do to a committed group of Anthroposophists, with a wide range of skills and supporting each other? I was so naive! Now Waldorf schools struggle to retain their spiritual identity under the onslaught of bureaucratic rules and regulations.

I read that Steiner predicted the social question would be the big issue in the future. However, I thought we in Germany had solved the social problem and that Steiner was just too pessimistic!

Then, Christiane and I became involved within the Camphill Movement, where we discovered, from some older members, that they had learned various lectures by heart, because Karl König was expecting some dictatorship at the beginning of the new millennium, when Anthroposophy would be forbidden.

Again, I found that absolutely unrealistic, for had we not our fundamental human rights, guaranteed in our constitution. I thought all these dark prophecies were simply pessimistic. Life was beautiful, we could study Anthroposophy, I could not imagine, how that could possibly change.

How naive I was! How wrong I was! Suddenly, seemingly out of nowhere, in March 2020 everything changed. Suddenly fundamental human rights were suspended: The right of movement, the right of gathering, the right of free speech, the right of bodily integrity. Especially hard hit were cultural and religious events: No Easter celebrations for two years, and even in the third year only permitted on a limited scale. Something like this had never ever happened before on a worldwide scale in the history of Christianity. The reason given was Public Health concerns.

What was going on? Could it be, that Rudolf Steiner was right after all, that Sorat and Ahriman were really wreaking havoc on humanity?

Today I will try and answer this question.

First I will introduce Sorat, give examples of how I see him at work today and lastly suggest what we need to do to counter his forces.

WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT SORAT?

An Ahrimanic Being, the Sun Demon, the two horned beast of the Apocalypse. The name "Sorat" in Hebrew letters is directly related to the number 666.

THE QUALITIES THAT CHARACTERIZE SORAT:

- Extremely powerful, the direct opponent to Christ, who wants to annihilate the work of the Christ. Christ incarnated 333 years earlier than was originally intended to balance Sorat.
- He wants to give knowledge to humans prematurely and of a purely materialistic kind. This knowledge will be so dazzling, so overwhelming, that humans will lose all desire for future spiritual development.
- This knowledge will also give great power to those who desire it and who will then control others
- Already in Gondishapur his special emphasis was on a highly developed completely materialistic medicine.

Rudolf Steiner spoke that Sorat had and will have a powerful effect on the world in the year 666 and then onwards in the years with multiples of this number.

In the year 666 Steiner points to the events at the Academy of Gondishapur. Previous to this the great centres of Learning in Greece had all been closed by the Christian church. Which resulted in so many leading scholars and researchers moving to Gondishapur in Persia where they were welcomed. Here under Sorats 'inspiration' knowledge was brought significantly early e.g. a special emphasis was on a highly developed completely materialistic medicine. However, Sorats powerful influence was diminished because the Arabs conquered Persia before 666 - in 641 - and brought the academy to a standstill through strict Muslim tenants.

$666 \times 2 = 1332$: A few years before the order of the Temple Knights had been annihilated, the Pope had moved to France and everything within the Catholic Church could be bought, e.g., you could pay and take the title Bishop or you could buy the absolution of your sins.

$666 \times 3 = 1998$ can we find the footprints of his activities in our time? Here we need to understand that Sorat's influence is not just in a fixed year, but is more like a wave, reaching a maximum at the specific year.

I can recognise his influence especially in the sciences which deal with the nature of the human being, namely Medicine and Psychology.

TOWARDS THIS I PINPOINT 3 AREAS:

- **In 1910**, two powerful American Foundations: Rockefeller and Carnegie decide to promote allopathic medicine as the only scientific medicine. This resulted in all holistic modalities being sidelined. Universities started teaching only how to fight diseases with the help of chemical drugs: the human body was now looked at as a machine where a disease can be fixed by chemical interventions. An individual's unique constitution is not taken into consideration. So, a shift from a triune perspective of disease to a duality occurred: this can be regarded as a shift to evil. This laid the foundation for the promotion of vaccines against any conceivable illness. A perspective

that promotes vaccinating everybody against everything to evade illness! Leaving no space for individual destiny, where disease is also seen as an important part of our biography, or for karmic backgrounds. I consider this vision of vaccination, promoted by Bill Gates, to be nothing but a materialistic illusion, inspired by Sorat.

- **In 1971** a most influential book appeared "Beyond Freedom and Dignity" by Burrhus Frederic Skinner. Wikipedia writes about it: Skinner argues that the entrenched belief in free will and the moral autonomy of the individual (which Skinner referred to as "dignity") hinders the prospect of using scientific methods to modify behaviour for the purpose of building a happier and better-organized society.

Skinner was the leading light of Behavioural Psychology. His ideas are the foundation of much of contemporary psychology. Where he says Our belief in free will and human dignity is an obstacle to creating a better society, he wages a 'spiritual war' against the idea of individual freedom and dignity!

In other words: our belief in human freedom and dignity is an illusion, a relic from pre-scientific times. We must overcome these illusions and use cultural or social engineering to manipulate people into doing what we, the enlightened scientists, have found to be the best behaviour. To be clear: His views are based on experiments with animals, mainly with rats. His approach turns humans into animals, into a herd of sheep! This is what is happening today, for example the Covid Vaccination campaign. The authorities being given the position to decide what is good or bad for us. Soon climate change will be another reason for manipulating human behaviour. Social engineering. Social technology.

Dear Friends, here we can hear Ahriman/ Sorat speak! Man is regarded as a higher animal! Man in need of being controlled and told what is appropriate to do. Leave as little as possible to individual decision, because freedom is anyway just an illusion! Some of you will still know Charlie Chaplin and the opening sequence of his movie: Modern Times, where human beings are walking to the factories like a herd of pigs.

In Ahriman's world truth is just what the majority believes - where you just repeat something often enough to make it true! And to call anybody who does not agree a conspiracy theorist.

Michael wants something else: A community of free thinkers, free individuals, who respect each other, who listen to each other.

Rudolf Steiner warned: the biggest danger in the future is that people will stop thinking for themselves, that they will leave it to authorities or the newspapers (media!) or influencers, politicians etc.

Michael in contrast waits for us, hopes that we will make an effort to think for ourselves.

The spiritual battle today does not happen anymore in the world out there, where we can sit back and watch Michael fighting! The battle is now happening within our own human consciousness - in all of us! Today Michael cannot win this battle on his own, he needs our support. We need to connect with his goals. His goals are human dignity and human freedom, the exact opposite of the social engineering, the manipulation by fear we see today. We must make these goals our own, overcome the fear which is spread by the media, see the present and future events through his eyes

- **The third development**, which is less in the headlines, but I believe, even more relevant for the future is Transhumanism. Transhumanism speaks of improving humans through technology.

Companies like Microsoft and Google, people like Elon Musk, pour billions of Dollars into this research. Elon Musk believes that without such improvements humankind will be doomed, for in the near future artificial intelligence and robots would be more intelligent than us and so step in to rule the world in future, and humans would be a dying species like the Neanderthals of ancient days. "We're creating God," the former Chief Business Officer, for Google, Mo Gawdat recently told an interviewer. Further, Elon Musk said a few years ago, in a talk at MIT: "We're summoning the demon".

Yuval Harari in his bestseller Homo Deus speaks not only of robots, but also of an integration of machines with humans. Ray Kurzweil (top manager at Google) can also be researched as a prophet of Transhumanism. (A video clip with Yuval Harari was shown).

You may think that this is just a temporary madness, and people will be sensible and not go for such nonsense. However, be aware that the last Emperor of Germany believed that cars would be just a silly fashion, and people would soon go back to using horses again.

Rudolf Steiner said that the integration of humans with machines will be a big topic for the next millennia! Not Centuries, but Millennia! And he adds that this will certainly come. It is not a question of 'IF' but of 'HOW' and with what intention, out of which spirit, will we approach this question.

TO SUM IT UP:

Skinner and Behaviourism brought us social engineering. How to manipulate humans into giving up basic human rights. To allow ourselves to be treated like lab rats or sheep. They have successfully demonstrated this over the last years.

Transhumanism will engineer not only our behaviour, but also our body and our mind. It will create new anorganic life forms, it wants to create hybrid beings, partly human, partly machine.

I am convinced that Sorat attempts to achieve what he did not manage back in 666: Super intelligent humans with no interest whatsoever in spirituality. He wants us to view spiritual beliefs as insanity.

To create a purely material world without the chance to transform earth into the future Jupiter, The New Jerusalem.

TO CLOSE

This information can be depressing, it is dark, so how can we deal with it?

Think of a small child, how it first crawls on the floor and then struggles against gravity to stand upright and to walk. What a triumph, when it finally succeeds after so many failed attempts.

Rudolf Steiner tells us that it is the Christ Impulse which inspires us to try again and again to rise up against gravity, for only an upright human being can learn to speak and to think.

This position, to raise ourselves against gravity we need to achieve to become human. Ahriman is the spirit of gravity. By overcoming him we become human. Without him, this would not be possible. Without gravity we would just float. We could not walk upright without gravity!

This is a fundamental truth of human evolution. We need the resistance of Ahriman for our development.

The same applies on a higher level. We must now learn to walk upright morally. The Christ force will help us to achieve this. But again, this can only be achieved through resistance. We live in the

age of the Second Coming of Christ. In order to fully appreciate this, we also need to encounter the counter force of Ahriman and Sorat. They will try their utmost to drag us down morally, to drag us down to a subhuman level. By overcoming their forces with the help of the Christ we will take a major step in our own human evolution.

WE ARE STANDING AT A CROSSROADS:

This was explained with the help of drawing a U- shape. We came down from Paradise. We are now at the point of freedom, where we can either rise up again or go further down.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

Our task is not so much about outer action. The battle today is waged within our soul, within our own consciousness.

There are three possible actions which come to mind:

Studying Anthroposophy, understanding present events against this background. Strengthen our soul forces.

When we listen to news, to politicians and others speaking, ask yourselves "Is what is said really true? Would Michael agree with it? Or is it just more materialistic lies, trying to make us feel helpless, instilling fear?" Formulate the truth clearly in your mind. This gives power to the thought. It will support Michael in his battle for truth. It will also strengthen ourselves.

We can help to prepare the next cultural epoch of "Brotherhood" by looking at one another as fellow travellers towards higher spiritual goals. The material conditions of life will become more difficult. This can encourage us to become more aware of the needs of our fellow travellers, to support one another.

Materialism itself is a lie! These lies weaken our physical body, our health. Truthful spiritual thoughts strengthen us.

We are spiritual beings who have lived many times and we will live again many more times on this planet. Whatever happens to us now is temporary, however, what will last is how we respond to what happens.

Martin ended with the last verse of the Foundation Stone Meditation.

A Follow-up meeting.

After Martin's talk, there was a sense that people would have liked to deepen the topic. So, a follow-up meeting two weeks later was arranged. 15 people met together in the library, opening with some Eurythmy exercises with Christiane. We then shared their concerns and understanding of the present situation in the world from a spiritual perspective. It was very rich!

Here are a few questions and seeds which came out of the sharing.

- We spoke of the importance of doing basic spiritual exercises, and using the power of our thoughts to create a better world.
- How can we support Michael in his fight against the dark forces at work in the world today? Could we possibly meet as a group and do some meditation together?

- How about a common artistic activity? Music? Poetry? A cultural evening or afternoon? Maybe performing a (or more) scenes from a Mystery Drama?
- Martin mentioned the Community exchange system in Cape Town. It was founded by a very interesting man, Tim Jenkin. It allows people to offer any kind of service or goods against "payment" in talents. It is meanwhile very well organized, offering the opportunity of economic activity outside of our financial system, which is clearly not working very well, providing the chance of a new economic community. Check out their webpage: community-exchange.org.

In the end, there was a feeling that there is still so much more which could be shared about the times we live in! Maybe we could start a "Current Affairs Café" on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, where people can try and make sense of what is happening in the world?

Godly Light,

Christ-Sun,

Enwarm

Our hearts

Enlighten

Our heads

That good will become

What we

From hearts would want to found

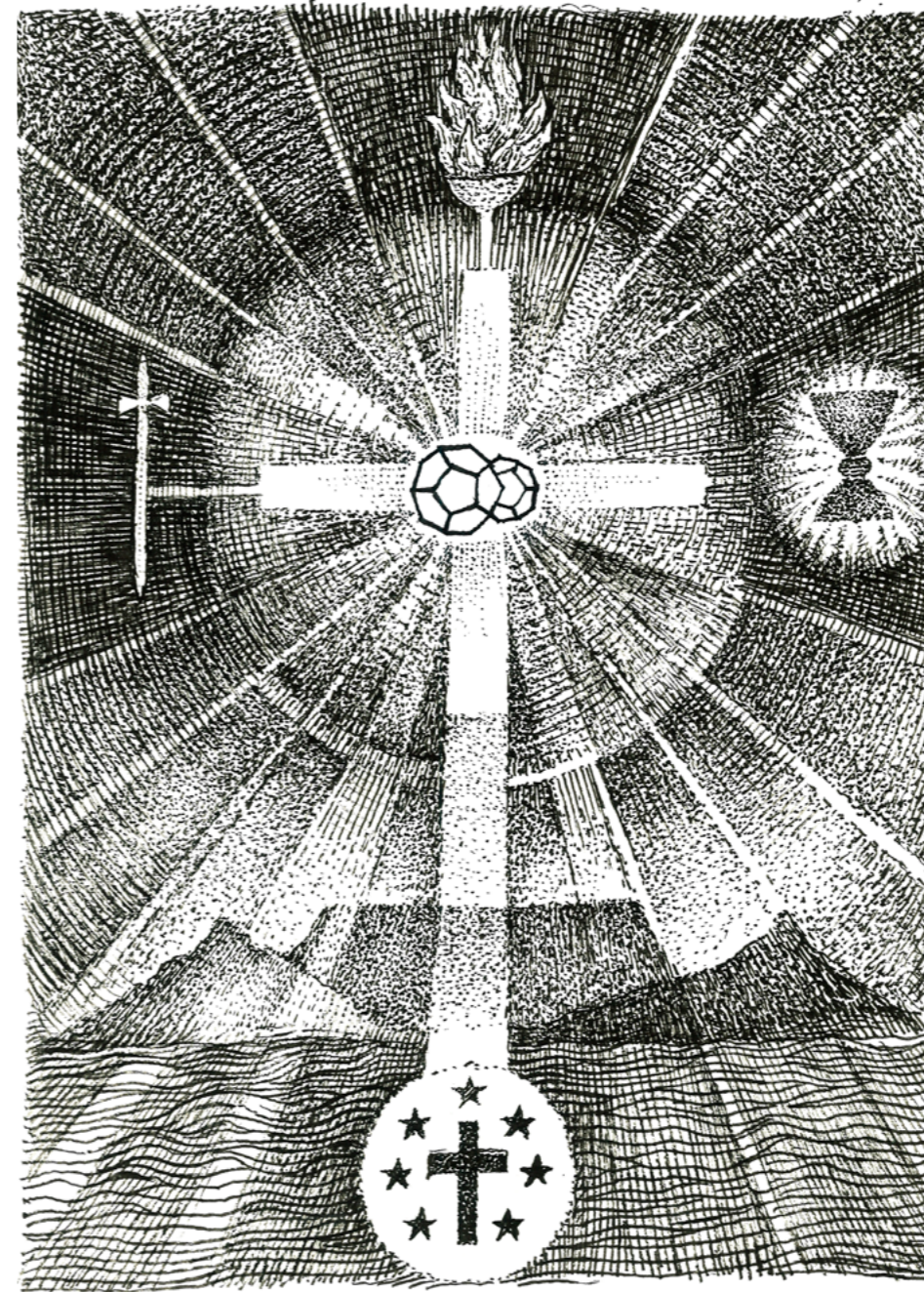
What we

From heads would want to guide

With willingness

"We are spiritual beings who have lived many times and we will live again many more times on this planet. Whatever happens to us now is temporary, however, what will last is how we respond to what happens."

Martin Wigand



After reading Martin's article "Humanity at a Crossroads" I felt that I couldn't put any other article next to it, but then this image came to me as *the* image that needed to be on this page. This artwork was done by Cyril Coetzee this year for the Christmas Conference book that Linoia Pullen compiled.

Cecilia

"Zeylmans van Emmichoven wrote a succinct and magnificent book on the Foundation Stone, in which he placed it in the context of the Rosicrucian alchemical tradition of the Philosophers Stone. Zeylmans visited Cape Town and described Table Mountain as the altar at the foot of the Earth's etheric cross. He subsequently died in Cape Town and his ashes were scattered on Table Mountain. The four points of this cross, invoked in the verses of the Foundation Stone Meditation: "East and West, North and South" indicate many correspondences including the four incarnations of the Earth, the four bodies of Man and the 'Four streams' of ancient Mystery tradition which Rudolf Steiner united in the laying of the Foundation Stone of the First Goetheanum. The Eastern (Astral /Grail) stream and the Western (Etheric/Arthur) stream were united by Parzifal in the 9th Century. In the 20th Century Steiner united the Northern (Ego/ Germanic) and Southern(physical/Rosicrucian) streams with the other two".

Cyril Coetzee

At the foot of the World Cross

Cyril Coetzee Cape Town 23 March 22

Fugitive

1

The very softest of things can ride

like a galloping horse

through the very hardest of things,

like water through rock –

Thus, the invisible enters in.

Lao Tzu

Now in the third year of this uncertainty that has befallen the earth and its peoples, and we still up here on the mountain. We have built a writing room now, a well of silence, and from this small infinite space, mid-winter, a fire burning in the cast-iron stove, I gaze out and up at a narrow ravine high in the side of the towering mountain, where water births from hidden springs. I am surrounded by the earth in all its wildness, soaked in the generosity of time. But I sit typing on a small computer, I touch the portals of technology with the tips of my fingers, with the anxieties that infiltrate time itself.

Once, a long time ago, as part of a small group reflecting on its future, I was asked to conjure a fantasy of where I personally might be headed, in life, giving free reign to the fantastical. An image came to me. *I was high in the mountains, living rough, part of a small band of outlaws composed of men, women and children; we were on horseback, gazing down at the plains below, at a town on those plains at the foot of the mountain, some of us were heading down the precipitous mountain towards it; that town was our destination, our next incursion into the cultivated world, we were going to raid that town, it's what we did, but we were not going to plunder, that's not what we did, we were going to liberate minds from matter, stir thinking from established pattern, let gusts of cold mountain wind flare slumbering hearth-embers into flame. It's what we did – living rough cleared our thinking of the cobwebs of convenience; we were outlaws because our minds were untamed.*

Here on this mountain, now, that image rises before me as I sit at the work of making meaning. The simplicity of that fantasy, resonant as it remains, is slivered into complexity as I shift my gaze between the narrow ravine hanging from mountains above me, and this digital screen. The plains below have infiltrated the mountains, even the mountains of my mind. I try to think the world through – can the mountain, can I, survive the depredations – where, now, is the citadel?

*

About four years before Covid, I had a dream. It felt more like a prophecy. I dreamed I was in the mountains of my childhood, where I had walked mountains under my father's lead. *In the dream, side by side with an old friend, I stood in the grip of a raging storm that first shook the ground beneath our feet and then crumbled the fabled peaks of my childhood, one by one they crumbled through the chaos of wind and rain, lightning and thunder, they crumbled all about me, and I watched,*



disbelieving, mountains cannot disappear, they cannot be crumbled; I was not scared for my physical body as rocks and rubble flew past me, but I was deadly scared for my world. When the peaks lay crumbled at my feet, I could see through to iconic Table Mountain in Cape Town, 300 kms away – there was no way that such a mountain could be collapsed. But it too, I watched collapse in the storm. I felt my heart collapse. The dream allowed me to see through to the city – it too had crumbled. Further to the east there were still mountains standing, on the rim of my vision. The dream feels prophetic, but I have found it impossible to quite believe in my own certainty. Covid came, and still I was not convinced. Now, three years later, I see a world that I have known and lived in all my life, crumbling in upon itself. The mountains I live in now lie beyond the still standing mountains of the dream's horizon. Our lives ask that we live here; but what are these mountains in a crumbled world?

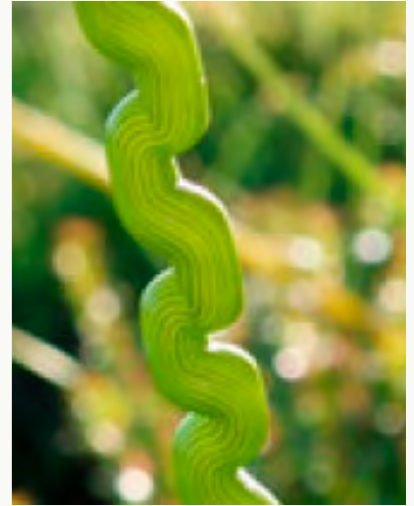
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In early 2020, we had arranged to run a post-graduate diploma for practitioners working at the interface between society and the environment. Our practice foregrounds active observation as a central contribution to social dynamics; it strives for an approach that accompanies life as it unfolds. To experience life inside its own undulating process, to develop a gaze that participates in its emergence.

Before we could engage with our students, Covid lockdown ensured that we were not able to meet each other, let alone be together in the wild. We postponed the start of the course, then postponed again, but in early 2021 we knew that if the course did not start then, it would not start at all; we would have to be content with a digital medium. All the students would stay in their homes, but we would travel to our partner university's town, because on our candle-lit mountain, digital connectivity was compromised.

The first two week-long modules of a four module course took place on-screen, nervously. Despite our trepidation, the first module astounded us; it proved a ground-breaking week. For all of us though, even as we were learning, the consequences of working in this way began to grind, the disjunct between life and screen never diminished, the burden of technological mediation became ever more onerous.

It's sobering how effectively that which is obvious keeps escaping our attention. We took our practice, geared towards a relationship



with life based upon attention, and tried to teach it through digital tech. We know this is a compromise, but we live with compromises; life adapts to meet what is coming towards it. It is not, perhaps, dishonourable, neither unsuccessful. But it is necessary to pay attention to that which continually keeps escaping.

On the mountain, everything interweaves. There is no organism that is not interwoven through all others; in every organism, all the elements – fire, air, water, earth, light, dark, time, space – are dissolved. Re-formed. Interwovenness is as much inner idea as outer reality, as much a way of being as a way of seeing. Our consciousness is interwoven with the myriad energies and activities of the living world in which we are so thoroughly immersed, they give us our being, they enable us to breathe, and to think.

It is so evident, amidst mountain, that separation and belonging give each other their meaning, that growth means decay, that the elements dissolve themselves into each moment and pour themselves through each organism, that every organism is a member of a bigger whole, a larger integrity, that life's intelligence is never mechanical or standardised but is in every moment specific and responsive and creative and necessarily collaborative. Interwovenness trembles in life's fingertips; no organism can live sundered from the whole.

We do not conjure the idea of interwovenness from the outside. Life's intelligence is the source of our own – interwovenness defines human thinking, it is what thinking does. The phenomena of life may appear to our senses as isolated events, but thinking reveals their relationships. When we see connections and symbiosis not primarily as subjective supposition but as drawn from the interwoven core of nature's being, we find life beginning to reveal itself. We can see interwovenness directly – yet only from within; separate us, and the nature of thinking, the core of our intelligence, begins to splinter.

We are seduced by a counterfeit connectivity when our relationships become mediated by digital technologies; we may also lose connection. Pay attention to that which continually keeps escaping attention – from the very first moment of these Covid Wars, I wondered who was at war, and with whom.

*

We would be safe, we were told, as long as we stayed at home. Stay at home, isolate yourselves, maintain (or create) social distance, make sure that you wear a mask (hide the individuality of your face), become compliant (make compliance the cornerstone of your culture), see everyone other as a threat, and recognise from the outset that you are prisoners (subject to lockdown, by decree). And if you wish to communicate, there are screens, and you will be provided with the technology through which you will communicate.

When I first saw the faces on the screen in an online meeting, I knew, immediately, that I must be one of those faces too, and that, so long as we used the screen to mediate our relationships, there would be no escape. I could see – though convenience makes monkeys of us all – that we were prisoners, each in our own cell, able to talk in specific ways, each separated from the other, kept apart but allowed to 'connect' when needed. Not recognising that dis-connection is the premise contained in the design brief – thou shalt not get together, thou might talk but shall remain separate, thou shalt sweat to remain a society.

So we cannot touch, we cannot embrace, we cannot share a cup of tea – we cannot even look into each other's eyes. We cannot smell each other; the very field surrounding us is missing, and we become cutouts. In amongst the digital pixels, we lose the miracle of textured skin constantly renewing itself.

We can choose to be absent even when present; we can leave – but we can never really enter. Presence is the premise of life. Presence is intimate and immediate, our own porosity enables the other to enter. I noticed that my own porosity opened me not only to those I was meeting, but to the screen itself. (All the while, we stay tightly ensnared in our rigid frames.)

The more the screen enters into me, the more abstracted and dependent I become. The more I become the pixelated image that I see. It is exhausting, and demeaning, diminishing, to try so hard to be human, as though we are working from memory, from something we were taught at school, long, long ago, in another time.

If not only the idea, but the very activity of interwovenness is eradicated from our thinking, then our thinking, as we knew it, will cease; what, then, will it mean, 'to be human'?

*

The question is no simple lament, because 'being human' means there is no going back, we move towards the future, our destinies and our prophecies are as interwoven as our memories, we hunt knowledge, we break through the forms that we have previously created, we evolve towards the future breaking through the bedrock of the past; our consciousness is premised on evolution.

As the world has split into relentlessly warring camps fighting for their own hegemonies, dependent upon their own contradictions, it is hard to know when resistance turns into unwitting collusion, or when surrender might have the effect of turning exhaustion into energy.

I must pay attention to the turning.

These mountains produce their own fire. Their vegetative processes need fire, it is a way of being. The danger of that sudden flaring presence lurks and lingers. Yet, when I sit before the woodstove with bread needing to be baked, the fire in the firebox will not be hurried. It has nothing to say to my needs, my urgencies, my wish to push the temperature as high as possible as quickly as possible. It may burn fiercely but it remains languid, it will not be commanded. It has no button to push. Despite fire's possibility to ravage, the increase in the stove's heat is accomplished gradually, with a slow, considered dignity; it will not be used, and will only bake when its temperature allows. The hours of waiting are not to be bypassed. I am struck by the fire's quietness, by its inner tranquility and independence, it is never docile, but it is always cadenced, proceeding at its own pace, according to its own sensibility. It can be neither cowed nor incited by human need.

I realise that all the wildness surrounding me carries the same air of composure, responds to an inner resonance, determines its own way, without ever finding, or discovering, a need for resistance or urgency. Never passive, always in movement, active, yet never peremptory or imposing, always responsive, always embedded inside the life processes of all that lives inside it (through which it is composed), discriminating between, yet somehow out of its own knowing, uniting together. Never reactive, never servile. I feel both loved and ignored by a wisdom that I can cut to pieces with my needs but which, within its own absorbed lucidity, ever disdains the challenge.

Nights here are candlelit, there is never the flick of a switch and the suddenness of the piercing light that floods. Candles never glare, they seem only to offer a caressing glance, revealing and concealing simultaneously. And so, as the day wanes, as the late afternoon turns to early dusk, as the light seeps out and the darkness begins to gather, so the world around me starts to fade, becomes more indistinct, less substantial, edges blur, certainties subside, colour flares then collapses; I must put work away and give myself over to this unsettling transition. I find myself becoming more pensive, less assertive, in the midst of this trembling turning, a relinquishing of sword-sharp daylight for the raw vulnerability of a darkness that banishes conviction and sometimes even confidence; but admits angels. I tremble. A flick of an electric switch would banish all this in an instant but there is no switch, only the ritual lighting of candles; the softness of their light mingles with the evening as the waning tide of day mingles with the incoming darkness. A seeping of light, an influx of dark, a turning that I must – without the possibility of that switch – give myself over to, open myself up to. I enter the channel between night and day. When twilight is the turning, victory may be found through defeat.

In the fullness of time, life turns. There is no power that can deny it. Its inevitability is irrevocable. Everything must turn towards that which it is not, and in the turning it will find itself again, renewed, enlivened, turning once more.

Turning asks that a vulnerability appear even as certainty grows. It calls for the impenetrable to become permeable, for the hardening to develop a sensitivity, it calls for appearance to disappear and so allows it to appear again. Such turning defies strength and weakness; it takes precedence, it overrides them by showing each the truth of the other, by asking each to yield to the other, by proving their need of each other. Living amidst such turning is to experience how life finds its way through paying attention, through delicacy of response, through the texture of ambiguity.

Out there, on the plains, in the cities, in the bastions of knowledge, amongst the management of resources and the power of politics and the venalities of acquisition, cynicism is rife. This attempt to control and subjugate, convince or subdue, calls for resistance. Without resistance, certain defeat. Living on the mountain may pretend to such acts of resistance; yet it may also soften defiance. Defiance can prevent turning, resistance can challenge wisdom. Turning seeks surrender, acquiescence, acceptance; so it overcomes, through renewal.

How to resist forces that would dominate – when life asks for surrender so that it may turn, and renew itself at every turning? Can this be resistance when I am protecting a life and a place that renews itself through surrender?

2

*... wise men perceive approaching things.
Their hearing is sometimes, during serious studies, disturbed.
The mystical clamour of approaching events
reaches them.
And they heed it with reverence.*

Constantine P. Cavafy

Well into this third year of the Covid Wars, both certainties and doubts mount. My heart aches with all that we are losing, the tide of my resolve ebbs and flows. Tears come easily, outrage hardens me, words fail me, insight seeks me.

Already in the very early days of this current era, I knew that Covid, and all the measures of induced enforcement that arose from its narrative – not least the terrible weapon of so-called vaccination, the fomenting of social distancing, isolation and predatory discrimination, and the distortion that compliance is religious – already in the early days I sensed that something more serious than a pandemic was underway. Was the integrity of human Being itself under threat?

I knew, from early on, that I would be fugitive in this new world. I did not realise, until this year, that we would all become fugitive, every one of us. The human being as human being.

All through this time I have wondered about conspiracy. That people, groups, whole sectors of society, sometimes conspire, of this there can be little doubt. And the visibility of censorship, the collusions between powerful players, the many contradictions in a lockstep narrative, and the outrageous conflation of 'good science' with the injunction to compliantly 'follow the science' – all this attests to and indicates aspects of conspiracy. But, if outlawing the possibility of conspiracy as a factor in these world events, itself might be the greatest indicator of conspiracy, I wondered what lay at *this* conspiracy's core, what drove it, what still accomplishes the confounding extent



of its coherence across so many different individuals and groupings spread through the entirety of planet earth.

I write this text not as answer to this question, but as a way of looking further into it. I'm trying to see. Through the process of writing I'm trying to see. Because my heart aches so. Because I cannot find rest. Because to see, is to meet.

I know that, in the arena of bodily health, there is great fear to be preyed on, manipulated, and that fear draws the manipulators like fresh dung draws flies. I know there is great money to be made, great wealth to be sequestered, it is clear how much this has already been effected. I know that power corrupts. I know how gullible are the victims amongst us, how silent, how obedient, and I know that perpetrators are victims too. I know that we are all addicted to our own conveniences. I know of the morphological fields that spread unanticipated congruences amongst people, whom we must forgive for 'they know not what they do'. I know that there are indeed cabals that operate through password and sign and seal.

But we're talking, here, of the whole of earth, the entirety of the planet and all of its peoples.

*

With all that we are losing – what is taking its place? When put like this, a picture is suddenly exposed. A digital, technological world is rising around us, configuring and constellating its presence through altering, insidiously but relentlessly, every corner and crevasse and cleft and cranny of our world. And we corralled through the portals of its proliferating screens. Harried through crushed parcels of time. Sundered by techniques of surveillance. A world of calculation now surrounds, commands, cajoles us.

A few weeks ago, as night descended on a rocky outcrop, a small group of people saw a sight that haunts me, simply from their telling. Looking up at the stars in the wide passage of the night sky, they were suddenly confronted by a line of lights strung across a segment of night, inflexibly and severely spaced with a machine-like uniformity, the lights pulsing as they held their rigidity of line amidst the wild scattering of stars. As though they were tattooed into the very fabric of space, altering, in a moment, the sacred communion with which human beings have always approached the stars and constellations overhead. Altering them all forever.

I have been invaded by the eyes of those who shared this story, the first time I had met a firsthand sighting of the many lines of satellites that are now being stitched into the wild heavens. If you wish, you can track these lines on your tiny screen; you can track the narrowing of immensity. You can track the disappearance of intimacy.

Through recent years, in meeting environmental organisations, I have been shaken by forbidding shifts in language. The phrase 'ecosystem services' for things like water and air, the phrase 'ecological infrastructure' for things like mountains and rivers. The language of the predators gains traction in the domain of the hunted, the subtlety of these shifts sinister. As with the contempt that the uniformity of wind-farms displays for wild landscape, as with the demise of the untamed vastness of firmament, these shifts in language alter the world they describe, and we find ourselves surrounded by so much technological infrastructure, by so much 'service provision', that the mountains and rivers and wild waters and clean airs of our homeland earth are subsumed by the not-so-virtual walls of a digital prison from which there will be no escape.

Language is the medium through which we make meaning, through which we think our world – our thinking is under attack.

*

In the 1930s there was a magazine dedicated to technology, called simply *Technology*, and it defined technology as *the science of social engineering*. Lest we forget. On my necessarily reduced bookshelves which carry only the books that matter to me, there is a book that I was given by my erstwhile 'environmental studies' professor decades back, a book that I had more recently forgotten, until these Covid Wars descended – called *The Technological Society*, by Jacques Ellul, written in the '60s. I hauled it out to keep at my side through these last years. It impresses itself again: *technology constructs a society committed to the quest for continually improved means to carelessly examined ends; indeed, it transforms means into ends, and, conversely, transforms ends into means. It considers only what is useful, pays no attention to what is good. Purposes drop out of sight and efficiency becomes the central concern. As the political form best suited to the unprincipled use of technology, dictatorship gains in power.*

We know that technology is the handmaiden of the surveillance society, but it also opens the way, not least through 'vaccine passports', not least through the now rapidly escalating threat of universal

digital identity, not least through the replacement of hard currency with digital banking, or with the means to monitor all behaviour and individual footprints – it opens the way to becoming the controller itself.

Is this our real challenge, to resist the dictator as algorithm? Control through, and in the name of, efficiency – means become ends, ends become means – mind is being usurped, distorted, turned against itself.

Genetic modification, upon which the entire so-called ‘covid vaccination’ effort is premised, is a threat to the lives of individual human beings, yes. And yet, it is not the primary observation that rises to confront me as I consider the nature of the conspiracy. Human beings can be lost whilst humanity survives. The danger of this conspiracy, which may somehow be laying hold of the conspirators themselves – unbeknown then, even to them – lies precisely in this sense that we are in the midst of a war against humanity, as being. Genetic modification erodes the bedrock.

But the more corrosive and obscured danger of genetic engineering (and the technological assumptions on which it is based), is the distortion of thinking that it entails – if we venture to control life through cutting-and-pasting, then we have lost all sight of what life is; and, in so doing, we have surrendered the treasure that thinking is.

*

How, though, to defend the treasure, to hold on to the nub of ourselves, to resist coercion and collusion, to protect the thinking that is both our birthright and our most daunting task, when such thinking asks that we let go, surrender, allow, open ourselves, for it to be our treasured thinking at all?

3

*I am not playing with words.
I incarnate myself in the voluptuous and unintelligible phrases that
tangle up beyond the words.*

Clarice Lispector

We become the hunted.

Lives taken, time contracted, relationships severed, truth inverted, memories stolen, anticipations eroded, eyes lowered, backs bent.

Already in the early months of this era, I observed within myself that the future seemed as though it were being erased as the past became less and less accessible while between the two the present has become an attenuated, emaciated thing that bears little resemblance to the vastness that grows through our own relationship to it.

Imprisoned.

A shadow world rises – a global culture becomes no culture at all, isolation masquerades as connectivity, convenience confines, freedom is restricted to the compliant, individuality weakens the collective, society is achieved through separation, understanding becomes algorithmic.

Words are severed, like decapitated heads, and they no longer see, they no longer confer seeing, they no longer ‘tangle up’ into phrases whose meaning we reach up for with all the height at our disposal. We no longer reach beyond ourselves in order to find ourselves

through the reaching. We are losing our longing for what remains, always, just out of reach.

We have become prisoners of the device. Expediency guts us. It erodes the unintelligible intimacies linking resistance and surrender. Between fierceness and compliance, love dances with shadows.

4

*... I noticed that discovering new sides of a
word was the same as discovering new
sides of Being.*

Manuel de Barros

I stand before the tree, leaning against my own soul. Hushed, beyond words, gazing upon a miracle of dormancy, of quiescence.

Winter is turning to spring, with such incipience that in the midst of this turning, time has ceased, and eternity hovers, as though a pendulum had swung to the end of its arc, and is stilled yet called, trembling with immobility.

I am leaning against a solidity of stillness, inside the sweep of mountain; the tree is just across the way from me. Still as it is, it is also beginning to turn. In the quiet, I can hear the mountain’s song.

With its intricately interlaced lattice-work of branches shorn of leaves, etched black and silver against the encircling sky, in the quiet of the moment the stinkwood speaks, reminding me of words I had previously written, a ‘thousand pinpricks of green can be detected almost at the very moment they exude, through the stinkwood’s bark, a thousand green eyes opening out onto their cosmos, the tree in communion with every tiniest opening in the world around it’. The pinpricks of green emerging into leaves that unfold with the tiniest murmuring of voices, until in a few weeks’ time the tree will be humming with green and the woodwork of branches will be almost hidden, stitched into the harmony of the tree’s summer song.

In the stillness, this eternity inside the turning, the tree and I are caught in an embrace, a recognition between two beings, amidst being’s breath. A sugarbird, doyen of proteas, its perky curiosity led by the nonchalant probing of its long beak, lands on the exposed edge of a narrowing branch, holds itself against the sway of its landing, and looks about, surprised to find itself so obviously at home. It quietens, the swaying of the branch subsides, the three of us are caught in this transitory eternity that our own different movements have brought us to, this moment that belongs to us all, a single note within the song.

Outrageously, I wish I could capture the moment with a photograph; immediately, the hubris of this desire appears – from where, exactly, could the photograph possibly be taken?

*

Safely hidden within the lattice-work of branches, the eyes of the stinkwood – seeds without substance or surface, openings through which the material of the new season’s branches will unfold – tremble with the powerful potency that I feel within. The tree and I, we each have openings. The same openness that allows the tree into me, that shifts me to new ground within myself, allows the tree to



grow through being drawn out of itself by forces of sun, overarching sky, and the levity that lives on the other side of weight.

The notion of openness, the notion of presence, immersion in relationship, the question of meaning, the evolution of consciousness, the wisdom expressed through life’s thinking, the glory of language, the deftness of apprehension – all these are threatened obsolete as technocracy overwhelms the human being’s sensibilities.

*

Whether mechanical or digital, the hallmark of technology is control over the processes of life through the hegemony of efficiency. Understanding this is not (as they say) rocket science.

Digital technology calculates. A kind of shadow thinking, beguiling for all that. A lazy thinking. It cannot know wonder. Notions of nuance and subtlety escape it. It cannot experience porosity. Informed without being educated. It has no issue with taking a photograph of the moment between stinkwood and sugarbird and me, for it is never inside but always outside – this is where it takes the photo from.

It has no access to the inner, it has no access to the between, it has no access to meaning or to doubt; it has no inner world. It makes of thinking something in its own image, a manager of information, a calculus of probability and option and resolution. It has repetition but no experience. It ignores what cannot be parcelled as information. Worlds disappear. Words disappear. Life disappears.

Presence is replaced by abstraction. Abstraction takes the moment out of its living, breathing context, makes of the moment an ‘object’. To ‘objectify’ is to attempt to defeat polarity, the sublime polarity between subject and object – by deleting the subject. Digital technology’s very premise is cancellation of the human being.

The pursuit of efficiency becomes the pursuit of control. The eradication of individuality.

The word ‘pursuit’, though, is mistaken, misplaced, misguided – redolent with meaning, it assumes purpose, direction, appropriate to the entelechy that is a living organism.

The understanding of entelechy and the notion of technology do not easily interweave. Technology, usurping means with ends, and ends with means, cannot grasp the meaning of entelechy; this is the



meaning, we could say, of its inability to grasp meaning at all. We are at war.

*

When meaning disappears, we are left with brute matter. We can explain things simply. The cause of everything must lie in a material substratum. Somehow, particulate matter comes first, in a linear progression, leading eventually to the whole, which is a vague generality or commonality, a summary, a thought, rather than an active shaping that emerges from within (a thinking).

With active shaping disappeared, volition and responsibility disappear. Technology, through its diabolically clever, fast, binary and essentially manipulative calculations, rescues life.

We are drawn to matter, we seek only to be masters of the material – no more, because there is nothing more.

On the other hand.

Every inanimate object, every constructed artifact, is suffused with ideas. Everything that has been made, had a maker. The ideas of the maker flowed into the made artifact, and suffuse them still. There is nothing constructed, no artifact that has come to form, that is not informed by the ideas of its maker. If we are to search for the ‘meaning’ of an artifact, we must focus on its function and its context, and we will find the ideas out of which it was formed. Brute matter cannot come to form except through idea. Thinking informs everything.

Does thinking form organisms? Not, this time, our thinking – but the world’s thinking. Following de Barros above, as new sides of words reveal new sides of Being, so every organism reveals the Being who shapes its incarnate form, who gives life to its existence.

Life is the incarnation, the manifestation, the evolving, the development, the becoming, the transition, of invisible idea into formed material – organisms are infused with an underlying unity that orchestrates, that sculpts, that choreographs, that conducts them – until their animating ideas fade and they separate into particles of matter.

There is nothing ‘out there’ that is not formed through the process of thinking. Life is the process of thinking made manifest. The

incarnation of intelligence. Life is interwovenness, belonging and separation turning as they dance. Life is the world thinking itself into Being.

*

If life is the world thinking itself into Being, and technology is calculating into existence a spectral world that is cleverer than it is wise, and that presumes to be Master – do we have to engage in surrender and resistance simultaneously?

5

*We make out of the quarrel with others, rhetoric,
but out of the quarrel with ourselves, poetry.*

WB Yeats

In the early days of lockdown, an article was published in The Guardian that spun my mind. Beware of yoga classes, it warned, yoga classes are training grounds for conspiracy theorists, because they teach connectivity, that all things are connected, and the practice of connectivity – especially in thinking – is a training in conspiracy thinking. One puts things together (thus making, I assumed the article was saying, unfounded assumptions).

But ... connectivity, interwovenness, is the foundation, the basis, the practice, of all thinking. There is no thinking without connecting ideas, words, perceptions to concepts, making associations, recognising that, in the end, for thinking to be intelligent and intelligible, all and any phenomena that appear in our experience as isolated events are in some way inwardly related. To think otherwise is to imagine levels of separation, inner separation, that destroy even the possibility of coherent thinking (and conversation).

I wanted to scream in response. This attack has nothing, of course, to do with yoga, except so far as yoga is a discipline, a practice; all practices demand mastery of connectivity and interwovenness. The collusion between propaganda, censorship and the technocratic agenda seeks – as totalitarianism always has – to disembowel thinking.

It is not only the human being who will be 'taken out' if we follow the rules, it is life, all life, that will crumble together with us.

*

Reading the poet Jane Hirshfield some years ago, I awoke to an aspect of thinking illustrated through her reflections on poetry. She suggests that one way to get closer to the nature of poetry is to first parse a poem – as we are taught in school, to analyse a poem into its component parts and describe the relationship of the parts to each other, which will result in a 'translation' of the poem into its literal meaning – but then recognise that the real meaning, or heart, of the poem lies in the 'remainder', that which is left over after the parsing is done, that which escapes the literal rendering, that which cannot be spoken. It is here where the poem's life lies; poetry reveals, uncovers, awakens, this particular perception of meaning. The underlying idea is revealed, not as summary but as active energetic in the

poem's genesis. The mind, not as calculator or analyst, but as organ of perception.

The writer Clarice Lispector speaks of using words as bait in the act of fishing for non-bait; meaning always lies beyond the words, in another realm, another dimension, but the bait is necessary, the words are necessary, not only to reveal the meaning, but to create it. Unlike words, meaning does not sit there on the page, an instruction waiting to be accessed. Meaning hovers, as it does when reading any word or sentence or poem, reading hovers somewhere between the reader and the 'material' words printed on the page, or heard by the ear. Meaning never remains, and is never static; it only emerges when set alight through the meeting of reader and sentence, or reader and writer.

Meaning hovers, arises, it may work itself through words but lives beyond them, it cannot be analysed, it must be seen.

On the mountain, life hovers, always emerging, always coming into being and fading away, always between, always threading. If I pay no attention, if I do not experience the movement that is streaming around me – with every moment every organism is turning, unfolding – then I do not break through to the wonder that is life pouring itself through every fissure and node and layer and part, life riding on a wave of time, the two indistinguishable. Interwovenness, resounding within me, enables me to see its passage outside of me, surrounding me. Life hovers in the wild as meaning weaves through the mind, like a swarming of bees travelling across the open hillside.

Life thinks, and thinking lives, and when either movement or meaning is denied, both life and thinking will crack and crumble. The magic of Earth will be no more.

*

I try to catch the wonder of that which we protect, and the enigmatic nature of the protection. All around me, as life shapes and sculpts its way through forms that rise and fall, through the waxing and waning, through the ebb and flow, through the growth and decay, the process ever winding as water through waterway, as river through ravine, so the forms open to let life through. I feel the nature of the wild as I sit in its midst, that wildness is a letting go, a surrender to what must be. There is always something greater than the particular organism or moment, each life form and each moment of time a member of that greater intensity. The strength of each life form is its openness to surrender to the life flowing through it.

We grow through opening ourselves, we find the next movement of life through letting go of the form we have achieved. I feel the generosity in the sacrifice that is the action of letting go.

We carve and we craft, yes, we work to find the way through – yet, the way through is an opening, not a closing. All around me – the gift of these mountains, their sage ability to accept without being vanquished, to hold without holding on, to find ways of allowing that enable movement forward.

As with the wild, so with the poem, with a thinking that sees – the meaning that hovers in the poem's mind, that forms the poem's words and cadences, that stirs the heart of the reader's seeing – it emerges, and is continually emerging, together with the poem's forming. We do not sit amongst that which is formed; we are forming ourselves through that which we are forming.

*

I struggle to realise the magic of opening, of surrender, within myself. I feel myself stretched between opposing poles, as Rilke put it. Inside myself is where God learns, he implies in the same poem. I feel only my poverty, an inner destitution, all that is being lost, an outraged wounded howl forming in my throat. I search for the citadel within.

The ubiquitous, juggernaut nature of the technology that is accelerating to confront the human being and our relationship with earth, is vicious. I am not easily able to read it, it advances, it imprisons, it erodes mind, it substitutes life, it kills – or rather, it gives us the power to kill, to imprison, to substitute, to erode. It also gives us abilities to resolve so very many situations. There is coming a time, when the power that it gives us may rob us of all power.

I am convinced of only one thing. If we do not attend to meaning, meaning disappears. It appears, and disappears, through us.

Meaning is not given; yet neither can it be wrested. Meaning arises through letting go, yet never ceasing to pay attention.

Never surrender the right to pay attention, never surrender the right to contemplate that which we see. Never surrender the right to communicate what we have seen, in the way that will show it. So that meaning may live. These are not rights, these are the keys to human Being. They are what lives between us and the coldness that would be Master.

I sit outside, midday, in the shade of a cheesewood tree, writing. Winter turning to spring. Sunlight dancing; cold in the shade. A patch of low-lying succulents stretching across the hillside at my feet, sour figs we call them, dazzling pink flowers, shining cerise, wide open, staring upward at the bees. A thousand bees humming amongst the flowers.

Allan Kaplan
Towerland



*With all that we are losing
– what is taking its place?
When put like this, a picture
is suddenly exposed. A digital,
technological world is rising
around us, configuring and
constellating its presence
through altering, insidiously
but relentlessly, every corner
and crevasse and cleft and
cranny of our world. And we
corralled through the portals of
its proliferating screens. Harried
through crushed parcels of
time. Sundered by techniques
of surveillance. A world of
calculation now surrounds,
commands, cajoles us.*

*“Language is the
medium through which
we make meaning,
through which we
think our world – our
thinking is under
attack.”*

Three Steps Towards an Understanding of our World Situation:

Review of an Inner Development Module led by Richard Goodall over three Wednesday evening in October at Sophia House.

Art offers us an opportunity to understand our world situation. According to Rudolf Steiner, the most consequential gift of art to the evolution of humankind is that it provides training for an understanding of future problems: "What we perceive of the human being with physical eyes bears the same relation to the true supersensible reality of the human being as the picture on the canvas bears to the reality it depicts. A deep inner experience of art is imbued with something that enables us to understand the human being in its picture-nature. In the epoch of the Consciousness Soul we must develop the capacity to comprehend humankind symbolically."¹

During October, Richard Goodall succeeded in using art to guide more than twenty participants to a deeper understanding of our current world situation and the future problems Steiner referred to in 1918. He achieved this by developing symbolic images through compelling use of language and storytelling, and then asking us to take hold of these images by drawing them on art paper using coloured chalk. He thoughtfully guided us in an interactive way towards an inner experience of each of three steps that he presented as three stories, or topics, namely: Snow White and the task of Michael; the Pietá and the task of the Consciousness Soul; and, the Little Tailor and the striving of Ahriman.

ARTISTIC METHODOLOGY

Each module culminated in a completed artwork on the blackboard, thoughtfully conceptualised and enthusiastically presented. Participants were methodically guided in forming their own rendition of these artworks on a square piece of paper. Chalk lends itself to be scraped into a fine powder using a coin or metal washer. This fine substance can then be rubbed onto art paper by moving the palm of a hand or fingers in a rhythmic motion, creating a layer that can become the foundation of subsequent darker layers on which images can be drawn. For three consecutive Wednesday evenings in

October, we would settle down, prepare our artistic space and start the creative process by building up layers. Beginning with the lightest colour and working our way towards darker ones, we would set the scene for a story to unfold on the page in front of us.

When chalk layers on paper become successively darker, eventually only the top layer appears as visible. This bears the same relation to the reality of our world and cosmology as seen through the lens of Anthroposophy; i.e. layers of interwoven supersensible hierarchical spiritual substance (being) becoming successively more dense, until what is generally perceived represents only the most dense layer, the physical. Thankfully, we were provided with a piece of cotton wool and eraser putty, with which darker layers could be magically lifted to reveal an unblemished state of affairs: a significant intervention that helps in realistically depicting our evolving human consciousness while deepening participant's inner experience of the artistic process. As Richard's stories would unfold and change, images or parts of images were drawn, erased (or lifted) and redrawn, often to be transformed again at a later point.

SNOW WHITE AND THE TASK OF MICHAEL

Using colour we explored why humanity had to descend from the world of living thinking to that of abstract thought. Through our own efforts we now have the possibility to climb the ladder back to the world of reality. Making reference to Rudolf Steiner's 'Michael letters', published as Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts, Richard reminded us that our innate capacities, gifted to us by the hierarchies, lie dormant until we take steps to engage with the world around and within us. The story of Snow White in all its detail bears a remarkable resemblance to this process of awakening. Imbued with deep and meaningful symbolism it can be an important reminder of what we can do to meet our world situation, when seen and understood from the perspective of Anthroposophy.

WAND THE TASK OF THE CONSCIOUSNESS SOUL

Contemplation of Michelangelo's marble sculpture and the unique circumstances around its conception and creation, was followed by pursuing the question: What is the real battle between Michael and Ahriman in our time and how do we awaken resurrection forces in our thinking? We were guided towards an experience of why death and darkness are necessary portals for the discovery of true life. Reference was made to Steiner's Knowledge of Higher Worlds and the organs of perception that must be developed if we are to overcome the deadening effect of materialistic thinking, and reconnect with the foundational spiritual reality ("layers") that can lead to living human thinking.

THE LITTLE TAILOR AND THE STRIVING OF AHRIMAN

We came to see why recognising and understanding your enemy is the first and most important step towards victory in the battle for freedom and that freedom is a matter of consciousness. Creating an original threefold composition converging around the human "I" (depicted centrally as the eternal present incorporating past and future), Richard combined three panels each telling a story based loosely in the past (the baptism of Jesus), the present (Ahriman and Lucifer interfering with the human soul faculties of thinking, feeling and willing in our time) and the future (Christ offering humanity the possibility of redemption in our thinking, feeling and willing in order to achieve "I" consciousness).

CONCLUSION

Richard Goodall created three original pieces of art and succeeded in getting participants to recreate their own renditions of these three compositions. He managed to weave in imaginative stories rich in symbolism, art history, historical facts, important indications from Rudolf Steiner, and some insightful and often humorous commentary. His remarkable effort resulted in each participant going home with three square pieces of heavily chalked up art paper resembling a sort of microcosmic stage on which important stories play out. Much of what was drawn, was erased, redrawn, and transformed again. The three art squares we took home with us therefore, really only represent a part of the stories we heard. Nevertheless, the pictures on the paper bears a resemblance to the reality it depicts. The experience of reproducing these three works of art was imbued with something that helped us to understand our world situation better. Reflecting on the process as I gaze at the three art squares on my wall fills me with hope for the future and a sense of gratitude towards Richard Goodall and Caroline Hurner for arranging these modules, preparing the space, and providing participants with art materials and delicious meals.

Gideon Malherbe



“ he thoughtfully guided us in an interactive way towards an inner experience of each of three steps that he presented as three stories, or topics, namely: Snow White and the task of Michael; the Pietá and the task of the Consciousness Soul; and, the Little Tailor and the striving of Ahriman”

1. Rudolf Steiner, From Symptom To Reality in Modern History, p.120 - 121, 1976 - Lecture 5, given in Dornach on 26 October 1918, The supersensible element in the study of history.

Quotes expressing the Sophia Wisdom in these times

Lorraine Forbes gathered these rich collection of quotes while working on The Sophia Foundation website. The Sophia Foundation – which Lorraine founded in 2012, is a non-profit organisation with the intention of stimulating and encouraging upliftment of the human

spirit by fostering a love of Wisdom, Beauty, Truth and Compassion. The Foundation is dedicated to raising consciousness amongst people in the interests of themselves, society and the whole of the natural world.

“... after a century devoted to innumerable wars – a question dawning in various quarters: Is humanity capable of learning anything from its experiences that can then become strong enough to avert similar disasters in the future? It will fall to the twenty-first century to wrestle with this question or ultimately to self-destruct.”

Virginia Sease

Emeritus member of the Executive Council of the Goetheanum

Perhaps never before has so much in our lives changed so dramatically and quickly. It seems everything has been upended, leaving no solid ground beneath our feet. How can we draw on our inner wisdom and the wisdom of the ages to get to the heart of our stress, anger, grief and fear.

Omega Institute

Sophia is the Goddess of Wisdom flowing throughout Nature. For the ancient Greeks, the ultimate goal of Philosophy was to attune with the inherent grammar they found in Nature – the word Philosophy coming from Philae – to Love, and Sophia – Wisdom – to love, embody and embrace the very Wisdom found within Nature.

Just as the seed of the plant brings forth blossoms in the future, so will Wisdom bring forth human blossoms if it is planted into man’s soul. Human morality will arise. Wisdom is the seed, the soul is the receptacle and morality is the blossom and fruit of the plant.

Rudolf Steine

Over time we have tended towards a Philosophy of Rationalism and a science of Materialism – grasping, extracting, defining, categorising, manipulating and exploiting the world around us. This is an important part of what makes us human. It becomes a problem when it begins to dominate our reality affecting the way in which we relate to the world, creating the illusion of separation, and castrating us from Nature and each other.

Extracted from Giles Hutchins Transformational Leadership

Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of Nature and its beauty.

Albert Einstein

The goal of life is to make your heartbeat match the beat of the Universe, to match your nature with Nature.

Joseph Campbell, Mythologist

As a principle, all that men will discover in the course of the Earth’s evolution is already present in Nature. But what the human being will really give to the Earth is love, a love which will evolve from the most sensuous to the most spiritualised form of love. This is the mission of the Earth evolution. The earth is the cosmos of love.

Rudolf Steiner

In Nature everything is distinct yet nothing defined into absolute, independent singleness.

William Wordsworth

The true ground of all being is the infinite, intangible spirit that infuses all living beings.

David Bohm, Physicist

This divine ground is within and all around us. We need to create a sanctuary within ourselves to listen to its guidance. Beyond our day-to-day world, beyond our usual human experience, lies a vast and fathomless world.....

Anne Baring, Psychologist

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.

Albert Einstein

Man is not a being who stands still, He is a being in the process of becoming. The more he enables himself to become, the more he fulfils his mission.

Rudolf Steiner

The greatest breakthroughs of the 21st Century won’t occur because of technology, they will occur because of an expanding concept of what it means to be human.....

John Nayek, Business Future

...to help us homo sapiens live up to our name – wise beings in a deeply wise, sentient and inter-connected world.

Giles Hutchinson

The right interpretation of “Anthroposophy” is not “the wisdom of man” but rather “the consciousness of one’s humanity.” In other words, the reversing of the will, the experiencing of knowledge, and one’s participation in the time’s destiny, should all aim at giving the soul a certain direction of consciousness, a “Sophia”.

Rudolf Steiner GA 257

ASWC PROCESS 2023

A plan has been born out of the ASWC AGM for a process together:

ANTHROPOSOPHY

Revealing and Illuminating Anthroposophy in ourselves and in the World

– a year of practicing recollection, mindfulness and beholding.

SAVE THESE DATES

18 February – Start up day for Members

27 April to 1 May – The big event a retreat in Cape Town with Wider Movement

29 July – Touching base together, shorter meeting after Class Lesson.

14 October – How are we doing?

18 November – Anthroposophy a Festival, open wide.

with enthusiasm

Caroline Hurner, Cecilia Solis-Peralta, Liz Smith, Maaianne Knuth and Sue Soal

Kairos Eurythmy

End of Year Sharing

Our community can be deeply grateful for the dedication and striving that can be experienced by trainers and students alike at the Kairos Eurythmy Training. Homage too goes towards the whole Centre for Creative Education for their courage and endurance to navigate these times in support of all their students, who leave as graduates well equipped to bring about positive change in our world.



Photos:

Kairos Students share their work at the end of year celebration 19 November 2022.

Kairos Students and Trainers

Recent Gifts to Sophia House

Beverly Hart has generously lent the Society a bronze sculpture 'Angel' by Johannes Jellinek. You will find it greeting you in our Library.

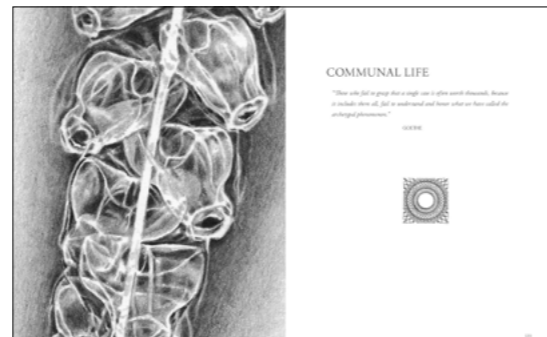
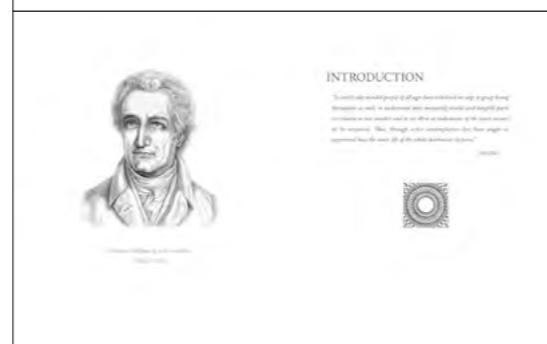
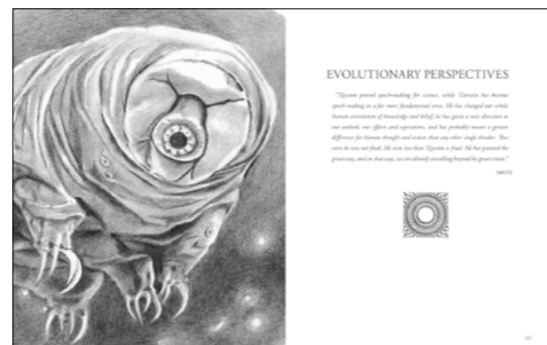
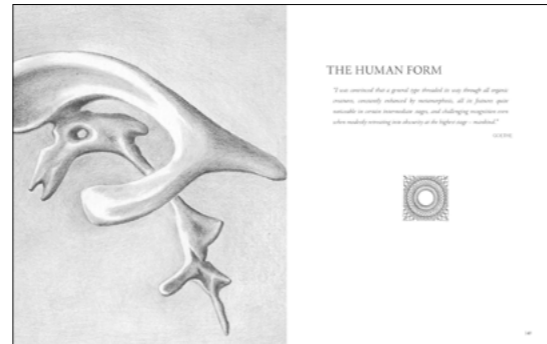
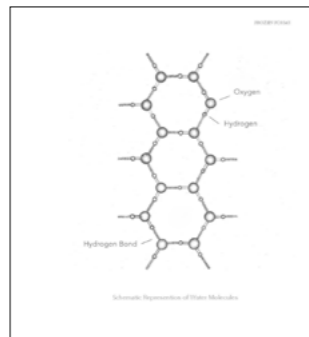
Richard Cox has given our library his recently published book 'Of Signs and Signatures'. It has taken him many years of careful research and pondering to write. Here he shares a few words on the book.

Why did I write the book Of Signs and Signatures? The subtitle Reading Nature's Script with Goethe and Smuts gives part of the answer. As a teenager in the 60's, I was among the millions who read The Naked Ape, a best seller by Desmond Morris about the human being that appeared to demolish any notion of purpose or spirituality in life and left me genuinely perplexed. It was powerful and I had to wait until I was twenty to rediscover my true roots. It was through Steiner and Goethe that I was able to see the bigger picture and on the journey, I had been intrigued by the philosophical writing of Jan Smuts whose writing my father had mentioned.

Since then, I have wanted to share my relief and delight at seeing the bigger picture, a picture that was so beautifully enriched by my two years at Emerson College in England. There I plunged into all that Goethean Science offered and I have followed the developments that emerged later in researchers such as Bockemuhl, Suchantke, Shad, and Verhulst. Their insights are amazing and not read enough.

The link between Goethe and Smuts is a story that to my knowledge has never been told. Goethe introduced morphology to the world and Smuts introduced holism to the world. Their combined efforts have provided a basis for a holistic empiricism that is both inspiring and healing. The book is not a light read but I hope it provides a journey of discovery and affirmation for anyone interested to look a little deeper into the script and patterns of life. What they show through metamorphosis and evolution is the gradual unfolding of freedom, the foundation of unencumbered love.

Richard Cox



Books

The following books have been bought for our library this this year with funds donated by the Basil Gibaud Memorial Trust.

Rosicrucianism Renewed – The Unity of Art, Science and Religion. The Theosophical Congress of Whitsun 1907 by Rudolf Steiner

Medicine An introductory Reader – by Rudolf Steiner

The Mystery of the Heart – Studies on the Sacramental Physiology of the Heart. Aristotle | Thomas Aquinas | Rudolf Steiner by Peter Selg

Illustrated Tales of Dwarfs and Fairy Folk – by Daniela Drescher

The Depth of the Lake and the Height of the Sky – by Jihyun Kim

Eurythmy and Rudolf Steiner; Origins and Development 1912 – by Tatiana Kieseleff tr Dorothea Mier

Biodynamic Beekeeping – A Sustainable Way to Keep Happy, Healthy Bees – by Matthias Thun

Eurythmy as Visible Singing – by Rudolf Steiner

The Mission of the New Spirit Revelation; The Pivotal Nature of the Christ Event in Earth Evolution – by Rudolf Steiner

Bridges between Life and Death – by Iris Paxino

Initiative - The karmic spiritual impulse of the followers of Michael. How Ahriman works into personal intelligence – by Rudolf Steiner

Education for the Future - How to nurture health and human potential? – by Michaela Glöckler

Raising a Vaccine Free Child – by Wendy Lydall

The Future Art of Cinema – Rudolf Steiner's Vision – by Reto Andrea Savoldelli

The Mystery of Musical Creativity - The Human Being and Music by Hermann Beckh

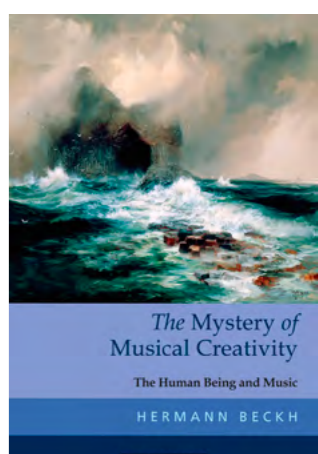
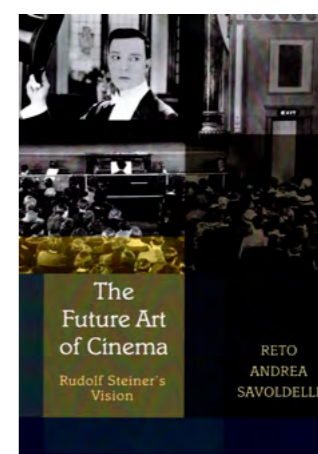
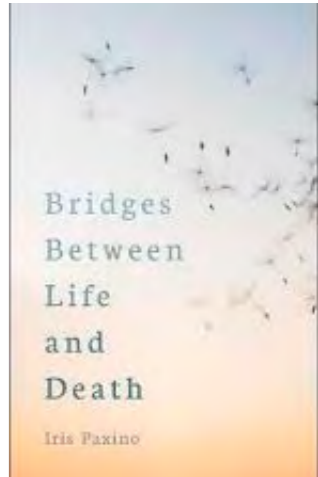
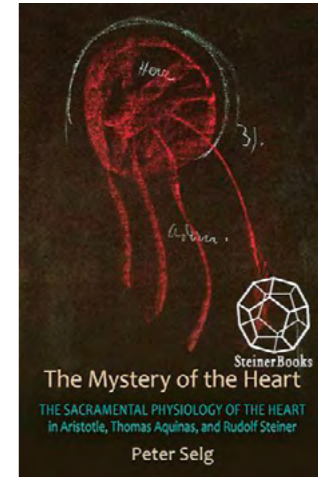
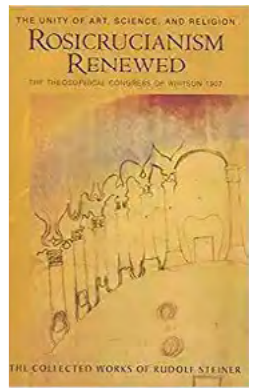
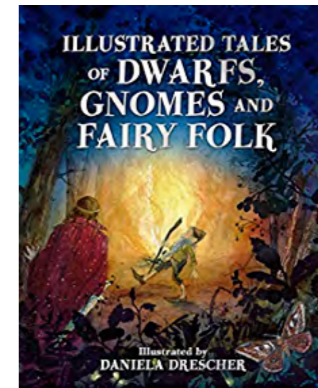
World History and the Mysteries: In the Light of Anthroposophy (CW 233) by Rudolf Steiner

True & False Paths of Spiritual Research as part of the newly published Collected Works of Rudolf Steiner

Thank You

A depth of gratitude to **Naureen Ngumbela** our incredible cleaning lady, she works with integrity, dedication and attention to detail and has brought such a beautiful and warm presence into Sophia House. We feel very blessed and fortunate to have her work alongside us.

We also thank **Clinton Lukhele** for delivering untold truckloads of rubble and **Kenneth Kamenya** for shifting so much of it spade by spade into our swimming pool! Consequently we are delighted to announce our pool is filled and now only needs a proper surfacing and some cosmetic care.



THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

The Mission of the Earth

20 May 1908, Hamburg – GA 103 – Rudolf Steiner

... continued from previous newsletter

... secreted within the Earth. Just as wisdom was prepared upon the Moon, that it might be found everywhere on the Earth, so is love now being prepared here in this Earth evolution. If you were able to look back upon the ancient Moon with clairvoyant vision, you would see that wisdom was not to be found everywhere at that time. You would find many things still lacking in wisdom. Only gradually throughout the whole of the Moon evolution was wisdom stamped upon the outer world. When the Moon had fully completed its evolution, everything was then pervaded by a wisdom which was to be found everywhere. Inner wisdom first appeared upon the Earth with the human being, with the ego. This inner human wisdom had to be developed by degrees.

Just as wisdom was evolved upon the Moon, in order that it might now be found in all things, so in like manner is love evolving. Love came into existence first in its lowest, its most sensuous form, during the Lemurian period, but during the course of life upon the earth, it will become ever more and more spiritualized, until at last, when the earth has reached the end of its evolution, the whole of existence will have become pervaded with love, as today it is pervaded with wisdom, and this will be accomplished through the activity of human beings if they but fulfil their task.

The Earth will then pass over to a future planetary condition which is called Jupiter. The beings who will wander about upon Jupiter, just as human beings move about upon the earth, will find love exhaling from all creatures, the love which they themselves, as human beings, will have placed there during their life upon the earth. They will find love in everything just as we today find wisdom everywhere. Then human beings will develop love out of their own inner selves in the same way that they are now little by little evolving wisdom. The great cosmic love that here upon the Earth is beginning its existence will then permeate all things. The materialistic mind does not believe in a cosmic wisdom, only in a human wisdom. If men would consider the course of evolution with unprejudiced minds, they would be able to see that all cosmic wisdom in the beginning of the Earth's evolution was advanced as far as human wisdom will be at the end of it. In those times when names were more accurately chosen than they are today, the subjective wisdom active in the human being was called "intelligence," in contra-distinction to the objective cosmic wisdom. Men do not notice that what they discover in the course of Earth-life had already been won during life upon the Moon and implanted in the earth by divine-spiritual beings. Let us take an example.

How it is drummed into the heads of the school children, the great progress humanity has made through the discovery of paper! But wasps had already produced paper many thousands of years ago,

for what the wasps build into their nests consists of exactly the same substance as that out of which men now produce paper and it is produced by the wasp in exactly the same way — only by means of a life-process. The wasp-spirit, the group-soul of the wasps, which is a part of divine-spiritual substance, was the discoverer of paper long before men made the discovery.

The human being, in fact, always follows along groping his way behind the cosmic wisdom. As a principle, all that men will discover in the course of the Earth's evolution is already present in nature. But what the human being will really give to the Earth is love, a love which will evolve from the most sensuous to the most spiritualized form of love. This is the mission of the Earth-evolution. The Earth is the cosmos of love.

Let us ask: — What then is essential for love? What is essential in order that one person love another? It is this — that he be in possession of his full self-consciousness, that he be wholly independent. No one can love another in the full sense of the word if this love be not a free gift of one person to another. My hand does not love my organism. Only one who is independent, one who is not bound to the other person, can love him. To this end the human being had to become an ego-being. The ego had to be implanted in the threefold human body, so that the Earth might, through mankind, fulfil its mission of love. Therefore, you will understand Esoteric Christianity when it says: — Just as other forces, of which wisdom is the last, streamed down from divine beings during the Moon period, so now love streams into the Earth and the bearer of love can only be the independent ego which develops by degrees in the course of the evolution of the Earth.

The human being, however, had to be very slowly prepared for all this, likewise for his present kind of consciousness. Let us suppose, for instance, that in the ancient Lemurian period, the human being had been immersed in his physical body — he would then at that time have seen the full outer reality, but at such a swift tempo he would not have been able to implant love in the world. He had to be guided little by little to his earthly mission. The first instruction in love was given him during the time of a dawning consciousness, before he possessed full self-consciousness, before he was evolved far enough to observe the objects about him with clear, waking-day consciousness. Thus we see that during those ages when the human being still possessed an ancient, dreamy clairvoyant consciousness, when the soul was for long periods outside the physical body, love was being implanted within him in his dull, not yet self-conscious condition. Let us clearly picture the soul of this human creature of olden times which had not yet reached the height of full self-consciousness.

The human being fell asleep at night, but there existed no abrupt transition from waking to sleeping. Images emerged, vivid dream-pictures, which, however, possessed a living relationship to the spirit world — this means that the human creature familiarized himself with the spirit world during sleep. Into him, into his dull state of consciousness, the Divine Spirit dropped the first seed of all love activity. The power that manifests itself as love in the course of evolution on the Earth streamed at first into mankind during the night. The God who brought the true earthly mission to the Earth revealed Himself first in the night to the dim, ancient clairvoyant consciousness before He could reveal Himself to clear, waking day-consciousness.

Then slowly and gradually the time spent in a dim, clairvoyant state of consciousness became shorter and shorter, the day-consciousness

became ever longer, and the boundaries of the aura around the physical objects gradually lessened and disappeared, the objects taking on clearer and clearer outlines. Formerly the sun and moon were seen surrounded by a mighty halo as though lying in a mass of fog. Only slowly did the whole aspect become clear and objects assume distinct outlines. By degrees the human being arrived at this condition. What he then saw externally, while the sun shone upon the earth, revealing to him by means of visible light the whole of earth-life, minerals, plants and animals — all this he experienced as the revelations of the Divine in the outer world.

From the standpoint of Esoteric Christianity, what is it that is visible during waking-day consciousness? In the broadest sense of the word, we may ask: — Of what does the Earth consist? It is a manifestation of divine powers, an outer material manifestation of inner spirituality. If you turn your gaze upward toward the sun or toward what is to be found upon the earth, you will see everywhere a manifestation of Divine-Spirituality. This Divine-Spirituality, in the present form, lying as it does at the foundation of all that appears to clear, waking-day consciousness, in other words, the invisible world behind this entire visible day-world, this is called in Esoteric Christianity, the "Logos" or the "Word." For just as from the human being speech can finally come forth, be uttered from his own inner being, so too has everything, animal kingdom, plant kingdom, mineral kingdom first come forth into existence from the Logos. Everything is an incarnation of the Logos and just as your soul rules invisibly within your inner being and creates an external body, so too everything in the world of a soul nature creates for itself the external body fitted to it and manifests itself through some sort of physical organism. Where, then, is the physical body of the Logos, of which the Gospel of St. John speaks? It is this we wish today to bring more and more into our consciousness. In its purest form, this external physical body of the Logos appears especially in the outer sunlight. But the sunlight is not merely material light. To spiritual perception, it is just as much the vesture of the Logos, as your outer physical body is the vesture of your soul.

If you were to confront a human being in the same way the greater part of humanity today confronts the sun, you could never learn to know that human being. Your relation to each human individual possessing a feeling, thinking and willing soul would be such that instead of presupposing a psycho-spiritual part within him, you would simply touch a physical body and imagine that it might even be made of *papier maché*. If, however, you wish to penetrate to the spiritual in the sunlight, you should consider it just as you consider the bodily part of a human being in order to learn to know his inner nature. The sunlight has the same relationship to the Logos as your body has to your soul. In the sunlight something spiritual streams down upon the Earth. If we are able to conceive not only the sun-body, but also the sun-spirit, we find that this spiritual part is the love that streams down upon the Earth. Not alone the physical sunlight awakens the plants into life — they would wither and die if the physical sunlight did not act upon them — but together with the physical sunlight, the warm love of the Godhead streams to earth. Human beings exist in order that they may take into themselves the warm love of the Divine, develop it and return it again to the Divine. But they can only do this by becoming self-conscious ego-beings. Only then will they be able to render back this love.

When men began — at first for a very short time — to live in waking-day consciousness, they could perceive nothing of the light, that light which at the same time enkindled love. The light shone into the darkness, but the darkness was unable yet to comprehend it. If this

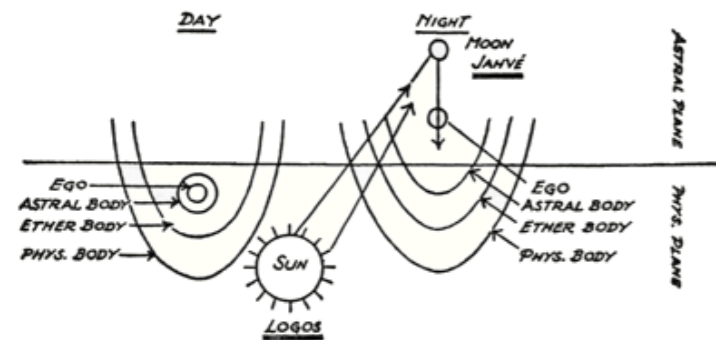
light, which is at the same time the love of the Logos, had only manifested itself during the short day hours, humanity would not have been able to grasp this light of love. But love streamed into human beings in the dull clairvoyant dream-consciousness of those ancient times. Now, let us glance behind existence at a great significant cosmic mystery.

Let us express it thus: — The cosmic guidance of our earth was of such a character that for a time, in an unconscious way, love streamed into humanity in its dim, clairvoyant state of consciousness and inwardly prepared it to receive this love in full, clear, waking-day consciousness. We have seen that our Earth gradually became the cosmos that was to accomplish this mission of love. The earth is shone upon by the present sun. Just as human beings dwell upon the earth, and little by little receive love into themselves, so too do other much higher beings dwell upon the sun and enkindle love, because the sun has reached a higher stage of existence. The human being is an earth-dweller and to be an earth-dweller means to be a creature which appropriates love unto itself during the Earth-period. A sun-dweller in our time means a being that can enkindle love, a being that can permit love to flow into the earth. The earth-dweller would not have developed love, would not have been able to receive it, had not the sun-dwellers sent down ripened wisdom to them with the rays of light. Because the light of the sun streams down upon the earth, love is developed there. That is a very real truth. Those beings who are so exalted that they can pour forth love have made the sun their scene of action.

When the ancient Moon had completed its evolution, there were seven great beings of this kind who had progressed far enough to pour forth love. Here we touch upon a deep mystery which Spiritual Science reveals. In the beginning of the Earth-evolution, there was on the one side the childlike humanity which was to receive love and become ready for the reception of the ego — and on the other side there was the sun which separated from the earth and rose to a more exalted existence. Seven principle Spirits of Light, who at the same time were the dispensing Spirits of Love, were able to evolve upon this sun. Only six of them, however, made the sun their dwelling-place and what streams down to us in the physical light of the sun contains within it the spiritual force of love from these six Spirits of Light or, as they are called in the Bible, the six Elohim. One separated from the others and took a different path for the salvation of humanity. He did not choose the sun but the moon for his abode. And this Spirit of Light, who voluntarily renounced life upon the sun and chose the moon instead, is none other than the one whom the Old Testament calls "Jahve" or "Jehova." This Spirit of Light who chose the moon as a dwelling-place is the one who from there pours ripened wisdom down upon the earth, thus preparing the way for love. Now, let us consider for a moment this mystery which lies behind the outer facts.

The night belongs to the moon and it belonged to the moon to a much greater degree in that ancient time when the human being was not yet able to receive the force of love in the direct rays of the sun. At that time he received the reflected force of ripened wisdom from the moonlight. This ripened wisdom streamed down upon him from the moonlight during the time of night-consciousness. Therefore, Jahve is called the Ruler of the Night who prepared humanity for the love that was later to manifest during full waking-consciousness. Thus we can look back to that ancient past in human evolution when spiritually that event occurred which is merely symbolized by the heavenly bodies, the sun on the one side, the moon on the other. (See drawing). During the night, at certain

times, the moon sends down to us the reflected force of the sun, but it is the same light which also shines upon us directly from the sun. Thus in ancient times, Jahve or Jehova reflected the force of matured wisdom, the force of the six Elohim, and sent this force down into human beings while they slept, preparing them to become capable later, by degrees, of receiving the power of love during waking-day consciousness.



The above drawing attempts in a symbolic manner to show the waking-day human being when his physical and etheric bodies are dependent upon the Divine and his ego and astral body are within the physical and ether bodies upon the physical plane. Here the whole human organism is shone upon by the sun from without. We now know that for the humanity of primeval ages, night was much longer and much more filled with activity than it is at present. The astral body and ego were then outside of the physical and ether bodies, the ego existing wholly within the astral world, and the astral body sinking into the physical body from without, having, however, its entire inner being still embedded in the divine-spiritual world. Therefore, the sun could not shine directly upon the human astral body and enkindle in it the force of love. Hence, the moon, which reflects the sunlight, was active through Jahve or Jehova. The moon is the symbol of Jahve or Jehova and the sun is none other than the symbol for the Logos, which is the sum of the other six Elohim. This drawing, which you should study, and upon which you should meditate, tries to indicate this in a symbolic way and if you reflect upon it, you will discern what deep, mystery-truths are presented in it, namely: that during long periods of time, in sleep-consciousness, the force of love was being implanted in human beings by Jehova, in a manner of which they were themselves unconscious. In this way they were being made capable of experiencing the Logos, of feeling the force of its love. One can ask: — How was this possible, how could that take place? We come now to the other side of the mystery.

We have said that the human being was destined for self-conscious love upon the earth. He must, therefore, have a leader, a teacher, during his clear day-consciousness, a leader who stands before him so that he can be perceived by him. Now it was only during the night, in dim consciousness, that love could be implanted within the human being. But little by little something happened, something happened in full actuality which made it possible for him to see outwardly, physically, the Being of Love itself. But how could that occur? It could only take place, because the Being of Divine Love, the Being of the Logos, became a man of flesh, whom men by means of their physical senses could perceive upon the earth. It was because mankind had developed to a condition of perceiving by means of outer senses that God, the Logos, had Himself to become a sense-being. He had to appear in a physical body. This was fulfilled in Christ-Jesus, and the historical appearance of Christ Jesus means that the forces of the six

Elohim, or of the Logos, were incarnated in Jesus of Nazareth at the beginning of our Christian era and were actually present in Him in the visible world. That is the important thing. The inner force of the sun, the force of the Logos-Love assumed a physical human form in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. For, like an external object, like an outer being, God had to appear to the earthly, human sense-consciousness in a bodily form.

You will ask what was that Being Who appears at the beginning of our era as Christ-Jesus? It was the incarnation of the Logos, of the six other Elohim, whose advent had been prepared by Jahve-God who preceded them. This figure of Jesus of Nazareth, in whom the Christ or the Logos was incarnated, brought into human life, into human history itself, what previously streamed down upon the earth from the sun, what was present only in the sunlight. "The Logos became flesh." It is upon this fact that the Gospel of St. John places the greatest importance and the writer of this Gospel had to lay great emphasis upon it because it is a fact that after the appearance of a few initiated Christian pupils who understood what had occurred, there followed others who could not fully understand it. They understood full well that at the foundation of all material things, behind all that appears to us in substantial form, there exists a psycho-spiritual world. But what they could not comprehend was that the Logos itself, by being incarnated in an individual human being, became physically visible for the physical sense-world. This they could not comprehend. Therefore, that teaching which appeared in the early Christian centuries called the "Gnosis," differs from the true Esoteric Christianity on this point. The writer of the Gospel of St. John pointed to this fact in powerful words, when he said: "No, you should not look upon the Christ as a super-sensible, ever invisible being only, one Who is the foundation of all material life, but you should consider this the important thing: 'The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.'" This is the fine distinction between Esoteric Christianity and the primal Gnosis. The Gnosis, as well as Esoteric Christianity recognizes the Christ, but the former only as a spiritual being and in Jesus of Nazareth it sees at most a human herald, more or less bound to this spiritual being. It holds firmly to an ever invisible Christ. On the contrary, Esoteric Christianity has always held the idea of the Gospel of St. John, which rests upon the firm foundation of the words: "And the Logos became flesh and dwelt among us!" He Who was there in the visible world is an actual incarnation of the six sun Elohim, of the Logos! With the incarnation of the Logos, the earthly mission — or in other words, what the earth was to become through the Event of Palestine — first really began. Previously, all was only a preparation.

What then did the Christ, who dwelt within the body of Jesus of Nazareth, especially have to represent Himself to be? It may be said He had to represent himself as the great bringer and quickener of the self-conscious, independent human being. Let us express this living Christ-teaching in a few short, paradigmatic sentences. The earth exists in order that full self-consciousness, the "I AM," may be given to mankind. Previously, everything was a preparation for this self-consciousness, for this "I AM;" and the Christ was that Being Who gave the impulse that made it possible for every human being — each as an individual — to experience the "I AM." Only with His advent was the powerful impulse given which carries earth humanity forward with a mighty bound. We can follow this by means of a comparison of Christianity with the Old Testament teaching. In the latter, the human being did not yet fully feel the "I AM" in himself. He still possessed a dreamy state of consciousness, held over from those ancient times when he did not feel himself as a personality, but as a part of a Divine Being, just as the animal today is still a

member of a group-soul. Mankind had its beginning in the group-soul and then advanced to a state of independent, personal existence, in which every individual experiences the "I AM," and the Christ is the force that has brought it to this consciousness of the "I AM." Let us consider this for a moment in its full inner significance.

The follower of the Old Testament did not feel himself as much enclosed within his own individual personality as did the follower of the New Testament. He did not yet say as a personality, "I am an I." He felt himself within the whole ancient Jewish people and experienced the group-ego of his folk. Let us enter in a living way into the consciousness of a follower of the Old Testament. The Christian feels the "I AM" and gradually will learn to feel it more and more, but the follower of the Old Testament did not feel the "I AM" in this way. He felt himself as a member of the entire folk and looked up to its group-soul. And if he wished to express this in words, he would have said: "My consciousness reaches up to the Father of the whole people, to Abraham; we — I and Father Abraham — are one. A common ego encompasses us all, and I only feel myself safe within the spiritual substantiality of the world when I feel myself resting within the whole folk-substance." Thus the follower of the Old Testament looked up to Father Abraham and said: "I and Father Abraham are one! In my veins flows the same blood that flows in the veins of Abraham." He felt Father Abraham as the root from which every individual Abrahamite had sprung as a stem.

Then Christ-Jesus came and said to his nearest, most intimate initiates: Hitherto, mankind has judged only according to the flesh, according to blood-relationship. Through this blood-relationship, men have been conscious of reposing within a higher invisible union. But you should believe in a still higher spiritual relationship, in one that reaches beyond the blood-tie. You should believe in a spiritual Father-substance in which the ego is rooted, and which is more spiritual than the substance which as a group-soul binds the Jewish people together. You should believe in what reposes within me and within every human being, in what is not only one with Abraham, but one with the very divine foundation of the world. Therefore Christ-Jesus, according to the Gospel of St. John, emphasizes the words: "Before Father Abraham was, was the I AM!" My primal ego mounts not only to the Father-Principle that reaches back to Abraham, but my ego is one with all that pulses through the entire cosmos, and to this my spiritual nature soars aloft. I and the Father are one! These are important words which one should experience; then will one feel the forward bound made by mankind, a bound which advanced human evolution further in consequence of that impulse given by the advent of the Christ. The Christ was the mighty quickener of the "I AM."

Now, let us try to hear a little of what His most intimate initiates said, how they expressed what had been revealed to them. They said: Heretofore, no individual physical human being has ever existed to whom this name of "I AM" could be applied; He was the first to bring to the world the "I AM" in its full significance. Therefore, they named Christ-Jesus the "I AM." That was the name in which the closest initiates felt themselves united, the name which they understood, the name "I AM." We must in this way delve deeply into the most significant chapters of the Gospel of St. John. If we take that chapter where we find the words: "I am the Light of the world," we must interpret them literally, quite literally. Now, what was this "I AM" which for the first time appeared in carnate form? It was the force of the Logos that streamed to earth in the sunlight. All through the entire eighth chapter, beginning with the twelfth verse which is usually entitled "Jesus, the Light of the World," we find a transcription of this profound truth

concerning the meaning of the "I AM." When you read this chapter, emphasize the words "I" or "I AM" wherever they appear and realize that "I AM" was the *name* in which the initiates felt themselves united. Then you will understand it and it will seem to you that this chapter must then be read in somewhat the following manner:

Then Jesus spoke to His disciples and said: That which is able to say "I AM" to itself, is the Force of the Light of the World, and whoever follows after me will see in clear, waking consciousness what those who wander in darkness do not see.

But those who clung to the old belief that only by night can the Light of Love be implanted within the human being, those who were called the Pharisees, answered: Thou callest upon thy "I AM" but we call upon Father Abraham. In this way we feel the power which justifies us in acting as self-conscious beings. We feel ourselves strong when we immerse ourselves in the substance of a common ego which reaches to Father Abraham.

Jesus said: — If one speaks of the I, as I speak, then is the testimony a true one; for I know that this I comes from the Father, from the primeval foundation of the world and I know whither it tends.

Now, let us consider those important words of Chapter VIII, verse 15, which should be translated in the following manner:

Ye judge all things according to the flesh, but I judge not the perishable that is in the flesh.

And if I judge, then is my judgment true. For the I does not exist for itself alone, but it is united with the Father from whom it has descended.

That is the meaning of this passage. Thus everywhere you find reference to a common Father. We are now able to bring the idea of the Father still more clearly before our souls. Then we see that the words, "Before Father Abraham was, was the I AM," contain the living essence of the Christian doctrine.

Today we have gone deeply into the words of the Gospel of St. John, more deeply than we would have been able had I interpreted them from an external point of view. We have drawn these words out of Spiritual Wisdom and have alluded to certain important words in the Gospel of St. John which show the very essentials of Christianity. We shall see that just by understanding such germinal and primal keywords, light and clarity will be brought into the whole of the Gospel.

Let us consider all this as a teaching that was given in the Christian esoteric schools, a teaching which the writer of the Gospel has transcribed — in a way which we shall discuss — in order that he might hand it down to posterity for those who really wish to penetrate into its meaning.



Christmas Mood

Devotion guide my still soul

Deep into sacred Earth-Spaces.

Where richly-coloured and sun resplendent

Celebration of all Beings resounds.

Christ gleams in Everything.

In strength of Calm and Power of Peace

Grows Beings Hope.

Stream Life's Light

A Way to the Christmas Mysteries Today

"My dear friends, there is something in the depths of our heart's that speaks of nothing else than of what is purely human and dissolves all differences. It is from these depths that we find the Christmas Mysteries.

Today there is a new form to the way that once led the Shepherds of the field, and on the other hand the Magi of the East, to find the Christ.

The Shepherds once came to spiritual vision from their inner world, but we can now come through outer observation in nature to a spiritual vision. Through the human heart, our observation can be set free from the dry, prosaic method pursued in the laboratories. Then will the growing plant, the rushing stream, the murmuring spring, the lightning and thunder from the clouds, not merely speak to us in an indifferent way. But there will, as it were, stream into our eyes and into our hearts, as the result of our observation, words that proclaim nothing else than this: "The divine is revealed in the heights of heaven, and peace shall be among men upon earth who are of good will."

On the other side, what the Magi once did outwardly with astronomy we can now come to by the inner powers of vision rendering creative what today is so prosaically experienced in mere mathematical and geometrical pictures, if we can raise mathematics again through inner experience to that glory which the ancient astronomy had. Then, with our hearts, we shall again find the way to the Christmas Mystery."

Extracted from a lecture,
by Rudolf Steiner, 23 December 1920.