

May Human Beings Hear It!
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Postscript
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An important feature of the Christmas Conference is its relationship to human freedom. Like everything else connected with the New Mysteries, it exclusively appeals to man's free comprehension; to his individual effort to make himself aware of the full significance of the events (at this conference).

This too makes it evident that the Christmas Conference is connected with the central stream of the Christian Mysteries that goes back directly to the Mystery of Golgotha. For just as some people evaluate the occurrences at the Turning Point of Time by basing them on outer historical data and relating their significance solely to the past, whereas others arrive with the aid of insights gained through spiritual science at comprehension of their central importance for the whole of Earth evolution, so too it is in regard to the Christmas Conference. As to the Turn of Time, aside from western materialists who refer to the 'simple man from Nazareth', some forms of eastern occultism likewise are of the first conviction. While they do point to the 'spiritual teacher', Jesus Christ, they emphasize at the same time that His deeds belong to the past. Humanity ought therefore to await a new Messiah who is to bring human beings new insights and solve the many problems they face.

Anthroposophists often make a comparable mistake in regard to the Christmas Conference. While they do consider it a significant event but one that long since belongs in the past, in their view the Anthroposophical Society requires 'fresh' impulses and possibly even a new initiate.

In both cases this error is founded on a shallow approach to the problem due to unawareness of the fact (fundamental to modern initiation) that not one but two streams of time exist in the world. The first, which is known to all human beings since their ego-consciousness has awoken in early childhood, flows from the past into the future. We enter into it at birth and remain in it without the least effort on our part up to the moment when, passing through the portal of death, we enter into the second stream time. The whole historical development of mankind as well as the individual biography of each single person takes its course in the first stream of time. It is therefore completely natural to judge everything by the standpoint of the first stream.

The second stream of time normally remains hidden (occult) to man. For it comes not out of the past but out of the future. In it live and work all the divine spiritual hierarchies, who even today prepare the future of Earth evolution in the higher worlds. According to the accounts of spiritual science, the coming Jupiter existence is being prepared on the

astral plane, the Venus existence is on the lower Devechan, and the Vulcan existence on the level of the higher Devechan. ¹

This occult stream of time furthermore accompanies every human being during earthly life. Man's higher self, as well as the karma forces that form destiny, abide and work in this stream. In contrast to the first stream knowledge of the second is not given to us initially. Only through one's own effort and intensive inner work on the path of modern spirit-discipleship can one arise to a conscious experience of it, and this is necessary in today's initiation. Rudolf Steiner reported how he himself attained to what is linked with this degree of initiation: 'It was the insight that there exists a backward-moving evolution that runs counter to the forward-moving one, the occult astral evolution. This insight is the condition for spiritual vision. ²

Not until immersion into the occult stream of time does it become possible to understand the central importance of the Mystery of Golgotha for earthly and cosmic evolution. For it was just the forces of this 'stream of time which (flows) from eternity to eternity' that the Christ brought to human beings when He descended into the sheaths of Jesus of Nazareth. (GA 236, 4 June 1924) With that He created *on the earth itself* the basis on which human beings gradually bring about a *conscious relationship* to the supersensible stream of time and, working out of its forces, can become co-workers of the spiritual world for Earth evolution's goal. Indeed, everything must apply to Earth evolution first lives win this stream as a task that must yet be fulfilled, as a goal that is supposed to be reached in the collective work of humanity with the hierarchies.

After its fiery end the First Goetheanum entered into this occult stream of time. Since then its spirit works out of the distances of the ether cosmos as bearers of those central tasks of the Anthroposophical Movement which were then revealed to anthroposophists at the Christmas Conference. Only from this occult stand point can one understand the Christmas Conference and realize that its spiritual being does not belong to the past but to the future. Then however, it comes to meet the person who recognizes it *from out of the future*.

In the Mystery of Golgotha the ultimate goal of all of Earth evolution and the path to them were revealed to mankind. In the same way, the goals of the Anthroposophical Movement in the spiritual as well as in the social regard were unveiled to anthroposophists at the Christmas Conference and the concrete way for their realization was shown to them. Furthermore, the Anthroposophical Society was founded so that human beings could likewise fulfill these tasks in the social domain. This is why the Anthroposophical Society receives its spiritual right to exist only if its members identify themselves with the actualization of the tasks posed to this society.

¹ This is the reason why the modern initiate can speak even today of future conditions of world evolution, if he is capable of ascending consciously to these higher levels. (See GA 13)

² GA 262, p. 7. See also lecture of 4 February 1913

The Christmas Conference is therefore only comprehensible through active inner work from the standpoint of the second occult stream to which its esoteric nature belongs. Once we have begun to proceed on the path to a conscious grasp of the spiritual content of the Christmas Conference, we soon ascertain that the more intensely we try inwardly for an understanding of this conference, the more it reveals something to us of its esoteric nature; the greater is the comprehension that streams from it to us. It is as if we begin a kind of inner dialogue with that actual being of the spiritual world that found its expression in the Christmas Conference and now patiently awaits our free and conscious understanding so that it can lead us deeper and deeper in the New Mysteries. Our individual work with the spiritual content of the Christmas Conference in this way becomes our individual reply to the call that the Guardian of the Threshold – as Rudolf Steiner puts it in the last lecture of the Conference – directed to all anthroposophists. (see Chap. 8)

Only when an anthroposophist does not make the effort to grasp the nature of the Christmas Conference from the viewpoint of the occult stream of time, and with that remains in the sphere of normal (historical) time, can he speak of the ‘failing’ of the Christmas Conference or even call it a ‘nothing’. (see Supplement X) To persuade him to change his opinion would be impossible because logical arguments belong to the external stream of time and in that regard have no influence on the necessary *resolve of will* to take the path into the New Mysteries on ones’ own (initiative).

How serious the situation becomes in the absence of such volition however, becomes evident from the words that Rudolf Steiner wrote shortly before the Christmas Conference: ‘In a manner of speaking, regarding the Society I place my last hopes on the Christmas Conference.’ (GA 262, p. 192) These words must be viewed in connection with what he stated about the three calls that were directed at the beginning of the twentieth century to humanity out of the spiritual world . In a conversation with Marie Steiner, he once spoke about the nature of such calls. She remembered later how he explained that ‘such a call would as a rule occur three times, but if the call would die away, not having been heard, it would be taken back into the spiritual world for a long, long time...that this was a matter of purely spiritual affairs. With each missed occasion the conditions and circumstances become more difficult’. (GA 264, p. 424) Rudolf Steiner declared that human beings did not hear the first two calls; the third then rang out at the Christmas Conference.

It signifies an inconceivable flippancy in the face of such appeals to our earnestness and our responsibility, when some anthroposophists turn the following words by Rudolf Steiner around concerning a *possible* failure of even the third call as evidence for their own opinion that this call had in *fact* ‘failed’. ‘If this Christmas Conference is only taken in the way in which people preferred to take conferences in the past, then it gradually “fades”, it will lose its content. It would have been better not to gather together at all. For a characteristic of a spiritual affair is that if it is not grasped firmly it disappears. It naturally does not disappear in the cosmos, but disappears in regard to the location where it is not cultivated further. It then seeks out different places in the cosmos.’ (GA 260a, p. 92)

Certainly today one can hardly overlook that the esoteric school impulse of the Christmas Conference has to a certain degree ‘faded’ from the Anthroposophical Society. Quite a few factors are proof of this in the Society’s more distant past as well as in its recent history. To draw the conclusion however, that this impulse has ‘faded’ *altogether* would only be possible if we were in a position to determine that in the Anthroposophical Society there is no longer a single heart in which the Foundation Stone rests; not a single head that seeks to reach an understanding of the Christmas Conference, and not a single will that strives to actualize its impulses. Such a determination could however only be made by the spiritual world to which ‘all hearts and thoughts of men stand wide open’, or by an initiate of Rudolf Steiner’s rank. Now we know that since the Anthroposophical Society’s existence there always were people – even if at certain times there were not so very many – who with all their strength of soul tried to lay the Foundation Stone into their hearts and carried out this impulse through all the conflicts and difficulties of the earthly history of the Society.

In most cases such persons do not particularly stand out within the Society. Unnoticed by the majority of members, for years and decades they accomplish extraordinarily important work for the spiritual world. In order to find these individuals in the Anthroposophical Society, there is hardly any other possibility but to go on the path oneself, the path that was described in Chapter 8. For here Rudolf Steiner’s words hold good that in the Anthroposophical Movement ‘it is not the number that counts but the inner substance of Anthroposophy’. (GA 260a, 29 March 1924) This is how it was during Rudolf Steiner’s lifetime, and so it is still today. Indeed if, despite all difficulties and conflicts that the Anthroposophical Society went through in the past century, it still exists today, then esoterically viewed this is a result of the fact that there always have been and still are people in it who through their spiritual work maintain a living connection to the esoteric being of the Christmas Conference, and try to actualize its spiritual goals despite all difficulties.

The present situation of the Society can be compared with a spiritual fire that, enkindled by Rudolf Steiner at the Christmas Conference, became a small flame during the course of years that burns merely in a few hearts. Yet, as long as it still exists, it can at any moment turn once more into a mighty fire with which the culmination will take place, the culmination Rudolf Steiner referred to in the karma lectures. If this were not to occur during today’s generation of anthroposophists, it can take place in the following one or still later, - however only if there are human beings existing on earth who preserve the spiritual flame in their heart.

This book would like to contribute to that. It would like to help; the contemporary and coming generations of anthroposophists *to become mindful* of what links them with the central impulses of Anthroposophy, meaning, help them *to recall* what they bear in their souls even out of their prenatal existence, and some of them out of their last life on earth at the beginning of the twentieth century. For only out of this can the will arise in the soul to devote its strength, its knowledge, and its love to the actualization of what Rudolf Steiner called the

‘World Turning Point of Time.’