

RECONCILIATION WITH THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY - John Pater

A step forward to accomplish Rudolf Steiner's expectations for the turn of the century.

Today, at the turn of the century, we can reasonably say that the Anthroposophical movement has not achieved the level of spiritual activity that Rudolf Steiner had hoped for even though much has been accomplished towards this direction. Surely we must ask why? One of the esoteric reasons could be due to unfavourable group karma originating from the split from the Theosophical Society (I'm very much aware of the mischief that can be caused by untruths yet in my own self I'm convinced that this view has substance and should be placed before individuals. If this view is without foundation then it will quickly disappear into oblivion, however if there is truth to it then it will grow as a force in people's hearts from which the appropriate actions will ensue). So as to understand the reason for this unfavourable group karma and its workings we need to review the occult movement of mid nineteenth century up until the split which occurred with the Theosophical Society in 1913.

In the middle of the nineteenth century the impulse of materialism had reached its zenith in the **West** (this is not to say that its external manifestation had yet come to fruition but only its driving force). Yet at the same time true spirituality had reached a low point and religious life was lost in little understood dogmas and traditions that had virtually lost all of its true impulses of genuine spiritual inspiration.

Yet the spiritual world does not desert mankind but sends its messengers at the appropriate times. Rudolf Steiner states that there were a number of 'powerful spiritual lodges' who conducted their affairs in secrecy. It was a concern by members of these lodges that mankind's consciousness of the spiritual world was declining with the advance of materialism and a decision was made to rectify this situation. It was possible at that time to disclose objective spiritual truths in the manner of anthroposophy or theosophy to the general public. But the conservatism of the members in these secret societies at that time did not choose this course of action, as they still felt the old oaths of secrecy should still apply. Some members felt that the revelation of esoteric spiritual truths was premature and that harm could come through the misuse of the information as had happened in the past. They chose instead to train up a number of mediums so that, through these mediums, the general public could become aware of a spiritual world that borders on this physical world and from which operate elemental beings and forces. The first of these mediums were the famous Fox sisters in America. What eventuated was that this course of action went astray in that people and the mediums themselves believed that the dead could actually communicate through this means. Mediumistic displays became a phenomenon where the interest stopped at the external displays and requests for egotistical information such as what numbers will win the lottery was common. Very few people took it further. **Nevertheless the scene was set where the spiritual world was made public even though it was in a distorted manner and a large number of people took an interest in this phenomena and in the spiritual world.**

Hence the scene was set where Helena Blavatsky, with the inspiration of initially western then eastern spiritual masters, presented to the West, objective spiritual knowledge that could be understood with the intellect and in 1875 helped form the great spiritual movement called the Theosophical Society which is still actively working today.

Helena Blavatsky, although opposed to the showmanship type mediumism due to its limitations, had a gift in that she could experience the spiritual world through a remarkably advanced mediumistic type of clairvoyance, where she could remember quite clearly and understand much

of what was transmitted and experienced. Hence, from her experiences, she was able to present outwardly objective spiritual truths. Some secret occult societies and lodges became aware of Helena Blavatsky's remarkable and unique abilities and sought an association with her to further their work (The members of these lodges verified their knowledge through mediums as at that time it was extremely difficult for individuals to directly experience the spiritual world in full ego consciousness until after 1899). At one stage she became involved with an American group which Rudolf Steiner refers to as having interests to the 'left'. (A group with interests to the right meant that its interests were in the direction universal humanity whilst a group with interests to the left meant that they direct their actions in a self seeking way). After a time Helena Blavatsky saw through the one sided political intentions of this American lodge and threatened to go public and expose them. So as to protect their interests this lodge 'Occultly imprisoned' her. This meant that the spiritual knowledge became inaccessible to her as if she experience a fog with respect to direct spiritual experiences. Apparently, even the lodges of the left rarely used this action. This came to the attention of an Indian Occult lodge and some agreement was reached with the Western Lodges regarding Helena Blavatsky. As a consequence she was freed from this occult imprisonment but at the same time was in debt to this Indian lodge. This, together with rigid Christian hypocrisy of the day, was one of the reasons why in her works, especially in the 'Secret Doctrine' there is an element of an anti Jewish/Christian theme. Today the Theosophical Society has, as well as the Indian stream, also has a Christian stream and other streams working side by side and holds that all spiritual doctrines have some validity and are worthy of examination.

In 1902 Rudolf Steiner was asked to join the Theosophical Society to head up the German section of the Society. He did so on the condition that he would have the independence to put forward his own work. He acknowledged the significance of the work that had already been achieved within the Theosophical Society as is shown by his words:- **'When I accepted the invitation into the society this was the sole institution worthy of serious consideration in which a real spiritual life existed'**. The Theosophical Society provided the framework and receptive audiences, which were already grounded in spiritual concepts, for Rudolf Steiner to unfold his work and to establish Anthroposophy to the extent that was achieved at the time he died.

In his early lectures Rudolf Steiner used the nomenclature and concepts that were current within the Theosophical Society but as his spiritual sight grew in clarity and the spiritual facts matured the existing nomenclature proved difficult to describe the results of his spiritual investigations. It can be observed that he gradually used his own terms or those derived from ancient western mystery wisdom as the situation required.

In 1907 he was responsible for hosting the General Theosophical Congress in Munich where he tried to place much more emphasis on the arts. This was not welcomed by many of the overseas Theosophists and together with disagreements with the running of the esoteric school (the inner school) was the start of the cooling down of relations between himself and the leadership of the Theosophical Society.

In 1908 Rudolf Steiner commenced his deeper teachings on the Mysteries of Christian Gospels and the significance of the death on the Cross and the second coming in the etheric. Around the same time Annie Besant, the president of the Theosophical Society and C.W. Leadbeater declared that they had found an Indian Boy, called Krishnamurti, who would be the vessel of the reincarnation of the Christ. Rudolf Steiner, from his spiritual sight categorically said that this was entirely erroneous and made this publicly known. Obviously his opposition would not have endeared him to Annie Besant. An organisation, which was called 'The Star of the East', was set up by the Theosophical Society for Krishnamurti's so called mission. In Germany a Theosophist and publisher, Hugo Vollrath who was expelled from the German Section of the Theosophical Society

in 1908 headed up 'the Star of the East' in Germany. This organisation, with its members, was maliciously undermining Rudolf Steiner's work with such published comments that 'some people had died from Rudolf Steiner's self development exercises and others had become ill'. Rudolf Steiner thereby banned members of the Star of the East from joining the German section of the Theosophical Society. Due to excluding these potential members and due Rudolf Steiner's opposition to equating the boy Krishnamurti as being a vessel for the Christ a letter was directed through Annie Besant to the General Secretary 'telling of the forthcoming expulsion of the German Section from the Theosophical Society'. Rudolf Steiner viewed this letter as an actual expulsion. Thereafter the Anthroposophical Society was formed in 1913. Krishnamurti, when he reach adulthood, dissolved "the Star of the East" and distanced himself from the Messiah role but nevertheless he went on to become a great world teacher (I'm told that the split from the Theosophical Society was necessary so that Anthroposophy could develop unfettered).

It would be reasonable to say that, today, the followers of both the Anthroposophical and Theosophical movements are trying to work and elaborate the spiritual insights given by their respective original spiritual mentors. The indepth esoteric input into the Theosophical Society finished around 1907 whilst with the Anthroposophical Society with Rudolf Steiner's death in 1925 and the societies have been basically concerned with the elaboration and application of the previously given spiritual truths and insights.

Rudolf Steiner contributed in a unique way to furthering the world spiritual outlook in that he used the methods of modern materialistic science to investigate the spiritual world **in full ego consciousness and freedom**. The results of his spiritual research are in terms that are understandable to the modern intellect and are applicable to practical areas such as education, the arts, agriculture, medicine, economics, architecture etc. This means of spiritual investigation was only possible after the age of Kali Yuga, which had finished in 1899. If we go back in time we see the method of bringing about spiritual knowledge was different and occurred in a another state of consciousness. We can look back in time at the seven Holy Rishis who provided the impulse for the great Ancient Indian Civilisation and gave out the original Vedic teachings. Mighty spiritual beings worked through their purified etheric bodies and inspired the Rishis to speak their words of spiritual wisdom.

The spiritual world does not reveal itself in absolute objectivity to mankind but progressively appears in veiled truths to suit the level of man's development. We see this in the various past religions (Christianity is an example), spiritual streams and mythologies. Hence, the above is a brief picture of how the spiritual world manifested itself in recent times from inwardness within the secret occult societies to spiritualism which then allowed the Theosophical knowledge to take hold which in turn allowed the Anthroposophical knowledge to be developed and established in an outward and practical manner. Into future Anthroposophical knowledge as well will be replaced by further spiritual paths based on direct perception.

So why has the Anthroposophical movement not accomplished what Rudolf Steiner had hoped for and why has there been no significant new openly revealed deeper esoteric input? Many reasons can be given and these need to be explored. But some of the external outward reasons are partly due to the immaturity and the egotism of the members that followed Rudolf Steiner causing havoc with their otherwise noble accomplishments.

As mentioned at the beginning a possible inner reason for the above inexplicable behaviour is caused by unfavourable group karma and is illustrated by an end note from the book Titled "Psychoanalysis and Spiritual Psychology" by Rudolf Steiner (Anthroposophic press - 1990)

which illustrates a subtle but nevertheless negative attitude towards the Theosophical society which is typical of many individuals within the movement:-

'Helena Blavatsky, nee Hahn, 1831-1891, Russian theosophist. Founded the Theosophical Society together with Colonel Steel Olcott in 1875. Established official journal and won many distinguished converts. Many of her so-called miracles demonstrated as fraudulent (1885) by Society for Psychic research. Author of Isis unveiled (1877), the Secret Doctrine (1888), and other works.' (Underline and bold are mine.)

This example of a subtle putdown of the Theosophical Society (by belittling its founder) reflects the thoughts (subconscious or otherwise) of many individuals who have deeply immersed themselves with Anthroposophy. (I'm not for one minute advocating that one should turn a blind eye to the past and present aberrations within the Theosophical Society. Theosophists themselves acknowledge certain aberrations have been apparent) But, is this the acknowledgment the members of the Anthroposophical movement give to the organisation which provided the initial framework for the establishment of the **Anthroposophical world picture to develop to its present high level through Rudolf Steiner? Today Theosophical knowledge has itself further progressed and has much to offer. Could this subtle but nevertheless negative attitude towards the Theosophical Society and other similar spiritual streams, which seems to have existed for many years, be the source of unfavourable group karma that has dried up the flow of true esoteric knowledge into the movement, through unconstructive egotism? Could this unfavourable group karma, caused by not giving thanks to past assistance in the growth of Anthroposophy, be the cause of the seemingly inexplicable behaviour of some otherwise advanced individuals within the Anthroposophical movement? One can even say, from observation, that this unconstructive egotism is stereotyped where individuals, within the movement seem to fit into the same mould and patterns. But the tragedy is that there seems to be a veil which prevents individuals (even those well versed in Anthroposophy) from recognising and changing the disruption caused by their behaviour (I'm also not excluding myself from this). Could not the unfavourable group karma be the cause of this veil?**

Unless adherents of Anthroposophy are able to embrace, at least in their thoughts, a sense of thankfulness and goodwill towards those that preceded and helped the Anthroposophical movement and to those that are today in similar movements (recognise and understand their good achievements) then it will be difficult for the 'straightjacket' that has been put around the Anthroposophical movement to be lifted. Could it not be possible that in some areas the Theosophical and Anthroposophical movements could work side by side with mutual benefits of spiritual growth? Ideally this proposed cooperation should not be limited only to the Theosophical society.

Did not Rudolf Steiner wish that Anthroposophy should flow into other spiritual streams and enliven them? Yet it has not flowed out even to the stream that is closest to Anthroposophy so how can we expect it to flow out into the world if we cannot be reconciled with a stream that is close in its philosophical outlook to the movement that is dear to us? This reconciliation, if it is to be achieved, will entail much hard work as not only Anthroposophical knowledge must live in one's consciousness (which is hard enough in itself) but the concepts from the other spiritual streams must be **lovingly embraced and understood** (this does not mean that all concepts are to be accepted) and only then can Anthroposophy flow out into the world as Rudolf Steiner had hoped for.

Some observations of outer actions that have not or are not assisting with the growth of the Anthroposophical movement and of which I'm am also a guilty party.

An Australian author commented that an influential Anthroposophist blasted him because he mentioned his name together in the same paragraph with another Anthroposophist.

An overseas visitor on her way home commented that individuals in the Sydney Anthroposophical movement were too egotistical and she had to distance herself from them.

Good Steiner teachers have treated the attitudes and opinions of the parents of their children with scorn thereby having the result of isolating the teachers from the general community.

Some individuals can have a tendency not to be able to embrace other individuals who espouse different viewpoints or they can egotistically overvalue their contribution to Anthroposophy. This has the characteristic of fragmenting the movement into various camps either in open confrontation or in cold subtle intolerance. Even if this opposition is kept hidden other individuals are able to sense it anyway and are turn away from embracing Anthroposophy.

(Why can't we embrace other individuals in a positive manner with warmth even though we may not be in agreement with their actions?)

Open and/or subtle intolerance is shown to others who may be naive in their demands and attitudes as to what should happen within the Anthroposophical Movement. This has the effect of turning people away from the movement.

Rudolf Steiner's work is considered to be the final answer by some and this attitude has turned anthroposophy into a dogma of sorts.

Too much egotistical emphasis is placed on the Anthroposophical movement as being the world's chosen movement to the detriment of other spiritual streams without truly acknowledging the positive points and contributions of those other streams. This leads to a type of spiritual isolation in what may be developing elsewhere and perhaps inhibits true spiritual guidance.

An incident occurred in 1975 when the Theosophical Society commemorated its 100th birthday and invited a number of spiritual streams to participate including the Anthroposophical Society. Representatives of the Anthroposophical Society responded by saying that the Society did not owe anything and was the only invitee that did not participate. (This information did not come from Anthroposophical sources)

There does not appear to be a successful esoteric school where a sufficient number of individuals inspired to regularly work on themselves with meditation and exercises (attempts are now being made to enliven the esoteric school)

Many individuals can become caught up in their anthroposophical profession and do a marvellous job but have no time for sharing of anthroposophical core work with other individuals outside their profession.

Possible actions that may assist in furthering the movement

Serious self-Development needs to undertake more earnestly, especially by those in leadership roles (the what is easy to see the how is difficult to know what to do)

Developing an attitude of embracing other contrary points of view with loving understanding and not with cold scorn, especially within the same movement.

A general awareness needs to be developed of the theosophical stream and other spiritual streams as they are today. This could be undertaken by individuals who feel they have a connection to a spiritual stream and their experiences could be shared with others by describing that particular stream in anthroposophical terms.(a lot of hard work)

Developing the strength to understand, with sympathy, the negative impulses working through the community at large and thereby being able to participate in the change of these impulses.