

What we are obliged to do... (II)

The pandemic of neglected thinking and the «tremendous duty» of the anthroposophists

This text was first published in German by «AGORA-in geänderter Zeitlage» Nr. 3-2020 (ISSN 2624-8972), p. 28-35 (www.agora-magazin.ch)

«Therefore we have in parallel with a popularization of science (which is useful in the highest sense, is advantageous in the highest sense, at the same time a descent in all worldview issues) a neglected thinking which takes over epidemic-like, epidemic-like, because it eats into everything, everything.» *Rudolf Steiner*

On the current situation

Probably we all are experiencing this «corona crisis» of 2020 as a weird, tremendous thing that came from some unknown, hidden center of global coordination and which led to the unquestionable, voluntary submission of the majority of people to rigorous governmental safety measures. Everything we previously believed to be the reality of life appeared to be within a few days a total illusion. «Democracy»¹ and freedom of expression, physical integrity, self-

¹ Rudolf Steiner on so-called democracy: «About as much as people who are shown a plucked rooster know about people, people who preach the glory of democracy today know about democracy. One accepts words as realities. But this makes it possible for illusion to take the place of reality when it comes to human life: by lulling people and putting them to sleep through use of words. Then they believe that their striving is for everyone to be able to express their will through the various institutions of democracy, and they do not realize that these structures of democracy are such that a few people always pull the wires that others are drawn. But because they are always told that they are inside democracy, they do not notice that they are being pulled, that there are individuals pulling. And these individuals can pull even better if the others all believe that they pull themselves, that they are not pulled. So you can lull people quite well through abstract terms, and they believe the opposite of what is real. In this way, however, the dark powers can work best. And when someone wakes up, they are not taken into account. [...] That is not yet possible today because it would still shock people very much to say what would take the place of [democracy]. Basically, only those who are initiated into Spiritual Science can know that today. Past forms will certainly not supercede. You need not fear that the one who speaks from Spiritual Science speaks the word of any reactionary or conservative thing; past things will not be. Our current «voting-machine» democracy will in the future appear shocking in its fakeness. It will be considered madness. Nevertheless, it will settle into

determination, freedom of movement, encounters in private and public spaces – in short, our ‹fundamental rights› proved to be collapsing facades. From behind these facades emerged unexpectedly a completely different paradigm, apparently long prepared and which pretended to be the one and only, all-powerful controlling authority, to be able to save everyone from imminent death. Fear and panic spread and made the overwhelming majority ready to put their own destiny, their life, their thinking and feeling and willing in the hands of those who say they could best protect us from the enemy within us. This invisible enemy had an effect like a biological weapon used worldwide. Their actual sphere of activity – which soon became apparent to those who knew how to check the alleged facts – is not the body but the consciousness. The virus released (very much as planned) the elementary fear of death from the semi-conscious layers of people's emotions (‹pandemic›). This means that the long-standing but still occult ban is finally taking effect, for example, to confront this event with thinking. The worldwide harmonization of the information media is therefore not perceived as what it is: the total manipulation of a humanity that has gone insane due to the basic fear of death. The comprehensive ban on thinking, which Rudolf Steiner said on April 4, 1916², would take effect around the year

the impulses of the development of time.» Rudolf Steiner, membership lecture in Dornach, on October 28, 1917, in GA 177, pp. 264ff.

² «The greater part of mankind will have its influence from America, from the West, and that is heading for a different development. That goes towards a development that shows itself today only in the idealistic traces, in sympathetic beginnings compared to what comes then. One can say that the present still has it quite good compared to what will come when western development blossoms more and more. It will be not long after the year 2000 is written; there will be not a direct but a kind of ban on all thinking from America, a law that will have the purpose of suppressing all individual thinking. On the one hand, there is a beginning in what the purely materialistic medicine does today, where the soul is no longer allowed to work, where people are treated only like machines on the basis of external experimentation. [...] So, the development of Spiritual Science has to be part of this whole development. It has to see through this clearly and objectively. Spiritual Science must be clear that what appears to be a paradox today will happen: around 2020 and a few years, the world's greatest suppression of thinking will begin, to the greatest extent. And in this perspective, work must be done through Spiritual Science. So much has to be found – and it will be found – that there can be an appropriate counterweight to these tendencies in world development.» Rudolf Steiner, member's lecture, on April 4, 1916 in Berlin (‹Symbol, Understanding and Word› – about occult fraternities in our time), GA 167, p. 99f. (The text says 2200. This is probably a mistake in the transcription from the shorthand. On page 100, for example, we read: «It won't take long, a few centuries – then everything will be done; then you will no longer have to think, not to think anymore, but to swipe. For example, it is written: ‹330 bales of cotton Liverpool›, so you think about something still today, don't you? But then you will only swipe, and everything is fine. And in order to not disturb the firm structure of social context in the future, laws will be enacted which will not directly state:

2000 would be checked for effectiveness in 2020. And the result seems <positive>: it works. To the delight of the people, the facades soon will certainly be repaired slightly. However, because humans are actually thinking beings, attentive contemporaries experience themselves today as if they had woken up in an apocalyptic nightmare. We should watch this carefully ... But in this magazine the crucial question can be asked: What role does the Anthroposophy of Rudolf Steiner play in this outrageous event? And what is actually the duty in action and thought of those in whom a kind of awareness of the cosmo-historical meaning of Anthroposophy still seems to exist?

Disturbing statements by Rudolf Steiner

In the New Year's lectures of January 1 and 2, 1916 (GA 165), Rudolf Steiner spoke more directly than usual of monstrosities that should have triggered the necessary revolution in the self-understanding of the anthroposophical movement even then, had they been observed. But whoever delves into these disturbing statements will at the same time come to understand why this revolution could not be started until today ... What we friends of Anthroposophy experience in the current <crisis> together with the rest of humanity must not be pushed aside with a lifeless, passive – also anthroposophical – cultural optimism as an undesirable sleep disturbance. Anthroposophists should actually know from their study of spiritual science what it is really about. What is necessary to turn to this anthroposophical duty, which is still to be revealed – and then is surely to be unpopular – is the willingness to think seriously through the paradoxes³ put forward at that time by Rudolf Steiner for this purpose, and to do this so long and so intensively until the self-understanding bound to the brain has dissolved through the inherent power of clear thinking, and another – let's say it boldly ahead: an anthroposophical – self-understanding can put itself into this necessary breakdown. Let us now come to Rudolf Steiner's diagnosis.

Neglected Thinking

On January 1, 1916, Rudolf Steiner, inviting his listeners to come along, contemplates the genesis of what he calls <neglected thinking> in the present. He states: «Everything (!) goes back to this neglected thinking. What appears to us as an external, often extremely sad appearance would not be there if this neglected thinking were not there.» (p. 115) – Well, that doesn't

<Thinking is forbidden>, but it will have the effect that all individual thinking will be eliminated.» The term <swipe> (<Schieben> in German) clearly suggests the gesture we use on a smartphone...

³ «But you will already have got used to the fact that through anthroposophical spiritual science you have to get into some things that initially seem paradoxical in your views.» GA 193, p. 31.

seem new to us. But let's go deeper: why is thinking neglected, what is meant by this neglect, and what role do the friends of Anthroposophy have in it?

Why is thinking neglected? We first take note that the unquestioning turning of scientists to the so-called facts (‹fact-based science›) has, on the one hand, helped make possible the enormous material progress in civilization. On the other hand, this turn has made thinking completely dilapidated. Such neglected thinking does not develop a stable, individual content in itself; it lets content flow in from the outside world. As a result, the main side effect of today's ‹science› is a blind belief in authority. This blind belief is far more seriously negative for the state of consciousness of people than was the belief in authority during the medieval period. Nobody believes that he could have thought about the statements of the scientific authorities himself. We simply allow ourselves, unquestioned, to have the content of our consciousness prescribed by others. With regard to what Rudolf Steiner calls an elementary deficit in today's thinking, we note here: this also applies if occasional ‹critical› objections and ‹alternative opinions› arise that are contrary to the dictate of prevailing opinion. For these, in turn, do not invoke clean thinking that gives itself the content in a safe way, but on other alleged facts whose function is to take the place of the thinking activity. In our materialistic time it is of course completely impossible to acknowledge Rudolf Steiner's theorem in a thinking way and to carry it out in its consequences: «*There is no being outside of thinking.*»⁴ The insight that this is impossible – including for most friends of Anthroposophy – only opens up the dimension of the second question:

What is meant by this neglect? The turn to the so-called facts, according to Rudolf Steiner, has frozen the thinking. It has lost its internal mobility. One cannot go beyond recognizing this or that as right or rejecting it as wrong. The ‹fact-based thinking contents› stand frozen next to each other, and consciousness hops from one to the other without looking for the inner connection of these things in thinking itself. An alleged connection is constructed using logical links, the factual requirements of which are not even sought. This must end such that every true connection is lost, as everywhere a connection is claimed by logic-sounding word combinations. Since thinking loses itself completely in the process, the context asserted by authority takes its place. (I believe that every reader can at least feel the ‹Corona topicality› of this situation, which is only briefly outlined here). Rudolf Steiner however also makes it explicitly clear: If this ‹thinking› is not replaced by clear, secure and genuine thinking which gives itself its content, one cannot speak of a future of human culture. But how should this turn be possible? This brings us to the third question:

⁴ GA 1, p. 157: «[...] this [Rudolf Steiner's epistemology] approaches without prejudice the only certain thing, thinking, and knows that it cannot find any being outside of thinking.»

What is the duty of the friends of Anthroposophy in this neglect? Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science places itself in the midst of our time characterized in this way, a time that has lost all hold in thinking, and in which people in all areas of life are helplessly confronted with the natural, social, politico-military destruction resulting from this unsound thinking. This helplessness of neglected thinking is of course not recognized where this thinking is the ‹basis› of consciousness. On the contrary, one thinks that one can organize life with a thinking alien to living.⁵ And the consequence of this all-dominating opinion is an ever increasing confusion, a more hopeless entanglement in increasingly absurd reactions to the completely unexplored problem, which is thereby becoming more and more incomprehensible and unsolvable. This is precisely the neglect that the responsibility of a clear and lively thinking for the design of world conditions is not even starting to be recognized.

The ‹tremendous duty›

Now, however, within this civilization, which is seemingly determined to final self-destruction, a small group should recognize the ‹tremendous duty› (p. 108) to ‹stand up for the right progress of humanity in a higher way on the basis of [Rudolf Steiner's] spiritual science.› (P. 100) The enormity of this duty has several aspects. One of them is: It must be clearly understood that ‹we cannot do anything› (p. 114) against this neglect of thinking. But at the same time

‹we have to have a clear idea that, above all, it would lead to much, much sadder times than we have in the present if what was indicated here were not seen through by people, if in the place of neglected thinking again clear and solid thinking could not be brought into humanity.› (p. 115)

One wonders how this should be done if there is certainly nothing that can be done today ... The inclined reader should (here and then in his own study of these lectures) pay close atten-

⁵ ‹For practical thinkers, it is already part of the experience of public life today that you cannot do anything with a utopian idea, however convincing it may seem. Nevertheless, many feel that, for example, they should approach their fellow human beings with such an idea, for example in the economic field. They must convince themselves that they only talk unnecessarily. Their fellow human beings cannot do anything with what they say. One should treat this as an experience. Because it points to an important fact of current public life; it is the fact that what one thinks is alien to living, for example in regard to what economic reality actually demands. Can one hope to cope with the confused state of public life if one approaches it with a way of thinking that is alien to living? This question may not be popular, because it prompts the confession of the thinkers that their way of thinking is alien to living.› Rudolf Steiner, ‹The Threefold Social Order›. Preface 1920. (Note: The original German title is literally: ‹The Kernel-Points of the Social Question in the Life-Necessities of the Present and Future.› <https://ogy.de/2m15>)

tion to how Rudolf Steiner leads us into a split, and then an ever-increasing tension builds up. We should recognize clearly that now and into the distant future nothing can be done against this neglected outward thinking, and at the same time imagine that there cannot be a positive future for mankind, «if not in place of neglected thinking clear and solid thinking could be brought into humanity». It is in this tension that we friends of Anthroposophy should develop the great questions of mankind as our own affair. Apparently, this notice is necessary because this is not the case. According to Rudolf Steiner, we must first develop genuine interest in this, for these questions, or for the misery of mankind. More precisely: for our own misery. And only then can it become clear to us what needs to be done. Rudolf Steiner:

«One thing is important: that we combine our interests with what is to be done, that we get more and more interest in what humanity needs in our time. Because it must be assumed that a circle, however small, gets interested in what humanity needs; that, no matter how small a circle, gets clear insight into what are forces leading downwards, damaging forces in the development of time.» (p. 101)

What might this mean: get clear insight into these «downward forces»?

From external to self-diagnosis

It is relatively easy to issue the diagnosis as an «anthroposophist» to today's «normal man» that he is frozen in his thinking, that his thinking is alien to living and that this thinking must lead to the demise of human culture if nothing changes.⁶ In such a third-party diagnosis, however, an enormous arrogance expresses itself, which surely prevents exactly what has to come: the liberation of thinking from the «fact-based» obedience to authority. At the very beginning of his speech, Rudolf Steiner ascertains what is then deepened and clarified in the further course of his speech: we meet this neglected thinking in its «aura of prejudice everywhere». Everywhere? Really? How about ourselves?

This brings us to the question of how we – «we» without Rudolf Steiner – relate to this dominant phenomenon of neglected thinking. The answer that Rudolf Steiner gives is: *We* can see (with Rudolf Steiner!) that we have no conscious relationship to it! We move in it unconsciously like a fish in water. It is also our element of life. We were born into it, we are socialized in it, we are trained with it, we have to assert ourselves in the company of others.

⁶ «Rethinking – Redirecting!»: Such frivolous political phrases appeal to an underground, dull feeling that the misery of the world is connected with the thinking of mankind, and at the same time – through its lying superficiality – consistently and sustainably prevent the necessary insight into the immense seriousness of the thinking challenge, which Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy wants to reveal.

But now follows from this: The first thing, according to Rudolf Steiner, is that we enable ourselves to feel this neglected thinking of our time as a «compulsion»: «Perhaps [«perhaps» is a soft wording in order to go easy on gentle minds] we cannot yet do anything in our age against the very materialistic course of the materialistic, unfree mood of the times. *But we at least have to learn to feel it as compulsion first.* It has to start there.» – Let us examine this note in more detail: as soon as I feel, for example, that the authorities are forcing me to wear a face mask because of «Corona», it is also clear to me that I do not want this because I do not see the reason given. I may think about it differently to what I am prescribed to think. I may also feel that an obligation to vaccination is a limitation of my rights. Maybe I have to bow to the constraint. I may still be able to protest against it at the moment – with a subtle feeling of powerlessness – without being kept and treated in psychiatric ward. Maybe I can defend myself a little in conjunction with many others. The external constraint is currently still an aid to awareness. But this does not go far. Because – so I have to say to myself, if I grasp the tendency behind the events – I or my children will not be able to escape the constraint in the long run. Theoretically, let us assume that the resistance prevails against the obvious totalitarian tendency: What would be won then? The constraint is gone again; I'm swimming with the current of the times again. Nothing has changed there. The cause of the overall situation – neglected thinking – persists. There was only one revolt against the personally embarrassing consequences. This is a huge problem: learning to feel this slight swimming with the current as a compulsion. Currently the compulsion is being delivered free of charge. And it wakes up my resistance. But this very «natural» resistance to the measures imposed hides the real problem: to learn to think of the whole of today's way of thinking as a compulsion, a compulsion that my personality has constantly exerted against me. If I do not come to this feeling, then the great question of mankind will not come up to me, how thinking can free itself from the unconscious compulsion of the «mental images»⁷ bound to the brain. We do not notice these compulsive inspirations as long as we live unconsciously in neglected thinking, but only when the absurd «thoughts» that spring out of this neglected (non-)thinking, thwart this comfortable habitual life. So what does it mean that we should learn to feel the constraint of this thinking? It is clear that we need to see through the forced situation of thinking much more radically, namely internally. Anyone who, as an anthroposophist, is now only defending himself against external coercive measures – resistance is desirable, because it is after all a stimulus for the consciousness which is revolting against a still unknown – misses however the plunging consciousness impulse that is recognized as effective behind the coercive measures as soon as Anthroposophy comes into play. But this is where one has to wake up to the real problem.

⁷ «One should not mix up:«have thought images» and process thoughts through thinking. Thought images can appear dreamlike, like vague inspirations in the soul. This is not a thinking.» «The Philosophy of Spiritual Activity» (Die Philosophie der Freiheit), p. 55.

Rudolf Steiner now directs the eyes of the friends of Anthroposophy to the place where this inner – decisive – question about the abolition of the ‹all-over› can and must really arise: by meeting Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science. This Spiritual Science was – as the ‹publication of occultism› – brought into the world so that a ‹smallest circle› of people on behalf of the rest of mankind, which has to form a kind of force counter-force, recognizes the misery of mankind as their own, which means to learn to recognize and treat humanity's misery – created by materialism and the neglected thinking that goes with it – as a matter of its own interest. This means: The method of overcoming neglected thinking internally is freely available in Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science. But it is important to deal with this Spiritual Science in the right way.

Here Rudolf Steiner points out that this appropriately required handling is not given easily. ‹But exactly some of the neglected thinking of the present has an effect on the view of Spiritual Science. [...] This is now transferred to the view of Spiritual Science.› (p. 108) – Do we see the problem? To do this, we need to take a closer look at how we usually deal with Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy.

Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science is physically given to us as text, black on white. We read it. We note that ‹Spiritual Scientific facts› are being presented. ‹Because people are really infected (!) with such a way of thinking, they say to themselves: what the Spiritual scientist says on pages a, b, c are Spiritual Scientific facts. You can't have it in front of you if you haven't got the vision.› (p.108) We then just think that the factuality of the communications in Spiritual Science is already given by the fact that they are successively ‹communicated› out of a higher knowledge. We accept them as ‹given› with inner passivity. We then link these communication elements with the content of consciousness that already exists in us through logical operations. Rudolf Steiner's ‹Messages› basically remain isolated as foreign bodies in our consciousness as if frozen. One only thinks that they have been taken ‹alive› because they have been forced into their own unconscious context. ‹And then they no longer think about whether they could not also get into the mutual relationship of what the Spiritual scientist says, but are making the same mistake that everyone makes today.› (ibid.) With this we are however told that there is no ‹content› of these messages, but rather that the relationships of the individual statements with each other result in the content when these relationships are grasped in thought. But what does that mean? Rudolf Steiner comes back to this. First of all, he says: ‹The bad thing is that this basic mistake of contemporary thinking is so little seen, so little understood.› What is bad is that we think that we are taking the anthroposophical representations in while doing something completely different: namely misunderstanding them from the start. And exactly for that – for this completely automatic misunderstanding! – we should develop an intense interest. Because only then are we interested in the real misery of people. ‹And [the basic mistake] is really seen through very little. It reaches into our everyday thinking, making itself as valid as the advanced post of philosophical or scientific thinking. And one rarely realizes what a tremendous duty actually arises from insight into this fact, how important it is to be interested in these

things, how irresponsible it is to blunt one's interest in these things.» (p.108) Insight into which facts? That we do not see the basic error that works in our neglected thinking. But what is ‹tremendous› about the duty that arises from this insight? That we must *consciously* destroy the illusion, we would have somehow gotten rid of this basic mistake of our time, just because we think we can quote a little Rudolf Steiner to show our ‹anthroposophical competence›. The immense thing is that we have to see how thoroughly we have to refute ourselves with regard to our ‹understanding› of the anthroposophical depictions. «*We have to search deep, deep into the subsurface of our soul if we want to find in ourselves how we are actually dependent on the blind belief in authority of the present, how thoroughly we are dependent on it. Our strolling, our comfort, that is what prevents us from being at least internally inflamed and ignited for the great interests of mankind.*» (P. 110) ‹Anthroposophical› strolling? Inner comfort? And what should we be inflamed with? «*Anyone who continues this line of thought inside himself will really find innumerable things in himself that will be absorbed in the very blindest belief in authority. And if he can't find anything, my dear friends, then don't take it against me, if I tell him that the less he finds it in him, the greater the dose of this belief in authority!*» (p. 102) What are we talking about here? But of our relationship to Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science! Are we not also subject to a belief in authority in regard to this Spiritual Science? Exactly when we don't notice it? If we can't find a blind belief in authority there, do we have an even bigger dose of it? I beg your pardon, what is that supposed to mean?

On the Right Approach to Understanding Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science

On January 2, 1916, Rudolf Steiner turned to the abysmal questions he raised for his listeners on the previous day. For the sake of brevity, I can only try to give an outline of his comments. Let us make clear the situation in which Rudolf Steiner finds himself as the publisher of the occult. The publication causes the content of occultism to appear in a way that favors the frivolous opinion that this content is now easily accessible through more or less accurate reading and a few exercises, and that anyone can pick it up easily. Is the misunderstanding of Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy thence necessarily linked to its appearance? Does it have to be that way? Yes! This side effect of the publication of the occult was inevitable for Rudolf Steiner.⁸ The

⁸ «In the minds of the so-called theosophists, all materialism of our age will once be most blatantly reflected. Because the theosophical ethos itself is so high, those who are not wholly touched by it will become the worst materialists. We will experience much more evil in the theosophists than in those who have not been touched by the theosophical teaching. Theosophical teaching as dogmatics, not as life, can lead to materialistic abysses. We just have to understand that. [...] That is its great responsibility. This is what the brothers always hold against us, who want to remain conservative in the occult and who also want to maintain the method of keeping things secret. And not a day goes

mystery of the occult was thus betrayed and destroyed, so to speak. If this effect remains, Anthroposophy as publication and thus as the end of true occultism will never be able to fulfill Rudolf Steiner's promise that it will be the origin of new mysteries. So if Anthroposophy was and is unconsciously ‹taken up› via neglected thinking, the result of this is a new ideological dilettantism, as the papal head of which would have to be Rudolf Steiner, while anthroposophists acting as the priesthood which claims to teach and guide contemporary humanity. Which is of course completely absurd. Rudolf Steiner: «You have to know that, and you have to be able to act in this sense. That is a signature of our time. [...] Therefore, we have in parallel with a popularization of [Spiritual, RB] Science – which is useful in the highest sense, is advantageous in the highest sense – at the same time we have a descent on all philosophical worldview issues, a neglected thinking that is flu-like, epidemic-like, because it bites itself into everything, everything [...]. Of course, we cannot do much as an individual or as a small society at first. But our own thinking has to move in the right direction, must know what it is dealing with, should not be exposed to the danger itself – if I may use the trivial expression – to fall into the ideological philosophical amateurism [...].» (Fall into – not fall for.)

Mystery mood – or philosophical amateurism

The way Rudolf Steiner published occultism could not have been anything other than seemingly popular. Still, the vast majority of people reject this new spiritual science. They do not want to learn to understand what is necessary to tell mankind about themselves. There are deep reasons for this. Because they do not know in the innermost how they could appropriately approach this spiritual science. There is wisdom. But a small group should and wants to understand Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science based on certain karmic conditions. However, the question this group has to ask here is: Which means of thought does this small group want to use to achieve the desired understanding? After all, one can turn to anthroposophy only through thinking so as to get the right impulses for feeling and willing. Rudolf Steiner explained on the day before that the ‹means of thought› readily available in ‹our (!) time› are unsuitable, that their application to Anthroposophy rather leads the ‹anthroposophists› into an absurd – meas-

by when the masters do not sound the warning clearly: «Be careful, consider the immaturity of your age. You have children in front of you, and it is your destiny that you must tell children the high secret teachings. Be aware that you are raising villains through your words.» I can only tell you if the Master did not know how to convince me that, despite everything, theosophy is necessary for our age: even after 1901 I would only have written philosophical books and spoken literarily and philosophically.» Rudolf Steiner, letter to Marie v. Sievers, January 9, 1905, GA 262, S 85f. (Rudolf Steiner could not avoid quoting the ‹masters' when writing to Marie von Sievers, a theosophist and admirer of Annie Besant...)

ured by what humanity needs – philosophical amateurism, which makes the anthroposophical impulse thoroughly ineffective. The small group of people interested in Anthroposophy must of course be there; but it must want to understand its task of understanding correctly. It must want to understand to which high extent it must consciously cultivate inner modesty and the right humility towards truth and knowledge. It must not be fooled by the intellectual thinking of the time. It must understand that it must achieve something very paradoxical

Rudolf Steiner: «[...] one should have this humility, this modesty not wanting to understand [Anthroposophy], until the possibilities of understanding have been brought about. However, this modesty does not exist anywhere in our time.» (p. 125) It is «especially true in our time that a certain mood of the soul cannot be achieved so easily, which is absolutely necessary if real spiritual knowledge is to be gained. This mood of the soul is exactly the mood of the mysteries, which consists in developing the feeling within yourself: you cannot understand anything until you have prepared the soul to enter into the understanding. It is important to see this fact clearly, my dear friends.» (p. 126)

Let us take a closer look at this sentence about the preparation of the soul. We are faced with what we should learn to understand: Anthroposophy. Spontaneously we start with the usual (neglected!) thinking and start what we then call «appropriation» of the content. Now, however, a feeling, a mood of the soul should hold us back. This feeling is put into words in Rudolf Steiner's sentence: You cannot understand before you have prepared the soul. For what? For going into understanding! A strange wording, isn't it? Let's make a picture of it. There is a Hall of Understanding. Most people don't notice it. They talk about this and that from «spiritual science» which they have heard or read somewhere. But we are now facing it. We are looking for more than just the talk. But the gate to the Hall of Understanding is closed. If we would then knock on this gate, a flap would open and a huge voice would sound: «Go back!»⁹ We could hear the mystery message: You must not enter it as you are! In other words: I am not allowed or able to enter this way into how Anthroposophy understands itself! To enter the Hall of Understanding, to BE there, where the objective understanding, i.e. Anthroposophy itself, enables me to be in it by virtue of my self-education. And as long as I'm not in this *anthroposophical understanding of Anthroposophy*, I can't understand any of it. What I first imagine as an understanding is actually not an understanding. I'm outside, I have no idea what true understanding is. Only this feeling – which Rudolf Steiner, as he says, can only bring about with great difficulty for us – tells me that I need first to go through a preparation, a preparation that I cannot grasp with neglected thinking as long as I do not experience myself as *completely* neglected in thought. But how

⁹ «The Magic Flute» Act 1, Scene 16.

should this experience be possible?¹⁰ It must be possible, the writings of Rudolf Steiner must offer the possibility, first of all: to gain insight into one's own neglect in thought, and secondly: to take self-education in thinking into one's own hands. But there are huge difficulties. And if we do not correctly assess these difficulties in their full weight, we will not be on the right track. In principle, we are dealing with the fact that Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical books are written with words we know, which we think we can understand, and then enter with the help of these «understood» words into the «Temple of Certainty».¹¹

Rudolf Steiner: «Don't be fooled by words, that's what you should understand first. For this, however, it is also necessary to free oneself from the whole aura of prejudices that we encounter everywhere; that we really experience under all circumstances that sentiment enlivening our soul that can come from the essence of Spiritual Science; that we ask ourselves more often: *What is in our soul than flows out of the essence of Spiritual Science, and what is in our soul only because we are also appropriating those forms of thought that are buzzing through the world today?*»

So that would be understandable at first. What again? This: How can enter «into our soul (please note: this «our» says Rudolf Steiner !) what truly flows out of the essence of Spiritual Science – and how can «we» ourselves (in fulfillment of the «tremendous duty»!) distinguish this from that which is in our soul as a pretended «Anthroposophy» only because we also appropriate ourselves those thought forms that are buzzing through the world today?»

There is no question that this possibility exists: that through the rigorous, conscious application of the ordinary intellect to a text by Rudolf Steiner, with the help of Rudolf Steiner, to put this own intellect in its place and take it into consequent self-education. But what that means cannot be said so easily. This requires a lot more than a few clever explanations ...

Summary

1. «Fact-based» and therefore neglected thinking is the cause of the breakdown of our civilization and the consequent social, political, military, ecological, ..., human chaos.
2. Anthroposophy places itself right in the middle of this doom with the claim to ensure in a higher way that clear, self-contained thinking (what would that be?) can alone make possible a future of humanity.

¹⁰ An uninhibited look at the catastrophe of an anthroposophical movement which is more and more losing its inner relationship to Rudolf Steiner and thus to itself may promote this experience. Anyone who experiences the intended reference to Rudolf Steiner as paradoxical may well know themselves on the required path ...

¹¹ Goethe, Faust I, student scene, V. 1990 – 2000.

3. Neglected thinking is however also prevalent in the small group of anthroposophists. As long as they do not see this, do not feel the constraint of this ‹thinking›, they will spread ‹with the best of their knowledge and conscience› a pseudo-anthroposophy as a ‹philosophical amateurism› and thus block its future (and their own!).

4. To see this would be the first and most serious duty for the small group of friends of Anthroposophy. In doing so, however, they are entering into a paradox that can abolish their usual self-image.

5. Only by experiencing this paradox, however, can one achieve what Rudolf Steiner calls ‹mood of the mystery›. We should come to want to avoid ‹understanding› Anthroposophy, which has completely given itself up to ordinary (mis)understanding, with ordinary thinking. With this will, Anthroposophy (the published occultism – the apparent secret) regains its occult dimension. This is to be understood as Rudolf Steiner's liberation from fate, which is reflected in his tremendous venture to publish the occult. – In the ‹Corona crisis›, the world was shockingly stopped in its normal course. This stop however basically applies to the friends of Anthroposophy. Understanding this is of utmost importance.

6. The situation in the world that occurred after the publication of Anthroposophy clearly shows that contemporary humanity refuses to understand Anthroposophy, and there are reasons for that. This rejection certainly leads to the demise of current civilization. In this doom, in addition to being fearless in going through with it, anthroposophists have the duty, on behalf of the rest of humanity, to develop in rigorous self-education on Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy a thinking that finds its form and content in itself. This thinking then must prove itself along the text of Rudolf Steiner as the outflow of his Spiritual Science. This is the inner mystery of Anthroposophy, which externally happens to all of us as a doomday scenario of the world as we know it.

7. The central riddle to be solved lies in the question of how the literary ‹fake factualness› of Spiritual Science can be overcome – which is only brought into it with the neglected thinking of also the friends of Anthroposophy – through the elaboration of the pure thought form of the sentences in Rudolf Steiner's anthroposophical books. The trouble of anthroposophical texts must also contain the solution ...

There might be more to be discussed soon ...

Kempton (Allgäu), May 28, 2020 Rüdiger Blankertz

Find the original German version here:

www.menschenkunde.com/pdf/RB_Was_uns_obliegt_II_Pfingsten_2020.pdf

Or: ogy.de/mebh

Translated from the German original by Walter Siegfried Hahn (Puerto Princesa, Palawan), with support from Ken Richings (Tucson, Arizona) and Jim Sharman (Zarraga, Iloilo), with permission of the author and the publisher.

The copyright is with the author Rüdiger Blankertz (www.menschenkunde.com).

Contact: autor@menschenkunde.com

Friendly Payback

For many months (‹Corona-Crisis›) the author, like many others, has not been able to earn a livelihood by working as a lecturer and seminar leader. For financial support:

Via Paypal: <http://Paypal.me/rblankertz>

Via bank transfer: Ruediger Blankertz, Postbank, IBAN DE41 2501 0030 0529 9413 02.