

Anthroposophical Society in New Hampshire Christmas 2020



Simeon and Anna in the Temple by Rembrandt van Rijn

Verse for Christmas
From Rudolf Steiner's Calendar of the Soul

I feel as from enchantment freed
The Spirit-child in womb of soul;
The Holy Word of Worlds
It has in heart's bright radiance
The heavenly fruit of hope begotten,
Which groweth jubilant to farthest worlds,
Out of my being's ground in God.

**We dedicate this issue of the Newsletter to our heroic teachers,
Who in unusual and very challenging circumstances,
Have continued to hold and nurture the children.
Therefore, the Christmas lectures and contributions
in the newsletter this time have a pedagogical orientation.
Thanks to them and to ALL people who have sacrificed on behalf of others in this difficult
time.**

What we experience in pre-earthly existence in working together with the Beings of the Higher Hierarchies leaves in us a heritage for our earthly life, a faint shadow of this communion with the Hierarchies. If between death and a new birth we had no such community of life with the Beings of the Hierarchies, we could not unfold, here on Earth, the power of love.

The power of love we unfold here on Earth is of course only a faint reflection, a shadow of our communion with the Spirit-Beings of the Higher Hierarchies between death and a new birth, but it is a reflection of that communion. That here on the Earth we are able to unfold human love, sympathetic understanding for another human being, is due to the fact that between death and a new birth we are able to live in communion with the Beings of the Higher Hierarchies.

Source: Rudolf Steiner - GA 219 - [Man and the World of Stars: IV: Rhythms of Earthly and Spiritual Life. Love, Memory, the Moral Life.](#) - Dornach, December 15, 1922

From: Spiritual Science as a Foundation for Social Forms, lecture XVI. Dornach, September 11, 1920

.....Now begins the age---and in many respects, this is the real reason for the stormy character of our times---in which the souls who descend through conception and birth into earthly life bring along for themselves images from the spiritual world. When pictures are brought along out of spiritual existence into physical life, and if salvation is to arise for the human being and his social life, they must under all circumstances be united with the **astral body**, whereas the element lacking images only unites with the ego. It is predominantly the unfolding of the ego which has blossomed in humanity since the fifteenth century.

Now, however, the time is beginning when man has to feel: Within me there live pictures from my prenatal existence; during my earthly life, I have to make them come alive. I cannot accomplish this merely with my ego; I must work deeper into myself, and this must reach as far as my astral body.

Now it is generally true that humanity resists the images indwelling in the astral body, images experienced prior to conception. In a way, human beings repel what is supposed to find its way out of the depths of their being into the astral body. The dry, prosaic attitude of the present time is one of its fundamental characteristics, and there are many broadly based movements that oppose an education whose concern it would be that the forces arising from the soul and trying to make themselves felt in the astral body will actually assert themselves. There are insipid, dry people who would really like to exclude any education by means of fairy tales, legends and anything illuminated by imagination. In our Waldorf School system, we have made it our priority that the lessons and instruction of the children entering primary education will proceed from pictorial descriptions, from the life-filled presentation of images, from elements taken from legends and fairy tales. Even what the children are initially supposed to learn about the nature and processes of the animal kingdom, the plant and mineral kingdoms, is not supposed to be expressed in a dry, matter-of-fact manner; it is supposed to be clothed in imaginative, legendary, fairy tale-like elements. For what is seated deep within the child's soul are the imaginations that have been received in the spiritual world. They seek to come to the surface. The teacher or the educator

adopts the right attitude towards the child if s/he confronts the child with pictures. By placing images before the child's soul, there flash up from its soul those images, or, strictly speaking, those forces of pictorialized representation which have been received before birth or, let us say, prior to conception.

.....We have now reached the point in human evolution where, out of sleep as well, we draw imaginations that seek to indwell not only our ego, where rationality reigns supreme, but also our astral body. If we work against this, we once more reject something that is trying to rise into consciousness out of the depths of the human soul; we also work against the whole course of mankind's evolution, and what matters here is that we do not oppose humanity's development but work in harmony with it.

.....It is true that Christianity confronts human beings in such a way that they can only grasp its essence, especially the nature of the Mystery of Golgotha, if they come round to a comprehension of something supersensible. For one must envisage that Christ, a being Who formerly had not been connected with earth evolution, united with the human being, Jesus of Nazareth, and that supersensible events took place. One must conceive of the fact that in regard to the event of Golgotha, even birth and conception differed from the way they take place in ordinary human circumstances. In short, the demand is made by Christianity to understand the Mystery of Golgotha in a supersensible sense.

There is an interesting passage in a book written by a modern naturalist where fulminations are uttered against the Immaculate Conception, where it is said that it is an impertinent insult to human reason to claim that an immaculate conception can occur.

Well, a modern naturalist, a purely intellectual person, can't help feeling this way. In a certain sense, what is intended out of the spiritual life is indeed an impertinent mockery of human reason. But the point is that we now live in an age where we must gradually begin to bring into waking life what has been spiritually experienced between falling asleep and waking in such a manner that our astral body can be impregnated and permeated with a pictorial element—not merely our ego, which is the seat of rationality, of intellectualism.

.....One who has insight into the whole character of our time, however, will understand that we must advance to a comprehension of the Mystery of Golgotha. Just because it is the central manifestation of our human evolution, it will tear us away from the earthly manner of thinking, and will draw us with might and mean to understand something that is incomprehensible based on the earthly sense domain. Whoever wishes in everything to remain caught in the earthly sensory sphere would say, "The Immaculate Conception is an impertinent insult against human reason."

One who understands the task of present-day man will say: I must accustom myself to such ideas. In that case, I must emancipate myself from the customary use of words today. When somebody by the name of Smith or Miller announces himself, I must not assume that he is coming with a hammer in hand or overalls powdered with flour. I must expect something quite different from what I might deduce from the words. Thus, I have to become used to emancipating myself from what was ingrained into the words by the merely physical life of the senses.

Today, the Mystery of Golgotha is in fact the first test for us to see whether we are willing to go along with the comprehension of something that extends beyond the physical-sensory sphere. We, therefore, can no longer content ourselves with a merely traditional, historical description of Christianity, we need instead a creative understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. Out of spiritual science, we need inner strength of soul which, in a new way, approaches the Mystery of Golgotha and is in a position to comprehend the Mystery of Golgotha as a supersensory fact. Then, having positioned the Mystery of Golgotha into the central point of human thinking and feeling, we must

make a new beginning especially in regard to education, and prepare the child in such a way that it does not suppress, does not have to suppress, the imaginations that seek to arise from the depths of the soul. We must meet the imaginations halfway by making pictures of our conceptions.

This is the deeper reason why, in the last issue of *Soziale Zukunft* (Social Future) which is a magazine dealing with education, I described education and instruction as an art in the most eminent sense. In the field of pedagogy, teacher and educators must actually proceed in the way an artist does, indeed, they must proceed in a style surpassing that of an artist. It does not do to impose abstract principles in an abstract pedagogical sense. What matters is that one penetrates the being of man, and, through this comprehension of man's nature, arrives at the point of reading from the inner human being what one has to do in each case. An artist who is creating something cannot go by abstract rules. The purpose of aesthetics is not that of establishing rules for the artists. An artist cannot even go by what he has created yesterday when he creates something today. At every moment he must endeavor to be creative and original. This is how the teacher must be, in a still higher sense. One must not say based on a certain attitude of mind: "Well, if we are looking for teachers like that, we have to wait another three to four hundred years." The only reason that we do not have such teachers as yet is because we say things like this. We can have them the very moment that we have the strong power of faith in it; but it is the strong, not the passive, power of faith that is needed here. Therefore, what is important here is that when we return from sleep, upon awakening, we truly experience in the astral body ad imprint into the etheric body what the astral body experiences from the moment of falling asleep until waking up. It can only take place through pictorializing the whole cultural life.

This pictorialization of the whole life of culture, this pictorialization that is demanded by the laws of humanity's evolution, will come into being when the whole spiritual life is left to the decision of those who participate in the spiritual life; when no instructions, no school regulations are laid down by a government which by its very nature stands outside the spiritual life. It is important here that the state does not hand down pedagogical regulations, school curriculums, and such like in an abstract manner. What matters is that one has human beings in an emancipated spiritual life who act out of their own free personality, and that one accomplishes with them what one can or wishes to accomplish with them.

The fact that the human being is presently beginning to ring along through conception and birth something that differs from what he brought with him since the middle of the fifteenth century, and the fact that he also bring something different with him out of sleep, both these facts demand that careful attention be given such matters, and that one really permeates oneself with the knowledge of such decisive facts. But from where can this knowledge be gained, if not from spiritual science?.....This is the reason why anthroposophical cultural thinking must lie at the foundation of everything that constitutes work for the progress of mankind.

"If we give up ourselves to mutual help, through this giving up to the community a powerful strengthening of our organs takes place. If we then speak or act as a member of such a community, there speaks or acts in us not the singular soul only but the spirit of the community. This is the secret of progress for the future of mankind: To work out of communities." ~Dr. Rudolf Steiner

From: *Erziehungskunst*, magazine for Waldorf Pedagogy, Christmas 2020 edition

As Above So Below

A Christmas Consideration

By Christof Wiechert

It is not so long ago that the human being was generally spoken of as a citizen of two worlds. This idea, that itself has a connection with a higher meaning, is rarely encountered now.

In the 1960's the sociologist Herbert Marcuse wrote the book One-dimensional Man. There he describes the human being squeezed between technology and economy. He is reduced to being a Consumer, one who strives only to fulfill the well-being of his body, while not even noticing other dimensions of his being. The book reached cult-status, everyone read it. But everyone was sure that things would never come so far! Marcuse himself was critical: he saw very little effect from the publication of the book.

Marcuse's book was written 50 years ago now. It is amazing how short our historical thinking and consciousness has become. Who still remembers what great hopes people cherished 30 years ago for a turning point in human affairs? Is it because of the quality of school education that events in time no longer have any lasting effect? Are we as teachers and pedagogues sufficiently aware of this, that the historical consciousness is very weakly developed these days? How can it instead be created? Indeed, it is done well firstly through an interest in the world and through this interest an ensouled love for the world. On such a basis the history lesson makes sense and takes effect. 'Love for', 'interest in' and an 'awakened consciousness'; these are the important pedagogical stages.

Not one-dimensional but at least two-dimensional is what Rudolf Steiner considered the human being to be. This 'two-dimensionality' receives little attention for those who study The Study of Man (The Foundations of Human Experience). In this work of Steiner's this concept is a bit hidden, although in the first lecture it sparkles like a little diamond: "The task of education, taken in a spiritual sense, means the 'harmonizing' of the Soul-Spiritual with the Life-Bodily aspect." When this harmony is established, the human being actually creates a middle between Above and Below and is a citizen of two worlds! If that is accomplished, then the human being can get his or her life's task in hand. It is helpful then to place the microcosmic human next to and compare it to the macrocosmic human. We will try to do this. First, we consider the human Form, that Leonardo da Vinci saw and drew (see picture at the end of the article), the so-called Vitruvian human being. We see a part turned towards the heights (or turned upwards), we see a middle part that is open to the periphery and a part that acts as a fundament, where the earth and gravity are literally connected. But arms and legs show us two gestures: The arms can also grasp the surroundings but also reach to the heights. The legs act as a fundament but they can also bend towards the middle. And this human being, this "Uomo universal" stands in a square, but at the same time in a circle. S/he is Earth (Microcosmos) and Cosmos (Macrocosmos) at the same time. This picture itself holds the pedagogical task together.

But mainstream education and consciousness is something different. Here we find a positivistic-reductionist impression which is also materialistically oriented. What does that mean for the science of education? It means that science has lost, through the thought forms of today, the cosmic reference in the human being, and holds onto only the earthly aspect. The upper capacities of the human being are seen merely as an "improvement" of the material world.

Finding the inner Middle

What does it mean to 'bring into harmony'? It means that Marcuse was right, we have become one-dimensional. This affects, among other things, our thinking that becomes 'heavy', that it works against us when we try to think 'non-materially', that we don't want to think aesthetically (or of beauty) and that we close ourselves off to spirit-born thoughts. The pedagogical task is, however, to make thinking flexible, fluid and almost 'living'. (This is the best precaution, by the way, against the ghostly ideas of the corona-infected time because this agile flexibility gives birth to common sense.) A powerful corrective to a hardening of the thinking that comes with singular dimensionality one finds in the weekly verses given by Rudolf Steiner in the so-called Soul Calendar, in particular for the Michaelmas season:

We are certainly part of Nature (the material world), but Nature gives birth to our Will and that is not material. And the power of the Will steels the Spirit, it is the Spirit-impulse. This is the 'bringing into harmony' from below upwards.

*Nature! Your soul of motherhood
I bear within the being of my will;
And this will's fiery might
Steels my Spirit's impulses,
That self-awareness they beget,
To bear my Self in me.*

One cannot imagine a more powerful integration of the lower human being with the upper human being. One may then ask, what does it mean *To bear myself in me*? There is a meditation for teachers-- Steiner calls it a mantric formula—in which it is shown how, out of the opposition of the upper and the lower human being a tension comes into being. This tension he calls "Conscious-Being". And indeed, this Conscious Being forces the pressing of the opposites together. And this Conscious Being shall bind the cosmic Human with the earthly Human, through which the brightness of the world is bound with earthly darkness. Also here, Above and Below are brought into harmony.

Very powerfully, but also tenderly, this comes to expression in the weekly verse for the Christmas time. The *Spirit Child in womb of soul* is freed from enchantment or released. The Self-awareness of the autumn verse (the Michaelmas mood) could receive the Spirit-Child, conceived from the *Holy Word of Worlds*. It embodies the *heavenly fruit of hope*. The *bear my Self in me* grows to the Spirit Child and awakens, *jubilant to farthest worlds*. The bringing into harmony has here taken on the gesture from above to below. And the *being's Godly ground* radiates it back.

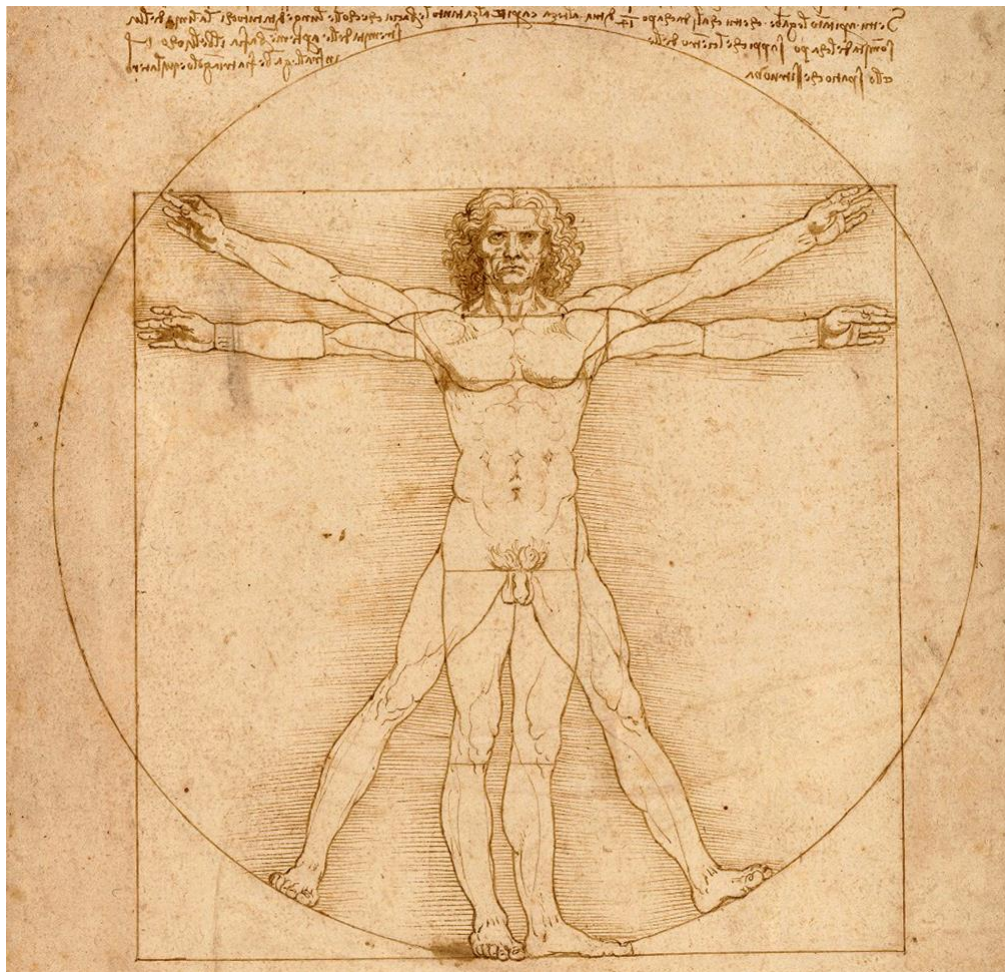
*I feel as from enchantment freed
The Spirit-Child in womb of soul;
The Holy Word of Worlds.
It has in heart's bright radiance*

*The heavenly fruit of hope begotten,
Which groweth jubilant to farthest worlds,
Out of my being's Godly ground.*

We can understand the whole human being only when we understand him/her at least as a citizen of two worlds. It makes the task of parents and teachers clearer and thereby easier when we always consider that appearances here on Earth are an expression of the conditions and the dynamic between above and below. From this parents, teachers and educators can, depending on the developmental stage, help the children to develop the right Center realm. Friedrich Schiller also wanted to find the right Center realm, as he expressed it in his letters to the Danish Prince Friedrich Christian von Augustenburg (what we know as the letters On the Aesthetic Education of Man). He searched for it in the polarity between Sensory Instinct and Form(-giving) Instinct, the coming together of which, and in the human to human realm, gives the Instinct to Play. This is where artistry and creativity come alive.

About the author: Christof Wiechert was a Waldorf teacher and formerly was the leader of the Pedagogical Section at the Goetheanum.

Translation into English by Alice Groh, Wilton, NH, USA.



Calendar of Events

Tuesday, Feb. 2nd, 7pm An **online** celebration of Candlemas. Zoom link to be arranged. We will each light a candle in our homes and hear a short presentation out of Rudolf Steiner's Agriculture Course concerning the seeds receiving their archetypes at this time of year.

Sunday, April 4th, 10am. An Offering Service will be celebrating in the Garden Room, Groh Farm, in honor of Easter. Anyone over the age of 14 welcome. Again, an RSVP is appreciated.

Sunday, May 23rd, 3pm, a Whitsun outdoor celebration at the Schepker's in Harrisville, with arts activities. Details to follow at a later date.

A reminder about financial contributions to the Anthroposophical Society in NH.

You may donate by either sending a check written to Anthroposophical Society NH to PO Box 681, Wilton, NH, or you may donate via PayPal to anthroposophicalsocietynh@gmail.com. Thank you for your support.

A Help-Wanted Ad for a Chef from Inner Fire in Vermont

View the ad on Google Docs:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d3oHQxRS9GEFBvtD12sjPxL8bpFjIEXuKekholChzlg/edit?ts=5fca6683>