

PRECONCEPTION AND FREE THOUGHT

Reflections on Judith von Halle

Pre-conception is one of the most insidious enemies on the path of thought. It deprives thinking from doing its work thoroughly, giving it an a-priori pre-packaged 'truth', ready-made but because of this, untrue.

Yet it would be enough to follow the intrinsic tenet of truth by which in order to judge it is first indispensable to know!

It seems a self-evident concept, but it is not so obvious if it's still the case that the so called Anthroposophists, or 'Scaligeriani', or students of esotericism afford to deliver *tranchant* judgments on personalities deserving of consideration and respect.

A few names among many: *Brian Weiss* and *Judith von Halle*. Very different personalities, different as their areas of expertise and their mission on earth.

Yet they have something in common: the virulence of pre-conception and pre-judgment they brought upon themselves. The first by scientists (as well as by Anthroposophists) the second by Anthroposophists (and by scientists too).

So I told myself: if so much acrimony and prejudice exists against them, well, maybe it's time to get acquainted with them. I researched as much as I could what has been said and written about them; then I read all or most of their works, until an image of these personalities emerged in my soul. Please note, an *image*, not an opinion, least of all a pre-conception.

Our soul, when properly used, has the 'sense organs' which often enable us to discern the truth as well as ordinary thinking.

But even that was not enough. It is necessary to turn to the observation of external reality to correct our judgments if we make some mistake in the exploration of the physical world, so I needed to have a further response to my images.

In that regard, forgive me if I say something personal.

Living in America, I am often surprised by how many people – even favourably inclined natures, tending towards objectiveness – lunge in rebukes on the American world – according to them, *Ahriman tout-court* - without really knowing it I would remind these people that if they aren't familiar with the language, culture and unless they have lived in a certain country, each judgment can't be but a prejudice. And if it is not ours, but 'suggested' by others – even by the person we value the most - then it's even worse.

That's why I wanted to get to know my two subjects in person, to listen to them live, to see the light in their eyes, feel the harmony of their word, ask them questions.

During these two meetings, both of which occurred in October of last year, the first one in Los Angeles and the second in Berlin, I confirmed not only the substance of the inner images born in me, but also how indispensable it is to know in person those we afford to judge.

This paper is a result of those two meetings.

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I've always had a hard time understanding why so many Spirit seekers can so easily fall into the trap of preconception and prejudice, especially when dealing with something that involves a higher level of human life such as the spiritual one.

Allow me to explain this.

If I examine the normal level of consciousness with which we think our thoughts, feel our feelings and emotions or act in our lives, it is quite evident that the levels of awareness that characterize our daily existence are relatively mediocre, if not often blurry. This obviously affects not just the way we think, but inevitably also our actions, thus changing our destiny; all we have to do is to look back at our own lives to realize this. If we wonder why at some point in our youth we have identified with the right or left wing, or why we have chosen this or that sports club, or why we took up that certain career, we can become aware of the degree of freedom or the necessity that at that

time characterized those choices.

We realize that it was because of our family, our friends or our social entourage, or even – on the contrary – in reaction to them.

All right, but why did we adhere, for example, to certain models while in other people close to us, reaction prevailed?

If we go deeper into this inner investigation with the tools of the spiritual path, we realize that it often has to do with karmic choices, involving *this* incarnation, which have nothing to do with either an objective truth or the essence of our immortal being.

It's a matter of *partial* views that we absolutely need to leave behind us - as the butterfly leaves the cocoon - if we want to spread our inner growth's wings.

I mean that most of the choices of our lives have been determined by a thought which was not aware of the general scenario of our existence, in other words with only half of its potential.

Moreover, even our deepest beliefs are often not ours, but, let's say, just borrowed from the surrounding world.

However, if we approach a spiritual path we should start to look at these facts again, under a different premise.

We should – here the conditional is required – re-examine the facts because the first premise of a spiritual path is the search for truth.

If we come to a spiritual way we do it because, somehow, what is considered by others to be "reality" is not enough for us.

It does not provide sufficient answers to our questions. We seek a deeper reality as a condition to complete what has become for us a *partial* picture of the world.

At that point we're faced with a dilemma: to passively comply with the path we are following – whichever it is – and find comfort and peace of mind through the answers it's beginning to provide us with, or to carry on relentlessly with the *construction* of knowledge.

Please note: I say *construction*, not research.

Because if our path is that steep way of the authentic spiritual seeker, we will soon discover that it does not allow for rest, to adjust our thoughts to those of the spokesmen of the path – even the highest Masters - to adjust their words to our pace.

We will find that – even assuming that they are authentic Masters, not people who, instead of showing us the way to freedom, bind us to their personalities or doctrine - our task can only be that of the continuous *building* of the truth, *our truth*.

Our truth is not an attained destination because, if properly understood - that means only *practiced* - the path may not be identified with an acquired experience; it is always a process, continuous experience of partial truths that we immediately overcome the instant after we achieve them.

The spiritual path is not the number of books we have read, the 'revelations' that inflame our hearts or wise discussions with friends, but the impervious and lonely transformation of our thinking, feeling and will.

In other words, of our whole earthly being.

"We may be volitive ascetics, or seraphic mystics, or meditators capable of humbleness and loneliness, just for the fact that this does not change the real self. We follow a method with fervor, because it allows the ego to remain intact with its own needs: without knowing it, we depend on a way to represent our own Spiritual World according to our senses' values" (Massimo Scaligero, *Yoga, Meditation, Magia* - Teseo, Rome).

Two corollaries spring from the growing awareness that the *construction* of truth is a process.

The first one is that truth will never be conclusive or fixed, and this can only lead us towards a profound respect for the others' truth.

The second one is that if we acknowledge that we ourselves in the past have achieved *partial* truths, we are then able to approach the others' truth with the humility and open-mindedness of those who by acknowledging their own limitations cannot fail to understand those of others.

That is why the spiritual path does not leave any room for preconception.

If my path is the *construction* of truth - in the truest spirit of *Philosophy of Freedom* - every thought which crystallizes in the form of prejudice is a dramatic inconsistency.

If it can be tolerated - never justified - in everyday life, it is actually a *betrayal* of the very

foundation of the research on the spiritual path.

Yet I keep encountering this deceit even in the most committed circles, even among the disciples of those who have tirelessly warned that not rigidly working on the construction of truth is dangerous.

I think, for example, of the one who considers himself a student of Spiritual Science, having at his disposal a huge corpus of books, lectures, essays, focused on freedom of thought and open-mindedness of consciousness.

Rudolf Steiner gave us the example of the tree, which has to be observed from all sides to be really known. Is it so difficult to understand and apply this analogy to our way of thinking?

Is it possible that we, as scholars of Spiritual Science, are ready to betray, day after day, the deeper meaning of Steiner's *Philosophy of Freedom*, even though we consider it our lantern on the inner path?

For example, in order to judge an author or a musician or a thinker, you must first know his works, the language in which he wrote - as translations are often misleading - know his life, look at him in the face and possibly meet him personally.

Unfortunately, the way by which we acquire knowledge is usually superficial or one-sided - we know through thought, sometimes through feeling, when not just relying on second-hand knowledge or parroting others' opinions. But if this is already inadequate when we apply it to people we know personally, when it comes to judging someone we do not even know personally, it can be disastrous.

Yet the soul has its senses and its messages; if we listen to them in inner silence they can tell us more than a thousand words.

I myself, since I was young, when it came to approaching an author or a musician who spoke deeply to my thinking or to my heart, I felt - after having read, or heard as many works as I could - an irresistible impulse to know their face, their biography, and, if possible, to meet them personally.

This instinctive inner impulse has always guided me and often allowed me to confirm that my impressions, feelings and intuitions were sound.

Unfortunately, people who should have this impulse by *default* because of their job, often do not have it.

An episode among the many.

I had just graduated in philosophy having written a degree thesis on Friedrich Nietzsche and Rudolf Steiner and received a research fellowship at the University of Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany.

Professor S. with which I had to work, an eminent professor, received me in his office with great kindness and helpfulness. During the conversation, however, he told me that, despite his favorable consideration for my work, he could not understand why I had chosen to work on such a *mystical* author - he used this word - as Rudolf Steiner. I asked him what he had read of Steiner that made him make such a statement. He replied in a very evasive way, could not remember the titles, making me understand that he had not read very many of Steiner's works; he was clearly only reporting the views of others. I was struck by his answer and suggested he read *Philosophy of Freedom*, a purely philosophical work, which would have easily shown how far from the truth his prejudice on Steiner was.

I was even more impressed, years later, to learn that this teacher, Professor S., had then become a leading member of the Anthroposophical Society! Fate had taken other routes and had swept away the pre-conceptions and prejudices with the force of a tsunami.

So this is what I was referring to when talking about pre-conception!

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But let's come to our two personalities.

Let's begin with *Brian Weiss*, a successful psychology graduate at Yale University School of Medicine in 1970, who studied at the New York Medical Center, and led for many years the Department of Psychiatry at Mount Sinai Medical Center in Miami. He, as professor of psychiatry at the Miami School of Medicine in 1980, during a session of regressive hypnosis with a patient, was seeking any childhood trauma at the root of her disorders. It happened that she, to his great surprise, moved backwards to experiences of past lives going back into the past for over 4000 years.

Being a scientist, Weiss was initially quite skeptical about reincarnation, but as, thanks to these experiences, the patient recovered, he decided to delve into this matter.

For a long time he did not disclose the results of his research, knowing what kind of reaction he would receive from the academic world, but, as more and more patients began to experience vivid memories of past lives - of which he sought and found validations from historical and biographical points of view - he decided to extend the range of regression beyond the infantile age to previous lives.

After many years of experience and many therapeutic successes, Brian Weiss is now absolutely certain that regression therapy is effective in dealing with psychological, emotional but also physical diseases, achieving, in most cases, a complete recovery.

He talks about his extraordinary experiences in books such as *Many Lives Many Masters*, *Only Love is Real*, *Messages from the Masters*, *Through Time Into Healing*, in which the initially cautious approach to the issue of reincarnation turned into a deep and serene awareness of its truth.

The method he uses, regressive hypnosis, despite its name is barely hypnotic in the traditional sense; it's actually a technique of relaxation and inner visualization designed to achieve a profound state of consciousness during which memories of past lives can emerge. The work of Brian Weiss throws in some ways a bridge between academic science and esoteric research.

It is, and this is easily understandable, the same instance - with a completely different approach - behind the work of Rudolf Steiner, with his tireless exhortations in favour of an essential, future confluence of science and spiritual research.

The works of Weiss, in fact, made the concept of reincarnation familiar to millions of people, a concept definitely essential for present times.

I've had the pleasure of meeting Brian Weiss personally and talk to him directly during a workshop in Los Angeles, asking him some very direct questions.

He told me he considers Rudolf Steiner a great Master, knowing his books on karma, spoke with great simplicity and modesty of what he considers the task of his life, namely to give his own account of the existence of past lives to people who are not naturally inclined to believe in reincarnation.

"If you believe or not - he said - in reincarnation, is initially not so important, for as much as the ordinary consciousness - the one which manages our 'beliefs' or what we believe or not - is in fact a rather superficial level, which does not affect much on what is the true essence of our immortal souls".

"Think - he continued - ice cubes dipped in cold water. Some are perfectly square, others begin to have rounded corners. Now imagine that the square ones look to those rounded and consider them inferior, to be despised, to be marginalized, as happens constantly in the human world towards the 'different ones'.

What happens when the water begins to warm up? Soon they will lose their sharp edge too, and then what? Their take on things will radically change, they will see the 'different ones', after all, as fellow beings. But as the water gets even warmer, all the ice cubes will melt and become part of a common fabric, their own essence. There will be no more differences; everyone will realize that they are part of the same substance of which the others are made. If we heat the water even more, everything will turn into steam, gas, and then what about those initial inequalities? Everyone will recognize itself on the base of its rarefied substance in the spiritual fabric that binds them all".

The hours spent with Brian Weiss were really stimulating and exciting; having known him personally, spending an entire day with him, confirmed what I had deeply felt reading his books, that is to say that I was facing a serious and profound personality. An honest seeker of truth - beyond some obvious differences between our respective spiritual paths - who is giving his special contribution by steering people in the direction of one of the main ideas of evolution; the idea of repeated earthly lives.

So why am I still hearing from people supposedly practicing free thought, that everything about these experiences - if not actually everything coming from America - is ahrimanic? Why should pre-conception keep on gaining over concept? Prejudice over judgment, which cannot follow but from knowledge?

It is time to put a stop to it!

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If Dr. Weiss – listening to the adepts of prejudice – goes hand in hand with Ahriman, no doubt about Judith von Halle: here there is a liaison with Lucifer for sure!

I've written in a previous article about Judith von Halle, the young Berlin architect whose alleged experiences have actually 'split' the Anthroposophical Society, with her stigmata and her lectures on the event of Golgotha. As I reported Judith had supersensible perceptions since childhood, but only at 25 she had, while reading *Outline of Occult Science* by Steiner, the decisive experience. As it happened also to Massimo Scaligero, it was among the pages of a work of Steiner that they found confirmation on the authenticity of their inner experiences. In 2001 she started to give anthroposophical lectures.

The real transformation of her life took place during the Holy Week of 2004, when Judith, in her 33rd year, suddenly 'experienced', with absolute realism, Jesus' Passion, Death and Resurrection.

On Good Friday stigmata appeared on the palms of her hands, feet and sides, with excruciating pain and bleeding – and from that time onward – she was unable to eat or drink. For seven years these have become stable conditions of her life.

What happened at this point in the anthroposophic circles? Judith, facing such a revelation, at the beginning withdrew from any public role just as Brian Weiss did (in his case reincarnation, which he at first did not know how to handle) realizing only after a few months that the meaning of these experiences was to talk about them, to give her own account.

But, if at first she had been criticized by some for her unwillingness to make known what was happening to her, subsequently there were major figures of the Anthroposophical Movement that strongly attacked her, followed in their attacks by most of the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society.

But of what was Judith von Halle accused? What was she blamed for? For receiving the stigmata? For being unable to eat or drink?

At first, like everyone else, I was quite thrown by these events.

So I began to read various papers of the members of the Anthroposophical Movement, for and against Judith von Halle: articles, blogs, and even books. Such attacks seemed to me – in both form and substance – unworthy of the path the authors of the same were following. If you'll excuse my overstatement, the aggressiveness and rigidity of some of the papers reminded me of the Nazi *Gott mit uns*.

The Nazis thought they had God on their side, certain Anthroposophists today think they have Anthroposophy on their side. The real one, of course, *the only one*.

Troubled by these heated arguments at a certain point I thought, "Well, now is time to figure out what it's about. We can not, after years of inner work, still rely on the opinions of commentators, interpreters and spokesmen, no matter how brilliant and witty they may be." Or no matter how influential within the official Anthroposophical Society they may be.

So I closed all the essays, articles, blogs and all else and I started reading Judith's books.

Well, believe me, it took more than a few pages in order to get the feeling that I was facing a bright personality, with deep integrity and spiritual authenticity.

As I kept on reading, when I got to the touching descriptions of Passion and Resurrection and above all of Pentecost, my soul was deeply moved by those pages.

One would ask: Who is Judith von Halle? What does her story mean in our times? What if she was an instrument of the Spiritual World trying to show us something through her experience?

What then? First, that the Spiritual World *exists*, and in fact breaks – with the stigmata and even more with her not eating or drinking – with the most elementary rules of matter, like our body that needs food and water.

Second, that Golgotha's event – in its absolute peculiarity and its contradicting of nature's laws – must be *central* in our lives.

More: Resurrection is the *climax* of Christ's mission. It's no accident that her first book is entitled, with Paul's words: "*And if He had not been raised*".

Finally, we must be able to overcome and set aside *dogmatism* of all kinds, even when coming from "enlightened clubs".

The Spirit, as my beloved Master, Massimo Scaligero, wrote "*will not suffer any obligation, nor human design: it is like 'the wind that no-one knows where it comes from, nor where it goes'*" (Massimo Scaligero, *On Immortal Love*, Tilopa, Rome, 1963).

Isn't this enough?

There are those who attacked her because of Rudolf Steiner's pretended reviews on stigmata, settled, they say, as something outdated and exclusively linked to the ancient world. Moreover there are those who argued that, by not using the fruits of the earth, her moving away from the physical world made her different from the way in which Steiner lived, who maintained an absolutely normal appearance.

And what about those things I said earlier about pre-conception? Did anyone take the trouble to go and check things first hand?

So, let's first see what Steiner said about *stigmata*.

Well, as far as I know, wherever he mentions stigmata, he does it in relation to the Christian Initiation.

In the lecture held in Leipzig on July 11, 1906, Steiner, speaking of Christian Initiation, which was practiced by all those who have always accepted Christianity from its secret depths, says that the exercises related to these Initiation were very hard, but those who submitted to them, reached a high degree of development on the Christian path. Through these exercises, *"raise to the consciousness of the disciple those secret forces that are dormant in his body. This may, in the course of meditation, cause the appearance of stigmata on his skin. This is a sign that he is ready for the fifth grade, in which is manifested, in a sudden illumination, the Mystic Death. While suffering from severe pain the disciple says to himself: I now recognize that the whole sensible world is only illusion. He really has the feeling of dying and sinking into darkness. But suddenly he sees the darkness bursting apart and a new light appears, the brightness of the astral light"* (Rudolf Steiner, *Kosmogonie*, GA 94).

In a lecture held in Karlsruhe on October 14, 1911, Steiner resumes his speech on Christian Initiation, which acts in depth up to the physical body. Living in an appropriate manner the experience of Feet Washing, the disciple came to feel the pains of the Crucifixion. These are experienced before getting to experience the Mystical Death, Disposition and Resurrection. If we experience all this in an adequately intense way - Steiner tells us - beyond the etheric, up to the physical body, *"we begin to feel that our feet are as though washed with water, our body as if covered with wounds, then we have succeeded in driving these feelings so deeply into our nature that they have penetrated as far as the physical body. They do indeed penetrate the physical body, and then the stigmata, the marks of the bleeding wounds of Christ Jesus, may appear. We drive the feelings inwards into the physical body and know that they develop their strength in the physical body itself. We consciously feel ourselves more in the grip of our whole being than if the impressions were merely in the astral body and etheric body. The essential thing is that through a process of mystical feeling we work right into our physical body; and when we do this we are doing nothing less than making ourselves ready in our physical body to receive the Phantom that went forth from the grave on Golgotha. Hence we work into our physical body in order to make it so alive that it feels a relationship with, an attractive force towards, the Phantom that rose out of the grave on Golgotha."* (Rudolf Steiner, *From Jesus to Christ*, GA 131).

Steiner here talks about something related to a certain degree of Christian Initiation, which has always been there - virtually unchanged in the course of time - in human history since the event of Golgotha up to now. This Initiation, divided into seven degrees, is grounded on spiritual exercises that generate peculiar symptoms, but always the same. The stigmata, as one can see - are connected to the experience of Feet Washing.

So far is what Steiner said on *stigmata*.

As to the second objection, the one related to the fact that Judith von Halle does not live on *physical* food - please note, *physical*, as there is obviously an *alternative* food, which she uses to fuel her vital functions - well, frankly I think it's a weak argument.

While it is certainly true that the outer existence of Steiner was absolutely normal, I think that it was the peculiar modality in which he showed itself, *that* specific incarnation of the high entity that was Rudolf Steiner at the beginning of the last century. In his previous (and future?) incarnations he probably has not been and will not be like this. The way in which one lives - because of his peculiar destiny - cannot be a rule or a law that others must blindly follow.

It would be like adding to the *ipse dixit*, the...*ipse vixit*.

So I had the pleasure of meeting Judith von Halle in Berlin attending two lectures she gave on the karma of the Anthroposophical Society and on the return - predicted by Rudolf Steiner

- on earth at the turn of the 21st century of the personalities that were in his time with him at the top of the Anthroposophical Society.

The experience of meeting her, her face, her voice, the hug saying goodbye to her left an indelible mark in my mind.

The tone of her voice, her clear eyes and her shape gave me the impression of a direct expression - visible and audible to everybody - of the Spiritual World.

But since the topics of her speech at the *Rudolf Steiner Haus* in Berlin are tremendously important, I shall take advantage of the reader's patience to give an account, hereinafter, of her speech.

I mainly do this because her words can emphasize, better than anything else, those elements of absolute *vivacity of thought* and *inner independence* that, in my opinion, make her personality an element of *sheer originality* in the contemporary Anthroposophical Movement.

Having stated, in tackling the issue of Anthroposophical Society's karma in front of an attentive audience, that her communications came exclusively from her own inner experience, Judith von Halle started from the disclosures that Steiner made during his Torquay's lecture of 14 August 1924. On that occasion Steiner said that some of those who were active in the Anthroposophic Movement in his days, would return to earth by the end of 20th century.

"Because of the particular form which the Michael Rulership assumes, there will be many deviations from the laws determining reincarnation in the case of those persons whose karma and connection with the Michael dominion leads them into the Anthroposophical Movement. For they will appear again at the turn of the 20th/21st century - therefore in less than a hundred years - in order to carry to full and culminating effect what as Anthroposophists they are able to do now in the service of Michael's dominion." (Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies*, GA 240).

Those individuals that, due to their karma and their link with the rulership of Michael, are coming back today in the Anthroposophical Movement because of the peculiar rules of Michael's rulership, which allows them, in a certain way, to 'break' reincarnation's laws. To bring to full realization the rulership of Michael, they have been reincarnated at the end of the 20th and the beginning of the 21st century; this means that they have spent a very short period of time in the spiritual world.

"My experience - so Judith von Halle - has led me to conclude that the forecasts of Rudolf Steiner are going to hit the mark, at least for the first part of this prophecy, namely that these men have come back in our circles at this time. For the second part - that they will then bring to full realization what has not yet been reached - this is not properly sure, or better, I think that perhaps only now these people have the chance to undertake this venture."

She added that the return of these important people can now be seen as an opportunity for the spiritual world to start afresh, since *"things after Steiner's death went terribly wrong, even though I do not want to take care of that whole span of time. I prefer to make a leap in order not to talk about the dirty laundry of this Society, its decay, landing directly today. I think that Rudolf Steiner has perhaps given us these lectures about karma, which he left behind as a testament, because he already foresaw that the fundamental question of the knowledge of karma would be decisive for the future of the Anthroposophical Society."*

We know that the spiritual currents, to which the personalities linked to the Anthroposophical Movement belong, have different characteristics, and this causes disharmony in the Society. *"It would be nice - said Judith - to say that, thanks to the Christmas Conference, these things are sorted out and that Anthroposophy is now living peacefully in the world, but of course this is an illusion probably shared by very few people. However the issue becomes especially critical if the opportunity is not taken to justify - through the observation of karma - the existence of the different currents, expressed within the Society, alongside one another, and perhaps to find a connection with the best forces that they bring with them."*

In reality, what then happens is that, failing to achieve a common spirit, the oppositions between different personalities fragment the work into thousands of different initiatives.

The fact that Anthroposophists belong to Michael's School must - as repeatedly recommended by Steiner - eventually become a state of self-awareness.

"The building of a community is a Michaelian task and if we cannot carry it out it is our duty,

as followers of the esoteric school, to look within ourselves and wonder why. The fact that these different personalities (who had experienced with Rudolf Steiner the foundation of the Anthroposophical Movement) belonged to different currents, joined with the fact that they are coming back to earth today, should no longer lead to conflict, but to fulfillment."

"This is no longer the era of the struggle between Platonists and Aristotelians, at the present time the deep content which permeates these currents should come to light: Anthroposophy, the event of Christ."

If we reflect upon the fact that these people have spent just 30 or 40 years in the spiritual world, against a general spiritual rule which provides for at least 500 years between two consecutive incarnations, we can easily understand that such a short time won't have allowed them to properly work out their karma. These people are then coming down to earth with a big task, bringing with them both their talents and qualities, but also, unfortunately, other aspects that they haven't been able to work on enough.

"I fear, then – said von Halle – that precisely because these men were in Rudolf Steiner's inner circle, they are now somehow forced to struggle with their present incarnation. According to the experience I've made in recent years, it doesn't just have to do with differences depending on belonging to different currents, but also with being 'human, all too human', something that now the processing of this karma is also dealing with."

Certainly the tragedy of the situation is that precisely the men who were at that time in the inner circle of Rudolf Steiner, today are unable to get along. This causes this fragmentation in the Anthroposophical Society where one is not able to re-connect in the way planned at that time by Steiner, thanks to knowledge of karma.

However, if the connecting factor is Anthroposophy, then everybody should see in the other a representative of the same impulse for which he came down to earth prematurely, meaning love for Anthroposophy, but also love for Rudolf Steiner, therefore a *selfless* love.

Only this could prove helpful for that 'human all too human' factor, which, obviously, is caused by the short time span between death and rebirth, which has proven to be inconvenient.

"I think that the worst of it is that certain things that were said by Rudolf Steiner were not further integrated in connection with the new times. They were not thought in a way that's consistent with evolution. One becomes slavishly attached to things that at that time could have been good but that are perhaps not applicable today. I don't intend to doubt Steiner's statements, I'm just saying that things change, that today elements have come to the light that hadn't at that time. Even from ourselves, the same people who were there, and many of us certainly were there then."

The 'human, all too human' that those personalities bring with themselves prevent these two streams from integrating, and this is the largest factor of interference and mutual misunderstanding that we find in the Anthroposophical Society today.

It is understandable that some people are afraid to see these things because things that happened during Steiner's time were very painful and perhaps this is the reason the necessary *karmic* overcoming is put into effect very rarely.

"But don't think - Judith goes on - that the people involved don't know anything about this. I think that some of them know something or at least imagine it. However, the fact that all this is not processed, that they fear what happened in the past, of mistakes and failings of those times, causes them to become aggressive or puts them in a state of artificial near-sleep."

Then, suggests Judith von Halle, instead of reading all the 19 lessons of the first class of Spiritual Science, these people should keep reading the first lesson.

"We need to experience the first class, not just read it or listen to it, we all need to apply it in order to look inside ourselves. We need to practice it, to read it until you get a spark of understanding."

What can we do if they don't do that?

The only thing to do - answers Judith von Halle - is something that, if we take Rudolf Steiner seriously, we can understand by ourselves, something that comes both from his observation and his personal experience with some people in Dornach. This means there was a magical link between the people who were with Rudolf Steiner during his lifetime, a link that brought these people in Dornach again.

As we have seen, Rudolf Steiner had already anticipated that these people would have been

reincarnated more quickly in order to bring Anthroposophy at the peak, and Dornach is the center where these people get together, or should re-connect.

"The issue is delicate - Judith continues - one can not indulge in speculation on individuals, but here I refer specifically to this because I believe that on this occasion, for the first time, we can address the problem of the streams covered in Steiner's last speech, which is a true testament found in the karma cycles."

It's important to pay attention to these things because in this instance the individual destiny only plays a small part and nevertheless it sheds light on the overall relationship.

The first thing is that people who were close to Rudolf Steiner should demonstrate an endless dedication to his work, the second is that they should maybe avoid presenting certain events in an odd way, which often produces a kind of 'jarring note'.

As mentioned above, in fact, Judith von Halle suffered a great deal of pain because of these 'jarring notes' coming from the Executive Council of the Anthroposophical Society.

Referring to the behavior held by Dornach towards her she then told how a former member of the Executive Council, questioned on why in Dornach they behave towards Judith von Halle in such an ambiguous, if not hostile way, said: *"We of the Executive Council don't have anything against clairvoyance, the problem is that Judith von Halle claims to take the lead on the basis of a previous incarnation."*

At this point of the lecture, Judith von Halle explicitly stated that this is totally groundless, since she does not lay claims of any kind, nor has ever done so: *"I've always been an apolitical person, and even if brought into this political context - so that somehow I feel however politicized - my sole interest is Anthroposophy and I also believe that this comes through in my lectures, from my books."*

As to the matter about her previous life, apart from not understanding from where this was gathered, Judith said: *"I can only say that this is a good opportunity to state explicitly and publically that I am absolutely certain that I have never belonged to the then Executive Council of the Anthroposophical Society."*

Obviously all this can only bring more conflicts and disagreement within the Society in a situation that is complicated enough as it is.

It is then essential that people take very seriously - at least now if *at that time it failed* - Rudolf Steiner's request to look at the important connections within the Society, starting with wondering why the others have a different opinion. Why does it happen? *"Well, because we are men, because my neighbour is the left leg and I'm the right one. Now I understand. He is not compelled by anything, he just sees it in a different way but it's the same thing. This is the impulse which I'm referring to, the one I'm talking about."*

Unfortunately it must also be said that the situation has gotten worse today; both worldwide and in the Anthroposophical Society not only Christian-Michaelian Impulse-led forces are embodied, but also forces of opposition.

Considering this considerably more challenging situation, the solution is not a general 'caring for each other', a general embrace. It is essential that the task of recognizing these different currents should be taken seriously.

In the karma cycles Rudolf Steiner said that while Michael was holding his council in the Spiritual World, Ahriman established on the earth, underground, its Ahrimanic counter-school.

We must, therefore, be acutely aware of opposing forces, given these forces do not sleep. We must remain acutely aware as we view things, both in the world and in Society, adopting a standard. This is in fact the motto of tripartite division. *"We must wonder what forces are showing themselves in the initiatives undertaken within Society. We must wonder if they are forces acting towards the Threefolding, i.e. freedom on the spiritual level, equality under the law and brotherhood in economic life. If this is the case, we are talking about Christian initiatives. If not, then certainly not. We have the means to discriminate, although this is certainly difficult."*

Rudolf Steiner, as a servant of the *Lord of karma* - as he named Christ - was, with the karma cycles, of great help to clarify this situation.

Towards the end of her talk, Judith continued: *"I believe that only now we can begin to deal with the problem, namely that the task we face begins now, given that not everything has been resolved after the Christmas Conference, we must accept this impulse and understand things and maybe then we will have a chance to go ahead with the form that this Society still has today and bring people to the awareness of karmic connections."*

And more:

"I think that now the responsibility will fall directly on the members, on all of you. You must therefore try, first of all with your perception, your knowledge, to lead the men of the Executive Council to self-knowledge. I think that since Steiner days things have been overturned, at the beginning were the members of the Executive Council who pointed out, through their karmic relationships, how one could articulate a christified social life. The karma of this Executive Council had to become clear through the karma lectures. But now things are reversed, that is to say that we members must provide help to people who are not making it on their own. I am obviously not referring to the current leadership as a whole, but to those people of the then leadership (at the time of Steiner) who have returned to earth in these circumstances.

Perhaps this is the solution of the riddle, that thanks to your perceptions they may get to such knowledge, in order to help them through your perceptions and your knowledge."

She then touched on a topic in the first of the two conferences – not examined here – namely the view that the Free University of Spiritual Science as such did not begin just with the Christmas Conference but is a metamorphosis of the impulse already present in the esoteric school, expressed in the construction of the Goetheanum and in the Threefolding.

"The peculiarity of the Foundation is actually the Foundation itself, namely the fact that the Foundation has taken place. That is to say that the spiritual world once again manifested itself in a compassionate way to give us a chance."

Rudolf Steiner said in the karma cycles, that the spiritual world could not have done it and if this was not the case, we must thank him first, for devoting his entire life to our development.

However this possibility is linked to a difficult condition, i.e. the knowledge of *karma*. It is the only solution, although it is certainly a very difficult test. This research of karma has suffered many mistreatments, *"perhaps the Anthroposophical Society has won a bad reputation, a bad name because people say: "Here they are those crazy people who always talk about karma." And of course, because it then ends up that everyone pretends to have been Cleopatra or Caesar ... "*

But since that is not the case, the knowledge of karma must be approached in a completely different way.

"So I think it could be argued, to close this evening, that the karma of the Anthroposophical Society is the Free University because we as Anthroposophists have a common karma, i.e. the supersensible Michael school and the Free University for Spiritual Science, which was named Goetheanum by Rudolf Steiner, because it has been freely given to us, represents us on earth. It does not matter if it exists on earth or not, because it is a real Michaelian institution."

Finally, she took pleasure in closing her speech with a quote from the last lecture Rudolf Steiner held on karma in London on August 27th, 1924:

"Every Anthroposophist should be moved by this knowledge: 'I have in me the impulse of Anthroposophy. I recognise it as the Michael Impulse. I wait and am strengthened in my waiting by true activity in Anthroposophy at the present time so that after the short interval allotted in the 20th century to Anthroposophical souls between death and a new birth, I may come again at the end of the century to promote the Movement with much more spiritual power. I am preparing for the new Age leading from the 20th into the 21st century' ... It is thus that a true Anthroposophist speaks. Many forces of destruction are at work upon the earth! All culture, all civilised life shall fall into decadence if the Michael Impulse's spirituality does not take hold of men that they are capable of elevating civilisation, which is hurrying downhill.

If there are to be found souls that are truly anthroposophical, willing to bring this spirituality into earthly life, then there will be a movement leading upwards. If such souls are not found, decadence will continue to spread. The great War, with all its attendant evils, will be merely the beginning of still worse evils.

Human beings today are facing a great crisis. Either they must see civilisation going down into the abyss, or they must raise it through spirituality and promote it in the sense of the Michael Impulse." (Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies*, GA 240)

Piero Cammerinesi