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The Transition

Robert Powell and Keith Harris

As a prelude to the main content of the following article, we the authors wish to offer the reader some background concerning this article. The idea for this theme of “The Transition” came from Keith. It is related to, and is a continuation from, his work presented in 2005 in *The Western Shores: Christian Hermeticism, Volume 1*. Keith wrote “The Transition” and sent it to Robert for his input, knowing that Robert has long been occupied with the themes developed in this article. Our collaboration is a true cooperation. Through Robert the article has undergone a metamorphosis; however, the basic tone of Keith’s original article still shines through. The reader will recognize that the theme of “The Transition” – originally formulated by Keith – is of immense spiritual significance...and not only significance on a spiritual level, but also in terms of what is taking place on the world stage. Here in the space of this article, however, we are not able to explore the vast theme as to how the spiritual transition that is the theme of this article relates to the great transition taking place in the world at the present time; this will have to be taken up in a subsequent article.

By way of preparation for the reader, the authors also wish to draw attention to an intrinsic aspect of this article. The reader will find some statements in this article that are not made lightly but are presented here in the certainty that now is the time for these mysteries to become known to those who are seeking to know. What is being referred to here is that some esoteric communications are made in this article concerning earlier incarnations of certain great teachers of humanity, in particular pointing to the first two of the three “spiritual teachers” of the twentieth century – teachers entrusted with guiding the unfolding of the Anthroposophical movement on earth. These earlier incarnations of the three spiritual teachers of the twentieth century were previously communicated in a book of Robert’s published in the year 2000.¹ However, at that time these esoteric communications were made in a veiled way. That is, in Robert’s book it was a matter of communicating certain “open secrets” in such a way that those who have ears to hear would grasp the karmic revelations presented there by reading “between the lines.” At that time, at the very beginning of the third Christian millennium, it was important to communicate these karmic revelations in that way. Now, fourteen years later – two dramatic and so to say “apocalyptic” seven-year periods having unfolded since then – it is time for these karmic revelations to be communicated more openly, at least within the relatively protected context of this newsletter, *Starlight*, whose readers, by and large, are open and well-prepared to receive the content of the esoteric communications made in this article. It is with full consciousness on Robert’s part of the *absolute certainty of the truth of the karmic connections revealed through the esoteric communications made in this article* that this writing is offered here to readers of this newsletter of the Sophia Foundation.

¹ Robert Powell, *The Most Holy Trinosophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2000), pp. 100-131.

Some readers of *Starlight* will, without any doubt or hesitation, immediately grasp the import of the communication of the karmic revelations given here. No doubt some other readers will question these revelations, which is understandable and is a good thing. We, the authors of this article, ask only that the reader take these earnestly-made karmic communications to heart together with the deeper question: “Are they true?” – and live for a time with this question, offering it up to the spiritual world for help and guidance with regard to seeking the truth. And it is Robert’s perspective that by the time the reader reaches the end of the article, he or she will understand that the karmic communications revealed here are necessary in order to truly understand on a deeper level what is at stake with “The Transition,” this being the central theme which we shall come to only much later in the article. And now, after these preliminary remarks, let us begin with the article, bearing in mind that this is only an article, and not a book in which more attention would be paid to providing exact sources supporting the various statements made. The authors ask for the readers’ forgiveness with regard to any perceived omissions and/or lack of exactness. This article can be thought of as a “work in progress” that will be deepened and expanded upon in due course. It is an attempt to come to a deeper understanding of one of the central spiritual themes of our time.

Key Introductory Thought: Rudolf Steiner Lays the Foundation

Rudolf Steiner said the very purpose of spiritual science (Anthroposophy) being in the world was to prepare human beings for the new presence of Christ Jesus in the etheric realm, the supersensible sphere closest to the physical world.²

As the basis of his re-founded Anthroposophical Society, Steiner gave a set of verses appropriately called the Foundation Stone meditation.³ The fourth and final verse of this meditation deals with the Shepherds and the Kings or Magi who, as representatives of the human heart and head respectively, come to adore the birth of the Child in Bethlehem. Since this meditation is the basis of a movement whose purpose is to lead us to grasp what is known in the Gospel as the *parousia* (“presence”), usually translated as “the second coming” of Christ, this points to a similarity between our own age and that time inaugurated by the birth of Jesus, denoted historically by the *transition* from BC to AD. Through the BC millennia the celestial Christ descended from on high, from the sphere of the Sun ... to that of the Moon ... and then finally to the Earth, when we spiritually behold Him after the birth of Jesus as flowing throughout the Earth's ethereal (life) aura and gradually condensing to the point of becoming human when He enters the body of Jesus of Nazareth at the Baptism in the Jordan on September 23 AD 29, then to indwell that body as the God-Man, Christ Jesus, for three and one-half years until His death and resurrection.

² Rudolf Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971), lecture of January 25, 1910 – “Christ will reappear because human beings will raise themselves toward Him in etheric vision. When we grasp this, *spiritual science appears to us as the preparation of human beings for the return of Christ*, so that they will not have the misfortune to overlook this great event but will be ripe to seize the great moment that we may describe as the second coming of Christ.” [Italics added by RP].

³ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha’s Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), appendix 3: *The Foundation Stone Meditation*. Rudolf Steiner re-founded the Anthroposophical Society at Christmas 1923, when he communicated the Foundation Stone Meditation on Christmas Day – this meditation being central to the re-founding.

One of Rudolf Steiner's most significant esoteric discoveries was that of the two Jesus children.⁴ Jesus in the Matthew Gospel, as shown in the genealogy, is descended from David's son Solomon, the wise and wealthy king, and thus represented the wisdom-filled stream of the three kings. Jesus in the Luke Gospel is descended from David's son Nathan, the priest, who thus represented the love-bearing stream of the shepherds. Steiner speaks of how the great initiate *Zarathustra*, the founder of the ancient Persian civilization around 6000 BC, underwent many incarnations and then eventually incarnated as the Solomon Jesus, and how in the Nathan Jesus the pure innocent Sister-Soul of Adam descended into incarnation for the very first time, having



Krishna and Arjuna

previously (most likely at some time between 3200 and 3100 BC) overlit Arjuna as *Krishna* in ancient India (not an incarnation, but an overlighting) and otherwise not having ever incarnated as a human being on earth before.⁵ He also tells us that at the age of twelve, just prior to the onset of puberty, the individuality of the Nathan Jesus and that of Zarathustra – incarnated as the Solomon Jesus – united, the “I” of the latter individuality passing over and uniting with the “I” of the twelve-year old Nathan Jesus, leaving the body of the Solomon Jesus behind. Having vacated this body, it – bereft of the “I” (individuality) –

underwent death a short time later. Here we see the uniting of two streams, which took place on April 3, AD 12, as a result of which the twelve-year-old Jesus taught the elders in the Temple.⁶

In his lectures on the Gospel of St. Luke, Steiner indicates that the heavenly host appearing to the Shepherds is actually a revelation of the *Nirmanakaya* – the great and purified astral body – of Gautama Buddha. This clearly suggests that the spiritual current which stands behind the preparation for the Nathan Jesus springs from the Buddha (and ultimately from the sphere of the Bodhisattvas) and flows from the first post-Atlantean epoch of Ancient India, which remains indelibly imprinted upon the subcontinent of India to the present day. The other stream, which stands behind the preparation for the Solomon Jesus and is described in Matthew's Gospel, stems from the founding initiate of Ancient Persia in the second post-Atlantean epoch. When the Bodhisattva who incarnated as Gautama ascended to Buddhahood five centuries before Christ, he passed the flame to the Bodhisattva who is to become the next Buddha. This Bodhisattva is destined to become the Maitreya Buddha around 4500 AD, and we can therefore call him the *Maitreya Bodhisattva* (*Maitreya* means “bearer of the Good”). We can envisage the Maitreya continuing to work through the Buddha stream in the last centuries prior to the Incarnation of

⁴ Robert Powell, *Chronicle of the Living Christ* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1996) gives an overview of the two Jesus children, with biographies and dates, including dates of the events in the life of Christ, such as the Baptism in the River Jordan, the Feeding of the 5000, etc.

⁵ Robert Powell & Kevin Dann, *Christ and the Maya Calendar* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2009), p. 29. Here the date of the *end* of Krishna's overlighting of Arjuna is dated to the start of Kali Yuga in 3102 BC, in accordance with Hindu tradition. Evidently the overlighting activity began some time earlier – the earliest possible date being shortly after 3200 BC.

⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 63-65.

Christ in Palestine and on through two more millennia into our own time, and on into the future through the next 2500 years.⁷

Rudolf Steiner also indicated that it was to have been the task of the Maitreya from the 1930s onward to communicate the new presence (*parousia*) of Christ Jesus in the etheric realm, the onset of this communication being in 1933.⁸ In 1921, Steiner even told one of his closest esoteric pupils, Friedrich Rittelmeyer, that if they lived long enough they would see the Bodhisattva begin to unfold his activity in about fifteen years time, i.e. around the mid-1930s.⁹ We can grasp why this task fell to the Maitreya if we ponder the Kings and the Shepherds. The Magi were wise; they were a very select group who studied the mysteries of the starry heavens to discover the path of the Star coming to Bethlehem. The Magi came to the Solomon Jesus and therefore can be considered as representing the Zarathustra stream – Zarathustra having reincarnated as the Solomon Jesus, whose birth is described in the Gospel of St. Matthew. This spiritual current speaks to a select group of fairly enlightened people. We will consider later in this article that Rudolf Steiner himself is deeply connected to this stream, and we see him opening the doors of esoteric Christianity to a relatively small group of people in the Anthroposophical movement in the first quarter of the twentieth century. But knowledge of Christ's new presence (*parousia*) in the etheric realm is not the domain of Anthroposophists alone; human beings around the globe need to hear the good news. The Shepherds were men of goodwill – bearers of “heart knowledge.” Outwardly they lived as ordinary people. And it was to these men watching their flocks by night that the heavenly host speaking out of the Buddha stream appears. One possible conclusion is that the Buddha stream – continued in the Maitreya current – speaks to wider audiences than does that of Zarathustra.



Zarathustra

Against this background, it emerges that Steiner's Anthroposophical Society was evidently not intended solely as a forum for esoteric knowledge. Clearly he envisaged the possibility that it could potentially be a vessel for the twentieth century incarnation of the Maitreya in order to bring to much wider audiences the good news of the second coming of Christ Jesus, his appearance in the etheric realm of life forces.

The deep tragedy was that in the course of his Anthroposophical activity, the Bodhisattva did not rise on a trajectory to become a leading figure in the Anthroposophical movement, which no doubt – at least, in part – had to do with the circumstances prevailing in Europe at the time. Briefly, the world situation then had to do, on the one hand, with Hitler's seizure of power in Germany and Stalin becoming a dictator in Russia, and on the other hand with the internal strife

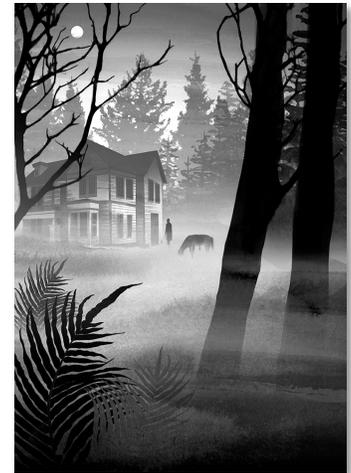
⁷ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013) gives an overview concerning the Maitreya and his activity at the present time and on into the future.

⁸ Rudolf Steiner held a lecture in Stockholm on January 12, 1910, in which he spoke about the return of Christ in the etheric realm. No stenographer was present. However, according to Marie von Siver's notes, he said: “1933...Christ will appear in an etheric form” – *Journal for Star Wisdom 2014* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), p. 19.

⁹ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), p. 12.

within the Anthroposophical Society occasioned by the personality conflicts between leading members of the society – conflicts that erupted soon after Rudolf Steiner’s death in 1925. As we shall elucidate in the following, the Maitreya Bodhisattva did in fact appear, and he did take up the work of Rudolf Steiner, and he even carried it further, especially in its Christian kernel; he also began to speak of the new etheric presence of Christ. However, he was not recognized by many Anthroposophists. He was ostracized by some leading Anthroposophists and obliged to leave the movement. Rudolf Steiner noted in his Gospel of Matthew lectures that the Maitreya in his twentieth century incarnation might be “unrecognized or treated with indifference.” Steiner implied that this would be a tragedy for humanity and the earth.

We can imagine that in the event of such lack of recognition – not being openly listened to – the Maitreya was likely to retreat from the Anthroposophical movement and live outwardly as an ordinary person in the world. The Bodhisattva stream speaks to human hearts, and if these are cold and closed, what then? We are reminded of the Luke Gospel, where there was “no room at the inn.” It is interesting to consider that the heavenly host did not speak to those snug in their homely comforts, but to the Shepherds who were watching their flocks by night. By analogy, the impulse of the Shepherds stream – the Buddha stream continued by the great individuality who will become the Maitreya Buddha – looks toward caring for the welfare of those less fortunate than themselves, especially in hard times. Indeed, are we not reminded of Walter de la Mare's hauntingly moving poem “The Listeners?” The Traveler comes to the house at the appointed time, he knocks loudly but only meets a house empty except for specters preoccupied – bottled up, as it were – with their own petty schemes. His words resound: “Tell them I came, and no one answered, that I kept my word.”



Do not these silent words of the Bodhisattva resound through the tragic period of the twentieth century? He came, he kept his appointment. But there was no room for him at the Inn of the Anthroposophists. Indeed, how could he not come, considering the great sacrifices which Rudolf Steiner made to make the Bodhisattva's path in his twentieth century incarnation easier?

It is worth noting Rudolf Steiner's use of juxtaposition in his lectures. He speaks about something, then moves on to speak about something else, and the two themes are left standing side by side. It is as though he is presenting us with an arcanum, which both reveals and hides at the same time. In connection with the reappearance of Christ, he juxtaposes the Maitreya theme. In some statements he tells us specifically that it will be the task of this Bodhisattva to speak openly about the etheric return of Christ in the twentieth century. Steiner also very significantly juxtaposes the Abraham theme with that of the second coming. In a lecture given at Karlsruhe on January 25, 1910, he says the following:

It will be of the utmost importance to grasp this event of Christ's reappearance, because other events will follow upon this. Just as other events preceded the Christ event in Palestine, so, after the period when the Christ Himself will have become visible again to humanity in His etheric body, will those who previously foretold Him become His

successors. All those who prepared the way for Him will become recognizable in a new form to those who will have experienced the Christ event. Those who dwelt on earth as Moses, Abraham and the prophets will again become recognizable to human beings. We shall realize that even as Abraham preceded the Christ, preparing His way, he has also assumed the mission of helping later with the work of Christ. The human being who is awake, who does not sleep through the greatest event of the near future, gradually enters into an association with all those who, as patriarchs, preceded the Christ event, uniting with them. Then appears once more the great host of those toward whom we shall raise ourselves. He [i.e., Abraham] who led humanity's descent into the physical plane appears again after Christ and leads human beings upward to unite them once more with the spiritual worlds.¹⁰

These words are quite specifically addressed to “the human being who is awake, who does not sleep through the greatest event of the near future.” Rudolf Steiner is speaking here to his contemporaries, indicating to them the need to be awake for Abraham in a new incarnation. This is the clearest possible indication that he, who at the dawn of Israel received the name Abraham (a higher being overshadowed the 99-year old Abram – Genesis 17:5 – giving him the name Abraham), is none other than the Bodhisattva whom Eastern wisdom tells us will become the Maitreya Buddha.¹¹ For a Bodhisattva does not incarnate as a human being from birth; he draws near and at a definite point, usually between the ages of 30 and 33, “incorporates” himself into the man or woman who will bear him.

The Abraham, Moses, and Solomon Millennia

In this connection, let us consider here another very relevant aspect of Rudolf Steiner's work. Concerning the preparation for the mission of Christ Jesus, he speaks about how three individualities bore the essence of the three millennia before the Incarnation: Abraham characterizes the first period, Moses the second, and Solomon the third, the millennium up to the birth of Jesus:

In Spiritual Science we call the first millennium of Kali Yuga the Abraham-epoch; it was the epoch when humanity did, it is true, lose the direct vision of the spiritual worlds, but when there unfolded in the individual something like a consciousness of the Divine which gradually made its way more and more deeply into the “I,” with the result that the human being came to conceive of the Deity as related to human “I”-consciousness. In the first millennium of Kali Yuga – which at its conclusion we can call the Abraham-epoch – the Deity is revealed as the *World-“I.”* This Abraham-epoch was followed by the Moses-epoch, when the God Yahweh, the *World-“I,”* was no longer revealed in the form of a mysterious guidance of human destinies, as a God of a single people; in the Moses-epoch this Deity was revealed, as we know, in the burning bush, as the God of the Elements. And it was a great advance when, through the teachings of Moses, the *World-*

¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971), lecture of January 25, 1910. The word “Abraham” is inserted here in brackets [], as it is clear from the context that Abraham is the one referred to (RP & KH).

¹¹ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), p. 14, clarifies this statement indicating that Abraham was, long ago, an incarnation of the great individuality who will appear in 2,500 years time as the Maitreya Buddha.

“I” as the Deity was experienced in such a way that human beings realized: the Elements of manifested existence, all that is seen with physical eyes – lightning, thunder, and so on – are emanations, deeds of the World-“I,” ultimately of the one World-“I”A further advance was made in the last millennium before the founding of Christianity, in the Solomon-epoch. Thus the three millennia before the founding of Christianity can be distinguished by calling the first millennium by the name of the individuality who appears and then works on into the second: the Abraham-epoch.... In the Moses-epoch the One God becomes the ruler of the manifestations of Nature and is sought for behind them. All this is then intensified in the Solomon-epoch, and we are led through this last epoch to that point in evolution where the same Divine Being whom the Abraham-epoch and the Moses-epoch, too, beheld in Yahweh, where the same Divine Being takes on human form.¹²

It is important to point out that these three individuals characterize what Valentin Tomberg in his *Old Testament Studies* calls the “male aspect” of the Old Testament tradition; we might even say *the element related to will and to deeds in the outer world*, as distinct from the deeply felt yet more hidden female tradition where the mother awaits the birth of her child. We can see this particularly through David's two children: Solomon who became king, and Nathan the priest. Jesus in the Matthew Gospel is descended from Solomon, and Joseph the father of Jesus is the central figure in the narrative leading up to the birth. In the Luke Gospel, on the other hand,



The Annunciation
by Bouguereau

where Jesus is descended from Nathan, Mary is central. The Archangel Gabriel appears to her, and she responds with the words, “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38). The Nathan line in this time represents the more hidden female tradition, while that of Solomon expresses the male tradition of outer action. Our consideration is therefore that Rudolf Steiner's characterization of these three millennium periods refers to the male aspect of the preparation, to deeds undertaken in the outer world. And thus, for instance, he does not mention in this connection another truly central biblical figure, Elijah, the great prophet who reincarnated as John the Baptist, because John the Baptist, overlooking Lazarus (who in turn indwells John the disciple, the brother of James) “stands” with Mary under the cross. Thus the Johannine element – associated with John the Baptist, Lazarus (who later took on the name John), and John the disciple (and later apostle) – is deeply connected with the female tradition of Israel.¹³

¹² Rudolf Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971), lecture of March 6, 1910.

¹³ It might be interesting to ponder the question of whether three other significant individualities distill in themselves the preparation for the Incarnation from the female aspect of the Old Testament tradition. See Robert Powell, *The Mystery, Biography, and Destiny of Mary Magdalene* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2008), chapter 3, regarding the interweaving of John the Baptist, Lazarus-John, and the Apostle John – where, in particular, the biographies of Lazarus-John and the Apostle John are explored in detail.

How can we characterize the Abraham period of Israel?

Abraham is the one from whom the Jewish nation descends. He separates himself from the Mesopotamian civilization into which he was born and from the surrounding Semitic tribes. He is not the fighter but the farmer, the digger of wells, who tended to his flock of sheep and herd of cattle. Rudolf Steiner describes how in contrast to the surrounding peoples who lived strongly in pictures, Abraham lived in thought. He withdrew from the dreamlike pictorial consciousness of the time to dwell in the element of thought. Before any other human being, Abraham was able to grasp a thinking based on sense perception and the use of the physical brain.



Rudolf Steiner also brought forth a Christian understanding of reincarnation, and he speaks of two central themes: continuity and polarity. Roughly speaking we might say that which we do in one incarnation, we further develop in another, but we tend to do this in a polar opposite way. Steiner refers to this concept of polarity in terms of the deeds of significant individuals: that someone who has done a meaningful deed in one incarnation will, in a later incarnation, undertake a polar opposite act. And he mentions specifically, in this context, how the Abraham individuality in a later life will do the polar opposite deed of rekindling for human beings the true nature of pictorial thinking on a higher level than the dreamlike consciousness of yore. Steiner informs us that the astral body is strongly related to and actually incarnates into the nerve-sense system (the nervous system and everything connected with the senses). Abraham uses this brain-based thinking, grounded in the sense perceptible world. His task is strongly related to the astral body and to the astral body's relation to the physical world.

In his inner life Abraham is far more isolated than the other people of his time who had what could be described as a *participatory pictorial consciousness*. He withdraws from the Mesopotamian civilization into which he was born, and after much wandering arrives in Palestine, where he is guided to settle. He does not allow his son Isaac to marry a woman from the surrounding tribes. Rather, he finds him a wife, Rebekah, from his own people, far away, living in the town of Abraham's brother, Nahor, the ancient city of Harran. Isaac marries Rebekah and follows in his father's footsteps, settling in the land of Palestine. Jacob, the third Patriarch, withdraws from his father Isaac's home, also to take a wife from his mother Rebekah's family, and ends up marrying Rebekah's nieces, Leah and Rachel. Later, with his wives, he breaks away from Laban, the father of Leah and Rachel, leaving the region of Harran to return to Palestine. The theme of withdrawing and remaining separate from the life of the surrounding populations runs as a leitmotif through this Abraham period. The Israelites are a kind of wandering orphan until, with the descent into Egypt, they find an adopted home. When nations intermingle, invariably intermarriage occurs, along with cultural and religious coalescence. This does not happen to the Hebrews. They do not intermarry with the Egyptians, and they retain their own language and religion.

A new time commences. The Jews are no longer able to live freely. They become enslaved. Egypt becomes the House of Bondage. Something has to happen to release the Chosen People from captivity, and this is when Moses appears and becomes the spiritual head of the Israelites.



The “Abraham tendency” to withdraw inwardly reaches such a peak within Moses (who was himself cast out by the Egyptians) that he encounters the very kernel of the human being’s inner life, the I AM. Thus, when Moses asks for the name of the Divine Being who speaks to him from the burning bush, the reply is, “Ehiyeh Asher Ehiyeh,” meaning “I AM that I AM.” And the I AM instructs Moses to free His people, and He entrusts to Moses a power of sacred magic such as has never been known before in recorded history

(barring the miracles of Jesus Christ Himself). Moses leads the Hebrews safely across the threshold – the Red Sea divides for the Israelites – but the pursuing hosts of the Egyptians perish in the waters as they endeavor to follow the Israelites through the divide in the waters, which, having parted to allow the Hebrews free passage, suddenly close upon the Egyptians.

Following Moses, the Chosen People are free from the Egyptian oppression; now, however, they are in the desert. There, instead of starving to death, they are blessed from above and are able to eat manna from heaven. Yet at the same moment when Moses is given the Ten Commandments on the summit of Mount Sinai, the children of Israel rebel, and even Moses' most trusted companion, his brother Aaron, allows them to make the Golden Calf and to engage in debauchery.

Valentin Tomberg in his *Old Testament Studies* speaks of how Moses now faced a terrible choice. He could have taken the faithful few and left the rest of the Hebrews to perish, yet he begs God to forgive them. And even though a great slaughter ensues, Moses does lead the people onward. However, forty years must elapse before they are able to enter the Promised Land. And Moses himself is not allowed to enter; he is only able to climb Mount Nebo and look down upon the land of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob from afar.

This image of Moses gazing down upon but not himself being able to experience the Land of the Promise begs us to see it symbolically. It foretells that the Moses individuality would not himself be physically present when the fulfillment of the Promise is brought to pass, but would gaze down upon the events of the Messiah’s Incarnation from the vista of heaven.



The millennium of Moses is not characterized by quiet withdrawal, but by war. The Children of Israel have to repulse the attacks of the surrounding nations in order to maintain themselves. Nowhere is this more apparent than at the very end of the millennium in the life of David. Moses and David lead the people. Through sacred magic they are able to find – and through heroism to remain – in the Promised Land. We might notice a kind of polarity between Moses and David as key, outstanding figures during this period; Moses employs sacred magic and the people follow without having to fight. David wins by the strength of his own arm; however, the Israelites must fight heroically beside him.

Rudolf Steiner also tells us that Zarathustra had two very significant pupils who in later incarnations became Moses and Hermes, each of whom fulfilled similar roles for his respective peoples. Hermes incarnated first, around the time of the building of the great pyramid, and became the wise teacher of the Egyptian civilization. According to Rudolf Steiner, the profound wisdom of Hermes came through his astral body, which actually was that of Zarathustra, bestowed upon him by the latter. Thus Hermes, around the middle of the Abraham millennium, drew upon the forces of a highly evolved astral body. Some twelve hundred years after Hermes, during the Moses millennium, Moses incarnated and arose to become the great teacher of the Hebrews, the “giver of the Law.” Steiner explains how Moses receives the etheric body of Zarathustra, the wisdom of which he was able to draw upon. Generally speaking, the etheric body is constantly struggling with the forces of outer nature, which would otherwise destroy the physical body. Thereby the etheric body preserves the physical body day and night, until it withdraws from the physical body at the moment of death. We see, then, that the physical body begins to decay when it is no longer permeated by the etheric body. This makes us aware that just as the Abraham millennium signified a preparation on an astral level for the coming of the Messiah, the Moses millennium relates to the etheric preparation for Christ’s Incarnation.



When David's son Solomon becomes king, we enter a new period. We confront the wisdom of Solomon, the riches of Solomon. Solomon is very much an “overripe being.”¹⁴ He has everything – wives, wealth, wisdom – and he is the inspired writer of the *Song of Songs*. Other works, too, the so-called “wisdom books” of the Old Testament, are attributed to him. And yet, notwithstanding all his attainments, he is tired of life. In reading Ecclesiastes, one of the wisdom books attributed to Solomon, one gets the sense that he has become weary, even

bored, when he writes: “What has been is what will be, what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun.”

The Anthroposophical writer Judith von Halle in her discussion of Zarathustra indicates that this great leader of the Ancient Persian cultural epoch can also be considered as an “overripe being,” as one whose principal, impulse-giving mission was already completed at that time (in Ancient Persia).¹⁵ And since Zarathustra himself later incarnates as the Solomon Jesus whose birth is described in the Matthew Gospel, we see that Solomon is somehow connected with the Zarathustra current, working through Israel, highlighted by the fact that the genealogy of the Solomon Jesus extends back to King Solomon.

¹⁴ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006), pp. 114-118.

¹⁵ Judith von Halle, *Von den Geheimnissen des Kreuzweges und des Gralsblutes* (Dornach, Switzerland: Verlag am Goetheanum, 2006), p. 116-119 – Judith von Halle on page 116 uses the expression “overripe being.” In the published English translation: *Secrets of the Stations of the Cross and the Grail Blood* (Forest Row, England: Temple Lodge Publishing, 2007), p. 133 instead of “overripe being” we read: “a profoundly mature earthly I.”

Let us take note of the fact that Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem at the exact location considered in esotericism to be the physical center of the world.¹⁶ Moreover, the Temple embodied the Divine Plan of evolution. This Divine Plan attained a first level of fulfillment with the birth of Jesus, and a still higher level of fulfillment was reached at the subsequent incarnation of Christ in Jesus at the Baptism in the River Jordan, when Jesus had reached the age of 29 years, 9½ months in his thirtieth year of life. At this time the “I” of the Solomon Jesus individuality withdrew from the vessel of the Nathan Jesus.



Here we may ponder the connection of the Zarathustra individuality with King Solomon, in particular contemplating the fact that Zarathustra incarnated *physically* as the Solomon Jesus, and that then *on the level of the “I”* as an overlighting, incorporated presence, he indwelt Jesus of Nazareth (the Nathan Jesus) from his twelfth year up to the Incarnation of Christ at the Baptism in the Jordan in his thirtieth year. We are led to appreciate that this third millennium, leading up to the birth of Jesus and the Incarnation of Christ, was the period of the actual physical preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

The three pre-Christian millennia of Abraham, Moses, and Solomon characterize, respectively, the preparation for the astral, the etheric, and the physical body of Jesus. These three “bodies” provided the vessel for the Incarnation of the Christ “I.” Let us turn now to consider how Rudolf Steiner speaks of these three periods being reflected around the central evolutionary point – the Mystery of Golgotha – such that the first Christian millennium is inspired by Solomon, the second by Moses, and the third by Abraham.

A repetition of these three pre-Christian ages takes place in the Christian era, but now in reverse order. The essential and fundamental trend of the Solomon-epoch is repeated in the first thousand years after Christ, in that the spirit of Solomon lives and is active as an impulse in the most outstanding minds of the first Christian millennium. And fundamentally speaking it was the wisdom of Solomon through which human beings endeavoured to grasp the nature and essence of the Christ Event. Then, following the Solomon-epoch, came the era that can be called the revival of the Moses-epoch...The course of the evolution of humanity is such that from our time onwards a renaissance of the Abraham-epoch will take place as we pass slowly into the third millennium. In pre-Christian times the sequence is: Abraham-epoch, Moses-epoch, Solomon-epoch; in the Christian era the order is reversed: Solomon-epoch, Moses-epoch, Abraham-epoch. We are moving towards the Abraham-epoch, and this will inevitably bring momentous consequences in its train. Let us recall what was of essential significance in the pre-Christian Abraham-epoch. It was the fact that the old clairvoyance had disappeared, that there had been bestowed upon the human being a consciousness of the Divine closely bound up with human faculties. Everything that humanity could acquire from this brain-bound consciousness of the Divine had by now been gradually exhausted and there is very little left to be gained through these faculties. But on the other hand, in the new Abraham-epoch exactly the opposite path is taken – the path which leads humanity

¹⁶ Robert Powell & David Bowden, *Astrogeographia: Correspondences between Stars and Earthly Locations* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2012), chapter 9.

away from vision confined to the physical and material, away from intellectual inferences based upon material data. We are moving along the path leading into the regions where human beings once dwelt in times before the Abraham-epoch. It is the path that will make states of natural clairvoyance possible for the human being, states in which natural clairvoyant forces will be in active operation.¹⁷

Let us take into consideration the development of the child through three clearly distinguishable phases, each about seven years long, and we can find a correspondence between these seven-year periods and the three historical epochs (1000-year periods) mentioned above. The physical body of the child is born first. Then, around the age of seven, with the change of teeth, the etheric body is released from its close connection with the mother, and the healthy child brings its abundance of life forces to expression. Thirdly, around the age of fourteen, at puberty, the astral body takes its place in the foreground. As the name “astral” – meaning “of the stars” – indicates, this third period of life is one in which the possibility exists for the young person to find a connection through the astral body with the starry heavens. However, in our time the forces of materialism are so strong, that the young person’s awakening to heavenly reality is generally overwhelmed by all the worldly attractions foisted upon young people nowadays. If we draw a parallel with the three post-Christian millennia, we can see that the first Christian millennium is concerned with the actual physical presence of Christianity. The second millennium of the Christian Era reveals that it is the life forces of Christendom that are developing. Today, at the start of the third Christian millennium, we stand at the beginning of the astral or celestial presence of Christianity. Our own time, with the passage from the second to the third millennium, is deeply concerned with the transition between the Moses and the Abraham periods of Christianity, and thus centers upon the question as to how the Moses individuality can hand on the theme of his work so that the individuality of Abraham can take it further. We shall return to this theme of the Transition towards the end of this article.

The first three Christian millennia stand under the inspiration of Solomon, Moses, and Abraham, respectively. The consideration put forward here is that this applies not so much to culture in general as to that which springs directly from the Incarnation itself, namely Christianity. Moreover in line with the earlier suggestion, these three individualities reflect and inspire not so much the hidden esoteric aspect of the Christ Impulse but the deeds related to the Christian tradition in the world. There is yet a further aspect: the impulses of these three great initiates have themselves to receive the baptism of Christ. It was and is definitely possible for impulses from the three millennia of the Old Testament period to appear in a renewed and metamorphosed Christian way, or to come forth as an echo of the pre-Christian way and therefore to appear in an ultimately destructive guise.

Let us consider the first Christian millennium under the Solomon inspiration. Solomon received a wisdom he did not need to strive for; it came as grace from on high. It was due, therefore, to something he had already attained in earlier lives. Like unto the wisdom of Solomon, in the early

¹⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The True Nature of the Second Coming* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971), lecture of March 6, 1910.

centuries of Christianity the wisdom of pre-Christian Gnosticism was employed in an effort to grasp the mystery of Christ's Incarnation. Solomon was the king; his brother Nathan was a priest. These two sons of King David were the progenitors of the two genealogical lines referred to at the beginning of this article: the kingly line that led to the birth of the Solomon Jesus, whose birth is described in the Gospel of Matthew, and the priestly line that led to the birth of the Nathan Jesus, whose birth is recounted in the Gospel of Luke. As a metamorphosis of this, we can see how the first Christian millennium was deeply concerned with the two posts: Emperor and Pope, corresponding to the two streams in Ancient Israel, that of king and that of priest. The relationship between the two posts came to expression in the relationship between Church and State. For example, the Roman Emperor Constantine brought Christianity forth from the catacombs to become the official religion of Rome, extending to both the Eastern and Western empires. Thus the Pope, the Bishop of Rome, was able to begin to exert an influence alongside the Emperor.



It was in the year 800 that Charlemagne, King of the Franks, went to Rome. His intention in going there was to help put the affairs of the Church in order. Then, on Christmas Day of that year, while he was on his knees praying at the altar in the Old Saint Peter's Basilica, Pope Leo III crowned him Emperor of the Romans (*Imperator Romanorum*) by placing a gold, bejeweled crown on his head. This act denotes how closely Church and State were tied, and it constituted the founding of the Holy Roman Empire. With this act, however, the Pope was effectively nullifying the legitimacy of Empress Irene of

Constantinople, and it had the effect of setting up two separate (and often opposing) Empires and two separate claims to imperial authority. For centuries to come, the Emperors of both West and East would make competing claims of sovereignty over the whole.

There are, of course, other parallels between the last millennium before Christ and the first millennium after Christ. The resignation expressed by the author of Ecclesiastes, attributed to King Solomon, has already been mentioned. Likewise, the theology of the first millennium of the Christian era was tainted with a certain resignation – witness St. Augustine with his theory of predestination.

Solomon was the architect of the great Temple in Jerusalem, constructed as a mirroring on earth of the Divine Plan of spiritual evolution. Similarly, the first millennium AD was much concerned with building – building churches and, even more significantly, monasteries. Solomon was wealthy; Solomon was wise. Similarly, the monasteries possessed lands and riches, and they were the repository of both spiritual and worldly knowledge. The Solomon millennium of the post-Christian era was focused above all upon establishing the actual presence of Christianity on earth. This parallels the first seven years of life of the child, when the focus is upon establishing itself on earth as a physical presence.

At the start of the second millennium AD something new appears. What lived uppermost in the pre-Christian Moses epoch for the Children of Israel was their exile from and return to the

Promised Land. The sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt began at the time of a great famine, when Jacob and his family moved from the Promised Land to Egypt during that famine. This move was occasioned by the high position that Jacob's son Joseph had attained under the Pharaoh. On this account the Pharaoh blessed Joseph's family with many gifts and offered to give them the best land in Egypt. Estimates of the number of years that the descendants of Jacob were there prior to the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt under the leadership of Moses vary from 215 to 430 years. As a metamorphosis of this preoccupation with the Promised Land, in the second post-Christian millennium the vision of Jerusalem and the Promised Land shone forth again in the eleventh century, when the Crusades were initiated and the conflict between Christianity and Islam became ever more pressing. Here we can see how impulses of the pre-Christian Moses epoch metamorphosed and came forth not only in Christian but also in regressive pre-Christian ways.

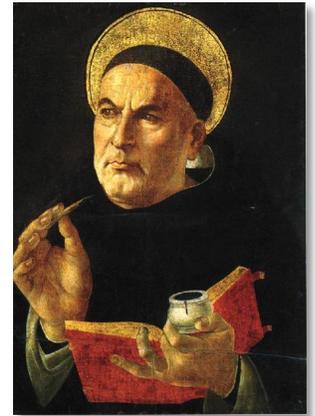
From the time of Moses' successor Joshua right up to that of King David, the Children of Israel had to fight for their survival in the Promised Land against the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Edomites, and others. With the advent of Christianity, through Christ's sacrifice on Golgotha, on a spiritual level all human beings became the "people of Christ" – unless they themselves chose (or choose) to turn away from Him. During the second millennium AD, the outer wars against the "Infidels" and also such warring impulses as those manifested by so-called "Christians" against the Native American Indians and the Australian Aborigines, reflect to a strong degree pre-Christian "Moses impulses" which have evidently not received the baptism of Christ. The warfare which springs from a truly Christ-filled "Moses fount" is that of the spirit. The real enemies of Christianity are not human beings but, as St. Paul so clearly knew, Powers and Principalities (i.e., fallen hierarchical beings). The conflict is in the realm of ideas, ethics, and theology. It takes place in the inner life of Christianity in ways similar to the manner in which the etheric body vivifies the physical, and it reveals the parallel of this millennium with the second seven-year period of life, which focuses upon the unfolding of the etheric body, constantly engaged in protecting the boundaries of physical life.

Moses obtained the release of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. This in itself strongly implies that this same individual, the eternal Moses individuality in the Christian Moses millennium would perform a polar deed, a metamorphosis of that great deed of enabling the exodus of the Israelites from Egypt. What would characterize such a polar opposite act? Bearing in mind his tremendous deeds in the outer world – deeds that overcame the Egyptian Pharaoh and his people, thus facilitating the exodus – it is evident that Moses worked through very powerful "sacred magic," and all that his followers, the Israelites, had to do was to follow his leadership. Considering a metamorphosis thereof, this would suggest that in the second millennium after Christ, the activity of the reincarnated Moses would be more in the inner world, and that he would forge a spiritualized thinking which his followers would have to work hard to grasp. The arsenal of sacred magic, which the great initiate Moses wielded, would thereby be transformed into "weapons of thinking," which any human being can master if he or she earnestly strives to do so.

In the second millennium after Christ the best minds of this era are permeated by the spirit of Moses. The spirit of Moses does indeed come to life again in a new form. In the pre-Christian age the spirit of Moses had been directed towards the outer world of

physical nature in order to find the Divine World-“I” as Yahweh, the World-“I” manifesting in lightning and thunder, in the great revelation from the Elements of laws for human beings. Whereas the World-“I” streams into Moses from outside, is revealed from outside, in the second millennium after Christ the same Divine Being announces Himself *within* the soul. The experience which came to Moses as an outer happening when he withdrew from his people in order to receive the Decalogue [the Law on Mount Sinai] ... is repeated in the second Christian millennium in the form of a mighty revelation from within the human being.¹⁸

Against this background, there is one man who stands forth above all others early in the second millennium AD, namely Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), who forged the highest level of theological thinking – a Christianised Aristotelianism – which even today remains the high theology of the Roman Catholic Church, where he is honored as *the* Doctor of the Church, i.e., the Church’s greatest theologian and philosopher. In this connection Rudolf Steiner revealed that the same individuality who incarnated as Aristotle in the fourth century BC reincarnated as Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century AD. Aristotle was *the* philosopher of antiquity and of the Middle Ages just as Aquinas was – and for the Church still is – *the* theologian and philosopher.



St. Thomas Aquinas
by Botticelli

Moses led the Chosen People out of the House of Bondage and had a profound spiritual experience on Mount Sinai. As a parallel, near the end of his life Thomas Aquinas had a truly significant spiritual experience after which he wrote no more. In the wake of this supernatural experience, Thomas said, “All that I have written seems like straw to me.” The thinking, which he had taken hold of in his own inner life, led him to break free from the strict limits of the sense-perceptible world. In a later incarnation this same individuality appeared on earth again in order to lead those who would choose to follow him through their own earnest efforts to the very threshold of the spiritual world. In 1861 the individual who had lived six hundred years earlier as Thomas Aquinas – and some sixteen hundred years before that as Aristotle – was reborn as Rudolf Steiner.¹⁹

Moses is considered as the author of the first five books of the Bible, even though they were written down much later. Evidently the tradition inaugurated by Moses was transmitted orally and then later written down. Moses was implicitly the “writer” of both exoteric and esoteric history, for the content of the first five books of the Bible is both exoteric and esoteric – the latter particularly in its describing of the seven days of creation. Nowhere has humanity's exoteric and esoteric history been so fully presented as in the works of Rudolf Steiner. Among his monumental achievements is his great book *Occult Science: An Outline* (also published as *An Outline of Esoteric Science*).²⁰ In this work he brings a new, modern account of the seven days of

¹⁸ Ibid. Words in brackets [] inserted by RP.

¹⁹ Erich and Margarita Kirchner-Bockholt, *Rudolf Steiner's Mission and Ita Wegman* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1977). This book goes into detail concerning the incarnations of this great individuality: Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Rudolf Steiner, and other incarnations as well.

²⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *An Outline of Esoteric Science* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1997).

creation, thus “updating” the account of Moses in Genesis, and by no other writer has the path to true initiation – to the breaking free from the House of Bondage of the sense-perceptible world – been so clearly brought forth as by Rudolf Steiner. If we understand the ancient images from Exodus 16:3 in a metamorphosed way to signify in our time the materialistic doctrine of our modern scientific era – a doctrine that excludes the spiritual dimension altogether – it can truly be said that Rudolf Steiner led his followers out from the “flesh pots” of Egypt. To his followers in the Theosophical Society (later the Anthroposophical Society), Rudolf Steiner offered “manna from heaven.” Just as Moses offered “manna from heaven” to the Israelites in the desert, so Rudolf Steiner gave the “manna” of true spiritual teachings in the contemporary “desert” of materialism.

On at least one occasion Rudolf Steiner indicated that his true task was to unveil the mystery of reincarnation by revealing the facts of repeated earthly lives of *actual historical individuals*.²¹ He also indicated how in earlier times (before Christ Jesus took over this post) Moses was the *Lord of Karma*. This meant that at the time of death, or shortly thereafter, each and every human being met with Moses to review his or her karmic destiny and burdens. Moses saw into the karmic connections of every individual human being. Who else but the Moses individuality, in the Moses millennium of Christianity, would be in a position to bring forth for humankind actual instances of reincarnations of historical individuals – not just a few, but a large number of reincarnation examples?!²²

Now, however, in our time it is Christ Jesus who, increasingly, is met with after death as the Lord of Karma. Steiner writes:

Moses presents human beings in the hour of death with the record of their sins, and at the same time points to the “stern law” [of destiny]. Thus human beings can recognize how much they have departed from this stern law which they ought to have followed. In the course of our time – and this is the significant point – this office passes over [from Moses] to Christ Jesus, and human beings will ever more and more meet Christ Jesus as their Judge, their karmic Judge.²³

There is also another delicate suggestion which Judith von Halle notes in her book about Steiner. One of Rudolf Steiner's esoteric pupils asked him who he really was, and his reply was that his karmic biography was like a golden thread running through the whole evolution of the earth.²⁴ But the history of the earth is that of the deeds, misdeeds, and sufferings of human beings. To liken himself – throughout the sequence of all his earthly incarnations – to a golden thread

²¹ T.H. Mayer, *Rudolf Steiner's Core Mission: The Birth and Development of Spiritual-Scientific Karma Research* (London: Temple Lodge Press, 2010).

²² Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, volumes 1-8 (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1971-2013).

²³ Rudolf Steiner, *From Jesus to Christ* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1973), lecture 3—words in brackets [] added by RP.

²⁴ Judith von Halle, *Rudolf Steiner: Meister der Weissen Loge (“Rudolf Steiner: Master of the White Lodge”)*, (Dornach, Switzerland: Verlag für Anthroposophie, 2011), p. 142. The quote attributed to Rudolf Steiner, but formulated by Steiner in the third person, reads: “His individuality runs like a golden thread through the whole of the evolution of the earth and he was already there at its beginning.” Note that the English expression “common thread” is the equivalent of the German “roter Faden.” However, “common thread” is inappropriate in this context, so I have used “golden thread” (RP).

running through the whole development of the earth is to indicate that, like Moses, who was the *Lord of Karma* from antiquity up to a certain point in time in the twentieth century, he has a deep connection to every human individual's destiny.

Great masters like Zarathustra, Christian Rosenkreutz, and the Maitreya are destined to leave us at certain points in the earth's development – ascending, like Gautama Buddha, to higher realms of existence, never to reincarnate upon the earth again, but to work from spiritual realms for the benefit of the evolution of the earth and humanity. However, could it be that the Moses individuality – he who appeared at the right hand of Christ in the scene of Christ's transfiguration – is *always connected to the earth's evolution*, since Christ needs him as His “right-hand man” to intervene again and again on His behalf from age to age?



The Transfiguration
by Titian

Let us consider how human thinking is in the process of developing.

Abraham, said to be the first human being to think, was still cognizant of the unity of the physical world with spiritual realms. By the time of Jesus Christ, however, in terms of the development of consciousness of thinking human beings, humanity had “come down to earth,” and there was a sense of earthly connectedness that did not predispose the human being to seek to return to heavenly realms. This is brought to expression by the saying from Homer's *Odyssey*: “Better a beggar on earth than a prince in the realm of shades,” meaning that compared to the Egyptians who were preoccupied with the afterlife, the Greeks considered earthly existence, however mean, superior to other-worldly aspirations.

At this juncture in the evolution of humanity, the Word had to take on flesh in order to be present among human beings, and in order that men and women could learn to love Him. Christ came to the earth so that through the very force of Divine Love, the seed of redemption could be sowed in human beings, thereby re-opening a path leading us back to our spiritual home – the realm of the Father, the creator, whence we originated.

As indicated earlier, we can think of the Christian Moses millennium as being related to the realm of the etheric, the realm of life forces. In order to come to the hidden ethereal regions we need to become aware that something vital is missing in our normal sense-perceptible experience of the world. In Thomas Aquinas' philosophical thought, an incipient discovery of the ethereal over and above the physical is present, because, in contrast to Abraham, Aquinas confronts a duality: the natural world, which we can learn to understand through our own activity, and the spiritual or heavenly presence, which – as far as Christian theology is concerned – can only be known through faith in the Christian revelation. This was the situation in the early part of the post-Christian Moses millennium. Near its end, Rudolf Steiner in his fundamental work *Philosophy of Freedom* revealed how our fundamental grasp of life comes about through a radical dualizing: human cognition splits the world apart into the percept, which we confront through our senses, and the concept, which we can only come to grips with through our own inner activity. Only in our own thinking can we reintegrate the unity of the world. The spiritual activity, that of thinking, which Rudolf Steiner speaks about in his *Philosophy of Freedom*, is not based merely upon the use of the

physical brain; rather, it springs from our ability to release and to employ etheric forces freed from the bondage of the “nerve-sense system” – meaning here our nervous system in conjunction with our organs of sense perception. Other than the reincarnated Moses himself, who else at the very culmination of the Christian Moses millennium could bring to humanity the path by which we can free ourselves from the “bondage” of the sense-perceptible world? And who else but the reincarnated Moses was destined to bring to humanity a new art form related to the redeemed etheric forces – this art form being eurythmy?

We see that the Moses individuality incarnated near the beginning of the post-Christian Moses millennium as Thomas Aquinas, the great teacher, philosopher, and theologian of Christianity, and near the end of that millennium as Rudolf Steiner, the initiate-pioneer of the New Age of Christ’s Second Coming. Thus the powerful and vibrant spirit of the Moses individuality, one of the twelve Bodhisattvas surrounding Christ, shone brightly both at the beginning and at the end of the post-Christian Moses millennium.²⁵

²⁵ Rudolf Steiner, *Esoteric Christianity and the Mission of Christian Rosenkreutz* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 2001), lecture of November 5, 1911 – *Jeshu ben Pandira*, lecture 2 – “The greatest of such transformations that ever occurred took place at the baptism by John. What occurred there was that the ‘I’ of Jesus, in the thirtieth year of his life, abandoned the flesh and another ‘I’ entered: the ‘I’ of the Christ...A similar revolution will be experienced by the future Maitreya Buddha. But he experiences such a revolution in his incarnations quite differently. The Bodhisattva patterns his life on the life of Christ, and those who are initiated know that he manifests in every incarnation very special characteristics. It will always be noted that, in the period between his thirtieth and thirty-third years, a mighty revolution occurs in his life. There will then be an interchange of souls, though not in so mighty a manner as in the case of Christ. The ‘I’ which has until then given life to the body passes out at that time, and the Bodhisattva becomes, in a fundamental sense, altogether a different person from what he has been up to that time, even though the ‘I’ does not cease and is not replaced by another, as was true of the Christ. This is what all esotericists in common call attention to: that he cannot be recognized before this time, before this revolution. Up to this time – although he will be absorbed intensely in all things – his mission will not be especially conspicuous; and even though the revolution is certain to occur, no one can ever say what will then happen to him. The earlier period of youth is always utterly unlike that into which he is transformed between his thirtieth and thirty-third years. Thus does he prepare for a great event. This will be as follows: The old ‘I’ passes out and another ‘I’ then enters. *And this may be such an individuality as Moses, Abraham, Elijah.* This ‘I’ will then be active for a certain time in this body; thus can that take place which must take place in order to prepare the Maitreya Buddha. The rest of his life he then lives in such a way that he continues to live with this ‘I’ which enters at that moment. What then occurs is like a complete interchange. Indeed, that which is needed for the recognition of the Bodhisattva can occur. And it is then known that, when he appears after three thousand years, and has been elevated to the rank of Maitreya Buddha, his ‘I’ will remain in him but will be permeated inwardly by still another individuality. And this will occur precisely in his thirty-third year, in the year in which occurred in the case of Christ the Mystery of Golgotha. And then will he come forth as the Teacher of the Good, as a great Teacher who will prepare the true teaching of Christ and the true wisdom of Christ in a manner entirely different from that which is possible today. Spiritual science is to prepare that which will one day take place upon our earth.” [Words italicized by RP]. These italicized words indicate that Moses, Abraham, and Elijah are three of the twelve Bodhisattvas around Christ. Indeed, two of these Bodhisattvas – Moses and Elijah – appeared at the right and at the left of Christ at the scene of the Transfiguration on Mount Tabor (Matthew 17:1-9). The third Bodhisattva mentioned here, Abraham, is the subject of this quote and of this entire lecture concerning Jeshu ben Pandira as one of the incarnations of this Bodhisattva, who will become the Maitreya Buddha around 4500 AD. Those readers who know the content of my book, *The Most Holy Trinosophia* (see footnote 1), will recognize that the focus in that book on the three “spiritual teachers” of the twentieth century (and, in the case of the third teacher, continuing on into the twenty-first century, still ongoing at the present time) is precisely upon the three Bodhisattvas named here by Rudolf Steiner *exactly* in the *unusual* sequence that he names them! – noting

At this juncture it is important to look at a reincarnation statement that has been circulating in the Anthroposophical movement indicating that Moses reincarnated as Goethe. The identification of Goethe with Moses is false. It is one of those apocryphal stories, introduced by Anthroposophist Rudolf Meyer, claiming that this identification goes back to Rudolf Steiner. Let us consider this indication more closely.

On April 19, 1984, Rudolf Meyer stated:

It was not me whom Rudolf Steiner addressed with this statement, but I heard it from Mr. Schröder, the then branch head in Bremen – where I held a lecture on Goethe – around 1920, that in an esoteric lesson Dr. Steiner had spoken of Goethe having been Moses in his Egyptian incarnation. Yet I have not heard it from anyone else since; that is why I am hesitant to talk about it.

This account does not make much sense. Rudolf Steiner disbanded the Esoteric School in 1914. In the meantime, all the extant notes made by those who attended these lectures have been published (3 volumes, in German, which have now also been published in English as *Esoteric Lessons* by Steiner Books). Surely something as sensational as the statement that Goethe was the reincarnated Moses would have been written down by at least one person! Given that Rudolf Meyer was eighty-seven or eighty-eight years old when he provided this indication, it seems likely that either he was getting things mixed up, or that Mr. Schröder had confused things, and therefore this second-hand account cannot be taken as a secure indication. Think of how the lecture in the Esoteric School in Berlin—held on March 22, 1912 (CW 266, vol. 2) on “Moses and the Golden Calf”—was written down in great detail, and how, in this lecture, Rudolf Steiner addressed his most faithful and dedicated esoteric disciples with these words: “*Imagine to yourself Moses as your teacher and master....*” How could it be that the statement that Moses reincarnated as Goethe was not also written down (in which case it would have been published in one of the aforementioned three volumes of the *Esoteric Lessons* (lectures))?²⁶ Goethe was the incarnation of a great individuality; there can be no doubt about this. However, can anyone seriously maintain that Goethe was the Bodhisattva who is at the “right-hand” of Christ, the bearer of the Archangel Michael, and the Lord of Karma? It was this being who brought the great teaching of the seven days of creation which was the backbone of Western civilization, providing a conception of the creation of the world and the origin of the human being from the time of Moses until Darwin’s *Origin of the Species* was published in 1859.

Now it is important that we bring Jesus Christ Himself to consciousness, over and above the periods of preparation for and the continuation of the Christ impulse on earth through the

the important fact of this peculiar order, as the normal order in which these three names appear historically is Abraham, Moses, and Elijah. Here we see again that every detail communicated by Rudolf Steiner is of profound esoteric significance. By giving the three Bodhisattvas in the sequence Moses, Abraham, Elijah, he was in fact – for those able to read “between the lines” – pointing to the sequence of the three incarnations of these Bodhisattvas in the twentieth century as the three “spiritual teachers” shepherding the unfolding of the Anthroposophical movement. Lastly, regarding the Elijah Bodhisattva, see Robert Powell, *Elijah Come Again* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2009), afterword, pp. 194-196, where the current incarnation of this Bodhisattva as the “third teacher” is discussed, whose work is now unfolding as a blessing for humanity and the earth.

²⁶ Rudolf Steiner, *Esoteric Lessons*, volumes 1-3 (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006, 2011, 2013).

millennia under discussion, viz., the Solomon, Moses, and Abraham millennia. After His death and resurrection, Christ ascended to the Father in heaven and then descended again – on his path of return – to that supersensible sphere closest to the physical, i.e., the etheric realm, from which His great work of guiding humankind is now unfolding in like manner to how He manifested Himself between the Resurrection and the Ascension two thousand years ago. Steiner indicated that this etheric manifestation would commence in the early 1930s (more specifically, on at least two occasions he mentioned 1933 – see footnote 8) and that it was not intrinsically his own task to present this theme to humanity at large, but that this was the unique task of someone coming after him.²⁷

The Moses individuality, who incarnated in Rudolf Steiner and began to unfold his sublime spiritual activity in the first quarter of the twentieth century in service to Christ, has been engaged in the process of fulfilling – of veritably bringing to a spiritual crescendo – the second millennium of the Christian tradition, i.e. the Moses millennium, with a view to then passing his work on to another. This is the meaning of the title of this article, “The Transition.” It is a matter of the transition between the Moses and the Abraham millennia, between the Moses and the Abraham individualities. And Rudolf Steiner was implicitly indicating to his followers – in view of the approaching Abraham millennium – to watch for the Abraham individuality soon to appear among them and to speak about Christ in His new presence.²⁸ This is a polar opposite deed to that of Abraham, who as the founding father of the Israelites withdrew from the Mesopotamian civilization into which he was born in order to initiate preparation of the physical vessel into which the Christ would incarnate many generations later. With the return of Christ Jesus to the earth's etheric sphere in the 1930s, clearly this same “founding father” individuality was meant to step forth and communicate to humanity the meaning of the New Presence of the Risen One, coming at the point in time just prior to the dawning of the post-Christian Abraham millennium. Here we confront *the* great spiritual tragedy of the twentieth century: The Moses individuality present in Rudolf Steiner was not able to pass on his work to the reincarnated Abraham.

Did someone appear at the time Rudolf Steiner said he would, i.e. in the 1930s, and attempt to unite his own work with Steiner's? If yes, was this someone – as the reincarnated founding father of Israel – able to spiritually penetrate the whole biblical tradition through the vista of Anthroposophy, and to speak in a profound way of that most significant of events, the Second Coming of Christ in the etheric? The answer to these questions is “yes.” Someone did come and connect on to Rudolf Steiner's work and wrote penetrating studies of the Old Testament, the New Testament, and the Book of Revelation and, above all, spoke in a most profound way about the second coming of Christ in the etheric realm. And the name of that “someone” is Valentin Tomberg.²⁹

²⁷ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha's Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), appendix 1.

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 15-20.

²⁹ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006). In this book are found his studies of the Old Testament, the New Testament, the Book of Revelation, and seven lectures entitled “The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric.” This great work reveals itself

Alas, however, Tomberg was heard by only a few, one of whom was mathematician and astronomer Elisabeth Vreede (see footnote 37). Vreede was appointed by Rudolf Steiner to the first board (“executive committee”) of the re-founded Anthroposophical Society (the re-founding took place at Christmas 1923), and she was nominated by Steiner as the head of the Mathematical-Astronomical Section of the University (“Freie Hochschule”) of Spiritual Science that he founded at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland, in 1924. It was with Elisabeth Vreede’s help and organizational skill that Valentin Tomberg held the profound lectures “The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric” in Rotterdam in December, 1938 and January, 1939.³⁰

Did Valentin Tomberg also attempt – as Rudolf Steiner had indicated in connection with the *reincarnated Abraham* – to return pictorial symbolic thinking to humankind? Yes, he did! He wrote the book *Meditations on the Tarot*, as meditations upon the twenty-two pictorial images of the so-called Major Arcana of the Tarot, and he sought to incarnate this work into the Christian tradition. This is also a perfect polar deed to that of the historical Abraham, who withdrew from the surrounding nations. Moreover, it appears that Valentin Tomberg sought (and from spiritual realms still seeks) to bring the Christian esoteric tradition as a re-enlivening influence back into the Church so as to be able to open up millions of Christians to the possibility of encountering Christ Jesus in the etheric realm.

Why was Tomberg not able to speak more about the Second Coming, if we understand that this was his task? Very simply, because those who had been prepared by Rudolf Steiner to be in a position to understand – viz., those in the Anthroposophical movement – did not open themselves to listen. Only relatively few Anthroposophists opened themselves to hear what Valentin Tomberg had to say.

Let us note that Abraham voluntarily separated himself from the religious customs and culture of his contemporaries. Likewise, Valentin Tomberg was ostracized and edged out of the Anthroposophical Society. Moreover, he did not find room for his work in the Christian Community, which Rudolf Steiner also helped to bring into existence as a new religious congregation founded on the spirit of Anthroposophy. Perhaps all of these setbacks that Valentin Tomberg experienced were somehow karmic necessities. Nevertheless it is tragic that so few people remained in close communication with him after he was obliged to withdraw from the Anthroposophical Society in Holland in 1940, and as Europe was moving deeper and deeper into the darkness of the Second World War.

in a completely new way if read against the background of what is presented in this article “The Transition,” especially holding in consciousness that the words one is reading have been spiritually lived through and experienced by one of the highest of Christ initiates.

³⁰ Ibid, appendix—comprising Valentin Tomberg’s seven lectures “The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric,” where he began to proclaim in a most profound way the renewed presence of Christ in the etheric realm.

Abraham prayed that the three angels or initiates who met with him before they embarked upon their journey to Sodom and Gomorrah would not destroy either of these cities, even if only “ten righteous men” could be found in them. However, Sodom and Gomorrah were not spared. And not even ten Anthroposophists were there to listen to Valentin Tomberg’s new and profound Christ revelation (*The Lord’s Prayer Course* – Amsterdam, 1940-1943) at that dark hour in world history in Nazi-occupied Holland during World War II.³¹



Lot Fleeing Sodom by Benjamin West

War raged, and humanity at large had not heard anything about the Second Presence of Christ Jesus; nor, for the most part, have they heard anything about this mystery since then, even to the present day. For it is an undeniable fact that the vast majority of people have next to no knowledge of the Second Presence of Christ Jesus encompassing his return to the earth’s etheric aura, the onset of which began in 1933.

According to Rudolf Steiner, generally speaking the Maitreya individual appears on earth once in every century. An overshadowing by – or incorporation of – this Bodhisattva into the person who will bear him usually takes place between the ages of 30 and 33.³² In the case of Valentin Tomberg, born in 1900, he was 32 to 33 years old when the Bodhisattva manifestation began, i.e. in 1932/1933.³³ Steiner pointed out that the Maitreya would step forth in his early thirties, and thus would not be constrained to follow another esoteric law, namely that an initiate will not emerge openly as an esoteric teacher in the world before his fortieth year. As we know, Valentin Tomberg began to speak openly about his profound spiritual-esoteric research in the realm of Anthroposophy in his thirties. In 1933 he began to publish his *Old Testament Studies*, in the foreword of which he states:

These *Studies on the Old Testament* are intended to represent the beginning of a series of ongoing publications...to meet the need...for pure *anthroposophic* research. The content of the Studies did not come into being through intellectual speculation and the establishment of hypotheses, nor by merely collecting facts drawn from Rudolf Steiner’s lecture cycles, but through *anthroposophic* research.³⁴

Since he goes on to define anthroposophic research as the gaining of esoteric knowledge through the higher faculties known as Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition, it is evident that here Valentin Tomberg is announcing himself – though very discretely – as an esotericist and spiritual researcher.

³¹ Valentin Tomberg held the *Lord’s Prayer Course* in German, and by the grace of destiny a copy of his notes of the course was given to me (RP), which I have translated into English and made available as a course of study, in installments, through the Sophia Foundation. For anyone who deepens into this course of study, there can be no doubt that Valentin Tomberg stood in direct connection with Christ. As far as we know (“we” being the authors of this article), it is the most profound exposition of the path of Christian esotericism that has ever been presented.

³² Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha’s Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013). Appendix 1 gives a useful summary of many of Rudolf Steiner’s statements regarding the individual who will become the Maitreya Buddha.

³³ Valentin Tomberg, *Lord’s Prayer Course* (correspondence course available from the Sophia Foundation). See the section *Our Mother Course*, week 21, where he states that “the Maitreya Buddha...began to work in 1932/1933.”

³⁴ Valentin Tomberg, *Christ and Sophia* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006), p. xxi.

Shortly after 1933 he began to speak openly about the Second Coming of Christ in the etheric.³⁵ This was precisely at the time Rudolf Steiner indicated with regard to the Bodhisattva when he said to Rittelmeyer in relation to the 1930s that then “we shall notice his activity.”³⁶ At that time in the 1930s Valentin Tomberg had reached the very age pointed to by Steiner as the “coming of age” of a Bodhisattva. In making such statements, Rudolf Steiner was implicitly asking his followers to take note of the emergence of an individual in his thirties speaking out of true spiritual knowledge in the 1930s concerning the return of Christ in the etheric. Yet Tomberg was ostracized by all but one of the Anthroposophical Society leaders both in Dornach and later in Holland.³⁷ When he was finally edged out of the Anthroposophical Society in Holland, he quietly withdrew from the Anthroposophical movement and henceforth lived outwardly as an “ordinary human being” in the eyes of the world, with (seemingly) nothing special about him, but in actual fact from then on until the end of his life he was working “behind the scenes” in helping the evolution of humankind to progress. In this connection we may recall yet another indication from Steiner that he made in a lecture when he was speaking of the Bodhisattva who will become the Maitreya Buddha:

It is quite true that a reincarnation of the greatest possible significance might take place in our epoch and be unrecognized or treated with indifference.³⁸

These words of Steiner were prophetic in relation to Valentin Tomberg. After Tomberg’s withdrawal from the public eye, the following words of Steiner also apply to him, and offer us a context for understanding why he authored his last great work, *Meditations on the Tarot*, anonymously:

The Masters, as a rule, are not personages known to history. They sometimes incarnate, when necessary, in historical personalities, but this is, in a certain respect, a personal sacrifice. The level of their consciousness is no longer compatible with any work on behalf of themselves – and preservation of a name does, after all, entail work for oneself.³⁹

³⁵ Ibid, appendix – seven lectures that Valentin Tomberg held in Rotterdam from December 1938 to January 1939 entitled *The Four Sacrifices of Christ and the Reappearance of Christ in the Etheric*.

³⁶ Referring to Jeshu ben Pandira as an earlier incarnation of the Bodhisattva who will become the Maitreya Buddha, in response to a question from Friedrich Rittelmeyer, Rudolf Steiner said: “Jeshu ben Pandira [i.e. the reincarnated Jeshu ben Pandira] was born at the beginning of this century, and if we live another fifteen years, we shall notice his activity.” This remark, made in August 1921, points to a birth in the year 1900 or thereabouts. It also indicates the beginning of the activity of the Bodhisattva [who will become the future Maitreya Buddha] in the 1930s. Rudolf Steiner thought that this activity would become noticeable by about 1936. The foregoing quoted from Robert Powell’s article “Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg, and the Return of Christ in the Etheric” posted under *Articles* on the Sophia Foundation website.

³⁷ Two leaders of the Anthroposophical Society had a close connection with Valentin Tomberg. One was Marie Steiner, who, having come from Russia, initially felt a close connection with the young Russian Valentin Tomberg, but then subsequently turned against him. The other leader was the Dutch mathematician and astronomer Elisabeth Vreede, who greatly encouraged and supported Valentin Tomberg. She wrote the foreword to the English edition of the *Old Testament Studies*. She organized lectures and seminars for him. And she was the contact person in Europe from whom his serially produced *Old Testament Studies*, *New Testament Studies*, *Apocalypse Studies*, and *Foundation Stone Studies* could be ordered, i.e. she was the distributor from her home in Dornach of Valentin Tomberg’s works – or rather, at that time she lived in neighboring Arlesheim in a house architecturally designed by Rudolf Steiner.

³⁸ Rudolf Steiner, *According to Matthew* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2003), lecture 10.

³⁹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Temple Legend and the Golden Legend* (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1985), p. 120.

Much more can be written on the themes we are addressing, but this is only an article and not a book. However, there are a few points which we still ought to address. A leitmotif seems to accompany the Aristotle-Thomas Aquinas-Rudolf Steiner individuality throughout history. His followers tend to see him as greater than anyone else, estimating his writings to be, respectively, the crown jewel of philosophy, the summit of theology, the last word in esoteric knowledge. In the case of the earlier Moses incarnation of this individuality, it seems that on account of the high esteem in which Moses was held, most of the scribes and Pharisees at the time of Christ preferred Moses to the living Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was teaching and healing and raising people from the dead in their midst. Quotes from Moses, i.e. from the first five books of the Bible, as well as other Biblical quotes, were pitted by the scribes and Pharisees against the teachings of the Messiah. The irony of this situation was that the life of Moses – who was referred to by Rudolf Steiner as an initiate of the Archangel Michael, at that time the Archangel (Folk Spirit) of the Israelites⁴⁰ – was totally dedicated to preparing the Jewish people for the coming of the Messiah!

We see how some of the followers of this individuality throughout history have had a tendency to elevate their master above all others, in effect placing him on a pedestal, so that an idolized figure is created who appears infallible to his followers long after he has died. Some followers then seem to be prompted to mercilessly attack anyone who might be considered to be in any way comparable with the master. Clearly, one of the main reasons that some Anthroposophists have attacked Valentin Tomberg is because he spoke with an esoteric depth and authority comparable to that which emanated from Rudolf Steiner himself. Instead of being seen as someone with a mission complementary to that of Rudolf Steiner, Valentin Tomberg was considered a competitor to the master, and consequently some Anthroposophists felt called to ruthlessly wage war against him; indeed some are still waging war against him to this day. This kind of hostility is reminiscent of some of the attitudes that prevailed during the pre-Christian Moses period. A kind of hardening, arising through the adoption of a sclerotic and dogmatic adherence to what their master once gave, seems sometimes to attach itself to some followers of the work of this truly great individuality. For example, many Jewish rabbis continue to hold dogmatically to the works of Moses, instead of endeavoring to spiritually penetrate the teachings of this great initiate. Also, there are a number of Roman Catholic theologians who seem incapable of reaching out to any theology extending beyond the strictures of Thomism (the teachings of Thomas Aquinas), although Rudolf Steiner spoke of these teachings as being eminently suited to prepare the way for the spiritual path of Anthroposophy.⁴¹ And perhaps in three hundred years there will still be some Anthroposophists who will remain content to elaborate solely upon what Rudolf Steiner brought forth in his books, lectures, and creative achievements, while ignoring everything else of spiritual note that has happened since Steiner's death in 1925. The irony here is that Rudolf Steiner himself categorically rejected fundamentalism and dogmatism of any kind!

⁴⁰ Rudolf Steiner, *Concerning the History and Content of the Higher Degree of the Esoteric School 1904-1914*, Complete Works volume 265 (Tobermory, Isle of Mull, Scotland: Etheric Dimensions Press, 2005), p. 443: "The Folk Spirit which united with Moses at his initiation and then dwelt in him was Michael." See also Dionysius the Areopagite, *Mystical Theology and the Celestial Hierarchies* (Fintry, England: Shrine of Wisdom, 1965), p. 47: "Michael is called the Lord of the people of Judah."

⁴¹ Rudolf Steiner, *The Philosophy of Thomas Aquinas* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2010).

In the temporal sense we have now entered the third Christian millennium, the millennium whose guiding and inspiring spirit is that of Abraham. This does not mean that Moses is of less value than Abraham. It means, to use a musical analogy, that the main theme is in the process of passing from the individuality of Moses to that of Abraham. Unfortunately, there are many in the Anthroposophical Society who continue to adhere to Rudolf Steiner alone, ignoring the fact that Rudolf Steiner himself spoke of other teachers of esotericism who would come. And sadly there has been a lack of success with regard to fructifying the sciences with an understanding of the nature and importance of the etheric life forces, a necessary prerequisite for humanity to enter into the mystery of Christ's presence in the etheric realm (this being an important task for the Anthroposophical movement vis-à-vis the world at large). As with the Thomist theologians in the Catholic Church, a tendency toward self-preoccupation is observable here.⁴² This was understandable during the pioneer phase of the Anthroposophical movement, yet now it is time to enter into dialogue with other spiritual groups, as Rudolf Steiner indicated:

Only when a spirituality, such as is seeking to flow through the Anthroposophical movement on earth, unites with other spiritual streams, will Michael find the impulses which will unite him once more with the [Cosmic] Intelligence that has grown earthly but in truth belongs to him.⁴³

And given the karmic background of Rudolf Steiner's previous incarnation as Thomas Aquinas, would it not be important for there to be a dialogue between Anthroposophists and Catholics – at least, with those in the Catholic Church who would be open to taking in the truths of esoteric Christianity?

Humanity, by and large, has not heard of the second coming of Christ in the etheric realm. This message, which should have been heard from the 1930s on, still remains to be given. And this is a profound tragedy for the individuality of Rudolf Steiner, who was not able to pass his mission on to the Abraham individuality – at least, not outwardly, although perhaps he could have done so if he had lived the full seventy-two years that he spoke of as an archetype for the span of human life (in 1933 Steiner would have been seventy-two years old). And between the years 1925 and 1933, it is more than likely that Steiner would have met Valentin Tomberg, who during that time met and became friends with Marie Steiner.



Marie Steiner

What conclusions can be drawn from these observations? It would seem that some leading members of the Anthroposophical Society cared little for the living spirit of their founder as an eternal individuality. Rather, their attention is focused only upon what the historical person, Dr. Rudolf Steiner, did, wrote, and said. However, our focus should not be upon the past alone but

⁴² We (RP & KH) would like to stress that this is simply a tendency on the part of some, and at the same time we certainly also want to highlight the wonderful and beautiful achievements in the world of many sincerely striving Anthroposophists who have accomplished extraordinarily positive things on behalf of the evolution of humanity and the earth. That there are many great accomplishments by Anthroposophists in the world is most laudable and commendable as exemplary of the intrinsic power of Truth, Beauty, and Goodness in Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy.

⁴³ Rudolf Steiner, *Karmic Relationships*, volume 3 (London: Rudolf Steiner Press, 1957), lecture 7. Word in brackets [] inserted by RP.

also upon the future (though of course we need to learn from the past so as to try to make up for mistakes).

At the very heart of the Transition, whereby the Moses individuality seeks to pass on the central impulse of his work to the Abraham individuality, lies knowledge of the Second Coming of Christ in the etheric. In this respect it is evident – at least to the authors – that we need to work not only with what Rudolf Steiner brought but also with what has been given by Valentin Tomberg. And if we do this, we can perhaps more easily become aware of when others speak from genuine insight.

The Aristotelian and Platonic Streams

The Transition also needs to be seen in a wider context than just these two individuals. Near the end of his life Rudolf Steiner spoke about two groups of people who through their ability to cooperate would be able to further humanity's positive development. These two groups he called the *Aristotelians* and the *Platonists*, and noted that their ways of taking hold of life were different yet complementary. Through their cooperation, much more good could be brought into the world than through what either group might achieve alone.

Clearly most of the Anthroposophists living at the time of Rudolf Steiner were connected with him – he who had lived on earth as Aristotle – and were therefore Aristotelians. On the other hand, as indicated in the article *Valentin Tomberg: A Platonic Soul*,⁴⁴ Valentin Tomberg was a Platonist.⁴⁵ Steiner envisaged large numbers of both Platonists and Aristotelians incarnating during the latter part of the twentieth century, their incarnations extending into our own time. His great hope was that they would work together and complement each other. Setting Steiner's hope in the context of the present article, according to the knowledge and observations of the authors there is an obvious tendency for Aristotelians to focus their attention solely upon the Aristotle (Moses) individuality, while Platonists tend to turn their attention predominantly to the Abraham (Maitreya) individuality. The Transition relates, as it were, to two orchestras – one accompanying the Moses and the other the Abraham individuality. Further, it is apparent that recognition of the Platonists by the Aristotelians, especially those Aristotelians whose life orientation is centered in and around the Anthroposophical Society, is intimately connected with the question of the identity of the Abraham individuality in his twentieth-century incarnation. The identification of the reincarnated Abraham, of whom Rudolf Steiner spoke in connection with the Abraham individuality's role in the coming post-Christian Abraham epoch, is an important key with which to inwardly, spiritually accomplish the Transition from the Moses to the Abraham epoch, which



Plato and Aristotle
detail –The School of Athens
by Raphael

⁴⁴ Robert Powell, *Valentin Tomberg: A Platonic Soul* can be downloaded as a pdf from the *Articles* section of the website of the Sophia Foundation – www.sophiafoundation.org

⁴⁵ I (RP) heard personally from Eva Cliteur, who was befriended by Valentin and Marie Tomberg, that Valentin Tomberg, who almost never spoke about the theme of reincarnation in terms of concrete examples of reincarnations, one day read Eva Cliteur's mind as she was holding the question inwardly as to whether Valentin Tomberg was an Aristotelian or a Platonist. Without any prompting, he said: "I am a Platonist."

we have already entered on the purely temporal level. Just as spiritually there is no discord between the Moses and the Abraham individualities, likewise any tendency toward discord between Aristotelians and Platonists needs to be overcome. This is how Valentin Tomberg expresses it:

Rudolf Steiner speaks of two streams within the anthroposophic movement: the Platonists and the Aristotelians. The Platonists are those in whom the new clairvoyance will appear in the form of karmic seership. The Aristotelians will have a clairvoyance with regard to the secrets of nature... These two groups must work together; there is no other way for it to be. They will *have* to work together... The men and women of Sophia [Platonists], [human beings] of revelation, will walk the path together with the men and women of knowledge [Aristotelians oriented toward Michael]. The Platonists [Sophia] will stand guard with the Aristotelians [Michael] at the threshold of the spiritual world... This community was begun through Rudolf Steiner, through the founding of the anthroposophic movement, through the revelation of the mission of Michael, and through the misfortune that we later experienced. We are summoned by the voice of Rudolf Steiner; we are tested by the misfortune now coming to us [1938]. What we must awaken in the depths of our souls is *earnestness* in regard to the spiritual and outer worlds, and *fidelity* to the spirit, each one according to his or her position in life. We can conduct ourselves in every way, in speech and action, according to the demands of everyday life. But let us keep one province free from compromise; let us remain *true to the spirit*, independent of all teachings and teachers, of all organizations in the world. Let us remain faithful to the inner voice of truth and conscience! Then we are in the school that is preparing for the future Michael Community – the community that will bear the motto: *Michael-Sophia in nomine Christi* (“Michael [and] Sophia in the name of Christ”).⁴⁶

This passage describes the spiritual talents and faculties of the two groups and how they complement one another. A complete characterization of Aristotelians and Platonists can and must be done on many levels, and such a task is far beyond the scope of this article. However, in drawing the article to a close, we would like to characterize one central difference between the groups, viz., the quality of thinking.

Abraham took hold of the physical brain and partially “extinguished,” as it were, the earlier dreamlike pictorial consciousness that prevailed in all the cultures of antiquity. With this “extinction,” a strict division was brought about between the sense-perceptual *percept* and the underlying, spiritually present *concept* of that which meets us in the world in which we live. Rudolf Steiner – most especially in his foundational work *Philosophy of Freedom* – shows us how through inner spiritual activity we can develop an etheric thinking, a thinking which not only takes hold of the physical brain but which dynamically releases and allows us to use its etheric counterpart. Here we are dealing with an intimate relation between the physical and the etheric bodies of the human being.

⁴⁶ Valentin Tomberg, *Inner Development* (Great Barrington, MA: Anthroposophic Press, 1992), pp. 31-32. Words in brackets [] added by RP.

Rudolf Steiner also explained how the pictorial dream consciousness of our life of dreams arises. As we begin to fall asleep, our astral body releases itself from the physical body (and especially from the nerve-sense system it normally takes hold of) but still retains a connection to the etheric body. Dream pictures arise when the astral body imprints itself onto the etheric body. One of the deeds which Steiner indicated that the Abraham individuality would accomplish for humanity in the post-Christian Abraham epoch is to help bring this symbolic pictorial consciousness to a higher and more conscious level. Valentin Tomberg has already helped us with this task in a most significant way. He has given us a truly profound description of a well-known set of symbols depicting the archetypal symbolism which lives in the ancient images of the cards of the Tarot deck, which in turn derive from the ancient Egyptian Book of Thoth, the book which contains the wisdom of the world. Rudolf Steiner said of this book:

The Book of Thoth by the Egyptians consisted of 78 cards, which contained the world secrets. This was well known in the initiation rituals of Egypt... Those who were initiated in the Egyptian mysteries were able to read the symbol for Tarot. They could also read the Book of Thoth, which comprised 78 cards in which all world events were depicted from the beginning to the end, from Alpha to Omega, which one could decipher if [the cards] were arranged in their proper order. The book contained pictures of life, leading to death, and arising again to new life. Whoever could combine the correct numbers with the correct pictures could read what was written.⁴⁷

From this brief characterization of the Tarot (an understanding of which – as Valentin Tomberg elucidates in his book⁴⁸ – depends upon inwardly bringing to realization the ancient Egyptian saying attributed to Hermes: “As above, so below”) it is evident that this Platonic mode of thought, based on correspondences, relates to the astral body (“above”) and the conscious carrying over of impressions from the astral body into the etheric body (“below”), as occurs on a more subconscious level during the dream state. Recognition of the parallel with dreaming, but now brought to consciousness, is a key to penetrating the mysteries expressed in the Tarot images. On the other hand, as already described, the point of departure of Aristotelian thought is from the physical brain level of thinking to the living thinking weaving in the etheric body.



Hermes Trismegistus

Platonic thinking – we could also say *hermetic thinking* (going back to the Egyptian initiate Hermes) – is based on analogy between “above” and “below.” For example, Newton’s discovery of gravity underlying planetary motion (“above”) was grasped by way of analogy with his perception of an apple falling from a tree (“below”). Another example of the application of the principle of analogy is the recognition of the correspondence between the cycle of the year (“above”) – spring, summer, autumn, winter – and the cycle of the day (“below”) – morning, afternoon, evening, night. On the other hand, Aristotelian thinking is based on the principle of metamorphosis. For example, in observing the growth of a plant, we see that it begins as a seed, then through metamorphosis the seed develops a root, extending down, and a stem, extending

⁴⁷ Rudolf Steiner, *The Misraim Service* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2006), p. 375.

⁴⁸ Anonymous, *Meditations on the Tarot* (New York: Tarcher-Penguin, 2002), chapter 1.

up; the stem, through metamorphosis, starts to branch out and, through further metamorphosis, develops leaves; through yet a further metamorphosis, flowering takes place.

In a nutshell, the Aristotelian mode of thinking can be thought of as living in the interplay between the physical and the etheric bodies as this interplay comes to expression through metamorphosis, while Platonic thinking relates more to the interplay between the astral and the etheric bodies as it comes to expression by way of grasping through analogy the correspondences between “above” and “below.” We see here the complementary nature of Aristotelian and Platonic ways of thinking. Their point of contact is the etheric body and the etheric world in which it lives. The great task, therefore, which confronts the Platonists and the Aristotelians, is to bring to humanity a clear awareness of the etheric – the etheric in nature and the etheric body in the human being. For if we do not understand the etheric level of existence, how can we begin to grasp the second coming of Christ Jesus in the etheric realm?

Against this background, one significant purpose of the Anthroposophical movement in the world is evident, viz., to help make the second coming comprehensible for human beings by way of opening up an understanding of the etheric realm in the world and the etheric body in the human being. This understanding can occur if men and women of both the Platonic and Aristotelian streams are able to work harmoniously together. And in light of the Transition discussed in this article, it is contingent upon us to be able to hold gratefully in our hearts the twentieth-century incarnations of the Moses and the Abraham individualities – Rudolf Steiner and Valentin Tomberg, respectively.



Since the Bodhisattva who will become the Maitreya Buddha incarnates once every century, and since Rudolf Steiner spoke of himself as incarnating again near the end of the twentieth century,⁴⁹ perhaps we will be given a second chance to witness the Moses individuality attempt to pass his work on to the Maitreya individuality in his twenty-first century incarnation. For it is the Maitreya’s mission at this time to speak to the hearts of human beings in such a way as to unveil the presence of Jesus Christ in the etheric realm.

⁴⁹ Robert Powell and Estelle Isaacson, *Gautama Buddha’s Successor: A Force for Good in our Time* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2013), p. 87—regarding the incarnation of the Bodhisattva once in every century. For the statement regarding Rudolf Steiner’s reincarnation around the beginning of the twenty-first century, see Stephen E. Usher’s article “Remarks on the Culmination at the End of the 20th Century” in: the periodical publication *Jupiter* (Dornach, Switzerland: Verlag am Goetheanum), vol. 6 (2011), pp. 71-92, available as a free download (PDF) from: http://www.anthroposophy.org/uploads/media/SEUsher-Remarks_on_the_Culmination.pdf where on page 75 Stephen E. Usher remarks: “In the little book *Rudolf Steiner’s Millennium Prophecies* by Heinz Herbert Schoeffler, which is the text of a lecture he delivered in 1995, there it is reported that in 1922, in response to a question asked by W. J. Stein, Rudolf Steiner stated that he would return in 80 years and in America. The text speculates whether this meant Steiner would be born in 2002 or be active by that year. After much reflection I decided that the better interpretation is that Rudolf Steiner was active in 2002, in other words, an adult capable of independent action and not an infant or child. The basis for this interpretation is that Rudolf Steiner states to his 1924 *Karmic Relationships* lectures audience that there were less than 100 years to the end of the 20th Century when very significant things would be determined for the future evolution of the earth, and that members of his audience were called upon to participate in these happenings after a relatively short interval between death and rebirth.”