

A TIME OF DECISION

Lecture given
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Dear friends,

We are living at a time of Decision. War, Terrorism and the 'Spectre' of Islam, Natural Disasters, Climate Change, Mass Migrations of peoples, Economic, Social and Cultural upheaval and even the Schism experienced in the Anthroposophical Society have their causes in what Rudolf Steiner calls - the Leprosy of Materialism.

This lecture will explore the significance of our times and how we can best make the first step towards understanding World Events in light of Spiritual Science. We will discuss the one important and simple tool for empowerment and consciousness that can help each individual to make the 'decision' for him or herself.

Firstly what does it mean to say that this is a time of Decision.

Rudolf Steiner characterises this time we are living in, as the Age Consciousness Soul. It is a time when human beings must strive to initiate a consciousness of their entire souls so that their actions and decisions are made, in light of this consciousness, with freedom.

Let's look briefly at what a Consciousness Soul is.

The Soul, according to Rudolf Steiner has been elaborated over eons and is responsible for the human capacity to have inner experiences of the outer world, through feelings, thoughts and actions.

The most rudimentary aspect of the Soul is called the Sentient Soul, which, according to Rudolf Steiner, is an extension of the element of feeling. Sensations enter us and make an impression in us and these impressions are in turn, responsible for creating the Sentient Soul. Through the Sentient Soul we take in what we perceive of the world, the world impresses itself on us and we feel something, e.g. we touch a hot iron, we sense its heat and this makes an impression in us, which causes us to feel pain.

The second aspect of the soul is the Intellectual Soul. This aspect of the soul was formed when our impressions went deeper and left their 'mark' in us longer. We call this longer lasting impression, memory. Memory has allowed us to reflect back at our sensations and feelings and judge them after the event. The intellect separates us from the 'feeling' and enables

us for the first time to develop an inner life that experiences itself not only through the present sensations of the outer world, but also through a memory of those sensations. This occurs because the intellect through memory creates concepts from those sensations and impressions - hot cold, pleasant etc. This also has the effect of separating us from the world, because through these concepts we can create a world inwardly that is completely different to the outer one, in other words we can see things differently to how we perceived and sensed them - this is what gives us freedom from the outer world and its impressions. Without this faculty we would be compelled to see the same inwardly as we experienced outwardly.

The Consciousness Soul is that aspect of the soul developed when we create our own sensations and impressions. When we do this we can bring harmony between inner and outer, without foregoing freedom. How? We take the inner feelings and impressions created in us by the outer world and our thoughts about them that we take back into the world again, and in so doing we can see how our deeds transform the world, through the impressions on that world, and how it is through these deeds that we can experience our soul outside us as an objective entity separate from the physical body.

I will give you an example.

I create an imagination of a cross encircled by roses. I take the concepts rose and cross and create something new. This strengthens my will, it becomes a new faculty of perception. This willed faculty is what enables the soul to become conscious of itself - objectified.

When the soul becomes conscious of what lives in the will, Anthroposophy calls this a spiritualised soul because it is able to experience a oneness with the spirit in the world, and a separateness from the physical body.

The ultimate goal of the Consciousness Soul is to become a vessel for the spirit. When it becomes a vessel, it is called a Spiritual Soul. However in order for it to do so, it has to pass through the individualising process that comes with the intellect and with inner contraction spoken of above.

The Archangel Michael is the champion of the development of the Consciousness Soul.

The age of the Consciousness Soul began in 1413. The Michael age, began in 1879. The Michael age is the seventh of seven smaller cycles. It signifies thereby, the end stage of those, cycle, because cycles are ruled by the number 7 according to Rudolf Steiner and ancient Tradition. From 1879 onwards therefore, we have been living in the end stages, one could say, of the development of the Consciousness Soul. And as the consciousness soul has to do with the will and action, it is a time of Initiative - initiative being the impulses to action that arise from the will.

Let us now look at The Book of Revelations, in particular Rudolf Steiner's lectures on The Book of Revelation and the Work of the Priest.

In these lectures Rudolf Steiner says that in relation to the Consciousness Soul, we are living in the time of The Seven Trumpets. Although the age of the Consciousness Soul began in 1413, its foreshadowings were felt around the time of the Crusades. After that each Trumpet Sounded approximately every 150 years.

Rudolf Steiner goes on to say that the year 1843 was a turning point for humanity. At this time it experienced a culmination of Materialism as a result of Ahrimanic powers working into human affairs with greater intensity than every before from the spiritual worlds. It was at this time that the war in heaven is said to have begun.

According to Rudolf Steiner 1840's correspond with the sounding of the Sixth Trumpet. One might say what was begun with the individualisation of the human being through the Crusades continued through the age of darkness in the middle of the thirteenth century until the time of Copernicus, and his materialistic view of the relationship between the Sun and the Earth, which was continued by Darwin with his materialistic view of the human being.

From the time of Copernicus a great portion of humanity was unable to progress spiritually - they were 'killed' or were so affected in their souls, Revelations tells us, that in subsequent lives the incarnation of an ego was not possible.

John the writer of The Book of Revelations calls these humans that have no ego or 'I' Locusts and the word he uses - 'killed' - refers to those who have the absence of an I or ego.

This brings us to the work of Michael, which commenced at the end of this war in heaven, when he was victorious over the Ahrimanic angels in 1879 and was successful in casting them down to earth.

Michael's aim since that time, is to encourage each human soul to become conscious of the spirit, as a protection from the danger of becoming estranged from it and therefore prey to adversarial powers. Once a human being is spiritually killed, he or she is incapable of rising to this consciousness and karma and destiny cannot help them because they don't have an individuality to take them from life to life.

Those who are 'saved' according to John are the ones who have the 'seal' of God on their foreheads. In other words, those who are in possession of an ego, or I, which has entered the soul and spiritualised it - enlightened it with consciousness of itself. This is the 'third eye' or two petalled chakra.

Here is the approximation of the dates of the Trumpets as gleaned from the lectures given by Rudolf Steiner on The Book of Revelations to the Priests.

First Trumpet around 1090 - 1240 The Crusades

Second Trumpet around 1240 - 1390 Destruction of the Cathar and Templar impulse.

Third Trumpet around 1390 -1540 Copernicus - Materialistic view of Earth in relation to the sun.

Fourth Trumpet around 1540 - 1690 - Thirty Years War

Fifth Trumpet around 1690 - 1840 Darwin's Origins of the Species

Sixth Trumpet around 1840 -1990 Mechanisation of the Soul.

Seventh Trumpet around 1990 - 2140 Ahriman's Incarnation and its effects.

If we follow Rudolf Steiner's indications regarding the Consciousness Soul in relation to the Book of Revelations, then we are living in the age of the Seventh Trumpet and as such in the age of the three final woes in which we experience, in this small cycle, a taste of what is to come in the greater cycles - we experience the phials of Wrath.

We see this wrath today being poured out over humanity in a way that has never happened before, I say this in relation to human consciousness:

Earthquakes, War, Famine, Catastrophes, Terror, Epidemics, Struggles and Dissention, Political and Economic and Cultural Upheaval. These are the 'fall out' of the materialistic thinking that preceded our time.

Rudolf Steiner tells us that the Michael Age, and in particular the time of the Seventh Trumpet, is a time of decision. But what does he mean by decision and what decision should we make?

In a sense a decision is usually preceded by an initiative - one must become conscious and alert for the impulse that will arise in the soul to act, or to make a decision. This is, apparently, particularly important for Anthroposophists according to Rudolf Steiner. He says that this should stand before the soul when one has become an Anthroposophist:

*'Now that I have become an anthroposophist through my karma, the impulses which have been able to draw me to Anthroposophy require me to be attentive and alert. For somehow or somewhere, more or less deeply in my soul, there will emerge the necessity for me to find inner initiative in life, — initiative of soul which will enable me to undertake something or to make some judgment or decision out of my own inmost being.'*¹

Staying awake and alert means we must become men and women of our time. We must become fully conscious of all that goes on around us so that we can either act or make decisions about what we see around us consciously. At the same time what we experience in the world today, has the effect of eroding our consciousness and our initiative - our ability to make decisions.

Since the call of the Sixth Trumpet and even more with the sounding of the Seventh, the foremost obstacles in our path today are Materialism and Intellectualism.

Intellectualism is characterised by everything that we find in the media, in the 24 hour news cycle, in opinion polls, on the internet, in the purely material view of history, and the elaboration of language based on physical facts.

Materialism is what is taught to us at school and later in Universities. It

¹<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA237/English/RSP1977/19240804p01.html>

lives in a purely materialistic view of the world and the human being.

Both materialism and intellectualism are an aberration of the intelligence of Michael. They work through a fragmentation (Intellectualism) on the one hand and a consolidation (materialism) on the other. In Alchemical terms we can characterise these as Solve and Coagula.

By way of intellectualism and materialism, instead of a consciousness of the spirit in the soul, of the I in the soul, what is experienced, is on the one hand a dilution of the soul - Solve, and on the other a concretisation of the soul - coagula. Both, in their own polar ways, cause there to form a connection of the soul not to the spirit through an emancipation from the body, but to the body through an estrangement from the spirit. They cause a fusing of the body with the soul and thereby the death of the individual soul itself.

We must remember that:

Materialism holds ONLY for the outer physical body and the physical world.

Intellectualism is ONLY a step towards consciousness of the spirit and not an end in itself.

Materialism and Intellectualism used correctly lead us to a holistic view. Used incorrectly they prevent us from finding our initiative by blocking our connection to the spirit which helps us to become conscious of the initiative.

So what is it that can bring us to clear judgment about the things we experience in life? How can we come to a certain clarity of judgment in the world today? It is by learning how to clear the path for the spirit in the soul through raising ordinary consciousness to the spirit.

The fact is that ordinary consciousness occupies only a small part of the soul. Most of what we experience around us in every day life is experienced unconsciously. Just imagine how much enters you through your senses and makes impressions on your soul that you are not conscious of when you walk down Sussex Street, for instance. And yet all we are not conscious of, enters us nevertheless, whether we are conscious of it or not, and what enters us unconsciously not only clouds the soul and prevents it from finding a clear path to the spirit, it also becomes

detached from us and takes part of our souls with it, leaving less and less soul to experience the spirit, so that, in lives to come our soul finds it harder and harder to find the spirit.

Rudolf Steiner says this:

*'For after all, there can be no question but that they who in this time of great decisions do not find their way to the Spirit, will suffer harm in their soul-life for the next incarnation.'*²

The power of discrimination comes from our initiative and from this power of initiative comes our ability to make decisions. We find this discrimination only if we are wakeful - but wakefulness is painful because we have to meet what we have allowed into our unconscious lives!

Since the time of the Sixth Trumpet humanity, according to Rudolf Steiner has been crossing the threshold into the spiritual world unconsciously and thereby collectively passing the Guardian of the Threshold without noticing him. This is the source of all the events we see in the world today. But what does this mean practically?

Rudolf Steiner tells us that our fear of the spirit comes from the abolition of the spirit by the ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 869AD. Before that human beings could lawfully speak of the human being consisting of body soul and spirit. The human being could experience the spirit in the world and in their souls without fearing judgement. The Council of 869 AD was a reflection of the gradual separation of humanity from the spirit. Those who still spoke of having access to the spirit after this time became known as heretics. This brings us to around the middle of the 13th Century when the period of darkness - a complete estrangement from the spirit occurred, according to Rudolf Steiner from 1250 onward. It is at about this time that we see the end of the Cathars and the end of the Templar impulse, for theirs was an impulse that could still recall a communion with the spirit.

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<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA237/English/RSP1977/19240804p01.htm>
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The Templars experienced this communion more outwardly, the Cathars more inwardly. These men and women, and the Rosicrucians that came after them, were the last to possess the ability, one might say, to observe what in our time we call the complementary colour and the after image. Theirs was the last vestige of a clairvoyance that understood that everything we see makes an imprint in our souls - that everything we see has a spiritual essence that enters into us. The Cathars concerned themselves more with what lived within the soul mystically and the Templars with what lived outside it ecstatically.

Imagine if you will what it was like for the souls of those times, surrounded as they were by nature. All that entered the soul was still connected to elemental beings that were the offspring of the higher gods. Their every initiative was 'commanded' by the impulses they received from spiritual beings, but this had to end. Even so the destruction of the Cathars and even more significantly of the Templars - the act itself and its brutality opened the abyss and released elemental beings connected to lower regressive beings, this resulted in an outpouring from below upwards of materialism over the earth, which led finally in the 1840s to the war in heaven.

This however was counteracted by what rained down from the spirit of the Cathars and Templars who had crossed the threshold to inspire men like Goethe as a preparation for the war between Ahrimanic Angels and Michael.

Through the beneficent impulse of the Templars, Goethe rediscovered the complementary colours, and was able to write the Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily. He was also able, in turn, to inspire what would become Anthroposophy.

The result of the raining downwards of these impulses was, that by the 1840s, all human beings were capable of experiencing the spirit again - this manifests in the ability to see after images and complementary colours again (something they could do before they lost their connection to the spirit) but they were passing, and continue to pass by these phenomena, unconsciously. They did not use them as a means of rediscovering the soul, of becoming conscious of the soul, and finding the spirit 'I' that lives in it.

This was a great tragedy, because, while humanity was unable to experience these phenomena, while they experienced darkness, they were protected from attacks by the adversarial powers.

Why?

Because the spiritual beings that correspond to these after images and complementary colours since 1840's are no longer beings only connected purely to nature and higher beings as in former times, but to sub-nature and lower beings due to an increasing mechanisation of the world. Therein lies the great danger of our times, for these beings which enter us from the glowing electrical light bulbs, the winking lights of cities and the lights of our computers, are related to what comes, not from higher spheres but from the bottomless pit - electricity and magnetism which have become essential in our man made mechanised world. These beings are the offspring of retarded adversarial powers who wish to wrest not only the 'I' or spirit away from humanity but also the human soul itself.

Our task, then, is to become conscious of these phenomena in the soul thereby enlarging that chamber of consciousness, that 'hut', from which we can safely begin to perceive the spirit in a way that is discretionary. This means that we do not pass the Guardian of the Threshold unconsciously, we learn to know what he shows us: own soul coloured as it is by the impressions made on us by beings that correspond to all our sensations and perceptions of the world. Only by working consciously with our Guardian can we ennoble these beings, clearing a path to the spirit. Only souls that become 'neutral', or clear and transparent for a vision of the spirit are able to freely find their initiative.

*'So we stand to-day at the infinitely important juncture in human evolution where, on the one hand, the spiritual world is willing to reveal itself with great power, while, on the other, man must find the strength to free himself from his greatest entanglement in what is material and come to a new reception of spiritual revelations.'*³

When Rudolf Steiner says we must become men and women of initiative, when he says that we must beware lest through hindrances of our own body, or hindrances that otherwise come our way, we are prevented from finding the centre of our being, we now know what he means. For it is in

³ <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19190612p01.html#sthash.5jJTX>

the centre of our own being that we find the source of your initiative, it lives in our will, that part of it that is connected to moral actions: The source of all moral actions is Christ Himself - the greatest representative of Consciousness, the one who brought the 'I AM' into the world and made it possible for us to overcome what dies inside us with every perception and sensation.

In our life all joy and sorrow, all happiness and pain will depend, according to Rudolf Steiner, on the finding or not finding of our own individual initiative, that is the Good Will that is inspired by Christ Himself.

*'This should stand written as though in golden letters, constantly before the soul of the anthroposophist. Initiative lies in his karma, and much of what meets him in this life will depend on the extent to which he can become willingly, actively conscious of it.'*⁴

When we take spiritual science into ourselves in a living way, so that we come to know ourselves as beings of soul and spirit and then when we apply this knowledge to the world in order to understand it, as a being of soul and spirit, we are working towards ennobling not only ourselves but also the world.

The more we become conscious of what we experience in the world (this means both spiritual and physical) the more we can take consciously into our sleep, the more we will realise that in the morning important impulses meet us from the night. Impulses that will help us with our actions and our decisions. We learn to read the Cosmic Script, what the spiritual world has written on our souls, impressed on our souls in the night - in the same way that the world impresses our souls in the day.

We must first inform the spiritual world of events in the world, only then can they help us to make 'reasonable' decisions about those events by showing us their spiritual complement. Very often we will make an interesting discovery - those impulses that inspire events today, find their impulses in the past.

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<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA237/English/RSP1977/19240804p01.html#sthash.2PIVLftN.dpuf>

What occurred in the past - when we also lived - now influences the present.

We see that if we are experiencing weather events, global warming for instance, it is the result of the materialistic thinking that created the spectre of Communism. If we experience Earthquakes, we know this comes from materialistic actions in war. If we experience epidemics today we can hark back to a time when human feelings, feelings of fear and terror were experienced by human beings.

Materialistic thinking - causes future Weather Events.

Feelings of fear - cause future Epidemics

Violent Actions - cause future Earthquakes

This is so because the impressions that live in our thinking feeling and will, those which have been gained through materialism and intellectualism become 'detached' from us at night and develop an independent life - Rudolf Steiner calls what is detached from the physical body a Phantom or Spectre, what is detached from the Etheric body a Ghost, what is detached from the Astral body a Demon - these arise from the soul's experience of its environment - be it an experience of immorality, be it due to political and social conditions, or religious aberrations. Our fear of ghosts in the 19th century, for instance, is now recapitulated in our fear of Germs, our fear, our terror today, will one day become the germs and diseases of the future. This kind of thinking brings with it a new sense of responsibility for what we are creating with our thoughts feelings and in our will for the future, when we shall also be incarnated - it shows us the fore-shadowings of what we will find when we return, but it also inspires in us the actions that we can initiate in the present, in concert with the progressive beings of higher worlds, to counteract the intentions of evil beings.

The woes and the plagues of wrath depicted in The Book of Revelations are counteractions by spiritual beings - because we are not doing enough. The woes are imposed on humanity for its own good, they are the diseases, plagues, and catastrophes that must be experienced by those who would not wake up any other way, and who would never otherwise be capable of finding their initiative and a consciousness of the spirit.

In a spiritual sense, the catastrophes and horrors we see today, therefore, stem from a loving action, for without it humanity would fall

into the abyss and not be capable of recovering. Karma is the great awakener and the great cleanser. But there is much that each individual can do to ameliorate these events for the future. The foremost being becoming awake to the spiritual impulses that are wishing to enter into the world. The most propitious time is in the mornings according to Rudolf Steiner...but these impulses work in us in the day too. These are moments when we pause because something completely unexpected enters our consciousness, this is usually an answer to a question we have held.

If one wishes to know the truth about events in the world today, if one wishes to understand what are the aims of certain political parties or who to vote for, or anything at all, one can consult the spiritual world and wait for an answer. Rudolf Steiner tells us:

'The moment of waking should be sacred for the modern man. He should feel: I come from the spiritual world and enter the physical; all that is good, all that makes me capable of being a reasonable man, I have experienced between falling asleep and waking up, through intercourse with the spiritual world, through intercourse with the dead I have known in life and who have died before me — in short, through intercourse with those who are no longer in a physical body. I experience it when I am with them in the purely spiritual world. From this experience I ought to draw the fundamental mood of sacred regard for the moment of waking; this fundamental feeling will then make it possible for me throughout the day to say in one case "Here I am helped by a spiritual impulse" and in another case "Here I receive no help; this must not be decided before to-morrow.'

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Thus do we make the first Initiatory steps towards a holistic view of life - a view that sees material and spiritual as complementary aspects of the same truth.

'The time has come when man must receive the light of the spirit through a free, inner deed. All the confusion and want of clarity in which men are living to-day come from the fact that men must receive something that they do not yet want to receive: an entirely new understanding of things.'

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⁵ <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19190612p01.html#sthash.5jJTX>

⁶ Ibid

This is how we shall make the greatest decision we can make in our time. The decision to become fully conscious in order to receive the light of the spirit and not to pass by the Guardian of the threshold unconsciously.

The beast of the apocalypse is really that impulse that would make the human being into an animal, into a being with no spirit - a body with a materialised soul. He paves the way for another being, a being which has been, until now, bound, but which will be loosened from his bindings in the future. According to the Apocalypse this being is called 'Satan'. In Anthroposophy we call him Sorath.

The beast or Ahriman, has to a certain extent been overcome through a spiritual view of the world provided by Anthroposophy, but the other being, one can see, since 1933, is becoming more and more unbound. What will come to us from his influence will result in the most horrible frightful diseases of the soul, but also of the physical body - this Rudolf Steiner calls the leprosy of Materialism. We see evidence of the beginning of this in the proliferation of paedophilia in both religious and non-religious institutions where children are taught.⁷

We are empowered however, and protected through our ability to consciously see that we are crossing the threshold. An acknowledgement of the importance of the complementary colour and the after image as something spiritual must become more widely spread. This is the beginning - what initiates an understanding of all that will come after it.⁸

I want to draw your consciousness to three dates⁹:

2016, 2017, 2018

2016 is the year of Political Change. The decisions made this year will affect 2017. The vote to leave the EU. The American and Australian elections, these will affect the following year.

⁷<http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA346/English/RSP1998/19240914v01.html>

⁸ See Author's workshops at www.adrianakoulias.com lectures

⁹ Added since giving these lectures.

2017 is the year of Economic upheaval due to decisions made in 2016. It is the pivotal year. The effects of this year will be seen in 2018.

2018 is the year of Military intervention, Politically induced economic upheaval will see its effects in military intervention in 2018. 2018 will be the culmination of what began in 2016.

But then if one explores these as hundred year reflections of 1916, 17 and 18 one begins to see a bigger picture.

In future lectures we will explore Ahriman's incarnation in relation to consciousness.