

Judith von Halle

Interview by Michel Gastkemper

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Michel Gastkemper: This interview is for *Motief*, the monthly magazine of the Dutch Anthroposophical Society. It's circulation is about 4,000 copies. Nothing has appeared in the magazine about you, Judith von Halle, which is strange but true.

Judith von Halle: Yes, that's true. But it's mostly because of me, at least as far as interviews are concerned.

MG: In readers' letters your name has been mentioned and commented upon. That is a remarkable situation. With today's interview, I hope to make you better known to our readers. I hope you are willing to tell us something about yourself. Naturally I have some questions, but I will ask them during the discussion. Today you told us something about your youth, but I don't know how much of it is for public consumption. Therefore, for this interview can you say something about yourself, how you grew up, what you experienced. A difficult question of course.

JvH: I already talked about that [this morning in a lecture about Faith and Knowledge]. I grew up in a non-anthroposophical family and I was told nothing about anthroposophy. I had a very active inner life. As long ago as I can remember I had a relationship to what we call the spiritual world. "Spiritual world" can mean anything, for one can understand

almost anything by it. In my case it was not in a confessional religious way, but an experience a person can have with super-sensible worlds, and that's something that I already experienced strongly as a child. Therefore, I asked myself very early about the world and about human beings in that context. I also wondered why so few people discussed the reality of the spiritual world. That was an important question for me as a child: Why is it a taboo?

And until I was 25 years old I found no one with whom I could exchange ideas about it. That's why my encounter with Rudolf Steiner was so important for me and decisive for my path in life, because there I found assertions about things that I had experienced myself. It was like being reborn, and I was thankful to find out that there was a Society that concerned itself with these things. There is not only *one* who was bold enough to speak about them, but *many* people who come together to cultivate what played no external role during my childhood.

M G: But the encounter was a book?

JvH: Yes, of course. I met Rudolf Steiner through his writing.

M G: That is different from a direct acquaintance through other people.

JvH: Yes, I read something that I had experienced myself. And therefore it was clear that Rudolf Steiner was the right one for me from then on. It was a direct confirmation of my own experiences. Of course what Rudolf Steiner had discovered went much further. But I found again what I had experienced in his work. Therefore I knew: this is where I want to go.

I am an architect and I still work in my profession, but my main activity is now Anthroposophy. It was only later that I dared to report on my inner experiences. And the stigmata and the related experiences, that is something else. But the main thing, what I told you about this morning, namely the spiritual research, that has nothing to do with the stigmata. I have not become a different person because of the stigmata, but what has come about through this event are factual perceptions of events which have occurred historically, like in a chronicle. That was new, and had special meaning for me, because these perceptions of historical events during the beginning of the Christian era [*Zeitenwende*] provided the impulse to spiritual-scientifically investigate the connections behind these historical facts. You will be doing me a great favor if you remember that. Because people often see "only" the stigmata and the perceptions during the Christian era change, but not my spiritual scientific work and task. Do you understand what I mean? I will clarify it once more:

I am often criticized—it is the main criticism—that my lectures and books only contain the description of the perceptions, of unreflected upon visions. But that is not the case. The work of investigating the spiritual world, *that* is my real activity, and it was also the case *before* the stigmatization. Together with the stigmata really came experience of the events

in the life of Christ and its historical circumstances, but perceptions of concrete historical situations from other times have also been possible for me since then, such as from the time of the Templars or events from other times and their circumstances. That was an amazing experience. However, what was important was that based on these historical events it was possible for me to spiritually investigate, that is to find out by means of spiritual science why just these historical events happened and their esoteric meaning in the overall cosmic plan. And it should be clear to every anthroposophist that such things cannot be found out through mere perception, but only by working for knowledge of them. And that is the kind of work, namely spiritual research, which I also did previously. It is very important that this be understood, because the same error in judgment of my spiritual activity is repeated again and again in public, at least by those people who judge without having been correctly informed about my work by reading my books. Therefore in every introduction to my [Christological] books I write about this – but it is unfortunately often ignored.

MG: You wrote that you have had Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition for ten years.

JvH: Yes, and that I followed a path of training of course. And it has not been only since ten years ago, together with the stigmata. Rather everything I do depends upon this path of knowledge which has lived in me for a long time. I did not begin to occupy myself with Anthroposophy because of the stigmatization. To believe that would be a mistake.

MG: And what is your research method? How does it work in practice? How does one go about it?

JvH: The question is kind of amusing, pardon me, because I can't give a satisfactory answer. How is one to go about it is left to the freedom of each individual. Rudolf Steiner gave inexhaustible indications about how to prepare for spiritual research and which steps can be taken on the path of knowledge, and in part must be taken. I could mention certain exercises in preparation for spiritual research. But one cannot really describe the moment of knowledge, the pure thinking and knowing, which cannot be described with intellectual concepts. If we could, there would be no need for super-sensible thinking. Then we could master everything necessary with everyday thinking. Rudolf Steiner, by the way, also didn't describe the moment in which he achieved super-sensible knowledge. You will nowhere find a description by him of what was done by his I at the last moment and what processes were necessarily accomplished by spiritual beings beyond the threshold in order for him to reveal the mystery of the two Jesus boys, for example. This knowledge process beyond the threshold could only really be made comprehensible to someone who also practices this spiritual activity, that is, who has himself experienced the "chemical", occult processes involved; but then no description would be necessary, because someone who does it would already know.

An indication of what happens in this respect on a higher plane can be found in Rudolf Steiner's Class lessons for the members of the Free University for Spiritual Science, especially what he says at the beginning of the 11th lesson.

I can only say here that spiritual research begins with a concentration exercise, one can call it meditation. That is self-evident. So, it begins with a concentration exercise, but accompanied with the focus on a particular problematic, which I would like to pursue. The alpha and omega is that personal interest in the subject must remain completely in the background, although that may sound strange. That's why spiritual research is so difficult, because first freedom from personal interest must be achieved. In another context Rudolf Steiner speaks of an "empty consciousness". That means I must first try to eliminate everyday affairs (the telephone, the cellphone, thinking about what I still have to do, at such and such a time this or that person is coming). All that must be pushed out. This is seldom possible for me, because I have such a busy agenda, so I mostly do this work at night, when I'm not sleeping of course. That is what must be done as the basic condition for what is called spiritual research, and then one can only hope to find certain answers from the other side of the threshold once one stands directly within spiritual activity. When one goes from thinking about spiritual activity to actually doing it.

It is possible in various situations: you give a lecture, you organize a seminar and someone asks a question. It's possible that you intuitively give a lightning quick answer because you're so immersed in the higher spiritual being of the other person and at the same time in the objective facts of the case in question, that the possibility arises that the answer comes like a bolt of lightning into the higher consciousness, something otherwise only possible when you become free of the personal through meditation. You have a clear vision of what *is*. A fantastic experience because it's like passing through the eye of a needle as a tiny point and recognizing how the entire history of mankind is lined up like beads on a thread, how one part is associated with the others in a higher order. Everything becomes visible, like through an eyepiece, all at once. Then you must make a great effort to *retain* what you have discovered and put it into *concepts*, into words – irrespective of whether it was obtained by meditative efforts or lightning quick intuition.

Necessarily much is lost in this way, so that what you have perceived and grasped in a higher sense is no longer exactly what it had been as living fact when you must speak about it. Today it is different only with mantras. In the future it will change more and more, so that the words we speak will correspond more to what we want to express of spiritual truth. It's a painful process. Finding the right language, the right formulation, is very difficult, but it must be done, or you can't bear witness to the spiritual world.

MG: I can well understand that. And how can you control or feel that it's possible?

JvH: Control what has been perceived or recognized? Naturally in a certain sense that is possible, *must* be possible, because before I write something in a book I must be certain that what I write corresponds as nearly as possible to the truth. It's like in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* (You know, Goethe's story?) when the spirits he called can no longer be sent back. He cannot call back what had been set free; therefore what one says or writes must be sustained, not only before people, but also before the divine cosmic judge. And this

earnestness is of course known to the person doing this work. When I write something of purely spiritual context, finding the right concept is terribly important. I try to do the best I responsibly can.

Firstly, one must review one's own perception, imagination or inspiration, of spiritual relationships. How does what has been perceived relate to objective reality? There are various methods or various points involved. I could name the example which I named in the foreword to my series *Beiträge zum Verständnis des Christus- Ereignisses [Essays for Understanding of the Christ Event]*. If, for example, I wish to say something about the world of the elementals, it is not enough that I enter the elementary world with my consciousness, but if I want to say something about the elementary kingdom, then I must also – after I have perceived in that sphere – elevate myself over this sphere with my purely spiritual thinking. That means that I must have at least reached the stage of Imagination in order to be able to speak correctly about the elementary world. Otherwise one could only describe the perceptions, but that would not be knowledge. Perceiving takes place within the respective sphere, for example, the elementary kingdom, and you must enter into it if you want to meet the elementary kingdom. But *knowledge* must be attained in one of the overlying spheres. This must be tested, for otherwise one doesn't achieve knowledge, but only subjective impressions or intellectual approximations, opinions, judgments or even illusions about the facts.

Misunderstandings can be observed especially concerning the subject of the elemental beings: Imagine that I am "conversing" with an elemental being. (I must clarify that such "conversations" do not take place like other people's, but my conversations with elemental beings take place in a different way.) But let us imagine that an elemental being, a water-spirit for instance, gives me information about the occult relationship between Judas and Christ, or about another profound, spiritual mystery, which in principle pertains to the higher development of man, that is, to the consciousness of man about his higher I. Then it must be clear to me that this elemental being can only describe such things from its point of view. This means that the elemental's information is not necessarily true just because it comes from a spiritual being. For the elemental being has no human I! Thus it can make no truthful statements about the I-mystery. The elemental being can only describe the effect of our deeds on its own world. That can have great value for man. But the elemental being cannot create a connection in its consciousness about the effects of our I-deeds on his sphere of life. Man must do that himself. But he should not then confuse his own conclusions with the elemental's words.

MG: Do the angels know everything?

JVH: (laughs) That depends on which angel you ask. There are luciferic and ahrimanic angels. It is most interesting to listen to these beings and what they know. But if we now stick with the *good* angels, then I would say: the angels know really everything in *relation to mankind*. But when we look further up, leaving the human perspective, then the angels also have a certain "position", as well as a task within the spiritual world. They may have

just as much "knowing" as the next higher hierarchy, in so far as they have insight into the wisdom of spirits and can affirm this wisdom by their I, but at present they can only work at a lower level than the higher hierarchies, because they are also evolving, so that the areas the higher hierarchies cover are not in their field of vision. It means that the angel has a certain task (which, from the human perspective, is so elevated that people often confuse their angels with God) namely to occupy himself with the individuality of one person, whereas the higher ranking hierarchy is there for groups of people and "knows" correspondingly more. There are folk-spirits and so forth and therefore "perspective sections" of knowing. Nevertheless, they live directly within the spiritual reality, so therefore naturally know everything, if you wish.

If a person is consciously in the spiritual world, he also knows "everything", every one of us does, every night. It is only a question of whether we can retain it in our consciousness. If we take an interest in the thoughts of the spiritual beings, we are all wise – just as the Angels take an understanding interest in the cosmic thoughts of the Kyriotetes or other spirits. We know exactly as much as the highest hierarchies at the moment we are completely in the spiritual world with our I. But to be really wise on his own, like a god, an angel-hierarchy, that is to bring forth wisdom, that is something else, which human beings must still work on, just as the angels had to work on it. At present man participates passively in the wisdom of others, of higher beings, in sleep, and is wise through them. But he must become wise through a gradual awakening of consciousness in the spiritual world. He can orient himself on the angels for this development.

MG: And how much do you occupy yourself with theological subjects, Christology themes? And why?

JvH: Because that can supply the answer to all our problems (laughs), and because, if we understand that something was introduced into humanity, beyond religious conviction, and something changed in humanity, even physically, namely the Christ event (as a non-confessional fact). When we begin to understand that, then we have grounds to configure the world differently. And I believe that the world is in need of that, and I believe that is the central issue, what the human being really is: the image of whom we call "Christ", the true I, so to speak. Therefore, as Paul said: "Not I (the lower one), but Christ in me." When I have learned to discover this, I have understood what Christ is. That sounds easy, but self-knowledge is very difficult. My opinion is: We don't need to be always talking about Christ, to have his name on our tongue from morning to night. But the *activity* that we can undertake by being aware that the Mystery of Golgotha has occurred as a spiritual-psychical-physical factum for change, and if we grasp this "gift", this activity, then things in the world can be corrected. The source interests me. Where does it come from? Why is the human being as such responsible? Why is it nonsense when DER SPIEGEL quotes a leading scientist who claims: We are only a system, a chance lottery of genes? If that were true and we were consistent in our judgments, then our entire administration of justice would be completely superfluous, because I can't help it if I act immorally, for it's my genes that guide me. If we all thought that way and acted that way, the world would

have been destroyed long ago. Luckily it's not the case. But unfortunately we can observe tendencies at present, which will become even stronger in the future, which want to have people believe this nonsense. With my work I wish to oppose this tendency. A source for moral activity exists. And man can find this source within himself, he senses a responsibility, a conscience, that calls for him to think and to act morally. Conscience is connected to this source. And if we use it we are better able to act morally. This is of great importance for our spiritual training. Spiritual training is not for our own benefit, but for others to benefit through us.

MG: And what is the physical effectiveness of Christ?

JvH: That is beginning (at least potentially) to have the effect that people are better able to hear each other, to perceive, so that they can really understand in a new way. This progress, which goes back to the development of the consciousness soul, is observable in the physical. The body is transformed by spiritual consciousness. This is most visible in the "oldest" of our organs, namely the brain. I am sure that if it were possible to place a contemporary person in a scanner and another person with the physical constitution of 1,000 or 2,000 years ago, we would observe that different areas of these two people's brains would be active when they think. Even the intellect we need in order to understand anthroposophical thoughts, higher thoughts – for that is the first step on the path to a thinking which someday will not need the brain. Present day man has to a much greater extent the capacity to understand certain connections about the world than earlier people. But we must use it in order to progress, not get stuck in pure intellectualism. But the capacity to jump from this comprehension thinking to a higher thinking would not have been possible, not even physically, for earlier humans. That is a consequence of the Christ deed. And I am convinced that one day researchers investigating the human brain will find that people who practice higher thinking do not use the decaying brain. It will be measurable. This means that we will be more able to think super-sensible thoughts the more our sensory thinking apparatus declines.

There are many, many examples of the effect of Christ on the physical. Previously I mentioned the change in the human procreation process. Man was not always physically as he is now. And in the future procreation will take place in a completely different way from today. The Mystery of Golgotha had the effect that man can become free from dependence on his body, and that he can not only be master of his soul, but also of its instrument, the physical body. And when one day, slowly, slowly, he accomplishes this, then he can also lay aside the physical body.

Anthroposophists know that this will be necessary at the latest when we appear again as human beings on the so-called Jupiter [future incarnation of the earth], for then there will be no mineral, no material earth. Then we will have to have a new instrument which takes over the functions of this physical material body, an instrument which, although *physical*,

is *not material*. We will cultivate, and have already begun to do so, what Rudolf Steiner called the "phantom" of the physical body, which Paul also describes in the first letter to the Corinthians [1 Corinthians 15,42f].

There is another example of the effect of Christ on the physical. In an exciting work by the physicist Peter Gschwind [*Die Ich-Struktur der Materie*, Verlag am Goetheanum], this physicist investigated matter and came to the conclusion that the physical substances have taken on a different chemical substantiation since the time of Christ. This is a highly respected book. Very few can exactly reproduce these results, but this work is also respected and taken seriously outside of anthroposophical circles. It describes scientific evidence of the alteration of the earth's structure since the event of Golgotha. And one can conclude that this also applies to human beings, for the earth is the field for the evolution of man to a higher spiritual being.

We say in anthroposophy that the earth is already in decline, sclerotic. In fact that is the case. Every natural scientist who does research in this field can confirm that the earth's regeneration processes are in decline, just as the sun's energy is being consumed and that the earth at some point in time will cease to exist as we think to know it or experience it today. And what the Mystery of Golgotha achieved was that a seed was planted which can transform matter. Not something that makes matter disappear, but a seed for something super-substantial, which is, however, very close to the border of the sub-substantial. We call this the etheric. And this etheric is spiritual, which means immortal life. The earth will, in the far distant future, consist of this "material", and the occultist calls this future earth "Jupiter".

MG: That is already an answer to my next question. How important is caring for the physical body?

JvH: Immensely important. Because the physical body is our instrument for achieving higher knowledge. It is not only important for the spirit, but in a certain sense for the upkeep of the material body itself, because we can only achieve the processes of maturity and education and all development during life on earth. And if I don't maintain this body as an instrument, then I can never acquire this spiritual knowledge. This doesn't mean that one cannot acquire higher knowledge if he is ill with cancer or has a broken leg, if the physical body is injured. But that I must contribute to the upkeep, to the etheric vitalization of my body for the protection and preservation of life, because it is the precious field of my development. And I must take care to create a body for myself which my I can inhabit in the future, when the material earth and the material bodies fall further into decline.

MG: I would like to ask something about relations between people. You spoke about difficulties between anthroposophists, because sometimes things are taken too personally. Well, that's human reality, but there is the individual personal level, and the social, the

community level. How can they be held in balance? It is difficult because people always apply what they mean and think to judgments. But it is disturbing for the community. What can the community do so that what happens is not so extreme?

JvH: I think we must consider the I-force of man for this, because each can only make his own contribution. I cannot permit another to do this or that for me; or, when I speak I expect you to be tolerant of me, and I must act accordingly to you. In the *Our Father* this is clearly stated: Forgive *us* our trespasses as *we* forgive those who trespass against us. So I expect from others what I myself do. The individual must try to do this, and the only thing that works, in my experience, is to withhold my own judgment and observe what exists, what is there. I can be aggravated because there's a tree out there in the garden. I say: Why is it there? I don't want it to be there. But my personal attitude towards the tree does not change the fact that it is there. Or I say it has no right to be there. Then the tree says to me: I couldn't care less about what you think. It is a plain fact that I am here. And this fact is independent of your opinion and of your attitude.

I mean to say that we must strive to deal with *reality* and that we leave it as soon as a personal opinion occurs and this personal opinion is confused with reality or even is taken to be based on spiritual-scientific knowledge. If our only objective is to insist on our personal opinion, we cause an escalation, but are not enhancing the community's knowledge.

Unfortunately children seem to achieve this better than anthroposophists. Children at least look each other in the eye when they argue, also bring their conflicts directly to the persons involved. I had to experience that not even this is still possible "with us", – a direct encounter, a conversation for knowledge, not even a perception of the other person is any longer possible. Encounters are avoided in order not to feel unsure of one's dearly beloved opinion.

MG: What can a person do when he enters a community where old problems appear that have not been resolved? What must one do?

JvH: You must first decide what your relationship is as an individual to the community you've entered. There are two possibilities: Either I realize that I have a karmic relationship to this group, so that the problematic is also *mine*. You'll notice that at some point. Or you say to yourself: Although I am interested in anthroposophy, I am aware that biographically I have nothing to do with this group which pretends to practice anthroposophy. These are two different starting points, and the first person will react differently than the second one. If my starting point is the first one, it makes the situation difficult, because it will be harder for me to achieve an objective position if I am karmically involved. If you find yourself in such a karmic group in which much has not been resolved, I would recommend that you work together on a task which motivates all equally and thereby unites. In our case the unifying element is called *Anthroposophy*. I assume that we all agree on the essential element, for we all want to advance Anthroposophy in the world. That is the most beautiful unifying element we can think of. And if we have this

goal in mind we will soon realize that it would really be a pity to waste time bickering about words or differences of opinion, or to long-windedly "prove" to the other that he falsely interprets some Gospel paragraph or Rudolf Steiner's words. That only prevents us from doing what is essential. And we also quickly realize that the One, the Grand is only achievable when *many* people contribute something, and in their own individual way. Otherwise the end cannot be achieved, only unilateral, fragmentary parts.

When you realize that you have a karmic relationship to that group of people, which is enmeshed in a grave karmic problem, then you should first find out to what extent you can see things objectively or how deeply you yourself are enmeshed and must admit: in reality I don't *want* to reach an agreement. That must be decided in peaceful moments. Because today it is not a question of *being able*, but of *wanting*. All by myself and not together with others, I must examine my motives and which causes are present. I myself am responsible. I cannot delegate it to others. If I want to render a useful, beneficial contribution to the community, I must first bestir myself to self-knowledge, I must in complete honesty examine my motives.

If someone feels: I am really only interested in Anthroposophy and have no connection to the karmic relationships within the anthroposophical community, then perhaps the best help he can give is to support the community to re-focus its work on what is essential, namely to place Anthroposophy again in the center of its activities. That would be really wonderful if we could finally begin to practice Anthroposophy instead of injuring the "Being" Anthroposophy with all our personal disagreements.

MG: And what will you do during the next ten years?

JvH: Hopefully learn more things. (laughs)

MG: You are the object of a controversy.

JvH: Yes, but that is only indirectly my problem. For it has often been shown that it isn't about my person at all. Most of my critics do not know me personally, have never seen or heard me, and many admit that it is not necessary for them to read my writings in order to judge me.

MG: How do you handle that?

JvH: With patience. This is an area where I learned a lot. It is very interesting to observe oneself in this situation. At first one is shocked and hurt and tries to justify oneself. Then comes a phase in which one realizes: that has nothing to do with you personally, because the people don't even know you. Therefore something else must be the cause. Those strong emotions let loose in many people are not about you as a person, but perhaps much more about what you say or what you are engaged in. Then comes the next phase. You have hope that by means of an exchange between people at the level of healthy human understanding the problems can be resolved. Because at first you think that it's a

question of knowledge or differences of opinion. Then you realize that mostly that's not the cause of the emotions. Because such a conversation is refused. Someone who is really interested in clarification would not refuse. One learns at this point that there are people who say: I do not *want* to exchange views. You were wrong from the beginning, so I do not need to converse with you. This is the second phase where one is disappointed that we cannot advance objectively. Then comes the third phase, which I am in now; I don't know how many more there will be. But I have learned to understand that those people who have decided not to exchange views also abandon their own freedom. I must pass through this disappointment.

The third phase is: try to counter the untrue with the true in the areas where it is necessary, but otherwise don't keep yourself back with controversies, for then what the opposing powers intend would happen, that nothing constructive, nothing enlivening can happen. The beneficial and calming knowledge in the form of a loving call comes from the spiritual world. Always examine yourself, and examine the reproaches against you. But don't forget to do your work! And that I do. For in the end what Paul said is valid:

"It is of no importance to me if I am judged by you or by any human court. Nor do I judge myself...rather it is the Lord who judges me."

This is how I offer my work in the world, in that I am responsible before God. My work is available to everyone. If you accept it, fine. If not, also fine.

MG: With whom do you wish to communicate?

JvH: With as many people as possible. I am not afraid of an exchange of views. The reason I have never given interviews is simply that too much "hype" is made of my person, and I don't want to encourage that through interviews, because my real cause is the anthroposophical work and the themes I write about in my books. And I know that the interviewer is unfortunately least interested in the content of my books and more in my apparently sensational destiny. And that is just what my critics accuse me of. It has been said: Judith von Halle should not do any anthroposophical work because due to her stigmata she is not free. My concerns are the themes I write about in my books, for example *The Templars* and *Descent into the Depths of the Earth* or whatever they are called, and none of them has anything to do with Judith von Halle personally. That is not my goal. On the contrary, previously I had a quiet, comfortable life, and for personal happiness one can wish for something different than such a destiny and the people's agitation about this destiny, which I have had to live with during the past ten years. But I like communicating with people, I have never withdrawn from a talk when the person involved had an honest question. It's a great asset getting to know people, each person is wonderful in his way, with his own biographical experiences. Truly amazing things can be experienced and learned; one becomes humble.

MG: How do you endure it?

JvH: I have the support of firm roots, and that is the spiritual world. My childhood was also not easy. But it was finally good to have lived through such a childhood, because I have put on a small protective armor for what I had to go through in later years, namely in the Anthroposophical Society. Because of the firm roots, which are in the spiritual world, I have never been completely thrown off track so that I was in a desperate situation in which I would have to say: I can't go any farther. In the low points in life it's a question of if we can reflect upon the light which shines beyond this life.

MG: Can you name your themes once more?

JvH: Well, the themes sometimes come in the moment when one looks into the spiritual world and encounters something which wants to be heard in today's world. One must only listen to it. Or you look at the earthly world and want to investigate the causes of certain circumstances. That is how the book about the Templars came about, because it was the six-hundred year jubilee and I began to occupy myself with the spiritual circumstances for the abolishment of the Templars and their continuous defamation.

A theme that I consider to be extremely important today is that of the spiritual opposing forces. They work so intensively in the world because they enter *in* the individuals. Here it is again a question of self-knowledge if we want to do something against the prevalence of these forces in the world. So I wrote a book about the earth's strata, which relates to this subject.

But my underlying concern – this is evident in my work – is the *Christ Mystery*, for I live in the certainty that the source of our salvation lies in knowledge of the Christ Mystery. One can comprehend this fact by thinking alone. You don't have to be an initiate to see that it is the case. One must, however, have the will to deal with this Mystery with truly heartfelt strength.

MG: Which people do you work together with?

JvH: I am related innerly with many different people and experience immense support from them on my personal path as well as in the impersonal field of spiritual work. One can say that as a rule destiny places the people on your side with whom something can be achieved for the progress of the Christ impulse in the world. One doesn't always choose these people – who live in different places – with one's everyday consciousness. For example ten years ago I could never have imagined that I would someday live in Dornach, a big city kid in a small "nest". But obviously I have a strong connection to the destiny and development of the anthroposophical community in Dornach, and that's what brought me there.

MG: How did that happen?

JvH: It was destiny. In 2006 I became very ill, and the doctor's advice was that I go to the mountains for my lungs, that is, not stay in Berlin's flatland. Then a very dear man, Joseph Morel, the publisher of *Verlag für Anthroposophie*, said: Come to our house, 700 meters altitude, in upper Dornach; it's not Davos, but surely better than Berlin. I had much time there to occupy myself with spiritual things, because I couldn't do anything else. As I gradually recovered it happened that a house, a carpentry, became free and the owner said: Would you like to start an initiative there? You can rent the building. I saw this chance as a call. Unfortunately in Berlin it was no longer possible. I would have liked to do it in Berlin, but because of the prevailing circumstances I could no longer use the Rudolf Steiner Haus in this way. So there I was suddenly in Dornach. But naturally I also have an inner attachment to the place, which I distinctly felt. *Dorn Ach!* A bittersweet relation to the place ["dorn" in German means "thorn"]. So on one hand I like being in Dornach and with the people who live and work there very much, and on the other it's the lion's den. But obviously it must be so. And I had to accept that one cannot work together with every person with whom one has a karmic relation or even a spiritual task. Because the human being is free. He has his karma and his karmic possibilities. But if he embraces it is his own decision. So it has unfortunately happened that I would have liked to work together with certain people, because I am sure that the spiritual world desires it, but such cooperation has not been realized. That is perhaps the greatest pain that I feel in respect to the spiritual work today.

MG: What was the controversy in Berlin about?

JvH: That the stigmata appeared and people could not accept that the spirit can and wants to be active in the physical body. In theory philosophy thinks about all kinds of things that the spirit can do. But when it is concrete, it shows how far people take the spirit seriously. I was told by the German Society (literally): "That has nothing to do with Anthroposophy. Make it go away!"

That's the example of the tree. As is said in the first mystery drama: *A fact is present*. It's not a case of cutting down the tree, but of finding out why it's there and what one can gain through its existence for one's own development. Is it not an excellent chance for the development of our knowledge that such a phenomenon appears in the anthroposophical movement? Anthroposophy is here presumably to investigate inexplicable phenomena, so that they are one day explicable. But such investigation cannot be carried out with fear, reservations, prejudice, for that obscures the objective view. Unfortunately however, the "responsible" parties did not have this attitude. I was fired without notice from my position in the Rudolf Steiner Haus, in which I supervised the office, alongside my professional activity as an architect. But also the whole staff who stood beside me, including the Rudolf Steiner Haus's founder, Peter Tradowsky, were fired without notice and without reason. Whoever is interested in the details can read the report by the so-called "Urteilsfindungskommission" [fact-finding-commission], which was later prepared. The most regrettable thing was that the members who didn't want all this to happen were

patronized by the Vorstand members [Board members] and finally because of this the rich spiritual life in the Rudolf Steiner Haus was to a large extent extinguished. This is the case still today.

MG: So you still work as an architect. Which buildings did you build?

JvH: The latest was the conception of a living and therapy institute for patients with dementia. It was then taken over by a Dutch architect because of a change in the client's Board members. I had worked on the project for four years. Then I was shown the door because a member of the Board had a "problem" with me. My work only reached the planning stage, but for me it was the most beautiful project, because it contained an especially interesting thematic. I wrote a book, *Dementia*, dealing with what I know about dementia. Now we're working on a building for Wolfgang Gutberlet, the previous owner of TEGUT, a foodstuffs provider – a complex of three different buildings and a beautiful open space with a brook and a pond and artistic works. An office complex and a workshop for seminars where entrepreneur culture can take place.

MG: How do you combine the two activities?

JvH: Naturally my husband and I depend on colleagues. For architecture is a full-time-job, and so are the seminars and lectures in Dornach, and the anthroposophical research and writing. In short: I don't get bored. Every day balance must be weighed.

MG: Is there anything else you'd like to say?

JvH: The last word? I must think of Dr. Benediktus Hardorp, a wonderful, wise man to whom Anthroposophy has much to thank, which is not known by many. Once he answered this question with a simple but profound sentence: *Do your work well!* I find that to be a very wise answer. It doesn't come from me and I can't claim it because I don't have 80 or 90 years of experience in life. But it makes a lot of sense to me. I can recommend it.

MG: Many thanks.

Translated from the German by Frank Thomas Smith

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