

## **Foreword**

That something must pass through the "nothing" in order to be born anew, is easier to understand as an idea than to live through directly. And thus it happens that those who experience the journey into nothingness – into death – will also, in their feeling, be able to experience the situation in which Anthroposophy now finds itself, as hopeless and irreversible. The turning away from Rudolf Steiner, a trend represented ever more openly in official quarters of the Anthroposophical Society, the rapid decline in the sale of his books, not to speak of the remarkable staging of the "Christmas Conference 2002", in which totalitarian rather than Anthroposophical tendencies seem to be coming to the fore, all this could lead one to lose either one's courage or the necessary distance from events. A distance which alone is able to direct the gaze to the place whence the spirit weaves – and this perhaps more strongly than before.

One can experience how this gaze, instead of turning more clearly and concentratedly to Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy itself, wanders off – for example to the constitutional or statutory question which has been left by the Goetheanum, with so powerful effect, in a state of confusion, leading to the belief that a Society can replace what can arise only through the development of each individual. For Anthroposophy is, in the first place, nothing other than a path of knowledge; a path of knowledge, however, that each individual has to work out quite alone with and within himself.

But now we can observe a dying, a decline, a dissolution of what up till now has been accepted as the Anthro-

sophy of Rudolf Steiner, a downhill trend which seems to be alien to the nature of Anthroposophy. But there is no phenomenon which could be inimical to Anthroposophy – the individual's path of knowledge – apart from the rejection of knowledge, as a free act of the individual. Every situation, however hopeless it may seem, bears within it the possibility of being the starting-point of such a path. Indeed, the situations experienced as the most dramatic, the most difficult and the most hopeless bear within themselves the greatest potential for such a new beginning. But for this to be so, one thing is necessary: knowledge, self-knowledge, must really be sought. For one's quite personal sense of shock in face of the situation in which Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy finds itself – does it not also arise through the fact that I must ask myself: to what extent am I, too, a part of this phenomenon?

An "inward brooding" will, of course, not bring an answer to this question. No, I must first bring about a cognitive process which creates for me the possibility of observing my own activity. This cognitive process will need to be set in motion by means of objects which have, for the present, placed themselves outside me: in the "world" which I believe myself to confront as an external reality. And here I will discover that, in cognition, I meet not only "the other", but also myself. In the text that follows we will try to describe how, when such an attempt is made, the picture, and also the counter-picture, appears of what Rudolf Steiner's Anthroposophy might be in its essential nature.

Berlin, 7th March 2003