

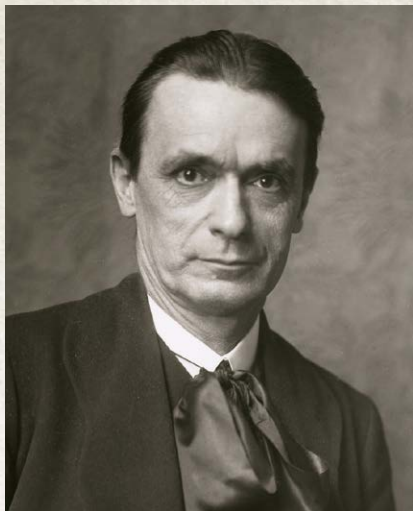
The School of Spiritual Science

What is the School of Spiritual Science?

When The Anthroposophical Society was re-founded at Christmas 1923, Rudolf Steiner outlined the new form it would take. It has the task "... of combining the greatest conceivable openness with true and genuine esotericism."¹ This aspect of openness, combined with esotericism, is expressed in the fourth Principle of the Society that begins: "The Anthroposophical Society is in no sense a secret society, but is entirely public. Anyone can become a member, without regard to social standing, religion, scientific or artistic conviction, who considers as justified the existence of an institution such as the Goetheanum in Dornach in its capacity as a School of Spiritual Science."² Rudolf Steiner's Spiritual Science, or Anthroposophy, is a research path leading to insight into aspects of reality that are concealed from our physical senses but can, nonetheless, be experienced by developing appropriate faculties.

The openness of the Society means that membership simply entails joining with others who have an *interest* in anthroposophy. Members undertake no commitment, either to accepting the validity of Steiner's work, or to becoming any more responsible for the Society's affairs than they wish to. (An introduction to the Society can be found in the booklet *The Anthroposophical Society*, available from Rudolf Steiner House.) Membership of the School of Spiritual Science, however, requires a definite commitment to anthroposophy.

1. 26th December 1923, *The Christmas Conference 1923/1924*, P.99, Anthroposophic Press NY
2. See www.goetheanum.org under The Anthroposophical Society / Founding Statute



In 1924, Rudolf Steiner spoke in London about the relationship between the Society and the School of Spiritual Science, as follows:

“In general it must be said that this esoteric school, of which the First Class exists, ought to be the heart and soul of the Anthroposophical Society. To this end it will be necessary that in the School only those friends shall become members who can make the resolve in every respect to be true representatives of anthroposophy in whatever walk of life they stand and, further, to demonstrate this in the whole way in which they conduct their life.”

*As a result of the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum the whole circle of the Anthroposophical Society has become a much wider one. Moreover, members of the Society are only obliged, so to speak, to take part in anthroposophical affairs to the extent that their circumstances may permit. They enter no obligations save perhaps those that any decent human being feels towards the world. But those who enter the inner work of the Society – from them it must be required that in their whole life they are true representatives of anthroposophy.*³

Since the School’s foundation, becoming a representative of anthroposophy means connecting with the meditative process by which Steiner derived his insights⁴. It therefore means taking a step beyond understanding anthroposophy as a body of ideas. As Steiner expressed it, “The School will lead its members on into regions of the spiritual world which cannot be revealed in ideas.”⁵

3. From an address to intending applicants to the School after a lecture on 24th August 1924 in London

4. See, for example, the book *How to Know Higher Worlds*, Rudolf Steiner Press.

5. 20th January 1924, Goetheanum News Sheet

The Michael School as a service to the world

The School of Spiritual Science is also known as the Michael School. In many of his writings and lectures, notably the *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*⁶ written during his final year on earth, Rudolf Steiner referred to the being of the Archangel Michael as the guiding spirit of our time. In a lecture of 28th July, 1924⁷ Rudolf Steiner described a 'school', led by Michael in the spiritual world during previous centuries, in which he prepared the souls of those present for the forthcoming age which he would inspire on the earth. The present School was founded by Michael, through Rudolf Steiner's agency, as the earthly embodiment of this supersensible school. Becoming a member is therefore a commitment to serving the needs of the world through Michael as the spirit of our time.

As well as the Archangel Michael, the School is also inspired by the being of Christian Rosenkreutz⁸ and follows a Rosicrucian and Christian path leading from the sense world to the world of spirit.

The arrangement of the School

All members of the School belong to the General Anthroposophical Section, within which members participate in the first of the three esoteric classes that Rudolf Steiner intended to establish. He died before he could begin the second and third classes.

In addition to the General Anthroposophical Section there are currently (2016) ten Sections representing specialized fields of work: mathematics and astronomy, medicine, natural science, agriculture, education, social sciences, performing arts, visual arts, humanities, and youth.⁹ The outcome of work within the Sections can be seen in the many initiatives founded by members of the School. Many of these initiatives face challenges today and, in many cases, their relationship to the School of Spiritual Science has become tenuous and is in need of being re-enlivened. Here lies a major challenge for members of the School in our time.

During the Christmas Conference of 1923/1924 Rudolf Steiner drew the sketch that is reproduced on the cover of this brochure. Horizontal bands above the General Anthroposophical Society indicate the three Classes of the School. These are intersected vertically by the Sections of the School to indicate that these relate to all levels of activity within the School and Society and to the world at large.

Information on the Sections can be found at
www.goetheanum.org/School-of-Spiritual-Science

6. *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts*, Rudolf Steiner Press

7. *Karmic Relationships, Volume III*, Rudolf Steiner Press

8. See, for example, *Christian Rosenkreutz The Mystery, Teaching and Mission of a Master*, Rudolf Steiner Press

9. Information on the Sections can be found at www.goetheanum.org/School-of-Spiritual-Science.



Members of the Art Section in the UK meeting in Sussex in 2015

Characteristic working methods

The General Anthroposophical Section is led by the Executive Council of the Society (Vorstand) based at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland. The Vorstand, together with the leaders of the other Sections at the Goetheanum, form a Collegium that takes collective responsibility for the School as a whole.

The relationship between School members and the leadership of the School is one of mutual trust and collegiality. Rudolf Steiner characterized this as a kind of unwritten contract based on human connections and mutual respect.

Collegiality is essential to carrying out spiritual research in our time, when few people experience the spiritual world in a fully conscious way. In any event, finding a true and complete understanding of any phenomenon necessitates sharing different insights and experiences. For this reason, joining the School entails being willing to relate to other members as colleagues.

The esoteric Lessons of the School

The fundamental esoteric substance of the School is contained in nineteen groups of mantric verses conveyed by the Archangel Michael to Rudolf Steiner. These verses form a meditative path, which leads “the spiritual in the human being to the spiritual in the universe.”¹⁰ Rudolf Steiner introduced the groups of verses in a course of nineteen esoteric Lessons given at the Goetheanum during 1924.¹¹ Working meditatively with the nineteen groups of mantric verses is fundamental to participating in the activity of the School and being able to be a representative of anthroposophy (P1.)

Class Holders, who are appointed by the Vorstand, convey the content of Steiner’s Lessons, with the verses they contain. This may be done by speaking Rudolf Steiner’s own words, or by holding ‘free renderings’ in which Holders introduce the verses in their own way. Conversations and other activities are also held, based on participants’ meditative work with the mantric verses. Being present at these events and sharing the School’s esoteric content, either by active listening or in conversation, is an essential aspect of collegueship within the School.

As well as the nineteen groups of verses given in the context of the General Anthroposophical Section, before his death Rudolf Steiner was also able to provide meditative content to support the work of the Medical and Education Sections.

Esoteric truth, by its nature, does not originate in human words and is compromised if written or printed. For practical reasons, the Lessons of the School have been published, but as far as possible members share the content by word of mouth.

Becoming a member of the School

Membership of the School is open to any member of the Anthroposophical Society who feels able to be a representative of anthroposophy and understands the nature and working practices of the School. An applicant should have been in the Society long enough to experience its activities in one form or another – generally for two or more years.

Enquiries should be addressed to a Class Holder who will meet with the prospective applicant. If they wish to proceed, the applicant will need to address a handwritten letter to The Leaders of the School at the Goetheanum. The letter will include a brief biographical note including the applicant’s relationship to anthroposophy and their reasons for wanting to join the School of Spiritual Science. When meeting with them, a Class Holder¹² will supply further details of the requirements.

10. *Anthroposophical Leading Thoughts* (No 1.) Rudolf Steiner Press

11. Altogether Rudolf Steiner gave 30 Lessons, including seven ‘Recapitulation’ lessons that work with material from the nineteen groups of verses, together with four Lessons given in various European centres, including London.

12. Contact details can be found in the Newsletter for members of the Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain.

Further reading:

The Christmas Conference 1923/1924,

(record of the conference)

Rudolf Steiner Press

The Constitution of the School of Spiritual Science

Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner Press

The Karma of Anthroposophy

Rudolf Steiner

the Anthroposophical Society and the Tasks of its members, (anthology),

Rudolf Steiner

Rudolf Steiner Press

The School of Spiritual Science, An Orientation and Introduction, Collegium of the School of Spiritual Science

Temple Lodge Publishing

Rudolf Steiner and the Founding of the New Mysteries

Sergei Prokofieff

Temple Lodge Publishing

Rudolf Steiner and the School for Spiritual Science,

The Foundation of the "First Class"

Peter Selg

Steiner Books

Why become a member of the School for Spiritual Science?

Sergei Prokofieff

Temple Lodge Publishing

The above books can be purchased from the Bookshop at Rudolf Steiner House or borrowed from the Library. See rsh.anth.org.uk for opening hours.

The School of Spiritual Science

Guidance for those wishing to become members of the School

If you wish to proceed with your application, you will need to address a handwritten letter to: The Leaders of the School of Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum. The letter will be forwarded by the Class Holder with whom you have talked about the School, together with his or her recommendation.

The letter of application should contain the following information:

1. Full name and age
2. Date of joining the General Anthroposophical Society and country of joining.
3. Your Society membership number as shown on the pink membership card.
4. A short description of the course of your life and your relationship to anthroposophy.
5. Your reasons for wanting to join the School of Spiritual Science.
6. Your knowledge and appreciation of the School as outlined in the leaflet describing its nature.
7. As a representative of anthroposophy and as a future member of the School of Spiritual Science, your inner readiness to comply with the responsibilities connected with the School.

Once you are accepted by the leadership, the Class Holder will be sent your blue membership card and will pass it on to you. The card must then be shown before the beginning of every Lesson and other School events.

Enquiries about the Anthroposophical Society and the School of Spiritual Science can be made to

The Membership Secretary
Rudolf Steiner House,
35 Park Road, NW1 6XT
Tel 020 7723 4400

Information about the School can also be found online at
www.goetheanum.org