

📖 Topic Page: [Steiner, Rudolf \(1861 - 1925\)](#)

Definition: **Steiner, Rudolf** from *The Columbia Encyclopedia*

(rō'dôlf shtĭn'Ər), 1861–1925, German occultist and social philosopher. He was a leader in the founding of the German Theosophic Association (see theosophy). In time he abandoned theosophy and developed a distinctive philosophy which he called anthroposophy; this philosophy attempts to explain the world in terms of man's spiritual nature, or thinking independent of the senses. Translations of his works include *Investigations in Occultism* (1920) and *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* (1922). He also wrote many works on Goethe.

See his autobiography (rev. tr. 1951, repr. 1970).

Summary Article: **Steiner, Rudolf (1861-1925)**

From *Encyclopedia of Reincarnation & Karma*

In 1904 **Annie Besant** made the German born Steiner the head of "The Esoteric Society" for Germany and Austria, which was originally created in 1888 by **Helena P. Blavatsky**, independent of the Theosophical Society. In that same year Steiner also began to build his own esoteric society which had a more Egypto-Hermetic-Masonic Rosicrucian flavor than the more theosophically oriented Esoteric Society. In fact, what caused Steiner to break with **Theosophy** in 1907 was the latter's increasing drift into Eastern mysticism, which finally culminated in the proclaiming of Krishnamurti, as not only the reincarnation of the Hindu god Krishna and Christ but as the coming world Messiah. For Steiner there was no need for a new messiah because **Jesus** of Nazareth was the messiah to end all messiahs. In this regard Steiner rejected the Theosophical view that Jesus was just one of many great world teachers. Steiner believed that the spilled etherized blood of the Christ essence that took possession of Jesus and the resurrection of the etheric body of Christ Jesus had been slowly working to spiritually transform this world for the past 2000 years. The subordination of Eastern religions to esoteric Christianity can be seen in Steiner's belief that in the Gospel of **Luke** the angel that heralded the birth of Christ to the shepherds was the Buddha.

By 1914 Steiner's own esoteric society gave way to his new school which he called Anthroposophy (Wisdom of Man). In the mean time, Steiner was also involved with the occult group *Mysteria Mystica Maeterna*, an autonomous national section of the *Ordo Templi Orientis*, founded in 1896, and he also was involved with the closely related Order of the Illuminati.

Steiner claimed to be able to access the *akashic records* from which he learned about his own past lives and the true history of humanity. According to these records, human kind originally lived free of a material plane of existence, but in time fell into it and was trapped in what is the round of birth and death and it is freedom from this entrapment that the soul now seeks. To accomplish this freedom the soul must pass and evolve through the various zodiacal periods or processional years. Every 2,160 solar years, the time it takes for the sun to enter a new sign of the zodiac, is one processional year. From one of these years to the next the evolution of the earth is believed to be radically different. In this way each soul is reborn under a different astrological sign for at least every twelve lives or 25,920 years, after which the zodiacal cycle repeats itself.

It is also part of the human evolutionary process that a person must be reborn at least once in each

sign, with the standard number being two times, once as a man and once as a woman. In fact, according to Anthroposophy, with some exceptions, there is a law of reincarnation that requires each soul to alternate in gender with each new life. Anthroposophy also advocates the evolution of latent spiritual awareness in order to contact a higher world composed of pure thought. It is through non-backsliding reincarnation that much of this evolution is advanced.

Steiner also believed that there were two sets of superior spiritual beings, the first worked to assist mankind in its evolutionary process, while the second were opposed to such progress. Since Jesus the Christ is considered to be one of these great supportive beings, Anthroposophy considers itself an Esoteric Christian Theosophy with a blending of Rosicrucianism, but at the same time a system of thought that puts man, not God, at the center.

Steiner seems to have further believed that the year 1899 was the dawn of a new age of light in which people would, in the not-too-distant future, begin to remember their past lives. In the meanwhile, in a series of lectures given in 1924, but not published until 1955-1966 as *Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies*, Steiner claimed that Charles Darwin was in a former life the 8th century Arab commander and conqueror of Spain, Gebel al Tarik; that the Caliph al Mamun (790-823) was reincarnated as the astronomer and mathematician Perre-Simon Laplace (1749-1827); and that the Abbasid Caliph Haroun al Raschid (764-809) reincarnated as Francis Bacon (1561-1626). In terms of his own rebirth Steiner is said to have believed that he was the reincarnation of the Medieval Christian theologian **Thomas Aquinas**.

Steiner offered a rather interesting idea about the purpose for mummification in **Egypt**. He said that the whole purpose of such elaborate preservation of the body was to prevent a new descent of the soul into a material body, which allowed the soul to remain indefinitely in the spirit world.

Steiner wrote some fifty books on reincarnation, the majority of which have been published by Anthroposophic Press. The headquarters of the Anthroposophical Society is in Switzerland.

See also **Ascended masters; Astrology and rebirth; Besant, Annie; Crowley, Aleister; Elijah; Fall of Souls; Finite or infinite number of rebirths; Kingsford, Anna Bonus; Lost continents and reincarnation; Moltke, Helmuth Graf von; Mummy, The; Population increase issue; Rebirth, non-backsliding.**

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