

## Two excerpts from Biodynamics and Social Justice: An Awakening Call Part II

### Excerpt from the Introduction

In Part I of this essay, I suggested that the biodynamic movement, and indeed the whole anthroposophical movement, needs to come to terms with the social injustices and the racial and cultural wounds that live on this continent, past and present. To avoid this challenge would be to succumb to what I called in Part I of this essay, the *sectarian tendency*—that is, the tendency to close ourselves off from the world and from the needs and perspectives of human beings in the present time.<sup>1</sup>

I also suggested that our efforts toward social change and transformation should be profoundly informed by the being of anthroposophia herself, who has so much still to offer toward the healing and transformation of our world. I also suggested that we should be extremely wary of “grafting” onto biodynamics and any other movement flowing out of the anthroposophy, the worldview, narratives or agendas currently prevailing in the social justice movement. As I said in part I:

What has been missing...in the biodynamic movement, through the working of these two tendencies (sectarianism and grafting), *is an individualized approach or response to the questions of social justice drawn from the profound social and spiritual heart of biodynamics and anthroposophy.*<sup>2</sup>

As you can see, I am seeking to strike a very delicate balance in this essay. On the one hand, I am affirming the need for profound social transformation of American and Western societies, but I am also suggesting that the narrative and strategies currently holding sway in the social justice movement, are incapable of bringing about the needed transformation. This installment, then, has two fundamental goals:

- a) to begin to lay the ground for a new narrative, a new understanding of and approach to social justice that is drawn from the deep wellsprings of anthroposophical spiritual science, and
- b) to explain why the highly influential narratives and strategies currently permeating the social justice movement are not only inadequate to the task, but are actually making the problems they are seeking to change worse.

These two tasks are intimately connected, in my mind, because to birth a new narrative and approach to social justice, I believe we need to understand, at a deep level, why the current narrative, and many of the strategies born of this narrative, simply will not bring about the changes in social life that each of us longs for so deeply. While this installment thus involves a rather strong critique of the social justice movement, I ask the reader to remember that this is all in service to the larger, positive task of contributing to the birth of a new kind of movement for social justice and social renewal on this continent.

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1 You can find Part I of this essay on my website at [www.robertkarp.net/writings/](http://www.robertkarp.net/writings/)

2 Karp, Robert. Biodynamics and Social Justice: An Awakening Call, Part I, 3

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**Excerpt from the Closing**

To bring to a close this installment, and draw many of these threads together, I would like to invite my readers to consider that it is the earth herself, the long-suffering, blood-stained, sacred landscapes of Gaia, that are calling to us, calling us to work for racial reconciliation, for true social justice and ecological renewal, and that is seeking to inspire in us the new social forms of the future that can make these possible. Building on the work of Orland Bishop,<sup>3</sup> I have come to understand this calling of the earth more deeply, by recognizing that there are sacred shrines, sacred earth temples and earth chakras, across the globe, which are in the process of being opened at this time by the initiates who have guarded them for centuries, opened so their profound gifts of wisdom can stream forth as a healing substance to the whole of humanity. I understand this to be a gradual process that began around the time of the end of Kali Yuga in 1900 AD and that will continue for many years yet to come, a process associated, in some cases, with making these ancient, sacred and indigenous traditions, available to a wider audience.

Like the gold, frankincense and myrrh that were once placed at the foot of the Christ child, the sacred earth shrines of Asia, of Africa, of the Middle East, of Eastern, Central and Western Europe, of North, Central and South America, of Australasia, of the entire earth, are gradually being opened and from them sounds a most extraordinary ringing forth of wisdom and of healing forces. When I seek to listen to this ringing in the depths of my heart, I find myself carried to the place where these tones come together, weave themselves into a whole, and ray out in harmony, the harmony of the spiritual legacy of all races, cultures and peoples. It is in and through these universal tones, that I experience the calling for the awakening of the true human being in our time, and the calling for the uniting of all human beings in service to the healing and refashioning of the earth, out of spiritual wisdom and insight. And it is these tones that I believe we can hear ringing through the Foundation Stone meditation given by Rudolf Steiner, and in a special way, perhaps, in the Monday mantra:

Oh Light Divine

Oh Christ Sun

The spirits of the elements hear it

In East, West, North, South

May Human Beings

Hear it!

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<sup>3</sup> Bishop, Orland The Seventh Shrine: Meditations on the African Spiritual Journey: From the Middle Passage to the Mountaintop (New York, Lindisfarne Books, 2017)

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When I feel my way into the place where these tones come together and ray out, I come to the experience that the cultural initiates, the culture heroes, who are guiding the opening of these sacred temples and earth chakras are all there together in that place, and that Rudolf Steiner, and the other great initiates of the West, of true Christianity, are also there, and indeed, have an honored place in this circle. In fact, it is quite clear to me that the initiates and spiritual beings who are there, representing all the races and cultures of the world, past and present, look to anthroposophy, to western spiritual science, with great hope, for they see in the spiritual substance created by the work of students of spiritual science, forces of great significance for the future of humanity, as well as forces that can help their own mystery streams go into the future.

This is the source, I would suggest, of the remarkable experience that many of us have had in North America, many of us who are both deeply devoted to anthroposophy and who have opened our hearts to the good spirits of this land. Namely, that when our work reaches a certain level of depth and intensity, we can, on special occasions, feel ourselves joined in the spirit by many deep souls of the Native Americans of this land. Yes, many deep and profound souls and spirits of Native American culture come to us, to support our work, but also to receive from this work, the forces they need to carry their own communities and spiritual gifts into the future. They come because, I believe, they have been guided by the leaders of their mystery streams, who stand in the circle of initiates I have mentioned above, to forge these collaborations, these friendships for the future, if you will, many of which are clearly also taking place among physically incarnated individuals of these two cultures.

This is also the reason, I believe, that people in other cultures from all over the world have come to embrace Waldorf education. The fact that Waldorf schools can provide a good education for their children is only a very small part of this picture. The overriding reason is that the people who start these schools have come to experience how the riches of their own culture find a home and a new, universal form of expression, through Waldorf education. You could say, they experience the Waldorf impulse as a kind of grail chalice into which the fruits of their culture can be poured and which undergo a kind of rejuvenation through their union with the Waldorf impulse, which in turn allows these individuals to bring fresh, transformative impulses into their local communities. In this process, I would suggest, they do not feel they are uniting the fruits of their culture with something European per se, but rather with something universal, that helps draw out the best of their own cultural legacy.

Likewise, when we look to the incredible growth of biodynamic agriculture in India, we find that this has not been the result of a bunch of greedy, missionary-minded, white, anthroposophists imposing their ideas, practices and financial schemes onto Indian farmers and Indian culture. This has, indeed, been the way, the methodology, of the western, biotech industry. The growth of biodynamics in India, however, has arisen entirely out of the spirit of genuine love and friendship, initially, between Peter Proctor, a white man, and various Indian farmers, scientists and agriculture professionals—cross-cultural friendships which continue to grow and ramify to this day. And what has arisen through these

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friendships is not the replication of the biodynamic farming models of Europe, but rather the rejuvenation, the strengthening and re-enlivening, of traditional Indian agriculture, which, of course, came into being under the guidance of the great initiates of Indian culture in long past ages.

The spirit of anthroposophy, in other words, is one of pure service to other people, cultures, religions, traditions, and movements. Anthroposophy, as a modern mystery stream that has come to terms with the strong, Ahrimanic influences of modern culture, contains a force that has the unique capacity to strengthen and enliven all people and cultures with whom it comes into genuine dialogue, genuine friendship. To suggest, as some have begun to do, that anthroposophy, or the Waldorf curriculum, or biodynamic agriculture, or any other of the so-called daughter movements, are somehow tainted by European or American traditions of white supremacy is an error of almost imponderable proportions. The truth is that all races, cultures and civilizations have given birth to fruits of universal significance, fruits that entirely transcend the influence of the double of those cultures. If this were not the case, the earth temples of the different cultures would be found empty at the time of their opening—there would be no healing wisdom able to stream forth from them. Anthroposophy, likewise, though midwifed into being by European culture, is universal in significance and scope, and is not tainted in the least with the colonial, missionary, white supremacist traditions of the European or American past. In fact, it carries within itself the power to heal and transform those very tendencies.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, the human beings who are seeking to embody anthroposophical ideas and impulses on the earth bring to expression a vast array of limitations, errors, flaws and weaknesses. Even Rudolf Steiner had certain understandable limitations as a human being incarnated into a particular time and place, which I will describe in an upcoming installment. These challenges within the anthroposophical community must needs be acknowledged and worked through, as I have shown throughout this essay. But all this must be distinguished from the being of anthroposophia herself, who, as I have tried to show, is a universal being of pure service, pure love, pure alchemical, rejuvenating, transformative power.

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<sup>4</sup> I understand, of course, that the question of how the pure spirit of anthroposophy can best be placed in service of the complex, multi-cultural organism of the United States is not always so straightforward to discern. This is something I will explore in future installments of this essay.