

Rudolf Steiner (1861-1925)



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Rudolf Steiner founded the Anthroposophical Society after serving as General Secretary of the Theosophical Society in Germany.

Steiner was born in Kraljevec, Upper Austria on February 27, 1861. As a fifteen-year-old youth he made the acquaintance of a herbalist who not only knew the species, families, and life of plants, but also their secret virtues. That herbalist had the ability to see the etheric form of plants and could contact the elementals associated with them. This acquaintanceship stimulated Steiner's latent psychic abilities so that later Steiner claimed that the herbalist was a messenger from a Master of the Wisdom. From the age of eighteen Steiner had what he described as "a direct and involuntary seeing of things."

At university in his late teens, Steiner studied Kant, Fichte, and Schelling. He also studied mathematics, chemistry, mineralogy, botany, and zoology. "These studies," he said, "afford a surer basis for the construction of a spiritual system of the universe than history and literature." Steiner outlined his intellectual mission as "To re-unite science and religion. To bring back God into Science and Nature into Religion."

Steiner earned the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Vienna, with a