

## **Indications given by Rudolf Steiner to Herbert Hahn for the Twelve Holy Nights**

**On December 24 the 12 Holy Nights begin. The Twelve Days of Christmas start on December 25.**

The 12 Holy Nights are symbols for the 12 forces of the soul that live in us. And so this indication is valid forever, not only for the 12 Holy Nights.

On January 1 at noon we have the Sun as close as possible to the Earth\* and that is why there are just five and half days before and five days and a half later, which is the time of the 12 Holy Nights. These nights, the darkest of the year, are closest to the Sun's Spirit, and this means that the Spiritual Sun shining from inside the Earth makes it translucent and illuminates everything from the inside, not as it is afterwards when the Sun illuminates the Earth from above, from the outside.

You have to enter these 12 Holy Nights wide awake and very conscious. It is important that on the first night (December 24), we only stay awake until one or two in the morning. On the other nights, if possible, try to go to bed regularly at the same time; it is of principal importance to live in a regular rhythm at this time, if this is not possible in the active life, one has to try to do so internally. Those who cannot be silent in the external life should seek constantly to be inwardly aware of the sanctity of the time. It is important to perform daily duties without losing sight of this realization, of the sacredness of the time, allowing nothing unhealthy, no ugly movement to enter the soul, remaining always attentive and severe on oneself in this regard.

During the experience of Christmas, with its 12 Holy Nights, we sow the seed for the next 12 months. Therefore, these 12 days are important, if for example we make mistakes on the first day, we lay a seed, which, in the first month, will germinate negatively in the blood.

We must try to pass the 12 holy days properly, according to the Law, because we need each year to work on our rebirth, and we cannot lose any year.

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**Holy Night 1**  
**December 24-25: Capricorn**  
**Related to January**

This Holy Night is the night the Christ is born in the soul and the soul asks: "Can my soul become liberated, saved, redeemed with all my weaknesses and flaws and passions?"

**Symbol:** The stable of Bethlehem in poverty and humility in which would be born the Light of the World. The voice of silence enters the soul and teaches one to affirm with joy the good that is found in ourselves and in others.

The soul seeks the mystery in a dark and trackless forest.

The Divine Spirit is born in Matter; the Alpha and Omega touches and creates life.

**First Contemplation:**

In the humble stable of our soul a child is born who will change the world. Why would our soul be such a place? The stable was the only place available for the very pregnant Mary. This was the resting place for the animals that, on the one hand, are part of nature that provides our sustenance, but on the other hand represent our astral nature that does what it wants unless it is trained. Pause and focus with reverence on your soul. Consider the gifts of feeling, thinking, and will that are at our disposal. See them lying in your soul for you to open and use as you so desire. Feel a deep thankfulness for this. What would life be if we could not feel the beauty in this world, and the beauty of the souls around us? What would life be if we could not connect ideas together to make sense of our lives? What would life be if we could not direct our behavior appropriately? At this time we can also pour out our hearts to those who cannot use these gifts fully. The intensity of our compassion fills the universe with Christmas lights.

**Holy Night 2**  
**December 25-26: Aquarius**  
**Related to February**

Night of John. The Eagle of the soul climbs high with its wings and looking back from a great height, observes its own life. *And now the man recognizes the Laws of Karma.*

**The Mystery:** Choosing the narrow and difficult path or the path that is wide and easy.

For those who are born of flesh it is hard to find the path of the spirit.

*Bhagavad Gita:* A selfish life, or a life devoted to humanity?

**Second Contemplation:**

Christmas is a spiritually elevating time, which can sometimes clash with the materialistic ideas of the modern world. We must strike the delicate balance between experiencing our spiritual self and our earthly self. We are inclined to clothe our spiritual self in our earthly understanding thereby masking its beauty and purity. Our task is to integrate the two by always acknowledging that our spiritual self underpins our earthly self.

When we look at our lives through the eyes of our spiritual self, we see that we attract all our difficulties for the express purpose of making us stronger and more objective. For it is only with objectivity that we can even see our spiritual self, our I Am. Christ came to earth to give us personal use of our I Am: that is the real Christmas gift. Do we reject it? Yes, we do. Each time we blame others for what they do to us, we reject this gift. We only ever accept this gift when we acknowledge that whatever happens to us we have attracted so that we can experience this gift more fully. If we can become the interested observer of all that takes place in our lives, we stand with Christ and share His work.

**Holy Night 3**  
**December 26-27: Pisces**  
**Related to March**

Now follow the Three Nights of the White Lily. The soul recognizes that it cannot stay above, but must come down again, because in it, it possesses too much earthly weight.

The conscious mind begins to purify the earthly body and assumes that each food is as a viaticum (provision for a journey). "I am the bread" (words of Christ Jesus). We come from the bread, we live in the path of development of the bread, and return to the bread.

**The Mystery:** Never forget the accomplishment of the distant objectives of leaving the earthly realm.

**Third Contemplation:**

When we have spiritual insight, we see that we are really part of the All. Then we are tempted to see ourselves as part of the All regardless of what we do. This choice means that we stand still on our journey and have some kind of faith that we will get there one day. However, we need also to use this spiritual insight to see the baggage that we carry; not to do so is a misuse of this spiritual ability. We don't want to look at the baggage because we think that if we look at it we won't have the strength to sift through it.

So what is the baggage? Our grudges, our lack of forgiveness, our fear, our lack of love, our opinions, our one sidedness, our jealousy, undervaluing ourselves, overvaluing ourselves, the list goes on. This baggage belongs to our lower self, our lower ego which found the strength to develop itself in all these things. Now that we have come within reach of our higher self, our I Am, which is the bread of life, we no longer have use for these things. In fact, now we need the exact opposite of these things. Leaving aside our opinions gives us the freedom to see much, much more. Loving others as they are is so much easier than deciding who to love and who not to love. While we may not experience instant gratification from forgiving others: *when we forgive we change the world.*

**Holy Night 4**  
**December 27-28: Aries**  
**Related to April**

Consciously purify the astral body (soul). The antipathies and sympathies are transformed into love, complete love, always through love. Love silences the passions and desires. The strength of Christ enlightens and fortifies us in our battles with Lucifer and Ahriman for our metamorphosis.

**The Mystery:** Personal work is to be placed in the service of all *for the good of all*. The Archangel Uriel places us before a mirror in which we see ourselves as we are.

**Fourth Contemplation:**

Even though we have three soul forces, Sentient/Feeling Soul, Mind/Thinking Soul, and Consciousness/Willing Soul, our overall soul mood is centered in our feeling activities. Our basic experience of feeling in our soul is drawn to what we like and what we dislike, sympathy and antipathy, or love and hate.

If we think about our own disposition, we can understand ourselves quite clearly if we observe what we accept and what we reject, what we are drawn to and what repels us. Some say that this is influenced by our upbringing, but essentially it can be directly linked to our karma and our experiences from past lives.

So we are attracted to everything that pleases us and we ignore everything else. This means that a large part of this world passes us by unnoticed, as if it didn't exist. This has a damaging effect on us and prevents us from engaging with our Higher Self and awaking the presence of Christ within us.

**Holy Night 5**  
**December 28-29: Taurus**  
**Related to May**

Consciously purify the body of thought, discipline thinking, concentrating on the positive, transforming the black doves of thought into white doves, because our thinking can be likened to a pigeon when it has no discipline. We have to learn to close the loft when negative or strange thoughts approach.

**The Mystery:** The Temple is purified by Christ.

**Fifth Contemplation:**

When we think we combine concepts developed in the past to make sense of the present. We do not do this in our brain. Our brain is like a mirror so that we can see the thoughts that are formed by our soul; so it is our soul that sends our thoughts to our body. This is why we can't think when we are asleep, our soul/astral being has withdrawn; but our brain is still there in the bed and scientists have all sorts of notions about why it doesn't work at night, except the right one!

So how much control do we have over these thoughts? 100%! All we need is to sharpen our concentration. If we are able to concentrate on our thinking, it and we will be transformed. We will experience thinking like a breath of inspiration, it will be freed from its predictable and tedious ways, and we will feel liberated. We will have direct control to warm up our thoughts with feeling, and bring our thinking to life with our will. This will give us a direct experience of our I Am, which isn't always easy to detect.

**Holy Night 6**  
**December 29-30: Gemini**  
**Related to June**

Now follow the Three Nights of the Sword.

Peter's night. Night of the consecration of the sword. Each of us has forged his or her own sword of discernment. Each of us must unite our spiritual will with the eternal, the immortal with the imperishable, and in this way, we shall recognize the truth.

**The Mystery:** Bring together the Son of God with the Son of Man. Unity.

**Sixth Contemplation:**

Of the three soul forces, the will is the most mysterious. In our lives, we deal with two kinds of will: one which is connected to nature and the forces of dissolution and destruction, the other which is connected to spirit and the constructive forces of the earth.

We find the earthly will in our digestive system and other bodily movements; we can't be conscious of it nor interfere with it, it has a job to do. It is the spiritual will that we can wield like a sword. The sword is directed by our moral impulses, making us an integral part of the cause and effect that creates this world. We have accepted a great responsibility by taking control of our own will. We were given this responsibility when Christ entered into the earth to give us personal possession of our I Am.

So what is morality? It is greatly misrepresented and has little to do with what we do, but rather how we do it. Our activity can only be moral when our happiness is not acquired at the expense of others. So if we are happy to have a new gift, which was made in a factory where the workers are badly treated, or we are happy to buy the cheapest food produced by animals that are badly treated and so on, we are caught up in a web of immorality. Acts of morality arise when our deeds originate from our interest in other people. So morality arises out of love, the purest, highest love and respect for others.

**Holy Night 7**  
**December 30-31: Cancer**  
**Related to July**

The serpent in the hilt of the sword. Wisdom. Occupy yourselves with elevated lectures. It is the night of the great commandment.

**The Mystery of Work:** Who rules your soul? Who is the master of our soul? Who is the author of our actions? We are free and we must strengthen the good will in us.

**Seventh Contemplation:**

As we become more aware of our three soul forces, our feeling or sentience, our thoughts or intellect, and our will or conscious awareness, we see many repetitive patterns. We realize that we are inclined to have certain feelings, think certain thoughts, and behave in a certain way. Everyone who knows us can tell us about this. Profilers study it and can predict how we respond to particular situations. This is our personality and our character. These personal inclinations have developed lifetime after lifetime. The strength of our character and the disposition of our personality can be directly related to the influence of our I Am in our soul.

[Regarding our most worthwhile activities:] It is our I Am that thinks in our soul, it is our I Am that arouses certain feelings in our soul, and it is our I Am that motivates us to behave in particular ways. If we allow this to happen unconsciously then we are no more than a puppet [of beings and forces outside of us]. We have no freedom and no understanding of the events in our life. What is more, under some circumstances, we can react unfavorably.

Every single thing that happens to us is caused by something we ourselves did in a past life. Now we meet the effect of what we caused. This could appear to be quite destructive; however, it is quite the opposite. Everything we have done was for the express purpose of becoming aware of our I Am. Our path is one of pain and sorrow as played out in the life of Jesus, "the Christed One." We follow in His footsteps for He is that great I Am who walked this earth in completeness. He shows us the way. It is our choice how we meet the consequences of our own actions; we can suffer in pain or we can experience the joy that comes with being aware that we are fulfilling our purpose.



**Holy Night 8**  
**December 31 – January 1: Leo**  
**Related to August**

The cross on the hilt of the sword. Sacrifice. The man with the *Christ Sword of Power* that cannot hurt, speaks the language of the truth. It is the night of fear and horror.

**The Mystery:** A Knight with the *Spear of the Will* and the *Sword of Knowledge* has a dog beside him, as a symbol of obedience. Behind him are death and the devil. At a certain level of knowledge, a mistake or a wrong move can quickly lead to perdition. Victory is achieved by the fullness of divinity, with a consciousness of responsibility, and an unflinching loyalty to the tasks ahead in life.

**Eighth Contemplation:**

In the eighth Holy Night, we stand on the precipice between two rounds of time [with the transition into a New Year]. There has to be a crucifixion. All that has served our growth during the past year must now be crucified, it must die. Imagine the consequences if Jesus had not been crucified?

All our precious thoughts, feelings, and actions that have brought us this far can be put to rest. As we step over the threshold into the New Year, we can raise them to a new level. When we sacrifice all that is precious in our soul, that served us throughout the year, we can put it to service for others. The depth of feeling that we experienced for spiritual truth can become compassion for the misfortune of others. Not just, "I'm sorry," but a real experience of the crushing sorrow that is felt by them.

The new thoughts that we were able to think in our soul because we understood some spiritual truth now paves the way for living Inspiration in our spirit. Even though that spiritual truth was like gold for us *we must loosen our grip on it*. We can never possess spiritual truth; it belongs to the universe. If we let it go, it will come back to us when we need it. If we hang onto it, we may not be able to find it when we need it.

The new actions that we were proud to put in place during the year must also be crucified. To hang onto them proudly is egotistical. Through our will we reveal who we really are; we allow others to know us and we can know them. To try to know others without revealing anything of ourselves is destructive for all concerned.

As we take this next step, we are reassured by the presence of Christ Jesus who took it before us.

**Holy Night 9**  
**January 1-2: Virgo**  
**Related to September**

Now follow the *Three Nights of the Crown*.

**Detachment:** Detach the intellect from its earthly and practical cares. This is the Triple Holy Night. It is when the lower self *surrenders in a desire to serve and be integrated*.

**Ninth Contemplation:**

Our personal resurrection is accompanied by a new level of objectivity. We won't take things as personally as we did before. This doesn't mean that we will meet every event in our lives with equanimity, but we will find a greater level of detachment than we have in the past.

Whenever we can be detached we know that we are responding to life through our I Am. Otherwise, we respond with our lower self, which behaves like a child in some situations. It wants its own way, which is usually *the way of least resistance*. Yet, if we do resist responding as we usually do to something that annoys us, *we feel liberated*. Try it. The next time someone annoys you, take a breath, create a space, and say to yourself: "If this was happening to someone else would I be annoyed?"

In this way, we activate our will to control our lower emotional responses. We let the words or actions of the other person wash over us and flow away into oblivion. When we do this, whatever they did loses its intensity and everyone benefits.

Furthermore, if we remember that we attract whatever happens to us then we could quickly recognize these little tests and see them as a way of strengthening our New Year resolves.

**Holy Night 10**  
**January 2-3: Libra**  
**Related to October**

It is the night that comes from the service, the greatest sacrifice. *Obey-Play*.

We learn to hear the inner voice and the signs of the divine. Something mysterious cries in us through various incarnations, its clarity is enhanced by the sacrifice and the decision.

**Tenth Contemplation:**

Do we hear our I Am calling to us? Do we strive to experience this I Am in our being, in our soul? Do we try to remember the agreement that we made with it before we incarnated? If we do, we will be undisturbed by success and failure, good and evil, joy and suffering, for we will see that these are important experiences necessary for our development.

Our I Am directs us to resolve our karma, to create harmony with all the people in our lives. Of course, we would rather keep away from some people in our lives; thinking that then our lives will be more enjoyable. We do not remove our difficulties in this way; they will be re-presented to us through other people. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit that it is easier to hate those who make our lives difficult than to love them. Hate is considered to be a strong word, but we must admit that the polar opposite of love is hate. It is better to face the truth of this word than to gloss over it and give it a nicer name.

If we know anything at all about our I Am we realize that we are challenged to serve every single person in our life, not one single person is in our life by accident. The way we serve all those who are gathered around us is to love them, *truly love them*. Every human being is sacred, every human being has the potential to become a god. Do we want to be in the company of something that is sacred? Something that is becoming a god?

**Holy Night 11**  
**January 3-4: Scorpio**  
**Related to November**

It is the eleventh night. *It is the struggle with the Guardian of the Threshold.*

We must build within us the *Mystery of the Grail Castle*. We must profess loyalty to the Almighty in Scorpio.

**Eleventh Contemplation:**

Humanity lives on the threshold of the spiritual world. Some say that we have passed over it unconsciously. This means that we wield spiritual power without knowing it. Therefore, there is an urgent call for human beings to become consciously aware that they are spiritual beings. We can only do this if we realize that our spiritual I-Being is animating us, using us just as we use any instrument in this physical world. Just as we pick up a spoon and place food in our mouth, our I Am is placing us in situations with other people that will be food for its development.

When we get this, when we actually think the thoughts associated with this, in the moments in our life when our karma is being played out, *we have an I Am experience*. We are in touch with who we really are and we observe what is before us with interest, just as we would observe our dinner plate with interest. We can see all that we like, and all that we dislike *without bias*.

This is when, through our own striving, we receive into ourselves the power of the blood of Christ, *the Holy Grail*. Our blood is the vehicle of our I Am, and when we purify our blood of its lower desires and instincts, we make it a fitting substance for our own I Am, then our blood becomes purer still so that it can become the blood of Christ. *Are we up to the task?*

**Holy Night 12**  
**January 4-5: Sagittarius**  
**Related to December**

On the twelfth night *place the crown at the foot of the Divine*. Because although we have won the crown, the struggle has been gained with help and grace; for grace comes from that source or fount in man *that human power cannot reach*. Now we manage to make *a beginning and an end* of time without space, and space out of time. *Everything is eternal and holy now*. We must use the forces of perseverance if we are to achieve the goals or aims of the hunter [the Archer], if we are to receive the good of the spiritual realm.

What we have known and received in the Twelve Holy Nights, we should take into life and thus spiritualize matter and soul. The Twelve Holy Nights are important to the life and fate of the entire year. *They may plant a seed of good will*.

It is especially important as we embark on New Year's Eve (Feast Day of St. Silvester\*). On this night, we released the spirit of the people; for now, what we think will be taken by the higher hierarchies and carried as the force of accomplishment.

\*St. Sylvester I (died Dec. 31st, 335 A.D.)

**Twelfth Contemplation:**

Now we take our final Holy Night step. These 12 steps, which we have taken each day, can become the theme for each month of the year ahead until we reach the renewal of our being at the following Christmas.

We have contemplated our inner being, and hopefully have become more conscious of all the different activities that take place moment by moment within us. We have become more aware of the way our feelings rise up and can sweep us away *if we do not intervene*. Some of our thoughts that flit through our mind might have shocked us; *they were always there, we just didn't notice them*. Our impulses to act may also have become more conscious, giving us the opportunity to assess our motives. At the very least, if we have become more aware of these three soul activities then we have experienced the highest in our being, our I Am.

Our I Am gives us poise and purpose and it changes the way we see our relationship to the world and to all the people that we encounter.

When we have those I Am experiences, *we start to see Christ within every human being*. The Cosmic Christ entered into this earth through the vehicle of Jesus *and this Spirit dwells in us*. It dwells in us primarily through every breath we take and through the food we eat; food that is grown in the earth that is now the body of Christ. As we accept the reality of this, we begin to experience His etheric presence in the life force of this earth and in our own etheric body. Now we begin to treat every person as if they were Christ. We arrest every negative thought before it forms, *because we see that we would be thinking that thought about Christ*. We are careful about all our feelings and motives because of our respect for Christ in the other person. In this way, we transform ourselves and we raise the other person up as well. As St. Paul said: "*...the glory of this mystery...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Colossians, 1:27). If we did nothing else but contemplate this mystery each day through the year ahead, we will change the world.

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\*Perihelion: This was the date of the perihelion at the time when Rudolf Steiner gave this meditation to Herbert Hahn. The earth's orbit around the sun is not a circle. The earth's orbit around the sun is slightly elliptical. Therefore, the distance between the earth and the sun varies throughout the year. Furthermore, this elliptical orbit is also moving.

At its nearest point on the ellipse that is the earth's orbit around the sun, the earth is 91,398,199 miles from the sun. This point in the earth's orbit is known as perihelion, and it occurs [on January 5 in 2020].

The earth is farthest away from the sun [on July 4, 2020], when it is 94,507,635 miles from the sun. This point in the earth's orbit is called aphelion.

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These indications by Rudolf Steiner are a rough translation by Adriana Koulias, edited & revised by John Barnwell.

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Adopted by Anthroposophy NYC, 2019.