

The Driving Force of Spiritual Powers in World History

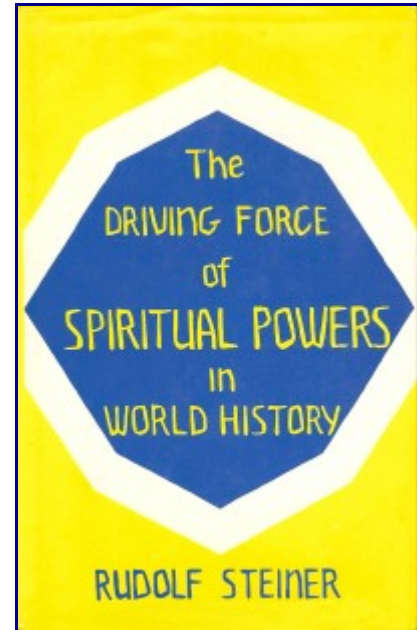
By Rudolf Steiner

Translated by Dorothy S. Osmond and Johanna Collis
GA 222

Steiner focuses here on spiritual events as causes of transformations in human consciousness as well as outer historical events. He also sheds light on a variety of other topics such as speech, experiences during sleep, and the future tasks of humanity.

Translated from shorthand reports unrevised by the lecturer. In the Complete Edition of the works of Rudolf Steiner the volume containing the original German texts of the following lectures is entitled: *Impulsierung des weltgeschichtlichen Geschehens durch geistige Mächte*. (No. 222 in the Bibliographical Survey, 1961).

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Complete Edition (ref.)

RUDOLF STEINER

THE DRIVING FORCE OF SPIRITUAL POWERS IN WORLD HISTORY

*Seven lectures given in Dornach,
11th to 23rd March, 1923*

Lectures I, II, IV, V, VI, VII, translated by Dorothy Osmond
Lecture III translated by Johanna Collis

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Publisher's Note

The following lectures were given by Rudolf Steiner to an audience familiar with the general background and terminology of his anthroposophical teaching. It should be remembered that in his autobiography, 'The Course of My Life,' he emphasises the distinction between his written works on the one hand and, on the other, reports of lectures which were given as oral communications and were not originally intended for print.

It should be borne in mind that certain premises were taken for granted when the words were spoken. 'These premises,' Rudolf Steiner writes, 'include at the very least, the anthroposophical knowledge of Man and of the Cosmos in its spiritual essence; also what may be called "anthroposophical history," told as an outcome of research into the spiritual world.'

For the benefit of readers a brief list of publications relevant to the main theme has been added at the end of this volume.

Lecture I

11th March 1923.

From our studies here you know that since the 15th century mankind has been living in the Age of Consciousness [note 1] when it is essential for any individual who wishes to keep pace with evolution to be enlightened about certain facts. Otherwise he cannot possibly find his bearings amid the conditions of social life today. His intercourse with other people and the different relationships developing in life, especially between human beings of different ages, the old with the young and the young with the old, bring him experiences that remain incomprehensible if he cannot grasp what spiritual-scientific knowledge contributes to every aspect of man's existence on this Earth.

We will study in greater detail a fact already well known to us, namely, that the four members of man's being discernible in the ordinary way — physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego — are directly connected with each other during the hours of waking life only. The physical body is closely linked with the etheric body on the one side and, on the other, the astral body and ego are separated during sleep from the former two members.

When we are looking at a human being he stands there before us in his physical body which has received its stamp from the etheric body. It is certainly correct to say this, for everything whereby one human being is revealed to another is due, not to the physical body alone but to the activity of the etheric body or body of formative forces within the physical body. It is therefore the living content of the physical and etheric bodies that reveals one human being to another on Earth. But what is determined in the depths of the ego, and is astral in the astral body, eludes outer observation and even for the individual himself passes into obscurity between the moments of going to sleep and waking.

This division of his being which happens to man at least once a day in the ordinary course is of fundamental significance for his whole life. Our senses and intelligence make it evident that from birth to death his physical body and etheric body undergo evolution.

From what comes to expression in the child, to begin with in his instinctive, imitative life and later in the life unfolding under the authority of his elders — from all this the human being evolves to a stage of greater self-dependence. Thus the different stages of growth, stages in the outer formation of the physical body, in what comes to expression in speaking, in thinking, in whatever is revealed through the physical body — although in reality it is all an expression of the life of soul — in all this a process of evolution is in evidence from birth to death.

The other evolutionary process — that of the ego and astral body between birth and death — does not become manifest in the same way. When a human being descends into life on Earth, many of the forces that were active in him in the spiritual world are still at work within him. During the stage of early growth, during the very obvious process of the child's bodily development, forces which in their full strength and true character work in pre-earthly life on the soul, through the soul and in the spirit of the human being, are still active. They are present in a weakening phase during childhood but they operate in the process of growth, in everything that develops gradually as a bodily expression of the soul. And deeply hidden in the bodily nature there are also corporeal expressions of the soul, for example the elaboration of the brain into the perfected organ of thinking, the elaboration of the vascular system underlying feeling, and so forth.

But these echoes of the forces of the pre-earthly life become progressively weaker and eventually reach their lowest ebb, the point at which, in respect of these pre-earthly forces, the human being comes to a standstill for the rest of his life. True, this lowest point is not reached until the 'twenties of earthly life; but then it is unmistakable. The soul is then affected more strongly by the forces stemming from the developed physical body; the individual is no longer subject to such an extent to the echoes of the pre-earthly life but is now more under the influence of the capacities acquired by the physical body and of what in turn works back upon the soul from

the physical body.

But if we were to observe with equal clarity the evolution of the ego and astral body we should reach definite conclusions about this process, just as in the case of the evolution of the physical and the etheric bodies from birth to death. We should say: In childhood the human being has an astral body and an ego in which changes are obvious during the years of his earthly life. We must of course also consider the changes that take place in the spirit and soul of the human being which emerge from the physical and etheric bodies during sleep. If as well as observation of a human being during his waking hours the ego and astral body could be observed from the moment of going to sleep to the moment of waking, two biographies of the individual would be available, both of equal importance in the life as a totality. Indeed the evolution taking place during the life of sleep is actually more important than that connected with the waking life for certain forces in the human being, but observation of the ego and the astral body is beyond the power of ordinary perception.

We will now consider a particularly important factor in the evolution of the ego and the astral body. This factor is due to the rôle played in human life by speaking, by speech in general — not this or that particular language.

The whole man in waking life participates in the act of speaking. The physical body participates in the vibration of the vocal chords, in the activity of the whole speech-apparatus; the etheric body also participates in the process, so too do the astral body and the ego. But by comparison the physical body and the ego do not participate to anything like the same extent in speech activity as a whole. The members essentially involved are the etheric and astral bodies.

The statement that the etheric body is more deeply involved than the physical body in the act of speaking may cause surprise. But after all, man's ordinary senses cannot perceive what goes on in the etheric body, nor does modern science tell him anything. Hence in the ordinary way he perceives only what the physical body is doing in acts of speaking, whereas the far more varied, far more strongly formative activity of the etheric body in acts of speaking — activity which then continues in the astral body — eludes sense-perception as usually understood. But if the rôle of speech is to be understood, the paramount importance of what takes place here in the etheric body and in the astral body must be realized.

Now consider this: because in speaking the main part is played by the etheric and astral bodies, speech has two sides. To begin with, the etheric body in conjunction with the physical body bring about outwardly perceptible, audible speech. But when we speak, something always streams back into our soul. We feel and live with it inwardly. In order to become aware of the content of our soul, however, the person to whom we are speaking is dependent upon the physical sounds. We, as the speaker, are inwardly united in our astral body with what we impart to our speech. But because in sleep the astral body is drawn out of our physical and etheric bodies, we carry something from our speech over with us into sleep, something of vital importance.

It is an actual fact that the element of soul we instil into our words from morning to evening continues to vibrate and pulsate from the moment of going to sleep until the moment of waking. We are unconscious of it but let me assure you that everything spoken during the day echoes on — admittedly in reverse order — during sleep. Not that the words actually sound again as they sound through our mouth during the day; it is rather the undulation of feeling in the words that resounds, the will-impulses that have flowed into them, the gaiety or sadness, the joy or pain expressed and revealed in the flow of the speech.

But these echoes during sleep are not vague or indefinite; what the soul experiences echoes in the very sequences of the sounds in that unconscious state through which a man passes in the ordinary way between going to sleep and waking.

Until the seventh year of life whatever echoes in the child's soul during sleep is to a very great extent dependent upon his human environment. The life of feeling, willing and thinking brought to expression in words by the father, mother and other people in the environment and heard by the child — all this echoes in his soul

from the time he goes to sleep until he wakes; his soul is given up to what has been laid into the words by the hearts and souls of those around him. During sleep the thoughts and will-impulses which the child experiences through the speech of older people are, however, connected much more intimately with the actual sounds.

In short, the child's whole being is given over to what he experiences from his environment. This state of things is already less pronounced in the second period of life, from the seventh to the fourteenth year, although it is still undeniably present. At puberty, however, at about the fourteenth year, something very definite begins: what echoes from speech into the sleeping soul tries by its very nature to establish relationship with the spiritual world.

It is a very remarkable process. Until the seventh year of life, during sleep too, the child will still be in full accord with whatever he has heard from those around him; to a certain extent this is also the case from his seventh to his fourteenth year, only during that period he is in closer contact with the actual soul-life of those in his environment, whereas until his seventh year he is concerned more with the external aspect of life. But after the fourteenth year, after the onset of puberty, it begins to be necessary for the soul during sleep to bring the echoes of speech into relation with Beings of the spiritual world. This is a remarkable fact. In everyday life man is not conscious of it but in sleep it becomes necessary for the life of soul to let what is spoken on Earth echo in such a way that the Archangeloi in their world may take pleasure in these echoes of speech.

It may be said with truth that it is necessary for the human being to establish relations with the Archangeloi through the components of speech which remain with him during sleep as echoes of earthly speech. The words spoken during the daytime echo in a remarkable way: the vowel-sounds are inwardly deepened, the consonants achieve the objectivity of mobile forms. This is an actual experience. And souls during sleep would feel unhappy if these echoes did not harmonize with the sounds ringing out from the other side, from the speech of the Archangeloi. There can indeed be harmony between the echoes of speech resounding in man's sleep and the speech of the Archangeloi resounding out of the astral world from every direction of the universe.

In his ego and his astral body the human being develops in such a way that from about the fourteenth year onwards, between going to sleep and waking, he has to cultivate intercourse — if I may so express it — with Angeloi and Archangeloi; during this intercourse it behoves him to establish understanding with these Beings. This is a deep secret of human life.

Now a characteristic of our epoch is that it produces more and more individuals who achieve no such understanding in the sleeping state, who take with them into sleep something from speech which actually hinders their souls from understanding the speech of the Archangeloi, and the Archangeloi find no pleasure in the echoes of speech during the sleeping life of these individuals.

The epoch has begun — one is obliged to use earthly terms in speaking of these things which it is naturally difficult to express in ordinary language — when the Beings of the spiritual world can no longer come to any real understanding with sleeping human souls, when misunderstandings keep occurring between what the Beings of the spiritual Hierarchies say and what echoes in the souls of men during the hours of sleep. Discrepancies, disharmonies creep in.

This is the aspect which in our epoch presents itself from the other side of life. A tormenting condition of misunderstanding, of a complete lack of understanding between human souls and spiritual Beings has insinuated itself into the state of sleep. And the question as to the reason for this condition must weigh heavily upon those who have knowledge today of a fact of spiritual life such as this.

Now the words which we draw from the range of our native language may, while we are learning them in childhood, develop in such a way that they apply to the physical world alone. This has been increasingly the case in the age of materialism. Words are available but these words only express something that is physical. Just consider how things were in earlier times: a human being became so intimate with the language that there were many words which, through their content, transported him into spiritual worlds. It must certainly be admitted

that true idealism has become feeble in our time, particularly in those who absorb modern intellectualistic culture.

It makes a great difference whether ideals are or are not embodied in the language used. Today we find that individuals who are supposed to be students certainly have a feeling for words which refer to external, solidly material things but that when it is a matter of rising to the level of pure thoughts reflecting the spiritual, they immediately stop thinking and the threads of their thought are broken. It is precisely in those who are considered well-educated according to modern standards that this most often happens when they are called upon to assimilate the idealistic concepts of pure thinking. The words seem to be no more than semblance. It is indeed a fact that in our days children grow up with a language whose words have no wings to carry them away from earthly conditions.

In the first phase of life, until the seventh year, the child is still able, during sleep, to experience the spiritual through the echoes of the speech emanating from his human environment. If materialism causes this environment to repudiate the spiritual, it is repudiating itself for it consists of both soul and Spirit. But during the first phase of life the human being is still able during sleep to experience the spiritual.

This continues during the second phase of life, from the seventh to the fourteenth year. But if eventually there is no longer any idealistic, spiritual significance in the words used around the young human being — as may well happen in this materialistic age when religious ideas too have lost their strong spiritual influence upon the souls of men — then, after the fourteenth year, with the onset of puberty the young person enters a phase of the life of soul which chains him during sleep to the physical. The soul is not released from the physical during sleep. The echoes of the words coerce the soul and confine it to the physical. The resonance of the mineral world vibrates from all directions into what the human being experiences between going to sleep and waking; so too does resonance of the physical content of the plant world. This brings discord into the echoes of speech; the soul cannot then elaborate what the genius of speech otherwise imparts to the language and which can bring about understanding between the human soul and the Beings of the higher Hierarchies.

And then a peculiar condition sets in. The soul experiences something but cannot express it, because it is not experienced consciously. What the soul experiences may be characterized approximately in the following way. — After the age of puberty, when the human being passes in sleep into the spiritual world, the world of the Archangeloi opens out before him; he senses it but no threads of thought pass from that world into his soul, or from his soul into that world. And on waking he comes back into the physical body having suffered this tragic deprivation.

Since the last third of the 19th century this state of things has been present for a large part of humanity. And in the unconscious, behind that of which man is conscious, there lies in many souls today something that causes them to say unconsciously to themselves on waking: We have been born into a world which does not allow us to enter rightly during sleep into spiritual existence. — Souls who experience this condition may well say: As children we have been received into a human world which has denied us spiritual reality in the words that are used. All this is astir in the feelings with which in many ways nowadays, youth faces the old. This is the spiritual aspect of the feelings manifesting through the Youth Movement.

What is the attitude of the young human being to the old today? He cannot express it because as a result of what he inherits in the course of his education, his consciousness is repressed rather than set free by those who are old. He cannot express it, but he feels it. In the dim obscurity of his life of soul he feels: As a child I have to accommodate myself to what has been handed over to me by older generations. I have to be educated by these older generations, yet they make it impossible for me to come to an understanding with the spiritual world when this is necessary. To the same extent as materialism increases in every sphere of life — in the spheres of knowledge, of art and of religion — to that extent the young will be unable to understand the old, because they confront the old with the feeling that the latter have denied them idealism in speech and the intimation in words that points to a spiritual life. The materialism of civilization is the cause of the cleavage between the young and the old. And the real source of the lack of understanding lies in the fact that the corruption of speech by

materialism brings about an unhealthy condition of the soul-life of young people during sleep.

Certain phenomena of modern culture can never be understood today if the spiritual side of life is ignored, for we are living in the epoch of consciousness and must therefore be alive to the spirit that moulds the human being and promotes his development. Understanding between youth and age will not be possible until the words in our languages again acquire the wings they have lost, the wings which raise the words out of the sphere of crass materiality into the world of conscious ideals.

In the year 1859 the people of Middle Europe were commemorating the centenary of *Schiller's* birth. In a certain sense, however, it was the very year of the death of true idealism. And what the young today see in Schiller they often disdain because what is taught them is not the true Schiller but only a superficial hotch-potch of words; it does not present what actually lived in Schiller, because the words no longer have the wings which in his days lifted men into the realm of ideals. And when Schiller is introduced to youth today with words that bear the current prosaic, philistine meanings, this is far more likely to become a burden in the soul than a liberating force.

What the soul needs cannot be restored to it in any external way nor by the nebulous, so-called idealisms which are only shams, cropping up here and there out of current materialism — maybe with good intentions but springing fundamentally from false thinking. The soul can be given what it needs only if, through genuine spiritual knowledge, vitality is restored to language and it is able once again to lead to the genius of speech.

Language as it is today does not really amount to more than a medium of understanding on the physical plane. As regards declamation and recitation we have even come to the point where the actual prose-content is considered all-important. We find that speech is being divested of everything that promotes descriptive power, rhythm, measure, melody, dramatic effect — that is to say, everything that leads it back into the realm of the soul, where the Imaginative element lifts it into the spiritual world. And so we find that in language a further concession has been made to materialism.

Language as it exists today among all civilized peoples, fetters the soul during sleep to the purely physical murmurings of the mineral world, to the rustlings of the purely physical content of the plant world, and no longer enables the clear speech of the Angeloi and the resounding trumpet-tones of the world of the Archangeloi, with their deep significance, to be audible to the soul.

From the age of puberty onwards the human being today ought to bring with him into sleep something from speech that has prepared his brain during waking hours in such a way that in his everyday life he understands the ideal content of what is expressed by the words. He ought to be able to bring with him — for the speech of the Archangeloi can be heard by his soul during the hours of sleep — something that enables his circulating blood to experience, to some degree at least, the spiritual depths of cosmic happenings. And if today he cannot acquire spiritual knowledge, if our school-education is not spiritually deepened, he brings with him instead the rumbling sounds of the physical mineral world; he also brings with him in his blood the rustling, thudding sounds of the physical part of the plant world.

As a result, for the purposes of conventional speech he is dependent upon this mineralized brain, made disharmonious by sleep, and upon the blood-system with the sounds of hissing and rustling surging through it, and thus he is confined through speech to life in the earthly sphere alone, whereas in other circumstances the words could have borne him above merely earthly experience to experience in a higher realm.

How could individuals who have received the materialistic education of today still affirm from the depths of their souls: 'Thought is my boundless realm and my winged instrument is the word?' [note 2] For men of culture today thought is by no means a 'boundless realm' but a strictly circumscribed realm, embracing only the material objects to be seen in the environment. And the word is no 'winged instrument' but an instrument by means of which we stammer from mouth to ear utterances of a vague soul-life, but in such a way that there is little supersensible significance in what is said. And whereas through a spiritual world-conception speech could be an

ocean into which a man's inner being sinks and which could then lift his soul to greater and greater heights, it becomes instead the means of chaining him to the Earth, chaining him to rigidly limited conditions of earthly existence.

Today this state of things takes effect in the destiny of the whole human race. We see how modern civilization is based upon the differences among men all over the Earth as expressed in their languages. Attempts are made to create new cultural divisions according to language. But because of what language has become it is evident at once that these cultural divisions and ideal are concerned with purely material life, that they form as it were the covering spread in the guise of civilization over the peoples of the Earth, in order to shut them off from the spiritual world. Everywhere today we see this wall of materialism being built around man's life of soul, and it is this that inculcates the materialism of mental attitudes, of thinking and of feeling, into external life as well. It is this that gradually causes man to forget that within the human race conditions are determined from the supersensible spheres, but when humanity is divided into nations, races and so forth, men are more and more strongly imbued with a blind belief that they must persist in a purely materialistic existence.

And so we see entering into earthly life in the form of civilization and culture, the element of materialism which has laid hold of the spheres of knowledge, of art, of religion. In the national groups that have come into being on the Earth we can recognize how the forces from the cosmic expanse which once worked creatively and formatively in life on Earth, no longer do so; the forces now in Operation issue from the depths of the Earth itself. We see man, as a member of a nation or people too, uniting more and more closely with the purely material side of earthly existence.

If people could resolve to pay attention to what in many ways sounds paradoxical in our times, namely that the human ego and astral body also have a biography, the individual phases of which become manifest from the time of going to sleep until the time of waking, just as the external physical life in its evolution from birth to death becomes manifest during waking hours, they would perceive the source of a great deal in our modern civilization that must not be allowed to continue ! But if we stop short at the findings of purely external sense-observation, we shall fail to perceive the most important, indeed the all-important things that must be done in order to change the present decline into an ascent leading into the future.

If this view of life is to have practical effects, a spiritual knowledge of man's existence is essential, and for this the world-view of Spiritual Science is necessary. This world-view must therefore permeate the whole of education, in such a way that instead of acquiring a store of words from which all wings have been removed, the child absorbs and is guided by the spirit and receives, together with the words, the power that raises him into the spiritual worlds in which man's being is rooted. In physical life we can deny the spirit. With the spiritual part of our being which must lay aside the physical and etheric bodies during sleep, we cannot deny the spirit. And if from the physical side of existence we repudiate the spirit, then we wake up each morning as grown men who no longer understand life; and this lack of understanding is imparted to all our thinking, feeling and willing. The coming generation is growing up in such a way that its members inevitably feel that the heritage transmitted by their forefathers is deserving of reproach because this heritage thrusts them into an abyss where they cannot be materialistic but where they needs must be spiritual when living in the ego and astral body.

The older languages of mankind were so constituted that their inner content could be taken into the spiritual world and lead to understanding with the spiritual Beings with whom man needs must associate when he is free of the body. The evolution of language to its present condition has reached a point where, when man should rightly associate with spiritual Beings, he inevitably remains spiritually deaf and dumb and is able to absorb only that which drags him down, namely, the physical element of the mineral and plant kingdoms.

And so in order to understand life today — if I may use trivial words — we must look behind the scenes of this life. But that is possible only through genuine Spiritual Science.

Notes:

Note 1. Or, the Age of the Consciousness Soul, sometimes 'Spiritual Soul'.

Note 2. The saying of 'Poetry' from Schiller's lyrical play, 'Homage to the Arts.'

Lecture II

12th March 1923.

The lecture yesterday will have made it clear that if we are to understand the destinies of human beings and their life, we cannot be satisfied by references to the abstract forces of Nature — which are the only forces spoken of in orthodox science today. As we heard yesterday, we must turn to those spiritual Powers which form, as it were, the continuation upwards of what here, in material life, we call the kingdoms of Nature. We speak of the three kingdoms of Nature — mineral, plant and animal — and, in so far as he is a physical being, man must be regarded as a fourth kingdom; but then we must go higher and assume the existence above man of the kingdom of the Angeloi, above that the kingdom of the Archangeloi, then the kingdom of the Archai, and so on.

These higher kingdoms are not, to begin with, accessible to external perception, to perception by the senses and the intellect ; nevertheless they play an essential part in the life of man.

I spoke to you yesterday of their participation in the alternating states of sleeping and waking in human life. Today I should like to add to this theme another, namely, the theme of man as a being who spends one part of his total life within the spiritual world whence he descends to earthly existence and into which he ascends again when he has passed through the gate of death.

From the course of lectures I gave here last year on *Philosophy, Cosmology and Religion* [note 1] you know that before man comes down to the Earth, he is a being with a very definite configuration, only not clothed in a physical body, not connected with the physical forces of the Earth, but clothed, one might also say, in spirit-and-soul, connected with forces of spirit-and-soul just as through the physical body he is connected with the physical forces of Nature.

Now when a human being comes down into physical existence on Earth, the after-effects of the forces he has within him during pre-earthly existence accompany him for a certain time. For in the child a spiritual element is always at work; it is an aftereffect of the forces that were in him before he came down to the Earth. As the child grows, developing clear-cut out of more indefinite bodily forms, he is still subject to the after-effects of the super-earthly forces that were at work within him before his descent to the Earth. These forces continue to take effect until the age of puberty, although they already become weaker with the change of teeth.

The human being elaborates his physical body in particular during the first seven years of his life and his etheric body, or body of formative forces during the second period of seven years. While he is elaborating and developing these two instruments of his earthly existence, the forces characterized above are still working from the spiritual world.

As I said yesterday, man is not only the being revealed to external sense-perception and intellectual recognition, but during his earthly existence he is also that supersensible, invisible being consisting of ego and astral body who is separated during sleep from the physical and etheric bodies. Every night the ego and astral body of a grown-up individual pass out of the physical and etheric bodies. In the child, especially in the earliest period of physical life on Earth, the union and separation of the four members of man's constitution are an indefinite process. At the beginning of his life the child's waking hours are few: that is to say, the firm cohesion between the ego, astral body, etheric body and physical body lasts for brief periods only. The connection between these four members is much looser in a child than in a grown-up. Hence we must always be mindful not only of the life-history of a human being that is enacted before external sight and the rationalizing intellect, but also of the other life-history, namely that of the ego and astral body during the periods of sleep. Although in an adult the time spent in sleep is shorter, for the whole condition of the human being, above all for the gaining and maintenance of health and hence for earthly life as a whole, it is actually of much greater significance in the general economy of the Cosmos than the outer, physical life.

Through his outer physical existence on Earth man lives in contact with the three visible kingdoms of nature

and their forces. When he is asleep, his ego and his astral body are not subject to these forces but are in a supersensible world which, however, permeates the physical world and is connected with it. Let us therefore make the clear distinction: there is a supersensible world in which the human being lives between death and a new birth; it may be called the world of pre-earthly or post-earthly existence. The human being retains a residue of its force for his earthly existence, forces which have a very strong effect in the child and later on become progressively weaker. But during the hours of sleep the ego and astral body are in a supersensible world that is not the same as the supersensible world of pre-earthly existence. The supersensible world of pre-earthly existence has actually not much to do with the earthly world *per se*, as externally manifest. The supersensible world into which the ego and astral body must pass from the time of going to sleep until that of waking has, however, a great deal to do with the earthly world and with the three kingdoms with which man is connected on Earth.

This supersensible world consists of the three so-called elemental kingdoms described in my book, *Theosophy*. Thus, apart from what I told you yesterday — namely, that the ego and the astral body pass into the world of Angeloi and Archangeloi — these members must also live, during sleep, in a supersensible world which, as such, has nothing *directly* to do with that supersensible world in which man lives when disembodied and which is the realm of Angeloi and Archangeloi. This other realm is the world of the elemental kingdoms, the world of beings who are at a level of existence lower than that of earthly man; they have no actual physical body but yet are not of a purely supersensible nature. These beings of the elemental kingdoms indwell as it were the other three outwardly manifest kingdoms of nature.

While he is awake, man lives with the external manifestations of the earthly kingdoms; while he sleeps, he lives — in his ego and astral body — with the invisible, supernatural beings of the elemental kingdoms.

The scene around man as it were, is different in each case, but it is primarily an earthly one. And what I described to you yesterday, the relationship into which man enters during sleep with the Angeloi and especially with the Archangeloi adjusts itself to the more purely supernatural relationship with the elemental kingdoms. Just as in the waking state in the physical world man takes from the kingdoms of nature the foodstuffs for his physical and etheric bodies, so, from the time of going to sleep to that of waking, the forces of the three elemental kingdoms stream into him. This is the scene of his existence. Within these three elemental kingdoms he is enveloped in living, intertwining waves of colour, in a world of weaving tones. That which here in the physical world is attached, as it were, to solid material objects, in the elemental world weaves and floats in freedom; flowing spirituality comes to expression there just as here on Earth material substance is made manifest in physical colour and physical sound. But whereas material substance holds the colours within fixed contours, the spirituality of the elemental kingdoms bears the colours hither and thither in streams and undulations, in free, ever-changing play.

True, the life in the elemental world remains unconscious or subconscious in the human being on Earth in our present phase of evolution. But for all that it takes its inevitable course, so that in this connection too a life-history of the ego and the astral body between birth and death could be described, just as the physical life-history of a man between birth and death in the physical body and the etheric body is described.

Now something very definite is in prospect for the ego and the astral body during earthly life when the human being reaches puberty. Just as in the physical realm man stands on Earth, perceives the kingdoms of nature around him but also gazes out into the expanse of the Cosmos and at the stars, thus perceiving what is super-terrestrial and physically manifest, so during sleep do the ego and the astral body experience, to begin with in the elemental world, the surrounding elemental kingdoms. But from this elemental world man looks upward and he beholds not merely dead, shining stars; in actual fact he beholds the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. And he becomes connected with these Beings in just such a way as I described yesterday in reference to language. Thus from the time of going to sleep to that of waking, man is in the elemental world, experiencing there what I have described in the lecture-course already mentioned. And from this elemental world he looks out into the expanse of the super-elemental world, becoming aware of Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai.

In this respect, however, there has been an essential change since the beginning of the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch, that is to say, since the 15th century A.D. Since then, because man has been developing the forceful intellectuality which he did not formerly possess, it is no longer as easy as it was previously for him to establish the right relation to the Hierarchies between sleeping and waking.

The man who lived before the 15th century — and this applies to all of us in our former earthly lives — was not yet permeated in the waking state by abstract intellectuality. Hence he lived with far greater intensity in his physical body and in his etheric body during his waking hours, and out of these bodies he drew a certain force into sleep; he experienced the elemental world with intensity, together with what he was able to see or to experience in the kingdom of the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai. In those earlier ages of evolution, man brought with him from his pre-earthly existence something that gave him greater strength than he has today during the hours of sleep. And so, on waking, he could bring from the elemental and super-elemental world experienced in sleep, something that gave him fundamental stability in his etheric and his physical bodies. Until the 15th century man was a self-sufficient being to a greater extent than he is today. Today, through the inheritance he brings from his pre-earthly existence into earthly life he is endowed with enough forces from the spiritual world to grow as a child and to receive the other evolutionary impulses he needs, until the age of puberty. But at the present stage of his evolution he has not enough forces of his own to establish the ego and the astral body rightly in the elemental world during sleep unless during his waking hours he absorbs spiritual knowledge.

The fact simply is that man today does not receive from the elemental world what in early times he brought with him naturally from the spiritual world and was still of use to him in the elemental world during sleep, even after puberty. This is connected with the fact that he was to become a *free being*. If, during his childhood, he does not receive knowledge of the spiritual world through teaching and education, he has a feeling of constriction in the elemental world during sleep. And not only does that condition of speech of which I spoke yesterday, take effect, but something quite different happens as well. In the super-elemental sphere man does indeed experience the Archangeloi although he is unable to make a real connection with them. But he no longer — or at least only very inadequately — experiences the Archai, the Primal Powers. Since the 15th century it has become characteristic of human evolution itself that in sleep man's ego and astral body stretch out eagerly for union with the Archai but are unable to reach them and feel a sense of helplessness in regard to them.

The Archai, the Primal Powers, however, are necessary in order that when he wakes man shall plunge with enough intensity into his etheric body. Understand me rightly here. — Yesterday I told you that if an individual absorbs no spiritual knowledge, he will be unable to contact the Archai during his sleep, although it is vitally necessary that in the sleeping state he should be able to establish as living a relationship with those Beings as here on Earth, in the physical condition, he has a living relationship with the Sun. This is extremely important. And it is something which, if things are perceived in the right light, may even be noticed in characteristic historical situations.

Under the influence of conditions such as I have described, individuals born with the full power of manhood in our intellectualistic age may have a fate similar, for example, to that of Goethe. What happened to him was very characteristic. His father was a typical representative of the intellectualistic era, a thoroughly good representative of it. Concerning this father, who naturally had a great deal to do with his education, Goethe felt: nothing spiritual comes to me from him. And his mother — you can feel this if you study the biography of the Councillor's aged wife — Goethe's mother had not become so deeply rooted in intellectualism. It was from her that Goethe inherited, as he himself says, 'the delight in story telling'. She had not entered to any great extent into the intellectuality of the time; but on the other hand she also was unable to give him what he really needed.

And so he lived with the unconscious feeling: you must really have descended from different ancestors. Now please do not misunderstand me. Goethe was not an undutiful son or anything of that kind; in his consciousness he was a thoroughly decent human being. But in his subconsciousness there was something that his soul whispered to him, namely: 'You should really have had quite different parents.' — If Goethe had been able to absorb Spiritual Science from any external source he might perhaps not have had this feeling so strongly. But in

those days Spiritual Science was not yet available. So in his subconsciousness the idea arose: I ought really to have had parents who are not alive now, but who lived earlier, very much earlier. At that time, through the living atmosphere in which their speech and the administration of their whole life were contained, parents still bequeathed to their offspring what was necessary to ensure that they could live during sleep in the elemental world in such a way that on waking they could take proper hold of the etheric body. Goethe tried by every possible means — there are portfolios full of drawings which he made and he tried in all kinds of other ways — but he never succeeded in taking hold of and using the etheric body in the right way with his ego and his astral body. If you look at Goethe's drawings you immediately have the feeling: here the drawing itself is made by an ego and an astral body, and here there is genius; but there is no true draughtsmanship in it, no trace of what a man must necessarily acquire when he makes proper use of the physical and etheric bodies.

Anyone who is not a Goethe philistine but a free, open-minded person will realize when looking at the poems of Goethe's youth: here it is everywhere clear that he could not reach his etheric body and his physical body with his ego and astral body. This was impossible for him. And with this characteristic he grew up; it was particularly strong during his youth. The Leipzig professors could not possibly help him to take from physical life into the elemental world the power that would have put him in real possession of his etheric body.

And so this indefinite, unconscious feeling persisted in Goethe: you ought really to have been born of quite different parents, in a different age, also in a different environment. And this indefinite feeling persisted in his soul until finally he could bear it no longer. Then one fine day the feeling came to him, again not quite consciously but for all that with intensity: yes, if you had been born of Greek parents you would have been a splendid fellow; you ought to have had a Greek father and a Greek mother!

This was what induced him to make his Italian journey, in order that in Italy, where at least it might still be found, it would be possible for him to find a living relationship to a different parentage, a different ancestry, from any that would have been possible in his environment. In a quite abnormal way he was, as it were, seeking different ancestors — Greek ancestors — for himself. For the trend that had gradually insinuated itself into the intellectualistic world since the Greek era, found no favour with him. When he came to Italy he actually felt as if he had been born of Greek parents, and what he saw there drew from him the utterance I have often quoted: 'After what I am seeing here, it seems to me as if I have penetrated behind the riddle of Greek art: the Greeks created according to the same laws by which Nature creates and of which I am on the track. ...' He felt that the strength he needed to get his etheric body properly in his control came to him there.

Then he took in hand the 'Iphigenia' he had already sketched out in writing — but it did not satisfy him, for it sprang from the ego and the astral body, not from the etheric body. And so in Italy he re-wrote his 'Iphigenia.'

In the lectures on Recitation [note 2] we have often presented both the German and the Italian 'Iphigenia' in order to show how Goethe had there made a stride forward in his development. This stride consisted in the fact that the impression made upon him by the aftermath of Greek art manifest in Italian art, enabled him to absorb the power that brought him, while sleeping, into the right connection with the Archai; the Archai could then imbue him with the capacity to unite in the right way with his etheric body and physical body.

Thereby Goethe became different from other men of the materialistic age. It is strange that these men talk of matter, of the physical world, whereas their malady consists in the fact that they are not properly connected with their physical and etheric bodies. A man becomes a materialist precisely because he does not reach the physical and etheric bodies, because the spirit is too weak to lay hold of the body in the right way.

During the whole of the first half of Goethe's life he was striving to take proper hold of his etheric body. And whereas, comparatively speaking, we can lead a wholesome life if during sleep we establish a certain relationship to the word of the Angeloi and Archangeloi, it is the Archai who must help us to bring sleeping and waking life into concord. Physical body and etheric body lead a waking life of their own through the outwardly visible nature-forces in the three kingdoms. Life during sleep proceeds as it should when a man lives in the right way in the elemental kingdoms between going to sleep and waking, and from out of these elemental kingdoms

establishes relationship with Angeloi and Archangeloi. But something further is necessary.

Physical body and etheric body must acquire in the waking state a right relationship to the three kingdoms of nature. Sleeping man, that is to say, ego and astral body, must acquire a right relationship to the three elemental kingdoms, but also to the kingdom of the Angeloi and Archangeloi. If, however, a man has an appropriate relationship only to these kingdoms, the proper interaction does not take place; there is no right connection between sleeping and waking. In order that the ego and the astral body shall emerge from and pass into the physical and etheric bodies in the right way, a man must also establish the proper relationship to the kingdom of the Archai, the Primal Powers.

Goethe's attraction to Italy was simply an attraction to a right relationship to the Archai. The Archai are concerned with the *whole* man, in so far as the whole man must be alternately a waking and a sleeping being. Sleep fails to impart the adequate strength, and what should be acquired from life on Earth is simply absent, if the right relationship to the Archai is not established by a man's endeavours to develop the strong inner forces necessary for the comprehension of Spiritual Science.

To grasp the essential character of official science today does not require relationship to the Archai, for it is grasped by the head alone. To understand it fully, no involvement on the part of the rest of the organism is required. But if the whole man is to be apprehended as a being permeated with spirit, then there must be a relationship to the Archai, to the Primal Powers.

In olden times this relationship to the Primal Powers was atavistic. The Primal Powers still worked upon man to such an extent in his pre-earthly life that he brought with him the necessary strength to live an independent life. But what actually characterizes our own epoch is that when man passes from the spiritual world into the earthly world, these Primal Powers more or less withdraw, allowing him to come down to the Earth more meagrely provided for than of old. The result is that here on Earth man must seek for the spiritual through *his own strength* in order to establish relationship again to the Primal Powers.

If you have a feeling for such things as the spiritual revelations of Goethe, you can easily realize the difference between him and one who is merely a head-man. The latter puts all kinds of ideas before you and what he says may be impeccably logical. But if he is to get beyond matters which can be comprehended by logic, he can only fall back upon his instincts, that is to say upon his animal nature, and then he sometimes becomes extremely illogical. You may perhaps have experienced that there are people today who can write quite good, logical books; but if one is in daily intercourse with them and it is not a matter of expounding some branch of science where they are capable of being logical, but of affairs of everyday life, they can drive one to despair, for then the most commonplace emotions and instincts come into play. It may certainly be said that wonderfully fine theories can be evolved in the head but they need not necessarily have anything at all to do with the whole man. You have only to remember the story that is very typical and known everywhere. — There was a schoolmaster who held exceedingly sound educational theories as to how children must be taught control of the emotions, the passions and so forth, and he preached along these lines to the pupils. Then it happened that a pupil who was somewhat of a scamp overturned the inkpot. Thereupon the teacher shouted: 'Now you have lost control of your passions! If you had been logical and sensible, you would not have upset the inkpot. I ...' he threatened. And seizing a chair he struck out with it. At the very time when he was advocating theoretically, out of his head, the restraint of passion, he let fly, perhaps smashing the leg of the chair. This is of course an extreme case, but similar things are constantly occurring.

Take a head-man of that kind on the one hand and Goethe on the other: everywhere you will see, not only in every detail of Goethe's life but also in his greatest achievements, that there the *whole man* is active, not merely the head, but Goethe the whole man.

In very many great individuals appearing in the course of evolution, the *man* may be forgotten. We have the feeling that only a head is there. What, I ask you, is there to interest us in Newton except the head? Newton lives on in history as a head only! Goethe as head alone would be unthinkable. Goethe, as we know, is present

everywhere as a whole man even in the least significant of his ideas. This is particularly obvious in the second part of *Faust* and also in *Wilhelm Meister*, and all Goethe's most interesting works. If you have a feeling for these things you see, even in his most spiritual achievements, that the whole man is there.

And this is what our own epoch needs: to make whole men again out of mere heads. In men of the present day it is a matter of chance if there is something working as well as the head. What they achieve for external life they achieve with the head. The arms, for example, are really only tools. Just think of it — many people today have handwriting which could be artificially produced quite accurately by some sort of writing machine attached to the head. If these men only had a feeling for the fact that there is spirituality too in the arms and hands, and that writing is achieved through the arms and hands ... well, if that were the case, the elementary writing-lessons given today would not be given at all, for this instruction in writing is purely a matter of the head; the arms and hands are used simply as external tools, as if they were just machines.

In truth, what depends on the head has become in the man of today more or less a machine. This is because that fluid, that fluid force — if I may use this expression — whereby the man of spirit and soul takes hold of his physical and etheric bodies, can develop as it should only if the man achieves a right relationship with the Primal Powers, with the Archai. In my book *Occult Science: an Outline* you can read that the Archai were the first Beings, already during the period of Old Saturn, to intervene as super-earthly Beings in the evolution of future mankind. Then came the Archangeloi, then the Angeloi, and only then did Man come into existence. Again, the Archai were the first Beings to withdraw from men's subconsciousness, and it is they whom he must again reach, now with consciousness.

But this is possible only if, during our waking life, we develop the strong forces necessary for grasping spiritual knowledge. Then we shall also be able to realize with the insight of heart and mind that in the nature outside in which we live as physical men on Earth, there is something different from what, in the waking state, we experience in our normal consciousness.

Think back to the times of earlier medicine. Nobody who had anything to do with medicine in those days would have thought of investigating merely the external, abstract forces and substances of nature. Men worked in their laboratories — if their workshops can be called that — in such a way that the operations of the elemental forces were clearly revealed to them. Actually, men have always asked: How does a sulphur — or some other process combine with a different substance? What effect has this behind the actual sense-phenomenon? How are the elemental beings working here? Men made their experiments in order to learn, let us say, by paying attention to the transformation undergone by a substance when it combines with another, or when it arises out of another, how — especially in the change of colour revealed by a substance in the process of transition — beings of the elemental kingdom peep out into the world of the senses. Even *Paracelsus*, when he described sulphur, salt and mercury was not describing these ordinary physical substances, but what peeped out at him from the elemental kingdom when these substances were undergoing transformation. Hence you can never understand Paracelsus if you take his expressions in the sense in which they are used today in chemistry, because everywhere he really means what peeps out from the elemental world in the way described. Here, however, are the healing forces, the real healing forces. In what you see when you Look at the external appearance of any plant, let us say the meadow saffron, you do not see the healing forces that are its characteristic; if you want to perceive the healing forces of the meadow saffron you must watch it when it is fading, when it is undergoing its unique, bold changes of colour; then the elemental being is escaping and this brings about the changes of colour. You know the saying that when the devil makes off, he leaves a stink behind him — and as they escape the elemental beings assert their audacity by the colouring.

We must recognize from the transitions that a process in the elemental world underlies them. But in this elemental process the human soul — ego and astral body — are also present from the time of going to sleep to that of waking. The human soul lives in the very process. And if you want to come to the help of a nature-process in man, so that a necessary healing may ensue, then the following takes place: if you leave the individual as he is, he passes in an irregular way from the sleeping into the waking state and again from the waking state into sleep. Give him some substance, let us say from the plant world, which is related to some quite specific

elemental being, and he is then absorbing into his body something that gives his astral body a definite strength when he passes into the elemental world, so that as a being of soul-and-Spirit he can establish a relationship with particular elemental beings. He brings the effect of this back with him on waking and this promotes health. It is not the substance itself that promotes health but the condition into which the individual has been brought by means of the substance, because the substance has its relationship to the elemental world and this relationship is transferred to the individual concerned. Actually, in the case of a great many illnesses you may ask: What must be changed in the individual in order that he may pass into and return from sleep differently from the way he does as a sick person, and thus become healthy? The study of healing processes is, for by far the greatest part, a study of the changes of condition through which man passes between his manner of life in the physical world of sense and his manner of life in the elemental world.

Formerly, when the Archai, the Primal Powers, still had a living relationship to man, indications of modes of life in the elemental world could be given. Today this is no longer possible if only the ordinary-level consciousness is employed and spiritual knowledge is not accepted. We must find our way to spiritual knowledge and then gradually, at first simply through sound human reason, we shall acquire insight again into how this alternation of waking and sleeping, this alternation between the external physical world and the elemental world must be regulated in order to bring about processes of healing.

So you see, it is not only necessary that in the domain of speech — of which I spoke yesterday — man should again establish a right relationship to the Archangeloi, but that through the stronger effort of will that is needed for understanding Spiritual Science, he should bring about an intensified relationship to the Archai, the Primal Powers. A kind of knowledge entirely different from anything that is available today will then come naturally to him. What frightens people so greatly today is that the study of Spiritual Science entails development of the will. The concepts and ideas brought forward in Spiritual Science must be absorbed with an inner energizing of the will, with inner activity, and this is not to man's liking today. They would prefer to leave the will quite undisturbed and let knowledge flow past them, let it come in through the eyes without themselves doing anything about it, than start the brain vibrating so that it also may come into play. And a great many people today would actually prefer, instead of lectures, a film during which they need not follow in thought what is being presented to them, but can give themselves up to it without any inner activity at all, letting everything pass by them. The film-pictures strike the eye and imprint themselves on the brain; the process is repeated as often as possible, so that the impression is intensified and finally it has been absorbed. In that way, however, one becomes a mere automaton, a spiritual automaton; there is no need to convert into inner activity what is imparted; it simply impresses itself into one. One becomes a spiritual automaton and there is no need, for example, to understand anything at all about the human organism; for to understand the human organism inner activity is unconditionally necessary. Man cannot be understood without inner effort, without absorbing ideas such as those put forward today. But — well, of course one can experiment without inner activity, for instance by taking antipyrin and observing its effect upon the organism. It can be tested and its external effect observed without it being necessary to understand anything about the organism itself. The result is impressed upon one and when this has happened often enough the substance can be used as a prescription. In this way, without any knowledge of man, one becomes a spiritual automaton. Life today runs very largely on these lines.

But the times call upon us to unfold inner activity, to achieve development of the will. This is what youth desires of the old. Young people say: those who are old should transmit to us something whereby, through speech, we establish the right relationship to the Archangeloi. But the old should also educate us in such a way that we can have the right relationship to the Archai. For — so say the young — until we have reached the necessary age we have to surrender ourselves to being educated by the old. But this education leads to mental inactivity, to film-watching.

Inwardly seen, this is the other side of the Youth Movement; I spoke to you yesterday of one side. Everything calls upon man today to be a *whole* man, not only to surrender himself to passive ideas which stream to him from the outer world, but to unfold inner activity, to experience the life of thought, the life of ideas too, with inner activity, with the will.

But for this, human nature today is in many respects much too weak-spirited — not to say too cowardly. For when a man applies his will to any combination of ideas, he immediately thinks: That is not objective, that is I myself, I myself am formulating the ideas. — This is because he is afraid to shape his will in such a way that it can experience objective reality in the spiritual world. But without the will he can experience nothing in the spiritual world, therefore nothing objective either. Of course, the purely emotional will, the will that is dependent merely on the physical body, or most on the etheric body, cannot penetrate into a spiritual world at all; it can only enable man to become a head-being. For the head is able — it does not move but lets itself be carried — the head is able to give itself up passively to what rolls past in the world like a film.

With the whole of his being man must share in the world's activity in order to reach the spiritual. This is what emerges again and again from all our studies and must be kept most clearly in mind today.

Notes:

Note 1. Ten lectures given in Dornach, 6th to 15th September, 1922. A shortened version is available both in German and in English translation.

Note 2. *Die Kunst der Recitation und Deklamation* (not translated).

Lecture III [note 1]

16th March 1923

Recently it has repeatedly been my task to point out that it would be just as possible to write a person's biography for the time spent between going to sleep and awakening as it is for the time spent between awakening and going to sleep. Whatever man goes through between awakening and going to sleep is experienced through his physical and etheric bodies. Because in his physical and etheric bodies he has suitably developed sense organs, he is conscious of the world around him, for it is linked with his physical and etheric bodies so that it forms, as it were, a unity with him. But because at his present stage of evolution he does not possess similar organs of soul and spirit in his ego and astral body — organs which, if I may be permitted this paradoxical expression, would be supersensible sense-organs — he is unable to be conscious of his experiences between going to sleep and awakening. Accordingly, only with spiritual sight would one be able to perceive what is contained in the biography of the ego and astral body, which runs parallel with the biography lived through with the help of the physical and etheric bodies.

In speaking about man's experiences between awakening and going to sleep we naturally include the events which take place in his physical and etheric environment, things which happen in connection with him, things he experiences and things which are caused by him. Thus we must speak of a physical and etheric environment, a physical and etheric world inhabited by man in the period between awakening and going to sleep. Similarly he inhabits another world between going to sleep and awakening, only the nature of this world is quite different from that of the physical and etheric world. Through spiritual vision it is possible to speak about this world which is just as much our environment when we sleep as the physical world is our environment when we are awake. You will find the elementary facts in the descriptions given, for instance, in my book *Occult Science: an Outline*. There you will find, albeit only in brief, a description of how the realms of the physical and etheric world, the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, extend on into the realms of the higher Hierarchies. Let us give this some consideration today.

If, while awake, we direct our eyes or other sense-organs outwards towards our physical and etheric environment, we perceive the four kingdoms of mineral, plant, animal and man. If we then ascend further into those regions which can only be perceived supersensibly, we find that which may be called the continuation of these kingdoms: the kingdom of the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai, the kingdom of the Exousiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes, and the kingdom of the Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim.

Thus we have two worlds which permeate one another: the physical and etheric world and the supersensible world. And we already know that we live in this supersensible world between going to sleep and awakening; we know that we have experiences there, although these experiences cannot make their way into our ordinary consciousness because we have no organs of soul and spirit.

As a matter of fact a more exact understanding can be reached of what man experiences in this supersensible world, if the same sort of description of this world is given as is given of the physical and etheric world with the help of science and history. In order to set forth what we may call a supersensible science of the actual course of the world we inhabit in sleep, we must begin by pointing out certain details. Today we shall first turn our attention to an event of deep significance for the whole of human evolution during the last few thousand years.

We have already discussed this event frequently from the point of view of the physical and etheric world and its history. Now we shall look at it from the other side, as it were, taking our viewpoint not in the physical and etheric world but in the supersensible world. The event I am referring to and which I have often portrayed from the one point of view took place in the 4th century A.D.

I have described how the whole disposition of man's soul in the Western world changed during this 4th century A.D.; how in fact without spiritual-scientific insight into the matter we today no longer have the slightest understanding of human feelings and sentiments as they were before the 4th century A.D. But we have often portrayed these feelings and this disposition of soul, describing what human beings experienced round about that century. Today we shall turn our attention for a moment to the experiences undergone by the Beings of the supersensible realm during this time. So we shall be concerned, so to say, with the other side of life and speak from the viewpoint of the supersensible realm.

That thoughts are confined to the head is a preconceived notion of man's so-called enlightenment. We should learn nothing about things through thoughts if these thoughts were confined to the heads of men. Anyone who believes that thoughts are to be found only in men's heads is a victim of the same prejudice, paradoxical though it may sound, as a person who believes that the sip of water which quenches his thirst arose on his tongue instead of flowing into his mouth from his glass. Really it is just as absurd to say that thoughts arise in men's heads as it is to say: If I quench my thirst with water from my glass, this water has come into being in my mouth. For thoughts are quite definitely spread throughout the world. Thoughts are the forces at work in things. And the organ of our thinking merely taps the cosmic reservoir of thought forces, taking the thoughts into itself. Accordingly we must not speak of thoughts as though they were something belonging to man alone. We must speak of thoughts with an awareness that they are forces which govern the world and are spread throughout the cosmos. But they do not just fly about at random; they are always borne and worked upon by beings of one kind or another. And most important of all: they are not always borne by the same beings.

Turning to the supersensible world, we find by means of supersensible investigation that until the fourth century A.D. the thoughts through which human beings make the world comprehensible to themselves were borne, or perhaps one should say, poured forth (earthly expressions are little suited for the description of such lofty events and beings) by the Beings of the Hierarchy called the Exousiai or Beings of Form.

If an ancient Greek wanted to account for the origin of his thoughts through knowledge of the Mysteries, he would have had to say the following: I lift up my spiritual vision to the Beings revealed to me by Mystery knowledge as the Beings of Form, the Forces of Form. They are the bearers of the cosmic intelligence, they are the bearers of the cosmic thoughts. They cause the thoughts to stream through the events of the cosmos, and they bestow these human thoughts upon the soul which becomes aware of them by experiencing them. When someone in the days of ancient Greece adapted himself to the supersensible world by means of a special initiation, he was able to come to an experience of these Beings of Form; he actually beheld these Beings, and in order to find a true picture or Imagination of them he had to attach to them, in a way as an attribute, the thoughts which flowed shining through the universe. This ancient Greek saw how these Beings of Form as it were sent out shining thought forces from their limbs, forces which entered into the world-processes and there continued to work as world-creative forces of intelligence. He would say perhaps: Throughout the universe, throughout the cosmos, it is the task of the Beings of Form, the Exousiai, to pour thoughts through the universal processes. Therefore just as science based on sense-perception describes the activities of human beings by recording what they do individually or co-operatively, so a science based on supersensible perception, in examining the activities of the Form Forces during the era under consideration, would have to describe how these supersensible Beings cause the thought forces to flow from one to the other, how they receive them from each other, and how embedded in this outflowing and receiving lie the universal processes which present themselves to man externally in the shape of natural phenomena.

And then came the 4th century A.D. in the evolution of mankind. For the supersensible world it brought an event of the utmost importance: the Exousiai, the Forces or Spirits of Form, transferred their thought forces to the Archai, the Primal Forces or Principalities.

At that time the Archai, the Principalities, took over the task previously carried out by the Exousiai. Events of this kind do take place in the supersensible world. And this was an event of immense cosmic importance. The Exousiai, the Spirits of Form, retained merely the task of controlling external sense-perceptions; with special cosmic forces they rule over everything present in the world of colour, tone and so on. Accordingly, those who have insight into these things must say with reference to the times which follow the 4th century A.D.: the thoughts which rule the world are transferred to the Archai, the Principalities; now, all the manifold forms of the world, the constant metamorphoses seen by eyes and heard by ears constitute a fabric woven by the Exousiai, who formerly gave thoughts to human beings and now give them sense-impressions, while the Archai now give them thoughts.

This reality of the supersensible world was mirrored here below in the world of the senses by the fact that in ancient times, for instance, the times of the Greeks, thoughts were perceived objectively in things. Just as today we believe we perceive red or blue on things, so a Greek found that a thought was not merely grasped by his head but that it radiated forth from an object in the same way as red or blue radiates forth.

I have described this human side of the matter in my book *Riddles of Philosophy*. In this book you will find a description of how this important event in the supersensible world was reflected in the world of the physical senses. Philosophical terms are used there because the language of philosophy is suitable for describing the material world, whereas in discussing the point of view of the supersensible world one also has to mention the supersensible fact that the task of the Exousiai has been transferred to the Archai.

The preparation of such things in humanity takes many epochs. And such things are linked with basic transformations of the human soul. When I say that this supersensible event took place in the 4th century A.D., this is of course only an approximation applying merely to the central period, whereas the whole process took place over many ages. Preparations began in pre-Christian times and the change was not completed until the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries A.D. The 4th century A.D. is only the central period and is alluded to in order to have something definite to point to in the historical development of mankind.

This is also the point in human evolution when men's outlook into the supersensible world begins to become wholly obscured. The consciousness of the soul loses the capacity of supersensible vision and perception while the soul devotes itself to the world. You will perhaps understand this more clearly in your souls if light is thrown upon it from another angle.

What is the point I am trying so insistently to make clear? It is that human beings begin to feel increasingly aware of themselves as individuals. When the thought-world passes from the Spirits of Form to the Principalities, from the Exousiai to the Archai, man feels more aware of the thoughts of his own being, because the Archai live one step nearer than the Exousiai to man. Somebody who begins to acquire supersensible vision will receive the following impression. He will say: Certainly this is the same world which I know as the world of the senses.

Ordinary consciousness knows nothing at all about the conditions under consideration here. But with supersensible consciousness there is definitely the feeling that Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai are present between man and his sense impressions. The feeling is that they are present here in the sense-world. They are not seen with the ordinary eye but they are actually present between man and the whole fabric of sense impressions. It is the Exousiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes who are beyond this world; they are concealed by the fabric of the senses.

Thus an individual possessing supersensible consciousness feels that thoughts, after they have been handed over to the Archai, come nearer to him. He feels them now to be more in his own world, whereas previously they were behind the colours on things, behind the red or the blue; we might say they approached him through the red or the blue or through a C sharp or a G. He feels that his communication with the thought-world has become freer since the transfer. Of course this also brings about the illusion that man makes the thoughts himself.

It took a long time for man to evolve to the point of being able to take into himself, as it were, what had formerly presented itself to him as the objective external world. This only came about by degrees during the course of human evolution. Looking back a very long way in evolution, right back beyond the Atlantean catastrophe and into the time of ancient Atlantis, I must ask you to imagine man at that time as I have described him in my books *Occult Science: an Outline* and *Cosmic Memory*. As you know, human beings at that time were formed quite differently. Their bodily substance was much more delicate than it became later on during the post-Atlantean age. Because of this the soul element was related differently to the world and the Atlanteans experienced the world quite differently. Let me give you just one instance of this particular way of experiencing the world. The Atlanteans could not experience the interval of a third, or even of a fifth. Their musical experience began with the experience of the seventh. They were also aware of greater intervals, but the seventh was the smallest. Thirds and fifths escaped their hearing; no such intervals existed for them.

As a result their experience of tone-structures was quite different; the soul had a quite different relationship with the tone-structures. For if, without the smaller intervals, we were to live only in the music of sevenths, if we were to live as naturally in these sevenths as did the Atlanteans, we would not perceive music as something taking place within us or in connection with us; we would find ourselves outside our bodies the moment musical perception began. We would live outside in the cosmos as was the case with the Atlanteans. For them a musical experience was a direct religious experience. In experiencing sevenths they could not say that they themselves had anything to do with the creation of these intervals; they felt that the Gods, weaving and flowing through the world, revealed themselves in sevenths. To say: 'I am making music' was senseless to them. But it meant something when they said: 'I live in the music made by the Gods.'

In a much weakened form this musical experience was still present in the post-Atlantean age, when mainly the interval of the fifth was experienced. This must not be compared with our present experience of the fifth. Today the fifth gives us the impression of an empty shell. In the best sense of the word we feel the fifth to be empty. It has become empty because the Gods have withdrawn from mankind.

But in post-Atlantean times man felt that the Gods still lived in the fifths. It was not until later, when the third, both major and minor, made its appearance in music, that music as it were submerged itself in man's inner nature, so that in musical experience he was no longer outside himself. In the real age of the fifth man was still definitely outside himself in the experience of music. In the age of the third, which as you know is comparatively recent, man remains within himself when he experiences music. He embraces music with his body. He interweaves musical and bodily nature. That is why the experience of the third is accompanied by the differentiation between major and minor, so that we have the experience of the major mood on the one hand and the experience of the minor mood on the other. With the arrival of the third, with the entry into music of the major and minor moods, musical experience links itself with the elevated and joyful moods and also with the depressed, painful and sad moods experienced by man because he bears a physical and an etheric body. We might say that man removes his experience of the world from the cosmos; instead he unites himself with his experience of the world. In olden times, in the age of the fifth, and even more so in the age of the seventh, if I may be permitted to use these expressions, man's most important experience of the world was such that it took him immediately outside himself. He could thus say: The world of tones draws my ego and my astral body out of my physical and etheric bodies; I interweave my earthly existence with the divine-spiritual world; the tone structures resound as something in whose wings the Gods flow through the world; and I experience this flowing of the Gods by perceiving the tones.

You see therefore in this particular field how cosmic experience in a certain sense makes its way towards the human being, how the cosmos penetrates into the human being. You see how if we look back into ancient times it is in the supersensible world that we must seek man's most important experiences. And you see how later the time comes when man as an Earth-being endowed with physical senses must be included when the most important world events are being described.

This becomes necessary when the thoughts are given by the Spirits of Form to the Principalities, the Archai. Another expression of this may be found in the transition from the ancient period of the fifth to the period of the third and the experience of major and minor.

Now it is of particular interest, in connection with this experience, to go back into an age even earlier than the Atlantean, an age of human evolution upon Earth which fades away into the dim and far-distant past but which can be recalled with the aid of supersensible vision. You will find this distant age described in my book *Occult Science: an Outline* as the Lemurian age. At that time man's perception of music was such that he could not even be conscious of intervals contained within an octave; at that time man could perceive an interval only if it extended beyond an octave, for instance: C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, where the interval C, D, is experienced only if the D lies in the next octave.

Thus in the Lemurian age there could be no musical experience in listening to intervals smaller than an octave; the interval experienced goes beyond the octave to the first tone of the following octave and then to the next tone of the next octave. Thus man experiences something which is difficult to describe, but you may be able to imagine it if I say the following: man experiences the second in the next higher octave and the third in the next octave after that. He experiences a kind of objective third, indeed the two thirds, both major and minor. But of course it is not a third as we know it today, since for us the third only comes about if we take the tonic and the next note but one within the same octave. Because man in ancient times was able to have a direct experience of intervals which we describe today as the tonic in one octave, the second in the next octave and the third in the third octave, he was able to perceive a sort of objective major and minor; not a major and minor mood experienced within himself but a major and minor expressing a feeling of what the Gods experienced in their souls.

We cannot describe what man in the Lemurian age experienced by any such names as joy and sorrow, exultation and depression; we must say that through this particular musical perception in Lemurian times, when he was quite outside himself in perceiving these intervals, he experienced the cosmic jubilation of the Gods and the cosmic lamentation of the Gods. We are able to look back to a time an Earth really experienced by man when what is experienced today as major and minor was, as it were, projected out into the universe. What man experiences inwardly today was then projected out into the universe. What today flows through his emotion and feeling was then perceived by him outside his physical body as the experience of the Gods in the cosmos. What must be characterized as our present inner experience of the major mood was experienced by him outside his body as the cosmic jubilation, the cosmic music of the Gods rejoicing in their creation of the world. And what we know today as the minor mood was experienced in Lemurian times as the vast lamentation of the Gods over the possibility of what is described in the Bible as the Fall of man, the falling away of mankind from the divine spiritual powers, the powers of good.

This is something which echoes down to us out of that wonderful knowledge of the ancient Mysteries which of itself passes over into the realm of art; we not only perceive in a more abstract way how mankind once upon a time succumbed to Luciferic and Ahrimanic seduction and temptation and experienced this or that, but we also perceive how human beings heard in ancient times the music of the Gods rejoicing in the cosmos about their creation of the world and also the cosmic lamentation of the Gods whose prophetic vision showed them that man would fall away from the divine-spiritual powers.

This artistic understanding of something which later became more abstract in form is given to us out of ancient Mysteries; from it we may win the deep conviction that knowledge, art and religion have flowed from a single source. This must lead us to the conviction that we must seek to return to that state of soul which will appear once again when the soul has knowledge because religion streams and art flows through it, that state of soul which brings a deep and living understanding of what Goethe meant so many years ago when he said: 'Beauty is a manifestation of secret natural laws which would have lain concealed forever had beauty not appeared.'

The secret of human evolution within the Earth's existence, within the Earth's evolution, itself reveals to us this inner unity of everything man must experience together with the world knowingly, religiously and artistically in order that he may experience his complete potentiality together with the world.

It is a fact that now the time has come when these things must once again enter human consciousness, for otherwise man's soul-nature would simply begin to decay. Now and in the near future man's soul would shrivel up as a result of increasingly intellectual and one-sided knowledge; his soul would be dulled by the one-sidedness of art and he would lose his soul altogether through the one-sidedness of religion if he could not find the way which leads to the inner harmony and unity of these three, the way which helps him to leave his body in a more conscious manner than of old and once more see and hear the supersensible world together with the world of the senses.

Through Spiritual Science we can look at the more ancient and profound personalities of the developing Greek culture, personalities whose successors were such people as Aeschylus and Heraclitus. We find that these personalities, in so far as they were initiated into the Mysteries, all had similar feelings as a result of their knowledge and their artistic, creative powers. Like Homer, who said: 'Sing me, O Muse, of the wrath of Achilles, son of Peleus,' they still felt their knowledge and their creative powers not as something working in them personally but as something they carried out in their religious feeling together with the spiritual world. Thus they could say: In most ancient times man experienced himself as man when, in carrying out the most important human activities, he passed out of himself and shared his experiences with the Gods (as I have shown you in connection with music, but it was also true in the forming of thoughts). But man has now lost what he was thus able to experience.

This feeling of having lost an ancient knowledge and an ancient artistic and religious possession of mankind most certainly weighed upon the more profound Greek souls.

Something different must come to mankind today. By developing the proper powers of his soul-experience, man must come to the point where he is able to rediscover what was lost long ago. What I want to say is that man must develop a consciousness — after all, we are living in the age of consciousness — of how what has become inward must find its way outwards again towards the divine-spiritual world. And it will be possible to accomplish this — as I have indicated in answer to a question put to me during a lecture-course at the Goetheanum — in one field for instance, when the inner wealth of feeling experienced in melody is transferred to the single tone, when man discovers the secret of the single tone, in other words when man experiences not only intervals but is also able to experience with inner richness and variety the single tone as if it were a melody. This is something which today can scarcely be imagined.

But you see how things progress: from the seventh to the fifth, from the fifth to the third, from the third to the prime and so down to the single tone and onward still further. So what once represented the loss of the divine world must be transformed in human evolution into the rediscovery of the divine by man on Earth, if humanity is to go on developing on Earth instead of perishing.

We only understand the past aright when we are able to see in contrast the true image of our development in the future, when we feel with an emotion which affects us deeply what was also felt by the more profound human beings in ancient Greece, namely that we have lost the presence of the Gods, and when we can contrast this by saying with deeply moved but intensely striving souls:

We will bring to blossom and fruition the spirit whose germ exists within us, so that we may once more find the Gods.

Notes:

Note 1. The translation by Johanna Collis of this lecture is also included in the volume entitled *Art in the light of Mystery Wisdom*, a collection of eight lectures given by Rudolf Steiner on various dates and published by Rudolf Steiner Press (London). Permission has been given for publication in the present volume.

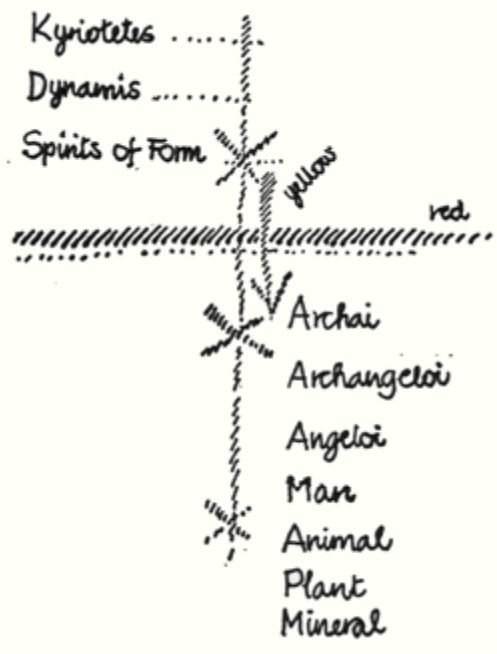
Lecture IV

17th March 1923.

By referring to the 4th century A.D. as a point in world history that we have for some time now recognized as very significant, I tried in the lecture yesterday to show that we can fully understand the evolution of humanity only when we keep in mind not only what takes place openly on the stage of history but also what is going on behind the scenes. I told you yesterday that the 4th century of our era is to be regarded approximately as the middle point of the period during which the Spirits of Form, the Exousiai, were handing over the cosmic thoughts to the Archai, the Primal Powers of Principalities. The process lasted for several hundreds of years. And with this transference is connected the fact — because man has become dependent in his thoughts upon quite different spiritual Beings — that his relation to Ins thoughts is not at all the same as it was in earlier times.

You must picture to yourselves how this supersensible event affects the course taken in those centuries by outer historical happenings and also by happenings in the spiritual history of mankind. Whereas previously the Spirits of Form — those Beings whom the Bible calls the Elohim — ruled over the cosmic thoughts so that men were obliged unconsciously to turn to them when wishing to formulate thoughts about things, the life of thought now came under the rulership of the Archai, the Primal Powers, who belong to a rank nearer to man. Yesterday I indicated this proximity pictorially by saying: here (in the diagram) is the boundary (red) representing the world of the senses. Everything we see and become aware of in the world of the senses — colours, sounds, sensations of warmth — is symbolized by means of this line. What lies *behind* the sense perceptions is the sphere of the Spirits of Form (the Elohim), of the higher Spirits, the so-called Dynamis, of the Kyriotetes, and so on. These, then, are the three kingdoms behind the world of the senses.

When modern physics becomes natural philosophy it indulges in the fanciful idea that behind the world of the senses are the whirling atoms. But that is just a fantastic, materialistic notion. The truth is that in that sphere weaving colours and tones are in play; this is because the Spirits of the higher Hierarchies hold sway there, in the colours, the tones and so forth.



Before the 4th Christian century the Spirits of Form held sway, not only in the impressions of the sense-world, but, above all, also in the thoughts. The thoughts now pass over to the Archai. These Beings are, however,

nearer to man than the Spirits of Form, for their realm lies between man and the world of the senses; only, because they are by nature supersensible, he is not aware of them. Then come the Archangeloi, then the Angeloi, then man himself, and then animals, plants and minerals.

So during the period I have indicated, this great, all-embracing, mighty deed lies behind the scenes of world-history: the thoughts which are in the things and which man draws out of the things, are no longer solely the possession of the Exousiai, the Elohim, but of the Archai.

Now it is a fact in the evolution of the universe that together with the advance of spiritual Beings, certain individual spiritual Beings of the Cosmos always remain behind. [note 1] Thus in the general advance of spiritual Beings during this epoch, that is to say, the first centuries of Christendom, certain Spirits of Form remained stationary at their former level.

What does this mean? It means that certain Spirits of Form could not bring themselves to surrender the world of thoughts to the Archai; they retained it for themselves. And so, among the spiritual Beings who hold sway over human happenings, there are the normally evolved Archai in possession of the world of thoughts as well as backward Spirits of Form, backward Elohim Beings, who still retain some sway over the world of thoughts. Hence in the stream of spirituality holding sway above humanity, the Archai and the Spirits of Form, the Elohist Beings, work together. The position is therefore as follows a man who through his karma is rightly qualified, receives the impulses at work in his thinking through the Archai. The result is that thinking, although it remains objective, becomes his personal asset. He elaborates the thoughts more and more as his own personal possession. Other individuals do not reach this point; they take over the thoughts either as the legacy bequeathed by their parents and ancestors, or accept them as conventional thoughts prevailing in their national or racial community, and so forth.

To this supersensible fact which I have sketched for you is to be traced the whole interplay between individual personalities — who appear more and more frequently in that era of vanishing antiquity and the dawning Middle Ages — and those currents of thought which sway whole groups of men. This trend becomes apparent in actual geographical areas. Certain spiritually minded personalities in the Near East, belonging to Arabian culture, were the first to be influenced by the Archai, the Primal Powers. The gift of these thought-impulses spread especially across Africa, over to Spain, to the whole of Western Europe. This great stream of thought moves across Africa, through Spain, also influencing Southern Italy, and up into Western Europe. It is a highly stimulating current of thought, stemming from the impulses described. This current of thought lays hold of the Arabian-Spanish culture which then, at a much later period, still exercises a strong influence upon thinkers such as *Spinoza*, for example. It is an influence which still persists in nature-knowledge and can be observed in the thought-impulses of *Galileo*, *Copernicus*, and others. Whereas the impulses of the Archai are contained in these currents of thought, and in what becomes history as a result of them, we also see, forcing its way into world-happenings everywhere, trends which lie more under the influence of the backward Spirits of Form, who now, on their side, send impulses into men. And again we see a different stream of thought and happenings moving from Asia towards Europe. This current of thought found its extreme expression only later on, when the Turkish hordes surged over from Asia.

Thus European life from the 4th century A.D. onwards is the scene of a continuous spiritual struggle. The Archai contend with the backward Exousiai, the Spirits of Form who had remained behind, for the possession that had once been rightfully allotted to them in the course of world-history. Everything that happened in the Middle Ages in a West-to-East direction and also in an East-to-West direction, all the surging migrations of the peoples, all the mutual antagonisms and hostilities from the Hunnish wars to the Turkish wars, from the tribal migrations to the Crusades, where everything always takes either a West-to-East or an East-to-West direction — all this is the physical, the historical reflection of a spiritual struggle taking place behind the scenes of world-history. Historical happenings on Earth can be understood in their reality only when we see them as reflections of what is being enacted in the supersensible, spiritual world between the Beings of the Higher Hierarchies.

Thinking of one aspect of this fact, we can speak, to begin with, of two currents or streams. One which I

shall mark *yellow* in the diagram, brings about the manifold movements again from West to East; the other stream presses forward and again back, so that these two streams constantly interpenetrate. A reflection of what was taking place in the spiritual world is to be seen in the struggles arising from migrations of the peoples, in the struggles whereby ancient culture was partially destroyed but in which that culture was permeated now by *human individuality*.

We can devote ourselves to the following study, by asking: What would have resulted from civilization if the different peoples had not begun their migrations, surging over into Europe from Asia and frequently settling in Europe, and if in these wanderings the factor of individual personality had not asserted itself — many a time with violence?

We see how within these migrations, whole tribes were permeated by a common spirit. But if we follow history we find that everywhere within these separate, yet homogeneous tribes inspired by one common spirit — Ostrogoths, Western Goths, Lombards, Heruli, Franks, Marcomanni, and so on — single personalities were stirred by the impulses of individuality. Everywhere we see happenings which on the one side represent the continuing stream of the impulses of the old, no longer really lawful Spirits of Form, and on the other, the now lawfully established Spirits of Personality, the Archai.

If history were related accurately, with more attention given to the influence of spiritual forces in what is for the most part described merely as tribal warfare, then it would be clear how these two forms of thought-impulses in humanity actually dominated life in the days of the folk migrations.

As I said, we can reflect as follows: What would European civilization have become if those partly barbaric peoples had not surged over from East to West and with the youthful vigour of personality in individuals had not poured down into the outworn Graeco-Roman world of culture?

On the other side we may ask: What kind of European civilization would these partly barbaric tribes have been able to inaugurate if what was contained in Graeco-Roman civilization, having been taken over by the Archai, the Spirits of Personality, had not been inculcated into it?

That is in truth tremendously interesting. If we consider the Greeks, indeed even the Romans, we see quite clearly that their thoughts — their scientific, aesthetic, political and social thoughts — are unmistakably derived from the influences coming from the Exousiai, the Spirits of Form. We need only look — not with the crude vision of modern historical treatises but with somewhat finer perception — at persons such as Pericles, Alcibiades, or even Sulla, indeed even Hannibal, although the hallmarks of personality are strong in him, and then also at Caesar — we need only think of these individuals and we shall certainly find that thoughts hold sway in them still as cosmic forces, as something instinctive.

This is because their thoughts come from the Spirits of Form. Then a personality appears who stands with his soul in the conflict between the newly empowered Spirits of Personality and the Spirits of Form who were no longer in authority. The personality whose soul is entangled in the conflict, is Augustine, the Catholic Church Father. I have described the struggles of his soul to you from many different sides. When, however, we regard these struggles as the earthly reflection of a cosmic, supersensible happening, we see in this individual, who in his youth inclined to Manichaeism, who then became in the strictest sense an orthodox Roman Catholic believer — we see in this spectacle of a soul torn hither and thither, the earthly image, the earthly reflection of a cosmic happening behind the evolution of humanity. Augustine turned to the Manichaeans while his soul was still influenced by the impulses of the Spirits of Form. These impulses brought to his soul treasures from earlier ages but these treasures were no longer suitable for souls belonging to his time. Through the good and splendid fruits of culture which had come to him from the backward Spirits of Form, however, he was prevented from receiving with the full potentiality of his own personality the new form of thoughts that could be imparted by the Archai, the Spirits of Personality, the Beings who had now assumed the rulership of the thoughts. And he could accept this new state of things only by surrendering unconditionally to the dogma of the Church.

A personality such as Augustine can always be characterized from two sides. From the viewpoint of earthly existence we can look simply at the personality and see how the soul-forces battle one with another. But we can also contemplate the case from the other side of earthly existence and take account of how such a personality is guided and led by the divine-spiritual Powers by the higher Hierarchies. Then, if we adopt the earthly viewpoint we learn to know a human personality as he lives on the Earth. If, however, we adopt the other viewpoint, the supersensible viewpoint, we can recognize in what way such a personality is a messenger of the spiritual world. In point of fact, man is always that. Here on Earth man is an earthly being and can be regarded as such. It is no bar to the freedom of this, his earthly existence, that he is, at the same time, pervaded by the forces of the super-earthly world — not guided and led, but impelled by them and so at the same time is a messenger of the supersensible Powers.

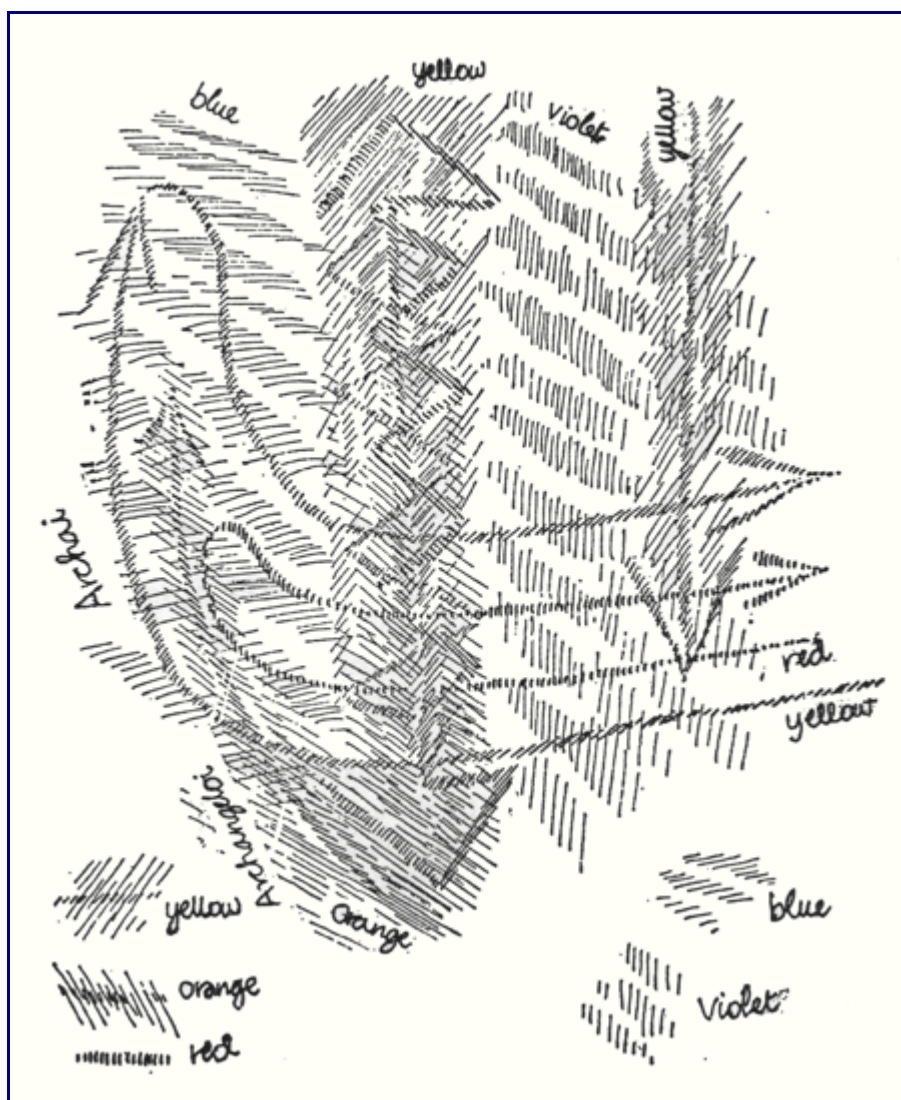
And again, in a different form, we see this interaction between the backward Spirits of Form who look for their ‘picked troops’ so to speak, chiefly over yonder in Asia and invariably dispatch them to Europe, and the newly empowered Spirits of Personality, the Archai, who have already advanced more towards the West and ever and again strive to repel the influences emanating from the backward Spirits of Form.

In later times this confused West-to-East and East-to-West fluctuation of the earthly reflection of higher spiritual impulses confronts us in the Crusades. Study how the Crusades develop, to begin with out of a certain impulse connected entirely with the Archai, the Spirits of Personality, and study what really powerful purposes led to the Crusades. Then study how the Crusaders succumb more and more to mass-opinions and how the suggestive power of these mass-opinions increases. The farther the Crusaders advance from West to East, the more firmly is the individual captured by mass-opinions. And then, when the Crusaders come into the sphere of Asiatic life, mass impulses spread a cover over what had been implanted by single individualities into other single individualities.

We see how men lose their personality We see how the soul-qualities of the Crusaders degenerate in the East. Under the sway of the mass-suggestions to which they have succumbed, they cannot develop the good, moral impulses they brought with them. They become morally decadent. And this moral decadence of good and earnest men who have travelled from West to East, allows the impulses which press from East to West and are rooted in Mussulman and Turk, to gain the ascendancy.

Thus in the Crusades we see the second fluctuation in world history of a conflict from East to West and from West to East — a conflict that is the reflection of the other, the spiritual struggle between backward Spirits of Form and normally progressive Archai, Spirits of Personality.

The whole situation would eventually have been like this. — If we are looking at Europe, in the West the impulses of the Spirits of Personality (blue in diagram) would have spread increasingly, although one-sidedly, and in the East the impulses of the backward Spirits of Form (violet). You may take what I am sketching for you today together with other viewpoints which I have already spoken of here on the subject of these streams of civilization. In the supersensible realm conditions are in constant interplay and we can only gradually understand them by studying impulses of the greatest variety.



But the situation did not remain like this. Certainly, if we go back to the very early Middle Ages, up to the time of the Crusades, we may say: In that epoch things were as I have sketched them here. But then another event came more and more into play — I mean in the supersensible world — namely, that not only have Spirits of Form remained behind, not only have the Archai advanced, but, as always happens in the hierarchies of the supersensible world, while certain spiritual Beings make normal progress, there are also certain Beings who overstep the goal.

Thus we see that in the West, and indeed from the South upwards (red arrow, left, in diagram) backward Archangeloi intervene in the whole movement. So that here (above) we have Archai at their rightful level, but here (below) Archangeloi who have remained behind at earlier stages, who are actually backward Beings of earlier stages, who have remained Archangeloi when they could already have been Archai. That is the nature of these spiritual Beings.

And so we see that in Western Europe, normal Archai and abnormal Archangeloi — if I may use this pedantic expression — work together to an increasing extent. Geographically speaking, the Archangeloi take a South-to-North direction, whereas the Archai and the backward Exousiai (Spirits of Form) take the West-to-East and East-to-West direction. In this way we find historical and geographical circumstances formed on Earth as reflections of the conflicts and collaborations between higher spiritual Beings.

All that happens in Western Europe — one may indeed say to this very day — can be understood as a reflection of the collaboration between normal Archai and abnormal Archangeloi and abnormal Archai-Beings who have a strong influence on men because they are near them; especially do they instil into men an emotional relationship to their language, that emotional relationship which as you may gather from the first lecture has very great significance for them. The whole nature of man is very strongly affected by the incursion of these Archangeloi Beings who play such an important rôle in man's relationship to language. What holds men together through language, makes them appear fanatically united through language, becomes intelligible as an earthly reflection when the supersensible facts behind it are known.

Now conditions on the one side or the other become less pronounced or more pronounced in the different epochs. In the West we find a preponderance of the normal Archai, in the South a preponderance of the impulses of the abnormal Archangeloi. It is quite possible to characterize the historical life of men and peoples from the viewpoint of the supersensible happenings.

Further, it must be said that what would have happened in the East was essentially modified through the fact that the backward Spirits of Form who are naturally very powerful, were strongly influenced by the normally developed Archangeloi working from North to South. Something deriving especially from the Turks, Mongols and other such peoples, dominated as they were by the backward Spirits of Form, by Elohist Beings, thrust itself, as it were, into that wild turmoil and commotion; something coming down from the North mingled with it, something derived — if I may use the expression — from good Archangeloi who are very near to man, who instil into every individual human soul something that quashes the group spirit which actually stems from backward Spirits of Form.

Again it is the case that in different epochs of world-history, the turmoil of a terrible, impersonal, unindividualized group spirit holds sway; in other epochs individualities gain the upper hand. If someone would present the remarkable history of Russia in this way as a reflection of the collaboration of spiritual Beings of the higher Hierarchies, tremendous light would be shed on what occurs in particular epochs of this history.

We have, then, in the West (see diagram) a stream flowing from South to North which mingles with the stream from West to East; and here too, a stream from North to South also intermingles with the stream from West to East. But these streams spread out again and later on we have a South-to-North stream that is continually being forced into zig-zag oscillations by the West-to-East impulses (diagram). And, working together with and into these streams there is the North-to-South current which again is forced into zig-zag oscillations by the West-to-East impulses (orange). This drawing-together of the two streams that have already taken definite shape occurs at a later period of European evolution, at the time when the struggles connected with the Reformation begin.

There we see how a North-to-South stream — but always intermingled with one from West-to-East bearing within it the strong forces of the normal Archai — presses into what had remained behind from the earlier impulses flowing over from Asia from the backward Spirits of Form. And, because it is connected with the Spirits of Form, something arises in an elementary way but nevertheless belongs to the normal impulses of human evolution.

Study everything that on the one side streams from North-to-South from the typical thinking of evangelical Protestantism but then becomes involved in the most violent, belligerent controversies, and study too what comes up from the South as countercurrents which again lead to warlike controversies. Study, for example, the stream of evangelical Protestantism having its main direction from North-to-South, and the Catholic-Jesuit stream with its main direction from South-to-North, and then you will be able to observe the complicated interplay of what takes place on Earth as a picture of the higher spiritual conflicts in the supersensible world.

And the outcome of this is something which as Anthroposophists you must be able to assess. From modern accounts of the Thirty Years' War — which Schiller amended only slightly, particularly those of the early events

— it is known that the religious conflict in Prague led to the episode when the excited people forced their way into the Town Hall, threw the two politicians Martinitz and Slawata and then the confidential secretary Fabricius out of the window. (As you know, nothing happened to them because they fell on a refuse-heap consisting entirely of scraps of waste paper. It was not what in the ordinary way would be called a refuse-heap but was just a heap of scraps of paper, for at that time it was not customary to use a waste-paper basket ; scraps of paper were just thrown out of the window.) Eventually, then, an excited crowd threw those politicians after the scraps. ... If one begins at that point and follows up the happenings — well, it is like a fruitless wandering over the map of Europe: here, one side is victorious, there, the other; here, some principedom is invaded, there, a General marches in that direction, and so on and so forth. It is like rambling over the map of Europe, no matter whether the route is sketched or merely described. In school one is always in despair about such extremely important happenings as the Thirty Years' War because on the basis of the usual historical accounts one can only narrate in such a way that the pupils will soon forget it again, for it is all a sheer jumble. There is nothing to give direction to individual trains of thought. If, however, we look for the truth of the situation, we see behind the external reflection those North-to-South, South-to-North streams which are also constantly crossed by West-to-East currents.

We see in what comes from *Wallenstein*, in what then comes down from the North, from *Gustavus Adolphus* and so forth, in all this we see that what happens externally in history is, so to speak — again I do not say led and guided — impelled by the supersensible forces behind the events. In spite of this, however, men are *free beings*, although natural impulses also play a part in their deeds. We cannot say that a man becomes unfree because when he looks out of the window and sees that it is raining, he takes his umbrella with him and opens it outside; he is adapting himself to the nature-forces. With the activities of his soul and Spirit man stands within the realm of spiritual impulses, within the nexus of the spiritual forces; yet he remains a free being.

But what takes place on the plane of world-history can be grasped only when it is grasped in the light of the supersensible realities behind it. We can then perceive the concrete impulse given to world-historical events by spiritual Powers, whereas by speaking only of an abstract Divinity no true vision is possible.

Those who speak only of an abstract Divinity must actually — since they are bound to think of this Divinity as operative everywhere — seek it, let us say, in a Turkish battle of the Middle Ages, both on the side of the Turks and also on the side of those against whom the Turks were fighting! Thus the abstract Divinity is there at war with itself, engaged in a self conflict.

When spiritual Beings whose mutual relationships arise, as I have shown, from the fact that certain tasks pass over from one group to another but also that certain groups lag behind, others reach normal stages, others again storm forward — when we realize that in the spiritual world there is a multiplicity of Beings struggling against each other yet able to be mutually helpful, only then does it become possible, without being guilty of inconsistencies, to apply human concepts to happenings taking place behind the scenes of world-history in the supersensible world.

Concrete insight then becomes possible. We perceive how, in the West, unauthorized Archangeloi intervene in authorized activity of the Archai and how, in consequence, deterioration of the good elements takes place continually in the struggles involved. We see how, in the East, Archangeloi working for the good as helping, protecting Spirits, neutralize what would otherwise have developed through the backward Spirits of Form in a way unworthy of full humanity. And when these two streams come together we see how in Middle Europe the incessant squabbling between Reformation and Counter-Reformation assumes the dimension reached by these forces in the Thirty Years' War and in the subsequent conflicts.

Our study will be twofold: we study the individual human being but not alter the manner of orthodox science, seeing only that this muscle is situated here, that muscle somewhere else, this bone here, that nerve there ... no, we study the whole man in his physical make-up as a reflection of the supersensible reality; and we know that the plane of thought belonging to the physical man as he stands on Earth was worked upon, in

conjunction with the Spirits of the higher Hierarchies between death and a new life, by the individual himself who incarnates on Earth. Thus we study the individual man as a mirror-image of a supersensible archetypal human figure.

And secondly we study what happens in history as the reflection of an event enacted behind the scenes of history in the supersensible world, where great hosts of supersensible Beings enter into ‘social relationships’ — if I may use earthly terms — with each other, just as men do on Earth. Only the actions of these super-earthly social Beings are such that their impulses play in upon the Earth and come to expression in the actions of men.

It is particularly important for men of the present day to perceive in detail how man is a reflection of the supersensible, and how historical events are also reflections of the supersensible. This is the only path by which man can find his way back again to the divine-spiritual world. Purely abstract ideal of a Divinity are still able to influence those who have not begun to perceive and think in the sense of modern spiritual life. But the number of the latter constantly diminishes and the number of those who are willing to perceive and think will increase all the time. These people must be led back once again to the religious life. This can succeed only if the concretely real operations of the spiritual world are placed before the eyes of their souls, if they are not presented with an abstract, generalized thought of a Divinity about which nothing is truly conveyed but is referred to merely by an all-embracing word, with the details not understood.

And so, my dear friends, one of the tasks which anthroposophical knowledge has, and ought to have at the present time, has once again been indicated from yet another point of view.

Notes:

Note 1. See the lecture-course entitled The Mission of Folk Souls. (Rudolf Steiner Press).

Lecture V

18th March 1923.

By considering in retrospect what has been presented in the last lectures concerning happenings, facts and actions in the supersensible worlds — it was all more or less supplementary to my little book, *The Spiritual Guidance of Man and Mankind* — you will understand that it is essential to realize that in our time a mighty event is taking effect. It is the event of which I said that it belongs essentially to the 4th century A.D. and it consists in the transference of rulership of the cosmic thoughts from the Spirits of Form to the Spirits of Personality, the Archai or Primal Powers. If we are mindful of the whole import, the cosmic import of this significant event, we may say: it consists in giving men in the course of their evolution what should rightly become theirs in our present Fifth post-Atlantean epoch, the epoch of the evolution of the Consciousness Soul, namely, inner freedom, the possibility for the individual to act from his own inner self. We know, of course, that human evolution on Earth was in essentials a kind of preparation for this very epoch, that the natural foundation had first to be laid down in man, so that within the sphere of what this foundation has enabled him to become, his soul might progress towards freedom. How is this connected with the supersensible event previously characterized?

If we picture this event in broad outline we can say: on the one side, from our survey of the supersensible world, we realize that the outstanding spiritual leaders of mankind are the Beings whom we must call Spirits of Personality, Archai, but those Archai who have been vested with rulership of the cosmic thoughts by the Exousiai, the Spirits of Form. These Archai to whom man in his evolution owes the possibility of formulating thoughts through the inner efforts of his own soul, are hampered in their activity by those Beings who, as Exousiai, as Spirits of Form, have remained behind at an earlier stage of evolution; they are Beings who, as Spirits of Form, have not ceded rulership of the cosmic thoughts. And now, in this epoch of the Consciousness Soul in which we have been living since the 15th century A.D., man is confronted with the great choice in some one of his incarnations definitely to decide for freedom or, which is the same thing, to have the possibility of this freedom through turning to the legitimate Archai.

We do indeed see, in our own age, how men strive to free themselves from those spiritual Beings who, as Exousiai, were unwilling to cede rulership of the cosmic thoughts. What part these Beings play in the present phase of the evolution of humanity will be clear to us when we realize what rôle was justifiably played in earlier times by the Exousiai who were then undergoing normal development.

In earlier times men did not unfold their thoughts as they have to do today. They did not unfold their thoughts by inner activity, inner effort. They unfolded thoughts by devoting themselves to the contemplation of external Nature and just as we perceive colours and sounds today, they simultaneously perceived the thoughts. But in still earlier ages, when men gave themselves up to instinctive, unconscious clairvoyance, they received, together with the clairvoyant pictures, *thoughts* as a gift from the divine-spiritual worlds. Men did not work out their thoughts; they received them. It was inevitably so in olden times.

Just as the child must first develop his physical nature, must first lay a foundation for what he can learn only in later life, so humanity as a whole could achieve the inner, active development of a world of thoughts only when this world of thoughts had first penetrated from outside into the whole nature of man.

This period of preparation had to be lived through. But during it man could really never say that he was qualified to become a free being. For, as you can see from my *The Philosophy of Freedom*, the basic condition of human freedom is precisely that man shall unfold his thoughts himself in inner activity, and that out of these self-evolved thoughts which in my book I have called 'pure thoughts', he shall also draw his moral impulses.

Such moral impulses, springing from the soil of man's own being, did not and could not exist in the earlier epochs of the evolution of humanity. Moral impulses had then to be imparted together with the thoughts, which were, so to speak, God-given, like commandments that were unconditionally binding and made a man unfree.

You will find this aspect of the subject presented in the *The Philosophy of Freedom*: the transition of mankind from bondage by commandments which exclude freedom, to action out of moral intuition which includes freedom.

Now the Spirits of Form are Beings who always work from outside when they bring about something in man. All stimuli from outside that cause a man to work on his own being bring to expression the deeds of the Spirits of Form. And it was definitely the case that as long as the Spirits of Form instilled the cosmic thoughts into man, the thoughts either came to him from stones, plants or animals as perceptions, or else rose up from instincts and impulses within him. In those days men floated, as it were, on the waves of life, and the waves of life were thrown up — but also calmed in so far as they brought thoughts — by the Spirits of Form. It was from outside, therefore, that there came to man what he then laid hold of in his inmost soul. Hence in those olden times man's feeling for his Gods was such that he turned primarily to them when seeking to find the causes of world-happenings and of his own life. When a man spoke of the Gods he spoke as though he was seeking to find in them the causes of his own existence on Earth, and of the manifestations of nature on Earth. He always looked back to the Gods as the primary causes of things. Whence came the world? Whence came I myself? These were the great religious questions of an earlier humanity.

If you study the ancient myths, you will always find, in the biblical story of Creation too, references to Genesis-myths, because men were seeking primarily for the origin of the world, but actually stopped short at this point in their search.

The whole mood and attitude of the human soul were due to the fact that in the world of his thoughts man was dependent upon the Spirits of Form. Until the 4th century A.D. and in its after-effects right on into the 15th century, the Spirits of Form were, so to speak, fully authorized in the world-order — if I may use this expression — to rule over and direct the cosmic thoughts and to promote thinking, the unfolding of thoughts, in man from outside.

Since that period things have changed. Since then the Exousiai, the Spirits of Form, have ceded the rulership of the cosmic thoughts to the Archai. But how do the Archai exercise this rulership? It is no longer as if they themselves were ruling over the thoughts, as if they were laying them into man from outside; they make it possible for man to evolve these thoughts himself. How can this be? It can come about for the reason that we men have all passed through a number of lives on Earth. In those olden times, when it was right for the Exousiai to bring the thoughts from outside, men had not lived through as many lives on Earth as is now the case. They could not yet, even when they awoke the impulse for it in themselves, produce activity of their own in order to engender the power of thoughts within themselves. We live today in such and such an earthly incarnation. And if only we have the necessary will for it — for it depends upon the will — we can find in ourselves the force to produce our own world of thoughts, an individual world of thoughts, as I have also described it in the *The Philosophy of Freedom*. Such is the Progress consisting of the transference of the rulership of thoughts by the Spirits of Form to rulership by the Spirits of Personality.

The Spirits of Form drew these thoughts out of the cosmic reservoir of thoughts, in order to instil them into men from outside. Man took the cosmic thoughts into himself and willynilly felt like a creature propelled forward in the Hoods and waves produced in the cosmos by the Spirits of Form. The world of thoughts within the cosmos transmitted its harmony to man himself. But man was an unfree being within the cosmos! Today he has acquired the freedom to work out his own thoughts but these thoughts would all remain hermits in the cosmos if they have not been taken from and brought back again into the cosmic harmony. And in our epoch this comes to pass through the Archai.

Here the foundation is laid for the solution of that immensely significant historic cleavage that has come about in modern times and has plunged human souls into such infinite confusion. Do we not perceive this cleavage? From other points of view I have often told you that man learns, on the one hand, that the whole cosmos is permeated by a nature-order, that this natureorder also plays into man's own being, that there was once

an archetypal nebula out of which sun and planets took shape, and then man himself. Do we not see on the one hand the system of cosmic laws of nature to which man feels himself yoked? And on the other hand, do we not see how man, in order to preserve his true human dignity, is urged, in his capacity as a being arising out of nature, to quicken in himself the thought of a moral world-order so that his moral impulses may not fly off and be scattered in the universe but have reality?

In the course of the 19th century this cleavage has again and again resulted in a certain philosophical hair-splitting. Think of those religious conflicts which, within Protestantism, are allied with the school of *Ritschl*. Most people know nothing of these religious-philosophical conflicts as such, for they have taken place within the narrow framework of the theological or philosophical schools. What goes on within this narrow framework, however, does not remain within its bounds. It is not important whether you or humanity in general know what Ritschl thought about the moral-divine world-order, or about the personality of Jesus. But what such people have thought in the course of the 19th century about the personality of Jesus flows down and persists in the teachings given to children from six to twelve years old. That will become, and indeed has become, a universal attitude of soul. And although men do not realize it in full clarity it is nevertheless present in them as vague feelings, as dissatisfaction with life; and it then passes over into action that must eventually bring about an era as chaotic as that in which we are now living. This is the anxious question facing modern humanity; it arises because man is obliged to say to himself: Here is the world of natural law, having issued from the primal nebula, reaching eventually total entropy, and therefore heading towards a condition where everything of the nature of soul and Spirit will have become submerged in a world which lacks all mobility and must inevitably become a great cemetery. All moral ideals proceeding from the individuality of man would have perished.

People do not acknowledge this today because they are not honest enough to do so. But all that they get from modern civilization would inevitably lead them to suffer on account of this immensely significant cleavage in their world-view, to suffer — only they do not realize it — from being subject to a natural world and also from being obliged to assume the existence of a moral world, yet having no power, because of the modern outlook, to ascribe any reality to moral ideas.

It was not so for an older humanity. An older humanity felt that its moral ideas came from the Gods. That was in the days when the Exousiai, the Spirits of Form, instilled the thoughts into man — including, of course, moral ideas. At that time man knew that even if the Earth did indeed perish, the divinespiritual Beings who draw the world-thoughts out of the cosmos would be there in the future. Man knew that it was not he who made the thoughts, that they were there in the same way as processes of Nature are there; they must therefore always have been in existence, like the external processes of Nature.

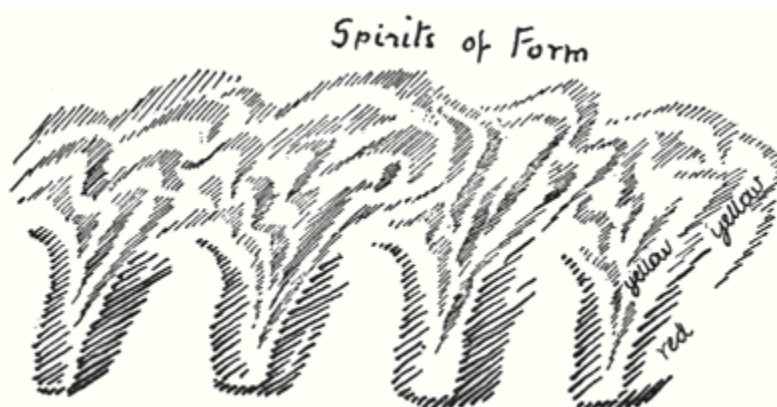
We must be quite clear that many people — in greater and greater numbers — simply cannot come to terms with life. Some admit this to themselves — they are possibly the best. Others do not admit it, and the world-chaos into which we have fallen is due to their actions.

All the chaos, the disorder that exists today, is the direct consequence of this inner cleavage, this ignorance of the extent to which the moral world has reality. Men prefer to blunt their understanding of the great world-problems since they are unwilling to force themselves to admit where the cleavage actually lies. They prefer to ignore it.

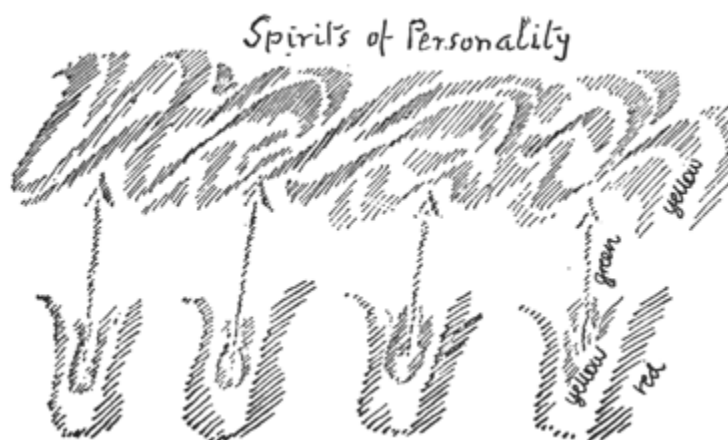
Now the cleavage cannot be healed by what is today called civilization. It can be healed only on the basis of a spiritual world-outlook sought by way of Anthroposophy. Man comes to realize the existence of Archai who have now received the task in the cosmos of linking the thoughts of man — which now arise in isolation in the soul — to the world-processes in due arrangement.

In a grand and impressive way man again finds the foundation for the moral world-order. How does he find it? He could not become free if he were incapable of feeling: You unfold your thoughts out of your own individuality; you are yourself the elaborator of your thoughts.

But this at once implies that we have wrested our thoughts away from the cosmos. In ancient times it was like this:



If I draw the ocean of cosmic thoughts (yellow) and man diagrammatically (red), then I must indicate what passed into each man as his share of the world of cosmic thoughts. He clung to the world of cosmic thoughts — it came down into him. That this could take place was due to the action of the Spirits of Form.



In the course of evolution this has changed. We have here the ocean of cosmic thoughts (yellow) but the rulership of it has passed to the Archai. If I indicate individual men (below, red), their thoughts are detached; they are no longer connected with the cosmic thoughts. This is inevitable, for man could never be a free being if he did not wrest his world of thoughts away from the cosmos. He must wrest his thoughts away in order to become a free being but then they must be linked again with the cosmos. What is necessary, then, is that the rulership of these thoughts — which is not a direct concern of human life (green) but of the cosmos — should be exercised by the Archai, the Spirits of Personality.

But now, if we turn to the moral aspect of these thoughts we shall say to ourselves: When we enter the spiritual world — either through the gate of death or in the Earth's future or whenever it may be — when we enter the spiritual world we shall meet the Spirits of Personality, the Archai. We shall then be able to perceive what it has been possible for them to do with our thoughts which, to begin with, for the sake of our freedom were isolated within ourselves. We shall then recognize our worth and dignity as men from what the Spirits of Personality have been able to do with our thoughts. And cosmic thought turns directly into moral sensibility,

moral impulsion.

Moral impulsion can arise anywhere today from Anthroposophy if rightly grasped — only it must be grasped by the whole being of man.

If we grasp this thought, the thought of responsibility to the normally evolving Archai, if we truly grasp our spiritual function in the cosmos, then we shall also find the place that rightly belongs to us in our epoch; we shall be true men of our time. And then we shall look in the right way at what, indeed, is forever around us: not a world of sense alone but also a spiritual world. We shall regard the Archai as the spiritual Beings to whom man must be responsible if, as a member of humanity, he is to undergo his evolution rightly in the course of earthly time. We shall realize that in the present age what was once the necessary world-order is still opposed by all that has remained from those Spirits of Form who are still intent upon ruling over the cosmic thoughts in the old way. And this is the most important concern of civilization in our time. The deeper talks of man today consist in this: through a right attitude to the Archai, the Spirits of Personality, to become truly free so that he may also adopt the right attitude to the Spirits of Form who today are not within their rights when they strive to exercise rulership over the cosmic thoughts as formerly, but were once the legitimate rulers. On the one hand we shall find what makes life in the world difficult, but we shall also find everywhere ways out of these difficulties. Only we must seek for these ways as *free individuals*. For if we have no will to achieve a free development of thoughts, what could the Archai possibly make of us?

What is important in our age is that man should have the resolute will to be a free being. In most cases he still does not will it and so has to accommodate himself to the idea. It is still difficult today for a man to wish to be a free being. What would please him most would be to wish what he likes and that the right Spirits would be there to carry out his wishes in an invisible, supersensible way. Then he would perhaps feel free, feel his dignity as man! We need only wait for one or two incarnations — not such a very long time, until about the year 2800 or 3000 — and then in our next incarnation, when looking back on the earlier one, we should never be able to excuse ourselves if we had confused human freedom with the furtherance of human comfort by indulgent Gods !

Today man does exactly this — he confuses freedom and indulgence of benevolent Gods with his love of ease and his wishes for comfort. There are still many people today who wish that there were benevolent Gods to carry out their wishes without much assistance from themselves. But as I said, we need only wait for the year 2800 or 3000 and in a subsequent incarnation we shall thoroughly despise such an attitude. Today, if we develop a truly moral attitude of mind this must be allied with a certain moral strength, with a genuine desire for freedom — inner freedom in the first place; outer freedom will soon follow in the right form if the will for inner freedom is present. But to this end it is essential to perceive exactly where the unauthorized Spirits of Form are active.

Well, they are active everywhere. I could imagine — the human intellect has such a strongly Luciferic tendency — that there may be people who say: Yes, it would certainly be much more sensible for the divine ordering of the world if these backward Spirits of Form were not causing havoc, indeed if they were not there at all ! I advise individuals who think like this also to consider as sensible people whether they could nourish themselves without at the same time filling their intestines with unpleasant substances. The one process is simply not possible without the other. Similarly it is not possible in the world for the things upon which the greatness and dignity of man depend to exist without their correlates.

Where, then, do we see backward Spirits of Form in action? Today in particular we see them active in the national chauvinisms which have spread over the whole world wherever the thoughts of men arise, not directly from the innermost core of human nature but out of the blood, out of what comes from the instincts.

In this connection there are two attitudes to nationality One is this: a man scorns the normal Archai and simply lends himself to what the backward Spirits of Form achieve through the nationalities. He then grows up simply as a national, boasting in chauvinistic style of what he has become through having been born with national blood in his veins. His speech is a product of his nationality, his thoughts come to him in the language

of his nationality, the very form of his thoughts too comes from the particular form of this language. He grows from the soil which the Spirits of Form have made out of the nationalities.

Now suppose there is someone who is willing to fall in with the backward Spirits of Form and is at the same time an extremely ambitious individual, placed by destiny in a special position, then — with an eye to the national chauvinisms — he may compose ‘Fourteen Points’. He then finds followers who regard Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points as a splendid gift to the world!

Seen truly, what were these Fourteen Points? They were something flung to the world as an inducement to pander to what the backward Spirits of Form were intent upon inculcating into the different nations. The Fourteen Points were directly inspired from that source.

One can speak of all these things on very different levels. Exactly what I am saying today on one level in characterizing the Archai and the Exousiai, I said years ago in order to underline the significance of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, because they have lulled the world in a cradle of illusions, have caused untold disaster and chaos.

Further, we see today how the influence proceeding from these backward Spirits of Form makes itself felt in the one-sided, materialistic world-view of natural science, where there is downright horror — or, better said, an unholy dread — of engaging in real activity of thought. Just picture what a terrible scene an orthodox professor would make if a student in the laboratory were to look into the microscope with the aim of producing some thought. That would never do ! One must carefully record only what external sense-perception presents. People are quite unaware that this presents only half of the reality — the other half being produced through a man's own creative thought-activity. But the present mission of the normally developed Archai must be known and understood. In the science that has been vitiated by the backward Spirits of Form, it is essential that the true mission of the Spirits of Personality shall make itself felt. And there is the greatest possible fear of this prospect today.

You have probably heard the well-known anecdote of how scientific knowledge is obtained by the different nations in accordance with their fundamental character. What happens when it is a question today of learning in orthodox zoology about a camel? How do the different nations set to work? The Englishman makes a journey into the desert and observes the camel. It may take him two years to observe the camel in every set of circumstances but in this way he gets to know its nature thoroughly, describes it, omitting all thoughts — as would be expected; he describes everything without formulating any thoughts of his own. The Frenchman goes to a menagerie where a camel is on show, looks at it and describes the animal as seen in the menagerie. He does not, like the Englishman, get to know the camel in natural situations of its life but describes it as it is in the menagerie. The German goes neither into the desert nor into a menagerie but sits down in his study, gathers together all the thoughts he can educe from what he has learnt, constructs the camel *a priori* and on the basis of this *a priori* construction, describes it. — This is how the anecdote is generally narrated. Moreover it is nearly, very nearly correct; for everywhere one has the feeling that whether a camel is being described, or man himself, or anything else, the description has originated in the ways indicated. One thing, however, is omitted. This alone would have given the right answer: there might be a fourth participant in this threefold anecdote. It matters not whether this hypothetical fourth goes into the desert or whether, having no opportunity to go into the desert or into a menagerie, he studies books. He may even go to a painter of animals and look at pictures in which animals are portrayed with genius. But no matter whether he sees the camel in the desert or in a menagerie or whether he takes the *a priori* descriptions out of books, he is able from what he learns to put this question to the divine-spiritual world-order itself: What is the *real* nature of a camel? The individual who has made this inner effort sees the camel in the menagerie and also how it behaves in the desert; he also perceives what can be gathered from reading different books, perhaps even books containing horribly caricatured, philistine, pedantic descriptions. Nevertheless if he can discern the essential nature of a camel he can still gather the important points from pedantic treatises and all kinds of *a priori* constructions.

What mankind needs above everything else today is to find the way to the spiritual, not, of course, by excluding but by including experience of the world gained through the senses.

Here again we have the indication of what, in every domain of our striving for knowledge, will lead to insight into how the backward Spirits of Form can mislead us, and how a true understanding of the mission of the Spirits of Personality can give us, as men, our rightful place in the epoch in which we are living. And what is most important of all is to inform ourselves about growing children, in order to achieve a true art of education. For a glaring defect in all education nowadays is that people hold fast to what man has become in the course of evolution through the backward Spirits of Form; it is assumed that everything is as it should be.

Now the child's nature revolts against this attitude — thank God, we may say. The grown-up person is content with this state of things, but the child's nature revolts against it; youth above all revolts against it.

Here again we have one of the characteristic features of the modern Youth Movement and one of the points where modern education must, shall I say, become clairvoyant — or at least must allow itself to be fructified by the findings of clairvoyance — so that it may be recognized that when a human being is born nowadays the seed of inner activity of thoughts is born with him. Then if this seed of the inner activity of thoughts is present, we learn one essential thing which men today are for the most part incapable of achieving. Do you know what that is? It is that they cannot become old! And youth would like to have as leaders men who have become old in the true sense. The young do not want to be led by the young — even if they insist that they do, they are deceiving themselves; they would like to have as leaders men who have understood how to grow old in the genuine sense and have brought with them into old age the living seed of the development of thoughts. If youth can perceive this it will follow such leaders, knowing that men have something real to say if they have known how to become old in the right way. But what does youth encounter today? Its own likeness! Men have not understood how to become old and have remained infantile. They know no more than the fifteen and sixteen-year-olds know already. No wonder that the fifteen and sixteen-year olds refuse to follow the sixty- and seventy-year olds who have grown no older than they are themselves. The others have not understood how to bring activity into their old bodies. Youth wants people who have become old in the real way, people who may be old in appearance, with wrinkles, white hair and bald scalps but who, despite old hearts, are fundamentally as young as themselves. Youth wants human beings who have understood how to become old, who therefore in becoming old have increased in wisdom and inner strength.

The problem of the Youth Movement would be easily solved if it were to be grasped in its cosmic significance, if, for instance, fundamental lectures were to be given on the theme: How is it possible in the world today not to remain infantile in ripe old age? There is the real problem.

With those who have become old in the real sense, who have not remained infantile, youth will ally itself, will harmonize quite naturally. But from those who are exactly like itself youth can learn nothing. It simply seems grotesque to a young man, himself perhaps only eighteen years old and possibly not having learnt a great deal — he has of course learnt something — whose hair is still quite dark or fair, who has no wrinkles, still a chubby face, not a beard yet — it seems grotesque to this young person to have to follow someone who is inwardly no older than himself, who looks so funny with his grey hair and bald crown, who has learnt no more than he has himself — but yet it all looks different! That is fundamentally the core of the manifest disharmony between youth and age.

If you take very seriously, in all its significance, what I have tried to express in a humorous way, you will also be able to perceive clearly much that constitutes a great and burning question in modern civilization.

Lecture VI

22nd March 1923

To begin with today we will remind ourselves of the indications I have given you concerning the real nature of human thinking. In the present age, since the well-known point of time in the 15th century, our thinking has become essentially abstract, devoid of pictures and imagery. People take pride in this kind of thinking which as we know, did not begin to be general until the above-mentioned epoch; previously to that, thinking had been pictorial and was therefore a living thinking in the real sense.

Let us remind ourselves of the essential character of thinking as it is today. The living essence of thinking was within us during the period between death and rebirth, before we descended from the spiritual into the physical world. This living essence was then cast off and today, as men of the Fifth postAtlantean epoch, our thinking is the corpse of that living thinking between death and a new birth. It is just because our thinking now is devoid of life that our ordinary-level consciousness as modern men makes it so easy for us to be satisfied with comprehending the lifeless and we have no aptitude for understanding the living nature of the world around us.

True, we have thereby acquired our freedom, our self dependence as human beings but we have also shut ourselves off entirely from what is involved in a perpetual process of 'becoming'. We observe the things around us in which no such process is operating, which are incapable of germination and have a present existence only. It may be objected that man observes the germinating force in plants and animals, but actually he is deceiving himself. He observes this germinating force only in so far as it is the bearer of dead substances; moreover he observes the germinating force itself as something that is dead.

The essential characteristic of this kind of perception is indicated by the following: In earlier epochs of evolution men perceived an active germinal force everywhere in their environment, whereas nowadays they have eyes only for what is dead; they hope somehow to grasp the nature of life too, merely by observing what is dead. Hence they do not grasp it at all!

Therewith, however, man has entered into a quite remarkable epoch of his evolution. Nowadays, when he observes the sense world, thoughts are no longer given to him in the way that applies to sounds and colours. From what I say in the book *Riddles of Philosophy*, you know that thoughts were given to the Greeks just as sounds and colours present themselves to us today. We say that a rose is red ; the Greek perceived not only the redness of a rose but also the thought of the rose, that is to say, he perceived something spiritual. And this perception of the purely spiritual has gradually died away with the rise of the abstract, lifeless thinking that is only a corpse of what thinking was in us before our earthly life.

But now the question arises: If we want to understand Nature, if we want to form a world-conception for ourselves, how are the sense-world outside us and the dead thinking within us to be related to each other? We must be quite clear that when man confronts the world today, he confronts it with lifeless thinking. But then, is there death also outside in the world? There ought at least to be an inkling today that there is not. In the colours, in the sounds, at the very least, life seems to proclaim its presence everywhere! To one who understands the real nature of the senses the remarkable fact becomes clear that although modern man invariably directs his attention to the sense-world alone, he cannot grasp this sense-world by means of thinking, because dead thoughts are simply not applicable to the living sense-world.

Make this quite clear to yourselves. — Man confronts the sense-world today and believes that he should not allow himself to look beyond it. But what does this mean for modern man — not to be willing to look beyond the sense-world? It actually means renouncing all vision and all knowledge. For neither colour, nor sound, nor warmth, can be grasped at all by dead thinking. Man thinks, then, in an element quite other than that in which he actually lives.

Hence it is a remarkable fact that although we enter the earthly world at birth, our thinking is the corpse of

what it was before our earthly existence. And today man wants to bring the two together ; he wants to apply the residue from his pre-earthly existence to his earthly existence.

And it is this fact which since the 15th century has constantly asserted itself in the sphere of thinking and knowledge in the form of doubt of every kind. This is the cause of the great confusion prevailing at the present time; it is this that has allowed scepticism and doubt to creep into every possible mode of thinking; it is this that is responsible for the fact that men today no longer have the remotest concept of what knowledge really is. There is indeed nothing more unsatisfactory than to examine theories of knowledge in their modern form. Most scientists abstain from this and leave it to the philosophers. And in this field one can have remarkable experiences.

In Berlin, in the year 1889, I was once visiting the philosopher *Eduard von Hartmann*, now long since dead. We spoke about questions connected with theories of knowledge. In the course of conversation he said that one should not allow questions connected with theories of knowledge to be printed; they should at most be duplicated by some machine or in some other way, for in the whole of Germany there were at most sixty individuals capable of occupying themselves usefully with such questions.

Just think of it — one in every million! Naturally, among a million human beings there is more than one scientist or, at least, more than one highly educated individual. But as regards real insight into questions connected with theories of knowledge, Eduard von Hartmann was probably right; for apart from the handbooks which candidates at the Universities have to skim through for certain examinations, not many readers will be found for works on the theory of knowledge, if written in the modern style and based on the modern way of thinking.

And so things jog along in the same old grooves. People study anatomy, physiology, biology, history and the rest, unconcerned as to whether these sciences bring them knowledge of reality; they go on at the same jog-trot. But a time will come when men will have to be clear about the fundamental fact that because their thinking is abstract it is full of light and therefore embraces something in the highest sense super-earthly, whereas in their life on Earth they have around them only what is earthly. The two sets of facts simply do not harmonize.

You may ask: did the thought-pictures current in days of old accord more fully with man's nature when his thinking was full of life? The answer is, Yes — and I will indicate the reason to you.

The human being of today is engrossed from his birth to his seventh year in developing his physical body; then comes the point where he is able to develop his etheric body as well — this takes place from the seventh to the fourteenth year. Then from the fourteenth to the twenty-first year he develops his astral body; until his twenty-eighth year the sentient soul; until his thirty-fifth year the intellectual or mind-soul; and after that the consciousness-soul. It can then no longer be said that *he* develops but that he himself is being developed, for the Spirit Self which will evolve only in future ages, already participates to some extent in his development from his forty-second year onwards. And so the process continues.

Now the period from the twenty-eighth to the thirty-fifth year in human life is extremely important. Conditions during this period have altered essentially since the 15th century. Until then, influences had continued to come to man from the surrounding cosmic ether. Because this is no longer the case today, it is difficult to imagine how man could have been influenced by the surrounding ether. Nevertheless it was so. Between their twenty-eighth and thirty-fifth years, human beings experienced a kind of inner revival. It was as though something within them was given new life. These experiences were connected with the fact that in his twenty-eighth year a man was raised to the degree of 'Master' in his trade; it was not until that age that he experienced a revival — of course not in a crude but in a delicate form. He was given a new impulse. This was because the all-encompassing ether-world worked upon him — the ether-world which, as well as the physical world, is all around us.

In the first seven years of life the ether-world worked through the processes operating in the physical body of the human being but it did not work *directly* upon him until his twenty-eighth year when the period of the development of the sentient soul was over. But then, when he entered into the period of the intellectual or mind-soul at that time, the ether worked upon him with a vivifying effect.

This no longer takes place and man would never have achieved independence today as an individual and a personality, had the process continued. This also has to do with the fact that the whole inner disposition of the human soul has changed since those days.

You must now accept a concept that may be extremely difficult for modern thinking to grasp but is nevertheless very important.

In physical life it is quite clear to us that what is going to take place only in the future, is not yet here. In etheric life, however, this is not so. In etheric life, time is, as it were, a kind of space and what will some day be present already has an effect upon what precedes it, as well as upon what will follow. But this should not be a matter for wonder; it is the same in the physical world too.

If we really understand Goethe's theory of Metamorphosis, we shall say to ourselves that the blossom of the plant is already working in the root. And that is indeed so. It is the case too with everything in the ether-world: the future is already working in what has gone before. Thus the fact that man was open to the influences of the ether-world had an effect upon the preceding life back to his birth, chiefly upon his world of thoughts. As a result his world of thoughts was different from the one that is his in the epoch in which we are living today, when the doorway between the twenty-eighth and thirty-fifth years is no longer open, when it is closed. There was a time when men's thoughts were truly alive. They made him unfree but at the same time they gave him a feeling of being connected with his whole environment; he felt himself to be a living member of the world.

Today man feels that he exists only in a dead world. This feeling is inevitable because if the living world were working upon him, it would make him unfree. Only because the dead world requires nothing of us, can determine nothing in us, can give rise to nothing in us — only because it is a dead world that is working in upon us are we free men.

But on the other side we must also understand clearly that precisely because of what man has within him now in complete freedom, precisely through his thoughts, which are dead, he can acquire no understanding of the life round about him; he can understand the death around him — and only that.

Now if there were to be no change in the attitude and mood of man's soul, the discordance in culture and civilization which is becoming more and more apparent, would inevitably increase and the inner assurance and resoluteness of the soul would progressively diminish. This would be even more apparent if men were to pay real attention to the knowledge they glean today from what is said to be irrefutable. But they still do not pay attention. They still content themselves with traditional religious ideas which they no longer understand but which have been propagated. Even in the sciences people content themselves with these ideas. When a man pursues any particular science he generally has no idea, when he begins really to grasp it, that he is still clinging to the old traditions, while the modern ideas which are only dead, abstract thoughts, do not even approach the sphere of the living.

In earlier times, because the ether worked in him, man could also come in touch with the living nature of the sense-world. When he still believed in the reality of the spiritual world, he could also grasp the essential nature of the world of the senses. Today, when he believes only in the world of the senses, the strange thing is that his thoughts, although dead, are now spiritual in the very highest degree! Here there is dead spirit. But man is not conscious of the fact that today he looks into the world with the heritage of what was his before his earthly life. If his thoughts were still living, vivified by the surrounding ether, he could look into the living world of his environment. As, however, nothing comes to him from his environment and he has to rely only on what he has

inherited from a spiritual world, he can no longer understand the physical world around him.

This is apparently paradoxical but for all that an extraordinarily important fact. It provides the answer to the question: Why are modern men materialists? They are materialists because they are too spiritual! They would be able to understand matter everywhere if they could comprehend the life that is present in all matter. But because they confront the life with their dead thinking, men make this life itself into something that is dead and see lifeless substance everywhere. It is because they are too spiritual, because they have within them only what was theirs before their birth, that they become materialists. A man does not become a materialist through knowledge of substance — in point of fact he has no real knowledge — but he becomes a materialist because he does not live on the Earth in the real sense.

And if you ask why hardened materialists, such as *Büchner*, *Vogt* and the rest, have become such out-and-out materialists, the answer is: because they were too spiritual, because they had nothing within them that connected them with earthly life, but only what they had experienced before their life on Earth — and this was dead. This remarkable phenomenon in human civilization, this materialism, is in truth a profound mystery.

Now in the present epoch, because his thoughts are no longer imbued with life from without, from the ether, man can transcend his dead thoughts only by instilling life into them himself. And the only possibility of doing this is by instilling life as conceived in Anthroposophy into his world of thoughts, by imbuing his thoughts with life and then penetrating into the life inherent in the world of the senses. He must therefore vivify himself inwardly. He must himself impart life to dead thoughts through inner activity of soul, and then he will overcome materialism. He will begin to judge everything around him differently. And from this very platform you have heard a great deal about the many possibilities of such judgments.

Let us focus our attention today on a particular subject: the plant-kingdom in our environment. We know that many plants are consumed as foodstuffs by animals and human beings and are worked upon in the processes of nourishment and digestion. In the way generally indicated they can be assimilated into the animal and human organisms. And now we suddenly come across a poisonous plant, let us say henbane or belladonna. What have we there? Suddenly, among the other vegetation, we find something that does not combine with the animal and human organisms as do other plants.

Let us be clear in our minds about the basis of plant-life. I have often spoken about this. Let us picture the surface of the Earth and the plants growing out of it. We know that the physical organization of the plant is permeated by its ether body. But as I have often pointed out, the plant would not be able to unfold if the all-pervading astrality did not contact it from above by way of the blossom (lilac).

The plant has no astral body *within* it but the astrality touches it from above. As a rule the plant does not absorb the astrality but only allows itself to be touched by it. The plant does not assimilate the astrality but towards the blossom and the fruit there is interplay with the astrality which does not, as a rule, combine with the ether-body or physical body of the plant.



In a poisonous plant, however, it is different. In a poisonous plant the astrality penetrates into the actual substance of the plant and combines with it. A plant such as belladonna or, let us say, henbane, hyoscyamus, sucks in the astrality either strongly or more moderately and so bears astrality within itself — in an uncoordinated state, of course, for if it were coordinated the plant would have to become an animal. It does not become an animal; the astrality within it is in a compressed state.

As a result, interaction takes place between what is present in a plant saturated with astrality and the processes of assimilation in the animal and human organisms. If we eat plants that are not poisonous, we absorb not only those constituents of the plant which the chemist works up in the laboratory, not only the actual substance of the plant but also the etheric life forces ; but we must, as I have said here before, destroy the substance completely during the process of nutrition. In feeding an what is living, man must kill it within himself. That is to say, within his own organism he must expel the etheric from the plant-substance.

In the lower man, in the metabolic system, the following remarkable process takes place. When we eat plants, that is to say, vegetable substance — the same also applies to cooked foodstuffs but it is specially marked when we eat raw pears, or raw apples, or raw berries — we force out the etheric and absorb into our own ether-body the dynamic structure which underlies the plant. The plant has a definite form, a definite structure. It is revealed to clairvoyant consciousness that the structure we thus take into ourselves is not always identical with the form we see externally. It is something different. The plant-structure rises up within us and adapts itself to the organism in a remarkable way.

And now something very strange occurs. Just suppose — I must speak rather paradoxically here but it is exactly how things are — suppose you have eaten some cabbage. A definite form (blue in diagram) becomes visible in the lower man as a result, and activity is generated there.



To the extent to which this activity is generated in the lower man through the eating of cabbage, the actual negative of the process makes its appearance in the upper man, the head-man. So having sketched the form which appears in the lower part of the organism, I now sketch in the upper man a hollow form (blue, red).



It is actually the case that the eating of the cabbage produces in us a definite form or structure and that the negative of it appears in our head.

And into this negative we now receive the impressions of the external world. This is possible because we have the hollow space within us — I am of course speaking approximately — and all nutritive plants have this effect.

If we have eaten something that is usually known as a foodstuff, the cohesiveness of its form is only strong enough to persist for twenty-four hours, in the course of which we must continually be dissolving it; one period of waking and sleeping dissolves it and it must again and again be formed anew. This is what happens when we have eaten nutritive plants — plants which have a physical body and an etheric body in their natural growth and do not allow the astrality to do more than play around them.

But now let us suppose that we drink the juice of henbane. Henbane is a plant that has sucked astrality into itself and consequently has a much more strongly cohesive form. In the lower man, therefore, there is a much firmer form which cannot easily be dissolved and which actually asserts its independence! Consequently the corresponding negative is more pronounced. Now suppose some human being has a brain with a structure that is not properly maintained. He tends to lapse into clouded, somnolent states because his astral body is not established firmly enough in the physical body of his brain. He drinks the juice of henbane and that produces in him a firm plant-form which in turn gives rise to a strong negative. And so by energizing the etheric body of his lower body and bringing into it a firm form through the taking of henbane, clearly defined thoughts may arise in a person whose brain was, so to speak, too soft, and the clouded state may pass away. Then, if in the rest of his

organism he is strong enough — he may often be ordered this medicine for his condition — if he is strong enough to rouse the corresponding life-forces into activity and his brain is again in order, a poison such as this may help him to overcome his tendency to lapse into somnolent states.

Belladonna, for example, has a similar effect. Let me indicate in a sketch the effect it produces.

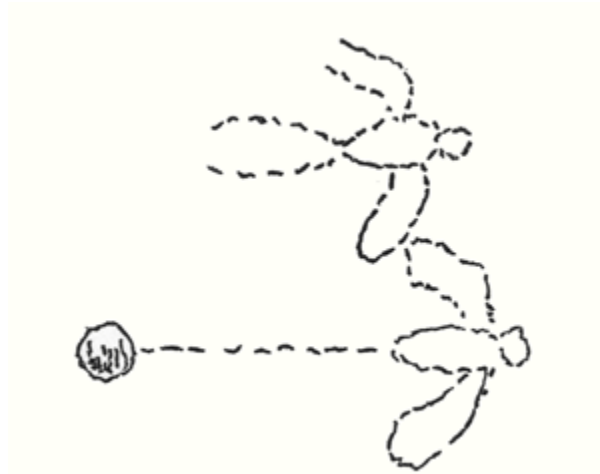
By taking belladonna the etheric body is reinforced by strong ‘scaffolding’. Hence when belladonna is taken in a suitable dosage which the patient can stand — after all, one can be cured by a remedy only if one can stand it — then a strong scaffolding is built, as it were, within the etheric body of the lower man. This strong scaffolding produces its negative in the head. And upon this reciprocal action of positive and negative depends the healing process we expect from belladonna.



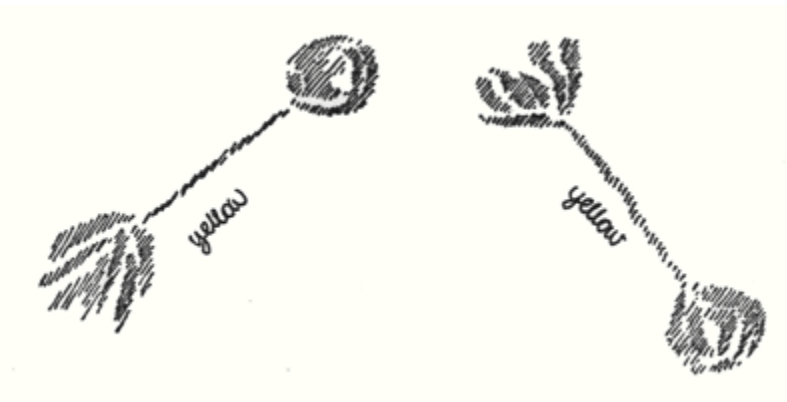
You must, however, be clear that when dealing with such effects, the factor of spatial distance can be ignored. The man of today, with his lifeless but massive intellect, imagines that if something is going on in his stomach it can get into his brain only if it visibly streams upwards. This, however, is not the case; processes in the lower body generate processes in the head as their counterpart and spatial distance does not come into consideration. If one is able to observe the etheric body, it can be seen distinctly how a form lights up in the etheric body of the lower body (red in diagram), while in the etheric body of the head, now darkened, the form is reproduced in negative.

You can perceive for yourselves that Nature everywhere tends to produce such phenomena. You know that a properly formed wasp has a kind of head in front, a kind of hind-quarter, and wings. That is a properly formed wasp.

But there are also wasps which look like this (lower form in diagram). They have a sting and drag their hind-quarters after them: the gall-flies. And even in the physical sphere, this appendage between the front part of the body and the hind-quarter is reduced to a minimum; the sting is greatly reduced.



As soon as one enters the spiritual realm, no visible sting is necessary any longer. And when you come across certain beings in the elemental world — you remember that I spoke to you not long ago about the elemental kingdoms — you may see, for example, some being ... then there is nothing ... far away there is a different being. And gradually it dawns on you that the beings belong together; where the one goes the other also goes. So you may find yourself in the remarkable position — in the elemental world it can indeed be so — of discovering that here there is one part of an elemental-etheric organism, and there the other part; then one part may have turned round, but when this happened the other part cannot move directly to a new position but must follow the path taken by the first.



So you see, for those substances which neither the human nor the animal organism can immediately destroy, which produce a stronger and more lasting scaffolding, it is a matter of finding a connection with what, in a quite different part of the human organism, can also work constructively and with healing effects.

This gives you a vista of how the world can again become living and be revealed as such to man. Today, having only a heritage from the spiritual world, man has no possibility of approaching the living environment. He will, however, one day understand it again, he will again perceive how physical thinking is related to the whole universe. Then the universe will help him to discover why things are connected in this way or in that, why, let us say, the relation of a non-poisonous plant to the human and animal body is different from that of a poisonous plant. Only in this way is a re-vitalizing of the whole of human existence possible.

Now this may cause the modern comfort-lover to say: the men of old were far better off than we are, for the surrounding ether still worked upon them and they had living thoughts; they still understood such matters as the essential difference between poisonous and non-poisonous plants. — You know, of course, that animals still understand this difference, for they have no abstract thoughts to detach them from the world. Hence the animals

are able through instinct to distinguish poisonous from non-poisonous plants.

Yes, but it must be emphasized over and over again that under such conditions man would never have been able to exercise his freedom. For what keeps us inwardly living — even in our thoughts — robs us of freedom. However paradoxical it may seem, with respect to the thoughts belonging to earlier earthly lives, we must each become an empty nothingness; then we can be free. And we become a nothingness when we receive into ourselves as corpses the living thoughts which were ours in pre-earthly existence, receive them into ourselves, that is to say, in their condition of ‘non-being’. Therefore with our dead thoughts we really go about as blanks in our waking life on Earth as far as our soul-life is concerned. And only out of this state of blankness or nothingness can our freedom become reality.

This is quite comprehensible. But we can understand nothing truly if we have nothing living within us. We can understand what is dead, but that will not bring us a single step further in our living relation to the world. And so, while safeguarding our freedom in face of the interruption in understanding that has come about, we must achieve new understanding by beginning now, in earthly existence, to give life to our thoughts by the power of our *will*. At every moment we can distinguish between living and dead thoughts. When we rise to the level of pure thinking — I have spoken of this in the book, *The Philosophy of Freedom* — we can be free men. If we fill our thoughts with feeling we shall, it is true, leave freedom aside, but in compensation we shall renew our connection with the environment. We participate in freedom through the consciousness that we are always capable of approaching nearer and nearer to pure thought, and in acts of moral intuition draw from it moral impulses.

Thereby we become free men; but we must first regulate our inner life of soul, the inner disposition of our soul, through our own deeds on Earth. Then we can take the results of those deeds with us through the gate of death into the spiritual world. For what has been achieved by individual effort does not go to waste in the universe.

I may have demanded difficult thoughts from you today but you will realize on reflection that we come nearer to understanding the world by learning to understand man, and especially the relation of physical man — the apparently physical man for he is really not a physical man alone, being permeated always by the higher members of his organism — to the other aspects of the physically manifested world, as we have learnt to know it from the example of poisonous plants.

Lecture VII

23rd March 1923

The essential characteristic of our present age in evolution is to be recognized in the fact that the thoughts of man on Earth are abstract and dead, persisting in us as a residue of the living nature of the soul in pre-earthly existence.

This stage of development leading to abstract, that is to say, to dead thoughts is connected with the acquisition of consciousness of freedom within the process of evolution. We will give special attention today to this aspect of the subject by studying the course taken by evolution in the post-Atlantean era.

You know that after the great Atlantean catastrophe, the gradual distribution of the continents on the Earth as we know them today took place and that on the dry land, or within the areas of the dry land, five successive civilization- or culture epochs have evolved, epochs which in my book *Occult Science: an Outline* I have called the ancient Indian, ancient Persian, Egypto-Chaldean, Graeco-Latin and our present Fifth culture epoch.

These five epochs are distinguished by the fact that the constitution of man, in the general sense, is different in each of them. If we go back to the very early culture-epochs this constitution is also expressed in the whole outer appearance of man, in his bodily features. And the nearer we come to our own epoch, the more clearly is the progress of humanity expressed in the natural tendencies of the *soul*. Matters relating to this subject have often been described but today I will speak about them from a point of view to which less attention has hitherto been paid.

If we go back to the first, the ancient Indian civilization-epoch which was still partly a direct outcome of the Atlantean catastrophe, we find that in those days a man felt himself to be far rather a citizen of the Cosmos beyond the Earth than a citizen of the Earth itself. And if we study the details of life at that time which, as I have often pointed out, takes us back to the seventh/eighth millennium B.C., it must be emphasised that, not out of intellectual observation — for that was unknown in those days — but out of deep, instinctive perception in that remote past, great importance was attached to the outer appearance, the external aspect of a man. Not that the people of those days engaged in any kind of study of physiognomy — that, of course, was utterly foreign to them. Such a practice belongs to much later epochs, when intellectualism, although not yet fully developed, was already dawning. These men, however, had a sensitive feeling for physiognomy. They felt deeply that if someone had this or that facial expression it indicated certain musical talents. They attached great importance to divining the musical gifts of an individual from his facial expression but also from his gestures and movements, his whole appearance as a human being. In those olden days men did not strive for any more definite knowledge of human nature in general. At that time, if anyone had come to them saying that something should be ‘proved’, they simply would not have known what was meant. It would have troubled them, would almost have given them physical pain; indeed in still earlier times there would have been actual physical pain. To ‘prove’ — that would be like carving someone with knives ... so these men would have said. Why should anything have to be proved? We do not need to know anything so certain about the world that it must first be proved.

This is connected with the very vivid feeling these people still had of having come from pre-earthly existence, from the spiritual world. In the spiritual world there is no such thing as ‘proving’. There it is known that proving is a matter that has meaning on the Earth but not in the spiritual world. The wish to prove something in the spiritual world would seem to indicate a definite norm of measurement : the height of a human being must be such and such ... and then, as in the Procrustean myth, something is cut off from one who is too tall and someone too short is stretched! This is more or less what ‘proving’ would be in the spiritual world. Things there do not allow themselves to be manoeuvred into proofs ; things there are inwardly mobile, inwardly fluid.

To an Indian belonging to the ancient Indian epoch with his vivid consciousness of having descended from the spiritual world, of having simply enveloped himself in this external human nature — to such an Indian it would have seemed highly curious if anyone had demanded of him that something should be ‘proved’. These

people much preferred what we today should call 'divining' because they wanted to be attentive to what was revealed in their environment. And in this activity of 'divining' they found a certain inner satisfaction.

Moreover a certain instinct enabled them to infer cleverness in a man from a face of this or that type; from another face they inferred stupidity; from the stature they inferred a phlegmatic temperament, and so on. In that epoch, divining took the place of what we today would call explanatory knowledge. And in human intercourse the aim of reciprocal behaviour was to be able to infer the moral quality of a man from his attitude of soul; from his movements and gestures, his stature.

In the earliest epoch of ancient Indian existence there was no such thing as division into castes — that came later. In connection with the Mysteries of ancient India there was actually a kind of social classification of men according to their physiognomies and their gestures. This was possible in early epochs of evolution, for a certain instinct prompted men to accept such classifications. What later arose within Indian civilization as the caste system was a kind of schematic arrangement of what had been a far more individual classification based upon an instinctive feeling for physiognomy. And in those olden days men did not feel outraged if they were ranked here or there according to their physiognomy; for they felt themselves to be God-given beings of Earth. And the authority of those from the Mysteries who were responsible for this classification, was absolute.

It was not until the later post-Atlantean civilization-epochs that the caste system gradually developed from antecedents of which I have spoken in other lectures. In the epoch of ancient India there was a deep and strong feeling that the basis of man's being was a divine IMAGINATION.

I have told you a great deal about the existence of a primordial, instinctive clairvoyance, a dreamlike clairvoyance. But in remotely distant times of the post-Atlantean era men not only spoke of seeing dreamlike Imaginations, but they said : In the particular configuration of the physical body of man when he enters Earth-existence there is present a divine Imagination. A divine Imagination becomes the basis of the being who descends to the Earth as man, and in accordance with it he forms his physiognomy and the whole physical expression of his manhood, from childhood onwards.

And so men not only looked instinctively, as I have indicated, at the physiognomy of an individual; they also saw there the Imagination of the Gods. They said to themselves : The Gods have Imaginations and they imprint these Imaginations in the physical human being. — That was the very first conception of what man is on the Earth, as a being sent by the Gods.

Then came the second post-Atlantean epoch, the ancient Persian. The instinctive feeling for physiognomy was no longer as strong as it had been in earlier times. Now men no longer looked upwards to Imaginations of the Gods but to THOUGHTS of the Gods. Formerly it had been assumed that an actual picture of man exists in certain divine Beings before a man comes down to the Earth. Afterwards, the conception was that Thoughts, Thoughts which together formed the Logos — the expression subsequently used — were the basis of the individual human being.

In this second post-Atlantean epoch — strange though it seems, it was so — great importance was attached to whether a human being was born during fine weather, whether he was born by night or by day, during the winter or the summer. There was nothing resembling intellectual reasoning but men had the feeling: whatever heavenly constellation is approved by the Gods, whether fine weather or blizzard, whether day or night, when they send a human being down to the Earth, this constellation gives expression to their Thoughts, to their divine Thoughts. And if a child was born perhaps during a storm or during some other unusual weather conditions, that was regarded by the laity as the expression of the divine Thought allocated to the child.

This was so among the laity. Among the priesthood, which in turn was dependent on the Mysteries, and kept the official register, so to speak, of the births — but this is not to be understood in the modern bureaucratic sense — these aspects of weather, time of day, season of the year and so forth, indicated under what conditions the

divine Thought was allocated to a human being. This was in the second post-Atlantean epoch, the ancient Persian epoch.

Very little of this has persisted into our own time. Nowadays something extremely boring is suggested if it is said that a person talks about the weather. It is considered derogatory to say of anyone nowadays that he is a bore, he can talk of nothing but the weather. — In the days of ancient Persia such a remark would not have been understood ; it was someone who had nothing interesting to say about the weather who would have been regarded as exceedingly boring! And in point of fact it is true that we have lifted ourselves right out of the natural environment if no connection can be felt between human life and meteorological phenomena. In the ancient Persian epoch an intense feeling of participation in the cosmic environment expressed itself in the fact that men thought of events — and the birth of a human being was an important event — in connection with what was taking place in the Universe.

It would be a definite advance if men — they need not merely talk about the weather being good or bad, for that is very abstract — if men were again to reach the stage of not forgetting, when they are relating some incident, to say what kind of weather was experienced, what natural phenomena were connected with it.

It is extremely interesting when, here or there, striking phenomena are still mentioned, as, for instance was the case in connection with the death of *Kaspar Hauser*. Because it was a striking phenomenon, mention is made of the fact that the sun was setting on the one side while the moon was rising on the other, and so forth.

And so we can come to understand human nature as it was in the second post-Atlantean epoch.

In the third post-Atlantean epoch this instinct in men had very largely already died out — the instinct for perceiving the spiritual, for perceiving divine Thoughts in the phenomena of weather — and then men began gradually to calculate, to compute. Calculation of stellar constellations replaced the intuitive grasp of the divine Thoughts of man in the natural order; and when a child was born into the world they calculated the positions of the stars, of the fixed stars and the planets. It was essentially in the third, the Egypto-Chaldean epoch that the greatest importance was attached to the capacity to reckon from the stellar constellations the conditions under which a human being had passed from the pre-earthly into the earthly life.

So there was still consciousness of the fact that man's earthly life was determined by conditions of the extra-terrestrial environment. But now it was necessarily a matter of calculation; the time had come when the connection of the human being with the divine-spiritual Beings was no longer directly perceptible.

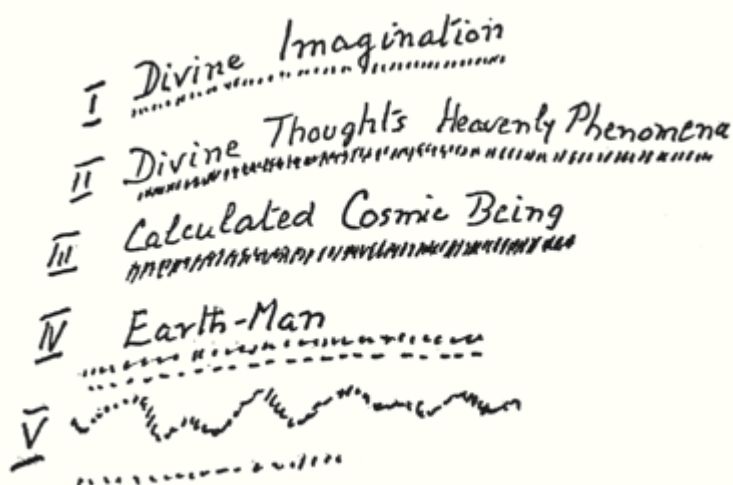
You need only consider how the whole mental process is really external when it is a matter of calculation. Most certainly I am not going to speak in support of the laziness of youth or of the later indifference to arithmetic shown by grown men. But it is a very different matter to give precedence to external modes of thinking which have very little to do with the whole being of man, and are simply arithmetical methods. These methods of calculation were introduced in all domains of life during the third post-Atlantean epoch. But, after all, the calculations were concerned with super-earthly conditions in which Man was at least reckoned to have his rightful abode. Whatever was calculated had been permeated through and through with *feeling*. But calculations today are sometimes thought out, sometimes not even thought out but arrived at simply by the application of method; calculation today is often unconcerned with content, being simply a matter of method. And the absence of content that is sometimes obvious in mathematics because method alone has been followed, is really appalling — I do not say this out of ill-will — but it is terrible. In the Egypto-Chaldean epoch there was still something thoroughly human in calculations.

Then came the Graeco-Latin epoch. This was the first postAtlantean civilization-epoch in which man felt that he was living entirely on the Earth, that he was completely united with the Earth-forces. His connection with the phenomena of weather had already become a matter of mythology. The spiritual reality with which he had still felt vitally linked in the second post-Atlantean epoch, that of ancient Persia, had become the world of the

Gods. Men no longer stressed the significance of climbing Olympus and plunging their heads in the mist veiling the summit; they now left it to the Gods, to Zeus, to Apollo, to plunge their heads in this Olympian cloud. Anyone who follows the myths belonging to this Graeco-Latin culture-epoch will even now have the impression that at one time men felt a relationship with the clouds and with phenomena of the heavens, but that later on they transferred this relationship to their Gods. Now it was Zeus who lived with the clouds, or Hera who created havoc among them. In earlier times man was involved with his own soul in all this. The Greek exiled Zeus — this cannot be stated in drastic terms but it does indicate how things were — the Greek had exiled Zeus to the region of the clouds, to the region of light.

The man of the ancient Persian epoch felt that together with his soul he still lived in that region. He could not have said, 'Zeus lives in the clouds or in the light' — but because he felt his soul to be at home in the realm of the clouds, in the realm of the air, he would have said: 'Zeus lives in me.' The Greek was the first man in the post-Atlantean epoch who felt himself to be wholly a citizen of the Earth, and this attitude too developed only slowly and by degrees. Hence it was in the Graeco-Latin epoch that the feeling of connection with pre-earthly existence first died away. In all the three earlier post-Atlantean civilization-epochs men were keenly aware of their connection with the pre-earthly existence. No-one could have confronted them with a dogma denying pre-existence. In any case such dogmas can be formulated only if there is some prospect of their being accepted. One must be sensible enough to lay down as a dogma only that for which a number of people are prepared through evolution. The Greeks, however, had lost all awareness of pre-earthly existence and they felt themselves to be entirely men of the Earth — so much so that although they felt themselves to be still permeated by the divine-spiritual, yet they were thoroughly at one with all that belongs exclusively to the Earth.

One must have a feeling for the reason why such mythology could be evolved for the first time in the Greek period, after the connection of man's own soul with super-earthly phenomena had been lost. In the first post-Atlantean epoch man felt himself to be the product of divine Imagination which he conceived as being present in the sphere of soul and spirit (diagram). Later he felt himself to be the product of divine Thoughts manifesting in the phenomena of the heavens, in wind and weather, and so forth. Then he gradually lost the consciousness which once led him into the cosmic expanse but had narrowed more and more into the confines of the Earth. Then came the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, when through calculation man was recognized as a cosmic being. And then came the fourth epoch, the Graeco-Latin epoch, when man became wholly a citizen of the Earth.



If we look back once again into the third post-Atlantean epoch, we come to a time when, although men calculated the conditions of their heavenly existence, at the same time they still had very strong feelings about *where* they were born on Earth. This is a particularly interesting fact. Except for calculation, men had forgotten their heavenly existence and in any case the calculation had first to be made. It was the age of astrological calculations. But a man who perhaps had no data at all for the time of his birth, nevertheless felt the effects of

calculation. One who was born in the far south felt in what he could experience there, the effects of the calculation; he attached more importance to this than to the calculation itself. The calculation was different for one who was born in the north. The astrologers of course could work out the calculation itself but the man felt the effects of it. And how did he feel these effects?

He felt them because the whole natural tendency of his soul and Body was bound up with the place of his birth and its geographical and climatic characteristics ; for in this third postAtlantean culture-epoch man felt himself to be primarily a creature of breath. His breathing in the south was not the same as it was in the north. He was a being of breath. Of course, outer civilization was not advanced enough to enable such feelings to be expressed ; but what was living in the human soul was a product of the breathing-process; and the breathing process in turn was a product of the place on Earth where a man was born, where he lived.

This was no longer so among the Greeks. In the Greek age it was not the breathing-process or the connection with the locality on Earth that was the determining factor. In the Greek age it was the tie of blood, the tribal feeling and sentiment that gave rise to the group-soul consciousness. In the third postAtlantean epoch, group-souls were felt to be connected with the earthly locality. In that epoch men pictured to themselves wherever there is a holy place, the God who represents the group soul is within it; the God was attached to the locality. This ceased during the Greek period. Then, together with the Earth-consciousness, with the attitude of soul bound to the Earth through man's feelings, sentient experiences and instincts, there began the feeling for kinship in the blood. Man had been brought right down to the Earth. His consciousness no longer led him to Look beyond the Earth; he felt that he belonged to his tribe, to his race, through his blood.

And what is our own position in this fifth post-Atlantean epoch? This is almost obvious from the diagram I have sketched in accordance with the facts. Yes, we have crept into the Earth. We have been deprived of the super-earthly forces; we no longer live and should no longer live, with the purely earthly forces which are astir in the blood; we have become dependent upon subterranean forces, sub-earthly forces.

That there are indeed such forces you may learn from what is done with potatoes. You know, of course, that in the winter the peasants bury their potatoes in trenches; then they keep alive, otherwise they would perish. Conditions under the Earth are different; there the summer warmth is maintained during the winter.

Now the life of plants in general can only be understood when we know that up to the flower the plant is a product of the previous year. It grows out of the Earth-forces; it is only the flower that needs the actual sunlight.

What, then, does it signify for us as human beings that we become dependent upon sub-earthly forces? It is not the same for us as for potatoes. We are not laid in trenches in order that we may thrive during the winter. Our dependence upon sub-earthly forces signifies something quite different, namely, that the Earth takes away from us the influence of the super-earthly. We are deprived of this influence by the Earth. In his consciousness, man was first a divine Imagination, then a divine Thought, then the result of calculation, then Earth-man. The Greek felt himself to be a man belonging altogether to the Earth, living in the blood. We, therefore, must learn to feel ourselves independent of the super-earthly ; but independent, too, of what lies in our blood.

This has come about because we no longer live through the period between our twenty-first and twenty-eighth years in the same way as men did in earlier times; we no longer have the second experience described yesterday, we no longer have living thoughts as the result of consciousness influenced by the super-earthly, but we have thoughts which have no inner vitality at all and are therefore dead. It is the Earth itself, with its inner forces, which kills our thoughts when we become Earth-men.

And a remarkable vista ensues: as Earth-men we bury what is left of man in the physical sphere; we give over the corpse to the Earth-elements. The Earth is also active in the process of cremation; decay is only a slow process of burning. As to our thoughts — and this is the striking characteristic of the Fifth post-Atlantean period — when we are born, when we are sent down to the Earth, the Gods give over our thoughts to the Earth. Our

thoughts are buried, actually buried, when we become men of Earth. This has been so since the beginning of the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch. To be possessed of intellect means to have a soul with thoughts from which the heavenly impulses have been taken away by the Earth-forces.

The characteristic of our manhood today is that in our inmost soul, precisely through our thinking, we have united with the Earth. On the other hand, as a result of this, it is only now, in the Fifth post-Atlantean culture-epoch that it is possible for us to send back to the Cosmos the thoughts which we imbue with life through our earthly deeds in the way described at the end of yesterday's lecture.

Evolutionary impulses of this nature lie at the very roots of the significant products of human culture. And our feelings cannot but be profoundly stirred by the fact that at the time when European humanity was approaching this Fifth postAtlantean epoch, poetic works such as *Wolfram von Eschenbach's* 'Parsifal' appeared. We have often studied this work as such but today we will direct our eyes of soul to something that is to be found there as a majestic sign of the times. Think of the remarkable characteristic that now becomes evident, not only in Wolfram, but wherever the poetic gift comes to expression in men of that period.

A certain uneasiness is perceptible concerning three stages in the evolution of the human soul. The first trait to be observed in a human being when he comes into this world, when he submits himself to this life and is living in a naive connection with the world — the first trait to be observed is *simplicity, dullness*.

The second, however, is *doubt*. And precisely at the time of the approaching Fifth post-Atlantean epoch, doubt is graphically described. If doubt is close to the heart, a man's life (or soul) must have a hard time [note 1] — such was the feeling prevailing in those days. But there was also the feeling: man must wrestle his way through doubt to *blessedness*. And blessedness was the word used for the condition created when man has brought divine life again into thoughts that have become ungodly, into dead thoughts that have become completely earthly. Man's submergence in the earthly realm — this was felt to be the cause of the condition of doubt; and blessedness was felt to be a break from earthly things through the vitalizing of thoughts.

SIMPLICITY — DULLNESS
DOUBT
BLESSEDNESS

This was the gist of the mood prevailing in the poetic works of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, when man was struggling onwards to the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch. The dawn of this epoch was felt more intensely at the time than it is today, when men are weary of thinking about these things, when they have become mentally too lazy. But they will have to begin again to think deeply about such matters and to set their feelings astir, otherwise the ascent of mankind would not be possible. And what does that really mean? The Earth acts as a *mirror* for man; he is not intended to reach a sub-earthly level. But his lifeless thoughts penetrate into the Earth and apprehend death, which pertains to the Earth-element only. However, the nature of man himself is such that when he imbues his thoughts with life he sends them out into the Cosmos as mirror-pictures. And so all the living thoughts that arise in man are seen by the Gods glittering back from evolving humanity. When man is urged to make his thoughts come alive he is being called upon to be a co-creator in the Universe. For these thoughts are reflected by the Earth and stream out again into the Universe, must make their way again out into the Universe.

Hence when we grasp the meaning of the evolution of mankind and the world, we feel that in a way we are led back again to the epochs that have already been lived through. In the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, man's status on Earth was arrived at by means of calculation; but for all that he was always brought by this means into connection with the surrounding world of stars. Today we proceed historically, starting from man; man becomes the starting-point for a study which you will find presented in the book, *Occult Science: an Outline*, where we have actually sent out living human thoughts and noted what they have become when we follow them in the cosmic environment as they speed away from us, when we learn to live with these living thoughts in the cosmic

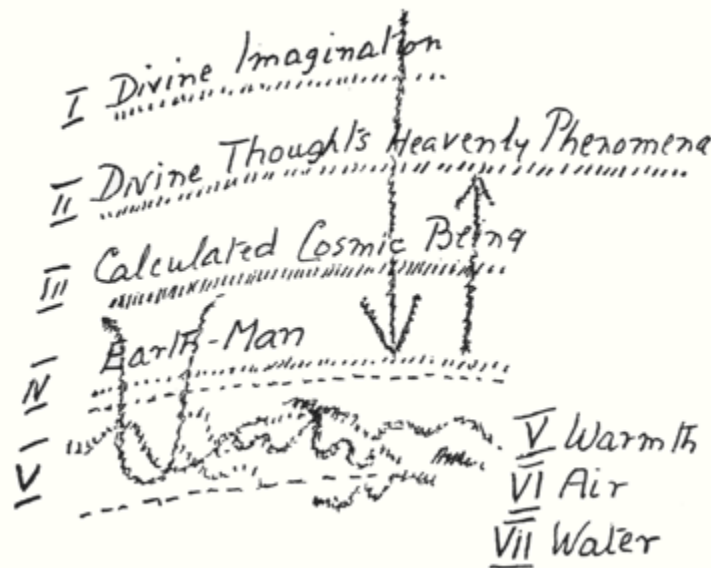
expanse.

These processes indicate the deep significance of the fact that man has come to the stage of having dead thoughts, that he is, so to speak, in danger of uniting completely with the Earth.

Let us follow the picture further. Genuine Imaginations make this possible. It is only deliberately thought-out Imaginations that lead us no further. Think for a moment of a mirror. We say that it throws the light back. The expression is not quite accurate, but in any case the light must not get behind the mirror. There is only one way in which this could happen and that would be if the mirror were broken. And indeed, if man does not vitalize his thoughts, if he persists in harbouring merely intellectualistic thoughts, dead thoughts, he must destroy the Earth.

Admittedly, the destruction begins with the most highly rarefied element: warmth. And in the Fifth post-Atlantean epoch man has no opportunity of ruining anything other than the warmth-atmosphere of the Earth through the ever-increasing development of purely intellectualistic thoughts. But then comes the Sixth post-Atlantean epoch. If by that time man has not been converted from intellectualism to Imagination, destruction would begin, not only of the warmth-atmosphere but also of the air-atmosphere, and if their thoughts were to remain purely intellectualistic, men would poison the air, ruining, in the first place, all vegetation.

In the Seventh post-Atlantean epoch it will be possible for man to contaminate the water, and if his exudations were to be the outcome of purely intellectualistic thoughts, they would pass over into the universal fluidity of the Earth. Through this universal fluidity of the Earth, the mineral element of the Earth would, in the first place, lose cohesion. And if man did not vitalize his thoughts, thereby giving back to the Cosmos what he has received from it, he would have every opportunity of shattering the Earth.



Thus the life of soul in man is intimately connected with natural existence. Intellectualistic knowledge today is a purely Ahrimanic product, aiming at blinding humanity to these things. If a man is persuaded that his thoughts are merely thoughts and have nothing to do with happenings in the Universe, he is being deluded into believing that he can have no influence upon the evolution of the Earth, and that either with or without his collaboration the Earth will at some time come to an end in some such way as foretold by physical science.

But the Earth will not come to a purely physical end; its end will come in the way brought about by mankind itself.

Here again is one of the points where we are shown how Anthroposophy connects the moral world of soul with the physical world of the senses, whereas today no such connection exists and modern theology even considers it preferable to regard the moral sphere as being entirely independent of the physical. And philosophers today who drag themselves about, panting and puffing, with backs bent under the burden of the findings of science, are happy when they can say : Yes, for the world of nature there is science; but philosophy must extend to the Categorical Imperative, to that about which man can know nothing.

These things today are often confined to the schools and universities. But they will take effect in life itself if mankind does not become conscious of how soul-and-spirit is creative in the physical-material realm and of how the future of the physical material realm will depend upon what man resolves to develop in the realm of soul-and-spirit. With these basic principles we can become conscious on the one side of the infinite importance of the soul-life of mankind, and on the other side of the fact that man is not merely a creature wandering fortuitously over the Earth, but that he belongs to the whole Universe.

But, my dear friends, right Imaginations give rise to what is right. If man does not vitalize his thoughts, but is more and more apt to allow them to die, then his thoughts will creep into the Earth and, in the end, he will become an earthworm in the Universe, because his thoughts seek out the habitations of the earthworms. That too is a valid Imagination.

Human civilization should avoid the possibility of man becoming an earthworm, for should that happen the Earth will be shattered and the cosmic goal that is quite clearly within the scope of human capacities, will not be reached. There are things which we should not merely take into our theories, into our abstract speculations, but deeply into our hearts, for Anthroposophy is a concern of the heart. And the more clearly it is grasped as a concern of the heart, the better it is understood.

Notes:

Note 1. With a slight variation Dr Steiner was quoting the opening couplet of Wolfram von Eschenbach's 'Parsifal'. In the original the lines are as follows:

Ist zwîfel herzen nâchgebûr,
Daz muoz der sêle werden sûr.

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