

Lesser Guardian of the Threshold

The **lesser guardian of the threshold** we first have to pass if we want to pierce the veil of our inner soul life in order to come to the direct perception of the spiritual world. Even when we cross the threshold with death, he stands at our side as the Angel of Death. In a slightly different form, the lesser guardian can also appear as a doppelgänger or double of man.

„There is not only one, but essentially two, a "lesser" and a "greater" "guardian of the threshold". Man encounters the former when the connecting threads between will, thinking and feeling within the finer bodies (the astral and etheric bodies) begin to unravel in the way indicated in the previous chapter. Man comes face to face with the "greater guardian of the threshold" when the dissolution of the connections extends also to the physical parts of the body (namely, first of all, the brain).“ (Lit.:GA 10, p. 193)

The lesser guardian is woven out of our good and bad deeds and appears as an initially dark, gloomy figure that makes a demand on the spiritual disciple to transform him into a luminous figure. Unconsciously, we meet him every time we wake up from sleep. Then he denies us insight into the inner nature of our lower members and diverts our consciousness to the sensual outer world and to intellectual thinking. He thus protects us from the frightening sight of our lower, gloomy, dragon-like nature. As long as man is not yet mature enough to bear this sight, he is repelled.

In Christian initiation, this experience occurs at the third stage, the Crowning with Thorns:

„In the course of the stage which in Christian initiation is called the crowning with thorns, a fearsome phenomenon occurs which is called the "guardian of the threshold" and which could also be called the appearance of the double. The spiritual being of man, formed from his will currents, his wishes and his intellectual abilities, then appears to the initiate as an image in the dream consciousness. And this image is sometimes repulsive and terrifying, for it is a result of his good and bad qualities and his karma; of all this it is the pictorial personification on the astral plan. This is the terrible ferryman in the Book of the Dead of the Egyptians. Man must overcome him in order to find his higher self. The guardian of the threshold, a phenomenon of clairvoyant seeing down to the most ancient times, is the actual origin of all the myths about the battle of the hero with the monster, of Perseus and Heracles with the Hydra, of St. George and Siegfried with the dragon.

The premature onset of clairvoyance and the sudden appearance of the double or the guardian of the threshold may lead to madness the one who has not followed all the preparations and perceived all the precautions imposed on the disciple.“ (Lit.:GA 94, p. 56f)

Literature

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