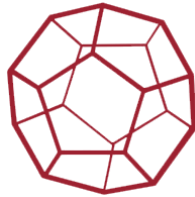


The Being of Man and His Future Evolution

GA 107



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by

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Preface

Throughout our life, we have to struggle with questions that cannot be answered on the basis of our experience or with our ordinary thinking. Spiritual science can help us penetrate to a realm where new possibilities open up to address these questions. These lectures offer fascinating insights into the spiritual nature of everyday matters such as forgetting, laughing and weeping, different types of illnesses, and rhythms in the bodies of the human being. Steiner shows how we can become, through our own efforts, "co-creators" in evolution.

Nine Lectures, 2nd November 1908 to 17th June 1909, given in Berlin. Translated by Pauline Wehrle from shorthand reports unrevised by the lecturer. The original texts of these lectures are contained in the series of 19 lectures entitled *Spiritual-Scientific Anthropology/Knowledge of Man* (in German, *Geisteswissenschaftliche Menschenkundein*).



I Forgetting

Berlin, 2nd November 1908

Today let us look at one of those aspects of spiritual science that show us how well qualified anthroposophy is to throw light on life in the widest sense. Not only does this knowledge help us understand everyday life, it also throws light on the great span of human existence that includes the time between death and a new birth.

Spiritual science can be of great help to us just where daily life is concerned; it can help us solve many problems and show us how to cope with life. Those people who cannot see into the depths of existence fail to understand many things they are encountering every moment of the day. The questions that cannot be answered out of sense experience mount up, and, being unanswered, remain problems that have a disturbing effect on life, breeding discontent. Being discontented in life, however, can never serve man's evolution nor his true welfare. We could enumerate hundreds of such life problems that are far more deeply illuminating than people usually imagine.

A word that contains many such problems is the word 'forgetting'. You all know it as the word indicating the opposite of what we call the retaining of a mental image or a thought or impression. Certainly you will all have had some distressing experiences with what is conveyed by the word forgetting. You will all know the annoying experience you often have if one or another idea or impression has, as we say, slipped your memory. You may then have wondered why such a thing as forgetting has to belong to the phenomena of life.

Now it is only with the help of the facts of occult life that you can get answers to a thing like this, that is, answers that are of any value. You know, of course, that memory or remembering has something to do with what we call man's etheric body. So we can also assume that the opposite of memory, namely forgetting, will have something to do with the etheric body. Perhaps we are justified in asking if there is any significance in the fact that the things a human being has had at some time in his life of thought can also be forgotten? Or do we have to be satisfied with

characterising forgetting in a purely negative way, as so often happens, and say that it is a defect of the human soul not to be able to remember everything all the time? We shall only throw light on forgetting by turning our attention to its opposite and considering the nature and significance of memory.

If we say that memory has something to do with the etheric body, we ought to ask ourselves how it happens that the etheric body acquires this task of retaining the impressions and thoughts in man, when the etheric body is present in plants where it has an essentially different task? We have often spoken of the fact that in contrast to the stone a plant has its whole material nature permeated by an etheric body. And this etheric body in the plant is the principle of life in a restricted sense, and also the principle of repetition. If the plant were only subject to the activity of the etheric body, then, beginning from the root of the plant, the leaf principle would repeat indefinitely. It is due to the etheric body that the parts of a living entity repeat again and again, for it is the etheric body that wants to keep on reproducing the same thing. That is why life has such a thing as so-called propagation, the bringing forth of its own kind, for this is due fundamentally to an activity of the etheric body. Everything depending on repetition in man or animal is attributable to the etheric principle.

The repetition of one vertebra after another in the spine comes from this activity of the etheric body. The termination of the plant's growth at the top, and the gathering up of its whole growth in the blossom is due to the astrality of the earth descending from without into the growth of the plant. The fact that in man the vertebrae of the spine widen and become the hollow bones of the cranium arises through the activity of man's astral body. So we can say that everything which brings things to a conclusion is subject to the astral principle and all repetition to the etheric principle. The plant has this etheric body, and man has it too. Of course there can be no question of memory in the plant. For to assert that the plant has a kind of unconscious memory with which it notes what the leaf it produced was like, grows a little further and then produces the next leaf on the pattern of the first, this kind of assertion leads to the strange illusions seen today in a recent trend of natural science. Some people even say that heredity is due to a kind of unconscious memory. We could almost call this bringing nonsense into natural scientific literature, for to speak of memory in the plant is actually sheer dilettantism on a higher level.

It is with the etheric body, which is the principle of repetition, that we are concerned. To be able to grasp the difference between the plant's etheric body and man's, which, in addition to the qualities of the plant's etheric body also has the capacity to develop memory, we shall have to become clear about the fundamental difference between a plant and a human being. Imagine planting a seed in the earth; out of it a quite definite plant will arise. From a grain of wheat a wheat stalk and ears will grow, and out of a bean will come a bean plant. You will have to admit that the plant's development is in a certain way irrevocably determined by the nature of the seed. It is true that the gardener may bring his influence to bear on it and alter and improve the plant by means of all sorts of horticultural methods. But that is really an exception to the rule, and is only of minor significance compared with the fact that a particular seed will produce a plant of a definite shape and growth. Is this also the case with man? Up to a point this is certainly so, but only up to a certain point. When a human being arises out of the embryo we see that his development is also enclosed within certain limits. Negroes come from negro parents, white children from white parents, and we could add various other examples to show that human development, just like the plant's, is also enclosed within certain limits. This limit, however, only extends as far as the physical, etheric and astral nature. Certain things can be traced in the permanent habits and temperamental nature of a child that show similarities with the temperament and instincts of his ancestors. But if the human being were just as enclosed within the limits of a certain form of growth as the plant is, then there would be no such thing as education, as the development of soul and spiritual qualities. If you imagine two children who have different parents but who are very similar with regard to ability and external characteristics, and then imagine that one of these children is neglected and does not have much education, while the other is carefully brought up and sent to a good school where his capacities are properly developed, you could not possibly say that this development of the child's capacities was already there in embryonic form as with a bean. The bean grows from the seed in any case without our needing to educate it. That belongs to its nature. Plants cannot be educated, but human beings can. We can pass something on to the human being and put something into him, whereas we cannot put anything of the kind into a plant. Why is this? Because the etheric body of the plant always has a certain finite number of inner laws which unfold from one seed to the next and have a definite round beyond which they cannot go. Man's etheric body is different. Besides the part that is used for growth, which is that part of his being that is also enclosed within certain limits like the plant, man's etheric body has as it were

another part too, a free part, which does not have a natural use unless the human being is taught all kinds of things through his education, and things are thereby put into his soul which this free part of the etheric body deals with. So there is actually a part of man's etheric body that is not used by his organic nature. Man keeps this part of the etheric body for his own use; he uses it neither for growth nor for his natural organic development, but keeps it as a free organ with which he can take in the ideas of education.

Now the first thing that happens in this process of acquiring ideas is that man receives impressions. Man always has to receive impressions, for the whole of education is based on impressions and on the co-operation between etheric body and astral body. To receive impressions we need the astral body, but in order to retain these impressions, so that they do not disappear again, we need the etheric body. Even the minutest, apparently most trivial memory-picture needs the activity of the etheric body. To perceive an object you need the astral body, but to remember it when you turn your head away you have to have the etheric body. The astral body is necessary for perception, but to have an idea, a mental image, you need the etheric body. Even though very little activity of the etheric body is necessary for the retaining of ideas, so little that it hardly need be taken into account until it comes to permanent habits, inclinations, changes of temperament and so on, you still need the etheric body for remembering. It must be there for you to so much as remember one single mental image. For all retaining of mental images is based in a certain sense on memory.

Now through the impressions of education, through man's spiritual development, we have put all sorts of things into this free etheric organ, and we can now ask ourselves whether this free etheric organ has any significance at all for a person's growth and development. Yes it has! The older a man becomes — not so much in his youth — all that has been incorporated into the etheric body through the impressions of education gradually begins to participate in the whole life of the human body, also in an inward way. And the best way of forming an idea of this participation is to get to know a fact that is not usually taken into account. People think that what is of a soul nature is not of much importance for man's life in general. Yet the following can happen: Suppose a man gets ill simply because he has been exposed to an unsuitable climate. Now let us imagine that this man could be ill in two different situations. One might be that he does not have much to work upon in the free part of his etheric body. Let us assume that he is a lazy fellow, on whom the outside world does not make much impression, and whose education has presented great difficulties, because things go in through one ear and out through the

other. A person like this will not have so much to help him recover as another person who has an alert, lively mind, and who in his youth took in a great deal and worked well, and has therefore provided well for the free part of his etheric body. It will, of course, still have to be proved by external medicine why the process of recovery meets with greater difficulties in the one than in the other. This free part of the etheric body that has grown energetic through many impressions asserts itself, and its inner mobility contributes to the healing process. In innumerable cases people owe their rapid or painless recovery to the fact that when they were young they received impressions with lively interest. There you see the influence the mind has on the body! In the case of recovery from an illness, it makes the world of difference if we have to deal with a man who goes through life with a dull mind, or with a man whose free etheric body, instead of being heavy and lethargic has remained alive. You can see this for yourself if you look at the world with your eyes open and notice how mentally lazy and mentally active people behave when they are ill.

You see then that man's etheric body is something quite different from a mere plant's. The plant lacks this free part of the etheric body which furthers the development of man, in fact man's whole development depends on his having this free part of the etheric body. If you compare the beans of thousands of years ago with the beans of today, you will notice a certain difference, of course, but beans have basically retained the same form. If, however, you compare the people of Europe in the time of Charlemagne with people today: why do present day people have such different thoughts and feelings? It is because they have always had a free part of their etheric body with which they could take something in and transform their nature. All this holds good in general. Now we must look at the way all that we have been describing works in particular instances.

Let us take the case of a man who cannot obliterate from his memory an impression he receives, and so the impression just stays there. It would be a strange thing if you had to think that everything that had made an impression on you since your childhood, every day of your life, from morning till night, were always in your mind. You know of course that it is only present after death for a certain time. And there is a good reason for it then. But man forgets it during life. All of you have not only forgotten innumerable things that happened to you when you were little, but also a lot of things that happened last year, and even a certain amount that happened yesterday. A mental image that has gone from your memory, that you have "forgotten", has by no means disappeared from your whole being, your whole spiritual organism. Far from it. If you saw a rose

yesterday and have now forgotten it, the picture of the rose is still in you, as well as all the other impressions you have received, even though they have been forgotten by your immediate consciousness.

Now there is a tremendous difference between a mental image whilst it is in our memory and after we have forgotten it. So let us imagine a mental picture we have formed of an external impression, and now have in our consciousness. Then let us see with our soul's eye how it gradually disappears and is forgotten. It is there nevertheless, and remains within the whole spiritual organism. What does it do there? What does this so-called forgotten image do? It has a very important function. From the moment of being forgotten it begins to work in the right way on the free part of the etheric body we have been speaking about, and make it serviceable for man. It is as though it were not digested until then. As long as the human being uses it for acquiring knowledge it does not yet work inwardly to bring life into the free etheric organ. The moment it sinks into oblivion it begins to work. So it can be said that work is continually in progress in and upon the free part of the etheric body. And what is it that does the work? It is the forgotten ideas! That is the great blessing of forgetting! As long as a mental image remains in your memory you connect it with an object. If you observe a rose and carry the mental image of it in your memory, you connect the image of the rose with the outer object. The image is thus chained to the external object and has to send it its inner force. The moment you forget the image, however, you set it free. Then it begins to develop germinal forces which work inwardly on man's etheric body. So our forgotten memories have great significance for us. A plant cannot forget. It cannot receive impressions either, of course. It would not be able to forget, anyway, because its whole etheric body is used for growth, and there is nothing left over. If mental pictures could enter into the plant, it would still have nothing there to be developed.

Everything that happens, however, happens in conformity to law. Everything that is meant to develop and yet is not helped in its development creates a hindrance to development. Everything in an organism that is not included in its development becomes a hindrance to development. If, for instance, all kinds of substances were secreted inside the eye and could not be absorbed by the general fluid of the eye, then sight would be impaired. Nothing must be allowed to remain that cannot be taken in and absorbed. It is the same with mental impressions. If, for instance, a man could receive impressions and never get them out of his consciousness, it could easily happen that the free part of the etheric body would be undernourished and would consequently be more of a handicap

than a help to a man's development. There you have the reason why it is bad for a person to lie awake at night and not be able to get certain impressions out of his mind because he is worried about something. If he could forget them they would work beneficially on his etheric body. In this case it is obvious what a blessing it would be to forget, and at the same time you have an indication of the necessity not to force yourself to remember something, but rather learn to forget it. It is the worst thing possible for a man's inner health if there are certain things he just cannot forget.

What we can say about everyday things of the moment also applies to things of an ethical-moral nature. A warm-hearted disposition that does not bear grudges is really based on this, too. Bearing resentment preys on a person's health. If someone has done us a wrong and we remember the impression it made on us every time we see him, then we relate this image to him and let it stream outwards. But if we could manage to greet him warmly next time we meet him, just as though nothing had happened, that would really do some good. It is a fact and not a fantasy that it does some good. A resentful thought like this is dull and ineffective when turned outwards, but no sooner is it turned inwards than it becomes soothing balm for many a thing in man. These things are facts, and they help us see even more meaning in the blessing of forgetting. Forgetting is not a mere defect in man but one of the most salutary things in human life. If man were only to develop his memory, and if everything that makes an impression on him were to remain in his memory, his etheric body would have more to carry, and its contents would become more and more extensive, but at the same time it would become more and more dried up. It is thanks to forgetting that man is capable of developing. Besides, no mental image is completely lost to man. This is seen best in that mighty memory picture we have immediately after death. There it becomes apparent that no impression is entirely lost.

Having touched shortly on the blessing of forgetting both in the neutral and the moral sphere of daily life, let us now consider how forgetting works in the large span of life between death and a new birth. What actually is Kamaloca, that period of transition human beings go through before entering Devachan, the spiritual world proper? Kamaloca exists because immediately after death the human being cannot forget the inclinations, desires and pleasures he had in life. At death man first of all leaves his physical body behind him. Then the mighty memory tableau I have often described stands before his soul. After two, three or at the most four days this has completely finished. Then a kind of extract of the etheric body

remains. Whilst the greater part of the etheric body withdraws and dissolves in the general ether, a kind of essence or framework of the etheric body remains behind, but in a concentrated form. The astral body is the bearer of all the instincts, desires, passions, feelings, sensations and pleasures. Now the astral body would not be able to be conscious of the tormenting privations in Kamaloca if it were not for the fact that it is still connected with the remainder of the etheric body, which gives it the continued possibility of remembering what it enjoyed and desired in life. And the breaking of habit is really nothing else but a gradual forgetting of all that chains the human being to the physical world. So if man wants to enter Devachan, he must first learn to forget all that binds him to the physical world. Thus we see that man is tormented here, too, because he still has memories of the physical world. Just as worries can torment man when they refuse to leave his memory, so likewise can the inclinations and instincts that remain after death torment him, and this tormenting memory of the connections with life expresses itself in all that the human being has to pass through during his Kamaloca period. Not until he has succeeded in forgetting all his wishes and desires for things of the physical world do the achievements and fruits of his previous life appear, in readiness for the work of Devachan. There they become sculptors and overseers working on the form of the life to come. For man largely spends his time in Devachan working on the new form he is to have when he re-enters earthly life. This work of preparing his future being gives the feeling of bliss which he has throughout Devachan. When man has passed through Kamaloca he begins the groundwork for his future form. The life in Devachan is always spent in using that extract he has brought with him for constructing the prototype of his next form. He forms this prototype by working into it the fruits of the past life. He can only do this, however, by forgetting the things that made Kamaloca so difficult for him.

We have seen that the suffering and privation in Kamaloca is caused by the human being's inability to forget certain connections with the physical world, and then the physical world hovers in front of him like a memory. However, when he has passed through the waters of 'Lethe', the River of Forgetfulness, and has learnt to forget, the achievements and experiences of his past incarnation can be put to work to build up bit by bit the prototype of the coming life. Now the joyful bliss of Devachan begins to take the place of suffering. When worries torment us in ordinary life, and particular images remain stuck in our memory, we introduce something hard and lifeless into our etheric body which undermines our health. Similarly, after death we have something in our being which contributes to

our sufferings and privations, until, through forgetting, we have rid ourselves of all connection with the physical world. Just as these forgotten memories can become a source of health in man, so can all the experiences of the past life become a source of bliss in Devachan when the human being has passed through the River of Forgetfulness and has forgotten everything that binds him to life in the world of the senses.

So we see then that these laws of forgetting and remembering are also absolutely valid for life in its broadest sense.

Now you might ask: How can a man after death have any memory pictures at all of what happened in his past life, if he must forget this life? Someone might say: Can you talk about forgetting at all, seeing that man has laid aside the etheric body with which remembering and forgetting are connected? After death, of course, remembering and forgetting assume a slightly different form. They change in such a way that a reading of the Akashic Record takes the place of ordinary remembering. The happenings of the world have not disappeared, of course, they just appear objectively. When the memory of connections with physical life vanishes in Kamaloca, these events appear in quite another form, and arise before man in the Akashic Record. Then he does not need the connection with life which comes from ordinary memory. Every question of this kind that might be asked will find an answer. But we must leave ourselves time to do this gradually, for it is impossible to have all the answers straight away at our finger tips.

Now we shall understand many a thing in everyday life, if we know about the things just discussed. Much of what belongs to the human etheric body is shown in the way the temperaments react upon man. We have said that this enduring characteristic that we call temperament also has its origin in the etheric body. Let us imagine a person who has a melancholic temperament and who never gets away from certain mental images that he is always thinking about. This is something quite different from a sanguine or a phlegmatic temperament, where the images just disappear. A melancholic temperament works detrimentally on a man's health, in the sense we have been considering, whilst a sanguine temperament can in a certain way be extremely beneficial. Of course these things must not be taken in such a way that you come to the conclusion the human being must try to forget everything. But you can see that the healthy and beneficial side of a sanguine or phlegmatic temperament and the unhealthy side of a melancholic temperament can be explained by these very things we have just learnt. It is natural to ask whether a phlegmatic temperament

is also working in the right way. A phlegmatic who only takes in trivial thoughts will easily forget them. That will be good for his health. But if, on the other hand, he takes in no other thoughts than these, it will not be good for him at all. This gets rather complicated.

The question as to whether forgetting is just a defect in human nature or something useful is answered by spiritual science. And we see, too, that strong moral impulses can follow from the knowledge of such things. If a man believes it is for his good — and this has to be taken quite objectively — to be able to forget insults and injuries done to him, then quite a different impulse will work in him. But as long as he believes that it does not make any difference, then no amount of preaching will help. When he knows, however, that he ought to forget for the sake of his well-being, he will let this impulse work on him in quite a different way. You need not immediately call it egoistic; it would be better to express it this way: If I am ill and feeble, and if I ruin my health spiritually, psychologically and physically, I am of no use to the world. We can also consider the question of well-being from an entirely different point of view. If a man is a thoroughgoing egoist he will not profit much from such considerations. But whoever has the good of humanity at heart and is therefore intent on working for it — and also, indirectly, has his own good at heart — if he is in a position to think about this, he will also draw moral fruits from such considerations. And we shall see that if spiritual science works into human life by showing man the truth about specific spiritual circumstances, it will give man the greatest ethical-moral impulses, such as no other knowledge and no merely external moral commands can do. Knowledge of the facts of the spiritual world, as imparted by spiritual science is, therefore, a powerful impulse which also in regard to the moral realm can bring about the greatest progress in human life.



II Different Types of Illness

Berlin, 10th November 1908

Those of you who have been attending these group lectures for years will perhaps have noticed that the themes have not been haphazardly chosen but have a certain continuity. In the course of each winter, too, the lectures have always had a certain inner connection, even if, on the surface, this has not been immediately apparent. Therefore it will obviously be of the utmost importance to follow up the various courses that are being held here alongside the actual group evenings, and which are intended for the purpose of bringing newer members up to the level, as it were, of these group lectures; for various things said here cannot be immediately understood by every newcomer. But there is something else we should note as well, which will gradually have to be taken into consideration in the various groups of our German section. As there is a certain inner thread in the lectures, it is incumbent upon men to form each lecture so that it is part of a whole. Therefore it is not possible to say the things that can be presented to advanced participants in that kind of single lecture in such a way that they are equally suitable for newcomers. We could speak about the same theme in a very elementary way, of course, but that would not do in face of the progressive path we are planning to take in the anthroposophical life of this particular group. This again is connected with the fact that the further we progress the more we can anticipate in the way of wide-spread lecture publications and reporting of lectures from one group to another. For with regard to these lectures I give in the groups it is becoming less and less immaterial whether you hear the one on one Monday and the next the following Monday. It may not be immediately apparent to the audience why the one lecture succeeds the other, yet it is important nevertheless; and when you lend lectures to one another you cannot take this into account at all. One lecture might get read before the other, and then it unavoidably gets misunderstood and causes confusion. I want to make a special point of this, as it is an essential part of our anthroposophical life. Even the inserting of a phrase here or there, or the over or under emphasising of a word depends on the whole development of the life of the group. Only when the publication of the lectures can be strictly supervised so that nothing is published unless it has been submitted to me, can any good come of this duplicating and publishing of lectures.

This is also a kind of introduction to the lectures about to be held in this group. There will be a certain inner connection in the course of this winter's lectures and all the preparatory material will eventually be directed towards a definite culmination with which the course will then close. Last week's lecture was a small beginning, and today's lecture will be a kind of continuation. But it will not continue like a newspaper serial, where the thirty-eighth installment follows on after the thirty-seventh. There will be an inner connection, even though the subject matter will appear to differ, and the connection will consist in the fact that the whole series will culminate in the final lectures. So, with these concluding lectures in view, we will start today by sketching the nature of illnesses, and next Monday we will talk about the origin, historic importance and meaning of the "Ten Commandments". These could well appear to have nothing in common; however, you will eventually see that it all has an inner connection, and that these lectures should not be taken as separate ones, as is often the case with those given for a wider public.

We would like to speak today about the nature of illness from the point of view of spiritual science. As a rule people are not concerned about illness, or one or another type of illness at least, until they themselves fall sick with it, and even then their interest does not go much beyond the cure. That is, they are only concerned about their recovery. How this cure is effected is sometimes a matter of complete indifference, and the pleasantest thing is not to have any further responsibility for the "how". Most of our contemporaries content themselves with the thought that the people who carry out the job have been appointed to do so by the authorities. In our time there exists in this sphere a much more rabid belief in authority than has ever existed in the religious sphere. The papacy of medicine, irrespective of its various forms, still makes itself felt with great intensity and will do so to an even greater extent in the future. Laymen are in no way to blame for the fact that this can and will be like this. For they do not think about these matters or care in the least about them unless it affects them personally and they suffer from an acute case that requires treatment. Thus a large section of the population calmly looks on whilst the papacy of medicine assumes greater and greater dimensions and insinuates itself into things in all manner of ways, like the way it is now speaking out and interfering so horribly in the education of children and the life of the schools, and claiming its right to a particular therapy. People do not care about the deeper significance that is actually behind all this. They look on whilst one or another law is instituted. People do not want to have any insight into these matters. On the other hand there will always be

people who are personally affected and cannot manage with ordinary materialistic medicine, the basis of which does not concern them, but only the fact of whether they can be cured or not, and then they will apply to the people who work out of occultism — and there again they only care about whether they can be cured or not. But they do not care whether public life as a whole, with its methods and its way of understanding things, completely undermines a deeper method arising out of the spirit. Who cares whether the public prevents any cures being effected in the method based on occultism, or cares whether the one who applies the method is put in prison? These things are not taken seriously enough except when people are personally affected. However it is just the task of a really spiritual movement to awaken a consciousness of the fact that there has to be more than an egoistic desire for recovery; in fact there has to be knowledge of the deeper foundations in these matters, and this knowledge has to be made known.

In our age of materialism it appears to anyone who can see to the bottom of these matters as only too obvious why just the theory of illness in particular comes under the strongest influence of materialistic thinking. However, if we follow this or that slogan, or give special credit to this or that method, merely criticising what is trimmed with materialistic theories, despite the fact that it arises out of a scientific basis and is useful in many respects, we shall be making just as much of a mistake as if we were to go to the other extreme and put everything under the heading of psychological cures and suchlike, and fall victim in this way to all manner of one-sidedness. Present-day mankind must, above all, realise more and more that man is a complicated being and that everything to do with man is connected with this complexity of his being. If there is a kind of science holding the opinion that man consists merely of a physical body, it cannot possibly work beneficially with the healthy or the sick human being. For health and sickness, have a relationship to man as a whole and not to one part of him only, namely the physical body.

Nor must the matter be taken superficially. You can find plenty of doctors nowadays, properly recognised members of the medical profession, who would never admit to being sworn materialists; they profess to one or another religious faith, and they would staunchly deny the accusation of being materialistic. But this is not the point. Life does not depend on what a man says or believes. That is his personal concern. To be effective it is necessary to know how to apply and make valuable use in life of those facts that are not limited to the sense world but have an existence in the spiritual world. So that however pious a doctor is and however many ideas

he has regarding this or the other spiritual world, if he nevertheless works according to the rules that arise entirely out of our materialistic world conception, that is, he treats people as though they only had a body, then however spiritually minded he believes himself to be, he is nevertheless a materialist. For it does not depend on what a person says or believes but on his ability to set in living motion the forces behind the external world of the senses. Nor is it sufficient for anthroposophy to spread the knowledge of man's fourfold nature and for everybody to go repeating that man consists of a physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego, even if people can define and describe them in a certain way. The essential thing is not just to know this, but to understand more and more clearly the living interplay of these members of man's being and the part the physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego play in the healthy and in the sick human being and what their interrelationship implies. Unless you make it your business to know what spiritual science can tell you about the nature of the fourth member of man's being, the ego, then however much you study anatomy and physiology you would not know anything about the nature of blood. That would be quite impossible. And you would never be able to say anything of any value about the illnesses connected with the nature of the blood. For the blood is the expression of the ego nature of man. And if Goethe's words in Faust: "Blood is a very special fluid" [see the lecture: *Occult Significance of the Blood*, e.Ed] are still quoted today, they do in fact say a very great deal. Present-day science has no inkling of the fact that scientists ought to treat blood, even physical blood, in an entirely different manner from any other organ of man's physical body, because these other organs are the expression of entirely different things. If the glands are the expression, the physical counterpart, of the etheric body, then even physically we have to look for something quite different in the composition of a gland, be it liver or spleen, than we have to look for in the blood that is the expression of a much higher member of man's being, namely the ego. And scientific methods must be guided by this if they are to show us how to work with these things. Now I want to say something which will really only be understood by advanced anthroposophists, yet it is important that it is said.

A materialistically-minded scholar of today takes it as a matter of course that when he makes a prick in the body blood will flow out that can be examined in all the known ways. And blood is described according to the method of investigating its chemical composition in exactly the same way as is done with any other substance, such as an acid. One thing, however, is left out of account, although, needless to say, it is not only bound to be

unknown to materialistic science, but it is sure to be considered sheer folly and madness, and yet it is true: the blood flowing in the arteries, and sustaining the living body, is not what flows out when I make the prick and take out a drop. For the moment blood comes out of the body it changes to such an extent that we have to admit it is something quite different; and what flows out as coagulating blood, however fresh it is, is no proof of the living essence within the organism. Blood is the expression of the ego, a member of the human being that is at a high level. Even as physical substance blood is something that you cannot examine physically in its totality at all, because when you are able to see it, it is no longer the blood it was when it flowed in the body. It cannot be looked at physically, for the moment it is exposed to view and can be examined by some method similar to X-ray, you are no longer examining blood but something that is the external image of blood on the physical plane. These things will only gradually be understood. There have always been scientists in the world working out of occultism who have said this, but they have been called things like madmen or philosophers.

Everything to do with man's health or sickness really is bound up with man's manifold nature, with the complicity of his being; hence it is only through a knowledge of man arising out of spiritual science that we can arrive at a conception of man in health and in sickness. There are certain ailments in man's organism which can only be understood when we realise their connection with the nature of the ego, and these ailments also appear in a way — but in a limited way — in the expression of the ego, the blood. Then there are certain ailments in man's organism that point to an illness of the astral body and which therefore affect the external expression of the astral body, the nervous system. Now whilst mentioning this second case I shall have to ask you to be somewhat aware of the subtlety of thought necessary here. When man's astral body has an irregularity that comes to expression in the nervous system, the external image of the astral body, the first thing we notice physically is a certain disability in the functioning of the nervous system. Now when the nervous system cannot do its job in a certain area all kind of symptoms can result, affecting the stomach, head or heart. However, an illness that shows symptoms in the stomach does not necessarily point to a disability of the nervous system in a certain area and originate therefore in the astral body, it can come from something entirely different.

Those types of illnesses connected with the ego itself and therefore also connected with its external expression, the blood, appear as a rule — but only as a rule, for things are not so clear cut in the world, even though you

can draw clear lines when you want to make observations — these illnesses appear as chronic illnesses. Various other disturbances appearing to begin with are usually symptoms. One or another symptom may appear, which nevertheless originates in a disturbance in the blood, and that has its origin in an irregularity of that part of the human being that we call the bearer of the ego. I could speak to you for hours about the types of illness that are chronic and which originate from the physical point of view in the blood and from the spiritual point of view in the ego. Those are chiefly the illnesses that are in the proper sense hereditary, and these are the illnesses that can only be understood by those people who look at the being of man from a spiritual point of view. Here and there are people who are chronically ill, who are, in other words, never really fit; they always have one or another thing the matter with them. To get to the bottom of this, we must ask ourselves what the actual basic character of the ego is like. What kind of a person is he? If you understand what life really is, then you will know that definite forms of chronic illnesses are connected with one or another basic soul character of the ego. Certain chronic illnesses will never occur in people who have a serious and dignified attitude to life but only in those of a frivolous nature. This can merely be an indication, to show the way these lectures are leading.

As you see, the first thing you have to ask yourself when somebody comes and says he has been suffering from this or that for years, is what kind of person is he fundamentally? You have to know what basic character type his ego is, otherwise you are bound to go wrong with ordinary medicine, unless you are lucky. The important thing in curing people of these, illnesses which are mainly the really hereditary ones, is to consider their whole surroundings, in so far as they can have a direct or indirect influence on the ego. When you have really got to know this aspect of a person, you may have to advise that he is sent to another natural surrounding, perhaps for the winter, if possible; or, if he has a certain job, to change it and encounter a different aspect of life. The essential thing will be to try to find the setting that will have just the right effect on the character of the ego. To find the right cure, you need, in particular, a wide experience of life, so that you can enter into the person's character and can say: For this person to recover, he must change his job. It is a matter of pinpointing what is necessary from the point of view of his soul nature. Sometimes, perhaps, just in this sphere, no recovery can be achieved at all, because it is impossible to effect a change; in many instances it can be effected, however, if people only know of it. A lot can be done for some people, for example, if they simply live in the mountains instead of the

lowlands. These are the things that apply to the kind of illnesses that appear externally as chronic illnesses, and that are connected physically with the blood and spiritually with the ego.

Now we come to those illnesses that have their spiritual origin mainly in irregularities of the astral body and that appear in certain disabilities of the nervous system in one or another direction. Now a large part of the common acute illnesses are connected with what we have just mentioned, in fact most of them. For it is sheer superstition to believe that when someone has a stomach or heart complaint or even a clearly perceptible irregularity somewhere, the right treatment is to deal directly with the symptom. The essential thing could be that the symptom is there because the nervous system is incapable of functioning. Thus the heart can be affected simply because the nervous system has become incapable of functioning in the area where it ought to support the movement of the heart. It is quite unnecessary to maltreat the heart or, as the case may be, the stomach, for they may, in principle, have nothing directly the matter with them, for it is only the nerves that provide for them which are incapable of carrying out their job. If in a case like this the stomach complaint is treated with hydrochloric acid, it would be a mistake comparable to tinkering with an engine that is always running late because you think something is the matter with it — yet it still runs late. For you would find, on closer examination, that the engine-driver always gets drunk before driving; so you would do better to deal with the engine-driver, for the train would be punctual otherwise. So it could well be that with stomach complaints we have to treat the nerves that provide for the stomach instead of the stomach itself. In the domain of materialistic medicine, too, you may perhaps hear various remarks to this effect. But it is not just a matter of saying that with stomach symptoms you have to deal with the nerves first. This achieves nothing. You only achieve something when you know that the nerve is the expression of the astral body and seek for the causes in the irregularities to be found there. The question is, what is the main thing?

The first thing to consider in the treatment of this sort of complaint is diet and finding the right balance between what a person enjoys and what is good for him. What matters is his way of life, not with regard to externalities but regarding what has to be digested and worked through by him, and in this respect nobody can possibly know anything on the basis of purely materialistic science. We need to realise that everything around us in the wide world of the macrocosm has a relationship with our complicated inner world of the microcosm, and every kind of food there is

has a definite connection with what is within our organism. We have heard often enough that man has passed through a long evolution, and how the whole of outside nature has been built up out of what has been thrust forth from man. Time and again in our studies we have gone back to the ancient Saturn period, where we found that there was nothing in existence apart from man, who, as it were, thrust forth the other kingdoms of nature: the plants, the animals, and so on. In that evolution man built up his organs in accordance with what they thrust forth. Even when the mineral kingdom was pushed out, certain specific inner organs arose. The heart could not have arisen if certain plants, minerals and mineral possibilities had not arisen externally in the course of time. Now what arose externally has a certain connection with what arose within. And only the person who knows of this connection can prescribe in individual cases how the macrocosmic element outside can be used in the microcosm, otherwise man will experience in a certain way that he is taking in something that is not right for him. So we have to turn to spiritual science for the actual basis of our judgment. It is always superficial to follow purely external laws taken from statistics or chemistry when prescribing dietary treatment. We need quite a different basis, for spiritual knowledge has to be active when we deal with man in health or sickness.

Then there are those types of illness, partly chronic and partly acute, which are connected with the human etheric body, and which therefore come to expression in man's glands. As a rule these illnesses have nothing to do with heredity, but a great deal to do with nationality and race. So that in the case of the illnesses originating in the etheric body and appearing as glandular complaints, we must always ask whether the illness is occurring in a Russian, an Italian, a Norwegian or a Frenchman. For these illnesses are connected with the national character and therefore take quite different forms. Thus for example a great mistake is being made in the field of medicine, for over the whole of Western Europe they have a completely wrong view of spinal consumption. Although they have the right judgment of it for the West [Europeans, they are quite wrong about it where the East European population is concerned, because it has quite a different origin there, as even these things still vary considerably nowadays. Now you will realise that the mixture of peoples affords us a certain survey. Only the person who can distinguish differences in human nature can make any judgment at all. These illnesses are simply treated externally today and lumped together with acute illnesses, whilst they really belong to quite a different field. Above all we must know that the human organs that come under the influence of the etheric body, and

which can fall sick as a result of irregularities of the etheric body, have quite definite relationships with one another. There is for instance a certain relationship between a man's heart and his brain which can be described in a somewhat pictorial way by saying that this mutual relationship of the heart and the brain corresponds to the relationship of the sun and the moon — the heart being the sun and the brain the moon. So we have to know, if a disturbance occurs in the heart for instance, that in so far as this is rooted in the etheric body it is bound to have an effect on the brain. Just as when something happens on the sun, an eclipse for instance, the moon is bound to be affected. It is no different, for these things have a direct connection.

In occult medicine these things are also described by applying the images of the planets to the constellation of man's organs. Thus the heart is the sun, the brain the moon, the spleen saturn, the liver jupiter, the gall mars, the kidneys venus and the lungs mercury. If you study the mutual relationships of the planets you have an image of the mutual relationships of man's organs in so far as they are in the etheric body. The gall could not possibly ail — and this would show spiritually in the etheric body — without the illness having its effect on the other organs mentioned, in fact if the gall is described as mars, its effect would be similar to the effect of mars in our planetary system. You have to know the interconnections of the organs when there is an etheric illness, and yet these are principally those illnesses — and from this you will see that any form of one-sidedness must be avoided in the field of occultism — for which specific remedies are to be used. This is the place to use the remedies you find in the plants and minerals. For everything belonging to the plants and minerals has a profound importance for everything to do with the human etheric body. So when we know an illness has arisen in the etheric body, and it appears in a certain way in the glandular system, we must find the remedy that can correctly repair the complex of interconnections. Particularly with those illnesses where the first thing you have to look for is obviously whether they originate in the etheric body, and secondly whether they are connected with the national character, and all the organs are interconnected in a regular way, these illnesses are the first ones for which specific remedies can be used.

Now perhaps what you are imagining is that if it is necessary to send a person to another place, you will not be able to help him as a rule if he is tied to a job and cannot move. The psychological method is indeed always effective. What is called the psychological method works best of all when the illness is actually in a person's ego being. Thus when a chronic illness

of this type occurs, one that is in the blood, psychological remedies are justified. And if they are carried out in the right way, their effect on the ego will entirely compensate for what impinges on him from outside. Wherever you look you will be able to see the subtle connection between what a man experiences in his soul when he is habitually working behind a work bench and when he gets the chance to enjoy country air for a short while. The joy that lends wings to his soul can be called a psychological method in the widest sense. Then, if the therapist is carrying out his method properly, he can gradually exercise his own influence in place of this, and psychological methods have their strongest justification for this form of illness and should not be overlooked, because most of the illnesses came from an irregularity of the ego being of man.

Then we come to the illnesses arising out of irregularities of the astral body. Although purely psychological methods can be used, they certainly lose their greatest value, therefore they are seldom used for these. Dietary remedies apply here. The type of illness we described in third place are actually the first in which we are justified in using external medicines to assist the course of recovery. If we see man as the complicated being he is, the treatment of illnesses will also be a broad-minded one, and one-sidedness will be avoided.

The only illnesses left now are those that actually originate in the physical body itself, having to do with the physical body, and these are the actual infectious diseases. This is an important chapter and will be considered in greater detail in one of the coming lectures, after we have first of all dealt with the real origin of "Ten Commandments". For you will see that this really has a connection. Today, therefore, I can only just mention that there is this fourth type of illness, and that a deeper understanding of these involves knowing the nature of everything connected with the human physical body. The basis of these illnesses is not physical but very much of a spiritual nature. When we have looked at the fourth type we shall still not have finished with all the important illnesses, for we shall see that human karma also plays in. That is a fifth category to be considered.

Let us say, then, that we shall gradually attain an understanding of the five different forms of human illness, that stem from the ego, the astral body, the etheric body and the physical body, and also from karmic causes. The sphere of medicine will not improve until this whole sphere includes a knowledge of the higher members of man's being. Up to now we have not had a medical practice that has really come to grips with what is at stake.

Although, as with many another occult insight, these things have to be brought up to date and put in a modern form, you must realise that this wisdom is, in some respects, not new.

Medicine arose from spiritual knowledge and has become more and more materialistic. And perhaps in no other science can we see so clearly how materialism has overtaken mankind. In earlier times people were at least conscious of the fact that they had to have a knowledge of man's fourfold being in order to understand it. There have been instances of materialism before, of course, and even earlier than four hundred years ago clairvoyants observed materialistic thinking arising all around them in this sphere. Paracelsus, for instance, who is taken for a madman or dreamer and not understood at all today, drew full attention to the increasing materialism of medical science centred in Salerno, Montpellier, Paris and also certain parts of Germany. And just because of his responsible position in the world, Paracelsus felt compelled — as we do today — to draw attention to the difference between medicine based on spiritual knowledge or on materialism. Perhaps it is even more difficult nowadays to achieve anything with paracelsian thinking. For in those days the materialistic approach to medicine was not so rigidly opposed to the paracelsian approach as materialistic science is today to any insight into the real, spiritual nature of man. What Paracelsus said about this, therefore, still applies today, though its significance would be less readily recognised. If we look at the opinions held today by the people working at the dissecting benches and in laboratories, and at the way research is applied to the understanding of man in health and in sickness, we could, to a certain extent, react similarly to the way Paracelsus did. It might not be appropriate, though, to add a plea for understanding and forgiveness, too, perhaps, as Paracelsus did to his local contemporaries in the medical sphere — that is, with any real hope of forgiveness. For Paracelsus himself said he was not a man of good breeding, nor had he moved in high circles; he lacked grace and refinement, therefore he would be forgiven if what he said was not always couched in the best language. Whilst discoursing on the nature of the different illnesses Paracelsus said the following about the foreign and also the German medical doctors: "It is a bad business, all those foreign doctors, to name those in Montpellier, Salerno and Paris, who want to have all the credit and pour scorn on everybody else, yet they themselves know nothing and can do nothing, and it is common knowledge that it is nothing but talk and show. They are not ashamed of their enemas and purgatives, and rely on them even if the patient is dying. They boast about all the anatomy they know, and they cannot even see the tartar on

people's teeth, let alone anything else. Fine doctors they are, even without spectacles on their noses. What kind of eyesight and anatomy have you got? You can do no earthly good with them, and see no further than your own noses. They work so hard, too, those German swindlers and thieves of doctors and newly-hatched fools, that when they have seen everything, they know less than they did before. So they choke in filth and corpses and afterwards put on holy airs — they ought to be thrown to the rabble!"



III

Original Sin

Berlin, 8th December 1908

We will keep to our set programme, and in the group meetings this winter we will work through a series of apparently widely divergent aspects of human health and illness. And later on these various aspects will group themselves into a whole and culminate in an understanding of certain things towards which we will gradually work our way. In the first lecture of this series we made a kind of classification of illness types, and last time we attempted to portray the text of The Ten Commandments. All that goes beyond this text will follow in the course of the coming meetings. Our main concern last week was to acquaint ourselves with the content and the actual trend of the Commandments. Today we want to speak of other aspects that will not appear to be directly connected with the preceding or following talks, for they are a series of aspects the comprehensive meaning of which will not dawn on us until later.

We will start today by looking at an important moment in man's earthly evolution. Those of you who have been working in the anthroposophical movement for some time have long been familiar with it; the others will gradually accustom themselves to this way of thinking.

The moment in human evolution we want to recall lies a long way back. If we go back through post-Atlantean times and then through Atlantean times as far as ancient Lemuria we come to that moment when the division of the sexes took place in the kingdom of man on earth. You know that before this we cannot speak of such a division of the sexes in the human kingdom. I want to emphasise that we are not speaking of the very first appearance altogether of two sexes in earthly evolution or in evolution as a whole, in so far as it comprises the kingdoms that are around us. Phenomena that doubtlessly belong to bisexuality occur earlier. But what we call the human kingdom did not divide into two sexes until Lemurian times. Prior to that the human shape was formed differently, and both sexes were in a way contained within it undifferentiated. We can form an external picture of the transition from dual sexuality to the division into sexes if we visualise how the earlier dual sexed human being gradually developed in such a way that in one group of individuals the characteristics

of the one sex, the female, became more pronounced, whilst in the other group the characteristics of the male sex developed more strongly. This was still a long time before the sexes separated, when there was progressive development in one direction or the other, at a time when man still lived in a very insubstantial material body.

We have focused our attention on this moment in time to start with, because we want to enquire into the meaning of the arising of the two sexes. It is only when we have a spiritual scientific basis that we can enquire into such a meaning, for physical evolution receives its meaning from higher worlds. As long as we are in the physical world, if we consider it let us say philosophically, it is somewhat childish to talk of purposes. And Goethe and others were right to make fun of the people who talked of the purposes in nature, as though nature in her wisdom had created cork so that man could make stoppers with it. This is a childish way of looking at things and can only lead to our missing the main point at issue. This view would be similar to thinking of a clock as having little demonic beings behind it wise enough to make the hands go round. In actual fact if we want to know how the clock works we must go to the mind that produced it, namely the clockmaker. And similarly, when we want to understand purpose in our world, we must step beyond the physical world and enter the spiritual. Thus purpose, meaning and goal are words that we can apply to evolution only when we consider them on a spiritual scientific basis. It is in this sense that we ask the question: What is the meaning behind the two sexes gradually developing and then inter-working?

The meaning will become clear to you when you see what we call fructification, the reciprocal influence of the sexes, (as) replacing something else that had previously existed. You must not think that fructification appeared for the first time at the moment when the division into sexes occurred in human evolution. That was not so. We must picture to ourselves that in the times preceding bisexuality this fructification took place in quite a different way. Clairvoyant vision can see that there was a time in mankind's earthly evolution when fructification happened in connection with the intake of food, and those beings which in those early times were male-female received fructifying forces with their food. This food was still of course of a much more delicate nature, and when human beings partook of nourishment in those times there was something else contained in these nourishing fluids which gave these beings the possibility of bringing forth another being of like kind. You must realise, however, that the nourishing fluids taken from the substance of their surroundings did not always contain these fructifying fluids, but only at quite definite times.

This depended on the changes that took place, comparable to today's seasonal changes, changes of climate, and so on. The nourishing foods imbibed from the surroundings by these beings of bisexuality had the power of fructification as well at quite definite times.

If with clairvoyant consciousness we look further back still, we find another peculiarity in the propagation of ancient times. What you know (of) today as the difference between the various individualities, which expresses itself in the multiformity of life in our present cycle of humanity, these differences did not exist before the arising of the sexes. A great uniformity was there then. The beings that arose then were similar to one another and to their forefathers. All these beings that were still undivided into two sexes were outwardly very similar, and their characters were more or less the same too. That men were so much alike did not have the disadvantage in those times that it would have at the present time. Just imagine how infinitely dull human life would be if people were to come into the world today with identical appearance and character, and how little could actually happen in human life, as everybody would want to do the same thing as everybody else. But in ancient times this was not the case. When man was still as it were more ethereal, more spiritual, and not so firmly embedded in matter, then at birth and on into childhood human beings were really very similar to one another, and the teachers would not have needed to notice whether the one child was a scamp and the other a gentle little being. Although the people were different in character at different times, they were in a certain way all fundamentally alike. Each person, however, did not remain the same throughout his life. Because man was still in a softer, more spiritual body he was much more open to the permanent influences coming from the environment, so that in those ancient times these influences brought about tremendous changes in him. Man became in a certain way individualised because, having a nature as soft as wax, he became more or less an impress of his surroundings. At a quite definite time in his life, which would coincide nowadays with puberty, it became possible for him to let everything that happened in his environment work upon him. The difference between the various times that were comparable to our present day seasons was very great, and it was of great importance to a man whether he lived in one part of the earth or another. If he traveled just a short distance over the earth, that had a great influence on him. If people go on a long journey nowadays, however much they see, they return on the whole the same as when they went away, unless they are very impressionable. This was different in olden

times. Everything had the greatest influence on people, and so long as they had a body of soft material they could actually become gradually individualised in the course of life. Then this possibility ceased.

Something further that reveals itself to us is that the earth itself became denser and denser, and to the same extent as the substance, let us say the earthy nature of the earth intensified, this uniformity became harmful. For this gradually reduced man's capacity to change. He became as it were very dense at birth. This is the reason why men nowadays change so little during their life. And this led Schopenhauer to think that men were absolutely incapable of bringing about any basic changes in their character. The reason for this is that men are embodied in such dense substance. They cannot easily work on the substance or change it. If, as once was the case, men could still alter their limbs at will, and make them long or short according to their need, then man would, of course, still be very impressionable. Then he would really be able to take into his individuality the power to change himself. Man always has an inner contact with his environment, especially his human environment. To make this quite clear I would like to tell you something that you may not have noticed before but which is nevertheless true.

Imagine you are sitting facing someone and speaking to him. We are referring to ordinary human relationships in the normal course of life and not to someone who is specially deeply schooled in occultism. Two people are sitting together, one talking and the other just listening. It is generally imagined that the one who is listening is doing nothing. But that is not true. In things like this we still see the influence of the environment. It is not noticeable to outer perception, but inwardly it is very clear, in fact striking, that the one who is merely listening is joining in everything the other one is doing.

He even imitates the movements of the vocal cords, and speaks with the speaker. Everything you hear you also say with a gentle movement of the vocal cords and the other speech organs. It makes a great difference whether the speaker has a croaky voice and those are the movements you have to imitate, or whether he has a pleasant voice. In this respect the human being does everything the other person is doing, and as this is really happening all the time, it has a great influence on a man's whole development, though only in this limited respect. If you imagine this last remains of man's participation with his surroundings vastly increased, you get an idea of how the man of ancient times lived and felt with his environment. Man's faculty of imitation, for instance, was developed on a

tremendous scale. If one person made a gesture, then everyone else made the same gesture too. Only a few insignificant things in certain particular directions remain of this today, like for instance when one person yawns, other people do too. But remember that in these ancient times it was entirely a question of their having a dim consciousness with which this power of imitation was connected.

Now as the earth and everything upon it became denser and denser man became less and less capable of transforming himself through the influence of his environment. In comparatively late Atlantean times a sunrise, for instance, had a powerfully creative effect upon man, because he was completely open to its influence and underwent sublime inner experiences, which, if they continually recurred, changed him tremendously in the course of his life. This diminished more and more and gradually disappeared altogether the more humanity progressed.

In Lemurian times, before the moon left the earth, mankind was in a dangerous predicament. It was in danger of becoming rigid to the point of mummification. Through the gradual departure of the moon from the evolution of the earth this danger was averted. At the same time as the moon departed, however, the division into sexes took place, and with this division came a new impulse for the individualisation of man. If it had been possible for human beings to propagate without the two sexes, this individualising would not have taken place. The present diversity among men is due to the inter-working of the sexes. If there was only the female element, human individuality would be extinguished, and men would all become alike. Through the co-operation of the male element human beings are individual characters from birth. So the significance and meaning of the inter-working of the sexes is to be found in the fact that through the separating off of the male element the individualising of man at birth has replaced the old kind of individualisation. What was achieved in earlier times by the whole surrounding environment was compressed into the inter-working of the sexes, so that individualisation was pushed back to the arising of the physical human being at birth. That is the significance of the inter-working of the two sexes. Individualisation happens by way of the effect of the male sex on the female.

Now this came about at the expense of something else, and when I describe the situation I beg you to take it as applying strictly to human beings, for when we are based on spiritual science we must not assume that what applies to man also applies to animals. Health and illness, in

their more delicate aspects, are subject to quite different causes in human beings than in animals. So what is being said applies solely to man, and we will begin by looking at the finer aspects.

Imagine yourself actually there in those ancient times when man was entirely given up to his surroundings, and the surroundings entered into him and on the one hand fructified him with the nourishing juices it offered him, and on the other hand he became individualised through its influence upon him. Now we know when we base ourselves on spiritual science that everything around us which influences us, be it light or sound, heat or cold, hardness or softness or this or that colour, is the revelation, the external expression of something spiritual. And in those ancient times man did not at all perceive external sense impressions, he perceived the spiritual. When he looked up to the sun he did not see the physical ball of the sun but that which is preserved in the Persian religion as 'Ahura Mazdao, the Great Aura'. The spiritual part, all the spiritual sun beings appeared to him, and it was the same with the air, water and the whole environment. Today when you drink in the beauty of a picture, you can have something that is as it were distilled from it, only in those times it was far richer. If we wanted to speak as they did in those times we would not be able to say: 'This or that tastes in some particular way'; but we would have to say: 'This or that spirit does me good!' This is what it was like when men were eating — an activity quite different from what it is today — and quite different, too, was the time when the forces of fructification were received: it was a phenomenon of the spiritual environment. Spirits overshadowed man and stimulated him to bring forth his kind, and this was also experienced and seen as a spiritual process.

Then little by little it became impossible for men to see the spiritual in their environment. It became more and more veiled from sight, especially during their day consciousness. Little by little men lost sight of the spirit behind things, and they only perceived the external objects which are the outer expression of these. They learnt to forget the spiritual background, and the influence of the spirit grew less and less the denser man's body became. Through this densification man became a more and more independent being and shut himself off from his spiritual surroundings. The further we go back into these ancient times the more spiritually godlike was this influence that came from the surroundings. Human beings were really organised in such a way that they were a likeness of the spiritual beings hovering round them in their environment; images of the gods who in older times were present on earth.

Through the inter-working of the two sexes in particular this was lost more and more, and the spiritual world withdrew from men's sight. Men beheld the sense world more and more clearly. We must picture this situation vividly: Just imagine, in those times man was fructified from the spiritual world of the gods. It was the gods themselves who gave forth their forces and made men like themselves. That is why in those ancient times what we call illness did not exist. There was no inner disposition to illness, and it could not be there because everything that was in man and that worked upon him came from the health giving divine-spiritual cosmos. The divine-spiritual beings are full of health, and in those days they made men in their image. Man was healthy. But the nearer he came to the time when the inter-working of the sexes came about and together with it the withdrawal of the spiritual worlds, and the more independent and individual man became, the more the health of divine-spiritual beings withdrew from him and something else took its place. What happened in reality was that this inter-working of the sexes was accompanied by passions and instincts aroused in the physical world. We must look for this incitement in the physical world after human beings had reached the point when the two sexes were sensually attracted to one another. This was a long time after the sexes already existed. The effect of the sexes one upon the other — even in Atlantean times — happened when physical consciousness was actually asleep, during the night. It was not until the middle of Atlantean times that what we call the attraction of the sexes began, what we might call passionate love; that is, sensual love that mingled with pure super-sensual or platonic love. There would be much more platonic love if sensual love did not enter into it. And whereas everything that formerly helped to form man came from the divine-spiritual environment it now came more from the passions and instincts of the two sexes working one upon the other. The kind of sensual longing that is stimulated by seeing the outer appearance of the opposite sex is bound up with the working together of the two sexes. And therefore something was incorporated into man at birth that is connected with the particular kind of passions and feelings human beings have in physical life. Whilst in earlier times man still received what was in him from the divine-spiritual beings of his surroundings, he now acquired something through the act of fructification which, as an independent, self-contained being, he had taken into himself from the world of the senses.

After human beings had been separated into two sexes they passed on to their descendants what they themselves experienced in the sense world. So we now have two types of human being. These two types live in the

physical world and perceive the world through their senses, and this leads them to develop various externally aroused impulses and longings, especially those arising from their own externally stimulated sensual attraction to one another. What now confronts man in an external way has been drawn down into the sphere of the independent human being, and it is no longer in full harmony with the divine-spiritual cosmos. That is imparted to men through the act of fructification, it is implanted into them. And this worldly life of theirs, received not from the world of the gods but from the external side of the divine-spiritual world, is passed on to their offspring through fructification. If a man is bad in this respect, then he passes worse qualities on to his descendants than another person who is good and pure.

And this is the true meaning of 'original sin'. That is the concept of original sin. Original sin is brought about by man coming to the point of transferring to his offspring his own individual experiences in the physical world. Every time the sexes glow with passion the ingredients of the two sexes combine in the human being who is descending from the astral world. When a human being incarnates he comes down from the Devachanic world and forms his astral sphere in accordance with his particular individuality. Something of what belongs to the astral bodies of his parents — their impulses, passions and desires — combines with this astral sphere so that he thereby shares in the experiences of his forefathers. What descends through the generations in this way, what is actually acquired as human attribute through the generations and is handed down as such, is what we have to understand as the concept of original sin. And now we come to something else: an entirely new impetus entered humanity through the individualisation of man.

In earlier times the divine-spiritual beings — and they were absolutely healthy — made man in their own likeness. But now man, as an independent being, detached himself from the all-embracing harmony of divine-spiritual health. In a certain respect he set himself up in his individualism against the whole of this divine-spiritual environment. Imagine that you have a being developing entirely under the influence of his environment. What he expresses will be the environment. Imagine, though, that he shuts himself off in his skin, then in addition to the characteristics of his environment he has his own characteristics as well. And indeed, with the division into sexes men became individual and developed their own individual characteristics. And there was contradiction between the great divine-spiritual harmony with its health and the individualism of man. And through this individuality continuing to work,

through it becoming a really effective factor, the possibility of becoming ill has entered into human evolution. This is the moment when the possibility of illness first occurred in human evolution, for it is bound up with the individualisation of man. When man was still connected with the divine-spiritual world the possibility of illness did not exist. It came about at the same time as individualisation, and that is the same time as the division into sexes. This holds good for human evolution, and you must not apply it in the same way to the animal world.

Illness is indeed a result of these processes I have just described, and you can see that it is really the astral body in particular that is originally influenced in this way. The human being draws the astral body into his organism himself to begin with as he comes down from the Devachanic world, and there it encounters what flows into it through the inter-working of the two sexes. So the astral body is the part of man that shows most clearly the non-divine. The etheric body is more divine, for man does not have so great an influence on that, and the physical body is the most divine of all; it is God's temple, for it is completely withdrawn from man's influence. Whereas in his astral body man seeks all kinds of pleasures and can have all sorts of desires that have a harmful effect on the physical body, even today his physical body is still such a wonderful instrument that it can withstand heart poisons and other harmful influences of the astral body for decades. And so we have to admit that because of all these things that occur in the human astral body it has become the worst part of man. Whoever looks deeper into human nature will find that the deepest causes of illness lie in the astral body and in its bad effects on the etheric body, and by way of the etheric body on the physical body. Now we will understand a number of things that cannot be understood otherwise. I will now speak of ordinary mineral medicaments.

A medicament from the mineral kingdom works in the first place on man's physical body. Now what is the significance of man giving his physical body a mineral medicament? Please note that we are not going to speak of any plant medicaments but purely mineral ones, what is prescribed in the way of metals and salts and so on. Suppose someone takes one or another mineral medicament. Something very remarkable is then seen by clairvoyant consciousness. This clairvoyant consciousness can carry out the following feat — it always has the ability to divert its attention away from something. It is possible to divert the attention from the whole physical body. Then you still see the etheric body, the astral body and the ego aura. You have suggested away the physical body through strongly negative attention. Now if someone has taken a mineral medicament, you can

remove everything from your attention and just direct your clairvoyant vision to the mineral or metal that he now has within him. That is, you suggest away everything in him of the nature of bone, muscle, blood and so on, and turn your attention solely to the particular mineral substance that has permeated him. Something very remarkable presents itself to clairvoyant consciousness. This mineral substance has become very thinly diffused and has itself acquired the human form. You have before you a human form, a human phantom consisting of the substance taken in by the man. Supposing the person has taken antimony, you have before you a human form of very finely diffused antimony, and it is the same with every mineral medicament a man takes. You create a new man within you consisting of this mineral substance; you incorporate it. Now let us ask ourselves what the purpose and significance of this is?

The significance is that if you were to leave a man as he is and withhold from him the medicine he really needs, then because of certain bad forces in his astral body the astral body would work on the etheric body and the latter on the physical body and gradually destroy it. You have put a double into the physical body. This works to prevent the physical body obeying the influences of the astral body. Imagine you have a bean plant. If you give it a prop it winds up it and is no longer blown by the wind. This double made out of the incorporated substance is a prop like this for the man. It attaches the physical body to itself and removes it from the influences of the astral and etheric body. In this way you make the human being's physical body independent as it were of his astral and etheric body. This is the effect of a mineral medicament. But you will immediately see the bad side of it, for it has a very serious drawback. Since you withdraw the physical body artificially from its connection with the other bodies you have weakened the influence of the astral and etheric body on the physical body and have made the physical body independent. And the oftener you take such medicines the more the influence of the astral and the etheric body disappears, making the physical body a hardened, independent being, subject to its own laws. Imagine what people are doing who take mineral medicaments of this sort all their lives. A man who has in course of time taken a lot of these mineral medicaments has within him a phantom of all these minerals, a round dozen of them. It is as though the physical body were surrounded by solid walls. And what kind of influence can the astral and etheric body still have on it? Such a person is actually dragging his body around with him and has very little power over it. If a man who has been dosing himself in this way for a long time applies for treatment to someone who wants to treat him psychologically and work especially on his

finer bodies, he will discover that he has become more or less unreceptive to psychological influences. For by making his physical body independent in the first place, he has deprived it of the possibility of being affected by anything that might take place in his finer bodies. And this has happened mainly because the human being has so many phantoms in him that are not in harmony, that they pull him hither and thither. If the human being has deprived himself of the possibility of working from out of his soul and spirit, he need not be surprised if spiritual treatment is not very successful either. In cases of psychological treatment, therefore, you should always give consideration to the kind of person the patient is. If he has made his astral or etheric body powerless by making his physical body independent, then it will be very difficult to help such a person by means of spiritual treatment.

So now we understand how mineral substances affect a man. They create doubles in him that preserve his physical body and remove it from the possible harmful effects of his astral or etheric body. Because materialistic medicine is ignorant of man's higher members, almost all our present-day medicine works in the direction of treating the physical body in some way or another only.

We have begun today by looking at the effects of mineral substances. Some time we shall have to speak of the effects of plant forces and animal substances on the human organism, and then we shall go on to those influences or remedies that work from one being to another in a psychic or spiritual way. But you will see that it is essential for our studies for us to acquire once again such concepts as the concept of original sin and understand it correctly. With certain things nowadays people just do not see what lies in front of them and show no understanding for them at all.



IV

Rhythm in the Bodies of Man

Berlin, 21st December 1908

The fact that we have the possibility of progressing to more and more advanced studies in this group is solely due to the arrangements we have made concerning the courses running parallel with the group lectures. Therefore I would like to ask you to give these courses all your support. It is necessary to have somewhere where we can progress with the lectures. Otherwise we would have to start from the beginning every year.

We will concern ourselves today with something that will again appear to be far removed from the previous lectures but which will nevertheless fit into our present train of thought. We want to take as our starting-point an observation made in one of the last public lectures; the one on 'Superstition from the Spiritual Scientific Point of View'. An observation was made there that cannot be carried further in a public lecture because, for a deeper understanding of it, certain preliminary concepts would have to be presupposed that are less related to an intellectual understanding than to an understanding that lies in our whole soul constitution, and that we can only acquire after years of group work. Patient work of this kind brings us ultimately to the point where things that would have seemed absurd appear possible and probable, and we can see that life bears them out. The observation we want to start from is that it is an ordinary fact and no superstition that in the case of certain illnesses like, for instance, pneumonia, there is a crisis on the seventh day when the patient can easily die, and the doctor has to do everything in his power to bring the patient through this crisis which occurs without fail on the seventh day. This is recognised today by every sensible doctor, though doctors cannot investigate the causes because they have no idea of the spiritual foundation of things. First of all I will simply present you with the fact that pneumonia shows something quite remarkable that is connected with the mysterious number seven.

We must look at the human being in a way that makes it possible to understand this fact and many others besides. You know from the innumerable times we have referred to it that man can only be understood when we know that he has a fourfold structure of physical body, etheric

body, astral body and ego. These four members of man's being are connected with and dependent on one another in the most manifold ways. Each member influences the other, and therefore they are in constant connection one with another. But this cooperation is very complicated. It takes a very long time for man to get to know these connections as well as the relationship of these members to certain forces, processes and beings in the cosmos as a whole. For man has a connection with the cosmos through each of his members; a connection which is continuous — and this again is very important — but which is also variable. What we know as the physical body, etheric body and so on are connected with one another but also with the cosmos, the whole world about us. For what we have within us is also to a certain extent outside us, and so we could say that we can best get to know these inner and outer connections if we observe man both in a waking and sleeping state.

When a man lies asleep, the physical and etheric bodies lie in bed and the astral body and the ego are to a certain extent outside these. But this is only roughly speaking. A rough idea is sufficient for a number of things, but we want to understand this situation a little more accurately today. The astral body and the ego are not active in the physical body now. But the physical body with its nerves and blood system and the etheric body cannot exist unless they are interpenetrated by an astral body and something resembling an ego. Nor could the etheric body exist without being interpenetrated by higher entities. When the human being's own astral body and ego depart, the activities of these two members have to be replaced. The human body cannot remain without there being an ego and an astral body active within it, so there also has to be an ego and an astral body active when the human being is asleep. To be exact, we would have to say that the ego and the astral body that are active in the human being's sleeping physical body are also within the human being during the day, but their activity is completely overpowered by the activity of the human being's own astral body and ego. If we want to imagine the ego as it is nowadays, in the waking state, we have to tell ourselves that this human ego is within the human body when man is awake, and because of its activity during this time it deprives a larger ego of its sphere of influence. What does our own limited ego actually do during sleep? We can in truth say fairly accurately that this ego that has freed itself in the daytime from the large cosmic ego and that has a free hand in the human body, descends into the cosmic ego during the night and foregoes its own activity. And because the day ego descends into the cosmic ego, the cosmic ego can work unhindered and get rid of all the exhaustion that has

accumulated during the day. Because the day ego sinks down into the cosmic ego it is possible for the night ego to be active in an all-embracing way. If you want to imagine it pictorially, you can visualise the relationship of the day ego to the night ego as though the day ego described a circle, passing through the greater part of this circle outside the realm of the great ego and descending into the great ego at night. For sixteen hours on average it is outside the night ego and for eight hours it is within it.

You will only understand this correctly if you take what I have said quite literally, namely that your ego never stays the same for the whole sixteen hours — assuming that to be the normal time for being awake — and that the ego is changing all this while. It describes part of a circle and then sinks down, passing through more changes during the night, about which the ordinary human being knows nothing. These changes become more and more unconscious until a climax is reached, and then the ego becomes slowly more conscious again. We must say, then, that in the course of twenty-four hours the human being is continuously undergoing certain changes, the outer symbol of which we can imagine as a circle, as a hand of a clock describing a circle and disappearing from time to time into the large cosmic ego.

The human astral body goes through changes in a very similar way. This changes too in such a way that we can imagine it symbolically as describing a circle. With the astral body too the changes are such that we really have to speak of a kind of sinking down into a cosmic astral body. Only present-day man does not notice this descent into the cosmic astral body any more, whilst in earlier times man was very aware of it. Then man felt his own innate astral feelings that he had at one particular time alternating as it were with quite different feelings at another time. At one time he felt more alive in the world around him and at another time he was more aware of his own inner feelings. You could perceive quite different shades of feeling in the astral body because it underwent rhythmic changes in the course of seven days, that is seven times twenty-four hours, that can again be compared to a circle. The ego undergoes rhythmic changes over a period of twenty-four hours, still expressed today in the alternation between waking and sleeping, and the astral body in seven times twenty-four hours. In primeval man these rhythmic changes occurred very vividly. Thus in the astral body rhythmic changes run their course for seven days, and on the eighth day the rhythm begins again. The astral body actually does sink down into a universal cosmic astral body for part of the time that man undergoes this rhythm. For the remainder of the time it is more outside this cosmic astral body. This can give you a picture of how

significant for man's life the universal astral body and ego are that are present in man when he is asleep. This I into which he plunges when he falls asleep and which keeps his blood flowing at night, is the same ego that works in his body during sleep. If he sleeps in the daytime he also goes into this universal ego, and this brings a certain irregularity into his rhythm which would have worked destructively in earlier times but which is not so destructive these days because in our times human life has changed considerably in this respect. During the course of the seven days, man's astral body actually goes into the same part of the universal cosmic astral body which interpenetrates the physical and etheric bodies during sleep. This brings about changes in man's inner feelings. This is hardly noticed today, though in earlier times it could not be ignored.

It is not only the ego and astral body that go through certain particular rhythmic changes but the etheric body does so too. These take place in such a way that in four times seven days the human etheric body, symbolically speaking, revolves on its own axis, and after four times seven days it comes back to the beginning again. A quite definite rhythm takes place in the course of the four times seven days. But now we are approaching a sphere about which we would have to speak in great detail if you are to understand it all. You will remember my saying that a man's etheric body is female and a woman's male. The two have a different rhythm, but we do not want to go into that today. We just want to emphasise that this rhythm occurs and, because of the difference in man and woman, we will just say it is approximately four times seven days.

This, however, does not bring us to the end of the matter. Quite definite processes are rhythmically repeated in the physical body too, however improbable this sounds to people today. Nowadays they have almost become obliterated, because man has had to become independent of certain processes, but they are still noticeable to occult observation. If the physical body were entirely left to itself this rhythm would take place over a period of ten times seven times four days in the woman and twelve times seven times four days in the man. That is how it would be if the human being were entirely left to the laws inherent in the rhythms. At one time it was really like this, but man has become more free of the cosmic influences around him. Thus we have a flow of rhythmic processes in the four members of man's being. If you like, you can imagine each of the four rhythms as a circling. The rhythms man would carry out in his physical body, for instance, if he were left entirely to himself, only approximate, of course, with the external physical, purely spatial processes that correspond

to these rhythms. This is because man has been driven back upon himself in the cause of freedom, and his relationship to the cosmos has changed accordingly.

You will have noticed from the number ten times seven times four or twelve times seven times four that the rhythm of the physical body corresponds roughly to the course of the year. You can imagine an external symbol for these changes in the physical body if you think that in the course of a year the human being turns around as it were; at one time he is on one side of the sun and at another on the other. If we imagine that he always turns his face to the sun, then in the course of a year he has to revolve once on his own axis and once round the sun. Anyone who only looks at it superficially will think that it is of no consequence, but it happens to be very important. These rhythms occurring in the four bodies were implanted into man over long periods of time, and the hierarchies — entities we have often spoken about — have brought it about that the various bodies influence one another. We know that we are embedded in higher beings. It is due to the action of these spiritual beings, who fill both physical and spiritual space with their deeds, that these particular connections come about. If you consider what I have just said, however, you will find a new way of looking at a thought I often mentioned here last winter. The establishing of the rhythm of the physical body already began on ancient Saturn. The incorporating of the etheric body into the physical body, in such a way that the rhythm of the two bodies harmonise, is the work of other spirits, the spirits of the Sun. Through the working together of the various rhythms a relationship is brought about in the same way as the relationship of the two hands of a clock is determined by their rhythm. On ancient Moon another rhythm was incorporated, that of the astral body.

Now those spirits that regulated our whole cosmos — for everything of a physical nature is an expression of those beings — had to create the outer physical movement in accordance with their own inner relationships. That the sun is encircled by the earth in a year arises out of the rhythm that was implanted into the physical body long ages before the physical constellation existed. Thus the spatial relationships between these heavenly bodies were regulated from out of the spirit. The moon had to go round the earth because its rotation had to correspond to the rotation of the human etheric body in four times seven days because this rhythm was to find its expression in the movement of the moon. The changing illumination of the moon by the sun — the moon's four quarters — correspond to the different rhythms of the astral body, and the revolution of the earth in the course of a day corresponds to the ego rhythm. In connection with this ego rhythm

in particular we can point out something that occultism has always taught, but which will appear to people nowadays as mere fantasy, although it is nevertheless true. In very ancient times the earth did not revolve around its axis; this axial rotation arose in the course of time. Whilst earth man was still in a different condition, this movement did not as yet exist. The first stimulus to movement did not occur in the earth but in man. The human ego was given this stimulus to turn by the spirits to whom it is subject, and the human ego actually took the earth with it and made it revolve round it. The revolution of the earth is the result of the ego rhythm. And this is true, however astonishing it sounds. The spiritual members of man that were developing their ego-hood had to receive the stimulus to turn first, and then they took the earth with them. Later on this was different. Man became free on the earth; conditions changed so that man was freed from the surrounding cosmic powers. But this is really what it was like originally. Thus you can see how everything that is physical around us is actually an outcome of the spiritual. Spirit is always there first. And it is the spirit that sets everything going.

And now think of the astral body that accomplishes its round in the course of seven days. Imagine how illnesses are connected with certain irregularities of the astral body because these irregularities are passed on through the etheric body to the physical body. Now we will suppose that the astral body has a certain defect. Through this defect it affects the etheric body and the defect is then passed on to the physical body. This also becomes defective. Then the organism starts revolting against the defect and applies protective measures. This revolt is usually in the form of a temperature, which summons man's forces of recovery. A temperature is not an illness; it is the human being calling together all the forces in his organism to put this defect right again. This revolt of the whole organism against the defect expresses itself as a rule in a feverish temperature. A temperature is the most beneficial, restorative part of an illness. The particular area that is defective cannot heal by itself, and it has to receive the forces from other places, and this is expressed in the temperature.

Now imagine this temperature occurring with pneumonia. The lungs have become defective through one or other cause. When it is the human lungs in particular that have suffered some damage, the astral body becomes defective first and then it passes through the etheric body to the physical body. With pneumonia the cause is always in the astral body; pneumonia can occur in no other way. Now think of the astral body's rhythm. The day pneumonia appears the astral body affects the physical body. Now the body begins to revolt with a temperature. Seven days later the astral and

etheric bodies are in the same mutual relationship; parts of them meet again. But it is not the same part of the etheric body, because the etheric body has been going through its own rhythm. It meets the next part. This is also affected by the astral body, but this time in the opposite way. The fever is now suppressed. Through the fact that the particular part of the astral body that coincided with the previous quarter of the etheric body seven days earlier coincides with its next quarter, the opposite process from a week ago is produced, namely a reaction to the fever. The opposing rhythm of the body now suppresses the temperature. For the human body is meant to be healthy, and that is the purpose of the rhythm. Certain influences increase in the first seven days, and in the next seven days they have to decline. In a healthy person this increasing and decreasing alternates. When a person is ill, however, his life is endangered when the fever is suppressed. Whilst in a healthy person an ascending process is reversed on the seventh day, in an ill person the ascending process ought to continue. But a rapid ascent causes a rapid fall. This is the reason for the pneumonia crisis on the seventh day.

We can understand this if we consider that the lungs were developed at a time when the moon had already split off and was preparing to develop its own rhythm, and the rhythm of the days was also beginning to develop. This is why even today the lungs are still connected with the astral body and the rhythm of the etheric body.

You can see, then, that spiritual science helps us to form a judgment of just these abnormal conditions in human life, and that the whole nature of man can be understood only when we see these conditions. It will only become possible again for the sciences to achieve fruitful results when man is permeated with the great truths of spiritual science. In earlier times, up to about the middle of the earth evolution, all the rhythms in man were much more in harmony with the rhythms of outer nature. Since that time, that is, since the middle of Atlantean times, however, things have shifted. Man's inner life has emancipated itself from outer rhythm, but he has kept his inner rhythm. It is just because the rhythms do not harmonise that man has acquired his independence and freedom, otherwise the evolution of freedom in the history of mankind would not have been possible. Man's rhythm compared with the sun, or the earth's compared with the sun has shot ahead. A similar thing has happened with the other rhythms, for instance that of the astral body. In earlier times man experienced quite different shades of mood in the course of seven days. At one time everything outside him made a great impression on him, and at another time he lived more in his inner life. It is because the rhythms are no longer

in harmony that the condition of inner experience remains, even when man has more joy from the outer world, and vice versa. They combine and balance one another and this makes the astral body even-tempered, as it were. By means of careful observation you can still notice these alternations of mood in people who live more in their astral body. The variations in the condition of the astral body can be established in the case of people who are psychologically or mentally ill.

The ego rhythm was the last to arise, but there too, things have already become displaced. Man can also sleep in the daytime, and stay awake at night. In earlier times this rhythm always coincided with the outer one. In Atlantis something very serious would have happened if man had wished to sleep in the daytime and stay awake at night. He would have brought his whole life into disorder. The rhythm is still there today to a certain extent, but it has become independent of outer circumstances. This is the same thing as setting a reliable clock exactly in time with the sun. You can then tell the exact solar time. But you could also turn the clock to midnight when it is seven o'clock in the evening. Then the rhythm of the clock will still remain correct but it would be displaced compared with that of the sun. This is what it is like with man. Man has kept the old rhythm that he used to share with the whole cosmos, but it has become displaced. If the clock were a living being it would be justified in dissociating its rhythm from the surrounding rhythms. In the far distant future man is to reach the point of projecting his rhythms out into the world again out of the strength of his own inner development. Just as there were once beings who, out of their own rhythms, made the sun, moon and earth move, man will at some future time transfer his rhythms to the world, when he has reached the stage of divinity. This is the meaning behind rhythm becoming independent. We can glimpse from this the deeper foundations of astrology. But we will not go into that just now. Today we only wanted to show that spiritual science is not a collection of abstract ideas for those egoistic people who take an interest in it, but something that can bring light into the most everyday things of life. One must have the will, however, to pass from external phenomena to the causes behind them. Rhythm has been implanted into matter by the spirit, and man, today, has these rhythms within him as a heritage of this spiritual origin. Nevertheless we can only understand what this rhythm signifies for man's being and also for the rest of natural creation if we go back to the original relationships. In the case of animals the various bodies — physical body, etheric body, astral body and group ego — have a quite different relationship to one another. There is a different rhythm for each animal species. It is roughly the same

for the physical body, but the different animals have quite different rhythms in their etheric and astral bodies. In the same way as the animal world is classified nowadays according to external form, it can be classified in species according to the rhythms of the astral and etheric bodies.

Do not imagine that these rhythms have never been clearly recognised. We will be able to show that it is not so very long since people were at least dimly conscious of these rhythms. Whoever goes through the world with a consciousness for these things, will find in some calendars in use in country districts certain rules referring to definite relationships between the animals and the land. Farmers used to manage all their agriculture by observing the rules in such calendars. In the farmer's lore a consciousness of these rhythms lay hidden. These are things that can show us that since the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries an age of abstraction, of external science, has arisen, a science that is no longer in a position to go back to the causes. This is particularly the case in medicine. People only grope today, and the solid basis of pathology and of therapy goes back to ancient times. It was a torture for my intellect and my feelings when phenacetin was tested. This kind of testing, without any kind of guide, shows that at the same time as it lost the spirit science also lost its depth. Through spiritual knowledge this depth will be acquired again. It is absolutely necessary to distinguish between caricatures of science and real knowledge based on the spirit. If you take this to heart you will see how necessary it is to have spiritual scientific knowledge, and that it has to find its way into every realm of knowledge and life.



V

Rhythms in the Being of Man

Berlin, 12th January 1909

It has already been mentioned here that in the group meetings this winter we want to gather together all the threads as it were that will eventually link up to form a deeper understanding of the being of man and various other things connected with man's whole life and evolution that will lead us deeper and deeper into the secrets of the world. Today I would like to remind you of the group lecture the time before last (21st December 1908) and take our start from there. You will remember that we spoke of a certain rhythm existing in the four members of man's being. We want to start there today and find an answer to the question: How can a knowledge of these things help us understand in a deeper way both the necessity and the object of the anthroposophical movement?

Today we shall have to link up two things apparently very far removed from one another. You will remember that there are certain relationships between man's ego, astral body, etheric body and physical body. What there is to say about the fourth member, the ego, is best seen if we bear in mind the two alternating states of consciousness experienced by the ego in the course of the twenty-four hours of the day. One day with its twenty-four hours, during which the ego experiences day and night, sleeping and waking, will be seen as a kind of unity. So when we say that what the ego goes through in a day is based on the number one, we shall have to say that the number that corresponds in a similar way to our astral body is the number seven. Whereas the ego as it is today comes back as it were to its starting-point in twenty-four hours or a day, our astral body does the same thing in seven days. Let us go into this in greater detail.

Think of waking up in the morning; that is, you rise up out of the darkness of unconsciousness, as people say incorrectly in ordinary life, and the objects of the physical sense world appear round you again. You experience this in the morning and again twenty-four hours later, with the occasional exception. This is the regular course of events, and we can say that our ego returns to its starting-point after a day of twenty-four hours. If we look in the same way for the astral body's corresponding rhythm, we have to say that if the ordered regularity of the astral body is really there,

then the astral body returns to the same point after seven days. So whilst the ego goes through its cycle in a day, the astral body goes considerably slower, and carries out its cycle in seven days. The cycle of the etheric body, on the other hand, takes four times seven days; after four times seven days it returns to the same point. And now please bear in mind what was said the time before last. With the physical body it is not as regular as with the astral and the etheric bodies. We can, however, establish a rough figure, and say that it goes through its cycle in about ten times twenty-eight days, and then returns to its starting-point. You know of course that a great difference exists and that the female etheric body is male and the male etheric body female. From this we can see that in a certain respect an irregularity is bound to occur in the rhythm of the etheric bodies. But on the whole the numbers 1:7:(4 x 7):(10 x 7 x 4) are the proportional figures that so to say specify the 'speeds of rotation' for the four members of man's being. This is of course speaking figuratively, for they are not really rotations but repetitions of the same conditions; rhythm ratios. A fortnight ago I had to point out that phenomena of daily life are comprehensible only when we know things like this that lie behind the sense perceptible world. And in a public lecture I also indicated a remarkable fact which cannot be denied by even the most materialistic scientist or doctor or be ranked among the 'spectres of superstition', because it is an indisputable fact. It is something that really ought to make people think, namely that in pneumonia a special phenomena occurs on the seventh day. A crisis arises, and the patient has to be pulled through this seventh day. The temperature suddenly falls, and if the patient cannot be brought through this crisis then in certain circumstances there is no recovery. This fact is known by most people, but as a rule the starting-point of the illness is not always correctly ascertained, and if you do not know which the first day is then as a rule you do not know which the seventh day is either. But the fact remains, so we have to ask why the temperature drops with pneumonia on the seventh day. Why does a special phenomenon occur at all on the seventh day?

Only a person who sees behind the scenes of existence, behind the physical sense phenomena into the spiritual world, knows of these rhythms, and why phenomena like a temperature arise. What actually is a temperature? Why does it occur? The temperature is not the illness. On the contrary, the temperature is something that the organism calls up to fight against the actual process of the illness. The temperature is the organism's defence against the illness. There is some damage in the organism, in the lungs, say. When the human being is healthy and all his inner activities are working harmoniously, these inner activities are bound to fall into disorder

if one particular organ of the human body is upset. Then the whole organism attempts to pull itself together and develop the forces within itself to counterbalance the local upset. There is really a revolution going on in the whole organism, otherwise the organism would not need to gather its forces because there is no enemy to fight. The expressing of this massing of forces in the organism is the temperature.

Now the person who looks behind the scenes of existence knows that the various organs of the human body came into existence and developed at very different periods of human evolution. What from the spiritual scientific point of view is called 'the study of the human body' is the most complicated matter imaginable, for the human organism is extremely complex and its individual organs came into existence at quite different times. The rudimentary beginnings of these organs were developed further at a later stage of evolution. Everything in the physical organism is an expression or outcome of man's higher members, so that each physical organ expresses the higher Organisation of the higher members. What we call the lungs today have their origins in the astral body and are to a certain extent connected with it. We will eventually come to talk about what the lungs have to do with the astral body, how the very first, archetype basis of the lungs came into man on the predecessor of our Earth, ancient Moon, and how at that time the astral body was as it were planted into man by higher spiritual beings. But today I want you to look at the fact of the lungs being an expression of the astral body. The actual expression of the astral body is of course the nervous system. But man is complicated, and the development of the various parts always runs parallel. The construction of the lungs began at the same time as the development of the astral body and the incorporation of the present-day nervous system. This in a way includes the lungs in the rhythm of the astral body, that rhythm that is governed by the number seven. The phenomenon of a rising temperature is connected with certain functions of the etheric body. Something must be happening in the etheric body if a temperature runs a certain course. The temperature, then, is somehow within the rhythm of the etheric body. Whenever you have a temperature it has this rhythm, but in what way? We shall have to be clear about the following:

The etheric body, which completes its cycle in four times seven days, moves considerably slower than the astral body with its seven day rhythm. So if we relate the rhythmic course of the etheric body to that of the astral body, we can compare them with the hands of a clock. The clock's hour hand goes round once whilst the minute hand, in the same span of time, goes round twelve times. There you have the relationship of 1:12. Now

suppose you look at the clock at noon, when the minute hand lies on top of the hour hand. The two hands coincide. Then the minute hand goes round one, and when it returns to the twelve it can no longer coincide with the hour hand, for this has meanwhile moved on to one. It will be roughly another five minutes before the two hands can coincide, so the minute hand does not point to the same place as the hour hand an hour later but after an hour and just over five minutes later. Now you have a similar relationship between the movement of the astral body and the movement of the etheric body. Imagine that your astral body, that is connected the whole time with the etheric body, were to be in a certain position in relation to the etheric body. Now the astral body begins to rotate. When after seven days it returns to its original position, it does not coincide again with the etheric body, for, after seven days, the etheric body has moved round a quarter of its cycle. So seven days later the position of the astral body does not coincide with the same position of the etheric body but with a position that is a quarter of the cycle behind the original one. Now imagine you have a case of the illness in question. A definite position of the astral body is connected with a definite position of the etheric body. And at this moment, with the co-operation of these two positions working together, the temperature appears, as a summons to fight the enemy. Seven days later the astral body covers an entirely different part of the etheric body. Now in the etheric body there must be not only the power to produce a temperature, for in that case, once it had really got going, it would never drop again; so seven days later this point of the etheric body that is now covered by the part of the astral body that produced the temperature seven days previously has the tendency to counteract the temperature and bring it down. If the patient's disorder has been overcome in seven days, then all is well. But if the disorder has not been overcome, and the astral body has not got the tendency now to push the illness out, the patient comes into the unfortunate position in which the etheric body has the tendency to bring the temperature down. It is important to pay good heed to these two points of coincidence. We could discover points like this for all kinds of phenomena in human life. And just through these rhythms, these mysterious inner workings, man's whole being could be understood. The etheric body really has a tendency that expresses itself in four times seven. In the case of other illnesses you will notice that the fourteenth day is of special importance; that is, two times seven. And we can definitely say that with certain phenomena the paroxysm has to be especially strong after four times seven; The point being that if the trouble decreases then, you can definitely hope for recovery. All these things are connected with rhythms of the kind we touched on three weeks ago and

have dealt with in greater detail today. With such things as these, which appear difficult but which can nevertheless be understood, we can begin to penetrate a little way beneath the surface of the physical sense world. And we must penetrate further and further. Now let us enquire into the origin of such rhythms.

We have to look once again to the great cosmic relationships to find the origin of such rhythms. We have often drawn your attention to the fact that what we call the four members of man, physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego have evolved through Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth existence. If we look back to our old Moon we find that it also separated itself from the sun for a certain length of time, though a large part of what is the moon today was then part of the earth. But outside there was a sun, and when such heavenly bodies belong together then their forces, which are the expression of their beings, always have an influence on regulating the life of their creatures. The orbiting of a planet around its sun or of a satellite around its planet is by no means mere chance, nor is it unconnected with life, on the contrary it is regulated by those beings we have learnt about in the hierarchies of spirits. We have seen that it is absolutely untrue that the heavenly bodies rotate by themselves through mere lifeless forces. We have pointed out how grotesquely the modern physicist explains the Kant-Laplace theory by means of his experiment with the blob of fat. A cardboard disc is inserted through the floating blob of fat from the direction of the equator and a needle stuck through it from above, and then the whole thing is rotated, whereupon small droplets break off from the large drop and rotate as well. Thus the experimenter shows how a planetary system in miniature arises, and physicists generally draw the conclusion that this is how the large planetary system must have arisen. Although it is usually good to forget yourself, in this particular case it is not. For the good man usually forgets that the miniature planetary system could not arise if he did not turn the handle. It is perfectly permissible to do such experiments, and they are very useful, but you should not forget the most important part. What an infinite number of people fall victim to such suggestions! They overlook the fact that the professor was doing it. There is no gigantic professor out yonder of course, it is the hierarchies of spiritual beings who regulate the rhythms of the heavenly bodies and actually bring about all the ordering of matter in the cosmos, so that the individual planetary bodies revolve around one another. And if we could go into the movements of the planetary spheres that form a correlated system

— and a time will come for this — we should recognise the rhythms of our own human members. For the time being, however, we need only point to one thing.

Modern man, with his materialistic mode of thought, laughs at the idea that in earlier times certain conditions in man's life were organised in connection with the four quarters of the moon. Now just with the moon in particular there is in a wonderful way a cosmic reflection of the relationship existing between the astral and the etheric body. The moon moves round its cycle in four times seven days. Those are the positions of the etheric body, and these four times seven positions of the etheric body are exactly mirrored in the four quarters of the moon. It is by no means nonsense to look for a connection between the phenomenon of the rising temperature we described and just these quarters of the moon. Just think, there really is a different quarter of the moon at the end of seven days, just as there is another quarter of the etheric body and the astral body covers a different quarter of the etheric body. Originally the relationship of the human astral body to the etheric body was indeed regulated by spiritual beings bringing the moon into a corresponding orbiting of the earth. And you can see how the things are to a certain extent connected, in that even modern medicine reckons with an ancient heritage of rhythmic knowledge. As the rhythm of the body is ten times twenty-eight and the physical body is as it were back at the same point ten times twenty-eight days later, there are about ten times twenty-eight days between the conception of a human being and his birth, ten lunar months. All these things are connected with the regulating of the great cosmic relationships. Man as microcosm is a true image of the great world relationships, for he is created out of them.

Today we want to turn our thoughts to evolution in the middle of Atlantean times. That was a very important point for earth evolution. Before that time we can distinguish three races in human evolution; the Polarian, the Hyperborean and the Lemurian race. Then comes the Atlantean race. We are now in the fifth race and two races will follow us, so the Atlantean epoch lies right in the middle. The middle of Atlantean times is the most important point in earth evolution. If we were to go back before this time, even then we should have found an exact reflection of cosmic relationships in the relationships of external human life. It would have had a very bad effect on man if he had done the kind of things then that he does now. Nowadays man does not adjust himself very much to the cosmic situation. In town life things often have to be arranged in such a way that people are awake when they would otherwise be asleep and asleep when they ought to be awake. If anything like being awake at night

or sleeping in the daytime had occurred in Lemurian times, and man had paid so little attention to the external phenomena that belong to certain inner processes, he would not have survived. Of course such a thing was quite impossible then, because it was a matter of course that man in his inner rhythm conformed with outer rhythm. Man lived as it were with the cycles of the sun and the moon and modeled the rhythm of his astral and etheric bodies on the cycle of sun and moon.

Let us come back to the clock. In a certain respect this also conforms to the great cosmic cycle, when the hour and minute hands coincide at twelve o'clock, that is because there is a certain constellation of the sun and stars. We set our clocks according to this and a clock is unreliable if the two hands do not coincide the following day as soon as this constellation of stars occurs again. In Berlin the clocks are set daily by electricity from the Enckeplatz observatory. So we may say that the movements or rhythms of the clock hands are set every day according to the rhythm of the cosmos. Our clock is correct if it synchronises with the central clock which, in its turn, synchronises with the cosmos. In ancient times man had no need of a clock, for he himself was a clock. His life's course, which he could clearly feel, absolutely conformed to cosmic relationships. Man really was a clock. And if he had not conformed to the cosmic situation, exactly the same thing would have happened to him as happens to a clock if its movement does not correspond to the outer situation: it goes wrong, and he would have gone wrong too. The inner rhythm had to correspond to the outer. And the essential part of man's evolution on earth is that since the middle of Atlantean times the outer situation does not absolutely coincide with the inner one. Something else has come about. Just imagine someone fancying that he could not bear the two hands of his watch coinciding at noon. Supposing he alters them to three o'clock, then when it is one o'clock for other people he makes it four p.m., at two o'clock he makes it 5 p.m., and so on. The inner working of his clock will not have changed, it will only have become displaced compared with the outer situation. Twenty-four hours later he will make it three o'clock again; that is, his clock's movement will not coincide with the cosmic situation but its inner rhythm will still agree with it, for it has only been displaced. Man's rhythm has also been displaced. Man would never have become an independent being if all his activity had remained in cosmic leading strings. The basis of his freedom lies in his having preserved his inner rhythm while severing himself from external rhythm. He has become like a clock that at the nodal points no longer coincides with cosmic occurrences yet is inwardly in harmony with them. Thus in the far distant past a human being could be conceived in

one particular stellar constellation only and be born ten lunar months later. This coinciding of conception with a cosmic situation has ceased but the rhythm has remained, just as a clock keeps to its rhythm even though at midday you set it at three o'clock. Of course it is not man's circumstances only though, that have become displaced, the times have become displaced as well. Even if we disregard the last-mentioned cosmic displacement, something very special has occurred in man's inner life, in that he has lifted himself as it were out of the cosmic situation and is no longer a 'clock' in the proper sense of the word. He is more or less like a man who has put his clock forward three hours and then, forgetting how much he has put it forward, cannot sort himself out any more. This is what happened to man in earthly evolution once he was free of the situation in which he was like a clock in the cosmos. In certain respects he brought his astral body into disorder. The more the conditions of human life were regulated by the physical, the more the old rhythm was preserved; but the more his life conditions became influenced by thought, the greater the disorder that came into them. I would like to clarify this from another angle.

Men are not the only beings we know of, we also know of beings that are superior to present-day earth man. We know of the sons of life or the angels, and we know that they went through their human stage on ancient Moon. We know of the spirits of fire or the archangels, that went through their human stage on the old Sun condition of the earth, and we also know of the primeval forces, who went through their human stage on ancient Saturn. These beings are in advance of man in their cosmic evolution. If we were to study them today we would find that they are beings of a much more spiritual nature than man. Therefore they live in higher-worlds. But in regard to the particular things we have been mentioning today, their situation is totally different from man's. In spiritual matters they conform absolutely to the cosmic rhythm. An angel would not think in such a disordered way as man, for the simple reason that his thought process is regulated by the cosmic powers which guide him. It is right out of the question for a being like an angel not to think in harmony with the great spiritual processes of the cosmos. The laws of logic for the angels are written in the universal harmony. They need no textbooks. Man needs textbooks because he has brought his inner thought processes into disorder. He no longer knows how to take guidance from the great script of the stars. Angels know the course of the cosmos, and the course of their thought corresponds with the ordered rhythm. When man came on to the earth in his present form he fell out of this rhythm, hence the lack of order

in his life of thought and feeling. Regularity still holds sway in the things man has less influence on in his astral and etheric bodies, but in the parts that have been given into man's hands, that is, his sentient soul, intellectual soul and consciousness soul disorder and lack of rhythm have entered in. It is one of the least important matters that in our cities man turns night into day. It is of far greater significance that in his inner life of thought man has torn himself away from the great universal rhythm. The way man thinks all day long is in a certain respect in contradiction to the life of the great universe.

Do not imagine though, that all this is being said to encourage a world conception that will bring man back into this kind of rhythm again. Man had to get away from the old rhythm; his progress depends on this: When certain prophets go around today preaching 'Back to Nature', they want to bring life into reverse instead of helping it forward. All this chatter about returning to nature contains no understanding of real evolution. When a movement today recommends people to eat certain foods only at certain times of the year because nature herself indicates this by making foods grow only at certain times, this is the abstract talk of the amateur. The essential thing about evolution is that man grows more and more independent of outer rhythm. But we must not lose the ground from under our feet. It is not the best thing for man's progress and salvation to return to the old rhythm and ask himself how he should live in harmony with the four quarters of the moon. For it was essential in olden times for man to be like an impress of the cosmos. But it is important too that man should not believe he can live without rhythm. Just as his inner life was formed from outside inwards he must now create rhythm from inside outwards. That is the essential thing. His inner life must become rhythmic. Just as rhythm created the cosmos, man has to permeate himself with a new rhythm if he wants to share in the creating of a new cosmos. It is characteristic of our age that it has lost the old, external rhythm and has not yet attained a new inner one. Man has outgrown nature — if we call the outer expression of spirit 'nature' — but has not yet grown into the spirit. He is still floundering today between nature and spirit. This is just what is characteristic of our time. This floundering between nature and spirit reached its climax in the second third of the nineteenth century. Consequently the beings who know and interpret the signs of the times had to ask themselves at that time: What can be done so that man does not lose all trace of rhythm but acquires an inner rhythm?

What you can see today as the characteristic of mental life is its chaotic nature. Today, when you see something that has been thought out, the first thing that is bound to strike you is its chaotic nature, its inner lack of order. This is the case in almost every sphere. Only the spheres that still possess good old traditions have something of the old order left. In new spheres man has first of all to create a new order. That is why men can see facts today, like the fall in temperature on the seventh day of pneumonia, but their explanation of them is an absolute chaos of thoughts. When the human being thinks about it, then — because he does not think in an ordered way — he piles up a medley of thoughts around the fact. All our sciences take an external fact of the world and stir up a mass of thoughts about it with no inner order, because man has gone astray in a kind of mental abyss. He has no guiding principles of thought today, no inner thought rhythm, and humanity would become completely decadent were they not to acquire an inner rhythm. Look at spiritual science from this point of view.

You will see the element you are in when you begin to study spiritual science. To begin with you hear — and gradually understand — that man has four members of his being: physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. And then you hear that work is done by the ego, and the astral body is changed into manas or spirit-self, the etheric body into buddhi or life-spirit and the principle of physical man into spirit-man or atma. Now just think how much ground we have covered with this basic formula of spiritual science. Think of the many themes that were really fundamental themes, and how we had to build up our whole thought structure time and again out of this basic scheme: physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego. You know, some people actually get tired of hearing these basic facts over and over again in certain public lectures. But this is and remains a reliable thread on which to string our thoughts: these four members of man's being and their inter-working; and then on a higher level, the transformation of the three lower members: the third into the fifth, the second into the sixth and the first into the seventh member of our being. If you count all the members of man's being that we know of physical body, etheric body, astral body, ego, spirit-self, life-spirit and spirit-man, you have seven. And if you count those that form the foundation of these, namely the physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego, you have four. And you are reproducing in thought the macrocosmic rhythm of 7:4 and 4:7 when you follow this train of thought. You are producing the outer, macrocosmic rhythm again from out of yourself. You are repeating the rhythm that was once there macrocosmically in the universe and bringing it

to birth again. You are laying down the plan or basis for your system of thought, as once the gods laid down the plan for the wisdom of the world. When we bring the inner rhythm of number to life in us again in this way, then out of the chaos of thought life a cosmos of thought is developed out of the innermost being of the soul. Men have freed themselves from external rhythm. By means of what is truly a science of the spirit we return to rhythm again, creating a cosmic structure from within outwards that is inwardly rhythmic. And if we turn to the cosmos and look at the earth's past, at Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth, we find four, then the Moon in spiritualised form at the fifth stage as Jupiter, the Sun at the sixth stage as Venus, and ancient Saturn at the seventh stage as Vulcan. Thus in Saturn, Sun, Moon, Earth, Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan our evolutionary phases add up to seven. Our physical body as it is today, has developed through the number four, through Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth. In the future it will gradually become completely transformed and spiritualised. So that here too, when we look at the past we have the number four, and when we look to the future the number three: again there is 4:3, or if we include the past in the whole of evolution, 4:7.

We are still only at the beginning of our spiritual scientific activity, even if we have been working at it for many years. Today we could only point out what men meant by the 'inner number' at the root of all phenomena. And we see that in order to gain freedom man had to fall away from the original rhythm. But he has to rediscover within himself the laws with which to regulate the 'clock', his astral body. And the great regulator is spiritual science, because it is in harmony with the great laws of the cosmos beheld by the seer. The future as created by man will have the same great numerical relationships as the cosmos had in the past, but on a higher level. Therefore men have to bring the future to birth out of number, like the gods created the cosmos out of number.

We can see how spiritual science is connected with the course of the macrocosm. When we grasp what is there in the spiritual world behind man, the number four and the number seven, we shall understand why we must look to the spiritual world to find the impulse to carry forward what we know to be the evolutionary course of humanity. And we shall understand why just in an age when men have reached the greatest chaos in their inner life of thought, feeling and will those individualities who have to interpret the signs of the times had to draw attention to the kind of wisdom that enables man to create his soul life in a regulated way from within outwards. We shall learn to think with inner rhythm in a way that is necessary for the future, when we think in accordance with these basic

relationships. And man will take into himself more and more from the world of his origins. At present he is acquiring what we can see to be the ground plan of the cosmos. He will go further and feel himself filled with certain fundamental forces and ultimately with fundamental beings.

All this is just in its beginnings today. And we appreciate the importance and world significance of the anthroposophical mission when we regard it not as an arbitrary act of this or that individual, but rather set about understanding it with all the inner force of our very existence. Then we can reach the point of being able to say that it is not a matter of choice whether we take up the anthroposophical mission or not, for if we want to understand our times we must recognise and fill ourselves with the thoughts of the divine-spiritual worlds which are the basis of anthroposophy. And then we must let them flow out of us again into the world, so that our actions and our being acquire, in place of chaos, the stature of a cosmos, like the cosmos out of which we were born.



VI Illness and Karma

Berlin, 26th January 1909

Let us continue with our studies which are to bring us closer and closer to a deeper understanding of man's being and task in the world. You will remember that in one of the group lectures held here this winter (10th November) we spoke about the four different ways in which it is possible for the human being to be ill, and we indicated that illnesses arising as the actual result of karma would not be discussed until later. Today we want to talk about at least a certain part of this karmic cause of illness.

We explained before that the division of man's being into four members, the physical body, etheric body, astral body and ego, enables us to have a kind of survey of the phenomena of illness in so far as each of these members comes to expression in certain organs and organ complexes of the physical body itself. That is, the ego has its chief physical equivalent in the blood, the astral body in the nervous system, the etheric body in all that comes under the heading of the glandular system, and the physical body represents itself. Then we presented the illnesses arising out of the ego as such, and which therefore have their physical manifestation in irregularities in the functioning of the blood. We indicated that what originates in irregularities in the astral body manifests in irregularities in the nervous system, and what originates in the etheric body manifests in the glandular system, and that it is in the physical body that we have to look for those illnesses that primarily have external causes. All this, however, only points to that aspect of illness that is connected with the span of one human lifetime. Now anyone who is able to look at world existence in a spiritual scientific way has an inkling that illness must also depend to some extent on a person's karma, on that great law of causes which show the spiritual connections between man's various incarnations. But the ways of karma are very intricate and manifold, and we must study the more detailed composition of karmic connections before we can understand anything about them. Let us talk today about a few aspects of something that is very interesting for people to know, namely, how illnesses are connected with causes made by man himself in earlier lives. In order to do this we must say a few introductory words on the subject of how the law of karma works in human life. We shall be referring to some

things most of you know from other lectures, but it is essential to have an exact picture of how the karmic causes of one life become the effects in the next. Therefore we shall have to say a few words about what actually happens to man spiritually in the period after death.

We know that on passing through the portal of death man first of all has the kind of experiences that come about because he is now in an entirely different situation from anything met with in life. His ego and astral body are connected with the etheric body, but without the physical body being there. He has, as it were, laid that aside. This only happens in exceptional circumstances in life, as we have often mentioned. During life, when man is asleep, he lays his etheric body aside as well as his physical body, hence this combination of ego, astral body and etheric body exists only after death, and then for a short while only, just a matter of days. The experiences that follow immediately after death have also been mentioned; man's feeling of growing larger and larger beyond the space he previously occupied, until he encompasses all things. We have mentioned the picture of his past life standing before him as a great tableau. Then, after a number of days that varies individually, the second corpse, the etheric body, is laid aside and absorbed by the general world ether, except in those cases we mentioned whilst discussing intimate questions of reincarnation, when the etheric body is preserved in a certain way for use in the future. Nevertheless an extract of the etheric body is kept, being the fruit of life experience. Then follows the life that is determined by the combination of ego and astral body without man being bound to a physical body. This is the period we call Kamaloca in anthroposophical literature, and often describe it, too, as the period of learning to do without the physical body and physical existence altogether.

We know that when man has just passed through the portal of death he still has all those forces in his astral body which were there at the moment of death. For he has laid aside only the physical body, the instrument of enjoyment and action. This he has no longer, but the astral body he still has. He still has the bearer of passions, instincts and desires. He still hankers for the same things — out of habit you might say — that he hankered for in life. Now whilst he was alive it was through the instrument of the physical body that man satisfied his desires. After death he no longer has this instrument, thus he is deprived of the possibility of satisfaction. This is felt as a kind of thirst for physical life until man has grown accustomed to live solely in the world of the spirit and to have solely

what can be acquired out of the spirit. Until man has learnt to do this, he continues living in what we call the period of breaking himself of his habits, or Kamaloca.

We have already described the remarkable way in which this period of life runs its course, and we know that at this stage of his existence man's life flows backwards. This is something that is difficult for newcomers to anthroposophy to understand at first. Man passes through the Kamaloca period which lasts roughly a third of the length of his earthly life — in reverse sequence. Assuming that a man dies in his fortieth year, he will pass through all the experiences he has gone through in life in the reverse order, beginning with his thirty-ninth year, then the thirty-eighth, the thirty-seventh, the thirty-sixth, and so on. He really does go through his whole life backwards, right to the moment of birth. This is what is behind the beautiful words of Christ, when He was speaking of man's entry into the spiritual world or the kingdom of Heaven: 'Except ye ... become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of Heaven!' In other words, man lives backwards as far as his first moments and being absolved of everything, he can then enter Devachan or the kingdom of Heaven, and be in the spiritual world from then onwards. This is difficult to imagine, as we are so very accustomed to time being absolute, like it is on the physical plane. It requires considerable effort to get used to this, but it will come.

Now we must picture to ourselves what man actually does in Kamaloca. We could say a great deal about it, of course. Today, however, we shall concentrate solely on what concerns the question of the karmic cause of illnesses. So what I am about to say must not be taken as the only kind of experience in Kamaloca, but as one among many.

We can visualise first of all what use man makes of this time in Kamaloca for his future by imagining that the man who died at forty had done something in his twentieth year that hurt someone else. When somebody has done something like this that hurt another person, it has a certain effect on his whole life. Any action of man that hurts another being or creature or the world in general, hinders the doer in his development. This is what the pilgrimage of life means for me, that the primary force of the soul, as it goes from incarnation to incarnation, is set for further development. And this development progresses in such a fashion that man as it were is always putting obstacles in his own path. If this primary force were the only thing that were active — it is this very force that is to bring the soul back to the spiritual — man would need only a very short time on earth. But in that case the whole of earth evolution would have taken an

entirely different course; it would also have failed to achieve its purpose. You must not think that man would be better off if he put no obstacles in his own way. It is only by setting himself these handicaps that he grows strong and acquires experience, for it is the very eradicating and overcoming of these hindrances that will make him the strong being he must become by the end of earth evolution. It is thoroughly in keeping with earth evolution that he puts stones in his own path. If he did not have to muster the strength to remove these obstacles he would not acquire this strength at all. Then the world would be the poorer. We must altogether disregard the good and evil connected with these hindrances and look solely at the wisdom of the world that intended, right from the beginning, that man should have the possibility of setting himself hindrances in earthly evolution so that in removing them he could acquire strength for later. We could even say that the wise guidance of the world allowed man to become evil and gave him the possibility of doing harm, so that in repairing the harm and overcoming the evil he can become stronger in the course of karmic development than he would have become had he reached his goal without effort. This is how we should understand the significance and justification of obstacles and hindrances.

When, therefore, whilst living his life backwards in Kamaloca after death, a man encounters some harm he did to a fellow man in his twentieth year, he experiences this harm just as much as the joy and good he brought to others. Only now it is in his own astral body that he experiences the harm he did to someone else. Supposing he hit someone when he was twenty, so that it really hurt. In his reverse journey through life he feels it in his own astral body in exactly the same way the other person did when it happened. You experience objectively in the spiritual world everything you yourself did in the external world, and in the process you acquire the strength and the inclination to compensate for the pain in one of your future incarnations. Your own astral body tells you what it felt like, and you realise you have laid an obstacle in the way of your further development. This has to be cleared away, otherwise you cannot get beyond it. This is the moment you form the intention of getting rid of the obstacle. So when you have lived through the Kamaloca period, you arrive back in your childhood filled with the intention of getting rid of all the hindrances you created in life. You are full of intentions, and it is the force of these intentions that brings about the special character of your future lives on earth.

Let us suppose that in his twentieth year B hurt A. He now has to feel the pain himself, and resolves to recompense A in a future life, that is, in the physical world, where the injury was done. The force of this good resolution forms a bond of attraction between B and A and brings them together in the next life. That mysterious force of attraction that brings people together in life springs from what they have acquired in Kamaloca. Our experiences there lead us to those people in life whom we have to recompense or with whom we have any kind of connection. Now you will realise that the Kamaloca forces we have taken into ourselves for the righting of wrongs in life can by no means always be worked out in a single life. It can then happen that we form connections with a great number of people in one life, and that next time we are in Kamaloca we have the possibility of meeting them again. Now this depends, too, on the other people, whether we meet them again in the following life. That spreads itself over many lives. In one life we correct this, in another life that, and so on. You must certainly not imagine that we can immediately put everything right in one life. It depends entirely on whether the other person also develops in his soul the corresponding bond of attraction.

Now let us take a closer look at the working of karma, by examining a particular example. In Kamaloca we form the intention of carrying out a certain thing in the next or one of our future lives. This force planted in our soul remains in it and does not leave it. We are born again with all the forces we have mustered. This is inevitable. Now life consists not only of those things we have to put right in our karmic connections although what we are about to say can also be related to that. We may have put hindrances in our path, lived in a one-sided way, not made proper use of our life, living only for particular pleasures and tasks and allowing other possibilities that life offered us to pass us by, so that other faculties have remained dormant. This also calls forth karmic causes in Kamaloca, and we bring this with us into life. Then we are born again as babies. Suppose we live to be ten or twenty. Our souls contain all the forces we have mustered, and when they have become mature they make their appearance. During a certain period of our lives an inner necessity will doubtless arise urging us to carry them out. So let us suppose that in our twentieth year we feel an inner urge to carry out a particular deed, because we made the resolution in Kamaloca. For the sake of simplicity, let us keep to the example of feeling the urge to recompense someone. The bond of attraction has brought us together, and there he is. As far as the external situation goes, we can quite well do the deed. Yet there can still be an obstacle. The compensating deed could be one to which our own organism is not equal.

Our organism is also dependent on the forces of heredity. This makes for disharmony in any life. Man is born on the one side into these forces of heredity. His physical and etheric body inherit the qualities that can be passed down through the generations. This hereditary stream is, of course, bound to have some measure of external connection with the karma our soul has set itself. For as it comes down from the spiritual world our soul is attracted to the kind of parents through whom it can inherit those qualities that come closest to our requirements. They never, however, entirely correspond, for in the body this cannot be so. There is always a certain discrepancy between the forces of heredity and what the soul brings with it from the past. Now it all depends on whether the soul is strong enough to overcome all the obstacles in the line of heredity, and is capable of reforming the organism during the course of a lifetime, so that it overcomes what does not suit it. People vary a great deal in this respect. Some souls have acquired great strength in the course of previous incarnations. A soul of this nature has to incarnate in the most suitable body possible, though it will not be absolutely suitable. Yet this soul might be strong enough more or less to overcome everything not suited to it, though this is not necessarily always the case. Let us follow this up in detail by looking at the brain.

This instrument of our life of concepts and ideas is inherited externally through our line of heredity. Its delicate convolutions are formed in one way or another according to this line of heredity. The soul will always to some extent have the inner strength to overcome what does not suit it and bring its instrument into harmony with its own forces, but only to a certain extent. The stronger the soul is the better it can do this. And if circumstances are such that it becomes impossible for the soul forces to overcome the resistance in the composition of the brain, the brain cannot be used properly. And then there occurs what we call mental defectiveness, mental illness. A melancholic temperament arises too, because the soul forces are not strong enough to overcome certain things in the organism. In the middle of life — it is different at the beginning and at the end — the forces of our soul always encounter a certain unsuitability in their instrument. This is the secret that always lies hidden behind the inner conflict and disharmony in human nature. What men often imagine to be the reason for their discontent is usually just a mask. In reality the reasons for it are as we have described. Thus we see the relationship between what the soul takes with it from incarnation to incarnation and what it receives from the line of heredity.

Now let us suppose we are reborn, and when we are twenty our soul feels the urge to compensate for a particular deed. We have also encountered the person concerned, yet our soul is not capable of overcoming the inner resistance necessary for doing the deed. We always have to set our forces in motion when we have a deed to do. A person does not usually notice anything happening within him, and, to begin with, he does not need to notice. The following might easily happen: There is a person who, at the age of twenty, feels the urge in his soul to compensate for something. External circumstances are favourable, but his inner strength cannot take hold of his organs and carry out what he should do.

A person does not need to know about all this, yet he will be aware of its effect. This effect appears in the form of some illness, and here lies the karmic connection between what happened in a previous life and the illness. The spiritual cause of the illness will guide the whole process in such a way that the person thereby becomes capable of carrying out the deed of compensation the next time he has the opportunity. To put it another way, in our twentieth year we are not capable of doing a particular deed. The urge is there, nevertheless, and the soul wants to do it. What does the soul do instead? It struggles, as it were, with its unusable organ, attacks it and destroys it. When the organ that should have been instrumental in carrying out the deed externally has been destroyed by these soul forces, then comes the inevitable reaction, which we call the process of healing, and the forces of the organism have to be called up to restore the organ. This organ, which was destroyed because it was unfit to perform the task, is rebuilt through the illness so as to be capable of performing it, although by the time the illness is over it might well be too late. But then the soul has now gained the strength to mould the growth and development of this organ in the course of life in such a way that in the next incarnation the deed can be carried out. Thus illness can be the very thing that makes us fit to carry out our karmic obligations in another life.

Here we have a secret karmic connection between illness and further development, for in reality illness is a process of further development. In order that the soul develops the power to form an organ in the way it needs, the unsuitable organ has to be destroyed and rebuilt again by the soul forces. Here we come upon a law in human life that has to be described somewhat as follows: Man has to acquire his strength by overcoming obstacles in the world, one after another. Strictly speaking all

our strength was acquired by the overcoming of obstacles in previous incarnations. Our present capacities are the result of our illnesses in earlier lives.

To make this especially clear, let us imagine that a soul is not yet capable of making use of the mid-brain. How can it acquire the capacity to use it properly? It can only do this by becoming conscious of the incapacity, destroying the mid-brain and rebuilding it, and in this process of rebuilding it the capacity is acquired. We become capable of everything that we ourselves have taken through the process of destroying and rebuilding. This has been felt to be true by all those people who, in the various religions, have connected a very exalted being with this process of destroying and rebuilding. In the religious beliefs of the Indians 'Shiva' represents the ruling powers that destroy and then restore things to life again.

That is one of the ways in which karma instigates a process of illness. In the case of illnesses that concern mankind in general rather than man as an individual, we find something else that gives them a more general character. For instance we see typical cases of children's diseases appearing at certain times. These show nothing else than that the child is learning inner control of a certain part of his organism, after which he can then be in control of it in all his future incarnations. We should regard illness as a process that makes a person capable. We shall then come to think of illness in quite a different way. We must not, of course, conclude from this that if someone is knocked down by a train it should be explained in the same way. That sort of thing does not come under the same heading as illness nor what we have just been discussing. But there is another kind of karmic cause of illness which is just as interesting, and which we shall only understand if we look at it in greater detail.

Suppose you learn one or another thing, the sort of thing you learn in life. First of all you have to learn it, for the most important accomplishments in life have first to be learnt. The process of learning is absolutely necessary. But that is not the end of it, for learning is only the most external part. The learning of a thing is still a long way short of all that we shall experience through it. We are born into life with definite capacities acquired partly through heredity and partly through our earlier incarnations. The range of our capacities is after all limited. In the course of each incarnation we increase our store of experience. This acquired knowledge is not so closely connected with us as the temperament and disposition and so on that we have brought with us into life. What we learn

in life to begin with in the way of memory and habit is less closely connected with us, and therefore it also makes its appearance in life in a more fragmentary manner. Not until after death does it appear in the etheric body in the great memory tableau. Then we have to incorporate this into us and make it part of ourselves.

Let us assume then that we have learnt something in life and are then born again. In our new life it can well be that because of hereditary or other conditions, or perhaps because our learning has not been harmonious, and although we have learnt something, it was not sufficient to have the whole thing at our finger tips, then on reincarnating, we develop what we have learnt in one direction but not in another. Let us assume we learnt something in life that necessitates having a certain part of our brain organised in a particular way or having a certain characteristic in the blood circulation in a succeeding life, and then let us assume that we had failed to learn the other things that are a necessary part of this. This, however, is not necessarily an immediate drawback. Man has to take forward leaps in life, and he has to learn from experience that he has done something in a one-sided way. Now he is born again with the fruits of what he has learnt, but he lacks the possibility of developing himself in such a way that everything can come to expression, and what he has learnt from life can really be carried into effect. A man might for instance have received a certain degree of initiation into the great mysteries of existence in one of his incarnations, and when he is born again these forces that were planted in him want to come to expression. But let us assume it has been impossible for him to develop certain forces which could produce the necessary harmony in the organism. At a certain point in his life it will inevitably happen that what he previously learnt wants to come to expression. But an essential organ is missing. So what happens? An illness has to occur that could have a very, very deep-seated karmic cause. And again part of the organism has to be destroyed and rebuilt afresh. And by means of this rebuilding of the organ the soul senses which are the right forces in the other direction, and it takes this feeling along with it. When this is acquired this way, or even through initiation, it usually happens that the fruits show themselves in that same incarnation. That is, an illness occurs in the course of which the soul experiences what it lacks. And then, for instance, something can take place immediately after the illness that otherwise would not have been achieved. It could be that a person would have been able to reach a certain stage of enlightenment in his previous life, but he could not get through to part of his brain, and he did not develop the strength to break through the resistance. Then this offending

organ must inevitably be destroyed, and a severe illness can result. Then comes the rebuilding, whereby the soul becomes aware of the forces necessary to overcome the blockage, and the awaited enlightenment ensues. The process of suffering an illness can definitely be regarded as a sign that something important is to *follow*.

Now we are touching on matters that our profane world would certainly sneer at. Yet many a person will have noticed a kind of perpetual discontent, as though part of the soul could not come to expression and life becomes impossible. A severe illness breaks out, and the overcoming of this illness brings an entirely new impulse, like a feeling of release that the blockage has really gone and the organ can be used. This was all due to the organ being unusable. In the life cycles of the present, people still have a lot of these blockages, of course, and they cannot all be overcome at once. We must not necessarily think of spiritual enlightenment every time; this kind of thing also happens in connection with many less significant life processes.

Thus we see that on the one hand we are faced with the necessity of developing some particular quality, and on the other hand the course of karma triggers off illness. Therefore we should never really be satisfied with remarking in a trivial sense: 'If I get ill I have brought it upon myself through my karma.' For we should not only think of karma in the past and of illness as being the settlement, but we should actually think of illness as just the second stage, which arises in order to produce creative strength and ability in the future. We thoroughly misunderstand illness and karma if we only look at the past; this turns karma into a merely accidental law of fate. But when we can look through present karma into the future, then karma becomes a law of action and of fruitfulness in life.

All this points to a significant law governing human existence. And in order to get at least some idea of it today — we shall return to it in greater detail later — let us look back into that ancient time in which man came into being in his present form, the Lemurian epoch. Man gradually descended from divine-spiritual existence into today's external existence, cladding himself first of all in his sheaths, and set out along the path of incarnations in the outer world, moving forward from incarnation to incarnation until the present time. Before man began to incarnate, the possibility was not there for him to engender illness within himself in the way he can today. Not until man had acquired the ability to control his relationship with the outside world was he capable of doing wrong and therefore also capable of producing wrong formations of his organs and of

engendering the possibility of illness. It was impossible before that for man to give rise to the process of illness in himself. Whilst divine influence was still supreme, and it was not yet in man's own hands to conduct his own life, there was no possibility of illness. Then this possibility of illness arose. If this is how it was, where can we best learn the way to heal? The best way of doing this is to look back into those times when divine-spiritual powers sent their influence into man and endowed him with perfect health, with no possibility of illness, that is, before his first incarnation. People who have had any knowledge of this have always felt this way. Bearing this in mind, I would now like you to try and look beneath the surface at the kind of thing expressed in mythologies. I will not actually draw your attention to the source of medical science proper in the Egyptian Hermes cult, but only to the Greek and Roman cult of Aesculapius.

Aesculapius, the son of Apollo, is so to speak the father of Greek physicians. And what does Greek mythology tell us about him? While still a boy his father takes him to the mountains where he can become the pupil of the centaur Chiron. It is Chiron the centaur who teaches Aesculapius, the father of pharmacy about the healing forces in the plants and elsewhere on the earth. What kind of being is Chiron the centaur? He is a being of the kind that existed before man descended in Lemurian times: a being half man and half animal. This myth tells us that Aesculapius is taken to the particular Mystery where he is shown those forces of health which were the source of man's health before man came down into his first incarnation.

Thus we find this important law expressed in a Greek myth, too; this great spiritual fact, that must be of particular interest to us, coming as it does at the start of man's earthly pilgrimage. The myths, in particular, will only be recognised as pictures of the deepest happenings of life when human beings get beyond the ABC of spiritual science. Myths, especially, are pictures of the deepest secrets of human existence.

When the whole of life is looked at in this way, it will be judged accordingly, and — this must be stressed more and more — spiritual science will grow into something that will become part of everyday life. Men will live spiritual science, and not until that time comes will the original intention of spiritual science come to realisation. Spiritual science will become the great impulse for the ascent of mankind, for mankind's real welfare and real progress.

VII Laughing and Weeping

Berlin, 27th April 1909

This winter we have given a whole series of talks on spiritual science with the specific purpose of coming more closely in touch with the whole nature of man's being. We have looked at the great riddle of man from as many aspects as possible. Today we will make it our task to speak of something that is absolutely a part of everyday life. And perhaps, for the very reason that we start from something really commonplace, we shall see that life's riddles really encounter us on all sides, and that we ought to take hold of them, so that in understanding them we see into the depths of the world. For the things of the spirit, and altogether that which is greatest, is not to be sought in unknown distances, for it reveals itself in the most ordinary things of life. In the smallest most insignificant things of life we can find the greatest wisdom, if we can only understand this. Therefore let us include in this cycle of lectures this winter a study of the everyday theme of laughing and weeping from the spiritual scientific point of view.

Laughing and weeping are certainly very common things in human life. But only spiritual science can bring a deeper understanding of these phenomena, because spiritual science is the only thing that can penetrate into the deepest parts of man's being where he is distinctly different from the other kingdoms with whom he shares this globe. By virtue of the fact that man has acquired on this globe the greatest and most powerful share of divinity, he towers above his fellow creatures. Therefore only a knowledge and understanding that reaches the spirit will really fathom man's real nature. Laughing and weeping deserve to be properly observed and appreciated, for they alone can remove the preconception that would rank man's nature too close to that of animals. The way of thinking that would so dearly like to reduce man as near as possible to animal level, emphasises as strongly as it can that a high level of intelligence is to be found in the various accomplishments of animals, an intelligence often far superior to that of man. But this does not particularly surprise the spiritual scientist, for he knows that when the animal does something intelligent it does not arise out of an individual element in the animal but out of the group soul. It is very difficult, of course, to make the concept of the group soul convincing for external observation, even though it is not absolutely

impossible. But one thing should be noticed, for it is accessible to any kind of external observation if it is extensive enough: the animal, neither weeps nor laughs. Certainly there will be people who maintain that animals also laugh and weep. But you cannot help such people if they do not want to know what laughing and weeping really imply, and therefore ascribe it to animals as well. A person who really observes the soul knows that the animal cannot weep but at the most howl, nor can it laugh but only grin. We must be alive to the difference between howling and weeping, grinning and laughing. We must go back to some very significant events if we want to throw light on the real nature of laughing and weeping.

From lectures given in various places, including Berlin, and particularly the one about the nature of the temperaments, you will remember that there are two streams in human life. One stream includes all the human capacities and characteristics we inherit from our parents and other ancestors, and which can be passed on to our descendants, and the other stream consists of the qualities and characteristics we have by virtue of being born an individuality. This stream takes on the inherited characteristics like a sheath, its own qualities and characteristics originating from past lives in previous incarnations.

Man is essentially a twofold being: one part of his nature he inherits from his forefathers, the other part he brings with him from earlier incarnations. Thus we differentiate between the actual kernel of man's being which passes from life to life, from incarnation to incarnation, and the sheaths surrounding it, comprising the inherited characteristics. Now it is true that the actual individual kernel of a man's being, that passes from incarnation to incarnation, is already united with his physical bodily nature before birth, so you should not imagine that when a man is born it is possible under normal conditions for his individuality to be exchanged. The individuality is already united with the human body before birth.

But at what moment this kernel of individuality can start its formative work on man is a different matter. The individual kernel is already in the child, as we said, when the child is born. But before birth as such it cannot bring to effect the capacities it has acquired in past lives. It must wait until after birth. So we can say that before birth there are active in man the causes of all those characteristics and qualities we can inherit from parents and ancestors. Although the kernel of man's being is there, as we said, it cannot take control until the child has come into the world.

When the child has entered the world this kernel of individuality begins to transform man's organism, assuming that circumstances are normal, of course, as it is different in exceptional cases. It changes the brain and the other organs so that they may become its instruments. Thus it is chiefly the inherited qualities that are visible in the child at birth, and little by little the individual qualities work their way into the general organism. If we wanted to speak of the individuality's work on the organism before birth, that is quite another chapter. We can for instance also say that the individuality is actively engaged in choosing his parents. But this, too, is basically done from without. All the work that is done before birth by the individuality takes place from without, for example through the mother. But the actual work of the individuality on the organism itself does not begin until the child has come into the world. And because this is so, the really human part can only start, little by little, to come to expression in the human being after birth.

To start with, therefore, the child has certain qualities in common with animal nature, and these are just those qualities that find their expression in today's subject, laughing and weeping. In the first weeks after birth the child really cannot either laugh or weep in the proper sense of the words. As a rule it is forty days after birth when the child cries its first tears and also smiles, because that is the moment when the kernel from previous lives first enters the body and works on it to make it a vehicle of expression. It is just this which gives man his superiority over the animal, that in the case of animals we cannot say that an individual soul passes from incarnation to incarnation. The basis of animal nature is the group soul, and we cannot say that what is individual in the animal is reincarnated. It returns to the group soul and becomes something that only lives on in the animal group soul. It is only in man that the fruits of his efforts in one incarnation survive and, after he has gone through Devachan, pass into a new incarnation. In this new incarnation it gradually transforms the organism, so that it becomes not only the expression of the characteristics of his physical ancestors but also of his individual abilities, talents, and so on.

Now it is just the activity of the ego in the organism that calls forth laughing and weeping in a being such as man. Laughing and weeping are only possible in a being that has his ego within his own organism and whose ego is not a group ego as it is with the animals. For laughing and weeping are nothing less than a delicate, intimate expression of the ego-hood within the bodily nature. What happens when a person weeps? Weeping can only come about when the ego feels weak in relation to what

faces it in the environment. If the ego is not in the organism, that is, if it is not individual, the feeling of weakness in relation to the outer world cannot occur. Being in possession of ego-hood, man feels a certain disharmony in his relationship to the environment. And this feeling of disharmony is expressed in the desire to defend himself and restore the balance. How does he restore the balance? He does so in that his ego contracts the astral body. In the case of sorrow that leads to weeping, we can say that the ego feels itself to be in a certain disharmony with the environment, and it tries to restore the balance by contracting the astral body within itself, squeezing together its forces, as it were. That is the spiritual process underlying weeping. Take weeping as an expression of sorrow, for example. You would have to examine sorrow carefully in every single case, if you wanted to see what was causing it. For example, sorrow can be the expression of being forsaken by something you previously had. There would be a harmonious relationship of the ego to the environment if what we have lost were still there. Disharmony occurs when we have lost something and the ego feels forsaken. So the ego contracts the forces of its astral body, compresses it as it were, to defend itself against being forsaken. This is the expression of sorrow leading to tears, that the ego, the fourth member of man's being, contracts the forces of the astral body, the third member.

What is laughter? Laughter is something that is based on the opposite process. The ego tries as it were to loosen the astral body, to expand and stretch it. Whilst weeping is brought about by contraction, laughing is produced through the relaxing and expanding of the astral body. That is the spiritual state of affairs. Every time someone weeps, the clairvoyant consciousness can confirm that the ego is contracting the astral body. Every time someone laughs, the ego is expanding and making a bulge in the astral body. Only because the ego is active within man's being and not working as a group ego from outside can laughing and weeping arise. Now because the ego only gradually begins to be active in the child, and at birth it is not yet actually active, and has as it were not yet taken hold of the strings which direct the organism from within, the child can neither laugh nor weep in its earliest days but only learns to do so to the extent that the ego becomes master of the inner strings that are, in the first place, active in the astral body. And because everything spiritual in man finds expression in the body, and the body is the physiognomy of the spirit — condensed spirit — these qualities we have been describing are expressed in bodily processes. And we can learn to understand these bodily processes from the spiritual point of view if we become clear about the following:

The animal has a group soul, or we could say a group ego. Its form is imprinted upon it by this group ego. Then why has the animal such a definite form, a form that is complete in itself? This is because this form is imprinted upon it out of the astral world, and essentially it has to keep it. Man has a form, which, as we have stressed many a time, contains as it were all the other animal forms within it as a harmonious whole. But this harmonious human form, the human physical body, has to be more mobile within itself than an animal body. It must not have such a rigid form as an animal body. We can see that this is so in man's changing facial expressions. Look at the fundamentally immobile face of the animal, how rigid it is, and compare that with the mobile human form, with its change of gesture, physiognomy, and so on. You will admit that within certain limits, of course, man has a certain mobility, and that in a way it is left to him to imprint his own form on himself because his ego dwells within him. Nobody is likely to say that a dog or a parrot has as individual an expression of intelligence on its face as a human being, unless he were just making comparisons. Speaking of them in general it could certainly be so, but not individually, because with dogs, parrots, lions or elephants the general character predominates.

With man we find his individual character written in his face.

And we can see the way his particular individual soul forms itself more and more in his physiognomy, especially in its mobile parts. Man still has this mobility because man can give himself his own form from within. It is this fact of being able to work creatively on himself that raises man above the other kingdoms.

As soon as man changes the general balance of forces in his astral body from out of his ego this also appears physically in the expression of his face. The normal facial expression and muscular tension that a man has all day is bound to change when the ego makes a change in the forces of the astral body. When, instead of holding the astral body in its normal tension, the ego lets it go slack and expands it, it will work with less force on the etheric and physical bodies, resulting in certain muscles changing their position. So when in the case of a certain display of feeling the ego makes the astral body slack, certain muscles are bound to have a different tension from normal. Laughter, therefore, is nothing else than the physical or physiognomical expression of that slackening of the astral body that the ego brings about. It is the astral body, from within, under the ego's influence, that brings man's muscles into those positions that give him his normal expression. When the astral body relaxes its tension the muscles

expand and laughter occurs. Laughter is a direct expression of the ego's inner work on the astral body. When the astral body is compressed by the ego in the grip of sorrow, this compression continues into the body, resulting in the secretion of tears which in a certain respect is like a flow of blood brought about by the compression of the astral body. This is what these processes really are. And that is why only a being that is capable of taking an individual ego into himself and working from out of it on himself can laugh and weep. The individuality of the ego begins at the point where the person is capable of tensing or relaxing the forces of the astral body from within.

Every time we see someone smiling or weeping we are confronting the proof of man's superiority over the animals. For in the astral body of the animal the ego works from outside. Therefore all the conditions of tension in the animal's astral body can only be produced from outside, and the inner quality of such an existence cannot express itself in an external form like laughter and weeping.

Now we shall see much more in the phenomena of laughing and weeping if we observe the breathing process when people laugh or cry. This enables us to see deeply into what is happening. If you watch the breathing of someone who is weeping, you will notice that it consists essentially of a long out-breath and a short in-breath. It is the opposite with laughing: a short out-breath and a long in-breath. Thus the breathing process changes when the human being is under the influence of the phenomena we have been describing. And you only need a little imagination to find the reasons why this must be so.

In the phenomena of weeping the astral body is compressed by the ego. This is like a squeezing out of the breath: a long out-breath. In the phenomenon of laughing there is a slackening of the astral body. That is just as though you were to pump the air out of a certain space, rarefy the air, and the air whistles in. It is like this with the long in-breath when you laugh. Here, so to say, in the change in the breathing process we see the ego at work within the astral body. That which is outside in the case of the animal, the group ego, can actually be glimpsed at work in man, for this particular activity is even accompanied by a change of breathing. Therefore let us show the universal significance of this phenomenon.

Animals have a breathing process that is so to speak strictly governed from outside and is not subject to the inner individual ego in the way it has been described today. That which sustains the breathing process and

actually regulates it was called in the occult teaching of the Old Testament 'Nephesh'. This is really what we call the 'animal soul'. The group ego of the animal is the nephesh. And in the Bible it is stated quite correctly: And God breathed into man the nephesh — the animal soul — and man became a living soul. This is often wrongly understood, of course, because people cannot read such profound writings today, they are too biased. For instance when it says: And God breathed nephesh, the animal soul, into man, it does not mean He created it at that moment, for it already existed. It does not say that it was not previously in existence. It was there, outside. And what God did was to take what had previously been in existence outside as group soul and put it into man's inner being. The essential thing is to understand the reality of an expression like this. One can ask what came about through the fact that the nephesh was put into man? It made it possible for man to rise above the animals and to develop his ego with inner activity, so that he can laugh and cry and experience joy and pain in such a way that they work creatively in him.

And that brings us to the significant effect that pain and joy have in life. If man did not have his ego within him he could not experience pain and joy inwardly and these would have to pass him by meaninglessly. However, as he has his ego within him and can work from within on his astral body and consequently on his whole bodily nature, pain and joy become forces that can work creatively in him. All the joy and pain we experience in one incarnation become part of us, to carry over into the next incarnation; they work creatively in our being. Thus you could say that pain and joy became creative world forces at the same time as man learnt to weep and laugh, that is, at the same time as man's ego was put into his inner being. Weeping and laughter are everyday occurrences, but we do not understand them unless we know what is actually happening in the spiritual part of man, what actually goes on between the ego and the astral body when a man laughs or cries.

Now all that forms man is in continuous development. That man has the ability to laugh or cry is due to the fact that he can work on his astral body from out of his ego. This is certainly correct. But on the other hand man's physical body and also his etheric body were already predestined to have an ego working within them when man entered his first earthly incarnation. Man was capable of it. If we could squeeze an individual ego into a horse, it would feel highly uncomfortable in there, because it would not be able to do a thing; it could find no outlet for the individual work of the ego. Imagine an individual ego in a horse. The individual ego would want to work on the astral body of the horse by compressing or expanding it, and

so on. But if an astral body is joined to a physical and etheric body that cannot adapt themselves to the forms of the astral body, then the physical and etheric bodies create a tremendous hindrance. It would be like trying to fight a wall. The ego inside the being of the horse would want to compress the astral body but the physical and etheric bodies would not follow suit, and this would drive the horse mad. Man had to be predestined for such an activity. For that to be so he had right at the beginning to receive the kind of physical body that could really become an instrument for an ego and could gradually be mastered by the ego. Therefore the following can also occur: The physical and the etheric body can be mobile within themselves, proper vehicles of the ego, so to speak, but the ego can be very undeveloped and not yet exercise proper mastery over the physical and etheric body. We can see this in the fact that the physical and etheric bodies act as sheaths for the ego but not so that they are a complete expression of the ego. This is the case with the kind of people who laugh and cry involuntarily, giggle on every occasion and have no control over the laughter muscles. This shows that they have a higher human nature in their physical and etheric bodies but have at the same time not yet brought their humanity under the control of the ego. This is why giggling makes such an unpleasant impression. It shows that man is at a higher level with regard to that which he can do nothing about than he is with regard to that which he can already do something about. It always makes such an unpleasant impression when there is a being who does not prove to be at the level to which external conditions have brought him. Thus laughing and weeping are in a certain respect absolutely the expression of the ego nature of man, because they can only arise through the fact that the ego dwells in the being of man. Weeping can be an expression of the most terrible egoism, for in a certain way weeping is only too often a kind of wallowing in sensual pleasure. The person who feels forsaken compresses his astral body with his ego. He tries to make himself inwardly strong because he feels outwardly weak. And he feels this inner strength through being able to do something, namely shedding tears. A certain feeling of satisfaction — whether it is admitted or not — is always connected with the shedding of tears. Just as in different circumstances a kind of satisfaction is obtained from smashing a chair, tears are often shed for no further reason than the sensual pleasure of inner activity; pleasure wearing the mask of tears, even if the person is not conscious of it.

Laughter can be seen to be a kind of expression of ego nature because if you really enquire into it you will find that laughter can always be attributed to the fact that the person feels superior to the people and

happenings around him. Why does a person laugh? Someone invariably laughs when he fancies himself to be above what he sees. You can always find this statement verified. Whether you are laughing at yourself or at someone else your ego is always feeling superior to something. And out of this feeling of superiority it expands the forces of its astral body, broadens and puffs them up. Strictly speaking this is what is really at the root of laughter. And this is why laughter can be such a healthy thing. And this pluming oneself should not be condemned in the abstract as egoistic, for laughter can be very healthy when it strengthens man's feeling of selfhood, especially if it is warranted and leads him beyond himself. If you see something in your surroundings or in yourself or others that is absurd, a feeling of being above such absurdity is sparked off and makes you laugh. It is bound to happen that man feels superior to something or other in the environment, and the ego brings this to expression by expanding the astral body.

If in the breathing process you understand what we tried to explain with the statement: And God breathed nephesh into man, and man became a living soul, you will also sense the connection this has with laughing and weeping, for you know that whilst laughing and weeping even man's breathing process itself changes. By means of this example we have shown that really the most everyday things can be understood only when we take spirit as the starting point. We can understand laughing and weeping only when we understand the connection between the four members of man's being. In the days when people still to some degree possessed clairvoyant traditions and had at the same time the ability to portray the gods with real imagination, they portrayed them as happy beings, whose chief quality was a kind of happy laughter. And not for nothing did people ascribe howling and gnashing of teeth to those regions of world existence in which primarily something resembling exaggerated egoism holds sway. Why was this? It was because laughter on the one hand signifies a raising of oneself, a setting up of the ego above its environment; that is, the victory of the higher over the lower. Whereas weeping signifies a knuckling under, a withdrawal from what is outside, a becoming smaller, the ego feeling forsaken, a withdrawal into itself. Sadness in life is so moving, because we know that it will and must be overcome, but how very different, hopeless and not at all moving is the appearance of sorrow and tears in that world where they can no longer be overcome. There they appear as the expression of damnation, of being cast into darkness.

We must pay good attention to these feelings that can come over us when we make a broad survey of what comes to expression in man as the work of the ego upon itself, and follow them up in their subtlest details. Then we shall have understood a great deal of things that meet us in the course of time. We must be conscious of the fact that there is a spiritual world behind the physical, and that what appears in human life as the alternations between laughing and weeping, when we meet them apart from man, appear on the one hand as the happy light of Heaven and on the other hand as the dark, bitter misery of Hell. These two aspects are absolutely there at the root of our world, and we must understand our middle world as deriving its forces from these two realms.

We shall get to know many more things about the being of man. But I would like to say that one of the deepest chapters on the being of man is that of laughing and weeping, despite the fact that laughing and weeping are such everyday occurrences. The animal does not laugh or cry because it does not have the drop of divinity within it that man bears in his ego-hood. And we can say that when in the course of his life the human being begins to smile and to weep, this proves to anyone who can read the great script of nature that a divine spark is really living within man, and when a man laughs this spark of God is active in him seeking to raise him above all that is base. For smiling and laughing are elevating. On the other hand when a man weeps it is again the spark of God warning him that his ego could lose itself if it did not strengthen itself inwardly against all feelings of weakness and of being forsaken. It is the God in man admonishing the soul, in laughing and weeping. This accounts for the wrath that comes over anyone who understands life when he sees unnecessary weeping. For unnecessary weeping betrays the fact that instead of living and feeling with the environment, the pleasure of being within ones own ego is too great. But bitter feelings also arise in anyone who understands the world when the elevating of the ego above its surroundings, which otherwise expresses itself in healthy laughter, is found in someone as an end in itself, as indiscriminate laughter, or as malicious criticism. For he realises that if the ego does not draw into itself all it can from its environment, and does not want to live with its environment, but raises its ego nature above it without cause, then this ego nature will not have the necessary depth or necessary upward thrust that we can only acquire by taking from the environment everything we possibly can for the development of the ego. Then the ego will move backwards instead of forwards. The right balance between sorrow and joy makes a tremendous important contribution to human development. When sorrow and joy are not just within a man's own self

but have their justification in the environment, and when the ego wants to establish the correct relationship between sorrow and joy and the surrounding world all the time, then sorrow and joy will be real evolutionary factors for man.

Great poets often find such beautiful words for the kind of sorrow and joy that are in no way rooted in arrogance nor in a contraction of the ego but originate out of the relationship between the ego and the environment, where their balance has been disturbed from outside, and which alone explains why a man laughs and weeps. We can understand it because we can see that it is in and through the outer world that the relationship between ego and outer world has been disturbed. That is why man must laugh or weep; whereas if it only lies within man, we cannot understand why he is laughing or crying because then it is always unfounded egoism. That is why it is so moving when Homer says of Andromache, when she is under the twofold grip of concern for her husband and concern for her baby: 'She could laugh while she cried!' This is a wonderful way of describing something normal in weeping. She is neither laughing nor weeping on her own account. The right relationship is there with the outside world, when she has to be concerned about her husband on the one hand and on the other about her child. And here we have the true relationship of laughing and weeping, that they balance one another: smiling while crying — crying while laughing. A natural child often expresses itself this way too, for its ego has not become so hardened in itself as later on in adulthood, and it can still cry while it laughs and laugh while it cries. And the one who understands these things can again ascertain the fact that whoever has overcome his ego to the point of no longer seeking the causes of laughter and weeping in himself but finding them in the outer world, can also laugh while he cries and cry while he laughs. Indeed, in what goes on around us every day, we have, if we understand it, the real expression of the spiritual. Laughing and weeping are something which can in the highest sense be called the physiognomy of the divine in man.



VIII

The Manifestation of the Ego in the Different Races of Men

Berlin, 3rd May 1909

In last week's lecture we became familiar with every day expressions of man's inner life, namely laughing and weeping, and today we will explore the conditions in both our immediate and more distant surroundings upon which this inner being of man, including man's whole evolution, in a certain way depend. As wide as possible a study of man is what we have been working at in these group lectures this winter, and we will go on studying man from as many aspects as possible.

If you consider what you know of earth conditions, then even if you look at these relatively superficially you would realise immediately that man takes on a different form in different regions of the earth. External bodily characteristics vary according to the different zones of the earth. You will remember that there are 'races', the black, red, yellow and white race, and that these races were originally connected with certain regions of the earth. You will also find this corroborated by history, either in what you learnt at school from the observation of purely physical, material conditions, or what we have learnt through anthroposophical science itself. Looking back into the ancient past, we see how the human soul and actually the human body too, developed in the different epochs of earth evolution. In the sphere of spiritual science we have looked back into ancient India, Persia, Egypt, and so on. And we saw how the various capacities that mankind has today, developed gradually in the course of ages. All this gives you an idea of how external conditions are connected with the unfolding of man's inner being. Now if even present-day earth conditions bring about such differences among men, what tremendous human differences must have come about since the very beginnings of our earth evolution, after it has passed through the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolution. We have described various details of this. What we are going to describe today, however, shall be considered from another point of view. For we shall really get to know human conditions if we continually consider them from different points of view.

At the beginning of earth evolution, earth, sun and moon were, as you know, still one body. The conditions within our whole evolution must have been entirely different then. Man, evolving in earthly evolution, would have been very different whilst the earth was still one with the sun; and how greatly he had to change as first of all the sun and then the moon separated from the earth! Now we know that the epoch after the sun and the moon had separated from the earth is also the so-called Lemurian evolution, in which man had only just begun to acquire a form that is anything like our present-day one. We have often described it by saying that this was actually the time when man descended from higher regions on to the earth. Although man was already in a physical body at the time when the sun was still joined with the earth, it was not like today's body. At that time he had the kind of physical body like you can imagine if you picture man today not standing with his feet on the earth, but raising himself into the air, as though he had no bony elements within him, but still belonged to the regions of air and water, whereby we must imagine the water dissolved in the air. He would have been like a transparent being on the periphery of the earth. A present-day eye would not be able to distinguish this human being from his environment, just as a present-day eye cannot distinguish certain sea creatures from their surroundings, because they look so similar. You can imagine such a being wafting through the air. Not until after the separation of the sun and the moon did man become like we know him today. What were the conditions necessary for man to develop into what he is today? It was essential that the sun's force should not work from inside but from outside on to the earth. That was the purpose of the separation of both sun and moon, that these two cosmic bodies should send their forces, like the sun sends its light, from outside on to the earth. Man could only acquire his present-day form because the sun shone on him not from below, from the centre of the planet, but from the side. Just imagine, if you care to assume such a hypothesis, that the moon were to fall back on to the earth, and the sun to reunite with it; if he wanted to survive in those conditions man would have to re-clothe himself with a body as airy as it was before, and he would have to be able to waft through the environment he is familiar with today. Thus man owes his present existence to the fact that the sun and moon shine on him from outside. We will disregard all the other forces today.

Now the sun and moon work in various ways from outside. The way the sun works in the region of the North Pole is very different from the way it works at the Equator. We get the impression of tremendous contrasts that acquired a meaning the moment the sun began to shine on to the earth

from outside. You know, of course, that the nearer we get to the North Pole the greater are the differences between winter and summer. And right at the North Pole half the year is day and half the year night. When you think of these differences, then what spiritual science has to say about these things will make sense. It tells us that at the North Pole itself earth conditions in Lemurian times were the closest to those conditions existing on the earth when the sun and moon were still united with it. Today, of course, these conditions are quite different. But even today it is still to a certain extent true that at the North Pole the strongest influence is from the earth's centre to its surface, and the influence of the sun and the moon are at their least. What has made itself felt since Lemurian times, in the great increase of forces raying in from outside, has had the least influence of all at the North Pole, so the effect of the centre of the earth on its surface and everything living upon it is here at its greatest. On the other hand the influence of the sun and the moon is strongest around the Equator, and this was already so in Lemurian times. In the Kashic Record we can confirm that earth conditions changed to something completely new with the separation of sun and moon. This, however, led to a quite definite consequence. Something arose which was of fundamental importance for the whole of earth evolution. For the reasons we have given it was in the area of the North Pole least possible for man to descend, as it were, and to incarnate in a physical human form in such a way that he could come to best expression within it. Therefore in ancient Lemurian times it was just at the North Pole that those beings congregated who, if I may express it this way, laid no claim as yet to coming right down on to the earth, but who preferred to remain above in the regions where the air was still interlaced with vapour. Thus there was at the North Pole in Lemurian times a kind of spiritual species that did not concern itself very much with the physical bodies that swarmed about on the earth below. From a spiritual point of view, seen by a present-day eye, this species consisted of transparent forms that were therefore not actually visible, and as such they were highly developed, but regarding their physical form they showed a lower form of humanity. They lived in an etheric body and were beings of a more ethereal nature, having only a loose connection with the primitive bodies developing on the earth below that still had no density to speak of. These bodies were too dependent on the earth, and these spiritually more advanced beings only used them as sheaths to the very smallest extent. If, therefore, a man of the present, with his powers of perception, had been able to visit the North Pole in Lemurian times, he would have spoken about its population much in this way: What peculiar people!

They are really very little developed with regard to their physical bodies, but this must point to something special, for as a people they are skilful and intelligent; it is as though they were being directed by strings from above! And so indeed it was, for the real human being did not descend on to the earth's surface. That is why the people living around the North Pole at that time were in the highest degree ethereal beings with highly developed etheric bodies but underdeveloped physical bodies; beings that as it were could grasp all the wisdom of the world with their etheric bodies, as though they had great clairvoyant faculties, and who looked out to the starry Heavens with an understanding of the beings who were weaving the life of world spaces. But you could almost say that their physical bodies were sleepy. Yet because they were led as though by strings from above, the deeds they performed were perfectly intelligent.

In the equatorial regions it was different. The influence of the sun and the moon was becoming more and more active from outside. The air was interlaced and warmed through by the rays of the sun. All the phenomena taking place in the region of the air became dependent on the sun and the moon. And the result of this was that just in ancient Lemurian times the people of these regions descended deepest into their physical bodies, and their etheric bodies interpenetrated their physical bodies most deeply. A present-day man with eyes of the senses would assume these beings to be the most highly developed physical human beings, whilst he would reckon the northern peoples to be underdeveloped. And there was a further difference that is of special importance.

Where the sun had least influence men developed in such a way that over large areas they all looked more or less similar to one another. For each of these beings that did not descend but was still ethereal belonged to a number of forms below. Up in the North they were group souls, whilst the souls around the Equator were more individual souls, and each human being was much more inside his own body. Thus the inhabitants of those regions that we find at the North Pole today had, in Lemurian times, the characteristics of group soul beings to the greatest imaginable degree. A great number of people looked up to their group soul. And if we look at these group souls as souls we will see that they were much more highly developed than the souls which, in Lemurian times, descended into physical bodies in the equatorial regions. So we can say that the North Pole was populated by people that actually lived in the realms of air in a kind of paradise, and who had not yet descended as far as the earth. What we thus understand to be a necessary consequence of the foregoing you can now compare with what you encounter here and there in anthroposophical

literature, namely that those higher beings who were once the teachers of mankind descended from the cold North! We have actually found them, the group souls around the North Pole. If they wanted to become teachers of those people who were inferior souls and who entered more into physical bodies, then they had to descend further, too, and oppose the capacity of the clairvoyance of Lemurian times in their etheric body, or they had to sacrifice themselves and take on the physical human form of the Lemurian people.

If we had taken a journey in Lemurian times from the Equator to the North Pole, we should have found a spiritualising of the earth population. In those times we can distinguish as it were a twofold population: one kind that had still remained spiritual, and whose earthly bodies appeared really to be only an addition to their spiritual being, and another kind that had already descended into matter, into the physical. What would have happened if no change had occurred with earth evolution? The best souls of the polar regions would not have been able to descend at all into physical bodies. And on the other hand the equatorial population would have more or less died out. Having descended too soon into a physical body, they fell into those wicked and immoral practices that led to the downfall of Lemuria. And this resulted in the best section of the population migrating to those regions lying between the Equator and the northern lands. For in Lemurian times we find the members of mankind with the greatest chance of survival living in the countries between the Equator and the North Pole. The human bodies that could become bearers of the most advanced human souls developed best in those regions of ancient Atlantis known today as the temperate zones.

Now all the various stages of evolution leave so-called stragglers behind and there are also stragglers left from these ancient times. What we call the Lemurian population of the earth, that remarkable people of the North with strongly developed etheric bodies and less developed physical bodies, and that other equatorial population with strongly developed physical bodies and less developed etheric bodies, of these people nothing remains, they became extinct. For these bodies were of such a nature that we cannot even find remains; the substance was so soft that there can be no question of there being any remains. Of paramount importance in their Atlantean descendants was that the germ of the ego, the consciousness of Self, the foundations of which were already basically there from ancient Lemurian times on, went through a progressive development on the earth. If mankind had not to a large extent migrated to Atlantis, the active development of the ego would not have come about. For the Lemurian

population would have gradually died out, having to succumb to passions, and the best souls of the North would not have descended to earth at all, for they would not have been able to find suitable bodies. The underdeveloped bodies of earlier times would not have provided them with the possibility of developing a strong consciousness of self within the bodily nature. Through the fact that the better sections of the Lemurian population migrated to Atlantis, the human body evolved its form to the extent that it could become the bearer of self-consciousness in a harmonious way. And it was only in the course of time that the human body acquired this form in the regions corresponding to the present temperate zones. For in this period of evolution the human body was still evolving. In Atlantean times the human body was not yet confined to rigid forms, and the highly developed human beings, those of great spiritual significance, were physically small in those days, whereas a person who was not very significant spiritually had in Atlantean times a gigantically developed physical body. And if you had met such a giant in those days, you could have concluded: He is not on a very high level spiritually, for he has rushed into his body with his whole being! Everything that refers to 'giants' in legends is absolutely based on a knowledge of the truth. If, therefore, a real memory of these times is preserved in the Germanic myths, we feel it to be absolutely correct, from the spiritual scientific point of view, that the giants are stupid and the dwarfs very clever. This is entirely based on what could be said of the Atlantean population: Where the people are small we find great intelligence, and a race of large men are all stupid! Where human intelligence ran to flesh there was not much mind left. So that physical size expressed the inability to retain the spiritual. In those days the body was still to a certain extent perfectly capable of transformation. Just at the time when Atlantis began to sink there was a great contrast between men who were good as to their qualities of soul, and were a race of little men, and the giant forms who were wicked and in whom everything had turned to flesh. You might even find echoes of these facts in the Bible, if you cared to look for them.

So we see that in Atlantean times the human body could still form itself according to spiritual characteristics. Therefore it could also take on the form which enabled it to mould all the organs, heart, brain, and so on, in such a way that they could become the expression of an actual ego being, a being with self-consciousness. These capacities and characteristics, however, developed on innumerable different levels. There were people whose inner nature was correctly balanced and who were normal, for they had not developed egoism to too great an extent, nor had they developed

their ego-feeling solely on a lower level. With them, devotion to the outer world and ego-feeling maintained a balance. Such people were scattered about everywhere. And these were the men that the Atlantean initiates could do most with. On the other hand there were other men who had developed a tremendously strong ego-feeling, much too soon, of course; for human beings had not yet reached the point when they could make of their bodies an instrument for a strongly developed ego-feeling. This made the body hardened in egoism as it were, and it became impossible for it to develop beyond a certain point. There were other people again who had not reached anything like a normal ego-feeling because they were more susceptible to influences from the outer world than they should have been; peoples who had completely surrendered themselves to the outer world. Thus it was the normal human beings that were the best material for the initiates to use for the evolution of the future, and they were also the ones that the great sun initiate, Manu, gathered around him as being most capable of evolving. Those peoples whose ego impulse was developed too strongly, so that it permeated their whole being and made it a manifestation of egohood, these people gradually wandered to the West and became the nation the last survivors of which appeared as the Red Indians of America. Those people whose ego-feeling was too little developed migrated to the East, and the survivors of these people became the subsequent Negro population of Africa. If you look at those things in a really spiritual scientific way you will see evidence of them right into the physical characteristics. If a man brings his whole inner being to expression in his physiognomy and on the surface of his body, then it permeates his external being with the colour of his inner nature as it were. Now the colour of egohood is red or copper or a yellowish brown. And an overpowering feeling of ego arising from offended self-respect can even nowadays turn a man as it were yellow with rage. They are absolutely connected, these two phenomena: the red colour of those peoples that migrated to the West and the yellow colour of the man whose 'blood boils' as we say, and whose inner nature is showing itself right into his skin. Those people, however, who had developed their ego being too little, and who were too exposed to the influences of the sun, were like plants: they deposited too many carbonic constituents beneath their skin and became black. This is why the Negroes are black. Thus both east of Atlantis in the black population and west of Atlantis in the red population we find survivors of the kind of people who had not developed their ego-feeling in a normal way. The human beings who had developed normally lent themselves best to progress. Therefore they were the ones chosen to infiltrate the various other regions from the place we know of in Asia.

Now between the little group of people Manu gathered round him and the extreme cases there were obviously innumerable intermediary stages of development. These were also turned to account, of course. To some extent these intermediary levels were extraordinarily suitable for the further evolution of earth civilisation. Thus for example, in the migration from West to East a people remained behind in parts of Europe who had developed their ego-feeling to a marked degree, but who were at the same time not very open to influences from the environment. Think what a peculiar mixture was bound to result in Europe. Those people who migrated to the East and became the black race were very susceptible to external influences, especially that of the sun, just because they had so little ego-feeling. But other peoples migrated into these parts, or at least in this direction, who had a strong ego-feeling. These were peoples who had preferred as it were going East to going West, and they are a milder red than they would have been had they gone West. They gave rise to the race of people who had a strong ego-feeling which nevertheless kept a balance between this and their devotion to the outer world. Those are the peoples of Europe of whom we were able to say in the last public lecture that their strong feeling of personality was from the beginning their essential feature.

Thus we see how man's outer surroundings work on his inner situation, and how the earth, through the different positions in which the areas of its surface are exposed to the sunlight, gave rise to innumerable levels of soul development. All according to the direction in which the souls looked, they found a different possibility for developing themselves in a physical body. It is very important that we realise the connection between the sun's influence on the earth and man's evolution. If some day you follow up these matters with me as far as the details of later times you will see how much becomes comprehensible through the fact that all these possible shades of colouring arose. Thus for example there was that particular part of the population that stayed in Europe whose characteristics were as I have described, and they led an independent existence up till much later times. They did not concern themselves about other people; but those that migrated into the regions already colonised by peoples with various shades of dark skin, and mixed with them, acquired every possible shade of skin colour. Look at the colours to be found in Asia, from the Negroes to the yellow races. Hence you have bodies that are sheaths for every possible level of soul, from the completely passive Negro soul entirely given up to the outer world of physical existence, to the other levels of passive souls in every possible part of Asia.

Various characteristics of the evolution of the Asiatic and African peoples will now be comprehensible to you: they present various combinations of surrender to the environment and the external manifestation of ego-feeling. So fundamentally we have two groups of people representing combinations: those on European soil, forming the root stock of the white population, who had predominantly developed the feeling of personality, but who did not migrate to where the feeling of personality permeated the whole body, but to where the ego-feeling became more inward. Therefore in western Asia and partly in North Africa and the countries of Europe, too, in earlier times, you find a people with a strong inner ego-feeling, but who on the whole were not given to losing themselves in the outer world; their inner character was strong and firm, but it did not set its imprint on the bodily nature. On the other hand there are those peoples in Asia with passive, self-effacing natures in whom just this passivity expresses itself in the highest degree. This makes the people dreamy, and the etheric body penetrates very deeply into the physical body. That is the fundamental difference between the European and the Asiatic peoples.

Manu, with his group of normal men, was wedged in between them. He had to bring the right form of culture to each different shade of the population, and he had to colour this wisdom and teaching to suit the external conditions of the people. Thus we see that the peoples of Asia were given instruction of the kind to satisfy them in their passivity and self-effacement. The Afro-Asiatic peoples do not emphasise the ego. The Negro would to some extent not lay stress on the ego at all. When these people looked up to the divine, they said: I do not find my innermost being within me, I find it in Brahma by flowing out of myself and surrendering myself to the universe!

A teaching such as this would not have been understood in Europe. Europe was situated much too near the North Pole for that, and the countries have kept a certain similarity right down the ages. Let us remind ourselves that it was at the North Pole that we previously found the peoples that did not descend right into physical bodies but whose physical bodies were actually to a certain extent stunted. In fact the European peoples had not as yet quite descended into their physical bodies. They turned their feeling of personality inward. And we would find this more and more the further back we went. Just think how this feeling of personality has been preserved right into later times, when people perhaps no longer saw any reason for it. Someone who belonged to the East would have said: I unite myself with the one, all-embracing Brahma! Thou unitest thyself with Brahma! The other man unites himself with Brahma, they all unite

themselves with the one Brahma! With whom did the European unite himself, if he had to acknowledge this as an acceptable idea? He united himself with the one valkyrie, with the one higher soul. And the valkyrie, one might say, was there for each one at the moment of death. It was all an individual, personal matter. And it was only at the border of these two regions that such a thing as the Moses-Christ religion could arise. It could only come right in the middle between East and West. And whilst it could not take root over in the East where the idea of God was that of a unity, but at a previous stage, it could assert itself as the idea of a personal God, which Jehovah is and which Christ is, among those people who already bore the feeling of personality within themselves. Therefore it spread to the West, and we see it meeting with understanding, when envisaged as the idea of a God people could think of as a person. That is why we see it developing in this way almost as a necessity just in this particular belt. The feeling of personality was there, but it was still inward, still spiritual, just as with the ancient Lemurians everything was still spiritual, and the bodily nature was only developed to a small degree. The bodily nature was certainly developed here, but the personal element, which man prized so highly, was inward, and man also wanted to conquer what was external by means of the inner being. Thus it was here that they best understood a God who had the greatest wealth of inner nature permeating his outer nature, namely the Christ. In Europe everything was prepared for the Christ. And because these were regions in which in earlier times men had not descended entirely on to the earthly scene, and therefore some kind of last remnants of spiritual perception existed, there was still something remaining of the vision of spiritual beings, of the old European clairvoyance.

This old European clairvoyance had also led to there being an ancient image of God throughout Europe and also as far as Asia, which present-day scholars, perhaps, will only get to know of if they discover it in the myths of certain isolated districts of Siberia. A remarkable description emerged there long before Christian times, when nothing was known as yet of what was going on in the South, namely what is described in the Old Testament, the Greco-Roman evolution and that of the East. A remarkable idea emerged there which possibly led to the name that has now more or less died out, the 'Ongod'; and Ongod is a name that is still echoed as it were in the idea of the 'One God'. The Ongod would be something like the divine we perceive in all spiritual beings. So according to this way of thinking the idea of a personal God was something that was absolutely familiar to the people that lived in this particular belt of the earth.

Therefore we can understand that it was just here that this particular outlook bore its chief fruit. For this belt of the earth and its inhabitants had so to speak solved the mystery of the ego. Strictly speaking all evolution since Atlantean times consists either of peoples who maintained the ego-feeling in just the right proportion, or of peoples who developed the ego too much or too little. Nothing special could come of the peoples who had developed the ego in too great or too little a degree. The peoples we have just described as the peoples of the Near East, and also the peoples of certain parts of Africa and especially of Europe, had developed the ego in a unique way.

These were the basic conditions necessary for the coming civilisation that has developed roughly since the beginning of our era. The ego had to reach a certain point of development, as it were, but not overdo it in either direction. And it is our task today to understand this in the right way. For all spiritual science has in a certain respect to appeal to what we call the development of a higher ego from out of the lower. When we look back over the ages we can learn from the fact that certain sections of the earth's inhabitant's did not find it possible to keep pace with earth evolution in the development of their ego, how many mistakes can be made in regard to the development of the higher ego out of the lower. In ancient Atlantis, for instance, there were peoples who dropped out of the earth population so to speak, and they became Red Indians. What would they have said if they had been able to put the facts of their development into words? They would have said: Above all I want to develop my inner being, which I find to be the highest thing within men when I look within myself. And they developed this ego so strongly that it affected even the colour of their skin, and that is how they became red. Their development led them into decadence. Among the people of Atlantis in whom everything still went directly into the body, these were the ones who cultivated what we might call inner brooding upon the ego, and they were so to say convinced that they could find within themselves everything that had to be developed. At the other extreme were those people who said: Oh, the ego is of no significance. The ego must lose itself entirely, it must dissolve altogether, and only listen to what the outside world says! They did not really say this, because they did not reflect in this manner. But those are the peoples who denied their ego to such an extent that they went black, because the external forces coming from the sun to the earth made them so. Only those peoples that were capable of holding the balance with regard to their ego could develop into the future.

Now let us look at our present earth population. There are still people today who say: Oh, the anthroposophists talk of a spiritual world which they seek within themselves. We, however, look back to our good old religious traditions that have been handed down to us externally. We rely on what comes to us from outside and are not very concerned about a higher world! Of course everything is more spiritual today than it was in Atlantis. Nowadays you no longer go black if you rely merely on traditions, and say: Those to whom we have entrusted the welfare of our souls will take care of us, those who do the job, and whose business it is to see that our souls reach Heaven! Nowadays this no longer makes you black. But we do not wish to deny everything, for in parts of Europe people still say today that if you think in this way you will go 'black'! Everything happens to be more spiritual today! That then is the one type. The others are those who, without taking the trouble to go into all the details of spiritual science — investigations in the Kashic Record, the nature of reincarnation and karma, the principles of man's being, and so on — which require an effort to be understood, are so easy-going that they say: What do I want all that for? I look within myself, that is my higher ego, the divine man within me is there! Such a way of thinking often arises, even in theosophical circles. These people do not want to learn anything, or really develop themselves and be prepared to wait until the ego has taken hold of the various parts of their nature, but run around waiting for the divine man to speak out of them, talking incessantly about the higher ego. Indeed, there are even certain books that tell you: You do not need to learn at all! Just let the God within you speak! Today, when everything is more spiritual, this no longer makes people red. But they succumb to the same fate as did the peoples that were always boasting of their ego.

What we need is an ego that keeps itself mobile, neither losing itself in external physical observation or in external physical experience, nor remaining stationary at one point, but really advancing in spiritual development. That is why the great masters of wisdom and of harmony of the perceptions have not been telling us all the time in the theosophical movement that we should let the divine man within us speak; on the contrary they have given us quite specific impulses for finding the wisdom of the world in all its different aspects. And we are not pupils of the great masters by only wanting to let the God within us speak, or by imagining that each individual carries his own master within himself, but by wanting to get to know the structure of the world in all its aspects. Anthroposophical development is a striving to know all the subtle aspects of cosmic happenings. We attain our higher ego by evolving upwards from

stage to stage. Our ego is there outside, manifest in the wonders of the world. For we are born out of the world and want to live our way back into it.

Thus we see that conditions which a man can fall into today are only so to speak modern, more spiritual versions of what we met with in Atlantean times. Even then men came under these three categories: There were those who really wanted to develop their egos, and who were always taking in new things, and by so doing they really became the bearers of post-Atlantean civilisation. Then there were those who only wanted to let the divine speak in them, and their egos made them red. And the third group turned their minds exclusively outwards, and these people became black.

We must learn the right lesson from these phenomena of earth evolution, then in the anthroposophical movement we shall really find the right impulse. What happens has always in a certain way already happened, but it happens again in ever new forms. The anthroposophical movement is something so great and significant because it is carrying further in the various regions of the earth something that developed visibly in Atlantis, but now is more invisible. Thus man is hastening forward from a civilisation of the visible towards a cultural epoch of the invisible and ever more invisible.



IX

Evolution, Involution and Creation out of Nothingness

Berlin, 17th June 1909

Today we intend adding something to round off the many facts and views we have been studying here this winter. We have often emphasised the way in which spiritual science should take hold of human life, and how it can become life, action and deed. Today, however, we want to give a few concluding aspects on the subject of the great evolutionary processes of the cosmos, as these are expressed in man. And to start with I should like to draw your attention to a fact that can tell you a great deal about the nature of cosmic evolution, if only you are prepared to look at it in the right way.

Consider, in a purely external way to begin with, the difference between the evolution of the animal and that of man. You need only say one word and hold one idea before you, and you will soon notice the difference between the concept of animal and human evolution. Think of the word 'education'. Actual education is impossible in the animal world. To a certain extent you can train the animal to do things that are foreign to its natural instincts and inborn way of life. But only an extremely enthusiastic dog-lover would want to deny that there is a radical difference between the education of a human being and what can be undertaken with animals. We need merely bear one particular anthroposophical insight in mind, and we shall understand the basis for this apparently superficial fact.

We know that man's development is a gradual and very complicated process. We have repeatedly emphasised that in the first seven years of his life, up to the change of teeth, man develops in quite a different way from the later period up to fourteen, and again from the fourteenth to the twenty-first year. We will only touch on this today, for you already know it. According to spiritual science man passes through several births. The human being is born into the physical world when he leaves his mother's body and frees himself of the physical maternal sheath. But we know that when this has happened he is still enclosed in a second maternal sheath, an etheric one. During the first seven years of his life the child's etheric body is completely enveloped in external etheric currents that come from

the outer world, just as the physical body is enveloped until birth in a physical maternal sheath. At the change of teeth this etheric sheath is stripped off, and not until now, at the age of seven, is the etheric body born. Then the astral body is still enclosed in the astral maternal sheath that is stripped off at puberty. After this the astral body develops freely until the twenty-first or twenty-second year, which is the time when strictly speaking the actual ego of man is born. Not until then does the human being awaken to his full inner intensity and the ego that has evolved through the course of his earlier incarnations work its way free.

To clairvoyant consciousness a very special fact becomes apparent here. If you watch a very young child for several weeks or months, you will see the child's head surrounded by etheric and astral currents and forces. However, these currents and forces gradually become less distinct and vanish after a while. What is really taking place there? You can actually discover what is happening, even without clairvoyant vision, although clairvoyant vision confirms what we are about to say. Immediately after the birth of a human being his brain is not the same as it will be a few weeks or months later. The child already perceives the outer world, of course, but its brain is not yet an instrument capable of connecting external impressions in a definite way. By means of connecting-nerves running from one part of the brain to another, the human being learns by degrees to link together in thought what he perceives in the external world, but these connecting nerve-strands develop only after birth. A child will hear and see a bell, for instance, but the impression of the sound and the sight of the bell do not immediately combine to form the thought that the bell is ringing. The child learns this only gradually, because the part of the brain that is the instrument for the perception of sound and the part that is the instrument for visual perception become connected only in the course of life. And not until this has happened is it possible for the child to reach the conclusion: 'What I see is the same thing that is making the sound'. Connecting-cords like this are developed in the brain, and the forces that develop these connecting-cords can be seen by the clairvoyant in the first weeks of the child's development as an extra covering round the brain. But this covering passes into the brain and subsequently lives within it, no longer working from outside but from within. What works from outside during the first weeks of the child's development could not go on working at the whole development of the growing human being were it not protected by the various sheaths. For when that which has been working from outside passes into the brain, it develops under the protecting sheath first of the etheric body then of the astral body and only when the twenty-

second year has been reached does that which first worked from outside become active from within. What was outside the human being during the first months of his existence and then slipped inside, is active for the first time independently of sheaths in the twentieth to the twenty-second year; then it becomes free and awakens into intense activity.

Now let us consider the gradual development of the human being and compare it with that of the plant. We know that the plant only has its physical and etheric body here in the physical world, whereas its astral body is outside it; but only the physical and etheric body within it. The plant emerges from the seed, forms its physical body, and then the etheric body gradually develops. And this etheric body is all that the plant has in addition. Now we have seen that man's etheric body is still enveloped in the astral body until puberty, and that man's astral body is not actually born until then. But the plant, after reaching its puberty, cannot give birth to an astral body, for it has none. Therefore the plant has nothing further to develop after puberty. It has accomplished its task in the physical world when puberty occurs, and after it has been fertilised, it withers. You can even observe something similar in certain lower animals. In these lower animals the astral body has quite evidently not penetrated into the physical body to the same extent as in the higher animals. Lower animals are characterised by the very fact that their astral body is not yet entirely within their physical body. Take the may-fly; it comes into being, lives until it is fertilised, and then dies. Why? Because it is a creature which, like a plant, has its astral body for the most part outside it, and therefore it has nothing further to develop when puberty has occurred. In a certain respect man, animal and plant develop in a similar way until puberty. Then the plant has nothing else to develop in the physical world, and so it dies. The animal still has an astral body, but no ego. Therefore after puberty certain possibilities of development remain in the animal. The astral body becomes free, and as long as it develops freely and possibilities of development remain, further development continues in the higher animal after puberty. But the astral body of the animal has no ego within it in the physical world. The animal's ego is a group ego; it embraces a whole group and exists as group ego in the astral world, where its possibilities of development are quite different from those of the single animal here in the physical world. What the animal possesses as astral body has a limited possibility of development, and the animal already has this possibility within it as a natural tendency when it comes into the world. The lion has something in his astral body that expresses itself as a sum of impulses, instincts and passions. And this tendency continues to live itself out to the full until an

ego might be born; but the ego is not there, it is on the astral plane. Therefore when the animal has just reached the stage when man attains his twenty-first year, its possibilities of development are all used up. The length of life varies according to circumstances, of course, for animals do not all live to be twenty-one. But up to the age of twenty-one, when the ego is born in man, his development is comparable to that of the animal. This must not lead to the conclusion that human development up to the age of twenty-one is identical to that of an animal, for that is not the case. The ego is already within the human being from the beginning, right from conception, and it now becomes free. Hence, because there is something within man from the beginning that becomes free at the age of twenty-one, he is from the outset no animal being, for the ego, although not free, is nevertheless working in him from the start. And it is essentially this ego that can be educated. For it is this ego, together with what it has accomplished in the astral, etheric and physical bodies, that passes from one incarnation to another. If this ego received nothing new in a further incarnation, man would not be able to take anything with him at his physical death, from his last life between birth and death. And if he were not able to take anything with him, he would be at exactly the same stage in the following life as he was in the previous one. Through the fact that you see man going through a development in life, and acquiring what the animal cannot acquire, because the animal's possibilities of development do not go beyond its inborn capacities, man is constantly enriching his ego, and reaches higher levels from one incarnation to another. It is because man bears within him an ego that has already been at work, although it only becomes free at his twenty-first year, that education is practicable, and something further can be done with him beyond his original possibilities. The lion brings its lion nature with it and lives it out. Man not only brings with him his nature as a member of the general human species, but also what he has attained as an ego in his Previous incarnation. This can be transformed more and more by education and life, and it will have acquired new impetus by the time man passes through the portal of death and has to prepare for a new incarnation. The point is that man acquires new factors of development and is constantly adding to his store.

Now let us ask what actually happens when man adds to his store from outside? To answer this we must reach three very important, rather difficult concepts. But as we have been working for some years in this group, we ought to be able to understand them. Let us start by taking a fully developed plant, for instance a lily of the valley. Here you have the plant before you in another form, as a small seed. Imagine holding the seed;

there you have a minute structure. When you lay it in front of you, you can say: Everything that I shall see later on as root, stalk, leaves and blossom is in this seed. So here I have the plant in front of me as a seed and there as a fully grown plant. But I could not have the seed in front of me if it had not been produced by a previous lily of the valley. The case is different for clairvoyant consciousness. When clairvoyant consciousness observes the fully grown lily of the valley, it sees the physical plant filled with an etheric body, a body consisting of streams of light permeating it from top to bottom. In the lily of the valley, however, the etheric body does not extend very far beyond the physical body of the plant and does not differ from it very much. But if you take the small seed of the lily of the valley you will find that although the physical seed is small it is permeated by a wonderfully beautiful etheric body raying out all round in such a way that the seed is situated at one end of the etheric body like a comet with a tail. The physical seed is really only a denser point in the light or etheric body of the lily of the valley. When a spiritual scientist has the fully grown lily of the valley in front of him then, for him, the being that was hidden to begin with is developed. When he has the seed in front of him where the physical part is very small and only the spiritual part is large, he says: the actual being of the lily of the valley is rolled up in the physical seed. So when we look at the lily of the valley we have to distinguish two different states. One state is where the whole being of the lily of the valley is in involution: the seed contains the being rolled up, involved. When it comes forth it passes over to evolution, and then the whole being of the lily of the valley slips more into the newly developing seed. Thus evolution and involution alternate in the successive states of a plant. During evolution the spiritual disappears further and further and the physical grows great, whilst in involution the physical will disappear further and further and the spiritual become greater and greater.

In a certain respect we can speak of evolution and involution alternating in man to an even greater extent. In the human being between birth and death a physical body and an etheric body interpenetrate to form the physical, and the spiritual interpenetrates them too in a certain way, as an earthly being man is in evolution. But when man is seen clairvoyantly passing through the portal of death, he does not leave behind in physical life as much as the lily of the valley leaves in the seed; the physical disappears so completely that you no longer see it, it is all rolled up in the spiritual. Then man passes through Devachan, where he is in involution as regards his earthly being. For this earthly being of man, evolution is between birth and death, involution between death and a new birth. Yet

there is a tremendous difference between man and the plant. In the plant we can speak of involution and evolution, but in the case of man we have to speak of yet a third factor. If we were not to speak of a third factor, we should not comprise the whole of human development. Because the plant always passes through involution and evolution, every new plant is an exact repetition of the last one. The being of the lily of the valley is perpetually going into the seed and out again. But what is happening in the case of man?

We have just realised that man receives new possibilities of development during his life between birth and death. He adds to his store. Hence it is not the same with man as it is with the plant. Each evolution of man on the earth is not a mere repetition of the previous one, but a raising of his existence on to a higher level. What he takes into himself between birth and death is added to what was there previously. That is why no mere repetition occurs, for what is evolving appears at a higher stage. Where does this new element actually come from? In what way are we to understand the fact that man receives and takes in something new? I beg you to follow very closely now, for we are coming to a most important and most difficult concept. And not without reason do I say this in one of the last sessions, for you will have the whole summer to ponder over it. We should ponder over such concepts for months if not years, then we gradually begin to realise their depth. Where does all that is constantly being added to man come from? We will make this comprehensible by taking a simple example.

Suppose you see a man standing opposite two other people. Let us take into consideration everything that belongs to evolution. Let us take the one who is observing the other two, and say to ourselves that he has passed through earlier incarnations and has developed what has been planted in him in these previous incarnations. The same applies to the other two people. Then let us suppose that the first man thinks to himself: The one person looks splendid beside the other. He is pleased to see just these two particular people standing together. Another person might not feel this satisfaction. The satisfaction the man feels in seeing the two standing side by side has nothing whatever to do with the possibilities of development in the other two, for they have done nothing that deserves the pleasure their standing together gives him. It is something quite different, and it depends entirely on the fact that it is *he* in particular that is standing opposite the two people. The point is that the man develops a feeling of joy over the two men in front of him standing together. This feeling is not caused by anything to do with development. There are things like this in the world

that arise simply through coincidence. It is not a question of the two men being karmically connected. Our concern is the joy the man feels because he likes seeing the two people standing together.

Let us take a further example. Imagine a man standing here at a certain spot on the earth and looking up at the sky. He sees a particular constellation of stars. If he were to stand five paces away he would see something else. This looking at the sky creates in him a feeling of joy that is something quite new. Man experiences a number of totally new things that have nothing to do with his previous development. Everything that comes forth in the lily of the valley is determined by its previous development; but this is not the case with what works on the human soul from the environment. Man is concerned with a lot of affairs that have nothing to do with any previous development, but which are there because various circumstances bring him into contact with the outer world. Because he feels this joy, however, it has become for him an experience. Something has arisen in the human soul that is not determined by anything preceding it but which has arisen out of nothingness. Such creations out of nothingness are constantly arising in the human soul. These are experiences of the soul not experienced through given circumstances but through the relationships we ourselves create connecting the circumstances one with another. I want you to distinguish between the experiences produced by given circumstances and those produced by the relationships between the various circumstances.

Life really falls into two parts, with no distinguishing line between them: those experiences strictly determined by previous causes, by karma, and those not determined by karma but appearing on our horizon for the first time. There are whole areas in human life that come under these headings. Suppose you hear that somewhere someone has stolen something. What has happened is, of course determined by something karmic. But suppose you only know something about the theft and not the thief — therefore there is a particular person in the objective world who has done the stealing, but you know nothing about him. The thief is not going to come to you, though, and say: 'Lock me up, I have committed a theft', on the contrary, it is up to you to line up the facts so as to produce the evidence as to who is the thief. The ideas you put together have nothing to do with the objective facts. They depend on quite different things, even on whether you are clever or not. Your train of argument does not make the person a thief, it is a process taking place entirely within you that gets associated with what is there outside. Strictly speaking, any kind of logic is something added to things from outside. And all opinions of taste, as well

as judgments we make about beauty, are additions. Thus man is constantly enriching his life with things that are not determined by previous causes, but which he experiences by bringing himself into a relationship with things.

If we make a rapid survey of human life and visualise man's development through ancient Saturn, Sun and Moon as far as our Earth evolution, we find that on Saturn there could be no question of man being able to relate to things in this way. Everything was pure necessity then. It was the same on old Sun and also on old Moon, and the animals are still in the situation today that man was in on the Moon. The animal experiences only what is determined by preceding causes. Man alone has entirely new experiences, independent of previous causes. Therefore in the truest sense of the word man alone is capable of education; man alone can continually add something new to what is determined by karma. Only on Earth did man attain the possibility of adding something new. On the Moon his development had not reached the point where he would have been capable of adding anything new to his innate capacities. Although not an animal, he was then at the stage of animal development. His actions were determined by external causes. To a certain extent this is still so today, for those experiences that are free experiences are only slowly making their way into man. And they appear to a greater and greater extent the higher the level at which man is. Imagine a dog standing in front of a Raphael painting. It would see what is there in the picture itself, in so far as it is a sense object. But if a man were to stand in front of the picture, he would see something quite different in it; he would see what he is capable of creating through the fact that he has already developed further in previous incarnations. And now imagine a genius like Goethe; he would see even more, and he would know the significance of why one thing is painted like this and the other like that. The more highly developed a man is the more he sees. And the more he has enriched his soul the greater his capacity to add to it the soul experiences from soul relationships. These become the property of his soul and are stored up within it. All this, however, has only been possible for humanity since Earth evolution began. But now the following will take place.

Man will develop in his own way through the subsequent ages. We know that the Earth will be succeeded by Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan. During this evolution the sum of man's experiences over and above those resulting from previous causes will become greater and greater, and his inner being become richer and richer. What he has brought with him from ancient causes, from the Saturn, Sun and Moon stages, will have less and less

significance. He is developing his way out of previous causes and casting them off. And when, together with the Earth, man will have reached Vulcan, he will have stripped off all he received during the Saturn, Sun and Moon evolution. He will have cast it all off

Now we come to a difficult concept which shall be made clear by an analogy. Imagine you are sitting in a carriage that has been given or bequeathed to you. You are taking a ride in this carriage when a wheel becomes faulty, so you replace it with a new one. Now you have the old carriage but a new wheel. Suppose that after a while a second wheel becomes faulty. You replace that, and you now have the old carriage and two new wheels. Similarly you replace the third and fourth wheels, and so on, until you can easily imagine that one day you will actually have nothing left of the old carriage, but will have replaced it all with new parts. You will have nothing left of what you received as a gift or inheritance; you will still drive about in it, but strictly speaking it will be an entirely new vehicle. And now transfer this idea to human evolution. During the Saturn period man received the rudiments of his physical body, on the Sun his etheric body, on the Moon his astral body and on the Earth his ego, and he has been gradually developing these principles. But within the ego he is increasingly bringing experiences of a new kind into being and stripping off what he inherited, what he was given on Saturn, Sun and Moon. And a time will come — the Venus evolution — when man will have cast off all that the gods gave him during the Moon, Sun and Saturn evolution and the first half of the Earth evolution. He will have discarded all this, Just as in our analogy the single parts of the carriage were discarded. And he will have gradually replaced all this by something he has taken into himself from relationships, something previously nonexistent. Thus on reaching Venus, man will not be able to say: Everything from Saturn, Sun and Moon evolution is still in me — for by then he will have cast it all off. And at the end of his evolution he will bear within him only what he has gained through his own efforts, not what he was given, but what he has created out of nothingness. Here you have the third thing in addition to evolution and involution: creation out of nothingness. Evolution, Involution and creation out of nothingness are what we must have in mind if we are to picture the whole magnitude and majesty of human evolution. Thus we can understand how the gods have first of all given us our three bodies as vehicles, and how they built up these vehicles stage by stage, and then endowed us with the capacity to surmount them again stage by stage. We can understand how we may throw away the parts, piece by piece,

because the gods wish to make us member by member into their image, so that we may say: The rudiments of what I am to become were given me, and out of them I have created for myself a new being.

Thus what man sees before him as a great and wonderful ideal in the far distant future, of having not only a consciousness of himself but a consciousness of having created himself, was already developed in earlier times by mighty spirits on a higher level than man. And certain spirits already engaged in the past in our evolution are developing at the present time what man will experience only in a distant future. We have said that during the Saturn evolution the thrones poured forth what we call the substance of mankind, and that into this human substance the spirits of personality poured what we call the forces of personality. But the spirits of personality, who at that time were sufficiently powerful to let the character of their personality flow into this substance poured out by the thrones, have since then ascended higher and higher. Today they have reached the point where they no longer need any physical substance for their further development. On Saturn, in order to be able to live at all, they needed the physical substance of Saturn which was at the same time the rudiment of human substance; on the Sun they needed the etheric substance that poured forth for man's etheric body; on the Moon they needed the astral substance, and here on Earth they need our ego. Henceforth, however, they will need what is formed by the ego itself, man's new creation out of pure relations, which is no longer physical, etheric or astral body or even ego as such, but that which the ego produces out of itself. This the spirits of personality will use, and they are already using it to live in today. On Saturn they lived in what is now our physical body, on the Sun in what is now our etheric body, on the Moon in what is now our astral body. Since the middle of Atlantean times they have begun living in the higher elements that man can bring forth out of his ego.

What are these higher elements man produces from out of his ego? They are of three kinds. First, what we call thinking in accordance with law, our logical thinking. This is something that man adds to things. If man does not merely look at the external world or merely observe it, or merely chase after the thief to find him, but observes in such a way that he sees the law inherent in the observation, availing himself of thoughts that have nothing to do with the thief and yet they catch him, then man is living in logic, pure logic. This logic is something that is added to things by man. When man devotes himself to this pure logic, the ego creates something beyond itself.

Secondly, the ego creates beyond itself when it develops pleasure or displeasure in the beautiful, the exalted, the humorous, the comic; in short, in everything that man himself produces. Let us say you see something in the world that strikes you as silly, and you laugh at it. This laughter has nothing whatever to do with your karma. A stupid person might come along, and the very thing you are laughing at could strike him as clever. That is something that arises out of yourself in that particular situation. Or, let us say, you see people attacking a brave man who for a time holds his own but eventually comes to a tragic end. What you witness was determined by karma, but the feeling of tragedy you have about it is something new.

Though necessity is the first thing, pleasure and displeasure are the second, and the third is the way you feel the urge to act under the influences of relationships. Even the way you feel compelled to act is not determined solely by karma, but by your relationship to the matter. Supposing two people are on the one hand so situated with regard to their relationship with one another that they are karmically destined to pay off something together, but at the same time one is further advanced in his development than the other. The more advanced one will pay up, the other will hold it back for later payment. The one will develop kindness of heart, the other's feelings will not be touched. That is something new coming into evolution. You must not look on everything as determined, rather it depends on whether or not we allow our actions to be guided by the laws of justice and fairness. New things are constantly being added to our morality, to the way we do our duty and to our moral judgment. Particularly in our moral judgment there lies the third element by means of which man goes beyond himself and then advances further and further. The ego puts this into our world, and what is thus put into the world does not perish. What men have introduced into the world from epoch to epoch, from age to age, as the result of logical thought, aesthetic judgment or the fulfillment of duty, forms a continuous stream, and provides the substance in which, in their phase of evolution, the spirits of personality take up their abode.

That is the way you live and evolve. And whilst you are evolving, the spirits of personality look down upon you, asking continually: Will you give me something, too, that I can use for my development? And the more man develops his thought content, his treasures of thought, the more he tries to refine his aesthetic judgment, and carry out his duty beyond the requirements of karma, the more nourishment there is for the spirits of personality; the more we offer up to them, the more substantial these

spirits of personality become. What do these spirits of personality represent? Something which from the point of view of our human world conception we call an abstraction: the spirit of the age, the spirit of the various epochs. To anthroposophists this spirit of the age is a real being. The spirits of the age, who are actually the spirits of personality, move through the ages. When we look back into ancient times, the Indian, Persian, Chaldean-Babylonian, Greco-Latin times and right into our own time, we find that apart from the nations and apart from all the other differences among men, what we call the spirit of the age is always changing. People thought and felt quite differently five thousand years ago than they did three thousand years ago and from the way they do today. And it is the spirits of the age or, according to spiritual science, the spirits of personality who change. These spirits of personality are going through their evolution in the super-sensible world just as the human race is going through its evolution in the sense world. But all that the human race develops of a super-sensible nature is food and drink for these spirits of personality, and they benefit from it. If there were an age in which men were to spend their lives without developing any treasures of thought, without pleasure or displeasure, nor any feeling for duty beyond the limits of karma — in such an age the spirits of personality would have no nourishment and they would become emaciated. Such is our connection with the beings who are invisibly interwoven with our life.

As I told you, man adds something new to development, creates as it were something out of nothingness in addition to involution and evolution. He could not create anything out of nothingness, however, had he not previously received the causes into which he has placed himself as in a vehicle. This vehicle was given him during the Saturn evolution, and bit by bit he is discarding it and developing on into the future. He had to receive the foundation for this, however, and if the gods had not provided this foundation for him in the first place, he would not have been able to perform any action that can be created out of nothingness. That relationships in the surrounding world affect us in such a way that they really help our further development is due to this laying of a good foundation.

For what has become possible through the fact that man can create something new out of relationships, and that he can make use of the connections into which he is placed so as to form the foundation for something new that he himself creates? And what does it mean that man has become capable of extending his thoughts beyond the things he experiences in the surrounding world, and feeling more than what is

objectively there in front of him? What has come about as a result of man being able to work beyond the dictates of karma, and live in duty towards truth, fairness and kindness of heart?

By becoming capable of logical thinking, of developing thought in accordance with its necessity, the possibility of error has been created. Because of the pleasure man can take in what is beautiful, the possibility has also been created for him to introduce the element of ugliness and impurity into world evolution. Because man is capable of both setting himself the concept of duty and of fulfilling it beyond the extent of karma, the possibility of evil and of resistance to duty has been created. So it is this very possibility of being able to create solely out of relationships that has placed man in a world in which he can also work on his own spiritual part, so that it becomes full of error, ugliness and evil. And not only had the possibility to be provided for man altogether to create out of these relationships, but the possibility had to be given for him by dint of struggle and striving gradually to create out of these relationships what is right, what is beautiful and those virtues that really further his evolution.

Creating out of relationships is called in Christian esotericism 'creating out of the spirit'. And creating out of right, beautiful and virtuous relationships is called in Christian esotericism 'The Holy Spirit'. When a man is able to create out of nothingness the right or true, the beautiful and the good, the Holy Spirit fills him with bliss. But for a man to be able to create in the sense of the Holy Spirit, he had first to be given the foundation, as is the case for all creation out of nothingness. This foundation was given him through the coming of Christ into our evolution. Through experiencing the Christ Event on earth, man was able to ascend to creating in the Holy Spirit. Thus it is Christ Himself Who creates the greatest, most profound foundation. If man becomes such that he stands firmly on the basis of the Christ experience, and the Christ experience is the carriage he joins for his evolutionary progress, then the Christ sends him the Holy Spirit, and man becomes capable of creating the right, beautiful and good in the course of his further evolution.

So we see the coming of the Christ to the Earth as a fulfillment as it were of all that had been put into man through Saturn, Sun and Moon. And the Christ Event has given man the greatest thing possible, the power that makes him capable of living on into the perspectives of the future and of increasingly creating out of relationships, out of all that is not predetermined, but depends on how man relates to the facts of the world around him, which is in the widest sense the Holy Spirit. This again is an

aspect of Christian esotericism. Christian esotericism is connected with the profoundest thought in the whole of our evolution, the thought of creation out of nothingness.

Therefore no true theory of evolution will ever be able to leave out the thought of creation out of nothingness. Supposing there were only evolution and involution, there would be eternal repetition like there is with the plant, and on Vulcan there would be only what originated on Saturn. But in the middle of our development creation out of nothingness was added to evolution and involution. After Saturn, Sun and Moon had passed away, Christ came to Earth as the enriching leaven which ensures that something quite new will be there on Vulcan, something not yet present on Saturn. Whoever speaks of evolution and involution only, will speak of development as though everything were merely to repeat itself in circles. But such circles can never really explain world evolution. Only when we add to evolution and involution this creation out of nothingness, that adds something new to existing relationships, do we arrive at a real understanding of the world.

Beings of a lower order show no more than a trace of what we called creation out of nothingness. A lily of the valley will always be a lily of the valley; at most the gardener could add something to it from outside to which the lily of the valley would never have attained of itself. Then there would be something which with regard to the nature of the lily of the valley would be a creation out of nothingness. Man, however, is himself capable of including in his being this creation out of nothingness. Yet man only becomes capable of doing so, and advancing to the freedom of individual creativity through the greatest of all free deeds, and one which can serve him as an example. What is this greatest deed of freedom? It is that the creative and wise Word of our solar system Himself resolved to enter into a human body and to take part in Earth evolution through a deed unconnected with any previous karma. There was no preceding karma forcing the Christ to His resolution to enter a human body; He undertook to do it as a free deed entirely based upon foreseeing mankind's future evolution. This deed had no precedent, having its origin in Him as a thought out of nothingness, out of His pre-vision. This is a difficult concept, but it will always be included in Christian esotericism, and everything depends on our being able to add the thought of creation out of nothingness to those of evolution and involution.

When we are able to do this we shall acquire great ideals which, although they may not extend to what may be called cosmic dimensions, are essentially connected with the question: Why, for instance, do we join an anthroposophical society? To understand the purpose of an anthroposophical society we must return to the thought that we are working for the spirits of personality, for the spirits of the age. When a human being comes into the world at birth, to start with he is educated by all manner of circumstances; these influence him and form the first step of his own creative activity. If only it could be clearly understood that the place where a man is born is only the first step, and that the prevailing circumstances work upon him with overwhelming suggestive power. Let us try to imagine how different a man's circumstances would be were he to be born in Rome or Frankfurt instead of in Constantinople. Through his birth he would be placed in different circumstances, into different religious affiliations. Under these influences a certain fanaticism could develop in him for Catholicism or Protestantism. If, through a slight turn of the wheel in karmic connections, he had been born in Constantinople, might he not also have turned out to be quite a good Turk? Here you have an illustration of the suggestive force with which environmental conditions affect man. But man is able to extricate himself from the purely suggestive nature of conditions and unite with other people in accordance with principles he himself chooses and acknowledges. Then he can say: "Now I know why I am working with other people". In this way there arise out of human consciousness those social groups in which material is created for the spirits of the age, the spirits of personality. And the anthroposophical society is a group of this kind in which this connection is created on a basis of brotherhood. This means nothing else than that each individual is active in the group in such a way that he acquires in himself all the good qualities that make him an image of the whole society. Thus all the thoughts, wealth of feeling and virtues he develops through the society he bestows as nourishment upon the spirits of personality. Hence in a society like this all that creates communal life is inseparable from the principle of individuality. Each single member becomes capable through such a society of offering what he himself produces as a sacrifice to the spirits of personality. And each individual prepares himself to reach the level of those who are the most advanced, and who, as the result of spiritual training have progressed to the point where they have the following ideal: "When I think, I do not do so for my own satisfaction, but in order to create nourishment for the spirits of personality. I lay upon the altar of the spirits of personality my highest and most beautiful thoughts; and what I feel is not prompted by egoism, I feel it because it is to be nourishment for the spirits of

personality. And what I can practise in the way of virtue, I do not practise for the sake of gaining influence for myself, but in order to bring it as a sacrifice to provide food for the spirits of personality." Here we have placed before us as our ideal those whom we call the masters of wisdom and the masters of harmony and feeling. For thus do they think and prepare for the development which will bring man nearer and nearer to the point where he will always be creating what is new until he will finally develop a world from which the workings of the old causes will have disappeared, and out of which new light will stream forth into the future. The world is not subject to perpetual metamorphosis into different forms, but the old is perfected and becomes the vehicle of the new. Then even this will be thrown off and will disappear into nothingness, so that out of this nothingness something new may arise. This is the tremendous idea of progress, that new things can perpetually arise.

But the worlds are complete in themselves, and you will have seen in the example given that we cannot speak of anything actually coming to an end. It has been shown how on the one hand the spirits of personality lose their influence over man, but on the other hand how they again pursue their own evolution. Thus ours is a world that is constantly being rejuvenated by new creations, yet it is also true that what is stripped off would hinder progress, and it is passed on so that others for their part can progress. Nobody should believe that he must allow something to sink into nothingness, for we have been given the possibility of creating out of nothingness. What on Vulcan will prove itself to be something new, will continually build new forms and discard the old, and what is thrown off will seek its own path.

Evolution, involution and creation out of nothingness are the three concepts we have to apply in order to understand the evolution of world phenomena as it really is. Only by this means shall we arrive at accurate concepts that both enlighten man about the world and engender in him inner warmth of feeling. If man had to admit his incapacity to do anything except create in accordance with impulses implanted into him, this would not steel his will nor kindle his hopes to the same extent as being able to say: "I can create my own life values and constantly add something new to what has been given me as a foundation. My ancient heritage will in no way hinder me from creating new blossoms and fruits which will live on into the future." This, however, is part of what we can describe by saying that the anthroposophical conception of the world gives man strength, hope and confidence in life, for it shows him that he can, in the future, have a share in working at creations which, today, not only lie in the womb

of causality but in nothingness. It shows him the prospect that, through his own efforts, he is working his way in the true sense of the word from being a 'creature' to being a 'creator'.



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