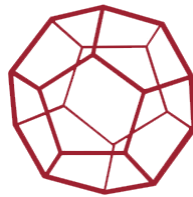


Esoteric Lessons

The School of Spiritual Science

GA 270

Volumes I, II and III



Note: Not meant for general publication (see
Apologia)

Esoteric Lessons

The School of Spiritual Science

GA 270

Volumes I, II and III

Rudolf Steiner

1904–1914

Source: [Rudolf Steiner Archive](#)

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Introduction

During the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society at Christmas 1923, Rudolf Steiner also reconstituted the "Esoteric School" which had originally functioned in Germany from 1904 until 1914, when the outset of the First World War made its continuance impossible.

However, the original school was only for a relatively few selected individuals, whereas the new school was incorporated into the *School for Spiritual Science* at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.



Marie Steiner 1915

Rudolf Steiner was only able to give nineteen lessons — plus seven "recapitulation" lessons — for the First Class before his illness and death. His intention had been to develop three classes. After his death, the Anthroposophical Society's Executive Council was faced with the dilemma of what to do about the Esoteric School — to try to continue it without Rudolf Steiner, or not. He had not designated a successor. And what to do with the stenographic records of the Class lectures.

Rudolf Steiner had always insisted that the lectures were not to be published. In fact, the members of the School were only permitted to copy the mantra — and not the text of the lectures — for their own personal contemplation. The dilemma was further complicated by the dispute between Marie Steiner — Rudolf Steiner's legal heir — and the rest of the Executive council, which claimed **all** of Steiner's lectures for the Society. (The dispute was eventually settled by the Swiss courts in favor of Mrs. Steiner.)

The Anthroposophical Society was permitted to hand out manuscripts of the lectures to its so-called designated "readers," who read each lecture to the members of the school in their particular area or country. This system is still practiced.

Marie Steiner wrote:

"How can we preserve the treasure with which we have been entrusted? Not by hiding it away, thereby simply giving our enemies the opportunity to do with it what they will, but by trusting in the good spiritual powers and thereby giving new generations the possibility of receiving a stimulus in their souls that will kindle the spiritual light slumbering there, a light that will awaken in their souls what the powers of destiny have sown in them."

Marie Steiner, letter of January 4, 1948

The lectures were published in German in manuscript book form in 1977 by the Rudolf Steiner Estate (Nachlassverwaltung — Marie Steiner's legal successor) in a limited edition and sold only upon written request to anthroposophists.

However, pirated editions containing errors and falsifications occurred to the extent that the Rudolf Steiner Estate decided to make the printed volumes in German generally available in 1992.

The Anthroposophical Society in Great Britain published the lectures in English translation in 1994.

Frank Thomas Smith — Editor, Southern Cross Review



Apologia

I have received many comments about the publication here of Rudolf Steiner's First Class Lessons. Most of these comments have been positive, expressing the writers' thanks for finally being able to have access to the Lessons. But there have also been messages expressing surprise, even shock at seeing them online and available to everyone who may be interested. So I decided that it's time to write an "apologia" (not an apology).

Those who object to the publication do so on both legal and moral grounds — I assume. I'll start with the legal aspect, because it's the easiest. All of Rudolf Steiner's literary work has been in the public domain since the year 2000. Previously it was the property of his literary estate, in the legal person of the "Nachlassvereinigung" in Dornach, and before that to Marie Steiner; *never* to the General Anthroposophical Society. Being in the public domain means that the original German works may now be published by anyone and read by everyone.

A translation is a different matter. Its copyright may belong to the translator or to the publisher. There already is an English translation issued by the Anthroposophical Society of Great Britain and, I believe, copyrighted by that body. There may be other translations of which I am not aware.

The translations published in SouthernCrossReview.org are new and are mine. So I could claim copyright if I wanted to. But my point is that I have the right to publish my own translations of texts which are in the public domain in their original language — without needing permission from anyone, least of all the General Anthroposophical Society.

Now for the moral issue. Those who object to the publication in English and free availability to everyone of these texts are probably thinking about Rudolf Steiner's admonitions that the texts, and especially the mantras, are available exclusively to members of the First Class of the Free School for Spiritual Science. In respect to the mantras, he said that if they got into the wrong hands their

esoterically positive effect on those for whom they were intended would vanish. In other words they would no longer be effective, no longer be alive. It is an occult rule.

However, Rudolf Steiner died in 1925. The esoteric school since then has consisted of continuous readings of the transcripts of the unfinished First Class by so-called officially appointed "readers". The second and third classes were of course never even begun. To believe that the Esoteric School still exists is an illusion.

The texts in German are available to the public since they have been in the public domain. If we take what Steiner said seriously, the esoteric effect of the mantras no longer exists. Now the student must create his own effect with the help of the mantras.

If the texts are available in German, why should they not be available in other languages, especially English, in order to be studied by members and non-members of the G.A.S and the Free School who do not understand German?

Practically everything Rudolf Steiner wrote and said has been published in German. Keeping certain works, such as the First Class Lessons, secret for some and not for others, no longer corresponds to the times. The time for secrets in esoteric life is over. The publication of the First Class texts in English, and their availability to non-German speaking interested individuals and groups is a reflection of that reality.

Frank Thomas Smith
January 2015



Esoteric Lessons

The School of Spiritual Science

Volume I

Rudolf Steiner

February–April, 1924

Source: **Lectures to the First Class, Vol. I**

Lesson 1

15 February 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

With this lesson, I would like to restore to the Free School for Spiritual Science as an esoteric institution the task which it has been in danger of being deprived of during the past years. In this introductory lecture, I will not go further into explaining that situation, but I wanted to stress the importance of this moment by indicating the seriousness with which our movement — which is daily being endangered and undermined — must be imbued, especially in this School. This is no unnecessary observation, for such seriousness has not been apparent everywhere.

A kind of preparatory introduction will be given today, my dear friends. And I would like to emphasize that in this School spiritual life is to be revealed in its true meaning, so that you will be able to consider this School as an institution which can provide for the revealed spiritual needs of our times. This spiritual life can be deepened in all its aspects. But a center must exist from out of which this deepening derives, and the Center can be seen by those who wish to be members of the School to be the Goetheanum in Dornach.

Therefore, I wish to begin the School today, with those members for whom it has so far been possible to issue the membership card, to begin in a way that will make you conscious of the fact that every word spoken within this School is based on the full responsibility towards the spirit revealed to our times — that same spirit which has been revealed to humanity throughout the centuries and millennia, but revealed in each epoch in a special way. And this spirit will only give to humanity what it is able to receive.

We must be clear from the very beginning that it is not animosity towards what the sense-world has accomplished for humanity when in a School for Spiritual Science we attend to the revelations of the spirit.

We must also clearly recognize that the sense-world has provided necessary, practical revelations to humanity and this fact should not cause us to undervalue those contributions in any way.

But it is nevertheless important that the spiritual revelations are received with all earnestness. For this — I must say it at the outset — much prejudice and obstinacy, which is deeply ingrained in the School's members, will have to go. It will be necessary to investigate how one finds the path to his own obstinacy, which hinders understanding what the School should be. For many still don't think correctly about the School. This must be gradually corrected. For it is only possible for those to be in the School who take it in all earnestness.

The matter itself demands this. And on the other hand, we must follow a difficult path in face of the opposition and undermining forces which are increasing day by day. The members of the School are by no means sufficiently attentive to this. All this, my dear friends, must be kept in mind.

The first and foremost thing to be observed in this School must of course be what it is possible for the spirit to give us. It will however be demanded of the members of the School that they accompany us on the difficult path strewn with obstacles and attempts at undermining it.

I have gone into these things in our weekly periodical, *What is Happening in the Anthroposophical Society*, and have also explicitly differentiated there between the General Anthroposophical Society and this School. And it is necessary that this difference be felt in all its explicitness by the members of the School, so that eventually only those persons are members who really want to be representatives of anthroposophy in all aspects of life. I say this now in order to emphasize the seriousness of the matter.

First of all, I would like to present to your hearts and to your souls what should stand over our School as a kind of engraving. That we really identify with what emerges from the life of the spirit onto our

soul's ear and our soul's understanding. We shall begin with the words:

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
Life is manifest in creation;
Where from earthly matter, form on form,
The lifeless is given shape;
Where sentient Beings, strong in will
Warm themselves in joy of existence;
Where you, O man, your bodily being
derive from earth and air and light.*

*There your true being enters
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse
No longer, who you are and were and will be.
For your own being the day grows dimly
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
And you turn with angst of soul
Toward the light that from darkness streams.*

I will repeat it:

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
Life is manifest in creation;
Where from earthly matter, form on form,
The lifeless is given shape;
Where sentient Beings, strong in will
Warm themselves in joy of existence;
Where you, O man, your bodily being
derive from earth and air and light.*

*There your true being enters
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse
No longer, who you are and were and will be.
For your own being the day grows dimly*

*To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
And you turn with angst of soul
Toward the light that from darkness streams.*

These words tell us that the world is beautiful and glorious and sublime and the endless glow of revelation in all that lives in leaf and blossom flows to our eyes with color on color from the visible universe; it is meant to remind us how the divine is manifested in what is lifeless in earthly matter, in the thousands upon thousands of crystalline and non-crystalline forms at our feet, in the water and air, in clouds and stars; it makes clearer to us that the animal life that frolics in the world and delights in its own existence and the warmth of its existence — that all that is divine-spiritual revelation. And it reminds us that we owe our own bodies to all those shapes, to all that is greening and growing, color on color. And it should also make us conscious of that fact that although all that is beautiful and glorious and grand and divine to the senses, it is futile to ask it what we ourselves are as human beings.

Nature, although it glows to us as grand and powerful in tone and strength and warmth, can never give us information about ourselves, although it does give us a huge amount of information about many divine aspects of the world. So we must evermore repeat to ourselves: what we feel as our innermost self is not woven from what we perceive as the beauty and grandeur and greatness and power of nature. And the question arises: Why does the reality of being all around us, of which we are also a part, remain dim and silent?

And what we might feel to be a kind of privation, we must experience as a blessing, so that we can say in all seriousness and sternness: We must first make ourselves truly human, warm in soul and strong of spirit, so that we, as spirit in humanity, may find the spirit in the world.

For this it is necessary that we prepare ourselves, without levity, to come to the frontier of the sense-world, where the spirit's revelation can rise in us. We must say to ourselves: If we arrive at this frontier unprepared and the full light of the spirit comes upon us at once,

then, because we have not yet developed the strength of spirit and the warmth of soul necessary for receiving the spirit, it would shatter us and cast us back to our nothingness.

Therefore, at the frontier between the sense-world and the spirit-world stands that messenger of the gods, that messenger of the spirit, about whom we will hear more and more during the next lessons, whom we will want to know always better and better. That messenger of the spirit stands there and warningly speaks, telling us how we should be and what we must set aside so that we may approach the revelations of the spiritual world in the right way.

And when we have grasped, my dear friends, that the beauty, the greatness and the sublimity of nature is, at first, spiritual darkness for human knowledge, from which the light must be born which tells us what we are and were and will be; then we must know that the first thing to come from the darkness that must be grasped is that Spirit-Messenger who sends us the appropriate warning. Therefore, let this Spirit-Messenger's words resound in our souls, and let the Spirit-Messenger's description shine out before our soul's eye.

*And from out the darkness you appear,
(the human being is addressed)
Your likeness manifesting you,
Yet also a parable of you,
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether
Heard by your heart, giving strength*

*To you the Spirit-Messenger, who alone
Can light for you the way;
Before him the fields of sense widen,
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.*

*And before his dark spirit-fields,
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,
Resounds his ur-potent creative words:
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.*

It must be clear to us that we must take seriously all that comes as warning from the Spirit-Messenger before daring to fathom what is found not on this side of the yawning abyss, that is, in the area of the senses, but on the other side spreading out as spirituality. This is veiled at first in darkness for human understanding, and can only be revealed by the countenance of the Spirit-Messenger, who appears at first to be similar to the human being, but transformed into one of gigantic stature. Then, although he is so similar to man, his form is shadowy, as though he were a mere parable of man. He warns that without the appropriate seriousness, no one should seek what lies beyond the yawning abyss. The earnest messenger entreats us to be earnest as well.

And then, when we hear that voice and have grasped it with due seriousness, we should be aware of how at first softly, most softly, and in abstractions, it wishes to give us indications and orientation from the spiritual world about the abyss which yawns before us and from which the Messenger holds us back lest we take a careless step. The voice resounds:

*From the distant beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the stages of the course of time,
which finds expression in creating,
From the depths of heart-felt feeling
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:*

*They resound in the speech of the soul,
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,
From divine curative powers
In the cosmic formative forces
The undulating existential words:
O man, know thyself!*

I will say it again:

*From the distant beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the stages of the course of time,
which finds expression in creating,
From the depths of heart-felt feeling
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:*

*They resound in the speech of the soul,
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,
From divine curative powers
In the cosmic formative forces
The undulating existential words:
O man, know thyself!*

These words can make it clear to us how the secrets of existence must be fathomed from all that acts and works in the depths of space and which from the depths of space manifest how real knowledge must be fathomed from what is revealed in the march of time as creative action, and how all that is revealed of the world in the human heart must be revealed by the soul's honest seeking. For all this can only constitute a basis for what one needs for fathoming one's self, in which the world has planted the sum of its secrets. Thus, they can be discovered through human self-knowledge. Everything man needs in sickness and in health on his journey between birth and death, and what he will also have to use on that other existential journey between death and a new birth.

But all those who consider themselves members of this School should clearly realize that everything that is not acquired in this way is not real knowledge, but only pseudo-knowledge, that what usually passes for science, what man learns before he has acquired an awareness of the Guardian of the Threshold's warnings regarding spiritual knowledge, is all pseudo-knowledge. It doesn't have to stay pseudo-knowledge though. We do not scorn this pseudo-knowledge. But we must realize that it will only emerge from the stage of pseudo-knowledge once it has been transformed by all man can know about that purification and metamorphosis of his being, which he achieves when he understands what the Spirit-Messenger warns at the yawning

abyss of knowledge —what the shining spirit warningly calls out from the darkness on behalf of the best spiritual inhabitants of the spiritual world.

Whoever does not acquire the awareness that between the sojourn in the fields of sense — which we must live during our earthly existence between birth and death — and the spiritual fields, a yawning abyss exists, cannot achieve true knowledge. For only by means of this awareness can true knowledge be acquired. **He doesn't have to become clairvoyant, although knowledge from the spiritual world comes by true clairvoyance. But he must acquire an awareness of what exists as a warning at the yawning abyss of the secrets of space, the secrets of time, the secrets of the human heart itself.** For whether we go out into space, the abyss is there; or if we wander in the turning points of time, the abyss is there; if we enter into the heart itself, the abyss is there.

And these three abysses, they are not three abysses, they are only one abyss. For if we wander out into space so far that we come to where the expanses of space merge, we find the spirit; if we wander in the turning points of time to where they originate at the beginning of their cycles, if we wander into the depths of the human heart, so deep that we can only fathom ourselves: these three ways lead to only one goal, to one last stop, not to three different stops. They all lead to the same divine-spirituality that bubbles from the spring that fructifies and feeds all being, but also teaches man to recognize the ground of existence in knowledge.

In such earnest awareness, we shall stand in thought where the earnest Spirit-Messenger speaks and listen to what he relates about the obstacles relative to our times, which we must sweep away in order to come to true spiritual knowledge.

Obstacles to spiritual knowledge, my dear friends, have existed in all times. In all times the people have had to overcome this and that, put aside this and that according to the warnings of the earnest Guardian of the Threshold to the spiritual world. But there are obstacles peculiar to each age. What proceeds from human civilization is to a large extent not helpful, but rather hindrance for access to the spiritual world. And man must find the particular obstacles that emerge from

each earthly civilization, and are implanted in his nature by that very civilization, and which he must put aside before he can cross the yawning abyss.

Therefore, let us now hear the earnest watchful Messenger of the gods speak about this:

.....
*Yes, you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your will;
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.*

*Behold the second beast, it bares
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;
Your flame for knowledge must subdue him.*

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.*

*Only when you've defeated the three
Will wings sprout upon your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
to consecrate itself in healing.*

I will read it again:

The Guardian speaks:

*Yes, you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
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*Only when you've defeated the three
Will wings sprout upon your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
to consecrate itself in healing.*

These, my dear friends, are the three greatest enemies of knowledge for contemporary humanity. The human being of today is afraid of the spirit's creativity. Fear sits deep in his soul. And he would like to conjure it away. So he dresses his fear in all kinds of pseudo-logical arguments by which he tries to refute spiritual revelations.

You will hear, my dear friends, from this or that side arguments against spiritual knowledge. It is sometimes dressed in clever, sometimes in sly, sometimes in foolish logical rules. Never, however, are the logical rules the reason why spiritual knowledge is refuted. Rather is it the spirit of fear that lives and works deep into humanity's inner life which, when it rises to the head, translates into logical reasons. It is fear!

But it is not sufficient to say: I am not afraid. Everyone can of course say that. We must first comprehend the nature and the seat of this fear. We must tell ourselves that we were born and educated according to the present time, in which the Ahrimanic side has installed spirits of fear, and that we are tainted by these spirits. And conjuring them away doesn't mean that they really go. We must find the ways and the means — and this School will provide guidance — to bravery and knowledge against those spirits of fear which reside as monsters in our will. For it is not what often leads people to knowledge nowadays — or what they say does — that can provide true knowledge, but rather only courage, the inner courage of soul which provides the strength and the capacity to follow the path that leads to true, real, light-filled spiritual knowledge.

And the second beast, which creeps into the human soul from the spirit of the times to become an enemy of knowledge, this beast lurks everywhere we go — in most of the literary works of the day, in most of the art galleries, in most sculpture and art in general and music. It wreaks its havoc in the schools and in society. In order to avoid having to confess its fear of the spirit, it resorts to mocking spiritual knowledge.

This mockery is not always openly expressed, because people are not conscious of what is within them. But I would say that only a thin wall, the thickness of a spiderweb, separates what is in people's consciousness and what is in their hearts wanting to mock true spiritual knowledge. And when the mockery is open, it is only when

the more or less conscious impertinence of modern man is able to suppress the fear. But basically, everyone today is vaccinated against the spirit's revelations. And the mockery is manifested in the most unusual ways.

The third beast is lazy thinking, the kind of thinking that would make the whole world a movie, because then no one is required to think — everything is reeled out and all one has to do is follow what is reeled out. Even science would like to follow the world's phenomena with passive thinking. Man is too lazy and comfortable to activate his thinking. Humanity's thinking nowadays can be compared to someone who wants to pick something up from the floor and stands there with his hands in his pockets and thinks he can pick the thing up that way. But he cannot. And existence cannot be comprehended by thinking with its hands in its pockets. We must move our arms and hands if we want to grasp something from the floor. We must activate our thinking if we want to grasp the spirit.

The Guardian of the Threshold characterizes the first beast, which lurks as fear in your will, as a beast with a crooked back and a bony face and scrawny body. This beast, with its dull blue skin, is verily what rises from the abyss and stands alongside the Guardian of the Threshold for today's humanity. And the Guardian of the Threshold makes it quite clear to the humanity of today that this beast is actually in you! It rises from out of the yawning abyss which lies in front of the knowledge fields, and reflects what lurks in your will as an enemy of knowledge.

And the second beast, which is connected to the desire to mock the spiritual world, is characterized by the Guardian of the Threshold in a similar way. It emerges alongside the other monster, but its whole attitude is one of weakness and sleepiness. With this sleepy posture and gray-greenish body, it bares its teeth in a warped face. And this baring of teeth is meant to indicate laughter, but lies, because to mock is to lie. So it grins at us as the reflection of the beast that lives in our own feeling and, as the enemy of knowledge, hinders our search for knowledge.

And the Guardian of the Threshold characterizes the third beast, which will not approach the world in spirit, as emerging from the abyss with cloven muzzle, dull glassy eyes, slouching posture and dirty-red form.

Such is the doubt which speaks through the cloven muzzle and doubt in the power of spirit-light which expresses itself in the dirty-red form. This is the third of the knowledge enemies that lurks in us. They make us earthbound.

If we approach spirit-knowledge accompanied by them, ignoring the Guardian of the Threshold's warning, we encounter the yawning abyss. One cannot pass over it earthbound, nor with fear nor mockery, nor with doubt. One can pass over it by grasping in thought the spirituality of being, by experiencing in feeling the soul of being, by strengthening the activity of being in the will. Then the spirit, the soul and the activity of being give us wings of release from the weight of earth. Then we can cross over the abyss.

The steps of prejudice are threefold and will cast us into the abyss if we fail to acquire courage, fire and creative knowledge. If, however, we do acquire creative knowledge in thinking and we want to activate thinking, if we do not wish to approach the spirit in dreamy lassitude, but receive the spirit with inner heartfelt fire, and when we have the courage to really grasp the spirit as spirit, not merely letting it approach us as a materialistic picture, then will the wings grow which will carry us over the abyss, where every human heart that is honest with itself today desires to go.

That is what I wish to bring before your souls, my dear friends, by means of this first introductory lesson, with which this School for Spiritual Science begins.

In closing, let us review once more the beginning, middle and end of the experiences with the Guardian of the Threshold.

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
Life is manifest in creation;
Where from earthly matter, form on form,
The lifeless is given shape;
Where sentient Beings, strong in will
Warm themselves in joy of existence;
Where you, O man, your bodily being
derive from earth and air and light.*

*There your true being enters
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse
No longer, who you are and were and will be.
For your own being the day grows dimly
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
And you turn with angst of soul
Toward the light that from darkness streams.*

*And from out the darkness you appear,
(the human being is addressed)
Your likeness manifesting you,
Yet also a parable of you,
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether
Heard by your heart, giving strength*

*To you the Spirit-Messenger, who alone
Can light for you the way;
Before him the fields of sense widen,
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.*

*And before his dark spirit-fields,
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,
Resounds his ur-potent creative words:
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.*

*From the distant beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the stages of the course of time,
which finds expression in creating,
From the depths of heart-felt feeling
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:*

*They resound in the speech of the soul,
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,
From divine curative powers
In the cosmic formative forces
The undulating existential words:
O man, know thyself!*

*Yes, you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your will;
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.*

*Behold the second beast, it bares
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;
Your flame for knowledge must subdue him.*

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.*

*Only when you've defeated the three
Will wings sprout upon your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
to consecrate itself in healing.*

As to what we will experience when we have passed the Guardian of the Threshold, what is necessary in feeling, willing, thinking to experience in order to pass by the Guardian's light, and enter into the darkness from out of which that light shines in which we recognize the light of our own humanity, and thus arrive at "O man, know thyself!"

— which calls out, which manifests from the spirit that enlightens the darkness. About all that, my dear friends, next Friday during the next lesson of the First Class.



Lesson 2

22 February 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

We will relate what is said today to the previous lesson, partly to preserve the thread, and partly because there are members present who were not here last time. We shall therefore start with a short recapitulation of the last lesson.

We proceeded in thought to the place where the human being - who with normal consciousness can grasp the sense-world, which is the world that surrounds him - can feel himself related to the super-sensible, related to a being which corresponds to his own being. And we want to first develop this sensation before proceeding to the mysteries of the spiritual life, which we will do shortly.

The first sensation should make us aware of how the human being, in his normal condition, lives surrounded by the world of the senses, which however he is not able to identify with his own being. We shall therefore develop this theme. And although the words "Know thyself!" have been enunciated throughout the ages, encouraging man to perform his noblest deeds, still he can find no answers, no satisfaction if, under the influence of "Know thyself", he only sees what the senses provide - the exterior world. Now, however, he is directed towards something else, something beyond the exterior world.

If with this sensation, which one can have when one gazes out to the depths of cosmic space with the question of his own being in mind, when in thought we approach super-sensible being, which is one with the inner human being, then the corresponding sensation will be given through the words I provided to you the last time:

*Where on earth-foundations, color upon color,
Life creative manifests itself;
Where from earthly substance, form on form,
The lifeless world is fashioned;*

*Where the sentient beings, powerful in will,
Delight in the warm glow of their existence;
Where you yourself, O Man, derive
Your bodily existence from earth and air and light:*

*There you do enter, for your own true-being,
Cold, night-enveloped darkness.
In vain you ask of the dumb expanse
What you are, what you were, or will become.
For your own being, this light of day grows dim
To the soul's night, the darkness of the spirit.
Then do you turn your anxious seeking soul
Unto that light that shines out of the darkness.*

We can now observe and feel in our souls the beauty, the greatness and the sublimity of the external world, but we also realize that we can never find our own being in this world. For the person who seeks the spirit, it is necessary to repeatedly feel this sensation in his soul. Because by deeply experiencing the sensation that by looking out into the external world we gain no answer to the question of who we are, feeling this sensation again and again gives the soul the impulse and the strength that can carry us into the spiritual world. Yet just as by having this sensation we will be carried up into the spiritual world, we must also bear in mind that the person of normal consciousness in normal life is unprepared to encounter that world, which in reality is the world of his own being.

Therefore on the border between the sense-world and the spiritual world that guardian stands who earnestly warns people against crossing over into the spiritual world unprepared. And it is the case, my dear friends, that we must always keep in mind the fact that the Guardian stands before the [entrance to] the spiritual world for the well-being of unprepared human beings. And we must therefore be quite clear about the necessity for a certain attitude of soul in order to achieve real knowledge and insight.

If such insight were provided to everyone walking down the street it would be terrible for them because they wouldn't be prepared. They would be receiving it without the preparatory attitude of soul.

Therefore we must deeply feel the second sensation which over and over again tells us how we must approach the Guardian:

*And from the darkness there appears,
In your own likeness manifesting you,
Yet forming you into a deeper parable,
Mightily working, in the cosmic ether,
The solemn spirit-word your heart can hear.*

*The Spirit-Messenger to you: he who alone
Can lighten up your path.
Before him lie the far-spread fields of sense-existence,
Behind him yawn the depths of the abyss.*

*And here, before the darkness of the spirit-fields,
Hard by the yawning chasm of existence,
Rings forth the ancient power of his creator-word:
Behold, I am the only gate of knowledge.*

Then the Guardian himself speaks while we are still on this side, in the sense-fields. He points to the other side where for us is unmitigated darkness while we are on this side, but which is to become light-filled, which must become light to us through spirit-knowledge, from out of which he speaks who alone is bright. He speaks, indicating the apparent darkness, this maya-darkness:

*From the wide expanse of beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the tread of time's onward course
Which finds in creating its very activity,
From the depths of the feeling heart
Where in the Self the world is founded:*

*There resounds in the soul's utterance,
There shines from the spirit's thoughts
Which from divine healing forces*

*In the cosmic-creative powers
Weave the mighty existential words:
O Man, know thyself!*

Whoever can feel deeply enough the words which resound from the Guardian's mouth, if he looks back upon himself, will realize that this looking back, the perception in looking back, constitutes the first stage of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge which is preparatory for the true self-knowledge which reveals spiritual cosmic knowledge of the being which is one with our own humanity. And then the knowledge arises which one can obtain on this side of the threshold of spiritual existence, knowledge which reveals the contamination in our own thinking, feeling and willing in terrible but true images; as three beasts arising from the yawning abyss between the sense-world and the spirit-world.

What we should feel at the abyss of being between the maya, the illusion, and the real world, should appear before our souls as the fourth sensation.

*Yet you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your will;
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.*

We must be quite clear, my dear friends, that bravery in acquiring knowledge is not present at first in the soul, but cowardice for acquiring knowledge is what dominates. Especially in our time that

cowardice is what holds back most people from even approaching an insight into the spiritual world.

*Behold the second beast, it bares
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begat this weakling in your feeling;
Your burning thirst for knowledge must subdue him.*

That is the second thing that we have within us - which plants doubt in our soul, every kind of uncertainty about the spiritual world. It is inherent in feeling, because feeling is weak and cannot rise to enthusiasm. True knowledge must outgrow superficial enthusiasm which trails all kinds of cheap external life. Inner enthusiasm, inner fire which becomes a burning thirst for knowledge; that is what overcomes the second beast.

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begat this ghost within your thinking;
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.*

We must find the courage and the fire to bring activity to our thinking. When we create with ordinary consciousness we create arbitrarily, we create what is not real. When, however, we correctly prepare ourselves for creative thinking, the spiritual world streams into our creative thinking. And then, due to knowledge-bravery, to a burning thirst for knowledge and to creative knowledge, we are truly standing in the spiritual world.

.....

*Only When you have overcome all three
Will wings sprout from your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
To consecrate itself in healing.*

.....

Such sensations can lead to feeling what we must activate in ourselves in order to enter the spiritual world as genuine, living human beings. In ordinary life it is often the most banal things which cause us to realize that life is serious and not a mere game. But what leads to knowledge does not impress us as much as exterior life does. It is all too easily made a game. And one is convinced that the game is in earnest. But one harms one's self and others greatly by playing at spiritual striving, by not being completely earnest about it.

This earnestness should not be expressed as sentimentality. Humor may be called for with respect to some aspects of life. But the humor must then be serious. When we compare earnestness with mere game-playing, it is not sentimentality, false piety or the rolling of eyes as opposed to games. Rather is it the possibility of really concentrating on spiritual striving and consistently and wholeheartedly living in it.

In order to sense the importance of what I am saying, my dear friends, it would be really good for spiritual striving if all the friends who are sitting here - especially those who have been in the Anthroposophical Society for a long time - to ask themselves the following question: How often have I resolved to undertake some task related to anthroposophical life, and how often have I completely forgotten about it after a short time? Perhaps I would have done it if I had thought about it, but I did not think about it any more. It was extinguished, just as a dream is extinguished.

It is neither meaningless nor unimportant to ask yourselves such a question. And perhaps it would not be unimportant if a large number of our friends were to undertake something in this direction now.

The Christmas Conference [1923] was to be the beginning of true esotericism pouring into the entire anthroposophical worldview stream, supported by the Anthroposophical Society. How often - one can ask - have I forgotten what I found to be quite beautiful during the Christmas Conference and in my thoughts and feelings continued as though the Anthroposophical Society were the same as it was before the Christmas Conference. And if someone says: that is not the case with me, it could be quite important for that person to ask himself: Am I fooling myself to think it is not the case with me? In respect to all anthroposophical activity have I realized that a new phase of the Anthroposophical Society has begun? To ask this question is very significant, for then the correct earnestness enters the soul.

And you see, this is connected to the life-blood of the Anthroposophical Society and therefore to the life-blood of every member who has requested acceptance in the Class; and it is good if it relates to something which exerts a strong influence in life. Therefore it would be good if all those who wish to belong to the Class ask themselves: Isn't there something I can do - now that the Anthroposophical Society has been re-founded - do differently than previously. Couldn't I introduce something new into my life as an anthroposophist? Couldn't I change the way I acted previously by introducing something new?

That would be enormously important, if taken seriously, for every individual who belongs to the Class. For thereby it would be possible for the Class to continue without being burdened by such heavy baggage. For everyone who keeps to the old humdrum routine burdens the progress of the Class. It is perhaps not noticeable, but true nevertheless. In esoteric life there is no possibility of introducing what is so prevalent in life: interpreting lies as truth. If one tries to do this in esoteric life it is not the interpretation which matters, but the truth. In esoteric life only the truth works, nothing else. You may color something because of vanity, but what has been colored makes no impression on the spiritual world. The unvarnished truth is what is effective in the spiritual world.

From all this you can judge how different spiritual realities are - which under the surface of life work today as always - from what everyday life shows, patched up as it is with so many lies. Very little of what

passes today between people is true. To continually remind ourselves of this belongs to the beginning of work within the Class. For only with this notion can we find the strength to cooperate here in the Class with what will be unfolded in our souls from lesson to lesson in order that we may find the path to the spiritual world.

For we will only be able to recognize what must be cultivated in our thinking, feeling and willing in order for the three beasts to be defeated: thinking, the thought - phantom; feeling - mockery; willing - the bony crookedness of spirit. For these three beasts are the enemies of knowledge. We see them in the mirror, but as realities from the yawning abyss of being.

And deeply rooted with our humanity is everything which hinders us from real knowledge, firstly in our thinking. Normal human thinking is reflected in the thought-phantom of the first beast, the form of which was described thus:

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;*

It is the image of ordinary human thinking which thinks about things of the outside world and doesn't realize that such thinking is a corpse. Where did the being live whose corpse this ordinary thinking is?

Yes, my dear friends, nowadays - in accordance with contemporary civilization - when thinking from waking in the morning till retiring at night according to the guidance given us in school and in life itself, our thinking is a corpse. It is dead. When did it live, and where?

It lived before we were born; it lived when our souls were in pre-earthly existence. Just as you imagine, dear friends, that the human being lives on the physical earth animated by his soul within and he goes around in this physical body until his death, when the animating soul is invisible to external observation and the corpse is visible - the dead form of the human figure. You must imagine this related to thinking. A living, organic, growing, moving being possessed it before

the human being entered into earthly existence. Then it becomes a corpse buried in our own heads, in our brains. And just as if a corpse in the tomb were to declare: I am the man! so declares our thinking when it lies buried in the brain as a corpse and thinks about the external things of the world. It is a corpse. It is perhaps depressing to realize that it is a corpse, but it is true, and esoteric knowledge must hold to the truth.

That is the meaning of the Guardian of the Threshold's words. After he has described the warning of the three beasts, he continues. And the words which resound in our hearts are these:

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived in fields of spirit.*

I will repeat it:

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived in fields of spirit.*

Thinking, with which we achieve so much here in the sense-world, for the gods of the cosmos is the corpse of our soul's being. By entering into an earthly existence we have died in thinking during this time on earth. The death of thinking had gradually been preparing itself since the year 333 A.D. The middle of the fourth post-Atlantean period. Before that life had poured into thinking, which was the heritage of

pre-earthly existence. The Greeks felt that vitality, as did the Orientals, in that they thought of thinking as being the work of the spirit, of the gods. They knew, in that they thought, that in every thought the god lived. That has been lost. Thinking has become dead. And we must heed the message of the times that reaches us through the Guardian:

*Yet you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise your beasts will consume you
If you hastily pass me by;
Your cosmic age has put them in
You, as enemies of knowledge.*

This cosmic age began in the year 333 after Christianity began, after the first third of the fourth century had passed. And now thinking, devoid of the force of life, is clearly present in everything. And the dead thinking of the nineteenth century forced dead materialism to the surface of human civilization.

It is different with feeling. The greatest enemy of humanity, Ahriman, has not yet been able to kill feeling in the same way he killed thinking. Feeling also lives in human beings in the present cosmic age. But man has to a great extent driven this feeling down from full consciousness into the halfway unconscious. Feeling arises in the soul. Who has it in his power, as he has thinking in his power? To whom is it clear what lives in feeling as it is clear to him what lives in thinking?

Take one of the saddest - to the spirit saddest - occurrences of our times, my dear friends. When people think clearly they are citizens of the world, for they well know that thinking makes you human, even when it is dead in the present age.

But people are separated by their feeling into nations, and especially today they let this unconscious feeling dominate in the worst possible way. Because people feel themselves as only belonging to a certain group, all kinds of conflicts arise.

Nevertheless, world karma places us in a certain human group, and it is our feeling that acts as an instrument of world karma when we are placed in this tribe, in that class, in that nation. It is not through thinking that we are so placed. Thinking, if it is not colored by feeling and willing, is the same thinking everywhere. Feeling, however, is graduated according to the different regions of the world. Feeling lies halfway in the unconscious, alive yes, but in the unconscious. Therefore the ahrimanic spirit, unable to exert influence on the living part, uses the opportunity to agitate in the unconscious. And he concentrates this agitation on the confusion between truth and error. All our prejudices based on feeling are colored by ahrimanic influences and impulses.

If we want to enter the spiritual world this feeling must rise up before our souls. We must be able to include feeling in the development of knowledge. Through constant review of our own being, we must be able to know what kind of persons we are as feeling human beings. This is not easy. With thinking it is relatively easy to achieve clarity about ourselves. We don't always do it, but it is still easier to admit: you are not exactly a genius, or you lack clear thinking about this or that. At the most, it is either vanity or opportunism which prevents us from achieving clarity about our thinking.

But with feeling we never really get to the point of observing ourselves in our souls. We are always convinced that the direction of our feeling is the correct one. We must delve most intimately into our souls if we wish to know ourselves as feeling human beings. Only by facing ourselves directly with complete conscientiousness do we lift ourselves up, do we lift ourselves up over the obstacles which the second beast places before us on the path to the spiritual world.

Otherwise, if we do not occasionally practice this self-knowledge as feeling human beings, then we will always develop a mocking countenance with respect to the spiritual world. Because we are not conscious of our ailing feeling capacity, we are also unconscious of being mockers of the spiritual world. We disguise the mockery in all possible forms, but we are still mocking the spiritual world. And it is just those, of whom I spoke previously, who lack earnestness, who are the scoffers. They are sometimes embarrassed to express the mockery even to themselves, but they are still mocking the spiritual

world. For how can one lack seriousness regarding the spiritual world, playing games about it, without mocking it. To such as they the Guardian speaks:

*The second beast's mocking countenance
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,
Which hollows out its own soul
And creates an empty life
Instead of fullness of spirit
With light from the force of the sun
Before earthly existence.*

The first beast is the reflection of our will. The will does not only dream, it does not lie only half in the unconscious; it lies completely in the unconscious.

I have often described to you, my dear friends, how the will lies deep in the unconscious. And deep in the unconscious is where man seeks the paths of his karma, at least for ordinary consciousness. Every step that a person takes in life related to karma is measured. But he knows nothing about it. It is all unconscious. Previous earth-lives work forcefully into his karma. Karma leads us to our life's crises, to our decisions, to our doubts. Here we meet the individual's aberrations, the person who lives only for himself, and seeks only his own way. In thinking: one seeks the path which all men seek. In feeling: one seeks the path which his group seeks. In feeling we recognize if someone is from the north, from the west or the south, from eastern, southern or central Europe. One must concentrate on the will's unconscious impulses in order to see another human being as a single individual, rather than merely a human being in general or a member of a group. This is an act of will - but also deep in the unconscious. The first beast shows the aberrations of the will.

The Guardian reminds us:

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

In our willing work the spiritual powers which want to strip our bodies from us during our earthly existence and therewith take a portion of our souls with it, in order to build an earth which does not continue to develop as Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan. Rather the earth is to be sundered from divine intentions and stolen at some point in the future. Together with the earth stolen from the gods, the human being would be united with certain powers which work in his will ... the same will through which he seeks his karma.

The first beast is surely capable of revealing in a mirror-image what is working in the will: bony head, dried-out body with dull blue skin, the crooked back. It is the Ahrimanic spirit, which acts in the will when karma is being sought and which can only be overcome by the courage of knowledge. So the Guardian of the Threshold speaks about this beast as I have just described.

I will read it again:

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

In these words from the Guardian of the Threshold's mouth resound further the warning to the human being seeking knowledge and insight.

Let the following words live most intensively in our souls, my dear friends, and let us listen often to the Guardian's words:

.....

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived in fields of spirit.*

.....

Once again, you must grasp the concordance in these verses: (The first stanza of this mantram is written on the blackboard)

.....

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived in fields of spirit.*

.....

At first we feel what each stanza contains.

The second stanza refers to feeling: (The second stanza is written on the blackboard)

.....

*The second beast's mocking countenance
Is the evil counter-force ...*

[counter-"force", no longer "part", but "force"!] ... of

feeling,

*Which hollows out its own soul
And creates an empty life
Instead of fullness of spirit
With light from the force of the sun
Before earthly existence.*

Now we feel first: "denies", and then "hollows out" and feel the nuance that enters into the verses by "denies" becoming "hollows out".

The Guardian's words directed to willing:

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

This third stanza is written on the blackboard:

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,*

[Now no longer "image" or "force", but "power". You must feel the escalation.]

Which would estrange your own body

[and now you have here the escalation: first the intellectual: "denies"; then instigation in inner life: "hollows out": then what completely eliminates inner life: "estrange".]

*From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

Note that in all three stanzas the word "evil" echoes. [The word is underlined.] And if you observe and feel the critical points in the escalations and in the difference between thinking, feeling and willing [the words are underlined], and if you correctly sense how all three are united by the always recurring word "evil", then, my dear friends, each stanza will become a mantram for you, according to its inner meaning. And they can become a guide on the three stages to the spiritual world - that of the third beast, of the second beast and of the first beast. And if you never omit these three concordances and never fail to unite the three by the one decisive word towards an inner soul-then they will become your guide, my dear friends, on the path past the Guardian of the Threshold and into the spiritual world.

We will get to know him better in the following lessons.

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived in fields of spirit.*

*The second beast's mocking countenance
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,
Which hollows out its own soul
And creates an empty life
Instead of fullness of spirit
With light from the force of the sun
Before earthly existence.*

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrangle your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

.....

.....

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Lesson 3

29 February 1924, Dornach

Let us begin, my dear friends, with the words the Guardian speaks - words we already know - when pointing in the direction of the spiritual world, which characterize what the human being can feel on the threshold of the spiritual world as he strides past the Guardian.

*From the wide expanse of beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the tread of time's onward course
Which finds in creating its very activity;
From the depths of the feeling heart
Where in the Self the world is founded:*

*There resounds in the soul's utterance,
There shines from the spirit's thoughts,
Which from divine healing forces
in the cosmic-creative forces
Weave the mighty existential words:
O Man, know thyself!*

It's about the path one should follow in thought, the path which one will actually take when seeking access to the spiritual world. And we should not say that when someone experiences in thought - if he honestly and earnestly lives in his thoughts - what the person in process of initiation realizes in reality by entering the spiritual world, that the former does not actually participate in what is revealed to the human soul when entering the spiritual world, because it is only a reflected ideation.

One should not say: Let's leave gaining entrance into the spiritual world to those who are striving to be initiates and stand with their souls in the spiritual world as people stand in physical existence with their senses. Rather should one say: When even in thought one

approaches the description of the path that leads to the spiritual world, and provided the thinking is not superficial, he will experience and feel fully what it means to leave the world of the senses behind, a world only the intellect can grasp, and enter the spiritual world.

That is what I will speak to you about today, my dear friends, and not merely for those who already seek the transformation which will lead them into the spiritual world, but also for those who, at first, only experience the transformation in their thoughts. And that includes all of you, else you wouldn't be sitting here.

Therefore the following must be said: When man makes his observations in the world of senses - life consists of such observations - when man uses the things that he encounters in the sense world to unfold his will, when he proceeds from observation to action, and when he lets the combination of such observations and actions have an effect on his feelings, he stands to a certain extent on firm ground, for this process has been implanted in him as a physical being on earth between birth and death. Wherever he doesn't have this firm ground, he looks for it. When he is expected to believe something, he looks everywhere for the facts behind it. He asks: What experience proves this or that? He doesn't like to accept something in ordinary life which is not proven by this or that outward experience. He stands on firm ground because he says to himself: What is true is what is seen, what is real is what is held in the hand. The world, the world order itself, provides a certain security in human life. And because of this security, man differentiates - insofar as it is necessary for ordinary life between birth and death - he differentiates between truth and illusion, truth and semblance, truth and dream. When verification cannot be found, he calls it semblance. And only by differentiating between true and false, reality and semblance, is life secure.

Just imagine, my dear friends, that you were to go through life between birth and death in a way that you could never really know whether something that confronts you is truth or illusion. You could not determine whether a person who stands before you and speaks to you is a real person or the semblance of one. You could not differentiate between something happening to you being real or merely a dream. Just imagine what insecurity, what terrible insecurity that would cause in your life.

But exactly as you would feel if life were to withdraw the possibility of knowing whether you were dreaming or confronting reality, is also the way the adept feels standing at the threshold of the spiritual world. That is the very first important experience he has when he realizes that on the other side of the threshold is the spiritual world.

As we have already seen, only darkness streams at first from this spiritual world. Yet although here or there brilliant flashes of light emanate from the darkness - in which the Guardian of the Threshold's words are heard, as we learned last time - with all the knowledge of the senses and reason you may have gleaned in the physical world, you would never be able to know whether a real spiritual being, a real spiritual fact stands before you or a shape in a dream.

That is the first experience of the spiritual world, that semblance and reality are mixed up and to differentiate between semblance and reality is problematic at first. That is something which should be borne in mind especially by those who have experienced impressions from the spiritual world not through normal spiritual training, but due to elementary forces, which can be the result of any number of things, such as shattering events, illness and the like. He shouldn't deceive himself by saying: well, now you have the spiritual world, because it could well be that whatever it is that seems to suddenly shine from out of the spiritual world is merely an illusion. Therefore the first thing one must learn in order to enter the spiritual world is the ability to distinguish between truth and error, between reality and illusion - independent of what is experienced in the physical world. One must acquire completely new capacities for distinguishing between reality and illusion.

In our times, when people no longer pay much attention to how the spiritual world illuminates life, in which they only pay attention to what is palpable, to what can only be seen by physical eyes; in our times, when people are completely attuned to the overt security which life between birth and death provides; in these times it is especially difficult to acquire this capacity to distinguish between truth and error, reality and semblance in respect to the spiritual world. It is in this area where the most earnestness is required.

And where does this come from? You see, when you confront the outer world as a physical person, you think about this outer world. And at the same time you have impressions from the physical world, which in a certain sense slip under your thoughts, supporting them. You don't have to do very much in order to live in reality. Reality accepts you as a physical reality.

It is quite different in the spiritual world. You must first grow into the spiritual world. For the spiritual world you must acquire the correct feeling of your own true reality. Then you will gradually be able to differentiate between truth and error, between reality and semblance of reality.

When you sit down on a chair - at the moment you don't fall on the floor, but are able to sit safely on the chair, you know that in the physical world the chair is a real chair and not merely an imagined chair. The chair itself provides proof of its reality.

That is not the case in the spiritual world. For why is it so in the physical world? Because in the physical world your thinking, your feeling, your willing are held together by the physical body. You are a threefold human being: a thinking, feeling and a willing human being. But they are all unified within each other by the physical body.

At the moment when the human being enters the spiritual world, he immediately becomes a triple being. His thinking goes its own way, his feeling goes its own way, his willing goes its own way. So you can think in the spiritual world, have thoughts which have nothing to do with your willing; but these thoughts are illusions. You can have feelings which have nothing to do with your willing; but these feelings contribute to your undoing, not to your advancement.

That is the essential thing, that when a person approaches the threshold of the spiritual world it seems to him that his thinking flies out into distant space and that his feeling goes beyond his memory.

Consider for a moment what I just said. You see, memory is really something which comes very close to the threshold of the spiritual world. Let's say you experienced something ten years ago. It returns in memory. The experience is there again. You are justifiably satisfied, as far as the physical world is concerned, if you have a vivid memory

of it. For someone who has entered the spiritual world, however, it is as though he pushes through the memory, as though he goes farther than the memory reaches. In any case he goes farther back than his memory of physical earthly life can reach. He goes back beyond birth.

And when one enters the spiritual world, he immediately senses that his feeling does not stay with him. Thinking at least goes out into the presently existing universe. It disperses, as it were, in cosmic space. Feeling goes out of the universe and if one wants to follow feeling one must ask: Where are you now? When you have become 50 years old, then you have gone back in time farther than 50 years; you have gone back 70 years, 100 years, 150 years. Feeling leads you completely out of the time in which you have lived since childhood.

And willing, if you take it seriously, leads you ever farther back in time, back to your previous earth lives. That is something which happens immediately, dear friends, when you really come to the threshold of the spiritual world. The physical body ceases holding you together. One no longer feels within the confines of the skin; one feels split into parts.

You feel as though your thoughts, which were previously confined by feelings, are streaming out into cosmic space and becoming cosmic thoughts. Your feelings seem to go back in time in the spiritual world between your last death and your present earth life. And with your volition you feel yourself in your previous earth life.

It is just this splitting of the human being - I described it in my book *How to Attain Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* — which causes difficulties upon entering the spiritual world, because your thoughts expand. They had previously been held together and now stream out into cosmos space. At the same time they become almost imperceptible. So one must achieve the ability to perceive the thoughts which have thus expanded.

Feeling is no longer permeated by thoughts, for the thoughts have gone, so to speak. So your feeling can only turn prayerfully, with reverence and devotion, to the beings with whom you pass your life between death and a new birth on earth. This is possible if one has cultivated such reverence for the spiritual world in life.

But the moment one's volition, which wants to proceed to previous earth-lives, takes over, the person meets a great difficulty in that he feels an enormous attraction for the contents of his lower nature. And here works most strongly what I previously said about the difficulty in being able to differentiate between semblance and reality. For the person acquires a strong preference for semblance. I'll describe it as follows.

When a person begins to meditate, when he or she is really dedicated to the meditation, he would like to continue in tranquility. He does not want it to deprive him of life's comforts. Well, this desire not to be deprived of life's comforts is a strong producer of illusions and semblances. Because when you dedicate yourself completely to meditation, necessarily from the depths of your soul the question arises about your capacity for evil. One cannot do otherwise than to feel through meditation, through that penetration into the depths, everything you are capable of perpetrating. But the urge to deny this is so strong that one submits to the illusion that one is essentially a very good person.

The real experience of meditation does not indicate such a result. It shows how one can be full of all kinds of vanity and overestimation of one's self and underestimation of others. Also, one judges people not only because they have something important to say, but because one wishes to bask in the good opinion of others. But that is the least of things. He who really meditates honestly will see what drives live in his soul and what he is therefore capable of. Man's lower nature appears strongly before the soul's inner vision. And this honesty must exist in mediation. When it is there we can see what the will's disposition really is, which is reflected in the words we have already heard:

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your will;*

Because the human being tends to succumb to illusion, he suppresses the impression that necessarily arises in meditation, and he feels the urge to mock the spiritual world. Only by honestly facing these opposing forces can he stand in the spiritual world in the right way. Then the sight of the second beast appears on the threshold:

*Behold the second beast, it bares
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;*

And then when we are helpless to follow the thoughts we had in our heads during earth life and are now cosmic thoughts, because of this inability to bestride our cosmic thoughts, that the third beast appears:

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;*

The less we succumb to illusions about this trinity, which reflects our own being, the more we find in us the true human who can receive the light from the spiritual world and who is in a position to really solve the riddle, insofar as it is possible on earth to do so, which is conceded to us with the words: "O man, know thyself!". For through this self-knowledge streams forth the true knowledge of the world which can lead us in the right way through life. Therefore, this threefold splitting in which one's thinking goes its way, feeling goes its way and willing goes its way, which otherwise are united by exterior forces, may be expressed by the words the Guardian of the Threshold says to the adept. We heard them the last time:

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counterpart
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived its life in fields of spirit.*

*The second beast's mocking countenance
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,
Which hollows out its own soul
And creates an empty life
Instead of fullness of spirit
With light from the force of the sun
Before earthly existence.*

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

These are the words spoken by the Guardian as a warning so that we know how we should *not* enter the spiritual world. Upon entering the spiritual world we must have become accustomed to a different way of judging, a different way of feeling and a different way of willing from what prevails in the physical world. And for that it is really necessary that we grasp this threefold element within us, that we firmly direct our gaze within in order to be alert to what our thinking really is, what our feeling really is, what our willing really is and what they must become for us to be able to step across the threshold into the spiritual world, if only in our thoughts. For the fact is that the gods place will-power before the bliss of knowledge and they require it.

Therefore, directly after the Guardian has spoken these discouraging, perhaps frightening words, he continues with the other words which tell us what we *should* do. At this point the first lessons of this class also become practical in that they instruct us what should enter into our thinking, feeling and willing forces in order to enter the spiritual world in the right way.

And the verse should also be threefold which should flow into us in a way that we can live with it. For in living with it we are setting out on the path to the spiritual world. In the same way that we eat and drink , that we see and hear, must something be evoked in us by what the Guardian of the Threshold, standing before the spiritual world, says with earnest visage.

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic semblances confront you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge beneath the semblances:
Ethereic essence flows in you;
Selfhood as such should revere
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

Let us examine the verse. When the human being lives in the sense-world between birth and death, he feels to be within his physical body. He knows that his legs carry him through the world. He knows that blood circulation gives him life. He knows that his breathing awakens life. He commits himself to this breathing, blood circulation and the movement of the members that carry him through the world. In doing so, he is a physical being on the earth. Just as he commits himself to these things physically, he must also commit with his soul to the leading powers of the spiritual world if he wants to participate in it, knowledgeably enter into it.

Just as I must say that for physical health your blood must circulate in the correct way, your breathing must be in order, I must also advise the person who wishes to stand correctly in the spiritual world, that his soul must follow, be sustained and led by his own spiritual guides:

[The first verse, beginning with the last words, is written on the blackboard:]

Guiding beings of your spirit

But, my dear friends, you are committed to your blood by the force of nature, as you are to the movement of your limbs, also your breathing. But you cannot be committed in this way to your spirit's guiding beings in the spiritual world. Inner activity is required. You don't reach them as you achieve breathing by movement of the lungs; you reach them, however, by learning to revere them.

[Over "Guiding beings of your spirit" "revere" is written:]

revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

Revere with what is deepest in you, with your selfhood.

["Selfhood" is written in front of "revere".]

selfhood revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

Selfhood as such should revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

[When spoken, the missing words are added, then written on the blackboard:]

selfhood as such should revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

Thus, you have the manner in which you must stand within the spiritual world, given in the words spoken by the Guardian of the Threshold.

And how do you stand within? Not as though you were standing with your legs on solid ground; not through the warmth of your blood in physical life; not by drawing breath. You stand there by virtue of feeling yourself in the half-spiritual etheric essence flowing through you:

Etheric essence flows in you

The feeling is as though one were a small cloud around which a spiritual wind blows, that one is carried by this wind in which selfhood, one's own I, reveres the spiritual guides which approach with the wind from all sides. We are invited to submerge into it. But what is it initially? As long as we remain in our meditation in what I have just described, it is mere semblance. We must submerge in this semblance fully conscious that the wind and the reverence for the spiritual guides is only semblance.

[The fourth line from the bottom is written on the blackboard.]

Plunge beneath the semblances

Why should we do all this? Well, in earth-life initially we have only a vague sense of our I - "Selfhood" - we define it with the word "I", but in reality it is an undefined, dim, hidden feeling.

[The fifth line from the bottom is written.]

Selfhood as such hides from you

We don't know much about it. And what we do know is not cosmic-being, it is cosmic-semblance.

[The sixth line from the bottom is written.]

Cosmic semblance confronts you

When we follow the Guardian of the Threshold's indications ...

[The seventh line from the bottom is written.]

See in yourself the weaving thoughts

it all becomes the weaving of our own thoughts.

Now we have the first mantric verse which can give us the strength in our thinking to accept the challenge with our selfhood which can initially be expressed in the words:

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic semblances confront you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge within the semblances:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood as such should revere
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

This is the invitation to us when observing our thoughts in retrospection. If you close yourself off from the outside world and observe how your thoughts fluctuate and then you follow the invitation in these seven lines, you have complied with the Guardian of the Threshold's first demand.

*Now you are to approach what the Guardian says to your feelings:
To hear within the flow of feeling:
when semblance and being within you blend,
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;
So plunge into what's seemingly being:
In you the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should well consider
Your own soul's living powers.*

Just as through the first mantric verse we enter thinking, we enter the inner world of thinking through the second.

[The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

To hear within the flow of feeling

Put aside thinking and try to observe your own feelings. In thinking everything is semblance. But when we descend into feeling semblance and being blend, intermix.

That is immediately apparent.

when semblance and being within you blend

Only our I, selfhood, does not wish to enter real existence. It is used to outside semblance and appearance. It tends towards semblance, still retaining this from the world of the senses:

*Your selfhood tends towards the semblance
So plunge into what's seemingly being*

in what results from feeling. It is seemingly being, a mixture of semblance and being.

"So plunge into what's seemingly being": when we will feel the mood which lies in these four lines, we will realize that it has become serious as we plunge into the semblance:

In you the cosmic-psychic forces

First of all, selfhood had to "revere" by sinking into thought; now selfhood should "consider". The thoughts are to be brought down into feeling. We then encounter something which assures us of true being:

*Your selfhood then should well consider
Your own soul's living powers*

No longer "semblance", but "living powers". Whereas our self, our I tends towards semblance, the gods give us the rock of being in the depths of feeling.

In order to convert the verse into a mantram, it would be good to revisit such correspondences.

<u>Revere</u>	
<u>consider</u> <u>well</u>	- in the third verse we will see how it increases. -
<u>semblance</u>	you experience. Here [first verse] is only semblance; and here [second verse]
<u>semblance</u> and <u>being</u> within you blend.	
<u>guiding</u> <u>spirits</u>	[in the first verse] your own
<u>living</u> <u>powers</u>	[in the second verse],

the beings who guide us through the ether; the living powers who guide us back to pre-earthly existence - where feeling goes.

If you wish to make it into a true mantram however, you must take something else into consideration. Read the first verse:

.....

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic semblances confront you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge within the semblances:
Ethereic essence flows in you;
Selfhood as such should revere
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

.....

Clearly this is a trochaic* rhythm, which I beg you to observe. If you stress this strongly and this weakly [the iambic rhythm symbols breve and macron — are placed above the beginning of each line and then spoken with the appropriate stress], it corresponds to the correct etheric movement in the soul where reverence for the higher beings requires such a tone. Thus you will be led into the spiritual world.

*It is otherwise in the second verse:
To hear within the flow of feeling:
when semblance and being within you blend,
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;
So plunge into what's seemingly being:
In you the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should well consider
Your own soul's living powers.*

The way in which the soul feels these words, either trochaic or iambic* - here [in the first verse] there is a distinctly trochaic beat, and here [in the second verse] a distinctly iambic beat - gives the soul the corresponding verve.

*Trochee: A trochaic line is pronounced DUH-duh, as in "HIGH-way." The first syllable is stressed and the second is unstressed.

EXAMPLES of trochaic meter

The trochee's stressed syllable is in all capital letters, while the weak syllables are in lowercase. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's epic poem The Song of Hiawatha is certainly unique. Written in 1855 and based on his visits with members of the Ojibwe, Black Hawk, and other Native-American tribes, this is one of the few pieces of English poetry that uses the trochee as its primary metrical foot. It is one of fewer still that contains line after line of perfect trochaic tetrameter (4 feet per line)!

SHOULD you ASK me, WHENCE these STORies?
WHENCE these LEgends AND traDitions,
WITH the Odors OF the FORest,
WITH the DEW and DAMP of MEAdows,
WITH the CURLing SMOKE of WIGwams,
WITH the RUSHing OF great RIVERs,
WITH their FREquent REpeTitions,
AND their WILD reVERberAtions,
AS of THUNDER IN the MOUNTains?

*An iambic line is pronounced duh-DUH, as in "in-DEED." The first syllable is unstressed and the second is stressed.

It is not a question of merely acquiring intellectual information, even when the soul is making its way to the spiritual world only in thought. Rather is it important that the soul enters with the right breathing and rhythm of cosmic being. If you use an iambic rhythm in striving to enter cosmic thought, you have misunderstood the Guardian of the Threshold. If you use a trochaic verse and not an iambic one for entrance into the world of cosmic feeling, again you have misunderstood the Guardian of the Threshold.

The third element we must plunge into is willing. And the Guardian of the Threshold also gives us a verse for this. Now that we have contemplated the first two, the last one will be easy to understand.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:
Which rises out of semblance-being
With creative self it rises up;*

it surges up from the will to what gives the self substance, content ...

.....

*Turn your life in full to this
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Cosmic creative power in the spirit-I.*

.....

Feel again the escalation:

revere:	one is far away, one looks up, one reveres from without;
consider well:	one draws closer in thought, one enters;
<u>grasp</u> :	the highest escalation, one enters and grasps it.
Guiding beings living powers	and now:
<u>cosmic</u> <u>creative</u> <u>power</u>	- now at the beginning of the line, corresponding to the reality of the direct power of the will.

You will feel that all three are mantric verses if you pay attention to the trochaic element here [the first verse], the iambic here [the second verse]. Here however [the third verse] we have two stressed syllables.

[on the line beginnings on blackboard the spondaic symbols - - are placed and spoken with the corresponding emphasis:]

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:
Which rises out of semblance-being
With creative self it rises up;
Turn your life in full to this
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.*

Here you have a spondee rhythm.

This is what must be observed. You must release yourself from the mere intellectual content and attend to the trochee, iambus and spondee rhythms. At the moment, we are able to move on from the intellectual meaning to commitment to the rhythm, from that moment it is possible to leave the physical world and really enter the spiritual one. For the spiritual, cannot be grasped only using the words whose meanings apply to the physical world; but only if we use the opportunity to carry the rhythms of these words out to the living cosmos.

Therefore, self-observation is exercised on the soul in a threefold sequence of thinking, feeling and willing. The soul will then express itself correctly if it experiences this as it does eating and drinking by the body, as it experiences blood circulation and breathing, if it experiences the rhythm in these words:

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic semblances confront you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge beneath the semblances:
Ethereic essence flows in you;
Selfhood as such should revere
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

*To hear within the flow of feeling:
when semblance and being within you blend,
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;*

*So plunge into what's seemingly being:
In you the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should well consider
Your own soul's living powers.*

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:
Which rises out of semblance-being
With creative self it rises up;
Turn your life in full to this
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.*

In words you have at first the blood; with the corresponding rhythms you have the circulating blood. Seek the sense of these rhythms, let them act in your soul and you will come near to the Guardian's first warning - which I told you at the beginning of these lessons, my dear friends:

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
is manifest in creation;
from earthly matter, form on form,
lifeless is given shape;
sentient Beings, strong in will
themselves in joy of existence;
you, O man, your bodily being
from earth and air and light.*

*Your true being enters
night-enveloped, cold darkness;
ask in the dark sweeping expanse
longer, who you are and were and will be.
your own being the day grows dimly
soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
you turn with angst of soul
the light that from darkness streams.*

And if we wish to find the light that emerges from the darkness, we will find it if we seek it by this threefold path, filling ourselves with this lifeblood for the soul that wishes to tread the path to true knowledge of the spirit and of God.



Lesson 4

7 March 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

In the previous lessons, we were concerned with meeting the Guardian of the Threshold. And we must understand this meeting well, to the extent that its earnestness can really occupy our minds. For here we enter an area which is essentially different from other areas of spiritual life, what is *called* spiritual life by today's civilization, that is. The encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold is the first thing one experiences when a relationship with the spiritual world truly and earnestly takes place. A relationship with the spiritual world cannot take place without this understanding of the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold, because the spiritual world is on the other side of this threshold. So when communications are received from the spiritual world, they should be understood as merely in preparation for a relationship with the spiritual world.

As an example of what we will receive today, my dear friends, I would like to tell you a story taken from ancient esoteric tradition.

Once upon a time a student was accepted into the mysteries. He completed the preliminary stages. And when he had achieved a certain stage of maturity - not that he became what most people nowadays consider clairvoyant, but he entered into a relationship with the spiritual world, the relationship where, as far as feeling is concerned, one correctly receives communications from the spiritual world - the teacher said to him:

Behold, when I talk to you the words I speak are not human words; what I have to say is merely clothed in human words. What I have to say to you are the gods' thoughts, and these gods' thoughts are imparted to you by human words. But it must be clear to you that I am thus appealing to everything in your soul. You must meet the words which I direct to you on behalf of the gods with all your thinking, all your feeling, all your willing. You must receive these

words with all your soul's enthusiasm, all its inner warmth, all its inner fire. You must receive them with total alertness, to the limit of your mind's capacity.

But there is one soul-force in you to which I am not appealing. Your memory. And I will be satisfied if you do not hold in your memory what I am now saying to you. I will be satisfied if tomorrow you forget what I have said today. Because what you usually call your memory, and what others call your memory, is only meant for earthly things, and not for godly things. So, when you appear before me again tomorrow, and when I again speak to you, appealing to your thinking, feeling, willing, and to all your enthusiasm, all your warmth, all your inner fire, to your mind's alertness, then these soul forces will be renewed for what is to be received. Everything should be new and freshly vital the next day, and the day after, and every day.

I said that I do not appeal to your memory, to your capacity for remembering. That does not mean that tomorrow you should remember nothing of what is said to you today. But you should not preserve it in your memory alone. You should wait and see what your memory makes of it. What should lead you to me tomorrow in a new attitude, however, should be your feelings, the innermost feelings of your soul; they should preserve what is said to you today. For you see, memory, that capacity for remembrance, is for learning. What the esoteric has to say, however, is not merely for learning, but for life, and every time it approaches you it should be relived without the help of memory's concepts. [Although there is no indication in the original, this appears to be the end of the story. Trans.]

It is in fact true that whenever we are dealing with esoteric truths we should not think: Oh, I know that already. For the essence of the esoteric does not lie in knowledge, but in direct experience. And inwardly, in deeper levels of our souls than where memory has its roots, is where we should grasp and retain the esoteric.

If you reflect on this, my dear friends, it will be of great help in understanding true esoteric life as we continue. For what must be taken seriously is that in the moment that we accept the esoteric, our very understanding of it brings about a different relationship of thinking, feeling and willing in us than our everyday consciousness is accustomed to.

For everyday consciousness, thinking, feeling and willing are bound together. A trivial example may be used to demonstrate how closely bound together thinking, feeling and willing are in normal consciousness. Let's say you know someone, anyone, with whom you had an intimate or a more distant relationship. The things you experienced with him or her have been retained in your memory and permeate your feelings. When you are together with her these things lead you to certain actions in your behavior towards her. You go on in life with such thoughts and feelings. One day someone reminds you of this person, says something about her and your memory is stimulated. If you had loved her, your love is recalled; if you hated her, your hate is recalled. If you had wanted to undertake something together with her, this is also recalled. You cannot separate what you feel and will towards this person with what you think about her. [In German, the gender of this person is not specified; it is immaterial. Trans.]

With this kind of attitude it is not possible to understand esoteric truths correctly. Such truths can only be understood correctly when, for example, the following happens. You know someone with whom you have a certain relationship. Certain aspects of this person are most antipathetic to you. When you are reminded of this person, you can think of her without the antipathy arising. You can simply think about her.

It is quite difficult, my dear friends, to just think about your enemy without letting the animosity towards him arise. One can practice this with a correct grasp of art. You could ask yourself: Am I able to exclusively *think* about certain despicable characters in Shakespeare's works? If I were to meet such characters in real life, I would feel great antipathy towards them. When artistically presented, however, I can regard them objectively, perhaps just *because* they are such excellent villains. This is possible in the artistic area, for people do not always feel the urge to jump across the footlights and throttle these Shakespearean villains. It is possible to separate thinking from feeling in the artistic area.

But in order to be a true esotericist one must also be able to do so in real life. At the moment when something derived from the esoteric is said, it must be possible to separate thinking from feeling in this way in order for it to be absorbed by the soul. For they do not separate on their own. At first when we think esoteric things, they are so strongly

present within the thoughts, and they are so distant from personal feelings, that we do not understand them if we do not use pure thinking to do so. So if we do not wish to listen to the esoteric like couch potatoes and let everything pass over us with indifference, we must develop feelings and will-impulses apart from those engendered through thinking. Such feelings should be developed in order that the esoteric not remain a cold, icy field, which merely pours through our understanding, when it should immerse us in the brightest enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm, this world of feeling, must come from somewhere else if it does not come from thinking.

For you see, if we want to make our feelings warm in the right way, we must be clear about the fact that when one speaks correctly from out of the esoteric, he is speaking from the godly sphere and therefore our feelings do not encounter thoughts, but realities.

That is why when I gave the first lesson I said that it is the School that speaks here, that is, the true spirit which goes through the School, and that it is necessary to realize that the School has not been born of some personal intention, but that it has been willed and instated by the spiritual world. If we see it in this way, the School's existence will give us the enthusiasm we need.

And then we will understand something else. Yes, my dear friends, in ordinary life and in ordinary science, we are spoken to in words. And when we understand the words, the thoughts they are meant to express come to us because they are contained in the words. The esotericist must also use words, for he must speak. But he uses words only as a means to show how the spirit flows toward us in streams and seeks to pour itself into human hearts.

Therefore, it is necessary that in an Esoteric School a sense is gradually developed to hear beyond the words. And when this sense has been developed it will be possible to acquire - in respect to the esoteric - what has been called in esoteric streams of all times with an attitude of holiness: *silence* - the silence which preserves holiness. And this holiness-preserving silence is connected with something else, without which the esoteric can not further humanity. It is connected with innermost humility. And without this innermost humility it is not possible to approach the esoteric. Why? Well, when we are exhorted to hear beyond the words, it is an appeal to the innermost essence of

our souls, not to our memory. Then our capacity comes into play, to what extent we are capable of hearing beyond the words. And it is good for our souls to hear much. But we should not jump to the conclusion that what dawns in our souls as a result is necessarily valid and should be relayed to the world. We will need much time, even when we hear beyond the words, before we come to terms with ourselves. We should develop the idea that the esoteric must first live and weave wordlessly in the soul before it can be considered to be mature enough.

Therefore, in the esoteric we must go back from what words mean in ordinary life to the deeper understanding in the soul. And that is what I did in the last lesson, my dear friends, when I provided mantric verses for you, in which scanning is used. The first verse had a trochaic rhythm, the second an iambic rhythm and the third a spondaic rhythm. We should feel as though we were descending from the mountain into the valley with the trochaic rhythm, and we should understand how this rhythm, which pertains to thinking, can be grasped only when we feel this descent within the soul. That is why this verse is trochaic, beginning with a stressed syllable and descending to an unstressed one. It was meant to instill in us a kind of psychic blood circulation in spiritual space. We don't just stand still when such mantras penetrate our souls, or voice certain thoughts, but we move together with the spiritual movement of the cosmos, in that human thoughts weave into human souls. So we learned the first verse, which is related to thinking:

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic semblances confront you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge beneath the semblances:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood as such should revere
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

Yes, the gods have raised us to themselves by giving us thoughts. And we descend from the peaks upon which the gods have placed us down into the valleys, where we encompass and grasp earthly things with

these thoughts.

It is different with feeling. We act correctly if, standing below in the valley, we wish to ascend with our feelings on a spiritual ladder to the gods. Feeling puts us in the opposite wave movement: from below to above. Therefore, the mantric verse has an iambic rhythm. It begins with an unstressed syllable and rises to a stressed one. We should feel it:

*Do hear within the flow of feeling:
When semblance and being within you blend,
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;
So plunge into what's seemingly being:
In you the cosmic-psychic forces live;
Your selfhood then should well consider
Your soul's own vital powers.*

And it's again different when we come to the will. To do so, we must be aware that our humanity is split within us. Then we must move close to the gods in feeling and, halfway there, through feeling's strength give birth to the will-impulse. That is only possible if we meditate in the spondaic, beginning with two stressed syllables:

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:
What rises out of semblance-being
With creative self it rises up;
Turn life in full to this
Filled with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.*

As I said last time, it is not a question of understanding the meaning of words, but that we also grasp what lies in the words' movements and that our souls enter into that movement. In that way, we no longer depend only on ourselves, but we grow into the universe.

Words whose meanings alone are grasped leave us unto ourselves. When the esoteric is concerned, however, it is a matter of growing together with the world, that we more and more come out of ourselves. For only so, by coming out of ourselves, are we able to withstand the separation of thinking, feeling and willing. Within ourselves, our corporeal "I" holds thinking, feeling and willing together for everyday consciousness. Outside, they must be held together by the gods. For this, however, we must enter the divine being. And we must grow together with the world. We must learn to develop a sense through which we can say to ourselves in all honesty and earnestness: Here I have my hand; I contemplate it. Over there stands a tree; I contemplate it. I contemplate my hand: it is I. I contemplate the tree: it is I. I contemplate the cloud: it is I. I contemplate the rainbow: it is I. I contemplate the thunder: it is I. I contemplate the lightning: it is I. I feel myself one with the world.

Abstractly, meaning dishonestly, this is easy to achieve. Concretely, meaning honestly, one must overcome many inner aspects. If, however, one does not shy away from overcoming these things, the desired goal will be achieved. For the question the esotericist must ask himself is: I contemplate my hand; it belongs to me. What would my life - which began a few decades ago - have become if I didn't have the hand? It is necessary for all I have become. But the tree: it is as it stands before us today - its conception originally from the Ancient Moon - grown out of the whole earth organism. What was present in the Ancient Moon organism could not have existed had the conception of the tree not been developed. But at that time the conception of my thinking also arose. If the tree didn't exist, I would not be thinking today. My hand is only necessary for my present earthly existence. The tree is necessary in order that I can be a thinking being. Why should the hand be worth more to me than the tree? Why should I reckon the hand more to my physicality than the tree? Little by little I am able to realize that what I call the outer world is much more my inner world than what I considered to be the interior of my physicality in this incarnation. To feel this deeply and sincerely must be learned.

So today we will consider three verses, mantric verses, through which this *feeling-one* with the whole so-called "outer being" can gradually penetrate deeply into the soul.

What is our attitude initially towards outer being? We look down at the earth. We feel dependent on this earth; it gives us what we need to live. We look into space. The sun rises in the morning; it goes down in the evening; its light streams across the earth; it comes from afar, it goes afar. We look up at night: the heavenly sky speaks mysteriously to us. In this threefold gaze our relationship to the world is determined. I look downward, I look out afar, I look upward. But let us do this with intensive consciousness, let us do it as indicated in the following mantric verses:

*Feel how the earth's depths
Press its forces in your being,
In the members of your body.
You lose yourself in them,
If you entrust powerless
Your will to their striving.
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.*

[These lines are written on the blackboard.]

*Feel how the earth's depths
Press its forces in your being,
In the members of your body.
You lose yourself in them,*

- in the forces -

*If you entrust powerless
Your will to their striving.
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.*

You see, my dear friends, we do not consciously relate what binds us to the earth with our own humanity. We look down at the earth, knowing that crystals are formed in it, knowing that it moves through space, that it exerts a force of gravity, that it attracts the stone that falls to earth, knowing that it attracts even us. We think about all this.

What we don't think about are the urges, instincts, cravings and passions that live in us, what we ascribe to lower human nature, and which also belong to the earth. When we look down and ask what the earth causes in us, we should remember: something exists in us, created by the earth, which would drag us down below the human level, which would darken our I, which would push us into the subhuman region. We must be aware that we are so bound to the earth that, despite all its beauty and majesty that spreads over its surface, for us humans the downward force is at the same time a sub-humanizing force. By honestly recognizing this we develop into true human beings.

Then we will be able to not only look downward in our development, but also to look afar in the distance at our own height and to see what surrounds the earth on all sides and describes our humanity within a circle. Thus, something begins physically, which to a certain extent lifts us above the downward pulling earthly forces. Through the downward pulling earthly forces man can become evil; but not so easily through the breath, which also belongs to what encircles the earth. And even less through the light which the sun lets encircle the earth. We consider breath and light as things that have no spiritual importance. But gods live in breath and light. And we must be aware that godly forces are especially active in light and, because they pass through us humans, act differently than the deep earthly forces.

This brings the second mantric verse to our consciousness:

.....

*Feel how from cosmic distance
Godly forces let their spirit-light
Shine into your psychic being.
Find yourself in them loving,
And they creating, wisdom weaving
You as self in their circles
Strong for spiritual works of good.*

.....

We are not always aware that we can love what flows over our earth as light, be it sunlight or starlight. But we are aware that we can love the sunlight, love it as warmly as a friend, then we also learn how

gods in garments of light circle round the earth. Then the opinion that sunlight is merely what illuminates the earth changes for good; sunlight becomes the garment of the gods. And the gods wander over the earth in shining garments. And what we experience from the light becomes wisdom. The gods bring their wisdom to our hearts, into our souls. And now, because of this differentiation in feelings, we have ascended higher.

First, we developed the appropriate feelings in respect to the deep earthly forces. We sensed correctly the part of our humanity that belongs to the deep earthly forces. Then we raised ourselves to that higher part of our humanity which belongs to the godly beings in shining garments moving over the earth, who do not wish to leave man in the earthly sphere but, even while he is walks on the earth, raise him to their spheres, so that when he passes through the gates of death, he can continue to walk in them. For the gods do not want to leave us alone on earth, but want to bring us into their spheres. They want to make us into beings who live among them. The deep earth forces want to separate us from the godly forces.

Therefore, a previous mantra communicated to you:

.....

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

.....

We must, however, also feel this when we are in the world and feel ourselves to be one with the world.

But we have not yet reached our full humanity in consciousness if we cannot look upward. We must gaze into the depths, we must gaze into the distance, we must gaze into the heights. From everyday

consciousness which mixes the depth, the distant and the height, we must differentiate depth-consciousness, distant-consciousness, height-consciousness.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Feel how in heaven's heights
Selfhood can selflessly exist*

We can feel that we are gazing up into the heights with full consciousness. Think, my dear friends, about standing outside in a field looking up at a star-bedecked sky. It becomes clearer when we have the opportunity to choose; it can also happen in daylight, but it is clearer at night. We feel at one with the world; we feel: that is you. But the point on earth we stand on, which we consider to be so important that it only encompasses our individual self, dissolves when we gaze up into space. It expands to the hemisphere. If we do this in the right way, then narrow selfhood ends and becomes selfless, for it is infinitely expanded in the heights of space:

*Feel how in heaven's heights
Selfhood can selflessly exist,*

[writing continues.]

*If spirit-filled force of thought
Follows striving in the heights*

Who really feels how the gods in shining garments move around the earth with the steaming sunlight and with every breath breathes in and breathes out of the human soul, and who gazes skywards feeling selfless in his selfhood, is soon able to also develop the distance of space within. The following lines are pertinent:

*Feel how in heaven's heights
Selfhood can selflessly exist,
If spirit-filled force of thought
Follows striving in the heights*

[writing continues.]

*And with courage hears the words
Gracefully intoning from above
Into man's genuine being.*

The heights are speaking. And just as we can grow in love together with the gods who move around the earth in shining garments, we can also grow together with the words resounding from the heights, if we develop the capacity to strive together with the forces of thinking in the heavenly heights.

But, my dear friends, you will only be able to correctly achieve these inner feelings, which convert your consciousness to a depth, spatial and heights-consciousness, if you make the corresponding verses [about the third, second and first beasts] so deep and visible for your souls as contrasted with these verses [the three verses on the blackboard].

You come before the Guardian of the Threshold. Living thought-images about it should be active in your minds. The Guardian of the Threshold shows you the third beast of which we spoke in the previous lesson. What this beast characterizes resounds within you:

*The third beast's glassy eye,
Is the evil counterpart
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,*

*Forsaking the spirit-force
which before it's earthly life
Lived its life in fields of spirit.*

It is what draws us downward. We escape from it by saying with inner courage:

*Feel how the earth's depths
Press its forces in your being,
In the members of your body.
You lose yourself in them,
If you entrust powerless
Your will to their striving.
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.*

At first glance there seems to be little difference between looking at the beast and what liberates you from it. Both mantras sound similar in that they both characterize the drawing under, except that one specifically describes the beast, while the other indicates watchfulness.

But let us go on to the second beast and take what rescues us from it; place both mantric verses alongside each other: the mood is completely different. In one the gruesome description of the second beast, in the other an appeal to the gods who approach us in shining garments. And we hear these two mantric verses alongside each other, how different their styles are:

*The second beast's mocking countenance
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,
Which hollows out its own soul
And creates an empty life
Instead of fullness of spirit
With light from the force of the sun
Before your earthly existence.*

Feel how from cosmic distance

*Godly forces let their spirit-light
Shine into your psychic being.
Find yourself in them loving,
And they creating, wisdom weaving
You as self within their circles
Strong for spiritual works of good.*

Because we begin by describing the third beast, we must place ourselves, as in this mantric verse [Feel how the earth's depths ...], next to the third beast. At first we can not free ourselves, we are only prompted to be aware of where the beast wants to lead us. When we turn to the second beast, and the helping mantric verse [Feel how from cosmic distance ...], the verse is already able to lead us far away from the beast whose ghastliness is characterized by its mocking face.

And when we approach the first beast, which wants to hinder us from hallowing our humanity by gazing up to the heavenly heights, and how we can escape in our innermost being from this beast, if we turn to the mantric verse which leads us upwards to the heavenly heights:

*The first beast's bony spirit:
The will's evil creative power,
Which would estrange your own body
From the soul's inherent strength
And devote it to the counter-forces,
Which would steal in future time
Cosmic being from the gods.*

And yet: As though we wished to burn up all that this verse says and lift ourselves up in flame, the other verse exists - comforter and grace-giving as opposed to what the first beast is, by means of our own courageous soul-force:

*Feel how in heaven's heights
Selfhood can selflessly exist,
If spirit-filled force of thought*

*Follows striving in the heights
And with courage hears the words
Gracefully intoning from above
Into man's genuine being.*

You see, the last time we saw that we practice an inner rhythm when we integrate our own being into the shining light-being of the world, so today we must recognize how the esoteric things which we are learning have an inner connection, so that we must always go back to the previous elements - not only in respect to the meaning of the words, which remain earthly, but to the inner disposition. And this disposition, this mood, comes both from the whole and from the details.

Take for example the first verse: "Feel how the earth's depths". Here we are directed to the earth's depths. And the other verse directs us to "The third beast's glassy eye". They belong together.

In the second verse "Feel how from cosmic distance": We feel how the gods approach in shining garments. Here we are raised up - if we can really feel it - and away from what mocks the divine in the world. "The second beast's mocking countenance" is truly wiped away by radiant sunshine, if we wish to grasp "radiant sunshine" spiritually.

And the third verse, which begins: "The first beast's bony spirit" ossifies us. We become warm if we are freed from the ossification by gazing at the heavenly heights. So we can also say:

*When you see the third beast's glassy eye, stand firm and
feel what the earth's depths want from you.*

*When you see the second beast's mocking face, lovingly
receive the sunlight.*

*When you feel ossified by the first beast's bony spirit,
warm yourself as a human being by raising your heart
warmly to heaven's heights.*

Thus we shall gradually feel our way into spiritual life, and this spiritual life will grow ever more closely related to our soul.

My dear friends, it is necessary to add something, because the School must be taken seriously, and what I said that Wednesday about its conditions must be taken seriously. So I have been obliged to withdraw the membership card from a person who, by neglecting to do what is necessary on duty here, could have caused a great misfortune. I mention this here because I wish to show that the intentions indicated during the Christmas Meeting must be taken seriously. And I request that in the future this should not be understood as a mere manner of speaking, if the fact that this Esoteric School is desired in all earnestness by the spiritual world is deemed valid, and in the moment when someone does not want to be a representative of the anthroposophical movement in the right way, the School must reserve the right to withdraw his membership card. I wish to indicate in all earnestness that the membership card had to be withdrawn from a person - at least for a period of time, until that person shows by his attitude that the opposite is the case. We will grow into the School in the right way if we reject all the flippant views about the anthroposophical movement which have brought so much mischief into the movement. We must grow into the esoteric in full earnestness. And I must say here again that what was meant in the Christmas Meeting has not been understood by everyone. But the School's leadership will be alert and will take the School seriously. Let us bear this in mind as part of today's lesson.



Lesson 5

14 March 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

We have seen the changes which take place in a person who encounters the Guardian of the Threshold. And whether he or she is able to approach and come to an understanding of the spiritual world in any form, depends upon understanding the essence of this Guardian. In particular, we have seen how what constitutes man's inner self - thinking, feeling, willing - undergoes a substantial transformation in the Guardian of the Threshold's domain. Especially in the last lesson here, it became clear to us how in a certain respect thinking, feeling and willing go different ways upon entering the spiritual world, how they enter into different relationships than those which usually prevail for earthly consciousness.

We have seen how through his will man is greatly influenced by earthly conditions. At the moment when the person approaches the spiritual world, in a certain sense thinking, feeling and willing become separated. The will, now living much more independently than previously in the soul, shows itself to be much more related to the forces which attract man to the earth. Feeling shows itself to be related to the forces which hold man in the periphery of the earth through which the light penetrates when it shines upon the earth in the morning, and which disappears from sight on the opposite side in the evening. Thinking, however, is the force which relates upwards to the heavenly. So that in the moment that man stands before the Guardian of the Threshold, this Guardian draws his attention to how he belongs to the whole world: through his will the earth, through his feeling the periphery, through his thinking the higher powers.

But that, my dear friends, is exactly what must be made clear - that upon entering the spiritual world a growing together with the universe occurs. For normal consciousness we stand here in the world while outside of us are the forces which are active in the plant, mineral, animal kingdoms, to which we have access through our senses, but which at first indicate no relationship to human beings. So here we

stand, apart, looking inwards at our thinking, feeling and willing, aware that our thinking, feeling and willing are somewhat separated, apart from external nature. And we feel a deep chasm between our human nature and the expansive nature around us.

But this chasm must be bridged. For this chasm, only the exterior aspects of which are perceived by normal consciousness, is the threshold itself. And our being able to perceive the threshold depends on our ceasing to simply accept this unconsciousness, when we look within ourselves, concerning an external nature which we perceive as being foreign to humanity. For this chasm needs to be understood as being not only extremely important for human life, but also for the entire universe.

Well, you see, at the moment when one enters the esoteric, a bridge over this must be built. We must, in a sense, merge with nature. We must stop saying to ourselves: Out there is nature, which has nothing to do with morality. We don't ask the minerals about morality, although it is of prime interest to us, nor do we ask the plants, or the animals - and in this materialistic age we have even ceased asking humans, because only human physicality is taken into consideration.

And also when looking into the inner human we see what for normal consciousness is passive thinking, with which we can indeed visualize the world pictorially, but which is nevertheless powerless. Our thoughts are at first things we own which allow us to recognize the objects in the world. As thoughts they have no power. Our feeling is our inner life. To a certain extent we are separated through it from the world. Our will does communicate external objects to us, but in so doing the external objects take on something foreign to their nature.

Something truly great happens to a person when he becomes aware of the abyss which exists between himself and nature: something great. Something which has been expressed since ancient times with these words, words which must be understood anew in every age: Nature must appear as divine, and the human must be a magical being. What does it mean, that nature must be able to appear as divine?

Nature must be able to appear as divine. The way it appears to the senses, and how reason understands it, it is certainly not divine. One would like to say: divinity is hidden within nature. It only appears to lack divinity. At most in dreams do we see a relationship between nature and the inner life of man. We can become aware of how an irregularity in our breathing process in one direction or the other can cause happy dreams or fearful and anxiety-filled ones. We can be aware of how the purely natural overheating of a room can give a kind of moral content to certain dreams. Dreams pull nature into the psyche.

However, we also know that in dreams our consciousness is submerged, and dreams are not what can directly describe the spiritual to us. Rather than the sleeping consciousness, we must see how the awakened consciousness presents nature.

Now in nature, my dear friends, we have a relationship of the human physical body with what is solid, with what is characteristic of the earthly element. We have a relationship of the human etheric body with what is characteristic of water. However, this relationship of the human physical body with the earthly, and the relationship of the human etheric body with the liquid element lie deep beneath what people experience.

What is closer to man is his breathing process, which is dependent upon the air. So it is from the breathing process upwards where the region begins where man can feel himself- when he is approaching the spiritual - related to nature.

The breathing process contains the air element, in which we exist.

air

[is written on the blackboard]

Above the element of air we have the quality of warmth.

warmth

[is written on the blackboard above "air"]

And above the element of warmth we have the essence of light: warmth-ether, light-ether.

light
[is written above "warmth"]

When we go even higher we come to a region - which we will speak about later - which does not lie so close to humans.

That man lives and moves in the element of air is obvious from a completely exterior point of view. One needs only to look at dreams to see how dependent they are on irregularities, abnormalities in the breathing process. When the breathing process takes place while awake, we don't notice it, because in general we pay little attention to normal life processes.

That the element of warmth is extremely essential to man is obvious to even superficial observation. If we dab our skin with an object that is colder than our body, a cold knitting needle for example, we feel the cold places that have been touched as separate even though they are very close to each other. We are very sensitive to the cold. If we touch our skin with an object that is warmer than our body, we don't feel the difference so clearly. We can hold two cold knitting needles very close to each other and feel the coldness of both. If we hold two warmed needles, the close contacts flow together at one point, and we must hold them quite far apart in order to sense them as separate. In fact we are far more sensitive to cold than to warmth. Why? We endure warmth much better than cold because we are creatures of warmth, because warmth is our own nature and we live and act in it. Cold is foreign to us and we are very sensitive to it.

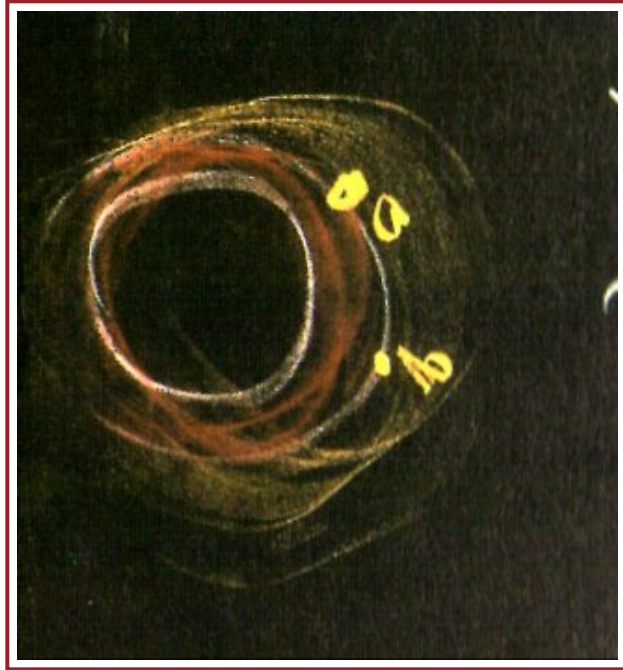
It is more difficult for normal consciousness to understand light. Today we want to approach these things esoterically. So it may be sufficient that I have indicated what air and warmth means to normal consciousness. But with this consciousness man feels air as something external, natural. He also feels warmth as something that touches him from without, and he also feels that light comes to him from outside himself.

In the moment when a person takes the leap in his life which brings him near to the Guardian of the Threshold, he becomes aware of how intimately he is related to what otherwise seems alien to him.

I have often pointed out how in every moment of our lives, also for normal consciousness, we can become aware of our relationship to the universe through our relation to the air. The air is outside, the same air which is inside me a moment later, then it is again outside, the same air which was within me. But we are not aware of the fact that, in the sense that we are beings of air, that what we hold within us we let out again, then take what was external into us again, so that we become one with the whole life and being of the element of air in which we exist as earthly beings. Whereas we always carry our muscles and bones within us, so we are only conscious of their origination and passing away during the embryonic and dying stages.

At the moment we enter the spiritual region this is no longer the case. We then feel how with every exhalation we fly out on the wings of the exhaled air into the expanse of being into which the exhaled air disperses. And how by inhaling we take into us the spiritual beings who live in the circulating air. The spiritual world flows into us when inhaling; our own being flows out into the environment upon exhaling.

This is not only so in respect to the air, but to an even greater degree in respect to warmth. As we are one with the air environment which encircles the earth, so are we also one with the warmth which encircles and penetrates the earth. [Two white circles are drawn: air, then a red one: warmth.]



When we approach the spiritual world we truly experience the spirit entering us when inhaling, our own being streaming out into the expanse of space when exhaling, that is, we experience a spiritual interweaving of inhaling and exhaling. And we feel more intensively how with the increase of warmth - in that we are ourselves within the element of warmth - we become more human, and with the lessening of warmth we become less human. Thus warmth ceases to be a merely natural element, for we feel and recognize the spiritual nature of warmth - and we feel it to be closely related to our being human. We feel that the increase of warmth means that the spirits which are active in the element of warmth say: We give you your humanity through the element of warmth; we take it away through the element of cold.

So we come to the light, in which we live and act. But we don't notice it because with normal consciousness we have no idea of the fact that the inner movements of light are contained in our own thinking, that every thought is captured light - both for the physically sighted and for the physically unsighted. Light is objective. Not only the physically sighted receive it, the physically unsighted also receive it ... when they think. Because the thoughts which we hold within us, which we capture, is light present within us.

We can say then, that when we approach the Guardian of the Threshold he admonishes us in the following way:

When you think, O man, your being is not in you, it is in the light. When you feel, your being is not in you, it is in the warmth. When you will, your being is not in you, it is in the air. Keep not within yourself, O man. Think not that your thinking is in your head. Think that your willing is none other than the moving, living, active air element working within.

One must be very conscious of the fact that in the Guardian of the Threshold's presence one is divided into the universal elements, that one can no longer simply hold one's self together in the usual chaotic, dim way of normal consciousness. And that is the grand experience that initiate knowledge gives to the human being, that he ceases to seriously think that he is enclosed within his skin - something which is no more than a mere indication that he exists. For spiritual consciousness what is concentrated within the skin is an illusion; for man is as great as the universe. His thoughts are as wide as the light, his feelings are as wide as the warmth, his will is as wide as the air.

If a being of sufficiently developed consciousness were to descend to the earth from another planet, he would speak to people in quite a different way than how people of the earth address each other. He would say: The light which envelops the earth is differentiated [The cloak of light is drawn around the air and warmth circles: yellow.] Many individually differentiated beings are in the light. One must imagine that in this earth-light, in the light that surrounds the earth, that weaves and waves around it, in this space many beings are present, as many as there are human beings on the earth. They all accommodate themselves within the earth's world of light. And for this visitor from space all human thoughts are in this cloak of light. And all feelings are in the cloak of warmth, and all willing is in the atmosphere, in the cloak of air.

Then this being would say: I have qualitatively differentiated out a being. It is indicated by body a; another, also within the cloak, is designated as b, and so on [within the yellow, two spots, a and b, are drawn]. The real human beings are all together in the light, warmth and air surrounding the earth.

For the person who really stands before the Guardian of the Threshold this is not speculation, but experience. And this is what constitutes spiritual progress, that man integrates with the surrounding world. It is of little use to speak of these things theoretically. It is not particularly profound mystically to say that you are one with the world by merely thinking that you are, if you do not begin to experience the fact that when you are thinking you are living in the entire earth's light, are becoming one with the earth's light, and how by doing so, by becoming one with the light of the earth, you go out of yourself - go out, so to speak, through all the pores of your skin into a divine-spiritual being - you become one with the essence of the earth itself and with the other elements of the earth's being. This is something which must be understood in all seriousness by anyone who strives toward relationship with the spiritual world.

You see, light must, in a sense, have a moral effect. And we must be aware of how we are related to the light and how the light is related to us in the esoteric experience of the world. But then, at the moment when one steps over the threshold, it becomes clear that the light is real and must wage a hard battle with the forces of darkness. Light and darkness become real. And then something occurs to the person which makes him say to himself: If in my thinking I merge completely with the light, I will lose myself in the light. For in the moment when I merge with the light in my thinking, light-beings grasp hold of me and say: You, human, we will not let you out of the light again, we will hold you back in the light. This expresses the light-beings' will. They want to draw man to them through his thinking, make him one with the light, rend him from all the earthly forces and integrate him into the light. The light-beings who are around us are those who at every moment of existence wish to rend human beings from the earth and integrate them with the sunlight which flows over the earth. They live in the periphery of the earth and say: You, human being, should not remain with your soul in your body; with the sun's first light of dawn you yourself should shine down on the earth, you should set with the sun's afterglow, and encircle the earth as light!

These light-beings will be found enticing us ever and again. At the moment of crossing the threshold one becomes aware of these light-beings who want to pull human beings away from the earth and try to convince him that it is not worthy of him to stay chained to the earth by its gravity. They wish to absorb him in the sun's radiance.

Yes, for ordinary consciousness the sun is shining above and we humans stand below and let the sun shine on us; for the more developed consciousness the sun in heaven is the great tempter who wants to unite us with its light and pull us away from the earth - who whispers in our ear: O man, you don't need to stay on the earth, you can exist in the rays of the sun, then you can illuminate the earth and bring it happiness, so you no longer have to be illuminated and made happy on the earth from without.

This is what we encounter when we meet the Guardian of the Threshold: nature, which was previously quietly outside us and made no claim on our normal consciousness, now has the force to speak to us morally. Nature appears in the sun as a tempter. What before was quietly shining sunlight now speaks enticingly, temptingly. And we first realize that there is something spiritual living and moving in this sunlight when the enticing, the tempting beings appear in the light of the sun who want to pull us away from the earth. For these beings are in continuous battle with what constitutes the interior of the earth - darkness.

And if we fall into extremes - which is quite possible because the experiences in meeting the Guardian of the Threshold are most earnest and profound and gripping for the human soul - when we realize how enticing the sunlight is, caused by the light-beings, that is when we want to escape from them, if we remember that we are supposed to be human beings. We may not forget this. If we do, although we continue to live physically on the earth, we are to a certain extent psychically crippled. But when we become aware of how enticing the sunlight is, we turn to the opposite side and seek relief in darkness, against which the light is continually fighting. And by swinging from light to darkness we fall into the opposite extreme. So this self, which wanted to surge out into the bright shining sunlight, is now threatened in darkness by loneliness, by being separated from all other beings. But we human beings can only live in the area of equilibrium between light and darkness.

Such is the great experience before the Guardian of the Threshold: that we face the enticement of light and the dehumanizing force of darkness. Light and darkness become moral forces which have moral power over us. And we humans must realize that it is dangerous to look at the pure light and the pure darkness. And we are reassured

when, there at the threshold, we see how the middle gods, the good gods of normal progress dim the light to a luminous yellow, to a luminous red, and when we know that we can no longer be lost to the earth, when we are aware not of the light which enticingly dazzles us, but of the color in spirit, which is subdued light.

And it is equally dangerous to yield to pure darkness. And we will be inwardly liberated if we do not stand before the pure darkness in spirit-land, but when we stand before the illuminated darkness as violet and blue. Yellow and red say to us in spirit-land: Light's enticements will not be able to wrest you away from the earth. Violet and blue say to us: The darkness will not be able to bury you, as soul, in the earth; you will be able to hold yourself above the effects of the earth's gravity.

Those are the experiences where the natural and the moral grow together in one, where light and darkness become realities. And without light and darkness becoming realities, we will not be aware of the true nature of thinking. Therefore we should listen to the words the Guardian of the Threshold speaks when we meet him with our thinking, which has become independent and separated in our soul:

*The light does battle with the forces dark
In that realm where your thinking
Would enter into the spirit-being.
You find, striving towards the light,
Your self by spirit taken from you;
You can, when darkness entices you,
In matter lose your self.*

This means becoming aware of the duality in which one is placed and between which one must find equilibrium, harmony, in thinking.

[The lines are written on the blackboard:]

*The light does battle with the forces dark
In that realm where your thinking
Would enter into the spirit-being.
You find, striving towards the light,
Your self by spirit taken from you;
You can, when darkness entices you,
In matter lose your self.*

The impulses which can derive from such words must be forcefully received by thinking and one must learn to feel when dealing even with normal exterior light, and exterior darkness, how this light can only be tolerated when it is dimmed to color. Then we must do our best to understand, with spiritual visioning, how thinking is placed in the middle of this battle between light and darkness: How, when it comes into contact with light, it is absorbed in a certain sense, interwoven with the light; and when it comes into contact with darkness it is extinguished. If we want to enter into matter, into dark matter, our thinking is extinguished. By understanding this, one gradually enters the spiritual realm.

And, my dear friends, in order to experience this, one must have courage, inner courage. To deny that one needs courage is to be ignorant of the true situation. We may think that courage is needed to let a finger be cut off, but none is needed to allow the severed thinking to stream into the vortex in which it will be seized when it finds itself in the middle of the battle between light and darkness. And it is always there. Knowledge means that we are aware of this.

In every waking moment, with his thinking, man is in danger because there are certain spiritual beings on neighboring heavenly bodies who know that in every century, in every age, it is possible, as far as humanity is concerned, for light to win over darkness or darkness to win over light.

Yes, my dear friends, for people with normal consciousness life seems as little dangerous as it does for a sleepwalker who has not yet been woken up: he doesn't fall down. For someone who observes life, however, a battle ensues, and he cannot say with certainty whether in

a hundred years light or darkness will have won, and whether the human race will even have an existence worthy of humanity. And he will know why such a catastrophe has not happened to human evolution until now.

I could use another comparison. When you watch a tightrope walker on his rope you know that he could fall at any moment to the left or to the right. That you could be on such a tightrope psychically - that anyone can plummet psychically to the right or the left - there is no awareness of that in ordinary life, because one does not see the abyss on the left or right. Nevertheless, it is there.

That is the benefit the Guardian of the Threshold bestows on man - that he does not let the abyss be seen until his own warnings alert him to it. That has been the secret of the Mysteries of all times, that the abyss is shown to the adept and he therewith is able to acquire the strength necessary for knowledge of the real world.

As it is with light in regard to thinking, so it is with warmth in regard to feeling. When approaching to Guardian of the Threshold, one is aware of entering a battle between warm and cold: how warmth is always enticing our feeling, for it wishes to suck it in to itself. Just as the light-beings, the Luciferic light-beings would in a certain sense fly away with us from the earth towards the light, so would the Luciferic warmth-beings suck our feeling into the general universal warmth. All human feeling should be lost to humanity and soaked up into the general universal warmth.

And this is enticing because what the initiate-science adept is aware of when he approaches the threshold with his feeling: the warmth-beings appear, who want to give the human being an over-abundance of his own element, of the element in which he lives: warmth. They want all his feelings to be soaked up by warmth. When the human being is aware of this however: when he approaches the threshold, the warmth-beings are there, he gets warm, warm, warm, he becomes warmth, he flows over into the warmth. It is a feeling of pleasure, and a great enticement. It flows through him continuously. One must know all this. For without knowing that this enticement exists within the desire for warmth, it impossible to obtain an unobstructed vision of spirit-land.

And the enemies of these Luciferic warmth-beings are the Ahrimanic coldness-beings. These beings attract those who are still aware of how dangerous it is to bask in the pleasure of warmth. They would like to dip into the healthy cold. That is the opposite extreme: the cold can harden them there. And then, when the cold affects man in this way, infinite pain ensues, which is also physical pain. The physical and the mental, matter and spirit, become one. The human being experiences the cold capturing his whole being, as though tearing him apart in great pain.

That the human being is continually engaged in this battle between warmth and cold is what one must understand as the Guardian of the Threshold's admonition in respect to feeling.

[The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

*The warmth does battle with the cold
In that realm where your feeling
Would like to live spiritually.
You find, loving the warmth,
Your Self in spirit-pleasure dispersed;
You can, when coldness hardens you,
Enwrap the Self in suffering.*

With his volition man enters a world which seems quite near to us - which in fact it is. It is the world of air, the world which sustains our breathing. One does not suspect how closely related human will is to the air which we breathe, for our will depends upon our breathing. And in the air, dear friends, life and death exists. It contains the vivifying oxygen; it contains the deadly nitrogen. The chemist says with his terrible, untrue abstraction: Air consists of oxygen and nitrogen. Yes, as long as we remain in normal consciousness one says: oxygen and nitrogen. Once we arrive at the Guardian of the Threshold, however, it becomes clear that oxygen is the external manifestation of many spiritual beings - the ones who give humanity life. Nitrogen is the external manifestation of the spiritual beings who

give humanity death - also the death which, in every instant of our waking life in which we think and in which we develop our soul-life, is partially putting us to death, is unmaking us.

In the air there is a battle in which the Luciferic oxygen-spirits do battle with the Ahrimanic nitrogen-spirits. As long as one has not arrived at the Threshold, air consists of the chemists' abstraction: oxygen and nitrogen. When we arrive at the Threshold, it consists of Ahriman and Lucifer, and the oxygen is the outer mask for Lucifer, and nitrogen the outer mask for Ahriman. And a battle rages in the air. This battle is hidden from the every-day, illusory consciousness. But one enters it when the Threshold is reached.

Once again: if one wishes to realize what exists in oxygen-spirits, what exists in the life-element when one wishes to unite his will with spiritual creativity, when one is stimulated to inner courageous activity, the danger exists that one's actions are all absorbed by spiritual acts and one ceases to be even human because what one needs as strength of will is taken over by the Luciferic spiritual world.

And if you turn to the opposite side, then the nitrogen forces, the Ahrimanic ones that act as death in the element of air will tempt you. This is not the death which we see in the physical world, but one with which one is not personally related. If you become related to death you begin to consider it as something you wish to unite with, and then are never released from. Whereas in the element of life the spirits want to hold us in order for their deeds to absorb the deeds of men, on the other side - that of the Ahrimanic nitrogen-spirits - we are thrown aside into the nothingness of life. We then want to act in death, act in nothingness. We are cramped instead of being active; the self is cramped.

Man is placed between these two opposing elements of which he must be aware with respect to his will.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*A battle rages between life and death
In that realm where your will
Would like to act in spirit-creation.*

*You find, grasping life,
Your Self in spirit-forces ending;
You can, if death-forces bind you,
Confine the Self in nothingness.*

If, dear friends, we say: I would rather do without such knowledge! Why should I do that to myself, approaching the Guardian of the Threshold, if what is otherwise benevolently hidden from humanity is revealed to me? Can it be beneficial for humanity to be aware of such terrible truths? It is obvious that this objection is due to the human desire for comfort, especially when the question: What should I do with such truths? is asked. If I ask that, it is about something I'd rather not know.

But, my dear friends, the task of contemporary times is that man penetrate in reality, that he does not cowardly shrink back from reality, that he penetrates into reality in order to unite with what is directly related to his being. We could of course stick our heads in the sand during this short earth-life and know nothing about these realities; that we can no longer do however, for we are now entering a new age when man can only thrive after death if he becomes aware of what he will experience after death.

And how will it be after death? When a person passes through the gates of death and his consciousness has still not been erased, he looks back and when this looking back has become conscious, spiritual beings whisper into the process causing a soft undertone to be present. One looks back the few days after death during which the etheric body is dissolving in the cosmic ether, one looks back and sees the pictures of the earth-life just experienced - and certain spirits whisper:

*A battle rages between life and death
In that realm where your will
Would like to act in spirit-creation.
You find, grasping life,*

*Your Self in spirit-forces ending;
You can, if death-forces bind you,
Confine the Self in nothingness.*

Now we know the reality: if we do not find the middle way, but wander off either to the right or the left instead, then one of those things can happen.

And also, when one has gone through the sleeping time after death, which does not last long, he enters in consciousness into a time when he experiences his past earthly life backwards, an experience which lasts a third of that of his past earthly lifetime, as we have described in the general anthroposophical lectures. But the admonishing spirits keep appearing during milestones along this journey. And they say to us:

*The warmth does battle with the cold
In that realm where your feeling
Would like to live spiritually.
You find, loving the warmth,
Your Self in spirit-pleasure dispersed;
You can, if coldness hardens you,
Enwrap your Self in suffering.*

Bearing this in mind, I have often counseled those who have asked me how they should act in respect to the dead who have been close to them to direct thoughts towards them in the sense, for example: "My love goes out to you, so that it might warm your coldness, lessen your warmth," for during the whole time of reverse experience of the past life warmth and cold play the role described above. But we are also warned that they play that role continually. These things are realities.

And when we then cross over from the life of reverse experience into the experience of being in the free spirit-land, preparing ourselves for the next earth-life, the spirits warning us at the milestones again appear. They call out to us unceasingly:

*The light does battle with the forces of darkness
In that realm where your thinking
Would like to engage in spiritual being.
You find, striving towards the light,*

- The striving is real; you could go right or to the left -

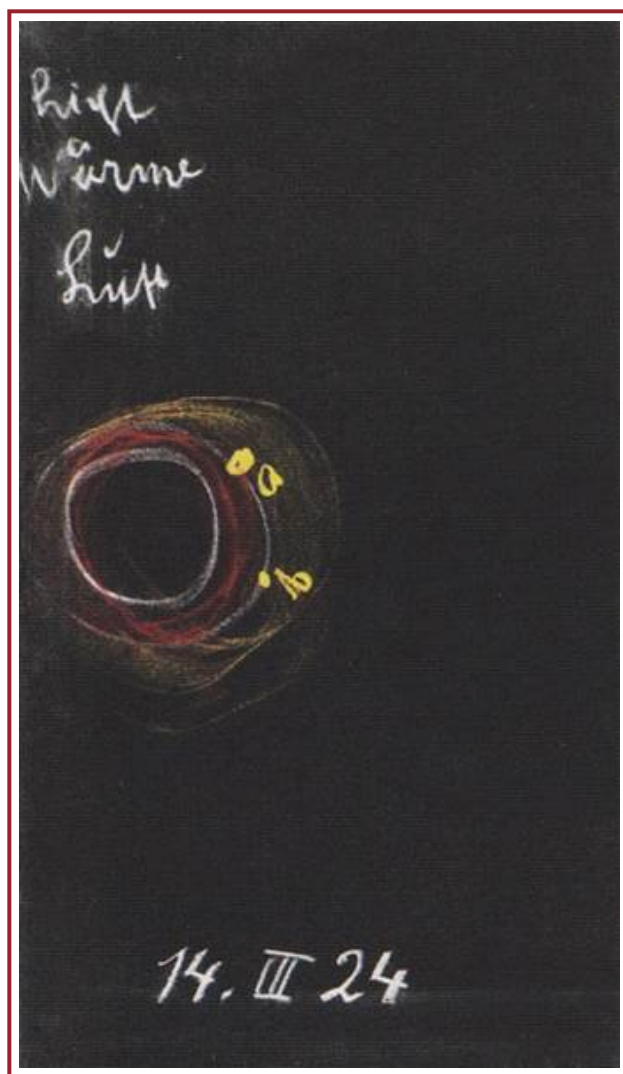
*Your Self taken away by spirit;
You can, when darkness entices you,
In matter lose the Self.*

My dear friends, when man still had an instinctive clairvoyance and passed through the gates of death, it was through this instinctive clairvoyance that he could understand the words spoken to him during the three stations of life after death. But in the age which man had to pass through in order to achieve freedom, it became ever more difficult for him to understand what was being called out to him. And now we live in an age when, if human beings are not made aware of the meaning of these words during their life on earth, they will not understand the words called out to them in spirit-language.

But that is what can happen to man if he confronts a future in which he passes through a world where these words are called out to him and he does not understand them and must therefore live through the torments of not understanding. And what do these torments mean? They mean the ever increasing prevalence of anxiety in the soul of losing the connection with the creative spiritual powers and finally not being able to join those spiritual powers to whom we owe our existence, and instead find ourselves with alien powers where the human origin can be lost.

To enter esoteric life, my dear friends, does not imply a mere learning process, nor a mere theory; rather it means to accept a most serious aspect of life. And whoever immerses in esoteric life does not listen to a mere teaching or a theory, but immerses himself in aspects of real life. The life which our senses are aware of is only the outer

manifestation; behind it at all times is the spiritual world. We do not enter it if we close our ears to what lies in these words. If we enter deeply, meditatively into such words, then our thinking, our feeling and our willing will be able to understand and to grasp the spirit in which we must penetrate as human beings.



Lesson 6

21 March 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

During these meetings, we are considering the truths which can be learned from the Guardian of the Threshold. And the Guardian's continuous admonition is that man be aware that he advances spiritually when he becomes conscious of his true relation to the world.

To become conscious of his true relation to the world, he first gets to know the world by observing the kingdoms of nature which are external to his own being - the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom and the mineral kingdom. These relations offer him the opportunity to admire them and to use them to carry out his own will impulses, etc. Man considers them to be his external world, and with normal consciousness he is hardly aware of how he has evolved out of this world, how a deep relationship to that world exists within him.

However, one cannot feel this relationship by merely letting one's gaze wander over this exterior world. One must advance to a self-knowledge of belonging to this world. And when one wishes to gain this self-knowledge, my dear friends, then one may not simply continue to see things as first glances provide; rather must one return to what is revealed between them.

Since the modern phase of human evolution began, we seldom see what is revealed between the things. We see the three kingdoms of nature in the outside world. But as you know, my dear friends, behind the kingdoms of nature we have what is called the world of the elements.

We can say: our feet stand on the ground of the solid earth.

[written on the blackboard]

Earth

And what the solid earth consists of is also present in the animals, plants and minerals and also in our physical human bodies. And when we lift our gaze from the ground beneath our feet to what is to a certain extent at our own height, what is present is not only air, for the air is always penetrated by the watery element. Although it is true that man's life on earth has developed in such a way that he only senses this watery element in fine solution in the air which surrounds him, and in order to use it in his own organism it must be condensed, it is nevertheless true that he also lives in this watery element.

[over "earth" is written]

Water

And man also lives in the air element through which he breathes.

[over "Water" is written]

Air

At the moment when we observe these elements we cannot speak of them as we speak of the other beings of the nature-kingdoms, which we see before us in sharply defined contours. But in the solid as such, in the earthly, we can only say that we live in it. We are too closely related to the earthly to specifically differentiate it. We do not specifically differentiate what is a part of ourselves. We do differentiate a table or a chair which exist outside of ourselves. We do not consider what is inside us as having clear boundaries. We do not see our lungs or heart within us as having clear boundaries. Only when they are made into objects, in anatomy, do we see them so. But just as we are related to our own bodies, we are also, to a larger extent, related to the elements. We live in earth, we live in water, we live in air, we live in warmth. They belong to us. They are too close to us to be understood as very sharply contoured in the world.

Let us now lay out this elemental world before us, a world which is around us and at the same time within us, so that we must consider it as the content of the world and of ourselves. So we have what we designate as Earth, what we designate as Water, what we designate as Air and what we designate as Warmth.

[over "Air" is written:]

Warmth

When we go further up out of the thicker substances into the etheric from warmth, which is already etheric, we come to the light.

[over "Warmth" is written:]

Light

and up to what we have always described with a dry, abstract expression: chemical ether and its effects. Because the ordering, the formation of the world is effected by it, we shall call that great chemicality of the cosmos "cosmic-formation".

[over "Light" is written]

Cosmic-formation

And then we will call what is highest in the etheric: Life-Ether, Cosmic Life.

[over "cosmic formation" is written]

Cosmic Life

Well, my dear friends, you have already seen from the previous lesson that the human being, according to the manner in which he lives on the earth, is not equally related to all of these elements in the same measure. In fact, the human being only lives in a completely intimate relationship with the element of warmth. [A red cross is drawn on the blackboard next to the word "Warmth".] For spiritual progress, it is necessary to be fully conscious of such things.

Just think how much you directly feel warmth and cold to be part of you. The difference between warm and cold affects you strongly. Even air circulation affects you less. Whether the air is good or bad you notice indirectly according to its effect on your organism. The effect of

light is the same. Nevertheless, man is very closely related to air and light. [Yellow crosses are drawn next to the words "air" and "light".] He is extraordinarily close to them.

But man is relatively distant from the watery elements - among the denser ones - even though he is related to them. Nevertheless, the watery element is very closely connected to human life. [A blue cross is drawn next to the word "water".] Imagine, my dear friends, a very vivid nightmare and consider how your perspiration, that is, the secretion of the watery element, is affected by it. Notice how the watery element plays a significant role in sleep. The human being lives in the watery element. The liquid elements dissolved in his environment are of great importance for him, but none more directly than warmth. Whether it is warm or cold, man feels it as being part of himself. When it is warm, he is warm; when it is cold, he is cold. When we walk into fog, for example, the fog's moisture has an important but an indirect influence on us, something which normal consciousness isn't very aware of.

I'll put it this way: We walk into fog - and our own watery element merges in a certain sense with the outer world's watery element. And with this easy transition from our own watery element to the outer world's watery element we feel our connection to the whole cosmos - contrary to the transition from our watery element to dry outer air. Dry air lets us feel more human. Watery air lets us feel our dependence on the cosmos. But nowadays we have no training in such things. In a lecture cycle in The Hague, which has been printed, I went into detail concerning man's dependence on the elements. The elements exist, and it pertains to esoteric life to be aware of this dependence in practice.

Man's relation to the earthly elements lies even deeper in the subconscious. [A blue cross is drawn next to the word "Earth".]

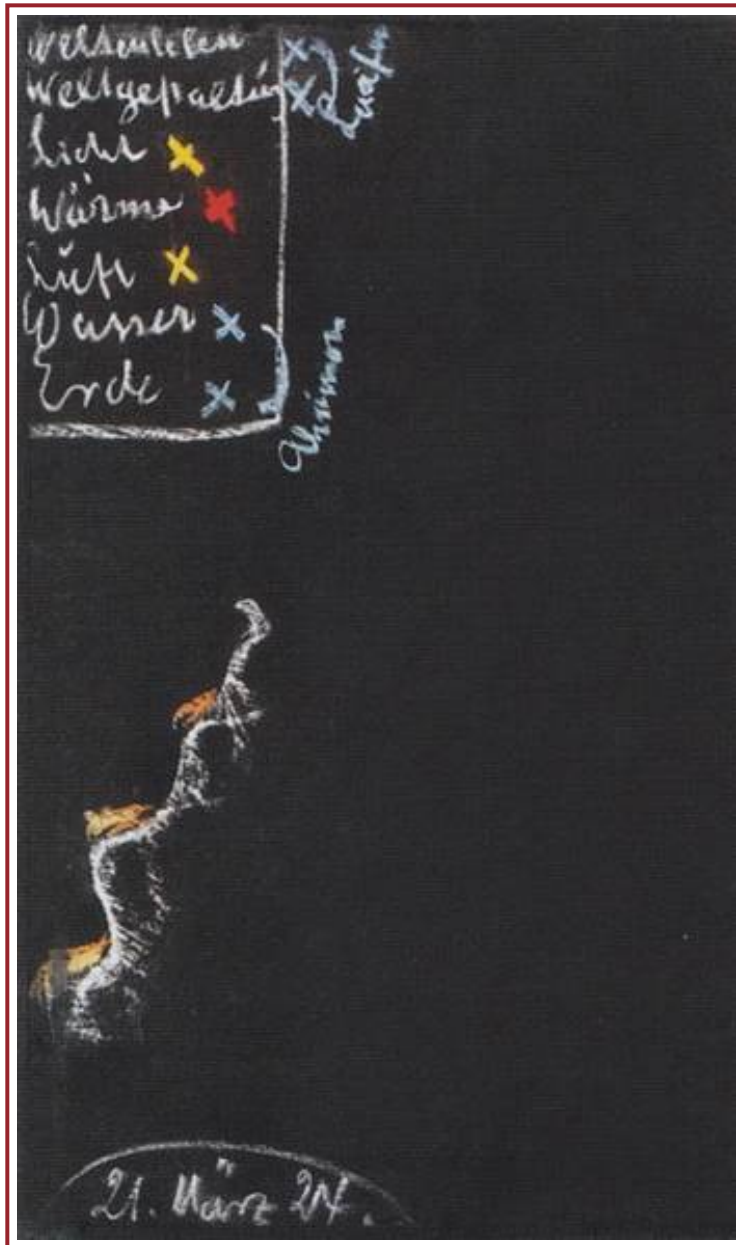
What does man know about his relation to the earthly element? He knows that salt is salty, that sugar is sweet. They belong to the earthly element. But about the processes of metamorphosis that salt and sugar undergo in his organism, how he acts together with the cosmos in dissolving the sugar or the salt within his organism, how certain cosmic forces work into the organism when the sugar's sweetness courses through his body, or the saltiness of salt courses

through his body, he is mostly unaware, save for the slight reflex of the saltiness or the sweetness on his taste-buds. These are profoundly meaningful processes. The universe has opened its doors, so to speak, to certain forces when the human being dissolves sugar on his tongue and transfers it to his organism.

It is also the case that whereas these denser elements have an indirect influence on the human being, the etheric finer elements, Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life also have an indirect influence on the human being, a hidden influence. [Blue crosses are drawn next to "Cosmic Formation" and "Cosmic Life".]

The most evident influence on man comes from the middle element, Warmth. The influence of Light and Air are also strong - evident also to ordinary consciousness. But the influence of Water and Earth on one hand, and on the other hand of Cosmic Life and Cosmic Chemical Formation lie in the unconscious. Therefore, man should be aware during his earthly life that he lives closely with these middle elements [Air, Warmth, Light], whereas his consciousness has been withdrawn from his relation to Water and Earth and to Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life.

In the days when the old instinctive consciousness prevailed, there was also a nuance of clairvoyance, and when the students in the Mysteries reached a certain stage in their development they were cautioned: Trust the Fire, trust the Air, also trust the Light; but beware of the underworld - Water, Earth; beware of the overworld - Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life. For due to the fact that they lie so deeply in the unconscious, Lucifer's temptations appear in Cosmic Life and Cosmic Formation, and Ahriman's temptations appear in Earth and Water.



<i>Cosmic Life</i>	X	}	<i>Lucifer</i>
<i>Cosmic-formation</i>	X		
<i>Light</i>	X		
<i>Warmth</i>	X		
<i>Air</i>	X		
<i>Water</i>	X	}	<i>Ahriman</i>
<i>Earth</i>	X		

In the Mysteries, esoteric instruction always indicated that man should find the right relation to these elements, feel his relationship with the elements in the correct way. When one advances to Imaginative life, he feels exactly this relationship to the elements. With normal consciousness: We look around, recognize the animals, plants and minerals as existing outside of us. When, however, we recognize the elements in their relationship with us, then we may not look around at the world, but we must feel, experience what is in us and the world at the same time.

Then, when we have advanced to Imaginative life, we are able to feel our relationship with the world.

If we develop this feeling in the right way, we will make a profound admission. This admission to ourselves is progressive, true self-knowledge. We realize that one is only human when he is released from the world to which he is inwardly connected, from the earthly world where he stands alone, as it were, where the plants, animals and minerals exist outside of us, are foreign to us. But if, through Imaginative knowledge, one becomes aware of his relationship with the earth, then he will no longer feel himself in his humanity, he will feel himself in his animality; he feels the inner relationship of man to the extended animal domain.

And when he feels himself as one with the water element on earth he becomes aware enough to say: In reality you are related to the vegetable kingdom. There is something in you that is as sleepy and as dreamy as the plants.

And if one becomes aware of his relationship with the air, he feels the mineral element within him. He feels something filling him through the whole skin.

As soon as we enter the elemental world with Imagination, we feel related to the animals, plants, stones. And we feel differently toward the kingdoms of nature when we feel that we belong to them as well. We feel the inner relationship to these kingdoms in the following way.

We look out at the animal kingdom. We observe the indolent animals which slowly take one step after the other. We observe the rapid ones, and the flying birds. We observe the inherent movement in the animals which fill the world with movement from out of their own being. And then we say to ourselves: All that which comes from the innermost being of the animals is revealed to be the same as our own will. And we feel the relationship of our own will with the animal world.

But there is something else. One feels fear of one's self. This is what is considered positive - that whoever enters into esoteric life feels this fear of himself. Not so that he gets stuck in it, but so that he may transform it into a higher psychic force.

It is like this: when we become aware that our human form exists because we stand alone and the kingdoms of nature are beyond us, where we can look at them, then we feel that the earth, in its true elemental nature, does not make us human, it makes us animal. We are animals. As far as the earth is concerned, we are animals. And because the earth-element is always present, the danger exists that we sink into animal nature. And when we don't merely understand this theoretically, as is mostly the case nowadays, but also feel it, we become fearful that at any moment we may fall into animality. But it is just this fear which encourages us to always wish to raise ourselves over this animality, to step out of the elemental life into the life which

surrounds us with an external, perhaps strange world, but which also introduces us to true humanity. To feelingly recognize our relation to the world is what leads us to true esoteric knowledge.

And when we feel our relationship with the world's water, with the water elements, then we realize: as far as water is concerned, we should not be human, but vegetables. And our feelings, which have a dream-like nature, as I have often explained, our feelings have a continuous tendency to be vegetable-like. Just try to think seriously about your innermost feelings and you will feel the vegetative nature of the life of feeling. And then you will have the feeling that you are not only in danger of descending to animality, but also of living on with a lamed consciousness, like a vegetable - sleeping, dreaming. But this feeling of lameness, which lies deep in the [sub]conscious, must be transformed into the feeling of awakening to humanity. Fear of animality must be transformed into the courage to raise yourself to humanity. The feeling of vegetable lameness must be transformed into an awakening call to inner strength, to develop into a fully awake person in the world.

And when we become aware of how we live in the air-element, then we can see how in reality all thinking - this is unknown to people - is nothing other than a refined breathing. Thinking is refined breathing. The thoughts in which we live are absolutely a refined breathing process. On one side, the breathing-in stream, holding the breath, and breathing out act, in a more coarse way, into our blood circulation; on the other side, but more refined, into the vibration of the brain organs. And the breath circulating there is known as thinking in the physical world; sublimated breathing is thinking.

The individual who has advanced to Imagination no longer believes in this abstract thinking existing as a kind of tenuous substance in the brain. He feels the inhalation, the expanding of the breath in the brain; he feels how the breath spreads out. When the breath expands in this way, then ceases, the closed concepts arise, closed ideas. If it encloses something else, in waves, the ideas of self-movement arise. It is merely a refined breathing process which weaves and waves within us which we designate as thinking.

When one feels: I inhale, I draw the breath up to the brain, I let it strike my ear, and one feels: what I hear as tone, as sound, as clang, lives in me as thought. I let the breath strike my eye: it lives in me as what I see as color. It is the inner language of breathing which acts as representations in thinking. When breathing, completely refined, strikes the sense organs it creates my mental pictures [representations]. But when one becomes aware of this, becoming a thinker and a breather, so to speak, then one feels that this refined-to-thinking breathing process is like an organized mineral, like an organized stone, which fills him.

You know that oxygen is transformed into carbon dioxide in man. This reception of carbon dioxide in the finer branches of breathing in the human head is tantamount to the capture of the carbon dioxide. It is a mineralization process. And the more we are able to internalize this capture of carbon dioxide by oxygen, the more we are conscious of the mineralization process. We take the carbon into ourselves. And carbon is the Philosopher's Stone; thus, within man carbon is the Philosopher's Stone.

Read how the old instinctive clairvoyants described the Philosopher's Stone. You will find them saying: The Philosopher's Stone can be found everywhere, only people don't recognize it. It can be produced everywhere. It can be found at its own place - in the earth. They describe in detail how carbon is produced, by burning wood. The Philosopher's Stone can be produced anywhere, it is carbon. It is in the coal mines ... [gaps here in the shorthand, possibly the result of rapid speaking ...] a mineralization process. One feels mineralized within ... by the combustion process [?] ... just as we feel ourselves to be plant-like by the watery processes and identify with the animals by living on earth. [This passage is unclear.]

This is the exhortation the Guardian gives to man: He must be aware of his relationship to the kingdoms of nature. Therefore, we have these exhortations in the form of spoken meditations. And if man lets them work with deep feeling on his sensibility he will be aware of his relationship with the earth-element, which is related to his will; with the water-element which is related to his feeling; with the air-element which, in the way I have described it, is related to his thinking.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*You climb down to the earth element
With forces of your will unfolding*

This is an unconscious process. Every time we will something, we climb down into the earth-element. But normal consciousness knows nothing of this. At the moment when the downward climb becomes conscious, man transforms himself from a human to an animal nature, he seems like some kind of animal - at least in the etheric form which he then observes. I don't mean that he will exactly become an elephant or a bull, but something like that for the element of will, yes, he gives the impression of being bull-like, elephant-like, eagle-like, and so on.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,
Your animality will be shown
To you by your own force of thought*

But such exhortations by the Guardian of the Threshold, my dear friends, are not to be taken as concepts or theories. They are meant to be experienced by the whole human being. If we look at where the will is heading, we become aware of our animality and we fear our own self which, however, must be transformed into psychic courage. Then one advances further. Then one can enter the spiritual world.

[The writing continues:]

*The fear you feel of self
Transform in courage of soul you must.*

Here we have the first descent, climbing downward to the kingdom where the Ahrimanic forces work so strongly. Our correct comportment is indicated by the exhortation just given by the Guardian of the Threshold:

*You climb down to the earth-element
With forces of your will unfolding;
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,
Your animality will be shown
To you by your own forceful thought;
The fear you feel of self
Transform in courage of soul you must.*

As a rule, what helps us most toward spiritual advancement is the overcoming of something that drags us down. When we overcome something which drags us down, like this fear of our own animality, and transform it by our own inner act into psychic courage, then it becomes an impulse toward a higher humanity. It's something we need to advance spiritually.

We learn about the next descent, into the water-element, through the words of the following exhortation by the Guardian of the Threshold:

*You live with the water-element
Through feeling's dream alone;
Pervading wakening water-being
Results in the soul becoming
Essentially plant-like dull
Your selfhood's lameness must
Lead you to self-awakening.*

The transformation to the opposite of this sleep-filled dreaminess, if we really descend consciously, becomes a wakening in ourselves.

[The second verse is written:]

*You live with the water-element
Through feeling's dream alone;
Pervading wakening water-being
Results in the soul becoming
Essentially plant-like dull
Your selfhood's lameness must
Lead you to self-awakening.*

And when the human being feels his relationship with the air-element, then even with normal consciousness he feels the relationship more strongly. He descends less deeply into the subconscious. Nevertheless, a trace of Ahrimanic temptation remains in this descent. When we live in our remembrances, in our memories, we are mostly in an inner breathing activity. If we refine normal breathing to thinking of what is in our environment, then very little danger is present. If memories arise, however, with breathing coming from within, danger is still present, although it is the easiest to observe. And it is in this descent from thinking to perception where we mostly are concerned with our memory's mental pictures. It is about this that the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes:

[Written on the blackboard:]

*You perceive in the waves of air
Only memory's mental pictures;
Take in willingly the essence of air*

We can do this, my dear friends, using the same inner force we use when combining one thought with another in the performance of normal activities. We are used to moving a chair from one place to another, when we make the effort. But we are not used to moving a thought from one place to another. We prefer to think according to the guidebook as events present themselves. We would like the book to show us the sequence of thoughts; that the newspaper indicate the sequence of thoughts to us, and we are satisfied when they do. It is as if we expected that everything we do through the exertion of our

will be set in motion by an objective power from without: as if your arm is to be raised so you can grasp a chair - as if a spirit stood there and placed your legs one after the other so you can walk. As far as thinking is concerned, it is as though we expected our legs to be moved for us so we can walk.

[Writing continues:]

Your own soul will threaten you

As coldly hardened stone

(this mineralizing process)

Whoever does not know "Imagination" does not realize how hard ordinary thinking is. Ordinary thinking is stone hard. One really feels thinking with angles and edges when one finally gains admittance to the spiritual world. Such thinking actually hurts when it appears in its particular abstract forms. Whoever knows spiritual life is able to feel empathy for what is thought as a result of human feelings and impulses. He can feel it himself when fits of hate and anger are expressed in thoughts; but he feels inwardly wounded as if by sharp angles and edges when the abstract thoughts of contemporary civilization enter his being. He will not be aware of the suffering which is caused by today's thinking if he does not know this sentence: "Your own soul will threaten you as coldly hardened stone." But when one consciously descends to the kingdom of memories, the kingdom of airy breezes, where breath is grasped by thinking, then what I described happens. But this inner death of thinking, this death by freezing, must inspire us to the contrary - to create spiritual vitality in thought from inner strength.

[Writing continues:]

*But your selfhood's death by cold
Must give way to spirit-fire.*

Those are the three exhortations concerning the nether world, the world of the lower elements, which the Guardian of the Threshold directs to those who come to the threshold by showing them how man must be aware of his kinship with the three kingdoms of nature if he wishes to be knowledgeable. How he must be aware of his animality and the animals in his environment by virtue of his kinship with the earth-element. How he must be aware of his own plant nature and therewith the plant life of his environment by virtue of his kinship with the water-element. How he must be aware of his own mineral kingdom, his own mineral nature, his own stone nature, by virtue of his kinship with the air-element, and therewith the nature of the mineral kingdom of his environment.

Fear, lameness and death must develop as negative characteristics, but must metamorphose into the positive characteristics of courage, wakefulness and vitalizing fire.

That is also what the Guardian of the Threshold calls out to the person striding by: first the inner feeling of fear of falling into animality; then the inner feeling of helplessness in plant-like lameness; then the desire to oppose the coldness of stone by engendering vitalizing fire in the soul.

Thus, the Guardian of the Threshold's threefold exhortation is:

.....

*You climb down to the earth-element
With forces of your will unfolding;
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,
Your animality will be shown
To you by your own forceful thought
The fear you feel of self
Transform in courage of soul you must.*

*You live with the water-element
Through feeling's weaving dream alone;
Pervading wakening water-being,
Results in the soul becoming
Essentially plant-like dull
Your selfhood's lameness must
Lead you to self-awakening.*

*You perceive in the waves of air
Only memory's mental pictures;
Take in willingly the essence of air,
Your own soul will threaten you
As coldly hardened stone
But your selfhood's death by cold
Must give way to spirit-fire.*

Here [in the lower part of the above list marked with blue crosses] we enter Ahriman's kingdom and are warned by the Guardian of the Threshold as to how we can save ourselves from Ahriman's temptations; and here [the upper part of the list] where we are in earthly life and wish to enter in the esoteric, in Light, World Formation and World Life. We absorb the light. Normally we do not know that the light unites with breathing when it penetrates the eye - warmth is between them - the breathing of air combines with the light [middle part of the list]: the representation [mental picture] of the perception arises. We live in light in that we form thoughts, just as toward the lower kingdoms we live in the air, in breathing. We hold thoughts back from the light. We don't realize that thoughts can only live in us if they are illumined by the light, if breathing is illumined by the light.

For those who have advanced to Imagination, thinking is a hushed breath illumined by ingested light, made vibrant by it.

Here are the gentle waves of breath. [Waving lines are drawn on the blackboard.] They are illumined by light. [Yellow marks.] For in spiritual science everything which works through the senses is designated as light. Not only what works through the eyes, also what works through sound, is light, also what is sensed as touch, is light. All perception through the senses is light. But when we become aware that thinking, this having thoughts, is refined breathing waving, weaving upon the light - it is as when one sees the surface of the sea upon whose waves the sun's light shines. Also, as though one were inside and could feel the surging of the waves and the light shining on them. It is all perception when one experiences it from within.

Now Lucifer's temptation appears, for this is all wonderfully beautiful, something which causes enormous delight and complacency. A terrible wantonness overcomes man. He becomes easy prey for Lucifer's temptations and enticements to pull him away from the earth into the beauty of the cosmos, where Lucifer reigns. He wants to tear man away from the earth-element and raise him up to the kingdom of angels so that after each sleep he no longer wants to return down to the physical body. Here is where the Luciferic temptation appears, whereas in the realm of the denser elements the Ahrimanic temptation appears.

What is important here is that we heed the Guardian of the Threshold's warning and not enter this realm without having determined not to forget the earth's needs. Then the bond with the earth, upon which we have still to stride, will remain unbroken. Therefore, the Guardian of the Threshold says:

*From Force of Shining Light
Your thoughts only you sustain within;
When Shining Light in you does think
Will then an untrue spirit-being
As selfhood mania arise in you.
Reflecting on the earth's needs
Sustains you as a human being.*

[The first part of the mantra is written:]

*From Force of Shining Light
Your thoughts only you sustain within;
When shining light in you does think*

Thus, man is totally related to the shining light through Imagination, and his thoughts are no longer abstractions, but as light playing upon the waves of breath.

*Will then an untrue spirit-being
As selfhood mania be born in you.
Reflecting on the earth's needs
Sustains you as a human being.*

If we advance further to the etheric element, the Luciferic temptation becomes more intense. There not only our thoughts, which are relatively easy to control, come into consideration, but also the element of feeling. For it is in his feelings that man holds on to the substantial - the Cosmic Formation, which works and weaves in the chemical ether. If he now advances to Imagination, really integrates with this cosmic chemistry, it is quite different from the comfortable, bourgeois earthly chemical laboratory, where the chemist stands at a bench and everything is outside and beyond him. Man must be within matter, be himself within the mixing and the separating. Then he will become a cosmic chemist and be integrated in his chemical processes.

With this integration in Cosmic Formation he feels the Luciferic temptation in the form of helplessness. First man is transported in a certain sense to inner voluptuousness so he can be spirit [an angel]. He is unwilling to return if he does not bear in mind the earth's needs. Now he is made helpless, not strong enough in his humanity to re-enter it. He must beware of this helplessness of soul in that he only enters this [spiritual] world once he has achieved a love for all that is worthy on earth, for the earthly values.

The Guardian of the Threshold speaks:

*Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain
Your feelings held fast within;
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt
Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,
And stifles in you the essence of selfhood.
But love of earthly values
Will rescue your human soul.*

[The second verse is written:]

.....

*Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain
Your feelings held fast within;
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt
Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,*

.....

(which comes from Lucifer)

.....

*And stifles in you the essence of selfhood;
But love of earthly values
Will rescue your human soul.*

.....

Man can only reach his cosmic goal if he becomes an angel at the right time. During the Jupiter evolution today's humanity will rise to angel rank. Lucifer's temptation consists of wanting to raise man to a stunted immature angel too early, during the Earth period. In that way the human soul would be lost and a stunted angel soul would take its place. We should listen to the Guardian of the Threshold's exhortation:

.....

*But love of earthly values
Will rescue your human soul.*

.....

The most intense temptation comes when we ascend to the last element, to general Cosmic Life. What is still present there is will which, however, is present as in sleep, as I have often explained. If it is awakened through Imaginative knowledge, we become aware - unlike in our limited earthly life which is enclosed in our skin - we become aware of sharing in Cosmic Life: and in that instant we are dead. Because to consciously live in Cosmic Life means to experience death as an individual being. Universal life kills us if it holds us. Like the insect that flies into the flame greedy for the fire, for the light. In

the instant that it flies into the flame it dies, thus does man as an individual die in General Cosmic Life if he consciously enters it with his spirit.

We shouldn't even dare to think of entering into this element without having first developed a god-given, spirit-given will for the earth, that is, without being fully conscious that on earth we are carrying out the intentions of the spiritual beings. If we completely fill ourselves with inner dedicated glowing love toward this god-given will, then we shall not succumb to the temptation of becoming a degenerate angel instead of remaining a human being. Thus, therefore is the Guardian of the Threshold's exhortation:

*Of Cosmic Life you only sustain
Your will within held fast;
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full
Destructive greed for spirit then
Will kill awareness of self in you;
But spirit-given will for earth
Allows the God in man to reign.*

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Of Cosmic Life you only sustain
Your will within held fast;
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full
Destructive greed for spirit then
Will kill awareness of self in you;
But spirit-given will for earth
Allows the God in man to reign.*

And here we have the Guardian of the Threshold's threefold exhortation referring to the upper, ether region in the above list.

*From Force of Shining Light
Your thoughts only you sustain within;
When Shining Light in you does think
Will then an untrue spirit-being
As selfhood mania arise in you.
Reflecting on the earth's needs
Sustains you as a human being.*

*Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain
Your feelings held fast within;
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt
Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,
And stifles in you the essence of selfhood.
But love of earthly values
Will rescue your human soul.*

*Of Cosmic Life you only sustain
Your will held fast within;
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full
Destructive greed for spirit then
Will kill awareness of self in you;
But spirit-given will for earth
Allows the God in man to reign.*

You are being introduced to the practice of knowledge in these lessons, my dear friends. You should not understand the things being given to you in this way as theoretical matters. Rather will you experience the heart of the matter if you understand the fundamental condition: that what you are being told here are the instructions from the Guardian of the Threshold himself, directly arising from what can be learned through contact with the Guardian of the Threshold. For it is not my intention to give theories during these Class Lessons, my dear friends. The intention is to let the spiritual word itself speak. Therefore, in the first lessons I mentioned how the School should be seen as having been founded by the spiritual world itself.

That has been the nature of all Mystery Schools, that in them men spoke as representatives of the spiritual powers of the world. It must also remain the nature of the Mystery Schools. Therefore, I have so strongly insisted on the earnestness required of all members of this class, without which no one can be a real member of this School of spiritual life. That is the earnest exhortation I wish to direct to you once again, my dear friends. Consider this School as being constituted directly through the will of the spiritual world, and which we are trying to correctly interpret according to the conditions of our times in which we have entered after the darkness was over and a light has come again, a light which, however, has only manifested itself on earth poorly because human beings have retained the old darkness. Yet the light is there. And only those who realize that the light is there will understand the nature and intentions of this spiritual school.



Lesson 7

11 April 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

Quite a large number of new members of this School are present, and I am therefore obliged to again say a few words about its principles.

First if all, this School represents the impulse of the anthroposophical movement which was renewed here during the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum. Previously there were several esoteric circles. All these esoteric circles must be gradually absorbed into this School, because with the Christmas Conference a new spirit was introduced into the anthroposophical movement insofar as it streams through the Anthroposophical Society.

I have repeatedly spoken - also outside [Dornach] - about what the difference is between the anthroposophical movement before the Christmas Conference and the one we now have since Christmas. Previously the Anthroposophical Society was a kind of administrative body for anthroposophical teaching and content. Within the Anthroposophical Society, Anthroposophy was, so to speak, cultivated. Since Christmas anthroposophy is not only cultivated, it is also carried out; meaning that everything which passes through the Anthroposophical Society as activity, as thought, is anthroposophy itself.

The renewal which has taken place must be clearly grasped, my dear friends, and above all it must be grasped with deep earnestness. For a distinction exists between the Anthroposophical Society in general and this Esoteric School within the Anthroposophical Society. The Anthroposophical Society will, as a matter of course and according to the principle of openness, not be able to demand anything more from the members than that they honestly recognize what anthroposophy is and that they are in a certain sense listeners to what anthroposophy says; and that they receive from it what their hearts, their souls can make of it.

It is different as far as the School is concerned. Those who become members of this School declare that they want to be true representatives of the anthroposophical movement. In this Esoteric School, which will gradually be expanded to include three classes, the same freedom must of course apply as it does to every member of the Anthroposophical Society; but freedom must also apply for the Executive Council at the Goetheanum which is responsible for this School. In this case, it means that only those who are recognized by the School as true members can be recipients of what the School teaches.

Therefore, whatever a member of the School does should have the effect of reflecting on anthroposophy in the world; and it must belong to the competence of the Executive Council to remove a member if it considers that he cannot be a representative of the anthroposophical movement. The relationship must be mutual.

Therefore, more and more a serious, in a certain sense strict spirit will have to be utilized in the management of the School. Otherwise the anthroposophical movement cannot advance if we do not feel that the School is like building a rock to support anthroposophy. It is going to be very difficult and the members of this School must know that they must adapt to those difficulties. They are not merely anthroposophists, they are members of an Esoteric School.

And it must be an inner obligation to consider the Executive Committee, as it is presently constituted, as an esoteric entity. This is not generally understood. So something must be done to bring it to the members' attention. It is saying much that an Executive Committee has been esoterically formed.

Furthermore, all those who consider themselves to be legitimate members of this School see the School as not having been founded by men, but in fact by the will of the world's presently reigning spiritual powers; something which has been instituted from the spiritual world and which intends to act accordingly; which feels responsible to the spiritual world alone. Therefore, anything which indicates that a member is not taking the School seriously must lead to the cancellation of that person's membership.

It is a fact that negligence has entered into the Anthroposophical Society to a marked degree in recent years. That it ceases is one of the tasks for the members of this School. We want to feel responsible even for the words we speak. Above all we should feel responsible that every word we speak is tested to the extent that we know it is true. For untruthfulness, even when derived from what is called good intentions, is destructive in an occult movement. There must be no illusions about this; it must be completely clear. It is not a question of good intentions, which are often taken very lightly, but of objective truth. Among the first duties of an esoteric student is that he does not merely feel obliged to say what he thinks is true, but that he feels obliged to determine that what he says is really objectively true. For only when we serve the divine-spiritual powers - whose forces stream through this School - in the sense of objective truth, will we be able to steer through all the difficulties which will assail anthroposophy.

What I will now say is within the circle of the School, and what is said within the circle of the School remains within the circle of the School. We may not forget that many people are saying something like the following. Certain influential persons are saying: Those who represent the principles of the Roman Church will do everything in their power to make the individual states of the former German Empire independent and out of them - I am only reporting - with the exception of the predominance of Prussia, to reestablish the Holy Roman Empire, which of course, when it is established by such prominence, will spread its power over the neighboring regions. Then - they say - we will need to completely destroy from the roots up the most dangerous, the worst movements. And, they add, if the reestablishment of the Holy Roman Empire is not successful, and it will be successful, but if not, we will find other means to completely destroy from the roots up the most resisting, the most dangerous movements of the present, and they are the anthroposophical movement and the movement for Religious Renewal [Christian Community].

I quote almost verbatim. And you can see that the difficulties are not less, but every week greater, that what I say is well founded. I wish today to speak from the heart to those who consider their membership in this School with heartfelt seriousness. Only by such earnestness as members of the School can we construct the necessary foundation for navigating through the future difficulties.

You can see from this that anthroposophy - the movement for religious renewal is only a branch of it - is taken more seriously by the opposition than by many of the members. Because when one can learn that the Holy Roman Empire, which fell in 1806, is to be reinstated in order to eliminate such a movement, that means that it is taken very seriously indeed. What is important is whether a movement is founded from the spirit and not, my dear friends, how many members it has, but which force is instilled in it directly from the spiritual world. The opponents see that it contains a strong inner force; therefore, they choose sharp, strong rather than weak means [to combat it].

*

The considerations of these Class lessons, my dear friends, have been primarily concerned with what can be told about the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold, the encounter which is the first experience towards the attainment of real and true supersensible knowledge. Today I would like to add something to what has already been considered.

It is not possible to claim that the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold has been successful until one has experienced what it means to be outside the physical body with the human I and the astral body. Because when the human being is enclosed within the physical body, the only things he can perceive in his surroundings are those which he perceives with the instruments of his physical body. And through the instruments of the physical body only the sensible world can be perceived - which is a reflection of a spiritual world, one which does not, however, reveal to the senses what it is a reflection of.

Generally speaking, it is not difficult for a person to leave the physical body. He does so every time he falls asleep. He is then outside the physical body. But when he is asleep outside the physical body his consciousness is suppressed to the point of being unconscious. Only illusory - or perhaps even not illusory - dreams rise up from this unconsciousness. But through the attainment of higher knowledge leaving the physical body takes place in fully conscious deliberateness, so that when outside the physical body the person perceives his

surroundings exactly as he perceives the physical world with his senses when within the physical body. He perceives the spiritual world while outside the physical body.

But the human being is at first unconsciously asleep. Under normal circumstances he is not aware of what he could see when outside the physical body. And the reason for this is that he is protected from approaching the spiritual world unprepared.

If he is sufficiently prepared, what happens then? When he is at the abyss between the sensory world and the spiritual world, the Guardian of the Threshold extracts his true human essence - assuming he is prepared as described in the previous lessons - which can then fly over the abyss with the means indicated in the mantric verses. And then from beyond the threshold he can behold his own sensory physical being.

That is the first powerful impression of true knowledge, my dear friends, when the Guardian of the Threshold can say to the human being: See, that is how you are over there, as you appear in the physical world; here with me you are as your inner being really is.

And now meaningful words sound out again from the Guardian of the Threshold - that the person is called upon, now that he is on the other side of the abyss, how differently he sees himself on the other, physical side. He sees himself differently. He sees himself as a tripartite being. He sees himself as a tripartite being which expresses itself psychically in thinking, feeling and willing. In reality they are three humans: the thinking one, the feeling one, the willing one, which exist in every person and are only held together in one by the physical body in the physical world. And what the person sees there resounds from the lips of the Guardian of the Threshold in the following way:

*O see the three
They are the one,
When you in earthly life
the human form have got.*

Or also "human imprint"; one must translate the words from the occult language.

*O see the three
They are the one,
When you in earthly life
the human imprint bear.*

*Experience the head's cosmic form
Feel the heart's cosmic pulse
Think the limbs' cosmic force*

*They are the three
The three, which as the one
In earthly being live.*

[The mantra is written on the blackboard:]

*O see the three
They are the one,
When you in earthly life
the human imprint bear.*

*Experience the head's cosmic form
Feel the heart's cosmic pulse
Think the limbs' cosmic force*

*They are the three
The three, which as the one
In earthly being live.*

The Guardian of the Threshold is indicating here how the Three - which separate from each other once the person leaves the physical body - how the Three look in relation to the physical body. The vision is directed to the physical body, to the head, heart and limbs, and the Guardian of the Threshold says: If you observe the human head in its

true cosmic significance, it is a mirror image of the heavenly universe. You must look into the distance, where the universe seems to reach its boundary. (In reality it is bounded by the spirit, not as it naively appears physically to be.) In looking up you must recall that your round head is a true image of the heavenly universe. And we add here, being conscious of the mantric words:

"Experience the head's cosmic form"

The sign is added here [in front of the above line]:

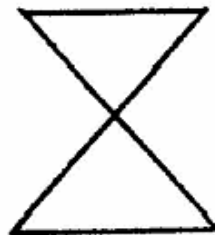


which encourages us to pause at this line of the mantric verse in order to envision the upward direction to the cosmic vastness, and of course that direction is always upward from anywhere on the earth.

"Feel the heart's cosmic pulse"

Through this cosmic-heavenly place the cosmic rhythm resounds as cosmic music. When we hear the human heart beating it seems as if this human heart were only beating as a result of the human organism's interior processes. In reality what beats in the heart is the counterpoint of the cosmic rhythm which has circulated not only for thousands but for millions of years. Therefore, pause again - the Guardian of the Threshold says - at the words "Feel the heart's cosmic pulse", and feel what works in the heart upward as well as downward.

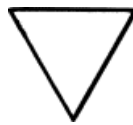
[The corresponding sign is drawn:]



The triangle pointing downward combines with the one pointing upward.

"Think the limbs' cosmic force"

This cosmic force is the one concentrated from below by gravity and other earthly forces. In our thinking - which as earthly thinking is only capable of understanding the earthly - we must look downward to grasp what streams out from the earth to work in man. Now we pause again at "Think the limbs' cosmic force" in the triangle pointing downward:



And we will feel the Guardian's words as they should affect the human heart, the human soul today if one activates this mantric verse in the appropriate way.

O see the three
They are the one,
When you in earthly life
the human imprint bear.

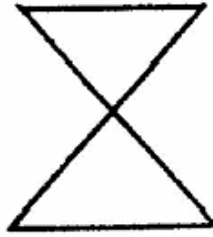
Experience the head's cosmic form.

The verse is spoken while making the sign before the head:



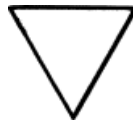
Feel the heart's cosmic pulse

One speaks the verse while making the sign before the breast:



Think the limbs' cosmic force

One speaks the verse while making the sign pointing downward:



They are the Three
The Three, which as the One
In earthly being lives.

And you should then try, after letting these mantric verses work on the soul, to make the senses subdued, close the eyes, hear nothing with the ears, perceive nothing and have darkness around you for a while, so that you are living totally in the atmosphere through which these words pass. And in this way you will transport yourself to the sphere in initiation which in all reality can be realized during the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold. This is one of the ways by which one can take the first step beyond the threshold.

But we must let the Guardian's next words work upon us with great earnestness. These words indicate that once we have crossed the threshold everything is different from the sensory world. In the sensory world we think that the site of thinking and mental images is the human head. And so it is, for the sensory world. But this thinking in the head is always mixed a little bit with willing, something which is also perceptible for normal consciousness. Because when we move

from one thought to another we must use the will just as we use it when moving an arm or a leg, or when willing in general. But it is a fine, delicate willing which transfers one thought to another. When we are in the sensory world the whole extent of thinking and a small amount of willing are bound together in the head. As soon as we cross over the Threshold and encounter the Guardian it is the reverse: a small amount of thinking and much widespread willing is bound to the head. And in this willing, which otherwise sleeps in man, we sense the spirit which forms the head from out of the cosmos, the heavens, as it's spherically-shaped mirror image in all its details.

Therefore, once we have crossed beyond the threshold, the Guardian calls out the following words:

[The new mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The head's spirit,
You can will it*

And now we see that willing is something quite different from what it previously was. Previously the senses were the transmitters of sense-impressions, and one was not aware that the will goes through the the eyes, through the ears, that the will goes through the sense of warmth, and through every other sense as well. Now we see that everything the eye experiences as multiple colors, what the ear hears as multiple sounds, what man perceives as warmth and cold, as rough and smooth, smells and tastes etc., is all will in the spiritual world.

[writing continues:]

*And willing provides you with
The senses' multiple heaven-weaving*

If on seeing the head from the other side of the threshold one recognizes how will goes through the head and how the senses represent will, then he will realize how the heart contains the soul and

how one can feel the soul within the heart just as he can will the head's spirit when observing the head. And now we know that when thinking is not considered as a function of the head, but as a function of the heart, of the soul, we realize that thinking does not belong to an individual, but to the world; then one experiences cosmic-life, the music of the spheres.

[The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

*The heart's soul,
You can feel it;
And feeling provides you with
Thinking's germinal-waking cosmic-life.
You live in the shining.*

not in the unsubstantial shining, but the shining where the essence of the world appears.

*The head's spirit,
You're able to will it;
And willing provides you with
The senses' manifold heavenly weave.*

summing up in the line:

You weave in wisdom.

Summing up what pertains to the heart's soul and feeling in the line:

You live in the shining.

Just as you recognize the senses as will, you also recognize thinking as feeling in respect to cosmic being, when you consider the Three, which only in the sensory world are One.

And thirdly the Guardian of the Threshold adds:

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*The limbs' strength,
You can think it.*

Now we have a complete reversal. Whereas normally we consider thinking to be concentrated in the head, here [in the first verse] it is the will, as I previously explained, that is concentrated in the head. Feeling stays in the heart, where it is also felt to be in the sensory world; for the inner force of the heart goes over to the spiritual world.

*The limbs' strength,
You can think it.*

Now thinking is brought directly into connection with the limbs, the opposite of the sensory world.

[Writing continues.]

*And thinking gives you
Human striving's goal oriented will;*

thus, willing becomes thinking,

You strive in virtue.

Thus, we have the complete reversal in the spiritual world as revealed to us by the Guardian of the Threshold. Whereas we normally differentiate willing, feeling, thinking from below upward in man, on the other side [of the threshold] we differentiate man as a Three: will above in the head, feeling in the middle, thinking below at the limbs.

We realize then how willing, concentrated in the head, is the weaving cosmic wisdom in which we live; how feeling is the cosmic shining in which all the spirit-beings glow; and how thinking, observed in the limbs, is human striving, which can be lived as human virtue. And the Three appear before spiritual vision thus:

The head's spirit
The heart's soul
The limbs' force

The mantric verse is built thus. And we must be aware of this inner congruence, and also aware that if we let this mantric verse work on us the following will penetrate our being:

Heavenly weaving
Cosmic living
Human striving

[These three lines are underlined in yellow.]

These then are the Guardian of the Threshold's words which accompany our spiritual vision of the Three, which derive from the One, when we cross over into the world beyond the threshold:

The head's spirit,
You can will it;
And willing provides you with
The senses' manifold heavenly weave.
You weave in wisdom.

The heart's soul,
You can feel it;
And feeling provides you with
Thinking's germinal-waking cosmic-life.
You live in the shining.

The limbs' strength,
You can think it.
And thinking gives you
Human striving's goal oriented will;
You strive in virtue.

These are the sensations which must flow through the soul if real knowledge is to be obtained; these are the admonitions which the Guardian of the Threshold lets resound at the moment when he also tells us:

Come in
The gate is open;
You will become
A real human.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*Come in
The gate is open;
You will become
A real human.*

Those are the words which for thousands and thousands of years have resounded at all the gates to the spiritual world, admonishing and yet encouraging:

Come in
The gate is open;
You will become
A real human.

Just imagine, my sisters and brothers, that you say to yourselves for the first time: I want to take the Guardian of the Threshold's words seriously; I recognize that I was not yet a human being; I recognize that I will become one through insight into the spiritual world.

Imagine, my dear sisters and brothers, you say the second time: Oh, I didn't take the words seriously enough the first time; I must admit that I need not one, but two of the stages from where I am now in order to become a true human being.

And imagine you say the third time: I recognize that I need three of the stages from the point where I now stand, at which I am not a true human, in order to become a true human being.

The first admonition, which you give to yourself, is earnest. The second admonition is more earnest. But the third admonition must bear the most earnest impression of all. And if you can awaken this threefold admonition of earnestness from the depths of your souls, then you will have an inkling of what it means to become a true human being through knowledge. And then you will return to the first admonition - as we will also do now - as a transforming verse in our souls.

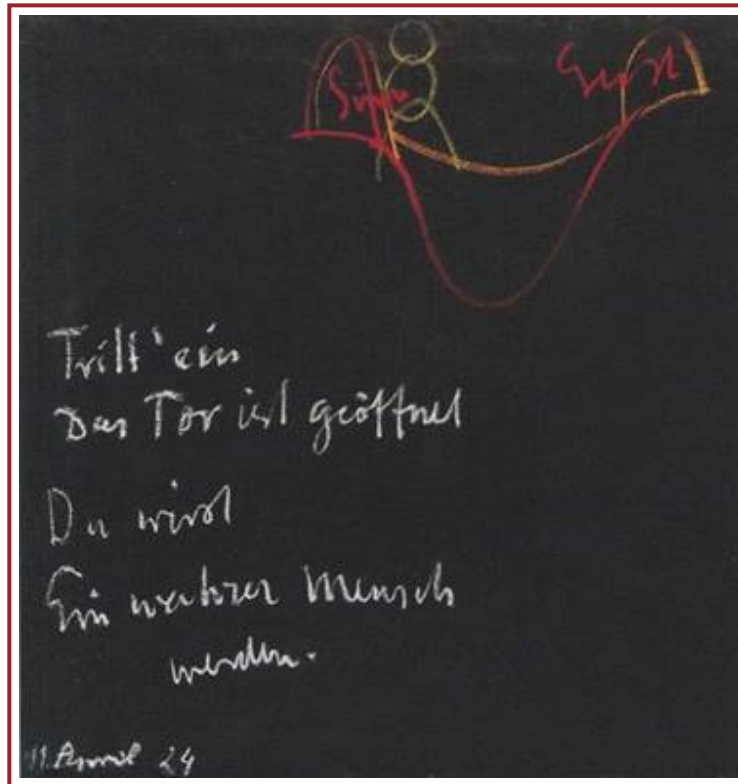
O see the three
They are the one,
When you in earthly life
the human imprint bear.

Experience the head's cosmic form
Feel the heart's cosmic pulse
Think the limbs' cosmic force

They are the Three
The Three, which as the One
In earthly being live.

Thus, my sisters and brothers, has it resounded in the hearts of all who have striven for knowledge ever since there have been human beings on the earth.

There has been a pause in the striving since the dawn of the fifth post-Atlantean cultural epoch. According to the will of the divine-spiritual entities who guide humanity, the pause has come to an end. Now it is up to you to make human hearts open again in a worthy way to what the wise guides of humanity raise up to the vision of what works in the world as spirit, what as spirit works in the world in humanity, as the crown of existence.



Lesson 8

18 April 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

A large number of anthroposophical friends have appeared at the Class today who have not been here before, so I am obliged to say a few introductory words about the School's arrangements. It is to be remembered in all earnestness that with the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum a new element has entered into the anthroposophical movement. Especially the members of our Free School for Spiritual Science must be aware of this new element. I have often indicated this, but I know that many anthroposophical friends are here for the first time who have never heard it, so I must emphasize it once again.

It is true that before the Christmas Conference it was always emphasized that the anthroposophical movement and the Anthroposophical Society must be held strictly separate.

The anthroposophical movement represented the inflow of spiritual wisdom and life impulses into human civilization today which can and should be obtained for our present time directly from the spiritual world. This anthroposophical movement exists not because people like it to exist but because the spiritual powers which guide and lead the world and affect human history consider it right that spiritual light, which can come through anthroposophy, flow today into human civilization in the appropriate manner.

The Anthroposophical Society was founded in order to act as an administrative society for the body of anthroposophical wisdom and life. And it had to be continually emphasized that anthroposophy as such is beyond and above any societal organization and the Anthroposophical Society is the exoteric administrator.

That has changed since the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum. Since the Christmas Conference the opposite is the case. And only because the opposite is the case was I able to declare myself willing, together with the Executive Committee (Vorstand) which was formed

during the Christmas Conference and with whom the appropriate work to be done can be carried out, to take over the presidency of the Anthroposophical Society which was founded at Christmas. I can explain what this means in one sentence: Until then, anthroposophy was administered by the Anthroposophical Society; now whatever happens through the Anthroposophical Society must itself be anthroposophy. Since Christmas the Anthroposophical Society must occupy itself with anthroposophy. Every single act must have an esoteric character. The investment of the Vorstand was thus an esoteric measure, a measure which must be thought of as coming directly from the spiritual world. Only when our anthroposophical friends are conscious of this can the Anthroposophical Society thus founded thrive. So, the anthroposophical movement and the Anthroposophical Society have now become identical.

Thus, the Vorstand at Dornach is an initiative-Vorstand, as was emphasized during the Christmas Conference. Of course, there must be an administration. But that is not what it considers to be its principal task, but rather to make anthroposophy flow through the Anthroposophical Society and to do everything possible to achieve this objective.

The position of the Vorstand at Dornach within the Anthroposophical Society is therewith given. And it must be clear that from now on every relationship within the Anthroposophical Society will not be based on some bureaucratic measure or other, but it will be based on the strictly human. Therefore, at the Christmas Conference statutes that contain paragraphs which detail what members must believe or agree to were *not* presented; rather do the statutes describe what the Vorstand intends. And that is how the Anthroposophical Society is constituted. It is founded upon human relationships.

It is a minor thing, but I must emphasize it: every member is issued a membership card, which is signed by me, so that even if it's an abstract thing, the personal relationship is at least present. It has been suggested that I have a rubber stamp made with my signature. I'm not going to do that - despite it not being exactly comfortable to sign twelve thousand membership cards, little by little. But I will not have the stamp made, first of all because, although very abstract, a relationship is at least established to each and every member when, if only for minutes the eye rests on the name of the person who carries

the membership card. Obviously, all the other relationships will be even more human, but by this means a concrete beginning is made within our society.

I must also stress that it must be clear to the members - I stress it because it has already been sinned against - that when the name "General Anthroposophical Society" is used, the agreement of the Vorstand at the Goetheanum is first obtained. In the same sense, when something comes from the Goetheanum and is then used as something esoteric, the use is based upon an understanding with the Vorstand at the Goetheanum. This means that nothing by way of formulations and teaching which appears in the name of the General Anthroposophical Society will be recognized by us here as valid unless an understanding with the Vorstand at the Goetheanum has taken place. In the future, no abstract relationship will be possible, only concrete ones. Anything said to come from the Goetheanum must really come from the Goetheanum. Therefore, the use of the title "General Anthroposophical Society" for lectures to be given somewhere or for the use of formulations and so forth which originate here and which an active member wishes to distribute, should write to the Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum, that is, to Mrs. Wegman, in order to obtain the Vorstand's agreement. It is important that in future the Vorstand at the Goetheanum be understood as the center of the anthroposophical movement.

Furthermore, the relation of this School to the Anthroposophical Society must be clearly understood by the membership. One who becomes a member of the Anthroposophical Society feels the inner heartfelt need to learn and live what circulates in the world as anthroposophical knowledge and living impulse. One assumes no responsibilities other than those which come to the heart and soul from anthroposophy itself. Once one has been a general member of the General Anthroposophical society for a certain time - presently the minimum is two years - he can apply for membership in the Free School for Spiritual Science.

In this Free School for Spiritual Science one assumes truly earnest responsibilities for the Society, for anthroposophy, that is, that as a member one wishes to be a true representative of anthroposophy to

the world. That is necessary today. The leadership of the Free School for Spiritual Science cannot agree to work together with someone as a member under other conditions.

Do not say, my friends, that this is a limitation of freedom. Freedom demands that everyone involved be free. And just as one can be a member of the School and be free in this relationship, the leadership of the School must also be free to determine with whom it wishes to work and with whom not. Therefore, if the leadership for any reason is of the opinion that a member cannot be a true representative of anthroposophy to the world, it must be possible for the leadership of the School to either not approve that person's application or, in the case where he is already a member, to say that his membership must be revoked. This must be strictly observed in this future, so that in fact a free cooperation exists between the School's leadership and the members.

Step by step we will try to make arrangements so that those who cannot take part in the continuing work of the School in Dornach can partake in some manner. We can only take the fifth step after the fourth, not the seventh step after the first; we must take one step after the other and there has been much to do here since the Christmas Conference. But it will all be arranged to the extent possible. We will have a newsletter through which those who reside elsewhere can participate in the School's activities. We were able to make a beginning with a newsletter that Dr Wegman sent to the physicians who were thus able to participate in the work of the School. Things will develop as much as possible, and I ask that you be patient in this respect.

Something else to be mentioned is that the School must be understood not as having been established by a human impulse, but from the spiritual world. A decision made from the spiritual world has been obtained with the means which are possible. So that this School is to be understood as an institution of the spiritual world for the present time - as has been the case with the Mysteries in all times. Therefore, we may say today: This School must develop into a true Mystery School for our times. Thus, it will be the soul of the anthroposophical movement.

This makes clear how serious membership in this School should be understood to be. It is obvious that all the previous esoteric work achieved here will flow into the School's work. For this School is the esoteric foundation and source of all esoteric activity within the anthroposophical movement. Therefore, if anyone wishes to initiate any kind of esoteric work in the world without a connection to the Vorstand at the Goetheanum, they must either reach an understanding with the Vorstand or they cannot include things which originate in the Goetheanum in their teaching or impulse. Whoever wants to do esoteric work under conditions other than those just mentioned cannot be a member of this School. They must then do the esoteric work outside the confines of this School and unrecognized by it, but must clearly understand that it cannot include anything which originated in this School. Relations with the School must be clearly understood. So the members must understand that [the leadership of] the School must be able to consider that each member is a true representative of anthroposophy in the world, and that every member represents anthroposophy exoterically (sic) as a member of the School should.

Before I was President of the Anthroposophical Society an attempt was made to organize the Goetheanum in the way other universities are organized. But that doesn't work under certain circumstances. Here esoteric studies will take place which are not found in other universities. And there is no intention to compete with other universities in the world, but to begin with questions about any field of life posed by honestly seeking people, which cannot be answered outside the esoteric.

Therefore, in the future, especially for members of the School, nonsense which keeps being repeated must cease, because with the Christmas Conference something real has happened and for the Goetheanum to fulfill its mission all the members of the School must frankly and freely declare: I am a representative of the anthroposophy which comes given from the Goetheanum. Whoever will not do this, who thinks that one should be silent about anthroposophy, prepare people slowly, whoever wants to play politics and thinks that he can advance by denying us and then people will come to us - they generally don't - would be well advised to give up membership in the School right away. I can promise you that in the future membership in the School will be taken very seriously indeed. For those members of

the School whose work is really about anthroposophy and not something else, this will be accepted readily and gladly. Those who continually claim that you can't confront people with anthroposophy immediately, that you must somehow talk them into it gradually, may choose to exercise their opinion outside the School.

These are the conditions which must be adhered to, and I had to mention them today because so many anthroposophical friends are present who had not yet participated in the School. And this is the reason why you have had to wait so long for the lesson to begin, and listen to this introduction. So, we can consider the lesson today to be a kind of preparation. I will hold a second lesson, date to be announced, in which no new friends may participate. So, I ask those who wish to attend in the future to have patience, because if every time a lesson is held here new people come, we would never get anywhere. Of course, one can still become a member, but only members who have attended today will be admitted to the next lesson. It will be a continuation of today's lesson.

I wish to begin today's lesson - without you taking notes, only listening at first - by speaking the mantric formula which points to what has resounded throughout the ages, first from the Mysteries, but previously *for* the Mysteries from the script written in the stars, in the whole cosmos, and which resounds in the human soul, in the human heart, as the great challenge to humanity to strive for a true knowledge of self. This challenge; "O man, know thyself!" rings forth from the whole cosmos.

We look up at the stars, which reveal an especially clear writing in the zodiac, which through their composition in certain forms reveal the grand cosmic script. For one who understands the script the cosmic words will sound forth: "O man, know thyself!"

When we look up at what the planets reveal by their movements, first the sun and moon, but also the planets which belong to the sun and moon, then just as the movements of the stars reveal the powerful, forceful cosmic word, so do these planetary movements reveal the heart and feeling content.

And through what we experience from the elements which surround us on the earth and in which we partake through our skin, through our senses, through everything in us, that enters into us and acts in our bodies - earth, water, fire, air - through them the will element pours into these words.

We can therefore let this cosmic word, which rings out to humanity, act on our souls through the mantric words:

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.*

*Who speaks so vastly cosmic?
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?*

*Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?*

*Is it you yourself who,
Feeling space, experiencing time*

*Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.*

My dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, there exists no knowledge which is not closely tied to the spiritual world. Everything we call knowledge which is neither investigated in the spiritual world nor imparted by those who are able to investigate in the spiritual world, is not real knowledge. We must be clear about the fact that when we look around in the world, in the kingdoms of nature, see the colors and the radiance manifested, see what lives above in the shining stars, in the warming sun, what springs up from the depths of

the earth - it is all sublime, grand, beautiful, full of wisdom. And we would be very mistaken to ignore this beauty, sublimity, this wisdom. If one wishes to become an esotericist, if he strives for real knowledge, then he must have a sense for the world around him - an open, free sense. For during the time between birth and death, during his earthly existence, he is obliged to absorb his strength from the forces of the earth, and to return the results of his work to the forces of the earth.

But although it is true that man must really participate in all the colors on colors, sound on sound, warmth on warmth, star on star, cloud on cloud, creatures of the kingdoms of nature which surround him, it is also true that if when he looks out at all the grand, powerful, sublime, wise, beautiful things his senses convey, he still does not discover what he himself is. Rather is it just then, when he has a correct sense of the sublimity, beauty and grandeur of his surroundings in his life on earth, that he will realize: In this light-filled kingdom of earth the inmost source of my being is not present. It is elsewhere. Full recognition of this causes us to seek the state of consciousness which moves us on to what we call the threshold to the spiritual world. This threshold, which lies immediately before an abyss, we must approach and remember that in all that surrounds us in earthly existence the primal source of humanity is not found.

Then we must know: at this threshold stands a spiritual figure called the Guardian of the Threshold. This Guardian takes care - beneficially to man - that one does not cross the threshold unprepared, without having experienced deeply in the soul those feelings I have spoken about. But then, when he really is prepared with inner earnestness for spiritual knowledge - whether by means of clairvoyant consciousness or through healthy human understanding of what he has been told, for both ways are valid, only then is it possible for the Guardian of the Threshold to reach out with a helping hand and allow him to look over the abyss. There, beyond the threshold where the human being's inmost being originated, utter darkness lies at first.

My dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, we seek light in order to see in the light the origin of our own being. At first darkness reigns. This light which we seek must radiate out from the darkness. And it only radiates out from the darkness when we become aware of how

the three fundamental impulses of our soul-life, thinking, feeling and willing, here in this earth-life are held together by our physical bodies. Thinking, feeling and willing are conjoined in physical existence.



If I schematically draw how they are conjoined, it looks like this. Feeling (green) extends into thinking (yellow); willing (red) extends into feeling. So, in earthly existence the Three are conjoined.

One must learn to feel that the Three separate from each other. And if more and more he uses the meditations suggested to him here by the School as the content of his soul life, he will note the following [drawing again]: thinking (yellow) is freed, detaching itself from feeling, feeling [green] is on its own as is willing [red]. For one learns to perceive without the physical body.

The physical body had held thinking, feeling and willing together, had pressed them into each other. [Around the first drawing an oval is drawn.] Here [in the second drawing on the right] the physical body is not present.

Through the meditations which he receives here at the School, one gradually comes to feel himself outside his body; and he comes to regard the world as self, and what self was, as world. We stand here

on the earth in our earthly existence: we feel like human beings; we say, as we become inwardly aware: this is my heart, these are my lungs, this is my liver, this is my stomach. What we call our organs, what we call the physical human organization, we consider to be our own. And we point up: that is the sun, that is the moon, those are the stars, the clouds, that is a tree, a stream. We identify these things as being outside us. We are within our organs. We are outside of those things we indicated as: that is the sun, that is the moon, those are the stars, and so on.

When we have prepared our souls enough so that they can perceive without the body, that is, outside the body in the spiritual universe, then the reverse consciousness comes about. Now we speak of the sun as we speak of our heart here in earthly existence: that is my heart. We speak of the moon: that is the creator of my form. We speak of the clouds more or less as we speak on earth of our hair. We call our own organism what people on the earth see as components of the universe. And we point out: look there, a human heart, human lungs, a human liver - that is objective, that is world. Just as when we are in our physical bodies we look out from here to the sun and moon and to the world, when from the universe we look at the sun and the moon and clouds and rivers and mountains and they are within us. And when we look at man he is our outer world. The difficulty is only in the spatial relationships. And the difficulty will be overcome.

As soon as we leave our physical bodies with our thinking, we perceive this thinking as one with all that is manifested in the stars. Here on earth we call our brain our own, as the instrument of our thinking. But now we begin to feel the stars, especially the stars of the zodiac, as our brain when we are out in the universe and look down at man external to us.

And we perceive the circling planets as our own feeling. Our feeling follows then the course of the sun, of the moon, and of the other planets. Between what we experience as thinking in the fixed stars and feeling, is the sun in ourselves [the sun sign is inserted between the yellow and green of the second drawing]; and the moon lies between feeling and willing - which we also feel within us. [The moon sign is inserted between green and red.] And by simply meditating on this figure, it has the force to bring us closer and closer to spiritual vision. It must be realized that what I am saying here can really be

experienced: leaving the physical body, expanding throughout the cosmos, feeling the elements of the cosmos - sun and moon, stars and so on - as one's own organs, observation of humanity as our exterior world.

What must be perfectly clear however, is that our thinking, our feeling and our willing which on earth is a unity held together by the physical body, now becomes threefold. And we learn to feel this threefold nature above all when we observe thinking.

Dear friends, dear sisters and brothers, this thinking which man uses on earth between birth and death is a corpse. It does not live. Whatever he may think with his brain about the beautiful, sublime, grand earth in his surroundings: these thoughts do not live. They lived in pre-earthly existence. They lived, these thoughts, when we had not yet descended to the physical world, but still lived above in the soul-spiritual world as soul-spiritual beings. There the thoughts which we have on earth were alive, but our physical body is the grave in which the moribund thought-world is buried when we descend to the earth. And here we carry the corpses of thought within us. And we think about our sense-perceptible surroundings on earth not with living thoughts but with the corpses of thought. But before we descended to this physical world a living thinking existed within us.

My dear friends, we only need to immerse ourselves in these truths again and again with inner strength and we come to the conscious conclusion that it really is so. One comes to know the human being in this way. One comes to know him and sees him so: This is the human head. [The outline of a head is sketched.] This human head is the bearer and support for earthly corpse-thinking. From it spring forth - but dead - the thoughts which spread over what is perceived by the eyes, by the ears, by the sense of warmth, by the other senses. We observe the thinking that corresponds to life on earth.

But gradually we learn to see through this thinking. Within the spiritual cell of the human head is the lingering sound of the true, living thinking in which we lived before descending to the physical world. When one looks at man, one sees at first his dead thinking [sketch: red part of the head]. But behind this dead thinking in the head's spiritual cell is the living thinking [yellow part of the head]. And this

living thinking has brought with it the force necessary to form our brain. The brain is not thinking's creator, but the product of pre-earthly living thinking.

So when we look at the human being with the correct awareness, dead earthly thinking is manifested on the surface of the head; if we look within to the spiritual cell behind, we see the living thinking, which is like a will, such as the will we are otherwise aware of in the human motor system, which is really sleeping in us. For we don't know how thought descends to our muscles and so on - when it intends to will this or that. Then we observe what lives in us as will: we see it as thinking in the spiritual cell behind the sense oriented thinking. But then this will, which we become aware of as thinking, is creative for our thinking organ. For this thinking is no longer human thinking, it is cosmic thinking.

If we can understand the human being so that we look through the earthly thinking to the thinking which made the brain the basis for thinking on earth, then sensory thinking flows out into the cosmic void, and eternal thinking arises as will.

We become conscious of all this when we let the following mantric words act in us:

*See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the darkening spirit-cell
Willing arises from the body's depths;
Let flow through your soul's force
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;
And the will, it arises
As cosmic-thought-creating.*

This imagination must gradually stand before you, my dear friends, this imagination of dead thinking directed toward the sensory world streaming out from the head. Behind it lurks - at first in darkness - the true thinking which glows through sensory thinking and which builds the brain as man descends from the spiritual to the physical world. It is, however, like will. And one sees then how from out of man the will

arises [white lines from below to above], spreading in the head, to become cosmic thinking because what lives in the will as thinking is already cosmic thinking.

We should therefore try to better understand and bring closer the mantric thoughts which we can imbue in the soul in the following way:

[The first verse is written on the blackboard:]

*See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the darkening spirit-cell*

- that is, one must look behind thinking - ["behind" is underlined]

Willing arises from the body's depths;

- one must become strong in the soul to let normal sensory thinking flow away -

*Let flow through your soul's force
Dead thinking into the cosmic void
And the will, it arises
As cosmic-thought-creating.*

These seven lines contain the secret of human thinking's connection to the universe.

We must not pretend to understand these things with the intellect, but must let them live in feeling as meditation. And these words have force. They are constructed harmoniously. "Thinking", "willing", "cosmic void", "will" and "cosmic thought creating" [these words are underlined] are arranged here in inner organization of thoughts so they can work on the imaginative consciousness.

Just as we can look at the human head and it becomes a means for us to look into cosmic-thought-creating, we can also look at the human heart as the physical imaginative representative of the human soul. As thinking is the abstract representative of the human spirit, we can look upon the human heart as the representative of feeling. And we can look into feeling, as it applies to human earthly existence, but now no longer behind, but into it. [In the drawing a yellow oval.] For just as we perceive cosmic-thought-creating in the spiritual cell behind thinking, we can also perceive feeling, whose representative the heart is, streaming through something which from the cosmos goes in and out of man: we perceive cosmic life, cosmic life which becomes human soul-life.

As here [in the first verse] must be: "behind thinking's sensory light", now it must be: "in feeling's" in the second mantra, which must be harmonically interwoven with the first.

*See in feeling's psychic weaving
How in the twilight of dreams
Life streams in from cosmic distance;
Let in sleep through the tranquil heart
Human feelings drift away:
Cosmic spirit life becomes
Man's true force of being.*

[*This second strophe is written on the blackboard:*]

*See in feeling's psychic weaving
How in the twilight of dreams*

Feeling is only a wakeful dreaming. Feelings are not as conscious as thinking is. They are as conscious as the pictures in dreams. Thus, feeling is a waking dream. Therefore:

*See in feeling's psychic weaving
How in the twilight of dreams
Life*

Here [in the first verse] "willing" arises from the body's depths;
whereas here "Life" streams in from cosmic distance.

streams in from cosmic distance;

[In the drawing 4 horizontal arrows are added.]

As here [in the first verse] thinking is to flow into the cosmic void
through strength of soul, now we let the dreams of feeling gust away,
but in their place, we perceive in the psychic weaving of feeling what
streams in as cosmic life. When feelings' dreams completely dissolve in
sleep, when individual human feeling stops, then cosmic life weaves
into man.

Life streams in from cosmic distance

[Writing continues:]

Let in sleep through the tranquil heart

Here [in the first verse] we need strength of soul; Here [in the second
verse] we need complete tranquility, for the dreams of feeling dissolve
in sleep, and the divine cosmic life streams into the human soul.

Let in sleep through the tranquil heart

[Writing continues, and the words "drift away", "cosmic spirit life" and
"Man's true force of being" are underlined.]

*Human feelings drift away:
Cosmic spirit life becomes
Man's true force of being.*

In these seven lines the whole secret of human feeling is contained, if it can become independent when the unity [of thinking, feeling, willing] becomes threefold.

In this way we can also observe the human limbs, in which the will is revealed [Drawing: white arrow pointing downwards]; here we cannot say: "See behind", "See into". Here we must say "See above", for thinking streams down to the will from the head, although man with normal consciousness cannot see it. But the thoughts stream from the head into the limbs in order for the will to be able to act in the limbs.

When we observe the will acting in the limbs, when we see in every arm movement, in every leg movement how the will streams in, then we also realize how in this will there is a secret thinking, a thinking which directly grasps earthly existence. Actually, it is our being in earlier earthly lives, which grasps earthly existence through the limbs in order that in grasping it we can live our present life on earth. Thinking descends into the limbs. When we see how thinking descends, we are seeing thinking in the will [drawing: red descending from the head through the arm].

Then, because we are seeing with the soul, we see how thinking lives in the arms, in the hands, in the legs, in the feet, in the toes, a process otherwise hidden from us, then we must see how this thinking is light. Thinking as light streams through arms and hands, through legs and toes. And the will, which otherwise is sleeping in the limbs, transforms itself and thinking appears as a magical being of will that transplants the human being from earlier lives - after becoming spirit - into the present-earth life:

*See over the will's work in the body,
How in sleeping fields of work
Thinking descends from the head's forces;
Let human will transform itself
Through the soul's vision of light;
And thinking, it appears
as the magical essence of will.*

It conjures, that is, it acts magically on the invisible thinking in the will of the limbs. He understands the human being who knows that the thought which is not seen in the will - because we are sleeping in the will - acts magically in the limbs as will. And only by seeing as magical the thoughts which pass through the arms and hands, through legs and toes is true magic understood.

[The third strophe is written on the blackboard with the words "thinking", "transform" and "magical being of will" underlined.]

*See over the will's work in the body,
How in sleeping fields of work
Thinking descends from the head's forces;
Let human will transform itself
Through the soul's vision of light;
And thinking, it appears
as the magical essence of will.*

Therein is contained the secret of human will, which creates magically from out of the universe into man.

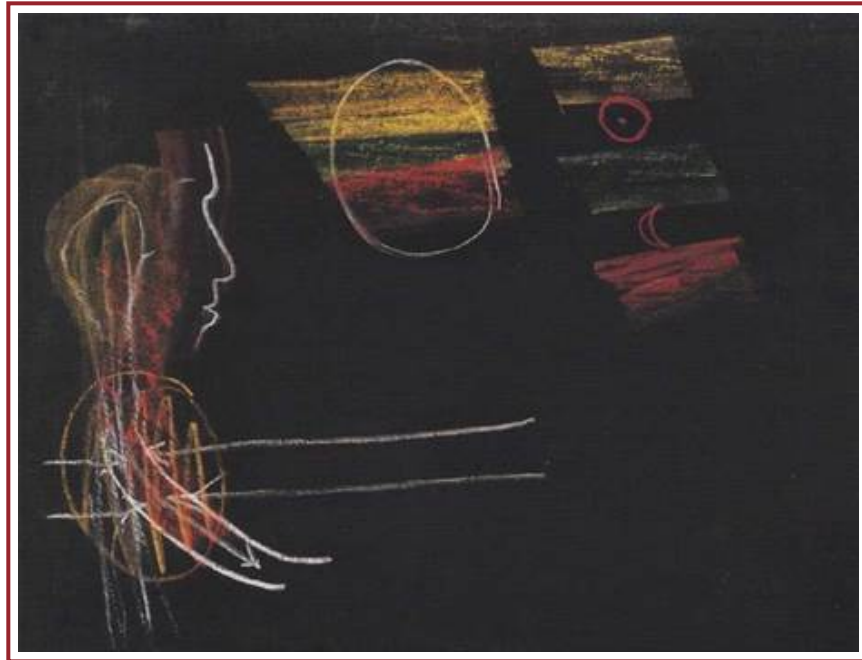
Let us then, my dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, consider this a foundation for building later on at a time to be announced, a foundation for again and again in meditation letting the mantric words flow through the soul.

*See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the darkening spirit-cell
Willing arises from the body's depths;
Let flow through your soul's force
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;
And the will, it arises
As cosmic-thought-creating.*

*See in feeling's psychic weaving
How in the twilight of dreams
Life streams in from cosmic distance;*

*Let in sleep through the tranquil heart
Human feelings drift away:
Cosmic spirit life becomes
Man's true force of being.*

*See over the will's work in the body,
How in sleeping fields of work
Thinking descends from the head's forces;
Let human will transform itself
Through the soul's vision of light;
And thinking, it appears
as magical being of will.*



Lesson 9

22 April 1924, Dornach

First - without taking notes - let us be reminded of the admonition which directs human beings to the ancient holy words of knowledge:

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.*

*Who speaks so vastly cosmic?
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?*

*Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?*

*Is it you yourself who
In feeling space, in experiencing time*

*Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.*

We can, my dear friends, look up to the distant stars and let our vision rest upon what radiates down to us from the universe in the forms the constellations possess. When we immerse ourselves in the sublimity of what the vast universe offers, we will gain enhanced inner strength. And especially for the strength to hold the soul separate from the body, we need to inwardly direct our gaze toward the heavenly bodies. By "inwardly" is meant the following: We have seen the stars so often and have stored the vision in our hearts and minds so that

we no longer need to even look up at the heavenly bodies in order to make the powerful image of the star-embedded heaven's vault effective in our inner consciousness. If this picture arises from our own inner being, if the soul empowers itself to create it, then it will be able, through this empowered force, to liberate itself from its corporeality.

And we can also observe all that radiates down and streams through us from the planets which circle the earth, and in their circling directly affect the earth's wind and weather. And when we again create a picture in our hearts of all this, the sensation of being integrated in the movement of the circling constitutes the second experience.

And then when we are conscious of all that binds us to the earth, that we are heavy bodies among other heavy bodies. In other words what lives in us as a feeling of being bound to the earth becomes a facet of our soul, and it is the third aspect.

And from these three inner experiences: what we have gained in luminous, radiant, living thought derived from the stars; and then when we merge with the path of our earth in the universe, merge with what the planets say to us meaningfully from space by their movements - so that having felt ourselves to be at rest in respect to the stars, now we feel ourselves to be set in movement through the cosmos itself. And thirdly, if we then feel ourselves bound to the earth by the force of the earth itself, then we will gradually and harmoniously be more and more able to make a beginning at entering into the spiritual world. And today everyone can make this beginning.

This leads to the question: Why is it then that so few do so? The answer to this must be: most people don't want to experience things so intimately in order to enter into the spiritual world. They disdain experiencing so intimately. They prefer titillating experiences such as the spiritual world approaching them with all the characteristics of the sensory world.

It would be easy to convince people about the spiritual world if for example a table from the spiritual world were to approach them. But there are no tables in the spiritual world, there are only spiritual beings in the spiritual world, and they must be perceived with what is spiritual in man. But spiritual is what we can read in the stars, what

we can feel in the movements of the planets, what we can experience in the forces which hold us to the earth and make us people of the earth. Therefore whoever desires to understand in the right way must do so inwardly. With common sense we can understand all of anthroposophy, but to understand inwardly means to transfer more and more what is understood to inner life. Whoever wishes to do this must decide to undertake a really intimate exercise of these three sensations - or experiences, it doesn't matter what we call them.

And now, my dear sisters and brothers, what is flowing to you from the spiritual world through this School wishes to speak to you about how by means of an intimate exercise you can become more aware of the connection of humanity with the world than you are accustomed to through normal consciousness.

Firstly, we humans should in later life be more like we were to a great extent when we were children. As children we are almost all sensory organs: eyes, ears. The child experiences everything that happens in its environment as though its whole body were a sense organ. That's why he imitates everything, because everything continues to vibrate within him; and in the same way in which it vibrates within him, it seeks to emerge by means of the will.

The child retains this characteristic only as long as we protect it from doing with its senses what we as adults do with them. The child develops this inner sensory capacity only as long as we carry it, protecting it so that it is not yet exposed to the forces of the earth. And it is really wonderful how the growing child's sensory-being is protected from the effects of the earth forces as long as this sensory-being is especially vital and alive.

At the moment when the child stands on its feet and begins to move about is when its movements become susceptible to the earth's forces and it must find its own equilibrium, at that moment the intimate sensory-being ends. The human being of course does not remember back to this first stage of infancy, and therefore does not know what it means to feel his whole being as a sensory-organ. But we must, if we want to experience the human in us more and more, be able to feel and experience our whole human being as such a sensory organ.

You grasp something, my dear sisters and brothers. It presses on you. You perceive the pressure. Or you perceive the texture of the surface you are touching. But in reality, you are continually touching in that you place your whole body from top to bottom on the earth and feel the earth under the soles of your feet. Only you are so used to it that you don't notice. When you begin to notice it, then you will first feel yourselves as human beings standing amidst the earth's forces. Therefore, the admonition at the threshold to the spiritual world.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, touch and sense in your body's being
How earth forces support your existence.*

[Certain essential words are underlined later, as described in the text. Trans.]

Thus, we let the first stage of this inner experience work in us.

Now we can feel ourselves as the ones touching, sensing. We can experience this touching, feel inwardly as the person doing the vibrant touching. When we advance enough to feel this touching itself, we are then not perceiving earth forces, but we begin to feel the vibrating water forces in us, the fluid forces which as blood and other liquids course through our bodies. And in these forces, we feel how all the fluids which course through our bodies are connected to the ether in the universe.

[writing on the blackboard:]

*O man, experience in the whole round of your touch
How water-beings are the framers of your being.*

If we only had earth forces to touch in our whole being, we would be constituted as something continually crumbling away. The water forces in us shape the form of the human body from the cosmic ether.

Only the earth has influence over what is solid in us. But the whole wide world of ether has influence over the liquids in us .

But then during the third stage we can immerse ourselves in what lives and weaves in the fluidity. We can feel it dimly, inwardly. When we feel our breathing, for example, we will realize how we are continually nurtured by the essence of breathing and of the air. We would be helpless children if we weren't continually nurtured by the forces of breathing flowing through us.

[writing on the blackboard:]

*O man, feel in the whole weaving of your life
How the powers of the air nurture your existence.*

And now if we have advanced to the third stage of inner experience, we can come to the fourth, if we feel inner warmth, and are attentive to our own fulfilling warmth which is in breath, which lives in everything air-forming within us. For only through what is air-forming in us is our warmth created.

But what lives in us as warmth can be reached with thoughts. And here we have a most important secret of human nature.

My dear sisters and brothers, you cannot reach with thought, but only with the sense of touch, how earth forces act on you and support you. You cannot reach with thought, but only with inner experience, how the water forces are your formative builders. You cannot reach with thought, but only with inner feeling, how the airy powers in you are your nurturers. You can be thankful for this nurturing, you can love these nurturers, but you cannot directly reach them with thought. But what man can reach by thought, by meditating on his warmth, is to experience himself as a being of warmth.

The physician comes with a thermometer; he measures warmth from without. Just as warmth can differ on different places of the body, it is also different in the individual inner organs. You can direct your

thoughts down to the individual organs and will find that the whole inner warmth-organism is differentiated. One can reach his own warmth organism with thought.

But then, having done that, you have a specific feeling. This feeling, my dear sisters and brothers, will now be revealed to your souls. Imagine that you have achieved it, that in thought you have descended into your organism, reached the differentiating warmth - the warmth of the lungs, the warmth of the liver, the warmth of the heart, which are all God-spirit created entities within you. You achieve this with thought. Now for the first time you know what thought is. Before you didn't know what thought is. You know now that thought, by descending into what was before only warmth, turns the warmth into flame, into fire. For in ordinary life thought appears to you in its imperceptible inwardness as abstract thought. When you sink it down into your own body, the thought appears to you as luminous, radiantly penetrating into the lungs, into the heart, into the liver. Just as the light which goes out from your brow stretches downward, so does thought illumine the inner organs, differentiating itself into various nuances of color.

One cannot merely say: I think through to the differentiations of my warmth; one must say: I enlighten myself by thinking through to the differentiations of my warmth.

[writing on the blackboard:]

.....

*O man, think in the full flow of your feeling
How the fire-powers are your helpers in being.*

.....

Everything in these eight lines can be summarized by letting what has been intimately worked through be summed up in your souls with the words:

[On the blackboard each element is placed after the corresponding mantra-phrase.]

O man, see yourself in the kingdom of elements.

<i>Elements:</i>	<i>Earth</i> <i>Water</i> <i>Air</i> <i>Fire</i>
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Thus, do you measure yourselves, radiate, strengthen yourselves in respect to the body. But note how this strengthening, this measuring of the mere physical extends to the moral:

Here we have the support of man, the physical support. [In the first mantra sentence "support" is underlined.]

Here we have the formative forces. [In the second mantra sentence "formers" is underlined.] Still somewhat physical, but permeated with the etheric.

Here we have nurturer. [In the third mantra sentence "nurture" is underlined.] It already has a certain morality. Then as we ascend from water to air we feel that the beings who are in the air are permeated with morality.

And in the fire, we have not only nurturer, but also helpers, ["helpers" in the fourth mantra sentence is underlined], comrades, beings similar to us.

Just as we feel through to our bodies, we can also feel through to our souls. For this we must not concentrate on the elements, rather must we concentrate on what pulls the planets that circle the earth and pulls the air and sea currents along with it. We feel our physicality in our spirituality when we measure the body as has been explained; but we directly experience our soul-life.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, let act in the depths of your soul
The cosmic powers that guide the planets.*

It can also be summarized in the sentence:

O man, through the cosmic circling renew yourself.

We realize and experience the spiritual in us when we elevate the spirit to the stars, which reach us in their groupings and formations and become like a celestial script to us. If we preserve what is thus written in the starry heavens we will become aware of our own spirituality, that spirituality which doesn't speak about man personally, but about the entire universe.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, retain in your spirit's creativity
The constellations' cosmological words.*

Summarizing:

O man, recreate yourself through celestial wisdom.

Not by vague generalities, not by vague sensations are we able to gradually extract our souls from our physical bodies and pass over to the universe, but rather by grasping the elements in the specified way, by the movement of the planets, by the meaning in the stars. We unite with the universe when we do this.

And we will note that once the first part of the exercise is accomplished we feel a life in us, the life of the universe.

[Alongside the first eight lines of the mantra is written:]

Life

Once we have finished the second part of the exercise we feel love towards the whole world.

[Alongside the tenth and eleventh lines is written:]

Love

Once we have finished the third part we feel a sense of piety in us.

[Alongside the thirteenth and fourteenth lines is written:]

Piety

And it really is an ascension from life through love to piety, to a truly religious cosmic sense which can be undergone through such mantric words.

But if it is really undergone, if we really end up being pious through such an exercise, then the world ceases to be physical for us. Then we say to ourselves with total certainty: the physical in the world is only semblance, maya; the world is everywhere through and through spirit. As humans we belong to this spirit. And if we feel ourselves as spirit in the spirit-world, then we are beyond the threshold to the spiritual world.

Then, however, once we are beyond the threshold to the spiritual world, we sense how here, on this side, our body holds thinking, feeling and willing together through its own bodily force; how at the moment we are body-free in our experiencing, thinking, feeling and willing are no longer one, but threefold. Then it is as though by binding ourselves to the earth-powers in water, air, fire, earth, that by sending our will to the earth we become one with the earth through our will.

Furthermore, because we feel love in our souls for the movements of the planets, that is, for the spiritual beings who live therein, it is so that we experience the Powers circling cosmic space as feeling. And if

we can say: the sun moves in the feeling of cosmic space, Mercury moves in the feeling of cosmic space, Mars moves in the feeling of cosmic space, then we have grasped feeling in its cosmic being separated from thinking and separated from willing.

And if we are able to grasp thinking in such a way that thoughts are freed from physical existence, it is as though our thinking were to fly out to the [resting] stars and rest there themselves.

[Translator's Note: in German the stars themselves can be referred to as "resting" stars, in contrast to the "wandering" or "moving" stars: the planets. In this lecture there is much play on words between the two concepts, which is necessarily lost in translation.]

And we say to ourselves when we have arrived on the other side of the threshold: my thinking rests in the resting stars; my feeling moves in the wandering stars [planets]; my willing unites with the earth forces. So thinking, feeling, willing are separated in the cosmos.

And they must be again joined together. Here on the earth man does not need to bind thinking, feeling and willing together, because they already are so due to the physical body being a unity. Thinking, feeling and willing would be constantly falling apart if they were not held together by the physical man, without his intention or awareness. Now though, on the other side of the threshold, they are divided so that thinking rests above with the stars, feeling circles with the planets, and willing unites with the forces of the earth. And with strong inner determination, with our own forces, we must bring them back together as a unity.

In doing this we must experience thinking, feeling and willing in such a way that we can communicate to thinking, which has gone to the stars, something of feeling and willing; to feeling, which is circling with the planets, communicate something of thinking and willing; to willing, which is bound to the earth, something of thinking and feeling. This something we indeed can do using such a mantric formula.

We must look up to the stars and with devotion say to ourselves: there is where your thinking lies. But I will bring the starry sky into movement; just as feeling likewise does for the planets, in spirit I will slowly move the starry sky. I feel myself attracted to the starry sky; I

want to go up there and be at one with that star-filled heavens. Thus have I incorporated feeling and willing into thinking, which is bound to the stars.

Then I look up to the planets and feel: In these planets [Ger. wandering stars] my own feeling wanders. But I will attempt to fix the moment as the stars [Ger. fixed stars] are fixed in place. And through my rhythmic system - to which heart and lungs belong - I will become as one with the entire planetary system. Then I have assigned thinking and willing to feeling.

And when I become aware of how, through this mantric formula, I am bound to the earth as a human being, then I should add feeling and thinking to this being bound to the earth. In thought I should set the earth in motion so that like a planet I accompany it on its rounds without perceiving its weight: bound to it as if I were guiding the earth through cosmic space. Feeling is combined with willing. I add thinking to the mixture when I accompany the earth's movement in thought, but can bring it again to a standstill, thus making the earth itself a [fixed] star by my own meditating force of thought.

When I carry out such a meditation again and again, I gradually come to feel myself as a human being outside my body in the cosmos. For this, my dear sisters and brothers, this mantric formula can work on the soul with special force.

[written on the blackboard:]

*Bring to thinking life
What as pure contemplation*

(that is: as meditation, as contemplation)

*in the soul light-filled
shine:
Feeling and willing*

*And you are spirit
Among pure spirits.*

Secondly:

*Bring to force of feeling
What as noble love
Through the soul warmly
weave:
Thinking and willing,
you are soul
In the realm of spirits.*

Thirdly:

*Bring to the Powers of will
What as spiritual impulse
For the soul actively
live:
Thinking and feeling,
And you shall see yourself
As body from spiritual heights.*

Only seen thus does the human body appear in its true form.

What is gleaned from the spiritual world, what the initiate experiences in the spiritual world, if it is expressed in words, they are mantric words, and he who experiences them will be led into the spiritual world.

Therefore, if you let the words work on your soul, they are a true guide to the spiritual world:

*Bring to thinking life
What as pure contemplation
On the soul light-filled
shine:
Feeling and willing,
And you are spirit
Among pure spirits.*

*Bring to force of feeling
What as noble love
Through the soul warmly
weave:
Thinking and willing
And you are soul
In the realm of spirits.*

*Bring to the Powers of will
What as spiritual impulse
For the soul actively
live:
Thinking and feeling,
And you shall see yourself
As body from spiritual heights.*

Then, my dear sisters and brothers, when what lies in these mantric words is clearer and clearer to you, then when you come again and again to these lessons it will be with greater understanding, that is, with ever greater cosmic experience that you will hear these words:

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.*

*Who speaks so vastly cosmic?
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?*

*Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?*

*Is it you yourself who
In feeling space, in experiencing time*

*Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.*

*

Blackboard Texts for the Ninth Class Lesson

Life

O man, touch and sense in your body's being

How earth forces support your existence. Earth

O man, experience in the whole round of your touch

How water-beings are the framers of your being. Water

O man, feel in the whole weaving of your life

How the powers of the air nurture your existence. Air

O man, think in the full flow of your feeling

How the fire-powers are your helpers in being. Fire

O man, see yourself in the kingdom of elements.

Love

O man, let act in the depths of your soul

The cosmic powers that guide the planets.

O man, through the cosmic circling renew yourself.

Piety

O man, retain in your spirit's creativity

The constellations' cosmological words.

<i>Bring to thinking life What as pure contemplation On the soul light-filled shine: Feeling and willing, And you are spirit Among pure spirits.</i>	<i>Bring to force of feeling What as noble love Through the soul warmly weave: Thinking and willing And you are soul In the realm of spirits.</i>	<i>Bring to the Powers of will What as spiritual impulse For the soul actively live: Thinking and feeling, And you shall see yourself As body from spiritual heights.</i>
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Esoteric Lessons

The School of Spiritual Science

Volume II

Rudolf Steiner

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Source: Lectures to the First Class, Vol. II

Lesson 10

25 April 1924, Dornach

For esoteric development — the true path to knowledge — the individual must find the way to understanding what it means to live in a world in which the senses, the whole physical organization, is not a facilitator; that is, to live with the psychic-spiritual, which is man's true identity, in a spiritual world. In order to do so there are many different more or less meditative exercises, mental exertions meant to affect the soul.

And to give a picture of what a human soul can pass through on the way from experiencing the physical sensory world to experiencing the spiritual world is what will be provided in these class lessons by means of the various considerations and the summarizing of such considerations in individual verses, which may then be meditated upon according to each member's possibilities and needs.

Once a certain time has passed the communications given in these class lessons, which, as I have often stressed, are real communications from the spiritual world, will coalesce in such a way that those who have participated — it is also karma for those who could be here — will have a complete picture of the first stage of esoteric development.

As a result of the various indications which are given here we can gradually rise above our earthly existence to an experience of the cosmos, we can develop the feelings which carry us out into those distant reaches of the universe from which the spiritual comes to meet us. But as long as we confine ourselves to using our senses and reason only in connection with the sense-perceptible world which surrounds us, it will be impossible for us to grasp what the spiritual world reveals as the truth accessible to man.

You see my dear friends, as I have often stressed, human common sense can understand everything offered by anthroposophy, if it exerts itself sufficiently and is free of prejudice. But it is just in

reference to this common sense where a touchstone exists concerning whether or not someone is really destined by their karma nowadays to participate in anthroposophy.

There are two possibilities. One is that the person hears about anthroposophical truths, lets them work on him and considers them to be self-evident. It is obvious that everyone sitting here today belongs to that group. For if someone who does not belong to that group wishes to participate in a lesson as a member, it would not be honest of them. And honesty is the most important aspect of esoteric life — complete truthfulness penetrating the human soul and spirit.

There is another group of people who find what is presented by anthroposophy to be fantastic, somehow belonging only to visionaries. These people show by their behavior that they are not able, according to their karma, to sufficiently separate common sense from physicality and the senses to be able to grasp sense-free truth, sense-free knowledge.

It is therefore the extent to which common sense is bound to corporeality or not which determines such a great divergence between people. For if you honestly consider that you possess a common sense which understands anthroposophy, then at the moment it grasps anthroposophy honestly, it does so independently of corporeality. And this healthy common sense which grasps anthroposophy honestly is the beginning of esoteric striving. And we should treasure the fact that healthy common sense which understands anthroposophy is the beginning of esoteric striving. It should not be overlooked. For when one starts with this understanding through healthy common sense and then follows the indications given in the appropriate schools, one proceeds farther and farther along the esoteric path. You can use whichever of the verses provided here which you consider appropriate for you. But you should apply them together with the indications as to how they relate to the inner life of man.

Today I would like to again provide an indication of how you can leave the body — if only by means of so slight a jolt that you don't even realize it.

We should develop the ability to observe and study the minerals and plants in our environment to the extent that we feel them within — if only by means of thinking — and become truly aware of how this earthly environment is related to us, that due to our wearing a physical body we are directly related to the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms around us. And then we ask the question in all honesty: Why? Why did I absorb the physical substances of the earth just by being born? Why do I drag myself through life from birth till death in order to end physical life once my organism is no longer able to process its physical elements? We must deeply feel our relationship to our physical environment starting from such a personal enigma. Then, however, we will also feel more and more what the starting point for esoteric life can be. Then we feel that in physical earthly life we are blindly groping in the dark.

And finally, my dear sisters and brothers, consider the people of today who have been placed in earthly life after birth and educated according to the usual methods and called to this or that work due to purely external circumstances. They do not understand the relationship of this work to the totality of human existence. Perhaps they do not know much more than that they work in order to eat. They do not realize that in the plants they eat cosmic forces from the distant boundaries of the universe are present which pass through the human organism and therefore in a certain sense undergo a cosmic evolution. Many people today cannot even begin to glimpse this process due to the materialism of the times. But to admit that by the mere consideration of earthly relationships one stands spiritually blind in life and lives in the dark — that is the starting point for true esoteric development.

And then change the direction of your gaze from what surrounds you on the earth to the star-studded heaven — either in thought, or if you really want to be affected by it, in reality. Behold the planets, behold the stars, fill yourselves with the infinite transcendence of what shines back to you from the universe, and say to yourself: as human beings we are related just as much to what radiates down from the universe as we are to what surrounds us in the physical environment.

Then by gazing up to the star-studded heaven, we really have the feeling that we do not live in darkness, but that we are freed from life in the darkness by rising with our soul-spiritual being to the stars, rise

to what the stars represent as pictures in their constellations. And, you see, if we can really enter meditating into this vision of the star-filled sky it becomes a plenitude of imaginations. You know the old pictures in which not only the constellations have been painted, but in which they have been recapitulated symbolically as animals. Not only the star group that is in Aries, or in Taurus has been represented, but also the symbolic images of the ram and the bull are included.

Today people think: Well, it was arbitrary on the part of those ancient inhabitants of the earth that just because the constellations were so named that the corresponding pictures were added. But that was not the case at all. In reality in ancient times the shepherds in the fields did not merely gaze up at the star-studded sky with physical eyes, but also in dream-consciousness or sleep-consciousness out there with their flocks they turned their souls with closed eyes towards outer space. They did not see the constellations which physical eyes see. But they actually perceived those pictures, those imaginations which fill universal space — albeit somewhat differently from what was later painted.

We can no longer go back to what the simple shepherds experienced by instinctive clairvoyance. But we can do something else. With far greater thoughtfulness we can imagine ourselves into the star-filled sky. We can feel the depth and at the same time the awesome majesty of what radiates back to us. And gradually we can come to a sense of veneration for what is expanding out there in cosmic space. And the more ardent the veneration is the more clearly can the experience be that the outer sense-images of the stars disappear and the star-filled sky becomes an Imagination for us. But only then, when the star-filled sky becomes an Imagination for us, do we feel ourselves carried away by our soul's vision.

You see, still in Plato's time one felt something special about the physical eye when it is observing. Plato himself described seeing as follows: When I look at a person something leaves my eye and encompasses him. People in ancient times sensed that something streams out of the eye and encompasses the object. The etheric streams out. Just as when I stretch out my hand and grasp something I know that I am connected to my hand until reaching the grasped object, so in the times of instinctive clairvoyance people knew that something etheric goes out from the eye and encompasses the thing

looked at. Today people think, well, the eye is here, the object seen is there. So the object sends out ether-waves which drum against the eye and the drumming is perceived by some kind of soul — about which even the materialist talks about here, but without having any idea of what it is. But that is not true. It is not a mere impact on the person emanating from the object, but really also an emanation of the person's inner etheric substance.

And we perceive our ether body as belonging to the universe when the star-filled sky becomes for us the grand open page of the universe on which the imaginative secrets of cosmic being are written — if we are able to read it.

And then the feeling comes to us: When you are here on earth you are in the robust sense-perceptible reality. But you are blind, you live in darkness. When you rise up with your sensibility then you live in what otherwise only shines down to you from the distant universe, and you live in the illusion of the distant universe. But at the same time you take your own etheric being out into the distant flooding stream of this illusory world.

And the illusion ceases to be illusion. It cannot be a nothing if we immerse ourselves in it. When we have this feeling — I will draw it —.

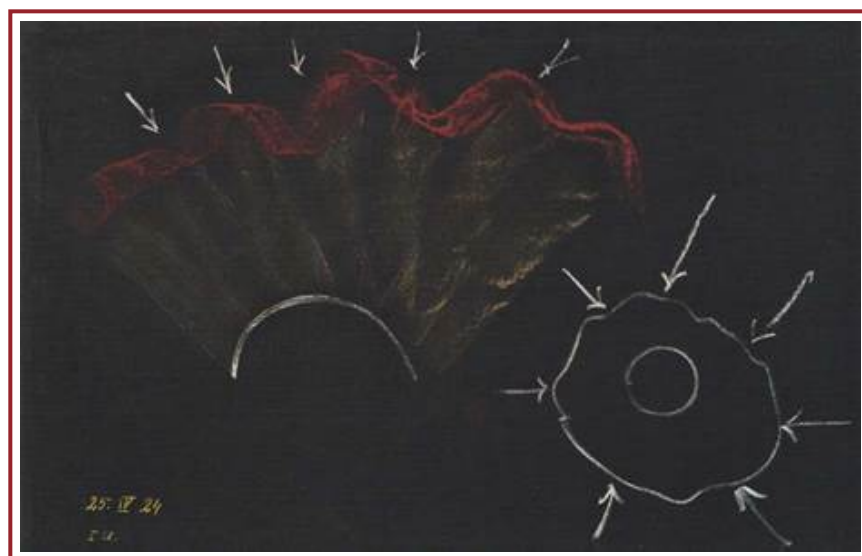


Diagram 1

We live as blind people in the darkness of earthly existence, (white arc); then we journey out into the distant universe (yellow rays), at the end of which we can feel the cosmic Imaginations by means of reverence for the brilliance of the stars (red waves).

So now that we have journeyed out we are together with our etheric being within the imaginative cosmic web. If we can accomplish this, then we are no longer in the physical body. We have traveled through the etheric emptiness to experiencing the cosmic Imaginations.

You see, it's like when in the physical world someone writes something down and, because we have learned to read, we read it. By being out in the cosmos — the gods have written the cosmic imaginations for us in the cosmos — when we arrive we see the imaginations from the other side (arrows). At first we live here on the earth (inner circle). Then we draw ourselves up to the cosmic imaginations (outer wave-circle).

Yes, my dear friends, my sisters and brothers, the zodiac speaks a meaningful language when we do not observe it from the earth — Arias, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo — but rather when we encircle it from without. And it is a task of our consciousness to encircle it from without. Then we begin to read the cosmic secrets, which are the deeds of the spiritual beings. In a novel we read of the deeds of men. When we look at the zodiac from the other side and read what from the earth we see virtually from behind, as Moses was told that he always had to look at God from behind, that is, from the earth. Initiation consists of seeing from the other side — not a matter of gawking, but of reading. And what we read are the spiritual deeds of the spiritual beings who brought it all about.

And when we have silently read long enough, when our souls have concentrated deeply on this reading, then we begin to hear in a spiritual way. Then the gods speak with us. When the gods speak with us we are within the spiritual world.

Now you see, my dear sisters and brothers, the initiate can tell you: the soul can rise up to the cosmic heights, receive the cosmic imaginations, read them from the other side, the spiritual deeds,

become capable of hearing in a spiritual way the language of the gods.

But if you really immerse yourself in what the initiate relates with your whole heart, your whole feeling, if you don't just listen to it greedily and say: Well, if I also could do that I'd like it, it would be interesting — but I'm not going to bother. But you receive it as something which you can revere, which you can love, which you can repeatedly meditate on, then it is the path to enter esoteric life yourself.

And you will find this path by meditating profoundly on the words: (The first part of the verse is written on the blackboard.)

-
- 1. I live in the dark domain of the earth,*
 - 2. I wander in the brilliance of the stars,*
 - 3. I read in the deeds of the spirits,*
 - 4. I hear in the speech of the gods.*
-

When experienced with the necessary deeply meditative feeling this works wonders in the human soul, transforms the human soul. It must rhythmically flow through the soul again and again, for it leads the human being through his own interior cosmic being.

But it is necessary that such a thing be deeply interiorized. And even though it still speaks more to the head, the heart should also participate in the whole process of going out into the etheric universe, then into the spiritual universe, that is, on the other side of the universe. It is necessary in such a process that we take our hearts with us in the experience and that it stimulate in you the feelings which can come quite naturally by this excursion into the outer universe. But these feelings must be really stimulated. It is therefore good to look deeply into what the words say:

*I live in the dark domain of the earth,
I wander in the brilliance of the stars
I read in the deeds of the spirits.
I hear in the speech of the gods.*

.....

Then you try to imagine that someone is speaking to you from a spiritual depth, as though you were not thinking it, but as though you were hearing it, as if another being were speaking. You really imagine that another being is speaking to you from an unknown depth. Then you try to develop the right feelings for what you have heard.

These feelings live in the second part of the verse: (The second part is written on the blackboard.)

.....

*5. The darkness of the earth creates longing in me,
6. The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me*

.....

When I am aware that I live blindly in the darkness of the earth, I long to get out. Then the brilliance of the stars becomes the comforter which expands my being:

.....

The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me.

.....

Now from the other side:

.....

7. The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me,

.....

— when I read them —

.....

8. The speech of the gods is creating to me.

.....

Only you must use it correctly. Imagine yourself vividly in this meditating which you are doing. As though someone were speaking to you from spiritual depths is how you hear the lines of the first verse.

You bring the corresponding feeling to each verse, so that you experience in the meditation: first listen, then bring feeling; listen, then bring feeling; and so on. (An arc is drawn connecting lines 1 and 5; another connecting 2 and 6, another connecting 3 and 7, and another connecting lines 4 and 8)

*I live in the dark domain of the earth,
The darkness of the earth creates longing in me,*

*I wander in the brilliance of the stars,
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me.*

*I read in the deeds of the spirits,
The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me.*

*I hear in the speech of the gods,
The speech of the gods is creating for me.*

It is a meditation in dialog in which you always objectify the first line, but the second you feel as though streaming out of your heart. Now you try again to visualize how one acts and weaves into the other, and then try to feel with your will what you can experience through the dialog. (The third part of the verse is arranged in connection with the first and the second parts while lines 9, 10, 11 and 12 are written on the blackboard.)

From depth of spirit resounds:

I live in the dark domain of the earth,

The heart replies:

The darkness of the earth creates longing in me.

The will senses the impulse in the dialog between lines 1 and 5:

.....

9. The earth's darkness extinguishes me.

.....

After this dialog has taken place we recall the connection of lines 2 and 6:

.....

*I wander in the brilliance of the stars,
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me.*

10. The brilliance of the stars awakens me.

.....

Afterward we recall what resounds from spiritual depths and the heart's reply:

.....

*I read in the deeds of the spirits,
The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me.*

.....

The will now senses:

.....

11. The deeds of the spirits call to me.

.....

into the spiritual world.

And now the most sublime, where we feel ourselves in dialog with the gods themselves, where the gods not only let us read, but speak:

.....

*I hear in the speech of the gods,
The speech of the gods is creating for me.*

12. The speech of the gods engenders me.

— brings me forth, engenders me.

Now imagine the whole meditation. It runs as follows: dialog — line for line with a spiritual being present in the dim spiritual depths that always speaks the top line of the verse. And the heart always replies:

*I live in the dark domain of the earth,
The darkness of the earth creates longing in me,*

*I wander in the brilliance of the stars,
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me,*

*I read in the deeds of the spirits,
The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me,*

*I hear in the speech of the gods,
The speech of the gods is creating for me.*

Now I recall each one and add the outpouring of will as a remembrance of what had just gone before:

*I live in the dark domain of the earth,
The darkness of the earth creates longing in me,
The earth's darkness extinguishes me.*

*I wander in the brilliance of the stars,
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me,
The brilliance of the stars awakens me.*

*I read in the deeds of the spirits,
The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me,
The deeds of the spirits call to me.*

*I hear in the speech of the gods,
The speech of the gods is creating for me,
The speech of the gods engenders me.*

Conviction results from the dialog in meditation, from recalling the dialog and in strengthening the recollection by means of the will.

If, firstly, with inner devotional feeling, secondly with complete soul and interest we have done what I have just described, if we do it not as mechanical meditating but as a true experience of the soul, then this means of creating a relation to the spiritual world really does have an awakening effect on the soul.

Also in the case of the last verse, which in the way I have described should really be experienced as remembrance of speech and answering speech — speech of the spirit and answering speech of the heart, we must correctly feel how, firstly, consciousness, which we wish to achieve, is extinguished by the earth's darkness. We must sense how a moment of extinguishing sleep overcomes consciousness, and how upon awakening, at the second line, we hear the spirits calling us to them, how afterward we feel: the spirits have called us so that they can bring us forth, engender us in the spiritual world by their own cosmic word.

If these nuances of inner experience flow through the soul — and the representations of the spiritual being who speaks to us are included — and the heart reciprocates with its dedication to the spiritual being, then yes, then the stimulation exists in the soul which will gradually lead this soul onto the esoteric path. And we must be clear that as we experience these three verses in our souls in the way in which I have described as best we can, something powerful takes place in the subconscious mind. If we sincerely live in these three verses as I have described, then when the first line resounds, our soul unconsciously passes through the starting-point of earthly life when the etheric body was first formed.

If we can vividly imagine what from the spirit resounds:

.....
I live in the dark domain of the earth,
.....

then we approach — in the unconscious — with this hearing in spirit, the moment in which our etheric body was formed; and from pre-earthly existence, from life between death and a new birth, acts the force with which we sincerely reply from the heart:

.....
The darkness of the earth creates longing in me;
.....

because we have the longing for the spiritual as a heritage from pre-earthly existence.

And again we are transported to the beginning of earthly existence. And what acts from our hearts is inspired by the previous earthly existence.

.....
I wander in the brilliance of the stars:
.....

We are transported to the beginning of our earthly life. The real comfort the brilliance of the stars can give when we are transported back is in our heart's reply:

.....
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me.
.....

And then:

.....
I read in the deeds of the spirits:
.....

We are transported back to the earth's beginning. Remember how we are taught by spiritual beings in pre-earthly existence.

The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me,

Among whom I lived and wandered before I descended to the earth.

I hear in the speech of the gods:

We heard them during the period between death and a new birth. We sense that what the gods say is not mere information as is what men say; we realize that the speech of the Gods is creative:

The speech of the gods is creating for me.

But then, if we can see it so, lines 9, 10, 11, 12 also acquire the correct meaning: (Line 9 is written again, this time on the arc connecting lines 1 and 5.)

*I live in the dark domain of the earth,
The earth's darkness extinguishes me,
The darkness of the earth creates longing in me,*

— deletes me from my present earth life for I am led back, through the region between death and a new birth, to my earlier incarnation. I divine this; therefor my consciousness is extinguished, for my consciousness was, until now, that of my current incarnation. In this moment of sleep I am transported back so I can divine: I am wandering in my previous incarnation. (Line 10 is written again, this time at the arc connecting lines 2 and 6.)

*I wander in the brilliance of the stars,
The brilliance of the stars awakens me
The brilliance of the stars is comfort to me,*

I am brought back to what I was in the previous incarnation as though awakened in it. My karma arises before me, the connection of destiny arises before me, it arises before me from the other side. (Line 11 is written again, at the arc connecting lines 3 and 7.)

*I read in the deeds of the spirits,
The deeds of the spirits call to me
The deeds of the spirits are teaching to me,*

to fulfill my karma with the forces which derive from my previous earth-life. (Line 12 is written again, at the arc connecting lines 4 and 8.)

*I hear in the speech of the gods,
The speech of the gods engenders me.
The speech of the gods is creating for me,*

Everything I am becomes clear to me when my earlier earthly existence penetrates the present one and shines through it and wanders through it and pulses through it. For here I am. My present I is in a process, it is a seed which will have meaning once I have passed through the gates of death. What shines and works in me from the previous earthly existence into the present one makes me into a human being, engenders me as an existing human being.

If we have the conviction that it is so, that — although we believe only to be in the ordinary world of physical existence — our soul really makes the journey back to the previous earth-life, then we will be aware of the gravity of what we are experiencing. And through this

awareness a warmer, luminous current streams through our thinking, feeling and willing. And with that inner magical feeling, which is necessary for the meditation to work in the right way, our meditation will prevail. We may call it a magical feeling for it cannot be compared with any feeling we have on earth, because it is completely independent of all corporeality. If we cannot yet leave the physical body behind with our thinking, this magical thinking which we experience through the gravity of our soul's activity is present in the purely spiritual world.

According to the way we experience these things, our esoteric striving is fulfilled. And that is what I was obliged to lay before your souls today, my dear sisters and brothers.

.....

In conclusion I would like to say one more thing. It should not happen that someone passes on the verses and the information given here without first asking permission. Only with permission may these things be passed on from one to another or to a group. It is especially frowned upon, my dear friends, that these verses or their interpretation be sent by post. They may not be sent by post, and I ask that this be strictly observed.

.....
:

Lesson 11

2 May 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

You have all probably been deeply affected this morning by the news that Miss Maryon* has departed from the physical plane — although it is something long expected and which follows difficult suffering which lasted more than a year.

Tomorrow when the members of the Anthroposophical Society are all gathered here, I will say what I have to say about Miss Maryon's departure from the physical plane. For now it is sufficient to say that the First Class has lost a truly dedicated student, for among those who have devoted themselves to the School with great diligence, Miss Maryon was the best. Despite the serious illness which afflicted her she not only participated in what is being esoterically developed here, but she also let the exercises given here work on her and lived with them in an extraordinarily intimate way.



This was the result of her having been familiar with esotericism before coming to us. She belonged to an esoteric school of a completely different nature before she discovered the Anthroposophical Society and through this esoteric school made the complete transition to anthroposophy quickly. The esoteric was essential to her and she experienced it intensely during the years with us on the physical plane. She has departed from the physical plane but certainly not from anthroposophy.

It would be unseemly to say more now as she has just left the physical plane. Tomorrow, though, when the members, the friends are here, it will be my task to say what is to be said.

My dear friends, in esoteric striving it is necessary to at least envision, to the extent possible, the path upon which real knowledge of spiritual things can be realized. Of course how far one or the other comes along this path depends on his karma, on what conditions he brings along from previous earth lives.

But not only that, it also depends on which physical and environmental conditions the person's destiny places him. Much old karmic residue may exist to be worked out which hinders achieving everything which is otherwise within one's capabilities. Thus much which perhaps could be quickly achieved without these karmic residues takes longer.

My dear sisters and brothers, we should never give up hope, never lose patience or energy, but continue on our way. When the right time has come, we will surely find what has been predestined. For certain lines of every human being's life path are uniquely predestined despite or perhaps because of freedom. Every individual is called to his life's task and can accomplish it with sufficient good will.

Here in this Free School for Spiritual Science everything that existed in the Mysteries in the past when they especially flowered is to be reenacted in the correct form according to our time and to the future. The flowering time of the Mysteries had already passed when the greatest Mystery of all, the one most hidden to world history, took place: the Mystery of Golgotha. After their flowering time, the Mysteries declined, a process in which, just because the Mysteries had declined, humanity could be taken into the stream of world evolution where freedom is possible.

Nevertheless, the time has now come when the Mysteries are to be renewed, in the fullest sense of the word and in the appropriate form. And once these things have been thought about correctly in the future the Goetheanum's work will be appreciated in the world, because the task of this Goetheanum is to renew the Mysteries. And only, my dear

sisters and brothers, if we are permeated with the will to understand this School as representing, through us, a renewal of the Mysteries, can we participate in the Mysteries and in the School in the right way.

If you will remember what was presented here in the last Lesson, then what I have just said can live in your hearts. For the transition is made for meditation to really enter directly into the individual's experience so that he frees himself from the narrow limits of his personality.

In the triple-versed structure of the last meditation we saw how we place ourselves in the world process and how in the meditation we confront not only what resounds from our soul but also what resounds *to* our soul, which in a certain way incorporates itself into a general universal language, a general universal Word. But only when the individual gradually frees himself from the limits of his personality, when he finds himself meditating in an ever more objective way, then will he be able to follow that intimate, subtle path, which is the true path to human knowledge. But for this to happen the objective truths which apply to humanity must become objectively present in him in the most varied ways.

You all know, my dear sisters and brothers, what has often been described as the threefold human nature: the nerve-sensory man, mostly represented by the human head; the rhythmic man, mostly represented by the breast, in which the respiratory and circulatory organs are concentrated. All these organs are everywhere in the organism, are located in other parts of the body as well, but more in certain areas than in others. Then we have the limbs-metabolism-organization, localized downward and outward.

That which can be known theoretically can also be meditatively objective. And when it is meditatively objective it becomes esoteric. Therefore in meditation we must intensively and intimately keep this threefold man in view.

So we have the head-organization, a real replica of the entire cosmos. We have the breast or rhythmic organization, which does not directly show in its form the cosmic image. And least of all does the limbs-metabolism-organization show the image of the cosmos. But man must be intimately conscious of how he places himself in the cosmos through each of these organizations. He must be clear about what

takes place in his head. We can feel this directly: when we think, our head is active. We notice that when the head is ailing, thinking is impaired. We sense the head's association to this clearest human earthly activity in both normal and abnormal circumstances. This doesn't mean that the head is really the bearer of the clearest human earthly activity, but it seems so to us.

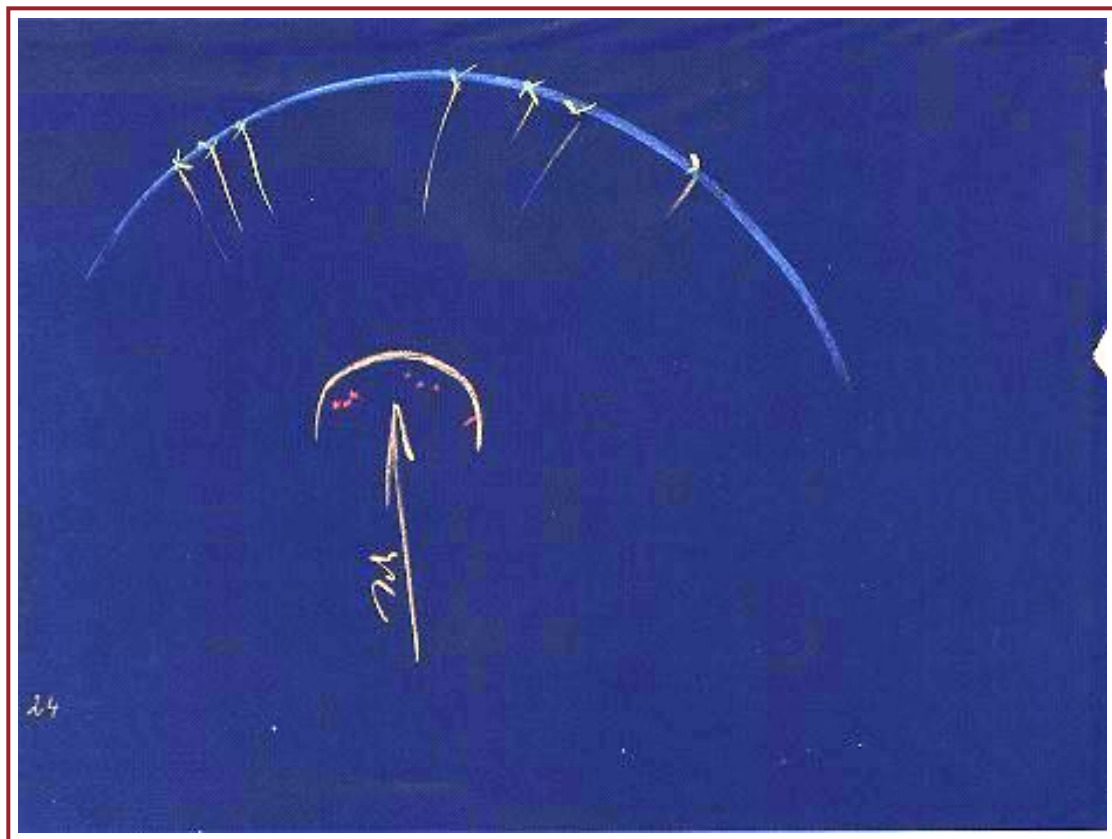
What is actually going on? When do we see ourselves — in our heads — in the right way? Only, my dear sisters and brothers, when we are aware that this human head would not exist if the star-filled sky did not arch above us. For the moment we will not dispute what the astronomers say about this; we are only taking into account what is visible to the eyes: the sublime starry heavens.

In the previous lesson much was said about this. The stars are there above; their rays of light approach us when we look up at them. But they don't only approach us, we also receive them. And what we receive of the rays of light we enclose in our heads. And out of it sprouts our human activity on earth: our thinking. And so we must imagine: Outside are the stars; our heads receive the effects of the stars' rays. From without it looks as though the stars were sending their rays down to us. Our heads receive these rays; so what has been received is within our heads. From here it looks quite different than from without, but it is the same, the whole starry sky rolled together, so to speak, within our heads.

But only the starry sky? No, not only the starry sky. For — what are the stars? What is in the individual stars which rays toward us? It is the domicile of the gods. They are the places where the gods reside. It is where the gods were sought in the times when instinctive clairvoyance knew where the gods reside, which are the places worthy of the gods.

During the times when such clairvoyance existed, people did not look up at burning points in the cosmos, but at the dwelling places of the gods. And in doing so had a truer idea of what exists in the far reaches of space than do the astronomers of today who observe the points of light and calculate their positions and angles to each other.

But in that man is a threefold being, he speaks and acts through what holds him together: his I — through all three elements of his being, through the nerve-sensory-system, the head; through the rhythmic system, the breast; and through the metabolic-limbs-system. It is held together only because the physical body is a unity. But man always sends his I into the three individual elements and we will learn today the different ways he sends this I into the individual elements.



At first man speaks the I through his thoughts into his head from his innermost being. Truly, it is thus: [draws on the blackboard]: What unfolds without as the shining element of the stars [blue arc, yellow stars], acts in the human head [yellow arc and rays from the stars]. It is also here within [red dots]. Man speaks his I from out of his center of his being into this rolled together cosmic space which is the interior of his head [arrow with the word "Ich", yellow]. And he should become aware that when he speaks his I into the part of his humanity which is an image of the dwellings of the gods, then the gods

themselves who live in these dwellings will act in him. We meditate correctly when we are aware that when we say "I" through the force of our heads, the gods of cosmic space and cosmic time speak in us.

And this is not a teaching given to us on the earth; it is a teaching, my dear sisters and brothers, given to us by the beings of the higher hierarchies themselves, at first from those beings who are with us humans: the angeloi, and in the background the directing archangeloi. This element of human nature — this I — has a relation to the dwelling places of the gods in the radiant stars, from out of which the godly beings themselves speak, and should let itself be taught by the beings we have always referred to as angeloi in our descriptions of the hierarchies.

We correctly accomplish a meditation thus: We look up, allowing ourselves to be impressed by the radiance of the stars, sense that cosmic space itself is sending us words. And these words should be:

Starry-cosmic-spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!

It resounds in the periphery. Thus we imagine that we hear it from cosmic space.

Starry-cosmic-spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!

It becomes an echo in us. We treat it as a call, but a call that excites us, because all heaven resounds in this call. This is how we meditate. And then we will be conscious of what we have to say from the depths of our souls, from whence in the stillness we answer the cosmic trumpet-call:

When human-spirit-radiance
Speaks with head-held-high
The "I am" :

That is what we say. Then the angel who belongs to us answers in our meditation:

Thus you live

— the gods —

in the earth-body
as man's true being.

That is the sense of this meditation. We hear it as a world-spanning trumpet call from all sides:

Starry-cosmic-spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!

We answer in stillness intimately praying:

When human-spirit-radiance
Speaks with head-held-high
The "I am" :

The angel answers, looking upward to the source of the trumpet call:

Thus you live in the earth-body
as man's true being.

And we accept these last two lines which the angel speaks in our meditation as teaching.

[The first verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Starry-cosmic-spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!
When human-spirit-radiance
Speaks with head-held-high*

— the scrolled together starry radiance, the human radiance —

The "I am" :

The spiritual teacher Angelos:

*Thus you live in the earth-body
as man's true being.*

— Starry-cosmic-spaces, Dwellings-of-the-gods! —

That is the first dialog with the cosmos and with the third hierarchy. Seen this way it is a deeply penetrating meditation on the human spirit, human soul and human body.

Now we go further to the rhythmic organization of man. We think of the lungs and the heart, the wonderful pulsation, the rhythm of breathing which by its very nature reveals that it is the expression of the deepest cosmic laws, the movement of which we sense in us. When we concentrate in meditation on our head, we sense rest. When we meditate on our breast, we feel movement. And this movement is an image of the movement of the planets, of the moon, the sun, of Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn. But a representative of this movement is the sun. It is closest to us. Every day it circles around our earth — in appearance. It can therefore stand as representative. But just as we carry within us the starry-cosmic-spaces, dwellings-of-the-gods, rolled together, so also the movements of the whole planetary system — represented by the sun — in our breathing, in our blood circulation, in everything which is movement in our organism.

Therefore we must imagine that just as the sublimity of the dwellings-of-the-gods was announced by the trumpet calls from all sides of the cosmos, also what the movements of the planets, represented by the sun, have to say through melodious sound courses through our bodies:

Cosmic sun circling
Paths of spirits acting!

That is the second thing: stillness in comparison to the loud trumpet-call of the cosmic surroundings.

Starry-cosmic- spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!

It resounds majestically from all sides. That is what we must meditate on. But following on the path of the sun and the other planets in our breathing and in our blood circulation it resounds joyfully within us:

Cosmic sun circling
Paths of spirits acting!

Now we say intimately from within us, if we take as inducement what
resounds melodiously from the star-circles into our own bodies:

Resound in heart's center
Human-soul-weaving
The "I live" :

The Angelos replies, speaking to the gods in the circling planets:

So you stride in earth's course
As humanity's creative force.

Just as the human being lives on the earth by means of what radiates
into him from the dwellings of the gods, so does the human creative
evolutionary force live by means of the activity of the gods in the
planets' movements, which is also received into man's rhythmic
system. Thus we have again the threefold verse: objective murmur
through our body in the sense of the planets' course; our own intimate
speech; the Angelos' reply:

Cosmic sun circling
Paths of spirits acting!
Resound in heart's center
Human-soul-weaving
The "I live":
Thus you stride in earth's course
As humanity's creative force.

[These lines are now written on the blackboard.]

*Cosmic sun circling,
Paths of spirits acting!
Resound in heart's center.*

— above "speaks", here "resounds"; above "head-held-high"; here
"heart's center" —

*Human-soul-weaving
The "I live":*

— above "I am"; here "I live" —

*Thus you stride in earth's course
As humanity's creative force.*

Each of these verses must be felt as being threefold in their coming into being: The objective resounding; our own intimate speech as the echo within us; the speech of the Angelos. Then it works correctly in us.

However, when we come to the third element of man — what lives in the arms and legs and continues inward in metabolism — then we do not hear the trumpet calls from the cosmos, then we do not hear the melodiousness of the planets, then we hear the dull rumbling of the world-foundation itself. It is what makes us earth-people. The limbs do not participate in our spiritual being. They are completely shaped according to the earthly forces: the arms and hands are only partly shaped by the air forces, but otherwise all is shaped by the forces that arise from out of the cosmic foundations and flow up through human beings. We must be conscious of this. Just as we hear in the first verse the language of the cosmos itself in the majestic tones coming from the cosmic periphery, as we hear the speech of the periphery in the second verse, we hear the rumbling speech of cosmic foundation from the depths of the earth in the third verse:

Cosmic-foundation-powers,
Creator's luster of love!

It is not a luster of light, it is a luster of love. For in those places where otherwise what is in the periphery is gathered in the center is where the source of the love-forces also lie. Therefore we cannot answer in echo "speaks" and also not "resounds", here we must answer with the deed, with what flows from the will. We must not "speak", not "resound", here we must "create". Therefore we answer from within pouring will into our words:

Create in the body's limbs
Human-action-streams
The "I will":

Then the angel answers in that he lowers his eyes to what is rumbling from the cosmic-foundations — "rumbling" not in an antipathetic sense, but only in the dullness of the tone — the active forces answer

which resound in the cosmic-foundation's depths:

Thus do you strive in earthly works
as human sensory deeds.

Again the threefold verse:

Cosmic-foundation-powers,
Creator's luster of love!
Create in the body's limbs
Human-action-streams
The "I will":
Thus do you strive in earthly works
as human sensory deeds.

[This third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Cosmic-foundation-powers,
Creator's luster of love!
Creates in the body's limbs*

"speaks", "resounds", "creates" — [creates is underlined.]

— "height", "center", "limbs", what strives from the center outwards
— ["limbs" is underlined.]

*Human-action-streams
The "I will":*

— "I am", "live", " will" — ["will" is underlined.]

Thus do you strive in earthly works

— "earthly-body", Earthly-path, earthly-works" [the three words are underlined.]

as human sensory deeds.

— "being", "creative force", "sensory deeds", which means: deeds visible to the senses — [the three words in quotation marks are underlined.]

True meditation, true exercise of the soul is not found in the theoretical, intellectual content of a meditation verse, but in its mantric character. The mantric character is present when the meaning dissolves into situation and happening and when we free ourselves from the theoretical, from the intellectual content, go out from ourselves, so that we do not merely have something vague in our thoughts, but have the idea that the sky, that the periphery, that the earthly depths resound; that we reply to these sounds from our own intimate inner self; that the angel interprets and teaches.

We should try to attain such an ideal setting, that is, to make meditation something in which we don't merely think, feel or will, but which also streams and weaves and radiates around us, and from all this something steps back into the life of the heart and in the heart it is streaming, weaving, striving and vibrantly radiating so that we feel ourselves integrated in the life of the world, of the cosmos, so that our meditation is not something that only lives in us, in our feeling, but which lives in us and the world; it extinguishes the world, extinguishes us, and in extinguishing unites us and the world, so that we can just as easily say: "The world is speaking" as we can say "We are speaking". This gradually enhances the character of the meditation.

If the meditation is practiced in this way, — by extinguishing what has always seemed to be one's ordinary self — it is possible to perceive oneself as spirit.

When, however, we start along this path of knowledge, when we honestly approach such paths of knowledge, we learn that we are not alone in the world, that we are in a dialog with the spiritual world, and through this we approach closer and closer to a renewal of the Mysteries. Of course physical, outer temples stood in places on the earth which today are considered to be uncivilized. Outer temples stood there, and early peoples needed outer temples. But these temples were not the only ones, not even the most important ones. For the most important temples have no place, have no time. One comes to them if one exercises the soul in the way that has been indicated here and in the Mysteries of all times.

In order to be clear, my dear sisters and brothers, if we live in such a mantric formula, it is thus:

Here I stand — each of us says rightly — and all around me is the everyday world. Bourgeois walls and chairs are around me, or perhaps a natural forest, visible trees, or houses. It is all there. I am fully aware that this is my environment; it is there and I see and touch it. But the meditation arises in my soul while I am in the external, sensory world. The meditation arises in me:

Starry-cosmic-spaces,
Dwellings-of-the-gods!
When human-spirit-radiance
Speaks with head-held-high
The "I am" :
Thus you live in an earthly body
Now as a human being.

Welten-Sternen-Stätten,
Götter-Heimat-Orte!
Spricht in Haupteshöhe
Menschen-Geistes-Strahlung
Das "Ich bin":
So lebt Ihr im Erdenleibe
Als Menschen-Wesenheit.

What do I sense moving? What do I sense arching over me? It is something; it is nothing. I sense walls, I don't see them.

The meditation continues:

Cosmic sun circles
Paths of spirits acting!
Resound in heart's center
Human-soul-weaving
The "I live":
Thus you stride in earth's course
As humanity's creative force.

Welten-Sonnen-Kreise,
Geister-Wirkens-Wege!
Tönt in Herzensmitte
Menschen-Seelen-Weben
Das "Ich lebe":
So schreitet Ihr im Erdewandel
Als Menschen-Schöpferkraft.

What I sensed — the moving, the temple dome which arches above, the temple walls. It is all becoming clear for the soul's senses, making the normal world invisible, the world of visible trees, clouds, everything which before was visible. A new visibility appears. The temple, which I only sensed at first, becomes real in the second verse.

And I hear the murmuring, the hissing and rumbling from below:

Cosmic-foundation-powers,
Creator's luster of love!
Create in the body's limbs
Human-action-streams
The "I will":
Thus do you strive in earthly works
as human sensory deeds.

Welten-Grundes-Mächte,
Schöpfer-Liebes-Glänzen!
Schafft in Leibesgliedern
Menschen-Wirkens-Strömung
Das "Ich will":
So strebt Ihr im Erdenwerke
Als Menschen-Sinnes-Taten.

The temple is complete. It has acquired its foundation. And in it are those spiritual beings with whom we wish to be in communion. The temple is there, visible to the soul's senses. It has been found.

Our meditation does not contain visions. It leads us into the spiritual world. The spiritual world exists. I am describing, my dear sisters and brothers, how the meditation can proceed: the moving temple dome is

sensed after the first verse; see the temple around us with the soul's senses. The temple is complete, and the beings with whom we wish to be in communion as humanity's teachers — the godly teachers — are there. We are within the temple, accomplished by the first, second and third verses of a true mantric meditation.

When we become aware that we are finding the temple, then we correctly understand what the content of this esoteric school is meant to be.

** Miss Maryon: **Edith Louisa Maryon** (London, 9 February 1872 – 2 May 1924 in Dornach, Switzerland) was an English sculptor. She belonged to the innermost circle of founders of anthroposophy and those around Rudolf Steiner. Maryon met Rudolf Steiner in 1912/13 and after the summer of 1914 she moved to Dornach. She worked with Steiner on the construction of the first Goetheanum, where she along with Steiner worked on the sculpture, *The Representative of Humanity*. She served as the head of the Section of Fine Arts at the Goetheanum. She died of tuberculosis.*



Lesson 12

11 May 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

First let us recite the verse which reminds us of what comes from the cosmos itself as an invitation to knowledge:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks so vastly cosmic?
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?
Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow?

Self-knowledge, my dear sisters and brothers, is what, in a spiritual sense, can lead to cosmic knowledge. And it has often been said that understanding must exist for true spiritual cosmic knowledge to stream out of the spiritual world itself; that we must understand that the person who is able to transmit such knowledge from the spiritual world must approach the threshold; that the Guardian of the Threshold stands at the threshold, the Guardian who protects the person in normal consciousness from entering the spiritual world unprepared.

But it is just when one gets to know this Guardian – at first by means of healthy human understanding – then later in its true form, in its real essence, then the Guardian makes known to us the admonishments if we wish to enter the spiritual world in the right way, and then to stand within the experiences of the spiritual world.

It has also often been said that this living in the spiritual world is mostly mistakenly imagined, because one wants something different than really standing within the spiritual world. One wants something which is similar to the sense perceptible world. It is super-sensible though, and can therefor not lead to envisioning something similar to what is seen through the senses. This imaginative-super-sensible envisioning is only an image. It must lead to a real experience of the spiritual world. And many of you, my dear sisters and brothers, have this experience of the spiritual more so than you think. You are only not aware of it. You do not pay attention to how the spirit acts and weaves within psychic experience. It works and weaves. And it is a matter of mustering the intimate mindfulness necessary for perceiving this working and weaving.

Therefore more and more real indications should be given to enable you to feel how the human soul lives in the spiritual world – for knowledge is meant to flow to you directly from the spiritual world through these class lessons, my sisters and brothers. And the following can be such an indication.

Take any of the mantras or other verses and recite it. It doesn't matter much which one it is, it can be any mantra you are familiar with. For your meditation select any mantra and recite it in the fairest way you can. Do it therefor not loudly, but in a soft, gentle manner:

.....

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.*

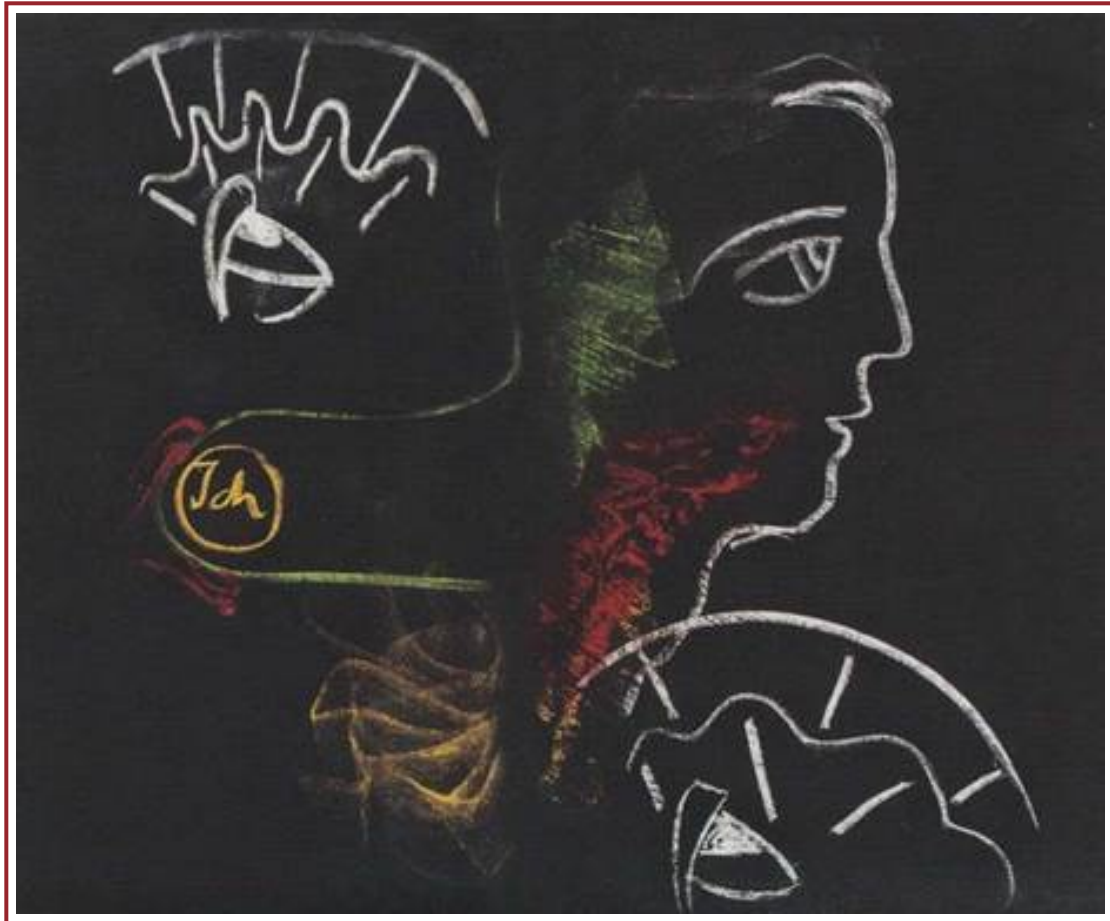
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And then, once you have recited such a mantra to yourself, try to sense how the reciting reacts within you. Try to come to the point where you can sense the speaking, that you sense the difference in your bodies between when you are silent and when you are speaking. Try to sense the speaking in your organism, how it passes through. You will sense it as all kinds of pressure and wave currents in the speech organs.

And when you have sensed this, ask yourselves: When I think something, due to someone talking to me or some other event that makes an impression on me relative to the present: Can I also sense that?

Well, if you have learned to sense speaking, then you will easily be able to sense the thinking which is directly induced by the immediate present. It is lighter and more delicate to sense than speaking, but it can be sensed. And you can learn to sense, to feel thinking by sensing speech.

Then, just as you can sense speech, you can also sense thinking. Then you will be able to touch, touch internally that is, perceive internally, thus: [draws: white outline of a profile]. When speaking is sensed so that it must be moved here [red], you will sense thinking here above [green]. That is, the sense of thinking is moved somewhat up against the back of the head.



It is good to practice such an exercise, for it acts as a guide to intimate self-observation.

And now you proceed, my dear sisters and brothers, to make a thought active, a remembrance-thought, one which you had days, weeks or months ago and which you can activate just as well now, and try to sense, to feel such a remembrance-thought. And you will have the sensation: I feel this under the region of speech, I feel it here below, under the region of speech [yellow]. And you will then say to yourselves: When I speak, I experience it in the region of my speech organs; when I think, I experience it above in the head, when I remember, I experience it under the region of speech.

When this becomes an intimate experience for you, when you really feel it, then you have grasped something spiritual, which can be the beginning of a progressively increasing spiritual understanding. But a substantial seclusion from the outer events of the day is necessary in

order to sense this. It is not good to say: Yes, but in order to achieve such seclusion I'll have to take a few weeks off and go to where there are no people, where nothing can bother me, where I will have absolute peace and quiet, for example in a hut on Mont Blanc. It is not good to think like that, because you will never progress that way. It is better to stand within the tumult of life, exposed to what life brings from morning to night and nevertheless dedicate by strength of soul a period of time, be it ever so short, when you are completely outside of the world's tumult, but at the same time within it, purely by means of your inner force. That is best. To withdraw in solitude in order to have peace is not what works best, but rather to create solitude through one's own forces. That is what definitely and securely can lead to the goal. This is a good foundation for meditating in the right way.

You have learned mantras, my dear sisters and brothers, which are spoken quietly from the soul. The first mantras in these lessons were like that. We have however advanced to mantras which partly ring out to us from the soul and also partly must be imagined as resounding to us from out of the distant universe; where we therefor do not inwardly meditate speaking, but where we inwardly meditate hearing. We imagine ourselves as being transferred to where we hear what is being spoken to us whether it is by the cosmos or by the spirit-beings. And it is just this transferring to a condition in which other beings speak to us that creates the condition which is conducive to feeling that we are in the spiritual world.

Today's mantras will be given with this objective. The mind, the soul should imagine itself as being perfectly silent. But the soul should also imagine itself to already be on the other side of the threshold standing before the Guardian in the spiritual world. And, although being perfectly silent itself, it hears three sounds. The first sound comes from the distant universe; the second from the Guardian. And the third comes from the beings who will be identified later in the mantra. That is how the mantra which is presented to your souls today is to be understood.

Thus, coming from all sides of the distant universe:

Listen to the field of thinking.

It's a question of becoming enlightened concerning the true nature of thinking through a spiritually cosmic experience.

Then the Guardian speaks. After the resounding to us from the distant universe – we must experience this situation spiritually – the Guardian speaks the next three lines:

The one who wants to shows to you

The paths from life on earth to life

On earth in spirit light does speak.

That is the Guardian speaking.

Then the angel who shows us the path from earthly life to earthly life speaks:

Behold your senses' shining radiance.

This is the being who as an angel-being, as angelos, guides us from incarnation to incarnation. It speaks of these goals. We hear them in inner contemplation.

Again the Guardian speaks:

The one who wants to carry you,

Your soul conveyed to souls

in regions matter-free, speaks.

And the next lines are spoken by the being who watches over us from the hierarchy of Archangels:

Behold the forces working in your thinking.

That goes above, to where the Archangels are.

First we had "Behold your senses' shining radiance." This means that for the senses the sun shines and the senses do not; in reality, though, our senses also shine, except that while our senses are

shining we are not aware of it. So the being who belongs to us from the ranks of angels admonishes us: "Behold your senses' shining radiance."

In general we think in normal consciousness; but we do not apprehend thinking; we do not sense it, we do not feel it. The being who belongs to us from the ranks of the archangels admonishes us: "Behold the forces working in your thinking."

Now we ascend to where the Archai are. The Guardian advises us that we should listen to the admonishment of the being from the ranks of the Archai. The next three lines are those of the Guardian:

The one speaks who among spirits

in earth-distant fields of creation

Desires to give you the ground of being.

I could also say the "throne of being", but "ground of being" is better, for it is what is to be given to you by the one who wants a spiritual ground in the spiritual field for you, just as here in the sensory field you are standing on physical ground.

After the Guardian of the Threshold has thus spoken, the being from the ranks of the Archai speaks:

Behold the imagery of remembrance.

That is third. First we should see the radiance of the senses, then the forces of thinking working in us, then what lies deep down, below speech, in the memory images: "Behold" the imagery of remembrance.

Thus have we listened with quiet souls to the threefold voice speaking to us: speaking from the cosmos in the very first lines: "Listen to the field of thinking". Then to the intervening three lines by the Guardian of the Threshold, and then to the beings who belong to us from the ranks of the hierarchies, always using paradigmatic lines which are meant to speak to the deepest levels of our being. Together it is like this:

Listen to the field of thinking:

The one who wants to shows to you

The paths from life on earth to life

On earth in spirit light does speak.

Behold your senses' shining radiance.

The one who wants to carry you,

Your soul conveyed to souls

in regions matter-free, speaks.

Behold the forces working in your thinking.

The one speaks who among spirits

in earth-distant fields of creation

Desires to give you the ground of being.

Behold the imagery of remembrance.

[The first mantra is written on the blackboard. The word "thinking" in the first line is underlined as well as the last lines of 1,2,3.]

I. Listen to the field of thinking:

1.) The one who wants to show to you

The paths from life on earth to life

On earth in spirit light does speak.

Behold your senses' shining radiance.

2.) The one who wants to carry you,

Your soul conveyed to souls

in regions matter-free, speaks.

Behold the forces working in your thinking.

3.) The one speaks who among spirits

in earth-distant fields of creation

Desires to give you the ground of being.

Behold the imagery of remembrance.

Therewith we have inwardly experienced the admonishments resounding from the three lower hierarchies for our self-knowledge:

the first from the hierarchy of the *Angeloi*

the second from the hierarchy of the *Archangeloi*

the third from the hierarchy of the *Archai*.

["Angeloi" is written beside part 1, "Archangeloi" beside part 2, "Archai" beside part 3.]

Before the exercise begins, concentration in the soul [mind] can be achieved by imagining a definite image, this image [drawing begins on the image above]: an eye looking upward [eye] and perceiving the higher hierarchies [arc], from which the cosmic forces stream into the eye [upper rays], which then perceives the circle of the lower hierarchies [wavy line], which reach up to the higher hierarchies and send the rays on the human beings [lower rays].

We call this image to mind and hold it there: the eye looking upward, the two lines – the circular one, the wavy one – the descending rays. And while doing the exercise, without thinking about it, the image remains before our soul: the image of the upward looking eye.

Then we hear again, resounding from all sides of the cosmos:

Perceive the field of feeling.

The Guardian then speaks the next three lines:

The one who speaks as thought

From the sun-rays of the spirit

Recalls you to cosmic existence.

It is now a higher language, the language that resounds from higher hierarchies. Whereas there [indicates the first mantra] we are made more attentive to what is already within us, in this mantra we are spoken to by the Guardian in a manner which does not only call us to observe our senses, our thinking and our memories, but we are now meant to hear how we are being called into cosmic being itself. This resounds from the hierarchy of the Exusiai.

Then the one who belongs to us from the hierarchy of the Exusiai speaks:

Feel in your breath life awakening.

Again the Guardian speaks the next three lines:

The one speaks who gives to you

From the stars' living forces

Cosmic being in spirit kingdoms.

Then the being from the hierarchy of the Dynamis speaks:

Feel in your blood's weaving waves.

We must feel the world's weaving movement continued in the weaving waves of our blood.

And the Guardian speaks once more, now advising us that we should listen to what the being from the rank of Kyriotetes says:

The one speaks who wants to create

In the light of the divine heights

The sense of spirit from earthly will.

Then this being from the ranks of the Kyriotetes speaks:

Feel the earth's mighty resistance.

For only if we feel this mighty resistance of the earth's forces can we enter correctly into the world of pure spirit.

Therefore the experience of this mantra must be felt:

Perceive the field of feeling:

The one who speaks as thought

from the sun-rays of the spirit

calls you to cosmic existence:

Feel in your breath life awakening.

The one speaks who gives to you

From the stars' living forces

Cosmic being in spirit kingdoms:

Feel in your blood's weaving waves.

The one speaks who wants to create

In the light of the divine heights

The sense of spirit from earthly will.

Feel the earth's mighty resistance.

It is the ascent to the rank of the second hierarchy where self-knowledge asserts itself in us, where the Guardian advises us that a being from the ranks of the Exusiai will speak to us.

Well, my dear sisters and brothers, we think in earthly life; our thoughts are almost nullities. But when a being from the ranks of the Exusiai thinks, he is thinking us. Our I is being thought. And it, our I,

exists as a thought by a being from the ranks of the Exusiai. When on earth we speak "I" to ourselves, where are we looking? Yes, this I: when we say "I" [drawing: circle with the word "Ich", yellow], we are looking back at this *Ich* [red arrows], and say the word "I" [Ich]. But for a being from the ranks of the Exusiai [green line] this I-thought is a real thought. We exist in that we are thought by beings from the ranks of the Exusiai. And when we say "I" to ourselves we are confirming that we are being thought by divine beings. **And it is in this being thought by divine beings that our higher being consists.**

Then: A being from the ranks of the Dynamis reminds us that the spiritual existence we receive from him as a gift comes from the life-forces taken from the stars.

And a being from the ranks of the Kyriotetes reminds us that what exists in us on earth as will is taken out to the heavenly heights and after the transformation which it undergoes there it is returned to us so that we can then also use it as spirit-will. Earthly will is only a transformation of spirit-will. Earthly will is constantly being taken up and brought down again. Above it is heavenly will; below it is earthly will. Finally the Guardian reminds us that a being from the ranks of the Kyriotetes is saying: "Feel the earth's mighty resistance." When we feel the earth's resistance, we feel the benefit, the grace inherent in the bestowing of forces from the heavenly heights.

[Mantra II is written on the blackboard. In the first line "feeling" is underlined, and the last lines of Parts 1,2 and 3 are also underlined.]

II.) Perceive the field of feeling.

1.) The one who speaks as thought

from the sun-rays of the spirit

calls you to cosmic existence:

Feel in your breath life awakening.

2.) The one speaks who gives to you

From the stars' living forces

Cosmic being in spirit kingdoms:

Feel in your blood's weaving waves.

3.) The one speaks who wants to create

In the light of the divine heights

The sense of spirit from earthly will.

Feel the earth's mighty resistance.

This, then, is the second mantra (recites it):

Perceive the field of feeling:

The one who speaks as thought

from the sun-rays of the spirit

calls you to cosmic existence:

Feel in your breath life awakening.

The one speaks who gives to you

From the stars' living forces

Cosmic being in spirit kingdoms:

Feel in your blood's weaving waves.

The one speaks who wants to create

In the light of the divine heights

The sense of spirit from earthly will.

Feel the earth's mighty resistance.

The first resounds from the ranks of the *Exusiai*

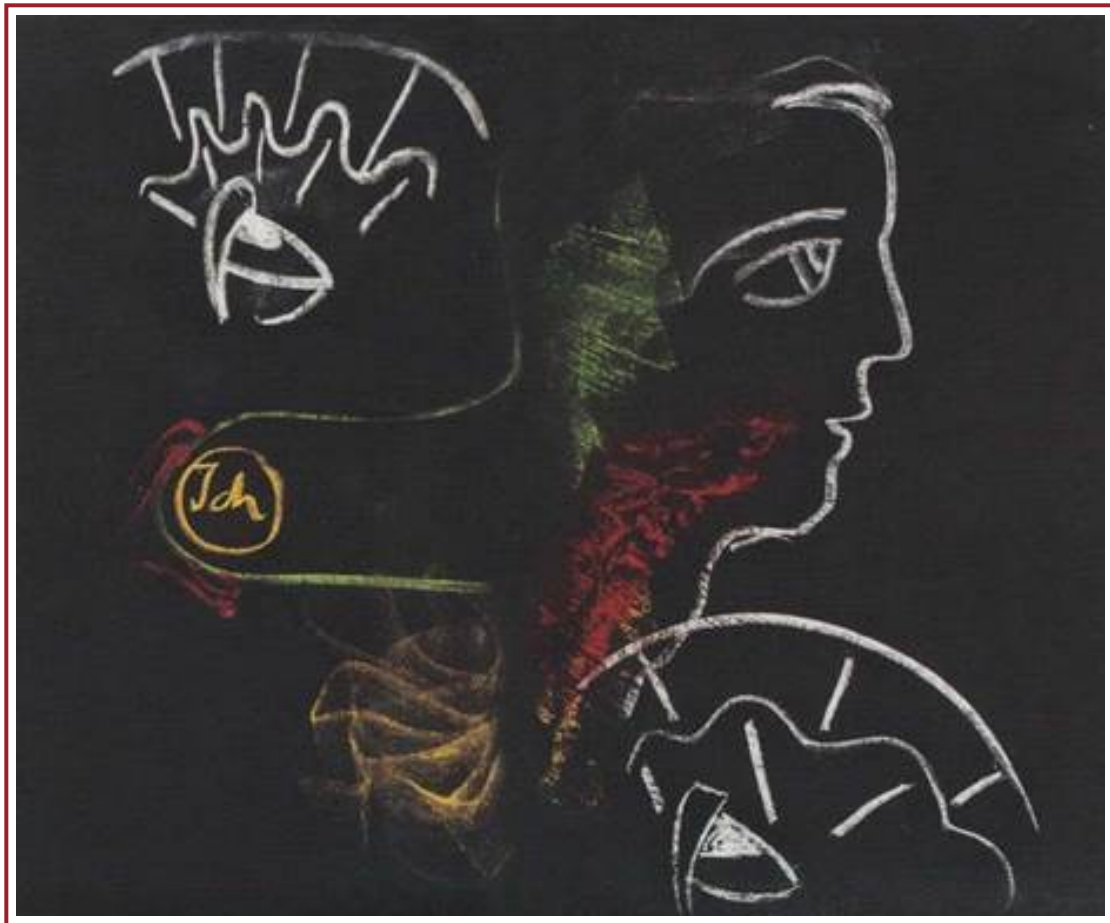
The second from the ranks of the *Dynamis*

The third from the ranks of the *Kyriotetes*

[Exusiai is written alongside part1; Dynamis alongside part 2, Kyriotetes alongside part 3.]

And finally, in order to remember the image we have placed before us after all this has taken place within us, and in order to have a clear experience of it, we recall the image – although we realize that it has been before us during the whole exercise – but we want to place it once more before our souls.

[In the image already drawn on the blackboard, the eye, arc, upper rays, wavy lines, lower rays are drawn again.]



The ascent to the ranks of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones will be added to these in the next class lesson. But now it is appropriate to clarify the meaning of the whole.

My dear sisters and brothers, at the beginning of today's lesson the words from cosmic-being instructed us to practice self-knowledge. Self-knowledge, it was said, leads to world-knowledge; but only if the Self can be in connection with the world.

But the Self does not exist in relation to an external natural entity or process, but alone in relation to the spiritual world. That is where the beings of the hierarchies are. So if we really wish to penetrate into our Self, into our I, then we must experience it together with the beings from the hierarchies and not with external nature. For what we can call our I in external nature is only the distant echo of the I. The true I exists in the same realms as these beings of the higher hierarchies.

Therefore in entering the realm of self-knowledge we must also enter the realm of the higher hierarchies. Then we must hear the speech of the higher hierarchies.

The admonishments of the Guardian of the threshold always intervene in order that we do this with all our strength, that we do not make it into a mere bloodless theory. In order that the whole content in the meditation appear before us in all its majesty, we hear the two – and as we will soon hear, three – forceful admonishments from the cosmos: "Behold the field of thinking", "Behold the field of feeling".

Only if we feel the language in such a living, threefold way, and if we experience ourselves within the spiritual world as described in the mantras, then these things will be able to help us advance. For only then will we feel them with the right attitude. We must seek this mental attitude above all. For inner consecration must be there if the meditation is to contribute to initiation. And this inner consecration comes only from the attitude through which we are displaced from the outer world for a while and live exclusively within the content and elements of the meditation. If we can do this so that self-knowledge is not merely an inner brooding, but is an explicit conversation with the universe, the Guardian and the Hierarchies, then we will find ourselves in possession of true self-knowledge.

Basically, we should even avoid thinking about such things if we cannot simultaneously evoke the appropriate mental attitude. We should only think about what has been presented today if we can really evoke this inner attitude in the soul, which consists in simply feeling that the sublime majesty from the universe, from the cosmic distances, comes to us like cosmic thunder; that a softly admonishing voice intervenes which comes from the Guardian of the Threshold; and that then one of the beings of the Hierarchies urgently speaks.

Only when we remember this and when we evoke the feeling related to this remembering, should we even think of these mantras or create an inner connection with them, so that we do not desecrate them inwardly, desecrate their force – that we do not think of them with the usual, dry, common way of thinking, which we would think if we did not first evoke the appropriate attitude, the inner mood.

And we therefore should achieve the inner mental attitude to feel that human self-knowledge is something solemn, earnest and holy and that these things should only be spoken internally by the soul – let alone externally – when they are felt to be earnest, solemn, consecrated.

It is a great hindrance to progress on the esoteric path that so much is spoken about these things in a cliquish manner, even with a whiff of vanity and gossip, when this earnest, solemn attitude of consecration has not been developed. We don't realize then that in esoteric life everything depends on the pure, absolute truth prevailing. Whoever does not recognize this – that in esoteric life truth, absolute truth must prevail – can do nothing in esoteric life; that one cannot merely speak of the truth and then regard things as one does as usual in profane life. That happens when we make these things the object of idle gossip.

And this idle gossip which is so much practiced is what throws so many hindrances and obstructions on the esoteric path. And we must necessarily bring together everything related to self-knowledge with an earnest, solemn consecrated attitude. Then we will have allowed the words to correctly work on our souls which were spoken at the beginning of the Class lesson and will be repeated now at the end:

O man, know thyself!

Yes, that is a guide to self-knowledge:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the cosmic-word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks so vastly cosmic?
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who

In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow?

Essentially it is a question. The answer is found in the mantras given today.

Translators' note:

Indeed it is a question. However, all the German originals (see below) here and in future lessons end the last line with a period instead of a question mark. Why, I don't know. Nevertheless, I am using a question mark in English, which seems the correct thing to do.

O Mensch, erkenne dich selbst!
So tönt das Weltenwort.
Du hörst es seelenkräftig,
Du fühlst es geistgewaltig.

Wer spricht so weltenmächtig?
Wer spricht so herzinniglich?

Wirkt es durch des Raumes Weitensgtrahlung
In deines Sinnes Seinserleben?
Tönt es durch der Zeiten Wellenweben?
In deines Lebens Werdestrom?

Bist du es selbst, der sich
Im Raumesfühlen, im Zeiterleben

Das Wort erschafft, dich fremd
Erfühlend in Raumes Seelenleere,
Weil du des Denkens Kraft
Verlierst im Zeitvernichtungsstrom.



Lesson 13

17 May 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

First of all we shall speak the imperative words from the spirit of the cosmos which urge us to self-observation for knowledge of our being:

O man, know thyself!
So sounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks from depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

Well, my dear sisters and brothers, in the previous lesson we tried to find the inner psychic words which can bring our humanity into contact with what is revealed by the spiritual hierarchies – with which the human spirit is closely related. We placed before our souls how by

concentrating on the field of thinking we could rise up to the region where the beings of the third hierarchy reside, so to speak: the Angels, Archangels and Archai.

Not meant is our everyday thinking, but the thinking which acts behind that everyday thinking, which we can only achieve from our whole being by meditating deeply on the words which begin with: "Perceive the field of thinking."

And I also pointed out last time how this thinking can be perceived in the human organism itself *above* the region of speech; whereas the field of memory-thought can be felt *under* the region of speech. In respect to the region of speech itself: when we say something innerly and intensely in a low voice, or even out loud, we feel the speaking within and we can designate the place where we feel the speaking within us. Then we have a starting point, for it is more or less easy to experience this speech.

And over the speaking, more toward the rear of the head, we can find the inner thinking through which we can discover the Angeloi; in the speaking itself the Archangeloi; and in remembrance, under the speaking, the Archai can be felt.

And the mantric verse which leads us to this point was described in the previous class lesson.

By means of this verse we imagine how at first cosmic space speaks, the universe itself resounds to us, so to speak, and therewith the Guardian of the Threshold tells us to be attentive to what the beings related to us from the ranks of the third hierarchy, the Angeloi, have to say.

Then, secondly, how the Guardian of the Threshold again admonishes us to be attentive to the beings related to us from the ranks of the Archangeloi.

And thirdly, the Guardian again admonishes us to listen attentively to the beings related to us from the ranks of the Archai. So we should imagine this mantric verse so that we hear the universe from the distant cosmos resounding to us, and hear the Guardian and the hierarchies speaking:

Perceive the field of thinking:

The one who wants to show to you
paths from life on earth to life
earth in spirit light does speak.

Behold your senses' shining radiance.

The one who wants to carry you,
Your soul conveyed to souls
regions matter-free, speaks.

Behold the forces working in your thinking.

The one speaks who among spirits
earth-distant fields of creation
Desires to give you the ground of being.

Behold the imagery of remembrance.

So if we can always feel ourselves in this situation – the cosmic distances speaking to us, the Guardian of the Threshold speaking to us, the ranks of the hierarchies speaking to us, if we can vividly imagine it as though it were around us, then in relation to the schematic picture I drew on the blackboard the last time, we gradually come to sense the thinking above the place of speech in the back of the head, through which we approach the movement and the life of the third hierarchy.

And so, my dear sisters and brothers, we can say that by means of this mantric verse we come in contact with the beings of the third hierarchy.

Likewise do we come into contact with the beings of the second hierarchy through the second mantric verse, which was also set forth and which should also be felt and spiritually perceived. We should ignore the fact that we are saying it; we should transpose ourselves into the situation I described.

Perceive the field of feeling:

The one who speaks as thought
from the sun-rays of the spirit
calls you to cosmic existence:

Feel in your breath life awakening.

The one speaks who gives to you
From the stars' living forces
Cosmic being in spirit kingdoms:
 Feel in your blood's weaving waves.

The one speaks who wants to create
the light of the divine heights
sense of spirit from earthly will.
 Feel the earth's mighty resistance.

Thus we come into contact with the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, An inner connection is created between the feeling sphere – breathing and blood circulation – and where the will arises, but which is only *felt* as will – and through which a connection is created between everything in our humanity and the beings of the second hierarchy.

What remains for us to consider today, my dear sisters and brothers, is the field of volition, of will. The field of the will is the one which most dominates the human being, which acts most strongly in him, but is also the one which is least experienced with real attention. For man usually knows little of how the will acts.

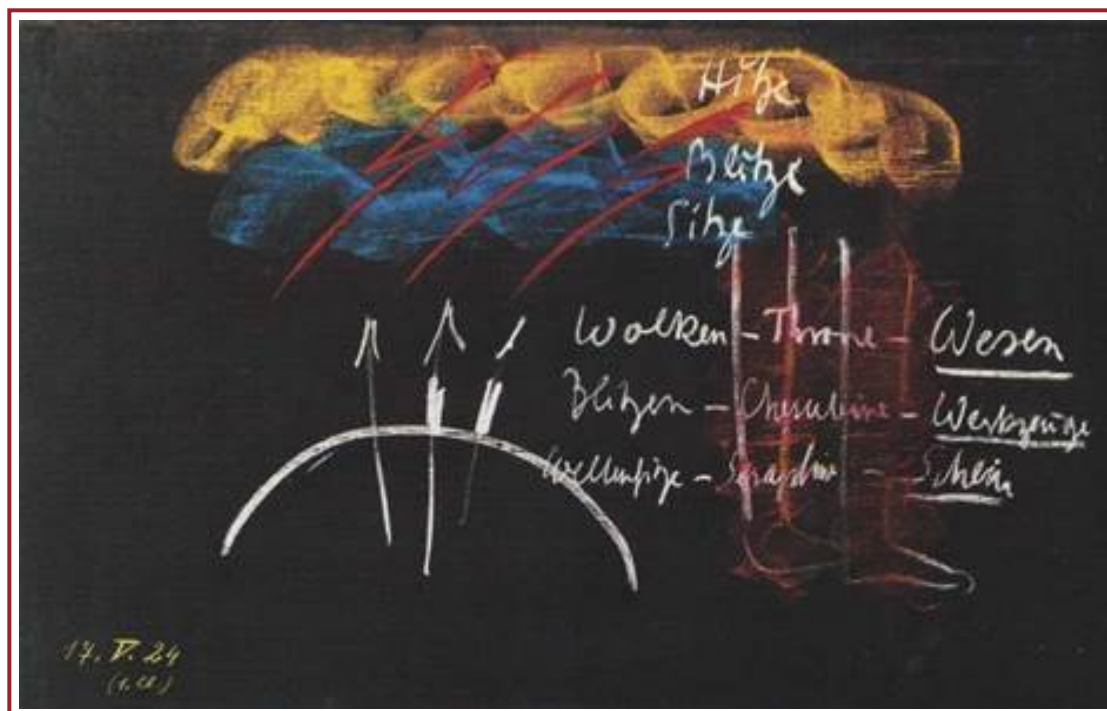
Let us take first where the will is most evident in the human organism, that is, when the human organism is set in motion.

You must, my dear sisters and brothers, adopt these intimate concepts if you want to penetrate into what the spirit which speaks through this esoteric school wishes to indicate as the path.

Imagine yourself walking, and perhaps moving your arms. Normally we think that we move our legs and the legs carry us forward. This is the most convenient idea one can have. We think that an unknown force – it is of course an unknown force, for nobody with normal consciousness can know anything about this force – streams into the legs. Each leg is placed before the other. Thus we carry ourselves through the world.

But such is not the case. In no way do the legs have the primary task of carrying us through the world. It is simply not true. Here we come to a subject where normal consciousness immediately shows its maya; for it is maya when we believe that we walk with the legs, with the physical legs, that the physical legs exist for walking.

Of course this does not mean, my dear sisters and brothers, that you should go out into the world of triviality and cry out-loud: "It is not true that man has his legs in order to walk." For that would of course not be understood at first. Because the profound sense in which it is true is unknown – that almost everything normal consciousness offers us at first is maya, the great illusion. The great illusion does not only include what we observe around us, but also how we experience ourselves in the world.



Imagine the following [drawing]: these are human legs – where each one strides before the other [white legs]. But within these physical human legs is the human etheric body [red] — the part of the human etheric body that corresponds to the legs; here is the astral body [yellow] — the part which corresponds to the legs, and then the I-organization [violet]. We don't walk with the physical legs, we don't walk with the etheric legs, not even with the astral legs, but we walk with the forces that correspond to the I-organization. We live with these forces, which correspond to the I-organization, in the gravitational forces of the earth, which are of course invisible. [drawing: arc with arrows]. These gravitational forces of the earth we experience with our I-organization forces [short strokes on the

arrows] – and the will which governs movement – which acts between the invisible I-organization and the invisible gravitational forces of the earth.

Now the I-organization is so constituted that it needs to feel something like resistance when it comes into contact with the earth's gravitational forces. The legs' astral body serves this purpose, also the etheric body and, especially, the physical body, in order that the I-organization can feel itself, can perceive itself. And without this perception it could not have a connection with the earth-organization – because it must be conscious of this connection. In order that in walking the I-organization may be conscious of itself and come into contact with the earth-organization, the physical and the other organizations are present.

Therefore, walking is a super-sensible process. The sensible organization is only present in order that the walking be perceived, because it can be accomplished only when it is perceived. You no more walk with your legs, my dear sisters and brothers, than you do with your stockings. You walk with what corresponds to your I-organization in your legs. And just as you have stockings to provide warmth, so do you have physical legs in order to provide consciousness for walking.

What I have just said must be felt. We must learn to feel when walking that walking is a super-sensible process, and that the sensible is only there in order to provide consciousness of the process. During waking earth-life this consciousness is created in a less than perfect way, because our legs are also heavy, so we not only come into contact with the gravitational pull of the earth, but also with the gravitational force that acts in our legs. Therefore, when we are not using our physical legs, as in sleep, we speed around the universe in the I and astral body in a much more agile way than when we move about in physical life. We do move about during sleep, only we have no consciousness of doing so, because the physical legs provide that consciousness.

Who is it then who provides us with the capacity for movement during sleep – and then also during clairvoyance? We are able to move, I said, in physical life because the movement becomes conscious through the physical legs. Who, my dear friends, does that instead

when we are sleeping? Those beings who connect with us for the purpose of movement when we are sleeping. They are the Thrones, beings of the First Hierarchy. However, with normal consciousness, with normal sleeping consciousness, man cannot perceive the Thrones; therefore, it doesn't help. But when through intuition he is capable of perceiving what happens during sleep, he becomes aware that during sleep he is in contact with a higher world through the Thrones, just as in physical life he is in contact with normal earth life through his physical legs.

All this we must translate into feeling. We must learn to sense it. And then we will sense the interweaving, undulating spiritual world in which we always are.

And we can again rise to such an inner feeling and experience if we let it work upon us in this situation as we did in respect to the other mantras which I described for the field of thinking and the field of feeling: from out of the cosmos comes an urgent voice like thunder, then the Guardian of the Threshold tells us to listen to the Thrones speaking to us. The Thrones speak to us about the drives – as they are called – the instinctual drives which are transferred to our volition when we carry out an act of will.

Therefore, we will let the third part of this mantra work on us, as it resounds again from the cosmos:

Perceive the field of will

Then Guardian of the threshold:

The one who guides the cosmic forces
from the dull dark earth-foundations
into your limbs' movements, speaks:
Behold your fiery instinctual drives.

That is the first. The second leads us more into the soul [psychological] aspect. If we continue to investigate the human will's actions in this deep meditative practice we make a great discovery. And at some point humanity must make this discovery if it wishes to advance in the field of evolution.

Now I must indicate something to you, my dear sisters and brothers, something you all know, for normal consciousness is already aware of it. It is what we call the voice of conscience in us. The voice of conscience! But the voice of conscience calls out in an indeterminate way to human consciousness. Usually we do not rightly know what it is – in respect to our moral-psychological comportment – that comes from the mysterious depths of our souls and which we call the voice of conscience. With normal consciousness one does not penetrate so deeply into one's own being as to reach the voice of conscience. It ascends, but man does not reach it, so he does not look at it face to face.

And when man penetrates meditatively to the distant world of the Cherubim, the wisdom filled beings who live and act throughout the universe, he makes the great discovery that from the world of the cherubim an impulse enters into him within which the voice of conscience lives. Oh, the voice of conscience is of high origin, high being. It actually lives in the world of the Cherubim. From that world of the Cherubim it weaves itself into humanity and at first resounds from the depths of this humanity in an indeterminate way. But it is a great, mighty encounter when man, through intuition, can come into contact with the field of the Cherubim and encounter the world where his conscience lives and works. It is the greatest personal discovery anyone can make.

Therefore, the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us with the following words:

The one speaks who with grace
lets the clear spirit-rays from God's
fields of action, circulate in your blood:
Behold the soul-guide of your conscience.

In truth it is the spirit from the field of the Cherubim that circulates in the blood that constitutes the voice of conscience. The blood is physical in all the parts of our bodies; but in that it is physical in all the parts of our bodies, it carries the voice of conscience, along with other things. And the waves of Cherubim life interweave in our blood.

We will gain an important place for this meditation if we imagine the situation thus:

First speaks what originates in the universal distance:

Behold the field of will.

Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

The one who guides the cosmic forces
from the dull, dark earth-foundations
into your limbs' movements, speaks:

Then we imagine [drawing] interweaving clouds [blue] symbolizing the Thrones. And in that we imagine these interweaving clouds, we hear the Thrones, the voices from the first hierarchy:

Behold your fiery instinctual drives.

Then the Guardian of the Threshold continues:

The one speaks who with grace
lets the clear spirit-rays from God's
fields of action, circulate in your blood.

Now we imagine lightning [red] flashing through the clouds, for lightning is the tool of the Cherubim, the fiery swords of the Cherubim. As the lightning flashes through the clouds, we feel these flashes in the words:

Behold conscience's soul-guidance.

Then the Guardian of the Threshold speaks:

The one speaks who brings the accomplished in man

That is, the previous earth lives

Sensibly through death and birth,
breathe again in contemporary times.

Now we imagine the entire sky above the lightning with interweaving warmth [drawing: yellow], sending the lightning down with heat. And in this interweaving heat from the cosmos we sense the Seraphim's

speech:

Behold your destiny's spiritual trial

how destiny extends from earth-life to earth-life to the present earth-life.

This mantra is especially effective when it is felt combined in this way with the image. And we can prepare ourselves for this mantra by using the good German word "Sitze" – after denuding it of all triviality – instead of Thrones say "Sitze" (seats).

So imagine, my dear sisters and brothers, that you feel the word "Sitze",

[it is written on the blackboard:] *Sitze (seats)*

Flashes in the clouds; form the idea of clouds in your minds – the word "*Blitze*" (lightning bolts)

["Blitze" is written over "Sitze"] *Blitze (lightning bolts)*

again with the idea of "flashing through": the lightning flashing in the clouds. You form the word "Hitze".

["Hitze" is written over "Blitze"] *Hitze (heat)*

Universal heat; and feel in this threefold "i" [pronounced "ee"] the ascending from the cloud flashes to the lightning bolts and to the universal heat, from which the lightning bolts derive. You feel prepared for the mantra:

Sitze, Blitze, Hitze.

And then, after this scene is before you, feel with the image the force of the mantra:

[Mantra III is written on the blackboard. The word "will" and the last lines of all three parts are underlined.]

III. Behold the field of will.

- 1.) *The one who guides the cosmic forces
from the dull dark earth-foundations
into your limbs' movements, speaks:
Behold your fiery instinctual drives.*
- 2.) *The one speaks who with grace
lets the clear spirit-rays from God's
fields of action, circulate in your blood.
Behold conscience's soul-guidance.*
- 3.) *The one speaks who brings the accomplished in man
sensibly through death and birth,
to breathe again in contemporary times.
Behold your destiny's spiritual trial.*

Nothing in such verses is mere empty phrase: rather is it about the limbs' active movement. I described it as a working together of the I-organization with the forces of the earth – a super-sensible process. We must be aware of that in the first part of the mantra.

In the second part of the mantra we must be aware of the blood circulating throughout the whole organism, containing everything pertaining to the conscience. However, our destiny basically lives in our breathing – the uppermost part of our rhythmic system – insofar as it is streamed through not only with what today enlivens us in breathing, but because breathing has been formed by earlier stages of earthly existence.

Here [in part 1] the Guardian of the Threshold refers us

to the *Thrones*
here [in part 2] to the *Cherubim*
here [in part 3] to the *Seraphim*

["Thrones" is written beside part 1, "Cherubim" beside part 2, "Seraphim" beside part 3.]

The symbol we choose to give the mantra the necessary strength and spiritual consolidation and which expresses the first Hierarchy's revelation in a beautiful way: clouds , but at the same time what the

Thrones derive their substance from – when we observe the spiritual in the clouds: their own being or essence.

[The following is written, with "being" underlined.]

clouds – Thrones – being

We look up to the lightning bolts. Oh, the Cherubim are already more hidden. We can sense how the Thrones are acting and moving in the clouds. The looming clouds provide the Thrones with substance. The Cherubim do not make it easy for us to see them. They are more hidden than the Thrones. They do not show themselves in the formations. They show us their tools in the lightning bolts. They do not show us their being in the lightning bolts, only their tools.

[The following is written on the blackboard, with "tools" underlined.]

Lightning bolts – Cherubim – tools

And if we ascend to the cosmic heat, the Seraphim are hidden deeply therein, much deeper than the Cherubim are hidden behind their tools, the lightning bolts. The heat is only the shining of the Seraphim. The Thrones reveal themselves by their being; the Cherubim reveal themselves by their tools; the Seraphim reveal themselves by their shining.

[The following is written on the blackboard, with "shining" underlined.]

Cosmic heat – Seraphim – shining

Thus we establish the connection between man and the first Hierarchy in the field of will:

Perceive the field of will:

The one who guides the cosmic forces
from the dull dark earth-foundations
into your limbs' movements, speaks:
Behold your fiery instinctual drives.

The one speaks who with grace

lets the clear spirit-rays from God's
fields of action, circulate in your blood.
Behold conscience's soul-guidance.

The one speaks who brings the accomplished in man
sensibly through death and birth,
breathe again in contemporary times.
Behold your destiny's spiritual trial.

In this situation, it is necessary that we feel as though we are not ourselves speaking, thinking, feeling and willing; rather that we completely forget ourselves and feel spoken to in a resounding threefold way.

Yes, my dear sisters and brothers, it is certainly necessary that such mantric procedures be taken most seriously. Then they are effective, as they are meant to be. Then they bring us forward, forward on the threefold fields of the spiritual worlds, on the fields of thinking, feeling and willing. And it is always necessary that we be able to undertake them earnestly.

Something else is necessary which must be taken into account. The meditator will often fall back into the humdrum routine of everyday life. He must do so because between birth and death he is an earthly being. He must always return to his normal consciousness. For example when we have some kind of ache which becomes chronic, we will always feel it. We can sometimes overlook it, but we feel that it is there. We can feel something similar when we have been embraced by the power of meditation. We should always be able to say to ourselves: this normal consciousness has meditated. It has been embraced by the prevailing power of meditation. We should feel that the meditation is present, that we were once in it. By feeling that meditation makes us into something different, we should have become a different person. Having once begun, we can never in life forget, not even for a moment, my dear sisters and brothers, that we are meditants. That is the right attitude.

We should live into meditative life in such a way – naturally for short enough intervals that it does not disturb our normal lives – that we always feel ourselves to be meditants, and when there are moments when we forget that we are meditants, then we should feel as

ashamed as if we were walking completely naked along a street crowded with people. We should experience the transition from non-meditant to meditant in such a way that if we forget that we are meditants and then realize that we have forgotten, we are ashamed.

And then we will really advance in what is said to us by the cosmic words with which we began:

O man, know thyself!
So sounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks in depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Creates the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

But we must always remember that knowledge is a serious thing, and that the world of great illusions, the world of maya, will not deliver it to us, that we must first arrive at the threshold where the Guardian stands, and that on the threshold all the deceptive forms with which normal sense-perception and normal consciousness is full will disappear.

Then we can perceive additional words from the same cosmic depths from which the words just spoken to us came:

Know first the earnest Guardian,
Who stands before spirit-land's gates,
Denying entry to your sensible forces
And to your understanding's power,
For in your senses' interweaving
And in your thoughts' forming
From space's lack of being,
From time's power of deception
you must first forcefully conquer
Your own being's truth.

When we have heard such words, the answering words can reverently
issue from the depths of our souls:

I entered this world of sense-perception,
Taking with me thinking's heritage,
A god's strength had led me here.
Death stands at the long path's end.
I want to feel the being of Christ
Who wakens in death-of-matter spirit-birth.
Thus I find the world in spirit
And know myself in world's becoming.



Lesson 14

31 May 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

We have been considering the human being's relation to the Guardian of the Threshold and have led our souls step by step to see what our relation is to the Guardian of the Threshold on the path of knowledge. Today we intend to enliven the situation of standing before the Guardian in order to advance a step further in this esoteric consideration.

I will repeat what has been considered in the previous lessons regarding this situation. Man leaves the physical world in which he develops his normal consciousness. He realizes that although this sensible-physical world can be wonderful, joyful as well as painful and full of suffering, it can also be majestic — and that he has every reason to consciously be a part of it. But he also realizes that he can never know himself if he merely directs his attention and his feelings to this physical world. He must say to himself: As wonderful as it is, with all its amazing variety of colors and forms, what I myself am, what my origin and being are, cannot be found in the scope of this environment.

Nevertheless, from all sides the words resound as the most important task in the life of the human being: O man, know thyself!

And it also becomes clear that in normal life we are protected from entering unprepared into the world which is the world of his real being. And the Guardian of the Threshold is the one who protects us from consciously perceiving his environment when we are sleeping at night, for what we would then perceive, unprepared, would be such a terrible shock that we would not be able to lead a normal human waking life.

The Guardian of the Threshold also makes it clear to us that he — the Guardian of the Threshold — is the true, the real gateway to the spiritual world.

Thus the person realizes that before he enters the kingdom of knowledge, he comes to an abyss, which at first seems bottomless. The support of the physical world ends here. He cannot cross it. One can only cross this abyss by freeing oneself from the physical, when one — symbolically speaking — "grows wings", in order to cross the abyss as a psychic-spiritual being.

But the Guardian of the Threshold calls forth to him how to beware of the abyss, especially to be aware of the beasts which rise up as spiritual figures from this abyss, that one should realize that these beasts are the outer reflections of impure willing, feeling and thinking — that they first must be overcome. And in a graphic image one sees how his willing, feeling and thinking appear in three animals — one ghastly, one horrid to look at, and so forth.

Then the Guardian of the Threshold shows us how thinking, feeling and willing can strengthen themselves after having consciously determined to overcome the beasts. To enter the spiritual world, to visualize the spiritual world, we need to develop situation-meditations, in order to feel how the cosmos speaks to us, how the hierarchies speak to us, how at first everything foretells what awaits us there in the spiritual world.

And from what has entered our souls through the mantras, we will realize ever more that the human being must become different when he crosses the abyss, when he wishes to live into what is beyond the abyss. We will realize ever more: Here on earth we associate with the beings of the three nature kingdoms and with men; beyond we associate with disembodied souls and with the spirits of the higher hierarchies. It is a different kind of relating, which requires a different state of mind. [original: *Seelenverfassung* = soul-constitution].

It is again the task of the Guardian of the Threshold to strongly indicate how the human being must comport himself when faced with the fact that when he crosses the abyss and experiences something of the reality of the spiritual world, he must do so with a completely different state of mind.

The person will realize that two states of mind can be a reality within him: the one on this side of the abyss with normal consciousness; and the one beyond the abyss, outside the physical and etheric bodies —

the state of mind in the purely spiritual world.

When the difference between these states of mind appears, great dangers await him, dangers which appear at first to be slight deviations from the normal state of mind which are always present within the psyche, but which are pathological deformities when carried to an extreme. Of course it must be emphasized: When the journey to the higher worlds is undertaken as it is carefully described in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*, in many shorter works which have appeared in anthroposophical circles, and in the second part of my *An Outline Of Occult Science*, then aberration from the normal condition of the mind cannot occur, not even in the slightest degree. The person will cross into the spiritual world in the full consciousness of normal human understanding, first in knowledge and also through initiation. But he must know how, in two ways, he may lose the everyday capacity for understanding, which holds him securely to life, if he does not adhere to the right guidelines into the spiritual world.

Here on this side of the threshold we are standing on the earth, on the solid earthly elements. The ground is beneath our feet, it is our support. Around us is the watery element, which also participates in the formation of our own bodies. In ordinary life this watery element cannot support us, but it interpenetrates us, transforms itself into our blood. It is contained in our growth, in our forces of nutrition. We breathe the air. The airy or gaseous element is all around us. Warmth is all around us: the warmth ether, the fourth element.

In ordinary life they are separate from each other. Where there is solid earth there is not water; where there is water there is not air; where there is air there is not water. Only fire — warmth — interpenetrates all. It is the only thing which interpenetrates everything.

The moment we leave the physical body — also with the first push, my dear friends — this separation of the elements ceases. We enlarge ourselves, we expand, and at the same time we are in earth, water, fire, air. We can no longer distinguish them from each other and the individual attributes of these four elements have ceased to exist. The earth is no longer our support, for it is no longer solid. The water no longer forms us, for its formative force has ended. Once in the

spiritual world it is as though we were dissolving, as ice melts in warm water, for we have become one with the water. We could not float in it, for that would mean that we were still separate from it. The blood is no longer a separate element in the blood vessels, but our blood becomes one with the all-pervading watery element of the universe. And air: it ceases being the formative breathing force in us. Warmth ceases to enkindle us to an I, and make us feel that we are a Self within the warmth. It all ends. We must meet this ending of the differentiation between earth, water, air and fire in the right frame of mind.

Imagine that we have already flown over the abyss. We have arrived on the other side, my dear sisters and brothers. The Guardian of the Threshold calls out to us, we should turn around again and face him.

Imagine it vividly, my dear sisters and brothers. The person has arrived on the other side, where the truths and knowledge of the spirit will be revealed to him. He stands on the other side. The Guardian of the Threshold invokes him to turn around in order to receive the advice he needs now that he has been touched by the state of mind which is on the other side of the threshold, where one lives within the four elements: in earth, water, air, fire.

He encounters there — pardon the trivial expression, my dear sisters and brothers — the illusion of being in love with release from the solid earth, from the formative water force, from the creative force of air, from the selfhood awakening force of warmth; he feels delight in spiritual beatitude, dedicated to it and wishes to remain in this state of spiritual beatitude. It overcomes him because the Luciferic temptation is approaching him. Depending on his karma, he can be more or less susceptible to this temptation. If he is so susceptible that he is utterly in love with the experience of dissolving into earth, water, air and fire, the luciferic forces will apprehend him and he will no longer leave this state of mind. He succumbs to the danger of continuing in this state of mind when he returns to everyday life.

The Guardian of the Threshold must call out to him: You may not do that. You may not succumb to Lucifer. You may not merely feel the delight of bliss in dissolving in earth, water, fire, air. When you return

to the physical world you must again take on the state of mind of ordinary consciousness; otherwise in the future you will be an unstable person in the physical world.

That is the luciferic danger, that upon return from the spiritual world, from beyond the threshold, one becomes an unstable, confused person, no longer versed in the ways of the world, a dreamer who confuses dreaming for idealism and who is contemptuous of ordinary consciousness. That you must not do. And the Guardian of the Threshold urgently admonishes us that we must resolve to live in the world, be it the earthly, be it the spiritual, in the way which corresponds to each.

But the Guardian of the Threshold adds a second admonishment: that when we cross over with separated thinking, feeling and willing, we must pay attention to what extent earthly inclinations are still present in this thinking, feeling and willing.

The person may be inclined to fixate on his experiences on this side of the threshold because of having the earth's support, and cross the threshold in a materialistic state of mind, cross with the congealed formative forces of water. If so, he can be plagued by earthly arrogance and say to himself: In life on earth I breathed, inhaled that breath from which the Father-God once created the human soul, human life. I can also do that if only I am freed from earthly limitations.

But if the person wants to bring over into the spiritual world what he has of creative divine force through his breath, he will succumb to the Ahrimanic temptation. Then he will not be able to return, because before he does so he will become faint. He will be more or less unconscious. His consciousness will be paralyzed. Because his consciousness has been paralyzed, he more or less becomes an instrument of the Ahrimanic powers in the spiritual world.

Although today humanity is crudely hardened by materialism, since the beginning of the Michael age it is almost being dragged over into the spiritual world by spiritual life itself. And what it means when the ahrimanic powers seize humanity when its consciousness is paralyzed,

though otherwise in a fully waking state, has been amply demonstrated, my dear friends, by the outbreak of the great [first] World War.

When this World War broke out, I said to many people: The history of this war can not be written from the physical plane alone. Documents alone do not speak the truth, because of the thirty or forty men in Europe who directly participated in the outbreak of the war, many of them had dimmed consciousness at the decisive moments. They became instruments for the ahrimanic powers on this side. So that much of what happened during this war was instigated by the ahrimanic powers. The war can only be written about in an occult way.

What is seen — in many respects modified on this side of the threshold — in many leading personalities at the outbreak of this World War, can be observed in those who preserved the habits of the mind and carried them over beyond the threshold and whose consciousness became paralyzed, muted, and they became instruments of the ahrimanic powers.

It must be perfectly clear that the human being may not carry over to this side the state of mind applicable to beyond the threshold, and that he may not carry over to the other side the state of mind applicable to this side. Rather must he develop a strong inner human consciousness for each domain — for this side and for beyond the threshold.

That applies to all four elements in the Guardian of the Threshold's admonition. We shall now work on these admonitions in meditation.

So let us imagine, my dear sisters and brothers, that you are standing on the other side of the threshold. The Guardian beckons. You look at his face. At first he calls out to you, admonishing:

Where is the earth's solidity which supported you?

We no longer have it. But the inner heart is motivated to give an answer. But this heart can be innerly motivated in a threefold way to an answer from the cosmos.

It can be motivated from the Christ and his power. Then it answers:

I abandon its foundation — the earth's solidity, that is — as long as the spirit supports me.

That is the correct attitude, that I abandon the earth's support as long as the spirit carries me in the spirit-domain, as long as I am out of the body. But the heart can also be motivated by Lucifer. Then it answers:

I feel rapture, for from now on I do not need its support.

That is how one speaks with arrogance, with pride, as though he also does not need the support when he returns to the physical world.

Or the heart can be motivated by Ahriman. Then it answers:

I will hammer it down even harder — the support — with the spirit's power, and bring it over with me.

No one should recoil from meditatively calling to mind again and again all three answers in order to freely choose the first one. For he must feel: the inner self tends to waver to Lucifer, and to Ahriman. One must keep this in mind during meditation.

For the earth element the meditation must therefore contain:

[The first part of the mantra is written on the blackboard. (Writing is always shown in italics).]

1) The Guardian — speaks — Where is the earth's solidity, which supported you?

The Human heart must answer. If it is motivated by Christ, it answers:

Christ: I leave its foundation as long as the spirit supports me.

If the soul is motivated by Lucifer, it answers:

Lucifer: I feel rapture, for from now on I do not need its support.

Now the heart omits "as long as" if it wants to replace the temporal with the eternal, which transforms the sentence. If the heart is motivated by Ahriman, it answers:

Ahriman: I will hammer it down even harder — the support — with the spirit's power.

In order that the soul fully dedicate itself to what is coming, we have the Guardian of the Threshold's second admonition, which is related to water's formative force. This formative force of water forms the solid organs in us from the liquid elements. All that we consume for nourishment must first become liquid, from which the organs are formed. All our sharply contoured organs are formed out of the liquid element. This formative force terminates once we tread the realm beyond the threshold. The Guardian warns us that this is the case. He calls to us once we stand on the other side of the Threshold facing his stern countenance:

[The second part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

Guardian: Where is the water's formative force which pervaded you?

The person answers if he is motivated in his heart by Christ:

My life extinguishes it, as long as the spirit forms me.

Christ: My life extinguishes it ("it" is the formative force), as long as the spirit forms me.

Again, modestly, "as long as" is used.

Now, when one is over there, out of the body, the spirit is beginning to form.

If the soul is motivated by Lucifer, it leaves out "as long as" and forms the sentence in a prideful, arrogant way:

Lucifer: My life melts it away — what is extinguished can be re-kindled; what melts remains melted — so I am released from it.

If the soul is motivated by Ahriman, it answers:

Ahriman: My life solidifies it, so I transfer it to the spirit-realm.

Observe, my dear sisters and brothers, how everything in mantric verses is innerly certain and meaningfully formed. Here [in the first verse] is: "I leave", "I feel", "I will". The "I" speaks in the answer. In the second verse the I no longer speaks egocentrically, but it says: "My life": "my life dissolves", "my life melts", "my life solidifies". It is all appropriate to reality if correctly spoken in the spirit. The carelessness in formulating sentences, which is common in the physical realm, may not be brought over into the spirit-realm. In the spirit-realm all that is spoken must be precise and exact.

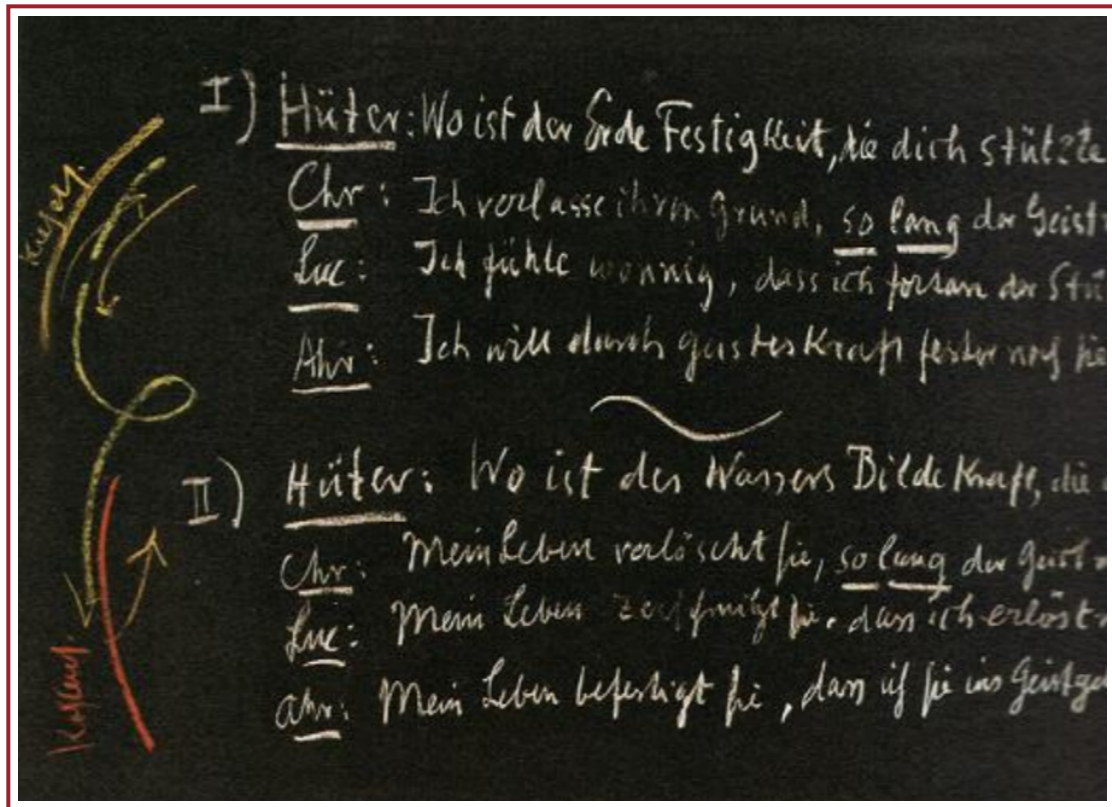
You must understand, my dear friends, the reality that this Esoteric School is not established by human will, but by the spiritual world, as I said at the beginning. Everything given here in the Esoteric School of the Goetheanum is only spoken through my lips, but is dictated by the spiritual world. It must be that way in every legitimately existing esoteric school — also in the present and in the immediate future, as it was in the ancient holy Mysteries. And this Esoteric School is the true Michael- School, the institution of those spiritual beings who possess the inspiration of Michael's cosmic will.

In respect to air, the Guardian of the Threshold speaks again, warningly: Where is the air's stimulating force which awakened you? — awakened you to existence.

Just as Jehovah formed a feeling being from a merely living being by means of living breath and the stimulating power of air, so can a human being become a feeling being through the stimulation exercised on his senses by the outer world. What, though, are the senses?

My dear sisters and brothers, the senses are nothing other than differentiated breathing organs. Eye, ear — all are refined breathing organs. Breathing expands to all the senses. As it lives in the lung, it lives in the eye. Except that in the lungs it combines with carbon, and in the ears with highly rarefied silica. Carbon dioxide is formed in the

organism. [He draws on the blackboard: "Kohlensäure" = carbon dioxide (red)] In the senses, very fine silicic acid is formed ["Kieselsäure" = silicic acid, yellow.]





Man lives downward by converting oxygen to carbon dioxide. He lives upward into the zone of his sense-nervous system by combining oxygen with silica, forming very fine silicic acid. [green]. So we live in a way that when breath turns to blood, it generates carbon dioxide; when breath passes around the senses it generates silicic acid — downward and outward through breath: carbon dioxide; toward the senses and back from the senses to the breathing process in very fine doses of silicic acid.

The Guardian of the Threshold calls to us about all that is in the air:

Where is the air's stimulating force, which awakened you?

He who is motivated in his heart by Christ answers:

My soul breathes the air of heaven — no longer the air of earth, the air of heaven — as long as the spirit surrounds me.

The heart motivated by Lucifer answers:

My soul regards it not in the spirit's rapture.

The heart motivated by Ahriman answers:

My soul absorbs it, that I may learn divine creation.

As Jehovah once created with air, the ahrimanicly-minded absorbs the air in order to carry it over to the spiritual world.

The Guardian speaks to the human being:

[The third part of the mantra is written on the blackboard:]

Guardian: Where is the air's stimulating force, which awakened you?

The heart motivated by Christ speaks:

Christ: My soul breathes the air of heaven, as long as the spirit surrounds me.

The heart motivated by Lucifer speaks:

Lucifer: My soul regards it not in the spirit's rapture.

The heart motivated by Ahriman speaks:

Ahriman: My soul absorbs it, that I may learn divine creation.

About fire, the warmth element, the Guardian now speaks the last of his element-words, warning the human not to lose himself in the warmth element as it is experienced in physical earthly existence, but also not to carry it over to the spiritual world.

Beforehand, my dear sisters and brothers, I want to draw your attention to the ascending direction:

"I" the human being says at first.

"My life" the human being says.

"My soul" says the human being.

Now the Guardian speaks warningly about the fire element:

[The fourth part of the mantra is written on the blackboard:]

Guardian: Where is fire's cleansing — or purification — which ignited your I?

Our I lives in what pervades us as warmth, as fire. In these esoteric classes, my dear sisters and brothers, I have already indicated once that his solid element remains in man's unconscious, the liquid element also, although one does feel pleasure at being in the liquid element; when sated or hungry, he also feels the liquid element's attributes. Man already feels the air element in his soul: he finds breathing difficult when the air's composition is not right and with breathing difficulty, angst. Warmth is something in which the human being feels completely immersed. He accompanies his cold and warm states with his whole I. Fire ignites the I.

The heart motivated by Christ answers:

Christ: My I blazes in God's fire, as long as the spirit ignites me.

Man does not need earthly-material warmth when the spirit enflames or ignites: the I blazes in divine fire, not in earthly warmth, not in earthly fire.

But the heart motivated by Lucifer answers:

My I has the force of flame through the spirit's solar power.

In immense pride the I — ensnared by Lucifer — wants to usurp for itself the fire element that comes from the sun, instead of only for the time the spirit sets it ablaze — keep it forever, never give it away.

Lucifer: My I has the force of flame through the spirit's solar power.

The heart motivated by Ahriman answers as though it wants to keep for itself the fire it had captured on earth and carry it over to the spiritual world — to master the spiritual world with the I-fire of the physical world.

Ahriman: My I has its own fire, which ignites through self-enfoldment.

The I wills not to blaze in the spirit, but to develop its own fire.

There is again an ascending direction in the formulation:

The person first says "I":

I leave

I feel

I will

He then becomes more objective in that what is in him refers to "My":

My life extinguishes

My life melts

My life solidifies.

He goes more within, what is within makes him objective:

My soul breathes

My soul cares not

My soul absorbs it.

Now he delves deeper into himself. And — note the difference, my dear sisters and brothers — before only "I" was said. Now the "I" becomes objective: "My I", as though it were another, as if one were to speak of the other as a possession. One is more outside of the physical body — which disposes one to speak so egoistically of the "I" — and speaks:

My I

as of an object. That is the correct speech here.

One gets to know this way of speaking in all its intensity, my dear sisters and brothers, when one speaks with souls who have passed through the gates of death and have been a while in the spiritual world. They never say "I", but they say "my I". I have not yet heard a dead person say "I" after death, at most only shortly after death. But after a certain time after death they always say "my I", for they see the I with the eyes of the gods. They become completely objective. It is characteristic. Therefore, an enunciation from a dead person who has been dead a long time can never be true if he says "I" and not "my I". So the soul speaks this "my I" here in the fourth place when standing before the Guardian of the Threshold.

That, my dear friends, is the wonderful conversation at the threshold between the Guardian of the Threshold and the human being. It is distinctive. And this distinctiveness is really present when one stands before the Guardian of the Threshold in this situation. When one practices the meditation of this dialog in the right way, as has been described here, one must be able to intuitively hear it. Therefore, we

meditate these words correctly, which have come to you here today as mantric words, my dear sisters and brothers, when in a sense we hear ourselves speaking the words after the Guardian has been heard in our souls. Thus we meditate first hearing the Guardian of the Threshold four times as I, II, III and IV, as earth, water, air and fire; then as when we let our own soul answer, but in such a way that first we hear the answer innerly ensouled by Christ, the second answer as the voice of the tempter, the third answer as the voice of the inflated materialistic Ahriman-spirit, which approaches the human being with the desire to carry the mineralized human being into the spiritual world.

Therefore, to end this esoteric lesson today, the way this is to be meditated resounds in us:

Where is the earth's solidity, which supported you?

I leave its foundation, as long as the spirit supports me.

I feel rapture, for from now on I do not need its support.

I will hammer it down even harder with the spirit's power.

Where is the water's formative force which pervaded you?

My life extinguishes it, as long as the spirit forms me.

My life melts it away, so I am released from it.

My life solidifies it, so I transfer it to the spirit-realm.

Where is the air's stimulating force, which awakened you?

My soul breathes the air of heaven, as long as the spirit surrounds me.

My soul regards it not in the spirit's rapture.

My soul absorbs it, that I may learn divine creation.

Where is fire's cleansing, which ignited your I?

My I blazes in God's fire, as long as the spirit ignites me.

My I has the force of flame through the spirit's solar power.

My I has its own fire, which ignites through self-enfolding.



Lesson 15

21 June 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

Today we will also begin with the mantric verse which rings out to human beings from all sides of cosmic events and cosmic beings, if they can truly understand with inner heart and soul what certain cosmic beings and events may tell them.

O man, know thyself!
So sounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks in depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

My dear sisters and brothers, my dear friends, because various Class members have come today who have not been present previously, it will be necessary to say certain things which, only for the sake of coherence, are necessary in order to grasp with full understanding what the content of these Class lessons are meant to be.

We have so far covered, my dear sisters and brothers, how the pictures of life appear before the soul when with real knowledge we approach the abyss which opens between the world in which we live, which surrounds us here, and that world in which we have our true being, our humanity.

We become aware, if we perceive the world around us correctly, how this world demands our intense attention. We look down at the lowest creatures and up at the glowing, sparkling stars in the sky. We look all around at the kingdoms of nature, much of what is derived from them being part of us. And we have every reason to deeply feel in our hearts and souls the sublimity, the cosmic importance and the majesty of all this. And participation in any kind of esoteric, in any spiritual science, should not tempt us to engage in false asceticism – to reject either the lowly worm or the majestic stars because they belong to the visible world – and not feel their greatness, their majesty and sublimity, nor feel the importance they have for us.

As true adherents of spiritual science, we should feel that we are a part of the world around us. But we should also be aware – and we can be aware of it if we put our hearts and souls into the phenomena and beings and events of the world in the right way – we can and should be conscious of the fact that our true highest human self cannot be found in all the kingdoms of nature; that it cannot be found in the sunlit shining world, despite its grandeur and nobility; that we must seek it in a world separated from our perception by an abyss; and that what is beyond that abyss in the world from which we really originate, appears to us at first as the blackest darkness. It stands like a wall before us, with the abyss in front of it.

The first being we encounter stands at this abyss. Every night when we sleep we find ourselves in the realm to which we belong with the most inner, true being of our humanity; we are really within it, that must be emphasized. But we may only consciously enter this realm in full maturity. The Guardian of the Threshold is there to warn us that we may not enter immaturity. He is the first spiritual being we meet if we have the earnest, real will to look into and to enter the world of our origin.

It is the Guardian of the Threshold himself who speaks the first words to us if we wish to take the path over the abyss into the realm of spirituality from which we originate. For it is the Guardian of the Threshold who first admonishes us to look back at our own self in order to seek the foundation of cosmic knowledge in self-knowledge.

This is all given in mantric verses for those who have participated in these lessons, and leads to what was put forth in the previous lesson.

Now we to situational meditation: how to see ourselves already on the other side of the abyss, but still under the influence of the Guardian of the Threshold's admonishment, whose words enable us to understand our situation once we have flown over the abyss into the realm which at first is dark to us.

As long as we are here, in the realm in which we did *not* originate, we have the solidity of the earth under us – which bears and supports us, which we touch with our whole bodies when we are on it – the first, the earth-element.

We contain in us, by what is called "water" in spiritual science, but which entails all liquidity which forms us, which makes us grow, from which all our organs are formed – the second, the water-element. The Guardian of the Threshold's admonishment also refers to this water-element, which is also the blood-element.

Regarding what we inhale through our breathing, the air-element, in regard to what we take in through warmth, through the active fire in us, the Guardian of the Threshold also directs important words to us.

And the cosmic powers act in us, in order that an answer forms in us to what the Guardian of the Threshold is asking. This answer, which the cosmic-powers themselves activate in us, can come from Christ: then it will be the right answer. It can come from Lucifer: then it will be the wrong answer. It can come from Ahriman: then it will again be the wrong answer.

Christ's council will always be shaped in conjunction with each of the elements, so that we may feel ourselves to be completely in the spiritual world, completely in harmony with the spiritual element – but also so that we know that as long as we are earthly beings we must

always return over the abyss as earthly beings and that we do not want the characteristics of the spiritual world to claim us longer than our presence in that spiritual world endures.

Christ will always speak to us, counseling: as long as we are in the spiritual world we should be one with this spiritual world; when we come back we should live as real earthly beings, for only with the spirit should we wish to be in the spiritual world.

Lucifer will always spur us on and tempt us to want to stay in the spiritual world, to merge with it, to merge with the feeling of wellbeing of the spiritual world.

Ahriman will always tempt us to enter into his service by dragging the spiritual world over into the physical.

We must let such things resonate in our souls so that we correctly feel the situation of the human being when he faces the spiritual world.

Therefore, let us imagine that we are already in the spiritual world on the other side of the abyss, still in utter darkness. The Guardian of the Threshold is at the abyss, warning us with his right hand extended, asking us questions which cut deeply into our souls. We sense that to each question a threefold answer comes from us: Christ's answer, Lucifer's answer, Ahriman's answer.

The Guardian speaks:

Where is the earth's solidity, which supported you?
(There is no ground. We are in the spiritual world.)

Christ in us answers:
I abandon its ground, as long as the spirit bears me.

Lucifer in us answers:
I feel sweet and lovely, so I no longer need the ground.

Ahriman answers:
I will hammer it more firmly with the spirit's force.

The Guardian speaks:

Where is water's forming force, which pervaded you?

Christ in us answers:

My life dismisses it, as long as the spirit forms me.

Lucifer in us:

My life dissolves it, so I am released from it.

Ahriman in us speaks:

My life strengthens it, so I can carry it over into the spirit realm.

The Guardian speaks:

Where is air's energizing power, which awakened you?

Christ in us:

My soul breathes heavenly air, as long as the spirit surrounds me.

Lucifer in us:

My soul respects it not in the spirit's beatitude.

Ahriman in us:

My soul absorbs it, that I may learn divine creation.

The Guardian speaks:

Where is the fire's cleansing, that enflamed your I?

Christ in us:

My I blazes in divine fire, as long as the spirit kindles me.

Lucifer in us:

My I has the power of flame through the spiritual force of the sun.

Ahriman in us:

My I has its own fire, which flames purely through self-unfoldment.

We are tested by the Guardian's questions as to how we will comport ourselves in respect to the earth's firm support, to the formative force of the fluids in us, to the astrality of the creative forces of air in us, to the I-bearing force of fire in us. And Christ answers in us to correctly energize the humanity in us. Lucifer answers temptingly in us, as though we wished to adhere to the beatitude forever, which we should only possess during the moments we give ourselves over to the spirit. And Ahriman answers in us as though we wished to transfer to the realm of earth what we shared in the spirit-land.

We must let what is active in the soul be what is possible for the soul. We must not only expose ourselves to the voice of Christ, but also to those of Lucifer and Ahriman. In meditation we must imagine ourselves in this situation. Then, my dear sisters and brothers, because we are called in the innermost depths of soul, we will be liberated to the extent that, in this liberating spirit-experience, we can really make the spiritual element our own.

Today we must review this situation again. We must strongly feel ourselves on the other side of this threshold of the abyss, the warning Guardian of the Threshold at our side; in us the voices which pull human beings in different directions: Lucifer and Ahriman; the voice of Christ in us, which shows us the right direction, while Lucifer on one side and Ahriman on the other try to lead us into error. Then we will hold to the orientation which makes it possible to make a start in the spiritual world with the right feelings.

We can only achieve this, my dear sisters and brothers, if we gradually acquire the ability to feel about the higher spiritual beings as we do about the three kingdoms of nature here in the world of the senses.

When we stand here in the physical world, we feel outside of us the essence of stone, of the mineral kingdom, and we say: this mineral essence also exists in us. We have salt in us in which the mineral element exists, and which enables us to be human beings within the earthly realm.

We look at the world of plants. We know: we take into ourselves the essence of plants, we have it in our earthly being within the confines of our skin, we bear it in our growth process, in all that forms our

organism, also in all that we evolve in sleep. We feel the essence of plants in us as we observe the plants around us.

We look at the animals and know that we bear the essence of animality in our astrality, in our breathing process. We look at the immense variety of animals and say: we feel identified with this animality because we bear it in ourselves. Only we elevate it to the level of humanity.

Thus we find ourselves here in the sensible world standing among the three kingdoms of nature. We must also learn to feel when we are in the spirit-world among its beings with our spiritual-psychical humanity, as we feel when we are here with our etheric-physical humanity among the kingdoms of nature. Just as we must learn to be physical beings among other physical beings, so must we learn to be spirit-soul beings among other spirit-soul beings.

We have learned about the spirit-soul world, which touches us as men in the form of three hierarchies, just as we have learned to know the beings within the three kingdoms of nature. We belong to the three kingdoms of nature with our etheric-physical nature. We belong to the three kingdoms of the hierarchies with our spirit-soul being. When we are here in the sensible world it is natural for us to belong to the three kingdoms of nature and to let them flow through us, to be among them. When we are in the spirit-soul world, it must be natural for us to belong to that world and to the beings of the higher hierarchies for the time we have there, and to realize that we are among these beings of the higher hierarchies, just as we do in respect to the beings of the kingdoms of nature.

The Guardian indicates this to us again. And the mantric words, brought forth from the spiritual world through the magical force of the Guardian's voice, must resound repeatedly, again and again, in our souls in meditation. Then they will have the force, through the simple way they are formulated and the repetitions contained in them, to awaken in our souls the sensation of standing in the spiritual world among the hierarchies.

Therefore, we are to imagine the mantras which the Guardian now speaks in the following way. We are still in darkness on the other side of the threshold in the spiritual world. We first learn to feel in the

spiritual world before we learn to see. The Guardian speaks again with respect to the elements – at first earth, water and air; fire will be the subject of the next lesson – So first the Guardian speaks about the earth, water and air elements, about everything in us which is solid; everything that is fluid in us, especially our blood and tissue fluids; about everything in us which is airy, the inhaled air. The Guardian speaks about all that. And he calls out what resounds from the world of the hierarchies.

After the Guardian has spoken to us, the hierarchies speak one after the other. The third hierarchy with the first mantra: first the Angeloi, then Archangeloi, and thirdly the Archai. We feel ourselves to be in this situation. The Guardian of the Threshold speaks to us. The words resound from out of the darkness, as if they came from under the earth, yet resounding deeply in our souls.

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of the earth's solidity, which supported you?

The Angeloi from the third hierarchy:
Feel! as we feel in your thinking.

The Archangeloi from the third hierarchy:
Experience! as we experience in your feeling.

The Archai from the third hierarchy:
Perceive! as we perceive in your willing.

From the cosmos we are receiving an important threefold teaching about the Guardian of the Threshold's questions. His words call forth the answers from the Angeloi, the Archangeloi and the Archai with magical force.

What do the Angeloi teach us? We humans think. At first we believe that we are experiencing our thoughts alone. But as our thoughts are passing through our minds, the Angeloi really live in them. And when we feel with our senses – as when we grasp something – the Angeloi live in our thinking; it is their feeling. They bring it to our

consciousness. And just as the Angeloi feel in our thinking, the Archangeloi experience in our feeling, and the Archai perceive in our willing.

When a thought is passing through your minds, my dear sisters and brothers, then feel that in this thought a being from the hierarchy of the Angeloi feels something. The Angeloi touch something when you think. When you are feeling, a being from the hierarchy of the Archangeloi experiences something. When you are willing, while your willing is unfolding, a being from the hierarchy of the Archai perceives something. Human thinking, human feeling, human willing, are not mere processes in humanity. While we are thinking, the Angeloi are feeling; while we are feeling, the Archangeloi are experiencing; while we are willing, the Archai are perceiving.

[The first part of the mantra is written on the blackboard – always in italics.]

The Guardian:

What becomes of the earth's solidity, which supported you?

From the hierarchy of the Angeloi [the answer] resounds:

Angeloi:

Feel! as we feel in your thinking.

From the hierarchy of the Archangeloi resounds:

Archangeloi:

Experience! as we experience in your feeling.

From the hierarchy of the Archai resounds:

Archai:

Perceive! as we perceive in your willing.

This is what replaces the earth-element in the spiritual world. For the solidity of the earth is not there. The earth's ground is gone. Everything solid is gone. The third hierarchy of Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai do not create solidity the way minerals do. In our thinking we

would not only sink downward but to all directions if the Angeloi did not act in it, if it did not have their feeling in it. We would be thrown formlessly in all directions if the Archangeloi did not live in our feeling. We would disappear into nothingness in our willing if we did not have the Archai's strength of perception in this willing.

Second is water, which provides us with formative force: the liquid element in us. Again we image that we are standing beyond the abyss in the spiritual world still in darkness. First we learn feeling. The Guardian speaks in admonishment, questioning. But now the beings of the second hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, answer about the force of fluids, the element of water.

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of water's formative force, which pervaded you?

From the second hierarchy the Exusiai answer:
Know! the spirit's cosmic creation in the human body's creation.

The Dynamis of the second hierarchy:
Feel! the spirit's cosmic life in the human body's life.

The Kyriotetes of the second hierarchy:
Will! the spirit's cosmic process in the human body's essence.

By this means we become aware that in our surroundings we do not stand alone. We should learn to feel that in the physical existence within the boundaries of our skin lives a portion of cosmic being. The second hierarchy is in us, acts in us as though we were cosmic beings, beings which belong as members to the cosmos.

By means of these mantras, we should become aware that we stand within the cosmic process, and that everything, from the most minute vibrations of our cells to the powerful, sublime wave movement of our blood, to the rhythm of our breathing system, to the rhythm that allows day to change into night, that it is all not only a process in us, but is also part of the cosmic process.

[The second part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian:

What becomes of the water's formative force, which pervaded you?

The Exusiai from the second hierarchy answer:

Exusiai:

Know! the spirit's cosmic creation in the human body's creation.

The Dynamis from the second hierarchy answer:

Dynamis:

Feel! the spirit's cosmic-life in the human body's life.

The Kyriotetes from the second hierarchy answer:

Kyriotetes:

Will! the spirit's cosmic process in the human body's being.

An exactness exists in these mantric verses. Therefore, the question may arise: Why do we have here "body's-being" in contrast to "cosmic process"? We must feel each word exactly if a mantric verse is to work correctly in our souls. Outside of us the cosmic process carries on, in that we feel it to be a process. This cosmic-process is everywhere expanding, filling the universe. –

Translators' note: The German word "Welt" can refer to world, cosmos/cosmic, or universe. With few exceptions, Rudolf Steiner always said "Welt". I have used the variation which I consider to best meet the requirements of his meaning.

– In that it continues in us, is in us, we feel it to be a closed entity because we are enclosed within our skin and feel ourselves to be complete and enclosed. We do not feel everything within us as

weaving, waving and undulating, as we do outside us. Therefore, "process" and "being" are in contrast, whereas the repetitions "creation" "creation" and "life" "life" [in the previous lines] are correct.

In respect to the air-element, the Guardian of the Threshold raises his questions. The beings of the first hierarchy – Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim – answer. They admonish us that we should be conscious of how the cosmos works in us. From merely being conscious, the beings of the first hierarchy lead us to being self-conscious.

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of air's stimulating force, which awakened you?

The Thrones answer from the first hierarchy:
Knowingly grasp the inner being in your divine cosmic being.

The Cherubim answer from the first hierarchy:
Warm! the inner life in your divine cosmic life.

The Seraphim answer from the first hierarchy:
Waken! within inner light in your divine cosmic light.

Now we are exhorted to waken self-consciousness at a higher level, in that we have felt our merging in the cosmos, our dedication to the cosmos, through the magical words of the second hierarchy.

[The third part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian:

What becomes of the air's stimulating force, which awakened you?

The cosmic answer resounds from the first hierarchy:

Thrones:
Knowingly grasp the inner being in your divine cosmic being.

Cherubim:
Warm the inner life in your divine cosmic life.

Seraphim:

Awaken within inner light in your divine cosmic light.

Yes, my dear sisters and brothers, if we do not feel the effect of this last mantra, how it resounds from the fiery, lightning-strong Seraphim: "Awaken within inner-light in your divine-cosmic-light", how these fiery words resound from the flaming lightning of the Seraphim, we will not sense how a force must awaken in our own souls with which, where we are standing in darkness beyond the abyss, still trying to orient ourselves, we feel the universe gradually approaching us – so that by and by a glimmer emerges, then becoming lighter, a continual expansion of the glimmer in space. And as the glimmer grows more glowing and shining, and through our own power the night-enveloped darkness beyond in the spiritual world gradually gets lighter. That is how it must be. We must try to develop the kindling force of our own selves, the kindling fiery force of our own humanity – for it is light in what was at first a night-enveloped spiritual land.

Thus we feel integrated in that threefold spirit-world of the Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones and so forth, just as we feel integrated here in the sensible world of the three kingdoms of nature. And we learn as truly human to feel at home in spiritual surroundings just as sense-perceptible beings we feel at home in sense-perceptible surroundings. We learn as we ascend from the third hierarchy – who unfold the spirit in us, our own spirit, in which they live – to the second hierarchy, who develop the spirit in us, creating, living, shaping; and finally to the first hierarchy, where we again have support, but support of spirit, which is above and not below, where we have the mighty wisdom of the Cherubim who bring to our self-consciousness what can warm our inner life with self-knowledge, self-feeling, self-warming – and this warmed self becomes the shining-element, so that what was previously dark for us becomes light.

Thus we are standing at the Guardian of the Threshold's side deeply feeling that admonition which resounds from all the cosmic beings, from all the cosmic events, so that we can gain, from self-knowledge, cosmic-knowledge, and from cosmic-knowledge, human-knowledge,

so that we can stand in the realm of nature, but also in the realm of spirit, and realize our Self from both sides of reality: from the side of nature and from the side of the spirit.

Then a new form resounds – not different in words, but in our feeling, strengthened by the admonishments from all the hierarchies of the spiritual world, from which we originated.

O man, know thyself!
So sounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks in depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.



Lesson 16

28 June 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

We will again start by letting the words resound from the cosmos near and far, which can be heard by everyone who correctly understands the world. But before doing so, because again many new members of the esoteric school are present, I must say at least a few words about the meaning of this school.

I will put it briefly. This School must be recognized as one which brings down its information from the spiritual world to human souls. Therefore, what lives here in the School and what is brought to human souls are to be perceived as communications from the spiritual world itself. From this you will understand that membership in the School must be regarded as serious in the highest degree.

This seriousness has only become possible because of the Constitution which the Anthroposophical Society received during the Christmas Conference. Since then the Anthroposophical Society as such is an openly public institution, but at the same time one through which an esoteric breath flows, which has been better received than the former exoteric one.

So nothing more is expected from the members of the Anthroposophical Society than that they feel themselves to be receivers of anthroposophical wisdom. And, of course, what is generally expected of decent people in life.

But membership in the School implies even more, that the member recognize the serious conditions for membership — namely the basic condition that anyone who wishes to belong to the School should present himself in life in such a way that he is in every respect a representative of anthroposophy before the world.

To be a representative of anthroposophy before the world necessarily means that whatever he or she does in connection to anthroposophy, be it ever so remotely connected, also be with the approval of the leadership of the School, that is, with the esoteric Executive Committee at the Goetheanum. Thus through the School a real stream can enter the anthroposophical movement, which today is represented by the Anthroposophical Society.

Therefore, it is necessary that membership in the School be understood in such a way that the member feels in his whole being that he is a part of what is being done and revealed from here in the Goetheanum. Such a condition should not be taken as a restriction on human freedom, my dear friends, for membership in the school rests on reciprocity. The leadership of the School must be free to give what it has to give to whom it considers right to do so. And the fact that no one is obliged to be a member of the School, but that it depends on his free will to be a member, means that the leadership may also place conditions on membership without anyone claiming that his free will is in any way infringed upon. It is a free agreement between the leadership of the School and those who wish to be members.

Furthermore, in order that the School really be taken seriously, it cannot be otherwise than that the leadership exercise its right to revoke a membership whenever it considers necessary because of certain events. And, my dear friends, that the leadership of the School takes this seriously is shown by the fact that since the relatively short time the School has existed, sixteen members already had to be suspended for shorter or longer lengths of time. And I must again emphasize that this measure will have to be strictly adhered to in the future, regardless of the personalities involved, because we will be entering ever more deeply into esoteric matters.

* * *

And now the words will be spoken which are always spoken at the beginning of our deliberations, reminding us of the admonitions which resound from all the events and beings of the world to all those who

have the heart to understand them: the admonition to self-knowledge, which is the true foundation of world knowledge.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks in depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

My dear friends, we have advanced, in respect to what has been sent to us from the spiritual world in the form of mantras, to the mantric verses which correspond to the esoteric situation in which we feel ourselves: first of all, in meditation we imagine the being standing at the abyss of existence speaking to us.

Let us imagine it once more, for we cannot recall it to our souls too often. We see before us everything belonging to the kingdoms of nature. We observe the glorious heavenly bodies; we see the floating clouds; we see the wind and the waves, the thunder and lightning. We see everything from the humblest worm to the sublimest revelations in the glittering stars. Only a false asceticism, unrelated to true esotericism, could in any way despise this world that speaks to the

senses. The person who wishes to be truly human can do nothing other than intimately relate to the sense-perceptible life, from the humblest creature to the majestic, divinely glittering stars.

We must never despise the grandeur and awesome beauty of all that surrounds us, which we must acknowledge; we must go forward step by step in the world and be able to appreciate what our eyes see, what our ears hear, what the other senses perceive, what we can grasp with our reason. However, a moment comes as you look around at the expanse of space, at the interweaving of time, that despite all the grandeur and awesome beauty in your surroundings, you cannot find there what the inner nature of your being is. So you must say to yourself: the inner source of my being is to be sought elsewhere. The very power of such a thought affects us.

What follows for the soul can only be expressed in imaginative thoughts. At first these imaginative thoughts lead us to a wide field in which everything earthly and sense-perceptible is spread out before us. We find it to be radiant with the sun, we find it to be shining light. But as we look all around us we find our own self nowhere. Then we gaze before us and see that this sunny field, which is grandiose and beautiful and sublime to the senses, is blocked by a dark, night-bedecked wall. We see ourselves entering deeply into the darkness. We intuit that perhaps there in the darkness is our self's true origin; but we cannot see into it.

And as we follow the path forward, the abyss of existence, the threshold to the spiritual world, appears before us. We must cross over this abyss. The Guardian stands there warning us that we must be mature in order to cross over the abyss, for with our thinking, feeling and willing habits which correspond to the physical sense-perceptible world, we cannot cross over the abyss of existence into the spiritual world in which our real self originated.

The Guardian of the Threshold is the first spiritual being we encounter. Every night we are in this spiritual world when we sleep. But it is like darkness around our I and our astral body, because we can only enter this spiritual world when sufficiently mature. The Guardian of the Threshold protects us from entering immaturely. But

now as we encounter him he sends us his grand admonishments. And the admonishments are contained in the mantric verses which until now have formed the content of these esoteric lessons.

Those of you who do not yet have these mantric verses can obtain them from other members of the School. But the following procedure must be observed: not the person who is to receive the verses asks for permission, but the one who gives them.

These verses have not only shown us how our hearts are to react if we wish to cross over the abyss of existence, they have also shown us what our souls will feel once we have overflowed the abyss and gradually sense — not yet see, but sense — how the darkness, which was at first night-bedecked, gradually becomes lighter. At first we feel becoming lighter, and we feel that the elements — earth, water, air, fire — are different on the other side, that we are living in another world. And the world in which we recognize our own being, and therewith the true form of the elements, is indeed another world.

During the last lesson we considered the meditation with which we were to imagine how the Guardian stands before the abyss of existence; now we are already beyond it, first we feel — not yet see — how the darkness becomes lighter. The Guardian speaks to us, after he had previously made clear to us how we should comport ourselves in relation to the four elements. He tells us how these four elements change for us. He then asks questions.

Who answers? The hierarchies themselves answer these questions. From one side the third hierarchy — Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai — from the other side the second hierarchy, from a third side the third hierarchy.

The third hierarchy — Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai — answers when the Guardian of the Threshold asks what becomes of the earth's solidity. The second hierarchy — Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes — answers when the Guardian of the Threshold asks us what becomes of the water's formative force, which acts in us and gives us our inner configuration. And the first hierarchy — Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim — answer when the Guardian asks us what becomes of our breathing, of the air's stimulating power, which awakens us from dull plant-like existence to sentient-feeling existence.

Such mantras are to penetrate our souls, our hearts, to the extent that we feel ourselves to be within the situation. The Guardian of the Threshold poses the testing, admonishing questions. The hierarchies answer.

The Guardian:

What becomes of the earth's solidity, which supports you?

Angeloi:

Feel as we feel in your thinking.

Archangeloi:

Experience, as we experience in your feeling.

Archai:

Perceive, as we perceive in your will.

The Guardian:

What becomes of water's formative force, which penetrated you?

Exusiai:

Learn the spirit cosmic creating in the human body creating.

Dynamis:

Feel the cosmic life of spirit in the human body's life.

Kyriotetes:

Will the spirit's cosmic working in the human body's being.

The Guardian:

What becomes of the air's stimulating power, which awakened you?

Thrones:

Knowingly grasp inner being in your divine cosmic being.

Cherubim:

Warm your inner life in divine cosmic life.

Seraphim:

Awaken inner light in your divine cosmic light.

These, my dear sisters and brothers, are the admonishing words coming from the communion of the Guardian of the Threshold together with the hierarchies, which bring our souls ever forward if we experience them more and more in the right way.

In this way, we are doing what is appropriate for human beings of today and the future, what in the ancient holy mysteries meant that the student was being guided to the essence of the elements: earth, water, air.

But warmth, which is also an element, pervades everything: in the solid earth element, which supports us, is warmth; in the element of water, which forms us as humans, which gives form to our organs, causing them to develop and grow, warmth is also present; and in the element of air, by which the Jehovah-spirits once breathed into humanity its soul, through which man is even today awakened from his dull, plant-like existence, warmth is present. Warmth is everywhere. We must recognize it as the all-pervading element. We must immerse ourselves in it as the all-pervading element: Yes, we feel so close to it.

We feel far from the solid earth element, though we still feel the earth's support. We even feel far from the water element. The air element maintains a more intimate relation to us. When the air element does not fill us with regularity, when we have too much breath in us, or too little, our inner life indicates how the air-element is connected to us. Too much breath awakens fear in the soul. Too little causes fainting. Our soul is embraced by the air element.

We feel ourselves most intimately united with the warmth element. We ourselves are what is warm or cold in us. In order to live we must generate a certain amount of warmth. We are intimately close to the

warmth element. If we want to be closer to it, then not only one hierarchy can speak, then the reminding words must resound together from various hierarchies.

Therefore, when the Guardian of the Threshold asks questions of us concerning the warmth element, the answers from the cosmos are different. The Guardian asks the question:

What becomes of fire's purification, which enkindled your I?

We already know this question; it is the question about our entrance into the element of warmth, or fire. But now the answer does not come from one hierarchy or from a rank of one of the hierarchies, but the answer comes in choir from the Angeloi, the Exusiai, the Thrones; secondly the Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim answer the Guardian's question; and thirdly Archai, Kyriotetes, Seraphim answer. Thus the three answers about the general nature of warmth resound from the choir-like words of the three hierarchies.

Therefore, we are to imagine that when we hear the Guardian of the Threshold's warning reminders, the answers, which resound from our I, but which are stimulated by the hierarchies — come from all sides: first Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones; secondly speak the Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim; and thirdly speak Archai, Kyriotetes, Seraphim. All three hierarchies always speak: a rank from each of the three hierarchies always speaks. Thus the answers comes to us from the cosmos.

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of the fire's purification, which enkindled your I?

Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones:

Awaken in the cosmic etheric vastness the flaming script of life.

From all three hierarchies we are reminded that everything which happened to us during earthly life is recorded in the cosmic ether and we see it recorded there when we have passed through the gate of death. Once we have passed through the gate of death, looking back at our earthly life, but also gazing out at the etheric vastness, what we have done and accomplished in thoughts, feelings and deeds during earthly life is recorded. It is your life's flaming script.

Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim — answer in us:
Create the soul's atoning forces in circling waves of time.

We are admonished during the second stage we go through after passing through the gate of death, where we experience in reverse, in mirror images — that is, in its just atonement — what we have done here on earth. If we have harmed another human being in any way, we experience in the reverse stream of time what the other felt because of us. As I have said, the Archangeloi, Dynamis and Cherubim admonish us in this second stage, which we pass through between death and a new birth.

What our karma works through during the third stage — what happens when as souls we cooperate with other human souls and with the beings of the higher hierarchies

— the Archai (primal powers), Kyriotetes and Seraphim admonish us:

Ask help from the redemptive eternal force of spirit.

We must feel ourselves completely within this situation: the speaking Guardian of the Threshold — his earnest gesture toward us, his admonishment. And from the cosmic vastness, resounding, grasping our heart — what connects us with the riddle of life.

[The fourth part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of fire's purification, which enkindled your I?

Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones:

Awaken in the cosmic etheric vastness the flaming script of life.

Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim — they answer in us:

Create the soul's atoning forces in circling waves of time.

Archai, Kyriotetes, Seraphim:

Ask help from the redemptive eternal force of spirit.

What previously stood before us like a black, night enclosed darkness, is not yet illuminated by light for the soul's eye. But we have the feeling that while we are standing within this black, night enclosed darkness, wherever we reach out we begin to feel a glimmering light. And we find ourselves in the situation where we know that we ourselves are within this glimmering light. We feel ourselves moving toward the Guardian of the Threshold. We had only seen him as long as we were in the field of the senses. Then we stepped into the darkness and heard his questioning, admonishing words.

But these admonishing, questioning words had led us to where we now feel something like a mild weaving, moving light. In this weaving, moving light we make our way to the Guardian of the Threshold seeking help. It is a unique experience: not yet light, but the light is making itself felt; in this felt light the Guardian of the Threshold, manifesting himself, as though he were becoming more intimate with us, as though he were leaning more to us now, as though we were also stepping closer to him.

And what he now says seems as though in [earthly] life a person is whispering something confidential in our ear. And what were at first admonishing, earnest words, trumpet-like, powerful, majestic, from all sides of the cosmos coming to our hearts, continues now as an intimate conversation with the Guardian of the Threshold in weaving, moving light. For now it is as though he no longer just speaks to us, it is as though he whispers to us:

Has your spirit understood?

Our inner self becomes warm when the Guardian of the Threshold says in confidence: "Has your spirit understood?" Our inner self becomes warm. It experiences itself in the warmth. And this inner self feels obliged to answer with devotion, quietly and humbly. Thus we imagine it in meditation:

The cosmic spirit in me
It held its breath within
And may its presence still
Illuminate my I.

[Der Weltengeist in mir
Er hielt den Atem an
Und seine Gegenwart
Mög' erleuchten mein Ich.]

Our I does not answer the question "Has your spirit understood?" with pride and arrogance: "I have understood", but the I feels: divine being streams through the innermost essence of the human being; it is divine breath in man which quietly lingers and prepares us for understanding.

[The first part of the new mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The Guardian:
Has your spirit understood?*

The I:

*The cosmic spirit in me
It held its breath within
And may its presence still
Illuminate my I.*

Secondly, the Guardian in confidence asks:
Has your soul apprehended?

The I answers:
The cosmic souls in me
Lived in the council of stars
And may their harmonies
Resounding create my I.

Again it is not proudly that the I is tempted to answer when the Guardian asks: Has your soul apprehended? Rather is the soul becoming aware that in it speaks the cosmic souls of the beings of the higher hierarchies, and that in what they say not an individual entity is present, but an entire council, a consultative meeting, as if the planets of a planetary system were circling and contributing their respective illuminating forces. Thus do the cosmic souls send their concise suggestions. Our soul hears and hopes that from the harmonies the I will be so formed that the I in the human being is an echo of the cosmic harmonies which arise when cosmic souls take council among each other — like the planets in the solar system — and their advice and harmonies resound in the human soul.

[The second part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The Guardian:
Has your soul apprehended?*

*The I:
The cosmic souls in me
Lived in the council of stars
And may their harmonies
Resounding create my I.*

And the third confidential question which the Guardian directs to the person in this situation is this:

Has your body experienced?

The soul feels that in this body the cosmic forces — which are everywhere — are concentrated in one point in space. But these cosmic forces do not appear now as physical forces. The soul has long since become aware of how these forces, which from outside appear as active physical forces, as gravitational, electrical, magnetic forces, as warmth forces, as light forces, when they are active in the human body are moral forces, are transformed into will-forces. The soul feels the cosmic forces as those which constitute eternal universal justice

throughout the succession of earth lives. The soul feels them to be like forces of judgment which weave in the verdicts of karma and therewith the I itself.

When the Guardian asks in confidence:
Has your body experienced?

The human being feels obliged to answer with devotion to universal justice:

The cosmic forces in me
They judge the acts of men
And may their words of verdict
Guide the I in me.

[The third part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The Guardian:
Has your body experienced?*

I:

*The cosmic forces in me
They judge the acts of men
And may their words of verdict
Guide the I in me.*

Thus after having experienced the metamorphoses of the cosmic elements together with the Guardian of the Threshold and the hierarchies, the soul answers the Guardian's three questions with inner devotion; interwoven with what has been poured into it, the soul has advanced somewhat in answering the riddle of the words: "O man, know thyself!"

And today we will compare the opening words after having been filled with the element of warmth in devotion to the spiritual content of the cosmos, feeling how we have advanced further in following the great admonishment: "O man, know thyself!" We will see how we, as human beings, stand between the resounding of the demand for self-knowledge from all the cosmic events and beings, and the mantric verse, which has been contemplated in today's lesson:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with cosmic might?
Who speaks in depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's psychic vacancy,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

What becomes of fire's purification, which enkindled your I?
Awaken in the cosmic etheric vastness the flaming script of life.
Create the soul's atoning forces in circling waves of time.
Ask help from the redemptive eternal force of spirit.

Has your spirit understood?

The cosmic spirit in me
It held its breath within
And may its presence still
Illuminate my I.

Has your soul apprehended?

The cosmic souls in me
Lived in the council of stars
And may their harmonies
Resounding create my I.

Has your body experienced?

The cosmic forces in me
They judge the acts of men
And may their words of verdict
Guide the I in me.



Lesson 17

5 July 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

We also begin today with that verse which, by a correct understanding of the universe, resounds to human hearts from all that is and all that is becoming as a call to self-knowledge, which one must first attain for true knowledge of the cosmos.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the souless void of space,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

Once more let us review in our souls what summarized the contents of the previous Class Lesson. It was also a meditation arising from what the human being can experience when he feels himself completely immersed in the cosmic context, above all in the context of the spiritual world.

Man's path to the abyss of existence, at which the Guardian of the Threshold stands, appeared before our souls. We heard the teachings the Guardian gives to those who cross the threshold. We heard how the person who arrives on the other side of the threshold at first feels himself to be within light, and experiences the world in a new way in that he first hears what the Guardian says, but also what the beings of the higher hierarchies are saying. In the last dialog the Guardian asks a question and the Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones; Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim; Archai, Kyriotetes, Seraphim speak, one after the other, about the element of warmth, which penetrates everything and reveals itself to be a moral element on the other side of the abyss.

We saw how the Guardian then speaks to the I, asking three questions which penetrate deeply into the human being, and the I answers with humility, as was explained last time, but exchanging words as in a deeply intimate conversation with the Guardian.

The Guardian speaks:

What becomes of the fire's purification, which enkindled your I?

Angeloi, Exusiai, Thrones:

Awaken in the cosmic etheric vastness the flaming script of life.

Archangeloi, Dynamis, Cherubim:

Create the soul's atoning forces in circling waves of time.

Archai, Kyriotetes, Seraphim:

Ask help from the redemptive eternal force of spirit.

The Guardian:

Has your spirit understood?

The I:

The cosmic spirit in me
It held its breath within
And may its presence now
Illuminate my I.

The Guardian:
Has your soul apprehended?

The I:

The cosmic souls in me
Lived in the council of stars
And may their harmonies
Resounding create my I.

The Guardian:
Has your body experienced?

The I:

The cosmic forces in me
They judge the acts of men
And may their words of verdict
Guide the I in me.

The human being beyond the threshold of existence, where the Guardian stands, feels himself to be within weaving, living light. Gradually it becomes not only felt light, but a kind of light about which we can say that he sees it.

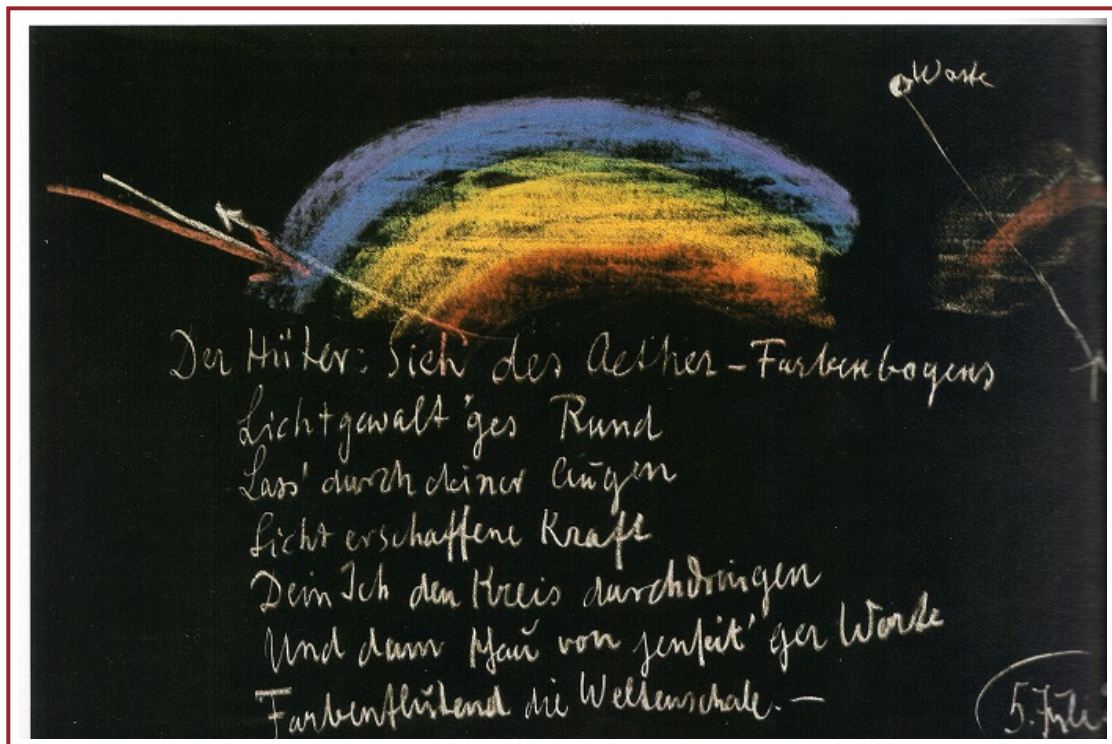
From feeling the light in waves, as in spiritual thoughts, so to speak, light appears which is seen by the spirit's eye.

But the human being cannot enter already seeing into this light without hearing another deeply founded admonition from the Guardian. And this admonition refers to a powerful cosmic imagination, something tremendously majestic which the person, even while being here in the sensible world, can receive as an impression — if he has the heart for it. For, when he becomes magically illuminated by the cloud formations and the majestic rainbow, then he can feel as if the spirits beyond the physical sense-perceptible rainbow's glow are

shining in through its colors. It is there, builds itself up from the universe, then disappears back into the universe, is placed within the universe like a mighty imagination.

The Guardian reminds us of this rainbow's impression at the moment when it becomes light enough for perception there in the spiritual world.

[The rainbow is drawn on the blackboard.]



And the Guardian reminds us that the one who has come over to the spiritual world should recall the impression from the sensory world which the rainbow had made. For it is remarkable, my dear sisters and brothers, that when we cross over from the physical sensory world to the spiritual world, the image of the rainbow is the easiest to remember and the one which most easily allows us to recall the relationship between the spiritual world, where it is becoming light, and the physical-sensory world, which we have left together with our capacities for knowledge.

Not referring to the view of the rainbow itself, but to the memory of the rainbow which has been called forth by the Guardian of the Threshold, the Guardian now indicates (we will hear the exact words): Try, with the force you normally use to see with your eyes, to prepare the substance with which you will penetrate this rainbow, with which you will pass below, through the rainbow and to the other side.

If we can imagine [the second drawing is made]: here in the cloud formation [white in the upper right-hand corner] — looking up from the earth [small arrow] — the rainbow would be here [red in the cloud formation]. Then the Guardian instructs us to penetrate through that rainbow and from this vantage point [a line is drawn to the small circle on which the word "Warte" (vantage point) is written] which is on the other side, to look back from that cosmic distance at the rainbow. The Guardian instructs us to make our imagination more profound through meditation, if we wish to advance beyond the point we reached during the previous lesson.

When we look back from out there, if you imagine that you go behind the blackboard [white arrow pointing up and left in the first drawing], then look at the rainbow from behind [red arrow pointing down and left in the first drawing], as it appears in memory, looking from behind, then the rainbow becomes a powerful bowl, a cosmic bowl. And we no longer see a bow, we see a powerful bowl extending over half the sky, within which the colors flow into each other.

This is the imagination which the Guardian first introduces:

See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.

[This first stanza of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.*

These are the powerful words spoken by the Guardian, my dear sisters and brothers, and you must put yourself correctly in the image-filled situation in which the Guardian of the Threshold's pupil finds himself when he is called to observe the cosmic bowl with its content of color-flooding light.

See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.

We must pass through such images. And if they work deeply into the I, then we see how the beings of the third hierarchy — Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai — appear in the flood of colors that fill the bowl. They are breathing the colors into their own angelic beings.

Thus we have an idea about the cosmic creation behind the sensory world, which is the result of the deeds of the higher hierarchies; we have a conception of how the spiritual beings act beyond the rainbow, at first breathing in the cosmic bowl's colors, taking them into their own being.

We observe how what flows from the cosmos to the rainbow, penetrating it, then appears behind the rainbow as thoughts, how it is absorbed, breathed in by the angelic beings. Now we learn the true nature of the rainbow. All the thoughts thought by people in a

particular place are gathered from time to time through the rainbow's bridge and sent farther out to the spiritual domain, where it is breathed in by the beings of the third hierarchy.

What so magically appears [the rainbow] in the vastness of the universe does not only have a physical meaning; it has a spiritual-inner meaning. And the magical ether-rainbow cannot be discerned from within the physical-sensory world; we can discern it only beyond the threshold of existence, once we have heard the Guardian of the Threshold's various admonitions.

Through the impression we receive from that outlook point of the rainbow as the cosmic bowl, it becomes clear to us how the light, which at first was a dark, night-bedecked sphere, spreads out before us. We are now within it. It brightens: it is sun, the cosmic bowl with its flood of colors seen from the other side of the rainbow.

Then the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai begin to reflect their consciousness within the human soul of how they breathe in the floods of color in order that what exists here on the earth as sense-perceptible may be brought into the spiritual domain, to the extent it is of use there.

And then we perceive how the beings of the third hierarchy have breathed in what they took from the sensible world, what has penetrated them through the rainbow, what they have transformed to the extent that it can be taken into the spiritual world — they go as helpers, with what they have absorbed within themselves, to the even higher spirits, to the spirits of the second hierarchy. For the spirits of the third hierarchy, Angeloi, Archangeloi, Angeloi, are the helping spirits of the spirit-world. We now hear from them what we see when we behold the color-flooded cosmic bowl — somewhere beyond the rainbow.

Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai:

Sense our thoughts
Breathing the colors of life
To the light-flooded bowl;
We carry the mirage of the senses

To spirit's domain of being
And turn, by the world inspired
To serve the higher spirits.

[This second stanza is written on the blackboard.]

Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai:

*Sense our thoughts
Breathing the colors of life
To the light-flooded bowl;
We carry the mirage of the senses
To spirit's domain of being
And turn, by the world inspired,
To serve the higher spirits.*

My dear sisters and brothers, let us place the image once more before our souls: the cosmic bowl, half the sky in size, the colors flooding within — which we normally see toned down in the rainbow — weaving, living in one another; the beings of the third hierarchy, Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, approach. They breathe these colors. The thoughts of the beings of the third hierarchy are visible to us in this breathing of colors.

We observe how these beings of the third hierarchy, permeated with these cosmic thoughts, turn to the beings of the second hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, whom they serve. And we have this powerful image before us — the pure spirit-beings appear, the residents of the sun, who only appear when the physical image which the sun casts, disappears; for despite all its greatness in comparison to the earth, it is a small image — for it is only an image. And the sun majestically fills the entire universe, infinitely larger than the gigantic cosmic image. Then the beings of the second hierarchy appear, weaving, living in the pure spirit-domain, but now receiving what the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai bring them. These are not dead thoughts, such as we have. The dead thoughts are taken from the illusion of the senses and become living thoughts through the breath of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai. As a powerful offering, the

Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai place these living thoughts before the second hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes. The thoughts which are illusions in earthly life are awakened to existence by the beings of the second hierarchy.

And we see how the beings of the second hierarchy receive from the beings of the third hierarchy the thoughts already made living by them; and we see that a powerful resurrection of a new world takes place, created out of what was dead, illusionary, and taken up by the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai. Thus a new world, a resurrecting world comes into existence through the workings of the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes.

Then we see how the remarkable secret of the cosmos works. We see how the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes give over what they received from the beings of the third hierarchy to what we call *rays* in earthly life — rays of the sun, of the stars. The awakened, now living world-thoughts are given over to all that rays.

In reality rays are not physical. In reality it is the spirit that beams in the rays. But we fail to see, when the rays reach us, what they had previously been given from the realm of the beings of the second hierarchy. All these rays, the rays of the stars, the rays of the sun, have been given what the beings of the second hierarchy weave in world-thoughts, but also what they let be resurrected from the dead thoughts — our thoughts on earth — which were made living by the beings of the third hierarchy. And now we hear how they also give to these raying spiritual forces what works as creative love in the cosmos — what weaves in the sun and star rays as love; the love that floods the cosmos and which is the creative force in the whole cosmos; how they entrust it to the rays of the stars, to the rays of the sun. We now see with the eye of the spirit how the beings of the second hierarchy — raying spirit, awakening love, bearing love — merge with the world.

Thus we hear them speaking, not to us; we are witnesses to a dialog between the beings of the second hierarchy and the beings of the third hierarchy. It resounds across. We only listen. It is the first time in the course of situational meditation that we hear the beings of the hierarchies speaking to each other:

What you have received
From dead illusion made live:
We waken it to existence;
We give it to the rays,
Who manifest with love
The nothingness of matter
In the spirit's essence.

By being witnesses to a heavenly dialog, the once night-bedecked darkness is gradually illuminated for the eye of the spirit. It becomes filled with a soft, mild light.

[The third stanza is written on the blackboard.]

*What is received by you
From dead illusion made live:
We awaken it to existence;
We give it to the rays,
Who manifest with love
the nothingness of matter
In the spirit's essence.*

If we have heard and have absorbed all this, then we will see with the spirit's eye something else taking place. We have already seen how earthly thoughts are made living ones by the third hierarchy, that what was made living is received by the second hierarchy and then shared with the rays of the stars and with the rays of the sun, and transformed into love. Now we see it taken over by the beings of the first hierarchy and made by these beings into the elements with which to create new worlds; what Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai breathe in from the world, what Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes receive from them and transform into creative forces from which they — Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim — shape new worlds.

What is remarkable is this: first we were witnesses to a conversation in heaven between the beings of the third and second hierarchies. Then we hear more with our spiritual ears. The beings of the first

hierarchy begin to speak the cosmic words. At first it seems as though we were only to be listeners to a heavenly conversation. But soon we realize that it is not so.

First the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai made their voices heard; then a dialog took place between the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes and the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai; then the Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim join the conversation. A choir of the spiritual spheres rings out. We become aware, now that the voices of all nine choirs ring out together, that what they are intoning is directed at us as human beings. And so finally the whole spirit world speaks to us. But only when what has been spoken within the spirit-world is included in the cosmic words of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, is it again intoned in our humanity. It intones to us as human beings:

In your worlds of will
Feel our cosmic working:
Spirit glows in matter,
When we create thinking;
Spirit creates in matter
When we willing live;
World *is* I-Willing Spirit-Word.

The world *is* the spirit-word which wills the I; and the world *is* in the creation by Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

[This fourth stanza is written on the blackboard.]

Thrones, Cherubim, Seraphim:

*In your worlds of will
Feel our cosmic working:
Spirit glows in matter,
When we create thinking;
Spirit creates in matter
When we willing live;
World is I-Willing Spirit-Word.*

The spirit-word, which wills the I, *is* the world. And as we hear with the spiritual ear these words directed at our humanity, it becomes light in the spiritual world. The mild light which was there before is transformed into spiritual brightness.

This is the experience with the Guardian while the spiritual sphere is becoming light:

See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.

Sense our thoughts
Breathing the colors of life
To the light-flooded bowl;
We carry the mirage of the senses
To spirit's domain of being
And turn, by the world inspired,
To serve the higher spirits.

What is received by you
From dead illusion made live:
We awaken it to existence;
We give it to the rays,
Who manifest with love
The nothingness of matter
In the spirit's essence.

In your worlds of will
Feel our cosmic working:
Spirit glows in matter,
When we create thinking;
Spirit creates in matter
When we willing live;
World *is* I-Willing Spirit-Word.

And it is as though the Guardian of the Threshold were touching us softly with his spiritual hands. We feel his presence as if he closed our spirit-eyes and we saw nothing for a moment, despite having been in a bright spiritual space a moment before. Words arise within me which I will place at the end of the lesson, to be saved for next time; I do not wish to include them as a mantra for today.

When the Guardian of the Threshold — if we may express with a sense-perceptible picture what takes place in a purely spiritual way — softly places his hands over our eyes so that we do not see the spiritual light around us, something arises in us that acts as a remembrance of the sensory world, which we had left behind in order to acquire knowledge in the spiritual world:

I walked in this world of senses,
Thought's legacy with me leading,
A god's force had led me in.
Death stands at the path's end.
I will to feel the presence of Christ.
In matter's death wakes the spirit's birth.
Thus In spirit I find the world
And know myself in the evolving world.

*

My dear friends, I must remind you of something I said upon the opening of these Class Lessons, and also during the Christmas Conference. It cannot be assumed that things which have been organized in a certain way for good reason may be changed from outside and be organized in a different way. Therefore, I must announce here that in the future no application to the Class will be considered which is not directed to the secretary of the Executive Committee of the Goetheanum, Dr. Wegman, or directly to me. Only applications for participation in the Class Lessons directed to either one of these two addresses will be considered. What has been the rule from the beginning must be continued. The members have not

followed this procedure, but have done as they wish. And those who are already members of the Class should make this clear to others who want to participate.

On this occasion I would like to bring to your attention something else, my dear friends, which is especially grave now when the importance of how the Anthroposophical Society is managed must be maintained. Again and again letters are arriving which state: If I don't give a reply, I will assume the answer to be affirmative. Those who have written in this way know about it. I wish to inform those who have written in this way, and those who intend to do so, to please know that every letter which contains the sentence: I consider no answer to mean yes — that every such letter can form its own answer as being a negative. In the future such letters will not be answered, because one cannot accept such impertinence, but what is written in such letters must be regarded as containing their own rejection.

Blackboard Texts in original German:

TAFELTEXTE DER SIEBZEHNEN STUNDE

Der Hüter: Sieh' des Äther-Farbenbogens
Lichtgewalt'ges Rund,
Lass' durch deiner Augen
Lichterschaffene Kraft
Dein Ich den Kreis durchdringen,
Und dann schau von jenseit'ger Warte
Farbenflutend die Weltenschale.

Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai:
Empfind' unsrer Gedanken
Farbenatmend Leben
In der Schale Lichtesfluten;
Wir tragen Sinnenschein.

In Geistes-Wesensreiche
Und wenden weltdurchdrungen
Uns höhern Geistern dienend zu.

Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes:

Euer Empfangenes
Aus totem Sinnenschein Belebtes:
Wir wecken es im Sein;
Wir schenken es den Strahlen,
Die des Stoffes Nichtigkeit
In des Geistes Wesenheit
Liebewebend offenbaren.

Throne, Cherubine, Seraphine:

In deinen Willenswelten
Fühl' unser Weltenwirken;
Geist erglänzt im Stoffe,
Wenn wir denkend schaffen;
Geist erschafft im Stoffe,
Wenn wir wollend leben;
Welt ist Ich-wollend Geistes-Wort.



Lesson 18

12 July 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

The call to self-knowledge, which the human soul can hear when it objectively pays attention to all the beings and events in nature and spiritual life, will pass before our souls again at the beginning of our considerations.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

On the path to the answer which the soul can find to this question, my dear sisters and brothers, we have followed the path leading to the Guardian of the Threshold, to the abyss of being. We have progressed to where the Guardian of the Threshold instructs us so that what was

previously dark and gloomy — although we knew that it contained the source of our being — expanded and became light. And then, in the increasing light, we heard the Guardian's call:

See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.

And the voices of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai are intoned with these words as they are directed to the human souls:

Sense our thoughts
Breathing the colors of life
To the light-flooded bowl;
We carry the mirage of the senses
To spirit's domain of being
And turn, by the world inspired
To serve the higher spirits.

And we see how through the flooding light in the cosmic bowl, which we met in the last lesson, the beings of the third hierarchy illuminate and are illuminated; we see the multitudes of these beings, Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, turn to the higher spirits, which they serve, to the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes; and we are witnesses to how the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes tell their serving spirits to fulfill the needs of human beings.

The Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes speak:

What you have received
From dead illusion made live:
We waken it to existence;

We give it to the rays,
Who manifest with love
The nothingness of matter
In the spirit's essence.

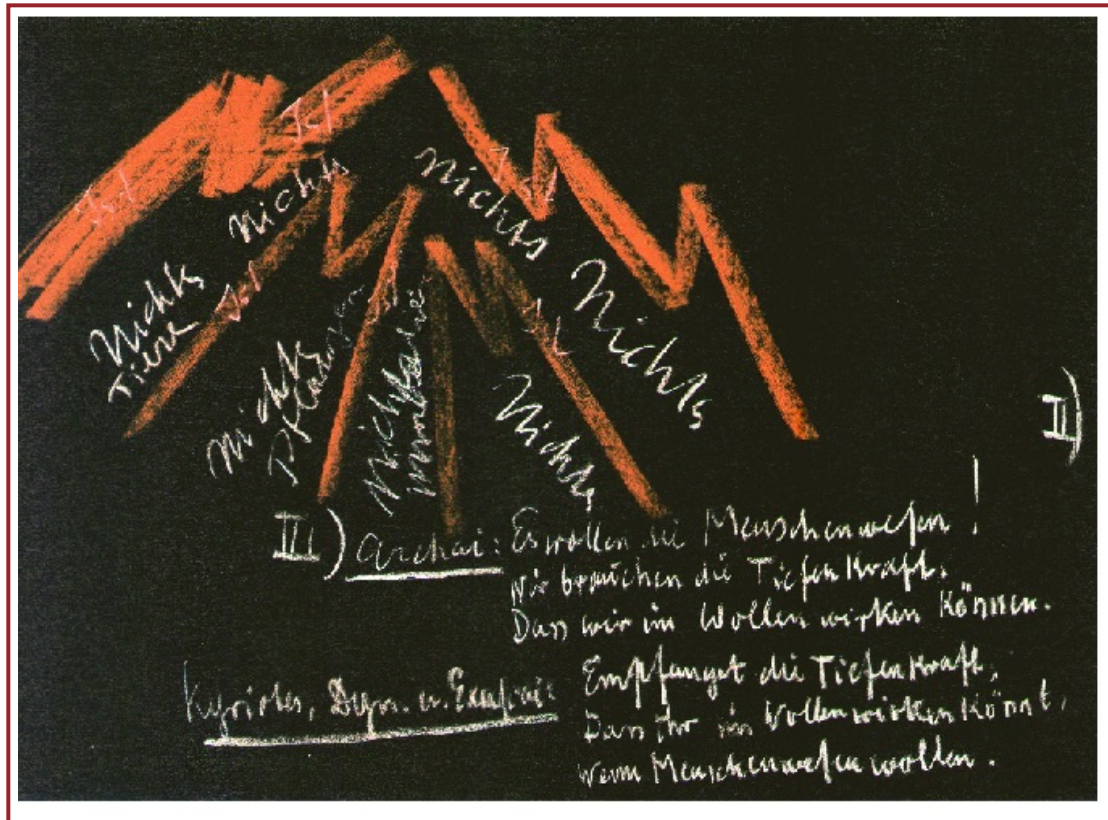
And then — impelled from within — we must turn our gaze to the highest spirits, the first hierarchy, who now turn to humanity in blessing. From them we hear:

In the willing of your worlds
Feel *our* world working:
Spirit glows in matter
When, thinking, we create.
Spirit creates in matter
When we live in willing:
World *is* the I-willing Spirit-Word.

As witnesses to how the beings of the higher worlds speak to each other, so penetrated with what the highest beings let stream into human souls as the cosmic-word so that the human heart may resonate with it, we must feel ourselves to be within the all-moving, all-pervading cosmic light in which we ourselves live and move.

And now we come to a truth, which is perceived where the non-embodied beings live, where the spirits live their lives, where the spirits think their truths, where the spirits radiate their beauty, where their spiritual acts take place. And we recognize the greatness, the all-pervading, weaving truth in the spirit-worlds: *spirit is*. For we are, we live, we act in spirit. We perceive spiritual being.

And now we realize that spirit, in which we now live, alone *is*. We now know that even here, in the world of sensory illusion, is only spirit. Only spirit *is*. This stands before our souls as unshakable, all-pervading truth: spirit *is*. And we do well to place this truth before our souls in picture form.



What is expressed here in the drawing is spirit. It is spirit alone.

[While continuing to speak, Rudolf Steiner inserts the word "Ist" in the red lines of the drawing — barely visible here.]

What is here: *Is* — is spirit. And what is outside this red is nothing. This is placed before our souls. And the spirit-world tells us [pointing]: here *Is*, here *Is*, here *Is*. Everywhere that spirit is, *Is* something.

[As he continues to speak, Rudolf Steiner writes the word *Nichts* (nothing) in various places between the red lines, then the worlds *Mineralien* (minerals), *Pflanzen* (plants), *Tiere* (animals).]

And where there is no spirit, there is *nothing*. We are profoundly impressed by this truth: Everywhere where spirit is, is something, and where there is no spirit, is *nothing*. And now we wonder: How did all this seem to us there in the world of sensory illusion, which we left to enter the spiritual world, where we find true being, the spirit revealed to our souls. Over there we did not see what is drawn here in red. We are too weak there to see what is drawn here in red. What remains there then? *Nothing*. Over there we see *Nothing*, call it *minerals*, one kind of Nothing; call it *plants*, a second kind of Nothing; call it animals, a third kind of Nothing, and so forth.

We see Nothing because we are too weak to see Something. And we call the Nothings the kingdoms of nature. That is the great deception, the great illusion. Over there only variations of the Nothing are visible when we look out from the body. And we feel deeply the impression, as we live over there and give names to what is fundamentally Nothing, that it is the great illusion. And what is Nothing, and what we give names to now appears to us as the sum of names which we give to Nothingness. For in their reality all beings are only present in the spiritual world that we have now entered. Names dedicated to Nothing we have wasted on the non-existent. And beings — not those from the domains of the gods to which we belong and to which we should belong — can take possession of the names which we have wasted on the Nothings. And they keep these names from now on.

If we are not clear about the fact that here on earth we give names to nullities, we fall with our nullities into the greatest illusion. We must know that we are giving names to the nullities. It is now clear to us, because over there [in the spirit-world] we live and move in the light, and the spiritual strength of our hearts has remained there, we can feel deeply, deeply, deeply: We now know that we have gone from the kingdom of illusions to the kingdom of truth. Earnestness, holy earnestness in respect to the truth begins to act in our souls.

And now we look back at the faithful Guardian of the Threshold, who stands at the abyss of being. He doesn't speak now. He spoke from out of the darkness. He spoke when we first felt the brightness. He spoke when the darkness [in the stenography "brightness" — possibly an error.] was brightening for us. Now, as we stand shaken by the great truth "only spirit *is*", he stands there speechless, pointing above

to where the beings of the higher hierarchies speak to each other. And with presence of mind we think for a moment: Below in earthly life we perceived the impression made on us by minerals, by plants, by animals, by physical human beings; we heard what the clouds say, what the mountains say, how the fountains ripple, how the lightning flashes, how the thunder rolls, what the stars whisper about cosmic secrets. That was our experience down below. Now beyond the abyss of existence all that is silent. Now we are witnesses to the gods speaking to each other. The whole choir of Angeloi begins to speak.

We look up and see how the choir turns to the spirits of the second hierarchy, which they wish to serve. We observe the loving, serving gestures of the Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, who turn to the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes. We view the serving multitudes of the third hierarchy.

We view the multitudes of the second hierarchy in world-creation, in world-dominion, in world-illumination, and we hear what the spiritual-illuminating, divine-willing beings speak to each other.

We hear the Angeloi intoning their words of concern for the guidance of human souls. Their words resonate:

The human beings think!

This weighs on the Angeloi. They are concerned as to how they should guide human souls, because humans think. Then they turn to the Dynamis for the force needed to guide human beings in their thinking.

Angeloi:

The human beings think!
We need the light from the heights
That we may illuminate their thinking.

From the realm of radiance, dominion, acting, the Dynamis lovingly and benevolently reply:

Receive the light from the heights,
So you can illuminate thought,
When human beings think.

And the flooding light, the force of illumination in thought, streams over from the Dynamis to the Angeloi. What the Angeloi receive enlightens, without our knowing, human thinking. Now we realize what acts and weaves in human thinking: the illumination of the Angeloi. But the light force for this illumination they receive from the Dynamis.

[The first part of the mantra is written on the blackboard. Italics indicate writing.]

I) *Angeloi:*

"Human being think!": their concern is expressed in their words.

Human beings think!

They turn to the Dynamis with their concern:

*We need the light from the heights
That we may illuminate their thinking.*

The Dynamis reply:

Dynamis:

*Receive the light from the heights,
So you can illuminate thought,
When human beings think.*

Our spiritual view goes farther. We see the multitude of Archangeloi turning to the second hierarchy. They turn to the Exusiai and Kyriotetes, to two categories of spirits of the second hierarchy. (The Angeloi had turned to the Dynamis: Archangeloi turn to the Exusiai

and Kyriotetes.) Their concern is for human beings' feeling. And they request from the Exusiai and Kyriotetes what they need in order to guide human beings in their feeling.

Archangeloi:

The human beings feel!
We need warmth of soul,
That we may live in feeling.

They must breathe life into feeling. And with powerful voices, because two choirs are answering, Kyriotetes and Exusiai voices ring out in the spiritual cosmos:

Receive warmth of soul
That you may live in feeling
When human beings feel.

[The second part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

II) *Archangeloi:*

*The human beings feel!
We need warmth of soul,
That we may live in feeling.*

The reply:

Kyriotetes and Exusiai:

*Receive warmth of soul
That you may live in feeling
When human beings feel.*

We turn to the third multitude of the third hierarchy, to the Archai. They have concern for the will of the human being, the third concern of the third hierarchy.

We feel: when the Angeloi turn to the Dynamis, then the Dynamis act way up in the heights in order to give the light they create from the heights to the Archai for their concern for human thinking. And we feel: everything in the compass of cosmic warmth is created by the Exusiai and Kyriotetes, and it is given over to the Archangeloi so that they can guide human feeling. And deep below, where the spirits and gods of the depths prevail, and where from the abysses — in which much evil moves — the good forces of the deep must be drawn up high, so all the gods of the second hierarchy pull together; for in their concern for the human being's will, the Archai need the forces of the deep. They speak:

The human beings will!
We need the forces of the depths,
That we may work in willing.

And the powerful spirits of the second hierarchy answer with a mighty cosmic voice in the combined voices of all three together, the three choirs forming one choir — Kyriotetes, Dynamis, Exusiai — three choirs in one:

Receive the force of the depths,
That you may work in willing,
When human beings will.

[The third part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

III) *Archai:*

The human beings will!
We need the forces of the depths,
That we may work in willing.

Kyriotetes, Dynamis and Exusiai answer together:

Kyriotetes, Dynamis and Exusiai:

*Receive the force of the depths,
That you may work in willing,
When human beings will.*

This is the world, existing in the holy words of creation, of which we will be witnesses in spiritual worlds, as we are witnesses of the events in the mineral and vegetable kingdoms here in earth.

And we hear, in that it becomes our experience:

The human beings think!
We need the light from the heights
That we may illuminate their thinking.

Receive the light from the heights,
So you can illuminate thought,
When human beings think.

The human beings feel!
We need warmth of soul,
That we may live in feeling.

Receive warmth of soul
That you may live in feeling

The human beings will!
We need the forces of the depths,
That we may work in willing.

Receive the force of the depths,
That you may work in willing,
When human beings will.

We grow into the spiritual world. Instead of what surrounds us here in the sensory earth, the choirs of the spiritual world surround us. And we become witnesses to what the gods say in their creative concern for the world of humans.

Only when in our meditation we go on to the complete elimination of what we are here on earth, and to having a feeling for the world the gods are forming with their divine speech, do we experience true reality. And only when we possess this reality, do we also know what really surrounds us between birth and death. Because behind the appearances in life between birth and death is the reality of what we experience between death and rebirth.

In earlier times people living on earth had a dull, dreamlike clairvoyance. Their souls were filled with dreamlike pictures, spoken [sic] from the spiritual world. Let us imagine a person from olden times. When he was not working, and was resting — although the sun was still in the sky — and was thinking back, pictures arose which he experienced in his soul and which reminded him of what he had experienced in pre-earthly existence in the spiritual world. But he didn't understand the connection between his earthly existence and that existence which shone into his clairvoyant dreams. But the initiates and their teachings were there. They explained the connection, first to their students, and through their students to all the people. So they lived in the earthly world experiencing the memories of pre-earthly existence.

Nowadays in earthly life the memory of pre-earthly existence has been extinguished. Initiates cannot explain the connection between earthly life and pre-earthly existence, because humans have forgotten what they experienced in pre-earthly existence. Such an explanation is not possible because the cosmic memory no longer exists.

Nevertheless, what the gods are saying behind sensory being must be heard by means of initiation-science. Human beings must experience it. And soon the time will come — it's approaching more and more — when a person who passes through the gate of death will only be able to understand the spiritual world into which he enters if he realizes that when a person enters heavenly existence through the gate of death, and finds himself in the reality of the spiritual worlds, within the world of Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes,

Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones — if he experiences all this, if what he experiences after death it is not to remain incomprehensible and dark to him, then he will have to remember what he experienced here on earth through initiation-science.

And what is extremely important in understanding what can be experienced in life between death and a new birth — if it has been heard, otherwise it cannot be understood — is remembrance of what is still heard on earth, and which resounds as follows:

The human beings think!
Receive the light from the heights.

The human beings feel!
Receive warmth of soul.

The human beings will!
Receive the force of the depths.

These, my sisters and brothers, are the words that should be heard today in the esoteric schools. They should resound through the instructions of those who lead the esoteric schools with the force of the Michael age. Then it can be thus:

In the esoteric schools the voice of the Angeloi are first heard within the earthly sphere:

The human beings think!

The Dynamis' reply:

Receive the light of the heights.

The voice of the Archangeloi is heard:

The human beings feel!

The reply of the Kyriotetes and Exusiai:

Receive the warmth of soul.

The Archai's words:

The human beings will!

All three members of the second hierarchy, Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, answer:

Receive the force of the depths.

Those people who have heard those words in esoteric schools will go through the gate of death, where they will again hear all these words resounding together: the esoteric schools here, life between death and a new birth there. They will understand what is resonating there.

Or they will be dull and unwilling — after preparation by general anthroposophy — in respect to what is said in the esoteric schools. They do not perceive what can be heard through initiation-science from the realm of the heights. They go through the gate of death. They hear there what they should already have heard here. They don't understand it. When the gods speak to each other with powerful words, it sounds to them like incomprehensible ringing, mere sounds, cosmic noise.

Paul speaks about this in the Gospel — that through the teachings of Christ men should protect themselves from death in the spirit-land. For death soon comes in the spirit-land if we go through the gate of death and don't understand what is resonating there, if we can only hear the incomprehensible sounds instead of the understandable words of the gods, because we have been overcome by the soul's death instead of the soul's life. There is an initiation-science because souls are alive. There are esoteric schools so that souls may remain alive when they go through the gate of death. This we must feel deeply. [In a previous paragraph leading up to these words, Rudolf Steiner says: *"And soon the time will come — it's approaching more and more — when a person who passes through the gate of death will*

only be able to understand the spiritual world into which he enters if ..." (Und immer mehr wird die Zeit kommen...) which seems to indicate that this means sometime in the future. {Ed./Trans.}]

And now let us consider the path we have taken in spirit, how we approached the Guardian in order to learn how the human being crosses the abyss of existence. And let us also consider how the impressions there acted on our souls; let us take into our souls the inner drama of self-knowledge.

We have traveled the path. Three tablets stood there, so to speak. We are now standing before the third one, after we have taken into our souls all the profundities of divine speech. On the first tablet, long before we arrived at the abyss of existence, resonated:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

Then we approached the Guardian. The second tablet stands there. On it stands:

Recognize first the earnest Guardian,
Who stands before the gates of spirit-land,
Denying entrance of your sensory force
And your power of understanding,
For in your sensory weaving
And in creation of your thoughts,
From space's emptiness,
From the illusion of time's might,
You must first forcefully seize
The truth of your own being.

We have arrived on the other side, passing the earnest Guardian, and have heard a conversation such as this:

The human beings think!
Receive the light of the heights.

The human beings feel!
Receive the warmth of soul.

The human beings will!
Receive the force of the depths.

We look back to the world of senses and we feel about this sensory world the words:

I entered in this world of senses,
Bearing with me thinking's legacy,
A godly force led me in.
Death stands at the path's end.
I will to feel the being of Christ.
In matter's death he wakens spirit-birth.
Thus in spirit I find the world
And know myself in world-becoming

Blackboard texts in German:

TAFELTEXTE DER ACHTZEHNEN STUNDE

I) Angeloi:

Es denken die Menschenwesen!
Wir brauchen das Licht der Höhen,
Daß wir im Denken leuchten können.

Dynamis:

Empfanget das Licht der Höhen,
Daß ihr im Denken leuchten könnt,
Wenn Menschenwesen denken.

II) Archangeloi:

Es fühlen die Menschenwesen!
Wir brauchen die Seelenwärme,
Daß wir im Fühlen leben können.

Kyriotetes und Exusiai:

Empfanget die Seelenwärme,
Daß ihr im Fühlen leben könnt,
Wenn Menschenwesen fühlen.

III) Archai:

Es wollen die Menschenwesen!
Wir brauchen die Tiefenkraft,
Daß wir im Wollen wirken können.

Kyriotetes, Dynamis und Exusiai:

Empfanget die Tiefenkraft,
Daß ihr im Wollen wirken könnt,
Wenn Menschenwesen wollen.



Lesson 19

2 August 1924, Dornach

My dear friends,

Again we shall let the verse flow through our souls which can bring to mind how everything that is, was in the past and will be in the future, calls out to us to seek self-knowledge, for it is the foundation of all real, true cosmic knowledge.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

My dear sisters and brothers, we have let mantric verses pass into our souls which, through their force, contain the path into spirit-land, first passing the Guardian of the Threshold into what is at first a dark, gloomy, night-engulfed spiritual world, where light is felt, which then becomes light for our spiritual perception. We have seen in this

spiritual world how the human being participates – usually unconsciously, though he can be conscious of it – in the dialogs of the higher hierarchies – as though the Cosmic Word itself were acting together with the higher hierarchies. And finally we have been able to move on to the cosmic realm where the choruses of the different hierarchies resound together. Let us now bring that to mind once more – how we had already continued from hearing what the beings of the second hierarchy were saying to where the beings of the first hierarchy speak. And now we are able to hear them speaking in harmony as a chorus.

The Guardian brings it to our attention; we know this from previous lessons:

See the ether-rainbow arc's
Light teeming round,
Let the light-creating force
Pass through your eyes,
Your I penetrate the circle,
Observe from the other side's vantage point
Color flooding the cosmic bowl.

After the Guardian reveals to us this spiritual secret of the rainbow, from the chorus or the Angeloi, Archangeloi and Archai we hear resound:

Sense our thoughts
Breathing the colors of life
Into the light-flooded bowl;
We carry the mirage of the senses
To spirit's domain of being
And turn, by the world inspired,
To serve the higher spirits.

The spirits of the third hierarchy explain how they wish to serve the spirits of the second hierarchy for the benefit of humanity: we hear again the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes in chorus from their realm:

What you have received
From dead illusion made live:
We waken it to existence;
We give it to the rays,
Who manifest with love
The nothingness of matter
In the spirit's being.

And once we have heard how the beings of the second hierarchy, creating the world, approach our I; then the choir of the first hierarchy resounds – the Thrones, Seraphim and Cherubim:

In the willing of your worlds
Feel *our* world working:
Spirit glows in matter
When, thinking, we create.
Spirit creates in matter
When we live in willing:
World *is* the I-willing Spirit-Word.

Now we stand within the Spirit-Word, the Spirit-Word that underlies the creation of the world. We feel ourselves surrounded by this Spirit-Word. We feel the world penetrated by this Spirit-Word. We feel ourselves woven within this Spirit-Word. We feel it penetrating into our humanity. Finally we feel this cosmic Spirit-Word streaming into our hearts; we feel our whole humanity immersed in the waves of this Spirit-Word. We feel ourselves spiritually immersed in the spiritual world interwoven with the Word.

The Guardian is there in the distance. We had passed him by. He is now far in the distance. We now hear him as he softly speaks a last word of warning to our spirit-ear from afar. The Guardian speaks:

Who speaks in the Spirit-Word
With the voice
Which blazes in the cosmic fire?

From the realm of the first hierarchy comes the answer:

The flame of the stars speaks,
Seraphic Fire-Forces flame;
They flame also in my heart.
In the primal being's fount of love
The human heart finds
Creative spirit-flaming-speech:
It is I.

My dear sisters and brothers, if we wish to enter the esoteric realm, we should first feel that the ancient holy "'eyeh 'asher 'eyeh!" – "I am I", "I am" is a holy word which resounds from that other worldly reality. What our fleeting thoughts understand as "I am" is only a reflection of it.

We must be aware that the true "I am" does not come from us in the earthly realm, that if we wish to say "I am" worthily, we must first enter the realm of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. Only there does "I am" sound true. Here in the earthly realm it is illusion.

In order to experience the true "I am" within us, we must hear the Cosmic-Word. So we must listen to the Guardian of the Threshold's question: who speaks in the Cosmic-Word? Seraphim, who wend their way through the cosmic waves with spiritual flames of lightning, where we now stand. The Word is flame, a flaming voice. And in experiencing ourselves in this blazing cosmic fire, which speaks the fire language in the flaming fire, we experience the true "I am".

This is contained in the Guardian of the Threshold's question posed from the distance – we have passed him long ago – and the answer comes from the realm of the first hierarchy:

Who speaks in the Spirit-Word
With the voice
Which blazes in the cosmic fire?

The flame of the stars speaks,
Seraphic fire-forces flaming;
They flame also in my heart.
In the primal being's fount of love
The human heart finds
Creative spirit-speech aflame:
It is I.

[The first part of the mantra is written on the blackboard:]

The Guardian speaks from afar (The human-I knows itself to be in the realm of Spirit-Word borne by the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones):

*Who speaks in the Spirit-Word
With the voice
Which blazes in the cosmic fire?*

Again the answer comes to us from the realm of the first hierarchy:

*The flame of the stars speaks,
Seraphic fire-forces flaming;
They flame also in my heart.
In the primal being's fount of love
The human heart finds
Creative spirit-speech aflame:
It is I.*

When human words resound, then human thinking speaks through human words. When the spirit's cosmic-word resounds, then cosmic thinking speaks through the spirit's cosmic-word. This lies in the Guardian's second question, which he now poses from afar.

The Guardian speaks from afar. The human-I knows itself to be in the realm of the Spirit-Word borne by the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones:

What thinks in the Spirit-Word
With thoughts
Which are formed from cosmic souls?

They are the thoughts that come from all the cosmic souls, which belong to the beings of the various hierarchies. They form and shape everything in the kingdoms of the world. Therefore, the Guardian asks who thinks the formative forces:

What thinks in the Spirit-Word
With thoughts
Which are formed from cosmic souls?

Again from the realm of the first hierarchy the answer comes to us:

The glow of the stars thinks.

First it was the flames that speak the words; the star-flames speak the words. The glow that come from the flames thinks.

The glow of the stars thinks,
The formative forces of the Cherubim glow;
They also glow in my head.

This is what the human being who stands within it all says.

In the primal beings' source of light
The human head finds
Thinking soul-forming at work:

It is I.

This is the second dialog – as though the beings of the first hierarchy were giving us cosmic permission to experience the "I am":

What thinks in the Spirit-Word
With thoughts
Which are formed from cosmic souls?

The glow of the stars thinks,
The formative forces of the Cherubim glow;
They also glow in my head.
In the primal beings' source of light
The human head finds
Thinking soul-forming at work:
It is I.

[The second part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The Guardian speaks from afar:
What thinks in the Spirit-Word
With thoughts
Which are formed from cosmic souls?*

From the realm of the first hierarchy:

*The glow of the stars thinks,
The formative forces of the Cherubim glow;
They also glow in my head.
In the primal beings' source of light
The human head finds
Thinking soul-forming at work:
It is I.*

The cosmic Spirit-Word must speak. Thoughts stream from it. But the thoughts are creative; the thoughts are permeated with forces; the thoughts stream; and cosmic beings and cosmic events, everything which evolves from them. In it, in the thought bearing Cosmic-Word live the word-created cosmic thoughts. It is not mere thinking, it is not mere speaking, it is force, forces streaming in the Words. Forces inscribe the thoughts into the cosmic beings, into the cosmic events.

Thereby the third question which the Guardian of the Threshold asks from afar is indicated:

What impels in the Spirit-Word
With forces
Which live in the cosmic body?

The whole world, which resounds from the Cosmic-Word, which gleams from the cosmic-thoughts, is what thinks and speaks in humans, what bears the body, the thought pervaded cosmic body. The Thrones bear it, or rather the Thrones bear the thought illumined cosmic Spirit-Word that is within it.

Therefore, the answer to the Guardian's question comes from the first hierarchy:

The cosmic body of the stars impels,
The Thrones' bearing powers "body".

We must form a picture which is otherwise unusual. But just as one "enlightens" from light, and can form the verb "to live" from life, so also can one form the word "to body" from the force used to bear the body. [The verb "leiben" – "to body" – does not exist in German or English. Here Rudolf Steiner invents the word, so to speak. There is a subtle difference between the two German words which mean "body": *Leib* and *Körper*. In the theological sense *Leib* indicates a kind of soul function which the biological concept of *Körper* lacks. Because there is

only one word in English for body, I feel justified in using "embody", where Steiner said "to body" or "bodies" which are so awkward in English, as they are in German. But embody does follow his line of thought deriving "enlighten" from "light", for example. If someone wishes to stick closely to the literal translation, he/she may substitute "to body" or "bodies" where "embody" or "embodies" appears.] For body is not dead, it is not something finished. Body is something which is active at every moment, mobile, alert, something that "bodies" ["leibt"].

The Thrones' bearing powers embody.
They also embody in my limbs.
In the primal being's source of life
Human limbs find
Forceful Cosmic-bearer-powers.
It is I.

Cosmic-Word, cosmic-thinking, cosmic-body; the speaking, thinking cosmic-body is what the Guardian's third question refers to:

What impels in the Spirit-Word
With forces
Which live in the cosmic body?

The cosmic body of the stars impels,
The Thrones' bearing powers embody;
They also embody in my limbs.
In the primal being's source of life
Human limbs find
Forceful cosmic-bearer-powers.
It is I.

[The third part of the mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian speaks from afar:

– The human-I knows itself to be in the realm of the Spirit-Word borne by the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones –

*What impels in the Spirit-Word
With forces,
Which live in the cosmic body?*

From the realm of the first hierarchy:

*The cosmic body of the stars impels,
The Thrones' bearing powers embody;
They also embody in my limbs.
In the primal being's source of life
Human limbs find
Forceful Cosmic-bearer-powers.
It is I.*

In a certain sense, my sisters and brothers, it is a kind of conclusion to the path that began in the realm of illusion, of maya, which led us to the Guardian of the Threshold, which led us to self-knowledge, and through self-knowledge over to the spiritual realm, and allowed us to hear the choirs of the hierarchies. In a certain sense it is a conclusion when we now stand at the place where we may experience in ourselves the true "I am", "'eyeh 'asher 'eyeh".

In this dialog we can experience, when the threefold "It is I" streams from the heart, where it may stream from the heart; when it streams from the heart in such a way that it is the echo of what resounds in these hearts from the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones:

Who speaks in the Spirit-Word
With the voice
Which blazes in the cosmic fire?

The flame of the stars speaks,
Seraphic fire-forces flaming;
They flame also in my heart.
In the primal being's fount of love
The human heart finds
Creative spirit-speech aflame:
It is I.

What thinks in the Spirit-Word
With thoughts
Which are formed from cosmic souls?

The glow of the stars thinks,
The formative forces of the Cherubim glow;
They also glow in my head.
In the primal beings' source of light
The human head finds
Thinking soul-forming at work:

It is I.

What impels in the Spirit-Word
With forces
Which live in the cosmic body?

The cosmic body of the stars impels,
The Thrones' bearing powers embody;
They also embody in my limbs.
In the primal being's source of life
Human limbs find
Forceful Cosmic-bearer-powers.
It is I.

Here, my dear sisters and brothers, in a certain sense we have completed the first section of this First Class of the School.

We have heard the communications which we have received from the spiritual worlds – for this School is one which has been constituted by the spiritual worlds themselves; we have let the images and inspirations which can come from the spiritual worlds pass through us. They point out to our souls the path to understanding the true Human I in the surroundings of the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones.

My dear sisters and brothers! It was, as you have heard in the general anthroposophical lectures, Michael's super-sensible School in which such inner heartfelt teachings first resounded. They were the powerful pictures of the imaginative ritual at the beginning of the nineteenth century, where the souls who were selected to be close to Michael were taught the School's revelations of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth centuries, and which was led by Michael and his companions in the way described here. And now we are here in this anthroposophical School founded by Michael. We feel ourselves to be in it. They are the words of Michael which were to characterize the path which leads into the spiritual world and the human I: The words of Michael. These words of Michael of the super-sensible Michael-School constituted the first section.

When in September we find ourselves again in these Class Lessons, it will be Michael's will to describe the imaginative ritual revelations of the beginning of the nineteenth century. [2] [Due to the great increase in new Class members, the announced second section could not begin in September of 1924. Instead, repetition lessons – with additional content – were held. These will be the contents of Volume III. Due to Rudolf Steiner's premature death in March of 1925, the Esoteric School lessons were left incomplete.] That will be the second section. What has been presented to us in mantric words, will stand before our souls as pictures, which will be – to the extent possible – the pictures of the super-sensible imaginative ritual brought down at the beginning of the nineteenth century.

The third stage of this School will consist of what will lead us directly to the interpretations of the mantric words that were given in the super-sensible Michael School of the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth centuries.

We should feel how we ourselves go through all this in the spiritual world. We should always keep looking back to the physical-sensory world of the earth and humbly absorb everything that takes place in the physical-sensory world of the earth.

Therefore, in conclusion let resound on our souls again what – if we are capable of absorbing it and appreciating it – what resounds from every stone, from every plant, from every moving cloud, from every bubbling spring, from every rustling wind, from the forests and the mountains, everywhere from the things and events that resound from the earthly sphere, if we are appreciative of it.

We were in the realm of the Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones. Even the Guardian of the Threshold only called from afar. We go back again with humility, past the Guardian, out to the realm of sensory appearances. And again we let these words resound in us:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

*

My dear sisters and brothers, it is unfortunately the case that the measures, which have been repeated sufficiently within this Esoteric School, have been observed in a strange way by many who have become members by requesting membership and attained it; and just yesterday I had to criticize some rather unedifying matters. It is hard to believe, but it is really the case that members have left their blue membership certificates here on the chairs to reserve their places. It has also happened that three members have left notebooks – one folder and two notebooks – have been simply left lying around. The folder with the typewritten verses was found out on the street. From one of the notebooks could be copied what I told you yesterday. Another notebook was left lying in the Glasshaus. Therefore, it was necessary to expel three members of this School directly before this Class Lesson began.

With these, there have been nineteen expulsions from the School. One could have expected that earnestness would mean more to those who have already heard here what this School means. One of them loses the verses on the street, another leaves them here, the third leaves them lying in the Glasshaus: so it was necessary to expel three quite prominent members of the School. And I can assure you, my dear sisters and brothers, that the strict observance of rules I informed you of at the beginning and often repeated, must be strictly observed. Such a School with the esoteric earnestness can only be maintained if its members really observe what is demanded in the name of the spiritual powers which direct it.

With true occult matters it is really so. And what has been often occurring in the Anthroposophical Society can no longer continue. That which is filled with earnestness by its own character, must also be treated with earnestness.



Esoteric Lessons

The School of Spiritual Science

Volume III

Rudolf Steiner

September, 1924

Source: [Lectures to the First Class, Vol. III](#)

Editor/Translator's Note

By the time Rudolf Steiner had given the first nineteen First Class Lessons (Volumes One and Two), so many new members had joined, or wanted to join, that he felt it necessary to recapitulate the lessons already given rather than continue to advance. However, although the mantras (verses) used are the same as in Volume One, the descriptions are sufficiently different to justify a new volume. Furthermore, much new and valuable material is introduced, which is not in the previous volumes.

Lesson 20 (Recapitulation of Lesson 1)

6 September 1918, Dornach

As it turns out, many more friends have come to this Class Lesson — and probably will to the next lessons as well — who had not attended the previous ones. So, it would be impossible to simply continue in the same way as we have with the previous lessons. But it is also true that a repetition of these Class Lessons will not be a disadvantage for those members of this esoteric school who participated in the earlier lessons, because the content of this esoteric school is such that it works again and again on the soul. Therefore, for those who today are experiencing a repetition, it also constitutes a continuation.

But for all those who are here for the first time it means something else: it means an acquaintance with the beginning of the esoteric path.

And even those who are far advanced on the esoteric path see in it the advantages of their continued striving, in that again and again they return to the beginning. This return to the beginning is always also the endeavor to reach a more advanced stage. We should therefore consider this lesson of today in that sense. And so for the members of the School who are here for the first time, the meaning of the School must be explained beforehand.

As the impulse of the Christmas Conference with the spiritual laying of the foundation stone of the Anthroposophical Society took place in this hall, from now on an esoteric breath is to flow through the whole Anthroposophical Society — as I said yesterday — an esoteric breath that can already be noted in everything undertaken within the Anthroposophical Society since Christmas. The nucleus of this esoteric activity of the Anthroposophical Society must be the Esoteric School. This Esoteric School, coming from the entire character of anthroposophy, is to take the place of what has been previously attempted as the so-called Free School for Spiritual Science, which cannot exactly be described as having been successful.

It was at the time when I did not yet personally have the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society, and thus had to entrust those who wanted to try something, to let them try. In the future, this cannot continue. The intention of what was formed together with me as the Christmas impulse was that the Free School for Spiritual Science, with its various sections, would form an esoteric nucleus for all the esoteric work in the Anthroposophical Society.

An esoteric school, however, is not founded as an earthly entity. An esoteric school can only be one if it is the earthly reflection of what has been founded in the super-sensible worlds. And it has often been declared among anthroposophists that in the succession of the reigning hierarchy of Archangels, those who reign over human spiritual life, the Archangel Michael took over this guidance during the last third of the nineteenth century. And it was made known that this guidance has a very special significance for the spiritual life and evolution of humanity on earth.

It is the case that in human evolution life is guided successively by seven Archangels who together comprise the spiritual ruling substance of the planetary system, to which the sun, earth and moon also belong. The impulse of one of these Archangels lasts about three to four centuries. And when we consider the Archangel under whose impulse the spiritual life of the present stands, when we consider Michael, we have the Archangelos who possesses the spiritual force of the sun in everything he does and supports.

Previously, again lasting for three to four centuries — that is, from the last third of the nineteenth century back through three to four centuries — was the reign of the Archangelos Gabriel, who mostly bears the moon's forces in his impulses.

And going further back we come to the centuries in which a kind of revolution against spiritual activity and spiritual being in humanity took place during the middle ages, even by those who were the bearers of civilization — the reign of Samuel, who had his impulses in the Mars forces.

When we go even further back we come to the era in which a medicinally oriented alchemy deeply influenced spiritual life under the rule of the Archangelos Raphael, who bears the Mercury forces in his

impulses.

And when we go even further back, we are approaching more and more the Mystery of Golgotha, but have not yet reached it. We find there the reign of Zachariel, who bears the Jupiter forces in his impulses, and the reign of Anael — with whom we are getting very close to the Mystery of Golgotha — who bears the Venus forces in his impulses. Then we come to the time when the brilliance of the Mystery of Golgotha asserted itself against a profound spiritual darkness on earth — under the reign of Oraphiel, who bears the Saturn forces in his impulses.

Then we come back to the previous reign of Michael, that coincides with the great international, cosmopolitan impulses through Alexander the Great and Aristotle, which until that point was brought to humanity by means of the Greek mysteries and spirituality, and was then brought by Alexander over to Asia, to North Africa, so that what was the spiritual life of a small territory streamed out to the whole civilized world of those times. For it is always an attribute of a Michael era that what had previously blossomed in one place streams out to other localities in a cosmopolitan manner.

Thus, after having completed the cycle of successive Archangeloi epochs, we always return to the same Archangelos. We can go back further — again through the succession of Gabriel, Samuel, Raphael, Zachariel, Anael, Oraphiel — and would come again to Michael. And we would find that after the Michael era streams over us, an Oraphiel era follows.

So, my dear friends, we should be aware that the Michael impulse lives in the way characterized in everything which is spiritual activity and being in the present. But it is a more important Michael era than the previous ones. I would like to emphasize this.

When the Anthroposophical Society was placed at the service of the esoteric during the Christmas Conference, its esoteric nucleus, this Esoteric School, could only be founded by the spiritual power which is incumbent for its guidance at this time. Thus, we are in this Esoteric School as one which the spirit of the times himself, Michael, has founded; for it is the Michael-School of the present.

And only then, my dear friends, can you correctly understand what is being said here — when you are aware that nothing else is being said but what the Michael stream itself wishes to bring to humanity in the present time. All the words which will be spoken in this School are Michael words. Michael will is all that is willed in this School. You are all students of Michael in that you are present in the right way in this School. Only then, when you are aware of this, is it possible to be present in this School in the right way — with the correct disposition and attitude, feeling yourselves to be members not only of what enters the world as an earthly institution, but as a heavenly institution.

It is of course therefore a condition that every member of this School accept certain self-evident responsibilities. It is a property of the Christmas impulse of the Anthroposophical Society, that it has taken on the characteristic of complete openness. Therefore, nothing is demanded of members of the Anthroposophical Society other than what they themselves demand: that they receive through the Anthroposophical Society what flows within the anthroposophical spiritual movement. One does not take on further responsibilities when one becomes an anthroposophist. The responsibility for being a decent person is taken for granted.

It is otherwise when one seeks to enter this School. Then, based on the truly occult spirit of this School, the member assumes the responsibility of being a worthy representative of anthroposophy before the world with all his thinking, feeling and willing. One cannot otherwise be a member of this School.

That this is taken seriously, my dear friends, can be seen by that fact that since the short existence of this School in twenty instances temporary expulsions have already taken place. This strict measure will have to continue to be followed in the same way. One cannot play around with true esoteric matters; they must be realized with utmost earnestness. In this way, through this School the earnestness that is absolutely necessary for the anthroposophical movement to spiritually prosper can stream into it. That is what I wanted to say as an introduction.

If you — I'm speaking now to those of you who are here for the first time — if you receive the words spoken here as real messages from the spiritual world, as truly Michael-words, then you will be here in the right way, in the only way you should be here.

And so now we want to bring to our souls the words which resound to the human being when he objectively observes everything in the world that surrounds him — in the world above, in the middle and below. Let us look at the mute kingdom of minerals, at the sprouting plant kingdom, at the mobile animal kingdom, at the thinking kingdom of humanity on earth; let us direct our gaze to the mountains, to the seas, to the rivers, to the effervescent springs, to the shining sun, to the gleaming moon and the sparkling stars. If the human being keeps his heart open, if he can listen with the ears of soul, the admonishment resounds to him which is contained in the words which I shall now speak:

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.*

*Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?*

*Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?*

*It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,*

*Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.*

And when we let the meaning and the spirit of these words work in us, then we feel the desire to go into the springs from which our true humanity flows. To really understand these words means to crave the path that leads to those waters from which the human soul flows — to seek the source of human life.

In seeking, my dear sisters and brothers, you will be rewarded to the extent it lies in your karma. But the first step will be to understand the inner meaning of the esoteric path. This esoteric path will be described in Michael-words here in this School. It will be described in such a way that everyone can follow it, but not that everyone *must* follow it, rather that it be understood; for such understanding is in itself the first step. Therefore, what Michael has to say to present-day humanity will flow in mantric words. These mantric words will at the same time be words for meditation.

Again, it will depend on karma how these words for meditation work for each individual. And the first thing is to understand that from the spoken words about human self-knowledge the desire arises to direct one's attention to the sources of human existence: O man, know thyself! Yes, this desire must awaken. We must seek: Where are the sources of what lives in the human soul, what our humanity actually is?

At first, we must observe the surroundings that have been given us. We must look around at all the little things we have been given, at all the great things we have been given. We observe the mute stone, the worm in the earth, we look at all that grows and exists and lives around us in the kingdoms of nature. We look up to the powerfully glittering stars. We listen to the turbulent thunder.

It is not by being ascetic that we can solve the riddle of our own humanity; it is not by despising the earthworm, the stars glittering in space, not by despising them as outer sensible phenomena and instead seeking an abstractly chaotic path; but when we develop a feeling for the transcendence of what shines down on us from the stars, for all that enters through the senses and becomes our perception: beauty, truth, purity, transcendence, magnificence and majesty. When you can stand there as an observer of all that surrounds you — of the plants, of the stones, of the animals, of the stars, of the clouds, of the seas, of the springs, of the mountains —

and can absorb their majesty and greatness and truth and beauty and radiance, then can you first say with complete intensity: Yes, great and powerful and majestic and glorious are the worms that crawl under the earth, the stars that glitter above in heaven's space. But your being, O man, is not among them. You are not in what your senses reveal to you.

And then we direct our questioning gaze, laden with riddles, to the far distance. From here on, the esoteric path will be described in imaginations. We direct our gaze to the distance. Something like a path is shown, a path that leads to a black, night-cloaked wall that reveals itself as the beginning of deepest darkness. And we stand there, surrounded by the majesty of sensory perception, marveling at the greatness and majesty and radiance of sensory perception, but not finding our own being in it, with our gaze directed to the limits of sensory perception. But black, night-cloaked darkness begins there. But something in our heart tells us: Not here, where the sun reflects its light from all that grows and moves and lives, but there, where black, night-cloaked darkness is staring at us, are the sources of our own humanity. From out of there the answer must come to the question: O man, know thyself!

Then we go, hesitating, towards the black darkness and become aware that the first being who confronts us stands where the black, night-cloaked darkness begins. Like a previously unseen cloud formation taking shape, it becomes human-like, not weighted by gravity, but human-like nevertheless. With earnest, very earnest gaze, it meets our questioning gaze. It is the Guardian of the Threshold. For between the sun-radiating surroundings of humanity and that night-cloaked darkness there is an abyss, a deep, yawning abyss. The Guardian of the Threshold stands before us on this side of the abyss. We call him this for the following reason.

Oh, every night while sleeping the human being with his I and with his astral body is in that world that with imaginative gaze now appears as black, night-cloaked darkness; but he doesn't realize it — his soul-senses have not opened. He doesn't realize that he lives and acts among spiritual beings and spiritual facts between falling asleep and awakening; were he to consciously experience without further preparation what there is to experience there: he would be crushed! The Guardian of the Threshold protects us — therefore he is the

Guardian of the Threshold — protects us against crossing the abyss unprepared. We must follow his admonitions if we wish to tread the esoteric path. He encloses the human being in darkness every night. He guards the threshold so that the human being does not, when falling asleep, enter into the spiritual-occult world unprepared.

Now he stands there — if we have sufficiently internalized our hearts and delved deeply into our souls — there he is, admonishing us as to how everything is beautiful in our surroundings, but that in this beauty we cannot find our own being and that we must seek beyond the yawning abyss of existence in the realms of night-cloaked, black darkness; that we must wait until it becomes dark here in the sunlit radiant realm of sensory light and it becomes light for us there, where now there is still only darkness.

That is what the Guardian of the Threshold reveals to our souls. We are still at a certain distance from him. We look at him, and perceive his admonishing words still from a distance, which resound so:

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
Life is manifest in creation;
Where from earthly matter, form on form,
The lifeless is given shape;
Where sentient Beings, strong in will
Warm themselves in joy of existence;
Where you, O man, your bodily being
Is shaped from earth and air and light.*

*There your true being enters
Deep, night-cloaked, cold darkness;
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse
No longer, who you are and were and will be.
For your own being the day grows dimly
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
And you turn with angst of soul
Toward the light that from darkness streams.*

That is the Guardian of the Threshold's first admonishment, the earnest admonishment that tells us that our surroundings are beautiful and grand and sublime, radiant with light, sun-filled; but that this radiant, sun-filled world is for the human being the true darkness; that we must seek there, in the darkness, that darkness becomes light, so that humanity, illuminated from out of the darkness, can approach us, so that the riddle of humanity may be solved from out the darkness. The Guardian of the Threshold continues:

*And from out of the darkness comes light,
— you in image-shape revealed —
Your likeness manifesting you,
Yet also a parable of you,
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether
Heard by your heart, imparting strength,*

*The Spirit-Messenger, who alone
Can light for you the way;
Before him the fields of sense widen,
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.*

*And before his dark spirit-fields,
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,
Resounds his anciently potent creative words:
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.*

[The mantra is written on the blackboard, with the last line underlined.]

The Guardian speaks:

*Where on earthly ground, color on color
Life is manifest in creation;
Where from earthly matter, form on form,
The lifeless is given shape;
Where sentient Beings, strong in will
Warm themselves in joy of existence;*

*Where you, O man, your bodily being
Is shaped from earth and air and light.*

*There your true being enters
Deep, night-cloaked, cold darkness;
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse
No longer, who you are and were and will be.
For your own being the day grows dimly
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;
And you turn with angst of soul
Toward the light that from darkness streams.*

And from out of the darkness comes light,

(The continuation of this phrase follows after a few lines. What comes now is an intermediate clause.)

*— you in image-shape revealed,
Your likeness manifesting you,
Yet also a parable of you,
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether
Heard by your heart, imparting strength —*

(The intermediate clause has ended; the phrase "And from the darkness comes light" continues.)

*The Spirit-Messenger,
(the Guardian of the Threshold) who alone
Can light for you the way;
Before him the fields of sense widen,
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.*

*And before his dark spirit-fields,
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,
Resounds his anciently potent creative words:
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.*

For it is the Guardian himself who, once he has imparted to us this first admonition: to feel light as darkness, darkness as light, indicates the feelings and sensations which can come anciently potent from our souls. He speaks them aloud, does the Guardian, as his gaze becomes even more earnest, as he stretches out his arm and hand to us, he speaks further with these words:

*From the distant beings in space
Who experience existence in light,*

*(We feel ourselves impelled to take a few steps closer to
the Guardian.)*

*From the stages of the course of time,
Which finds expression in creating,
From the depths of heart-felt feeling
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:*

*They resound in the speech of the soul,
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,
From divine curative powers,
In the cosmic formative forces
The undulating existential words:
O you man, know thyself!*

It is different if we first hear these words from sensory beings, and if we correctly understand the words which resound: "O man, know thyself!", or if they now resound before the terrible abyss of existence from the mouth of the Guardian of the Threshold himself. The same words: two different ways to grasp them. These words are mantric, for meditation, they are words which awaken the capacity in the soul to come near to the spiritual world, if they are able to ignite the soul.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard and the title and last line are underlined.]

The Guardian at the abyss

*From the distant beings in space
Who experience existence in light,
From the stages of the course of time,
Which finds expression in creating,
From the depths of heart-felt feeling
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:*

*They resound in the speech of the soul,
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,
From divine curative powers,
In the cosmic formative forces
The undulating existential words:
O you man, know thyself!*

While the Guardian is saying these words, we have moved close to the yawning abyss of being. It is deep. There is no hope of crossing the abyss with the feet given us by the earth. We need freedom from earthly gravity. We need the wings of spiritual life in order to cross over the abyss. By at first beckoning us to the yawning abyss of existence, the Guardian of the Threshold made us aware of how our Self, before being illuminated and purified for the spiritual world, where actually today we are everywhere surrounded by hate for the spiritual world, by mockery of the spiritual world, by cowardice and fear of the spiritual world — the Guardian makes us aware of how this, our Self, which wills and feels and thinks, is constituted today in our present evolutionary cycle in its threefold character of willing, feeling and thinking. We must first recognize this before we can become aware, in real self-knowledge, of our true Self, which is implanted in us by the gods.

All three beasts, which arise from the abyss one after the other, appear to us as seen from the viewpoint of the eternal divine force of healing: human willing, human feeling, human thinking. As they appear one after the other — willing, feeling, thinking in their true form — the Guardian explains them:

We are standing at the edge of the abyss. The Guardian speaks — the beasts rise up:

*Yes, you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
The bony head, the scrawny body,
His skin is all a dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your will;
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.*

*Behold the second beast, it bares
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;
Your flame for knowledge must subdue him.*

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.*

*Only when you've defeated the three
Will wings sprout upon your soul
To fly the abyss over,
Which separates you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires
to consecrate itself in healing.*

I will write these mantric words on the blackboard next time.

When one has heard this directly from the mouth of the Guardian, one may return, remembering, to the point of departure. There exists everything before the soul that all beings in our surroundings say, if we understand them correctly; what all beings in the most distant past already said to humanity, what all beings say to humanity in the present, and what all beings will say to the human beings of the future:

*O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.*

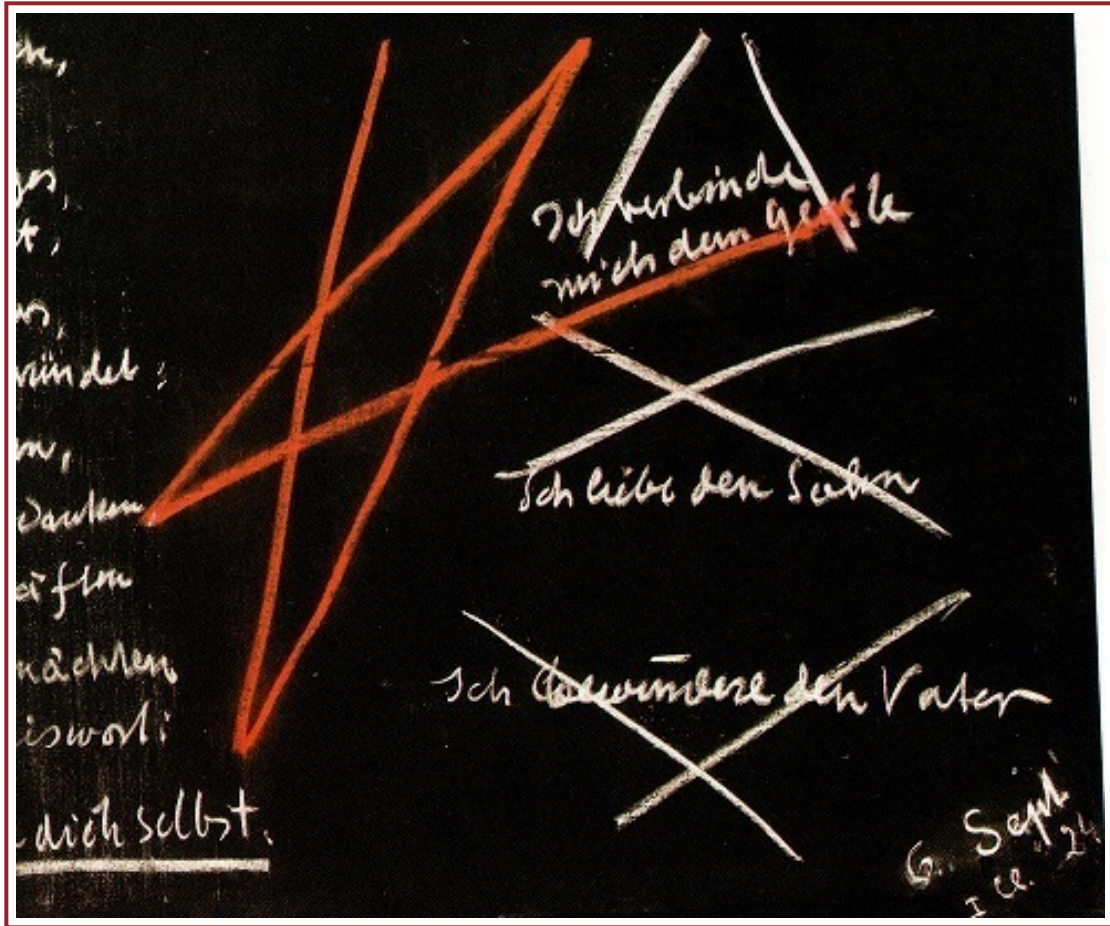
*Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?*

*Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?*

*It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,*

*Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.*

These are the words of the Michael-School. When they are spoken, Michael's spirit flows in waves through the room in which they are spoken. And his sign is what confirms his presence.



Michael-Sign (red)

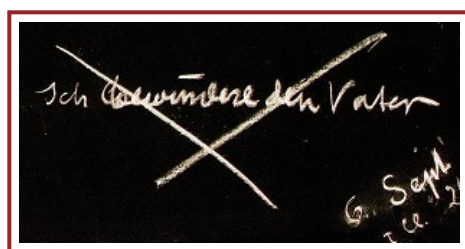
Then Michael leads us to the real Rosicrucian School, which shall reveal the secrets of humanity in the past, in the present and in the future through the Father-God, the Son-God and the Spirit-God. And then pressing the seal on the words "rosae et crucis", the words may be pronounced:

Ex deo nascimur
 (ex day-oh nas-ski-moor)

In Christo morimur
 (en kree-stos moor-ee-mur)

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus
 (pear speer-ee-toom sahn-ktoom ree-wee-wee-ski-moos)

accompanied by the sign of Michael's seal, which are for the first words "Ex deo nascimur" [See note]:



secondly by the words "In Christo morimur":



thirdly by the words "Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus":



As we say the words "Ex deo nascimur", we feel them confirmed by the seal and sign of Michael —

"Ex deo nascimur" by this sign [makes the gesture — see note]:



I esteem the Father

"In Christo morimur" by this sign:



I love the Son

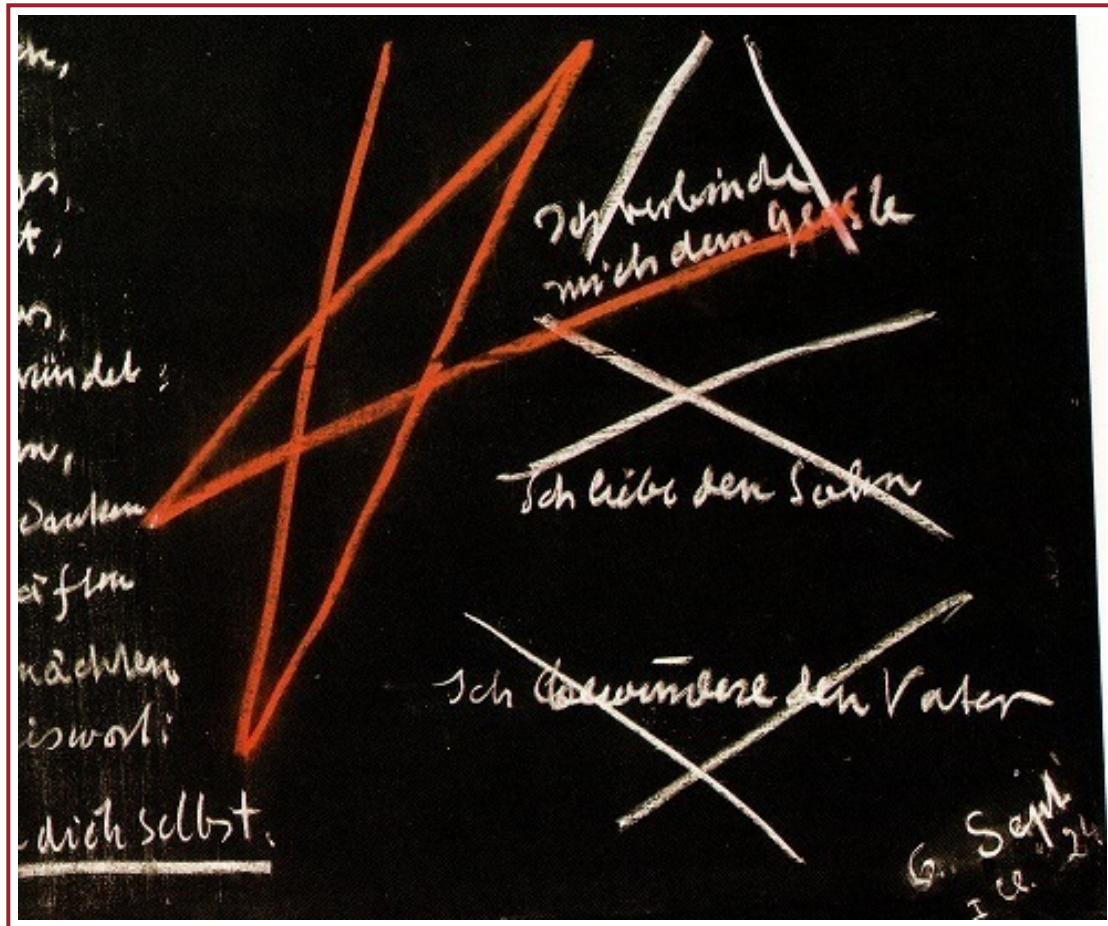
"Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus" by this sign:



I bind myself to the Spirit

That is what the signs mean.

Michael's presence is confirmed by his seal and sign.



Michael-Sign [see note]

The mantric words written on the blackboard may only be kept by those who are legitimate members of the School, that is, who have been issued the blue certificate. No one else may possess these words. Of course, those may have them who for some reason cannot attend a particular session of the School, or because of the distance from their homes cannot attend. As members of the School they can receive them from other members.

However, in each case permission to pass on these words must be obtained. The one who is to receive the words may not request permission, but only the one who passes them on. He or she obtains permission either from Dr. Wegman or from me. This is not a mere administrative measure, but must be the basis for every passing on of the words that permission must be granted either by Dr. Wegman or by me. The words may not be sent by letters, but only personally; they may not be entrusted to the mail.

Note: It is not possible to determine from the stenographic records of the seven Repetition Lessons exactly when during each lesson, Rudolf Steiner drew the Michael-Sign and the Michael-gestures with their corresponding words, or when he made the signs and the gestures.



Lesson 21 (Recapitulation of Lesson 2)

9 September 1918, Dornach

Despite the fact that a number of new members of this Esoteric School are present today who have not attended the previous classes, it will not be possible to repeat the introductory words. Therefore, I must insist that if the new members receive the verses from other members in the manner I will describe later, at the end of the lesson, then those who give the verses to the new members are duty bound to inform them of the conditions for membership in the School. So now we must immediately continue where we left off the last time.

*

First, however, let our souls again hear the words which resound from all the beings and events of the world to unbiased hearts and minds [Gemüte]. Everything in the following words was said to human beings in the past, is said to them in the present, and will be said to them in the future:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?

Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

We have seen how the person who follows these words coming to him from all the things of the world and from all the events of the world, feels the desire to leave the majestic, illustrious sensory world and enter into the world beyond the yawning abyss of being, which at first confronts the human soul as black, night-cloaked darkness. But the hope exists that in order to truly solve the riddle of humanity, what shines and is radiant in earthly life must become dark in order for the light which is in that other world, in which one's own self finds its being, comes from what appears at first as black, night-cloaked cosmic darkness.

And we have seen as we approached the path leading there in thought and feeling, the figure of the Guardian of the Threshold luminously emerged as though from a spiritual cloud-like form. We heard him speaking: for everything spoken here resounds from spiritual worlds on behalf of Michael, the leader of humanity's spiritual path in our times. For this School is the true Michael School. And he also spoke about human self-knowledge. But then he used words which at first are dismaying for the soul.

The Guardian calls us to stand close to him. He looks at us with earnest countenance. And he shows us how our willing, our feeling, our thinking appear before the countenance of the gods as imaginations. There this willing, this feeling, this thinking is not yet human; it is still animal-like. There the self-knowledge is dismaying, even shattering.

But we must pass through knowledge of that self, which is the result of the errors embedded in us by our times, our cosmic time, in order to press forward to true self-knowledge.

This erroneous self-knowledge, the knowledge of the self which we carry within us from the spirit of our times, is shown to us by the Guardian by letting the first of the beasts, which represents willing, to arise from the yawning abyss of being. Then, raising his hand and pointing to the yawning abyss of being, he lets the second beast arise, representing feeling. Again pointing to the yawning abyss of being, he lets the third beast emerge, which represents thinking.

They arise one after the other thus:

The first beast — the true spiritual form of our willing, created by the fear of knowledge, which can only be overcome by having the courage for spiritual knowledge.

And then the second beast — born from the hate of spiritual knowledge, which at the present time is in the subconscious of the Gemüt [soul, heart or mind] of all people, which can only be overcome by the right enthusiasm for knowledge, for the right heartfelt blaze of knowledge; whereas today nonchalance and tepidity in respect of knowledge, yes, hate of knowledge due to nonchalance and tepidity is in the hearts.

And then the third beast — created in its ghostly nature by doubt about the spiritual world that today gnaws at the souls' roots, and which can only be overcome if knowledge awakens in itself the strength to create in one's own soul [Gemüt] the things of the spiritual world beyond.

And the Guardian at the yawning abyss speaks the following words after we have come quite close:

Yet you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.

Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
bony head, the scrawny body,

All its skin is a dull blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your willing;
Your fearless knowledge alone overcomes it.

Behold the second beast, it bares its teeth,
Mockingly it lies with warped countenance,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;
Your burning thirst for knowledge must subdue him.

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;
To creative knowledge must it yield.

Only when you have overcome all three
Will wings sprout from your soul
To carry you over the abyss
Which sunders you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires to reach
By consecrating itself to strive for healing.

[The mantra, with underlining's, is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian speaks at the abyss:

*Yet you must beware of the abyss;
Otherwise its beasts will devour
You, if you pass by me in haste.
Your cosmic age has placed them there
In you as enemies of knowledge.*

*Behold the first beast, the crooked back,
bony head, the scrawny body,
All its skin is dullish blue;
Your fear of creative spiritual being
Begot the monster in your willing;*

Your fearless knowledge alone overcomes it.

*Behold the second beast, it bares its teeth,
mockingly it lies with a warped countenance,
Yellow with gray spots is its body;
Your hate of spiritual revelation
Begot this weakling in your feeling;
Your burning thirst for knowledge must subdue him.*

*Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,
Dirty-red its form appears to you;
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light
Begot this ghost within your thinking;
To creative knowledge must it yield.*

*Only when you have overcome all three
Will wings sprout from your soul
To carry you over the abyss
Which sunders you from the knowledge fields
To which your heart desires to reach
by consecrating itself to strive for healing.*

When the Guardian shows us this - the shattering picture of our own being which at first confronts us as the answer to the call "Oh man, know thyself!" —, once the Guardian has shown us this picture, he approaches us in order to give us a further clarification that can begin to support us again: a clarification about the third beast, which is interwoven with our thinking; about the second beast, which is interwoven with our feeling; about the first beast, which is interwoven with our willing. And he gives us a certain teaching in what he then says. He draws our attention to how we should feel about our earthly thinking.

My dear sisters and brothers, one feels, even exoterically, that this thinking by which we acquire the things and events of the world is something abstract, something shadowy, something unreal. What is then this thinking?

We must place what this thinking really is before our souls in pictures. We imagine ourselves in front of a corpse which has recently been abandoned by a human soul and spirit. We observe this corpse. As it is now, it can never have come into being in the world. It can be nothing of itself. It can only be the remains of a living human being, who was once within it, who must have first transfigured it. The corpse lies in the coffin. Let us keep this picture in mind.

Our psychic-spiritual life, which is our own true humanity, was living before it descended from the divine-spiritual world by means of conception and birth into a physical human earthly body. There above in the divine-spiritual world it was no shadowy, abstract thought, but a psychic-spiritual living, interweaving, creating, acting being. It was alive there. Then it descended into a human body; but it died by descending. And the thinking that we have between birth and death is the corpse of the living thinking we had before descending into earthly being.

Only, my dear sisters and brothers, when we feel our thinking this way, do we feel it esoterically in the right way and struggle upward to overcome the ghostly form of the third beast, do we ascend more and more to the purely angelic form of true thinking, the dead afterimage of which lives and pulses and interweaves and acts in our physical earthly body.

As long as we consider thinking as something living, we are not experiencing the truth; only when we consider our body as the coffin of dead thinking, and we feel it deeply, are we experiencing the truth. This is what the Guardian of the Threshold at the yawning abyss of being tells us, whose words we will then hear, words which can serve us as a mantric verse. He says it to us with special intimacy.

And when we turn from thinking and observe our feeling, then we must see and feel how normal feeling, which we believe is alive in us between birth and death, is only half alive, how it continually consumes and kills something in us, how in fact it makes us spiritually hollow. Thinking is dead, and feeling is half alive, it is basically only an image-form in us. And only when we feel that this earthly feeling is a weak, half-living reflection of the solar power that emits cosmic feeling

throughout the entire cosmos as general universal love, then only do we feel correctly about feeling. This the Guardian of the Threshold tells us privately, in intimacy.

And only when we feel that our will, although it lives in us, is continually tempted and attacked by spiritual opposing powers, so that its strength does not serve the divine above, but the physical below; only when we feel these opposing powers, who wish to divert us in our will from our actual divine task and completely enmesh us in earthly existence, then we will feel how these opposing powers, by usurping our will, want to bring the future of the earth under their power. If they were able to do it, if we were not alert enough to dedicate our will to the Divine, and not to the Ahrimanic earthly powers, then the earth would become problematic for the gods to whom it has belonged from the its very beginning.

The Guardian tells us this as a clarification of the three beasts:

The third beast's glassy-eyed gaze,
It is the evil counter-image
Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-forces
Which before its earthly life
Was alive in fields of spirit.

The second beast's mocking countenance,
It is the evil counter-force of feeling,
Which hollows out your own soul
And creates an empty life in it
Instead of spirit-content which,
Before earthly existence was the soul's,
Enlightened by the sun's spirit power.

The first beast's bony spirit:
It is the evil creating power
Of will, which from your own body
Estranges your strength of soul
And devotes it to the opposing powers,
Who would steal in future time
Cosmic being from godly being.

[The mantra is written in the blackboard, with underlining.]

The Guardian speaks:

The third beast's glassy-eyed gaze,
It is the evil counter-image

— it is only an "image" —

Of thinking, that denies itself
In you and chooses death,
Forsaking the spirit-forces
Which before its earthly life
Was alive in fields of spirit.

The second beast's mocking countenance,
It is the evil counter-force of feeling,

— first is "image", the second "force" —

Which hollows out your own soul
And creates an empty life in it
Instead of spirit-content which,
Before earthly existence was the soul's,
Enlightened by the sun's spirit power.

The first beast's bony spirit:

— the escalation: "image", "force", "power" —

It is the evil creating power
Of will, which from your own body
Estranges your strength of soul
And devotes it to the opposing powers,
Who would steal in future time
Cosmic being from godly being.

And the Guardian at the abyss of being leads us ever closer to true self-knowledge, which can only be ours if light arises beyond in the black, night-cloaked darkness. Therefore in the most varied ways he shows us what he first showed us in the forms of the beasts, what he

then showed us in the form as it pertains to this mantric verse, and what he now once again describes, in order that we come ever and ever closer to self-knowledge, for us to have wings to cross the abyss of being, for with human feet, with heavy human feet, that is, with the outer illusions, with maya-reality, we cannot cross.

After having given us this mantric verse in confidence, the Guardian now indicates to us how we should further feel about thinking, how we should not feel it as a being; for then we are still weaving illusions if in this thinking that we have as human beings on the earth we see anything else but seeming. Selfhood being, that is, our true, real being, hides itself in thinking, doesn't live in thinking — the Guardian says. One can do nothing else but submerge into the seeming of thinking ever more, until one reaches, by submerging deeply, ever further, into the immeasurable cosmic ether, in which one at first dissolves with the soul.

If our selfhood at least feels wavering in the world's seeming, then we should revere the leading beings of the higher hierarchies who guide us. Here we feel that we need these leading beings of the higher hierarchies.

Then the Guardian exhorts us to turn from thinking to feeling, to perceive the streaming feeling in us. Thinking is still naught but seeming. But what we feel stands at least halfway close to our being. We come deeper into our own being when we feel than when we think; but we are not yet there. We are in half of our own being when we are feeling; for feeling has something unclear in it, and it is also never firm: seeming and being are intermixed in feeling. The selfhood which we seek — selfhood in the good sense of the word is — tends towards seeming. We should now submerge into seeming, into a being that is only apparent, into a seeming that energizes itself to half a being; there cosmic forces hold us, which are not mere seeming, but halfway to being: cosmic soul forces. There we should ponder in this interweaving of our own being in weaving cosmic ether; there we should ponder the living power of our own soul, which we cannot ponder by thinking because thinking is seeming.

Then we should submerge in the will, which we feel to be the being hidden in us. We cannot grasp it. But the will acts as thrust and force: being. This will climbs up from all the seeming and creates our own

being, our own true being. We should turn our lives towards it. It is filled with the power of the cosmic spirit. Our own being should grasp the cosmic creative power, which fills all space, all times, all spiritual domains, and submerge in the will.

At the edge of the abyss the Guardian speaks:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Cosmic seeming confronts you,
Selfhood as such hides from you;
Plunge down beneath the seeming:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood being should revere the
Guiding nature of your spirit.

Perceive within the flow of feeling:
Where seeming and being within you merge,
Your selfhood tends towards the seeming;
So plunge down in seeming being:
And in you are the cosmic-psychic forces;
The selfhood, it should then ponder
Your own soul's powers of life.

Let act in you the thrust of will:
Which climbs up from all the seeming
With your own self creating;
Turn your life in full toward it:
Filled it is with cosmic force of spirit;
Your own self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.

I will write this mantra on the blackboard next time, and explain it with its characteristics.

But now let us turn again to all that has spoken to the human being in the past, to what speaks in the present, to what will be spoken in the future, what will be required of him as the most holy on his life's path: self-knowledge.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

The next esoteric lesson of this First Class will be next Thursday at eight o'clock.

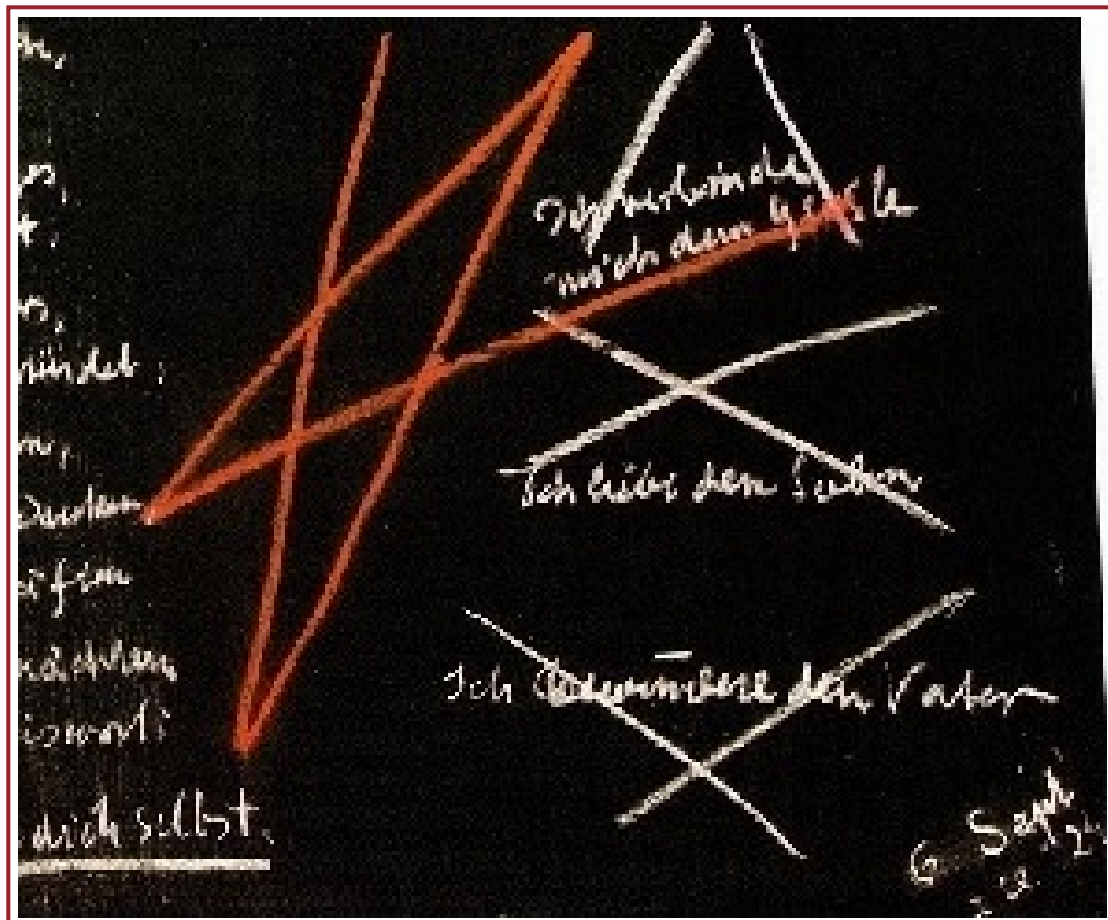
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I must also say that the verses, which are given as mantric meditation verses from the Guardian of the Threshold on behalf of Michael, are only for members of this School. Those who for any reason could not acquire them personally, may receive them from another member of the school who has them. However, permission must be requested in each case from either Dr. Wegman or from me. This is not merely an administrative measure, but means that everything in our anthroposophical movement must be based on reality from now on. And this statement begins with the permission as a real fact, not as a mere administrative measure. The verses may not be sent by mail. Only the person who is to give the verses to another may request

permission from Dr. Wegman or from me. Not the one who is to receive them, but the one who gives. One asks someone who can give them, and that one then asks.

If anyone has written down something other than the verses themselves, then I ask them to only keep it for eight days and then burn it, in order that the content of the School, which only has meaning when the Michael stream flows through it, not get outside and thereby become ineffective. It is a fundamental occult axiom, which must be observed.

And we are in an earnest occult School, in the real School of Michaeli, and thus give what flows through this school in the Michaeli Sign: [drawn on the blackboard]



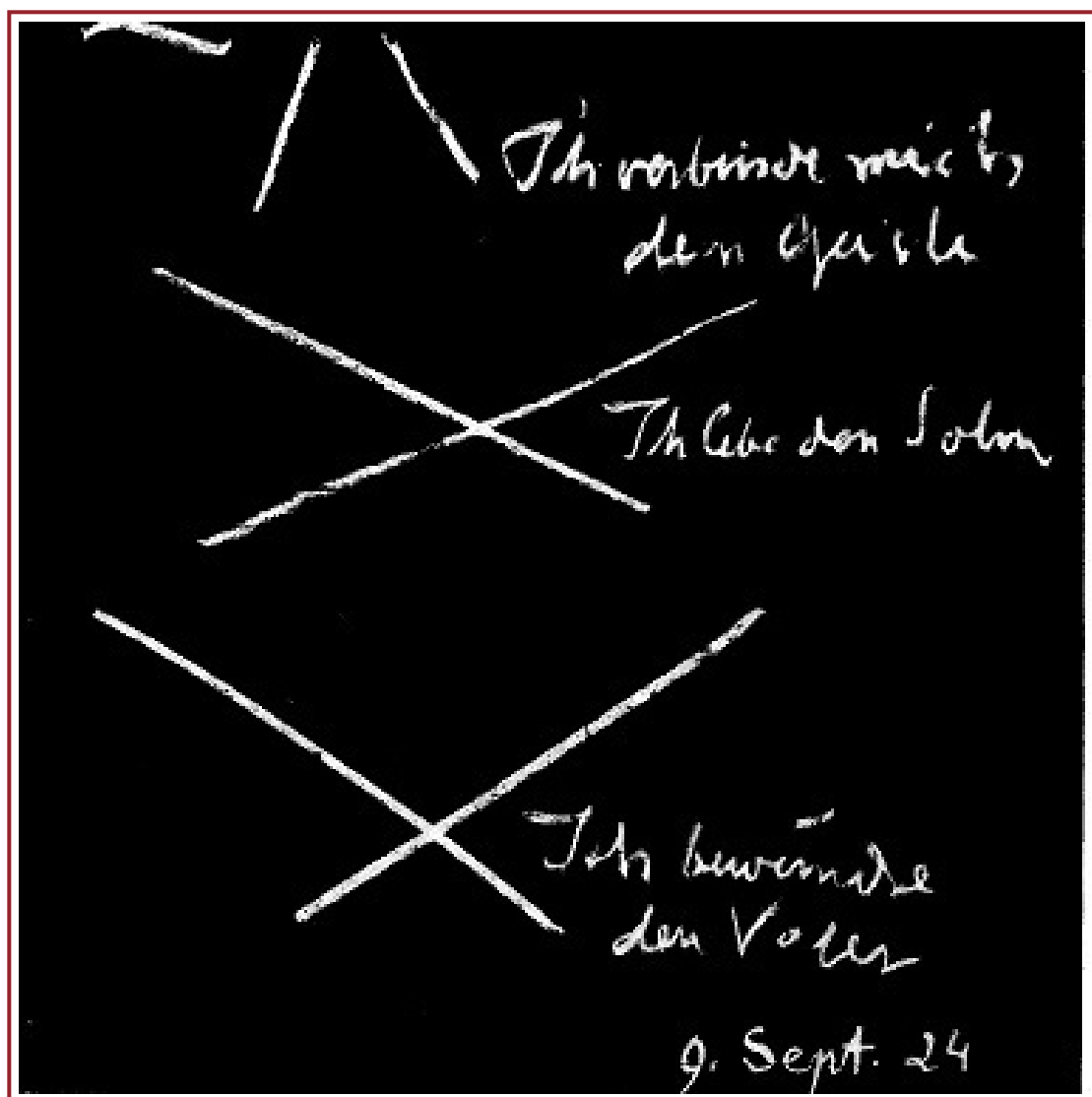
[in red]

and give it in the sense of the Rose Cross, with the symbol of the Rose Cross:

Ex deo nascimur [the lower seal is drawn on the blackboard]

In Christo Morimur [the middle seal is drawn on the blackboard]

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus [the upper seal is drawn on the blackboard]



And while making this seal and sign we think of Christian Rosenkreuz:

[beside the lower seal is written:]

I revere the Father

[beside the middle seal is written:]

I love the Son

[beside the upper seal is written:]

I unite with the spirit

Per signum Michaeli:

[the michael sign — above red — is made]

[as each of the seal gestures is made, the following is spoken:]

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus



Lesson 22 (Recapitulation of Lesson 3)

11 September 1918, Dornach

It is not possible to again give the introduction concerning the obligations for the newly participating members of the Class. I therefore request that the members who give the new ones the [mantric] verses also inform them of the conditions involved, which I will describe at the end of this lesson.

*

My dear sisters and brothers, we will again begin by letting our souls hear the words that human beings — if they have ears to hear them — can hear from all the Beings of the surrounding world, which they could hear in the past, can hear in the present and will hear in the future, which allow them to envision the need for self-knowledge — that constantly comes to them from the entire universe — which is the true bridge to what the human being needs for his thinking, for his willing, for his working in the world if he wishes to be human in the true sense of the word.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

*

My dear sisters and brothers, the description of the path to knowledge has led us to the Guardian of the Threshold. Once the Guardian of the Threshold, at the edge of the abyss of being, has shown us how the forces of our inner humanity — willing, feeling, thinking — appear to the eyes of the Beings of the spiritual world; after the Guardian has shown us how in the present time's consciousness we have not awakened to our full humanity in respect to these forces if they are inwardly observed, but that these forces appear to the divine-spiritual powers as the three beasts, which are shown to us by the Guardian of the Threshold; after the Guardian of the Threshold has placed this shattering view before our souls, he shows us the path forward, which leads to ennoblement in self-knowledge, and which must be followed if the exhortation "O man, know thyself" is to be realized.

After he first showed us how we should stand in respect to our thinking, feeling and willing, he shows us — in the mantric verses which were cited at the end of the previous lesson in this Michael-School — how we are first to delve down into our thinking, but that this thinking is of a seeming nature [Scheineswesen] that cannot bear our true Self; but how we are then interwoven out in the cosmic ether and are at least able to revere those guiding beings [1] who lead us from earth-life to earth-life.

Then he shows us how we can delve down into feeling, how in feeling being and seeming are united, how there our being — selfhood in the good sense — arises with half its strength; how, however, we should

understand that not only what is perishable and seeming in our being arises, but also the life-forces of the world, of the cosmos.

Only when we descend into the will do we feel being streaming into our selfhood. Seeming transforms itself into being. It descends into the will, and we feel the cosmic creating powers streaming through our will.

These were the Guardian of the Threshold's words at the edge of the abyss of being — where the yawning darkness, the night-cloaked darkness is still before us, which is to become light in order that we find the light that can illuminate our actual self. Behind us is the glowing, sunlit physical reality, which only becomes dark because we cannot find our actual being in it. There the Guardian of the Threshold says these mantric words:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Seeming world is what you see,
Selfhood's being hides in you;
Delve down beneath the seeming:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood's being should revere the
Guiding Beings of your spirit.

Perceive within the flow of feeling:
Within you mingle seeming and being,
Your selfhood tends towards the seeming;
So plunge into your seeming being:
In you exist the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should understand
Your own soul's living powers.

Let strive with thrust of will
Which rises out of all the seeming,
With creative actual Self it rises;
Your life in full should turn to it:
It is filled with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner Self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic force in the spirit-I.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian speaks:

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Seeming world is what you see,
Selfhood's being hides in you;
Delve down beneath the seeming:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood's being should revere the
Guiding Beings of your spirit.*

*Perceive within the flow of feeling:
Within you mingle seeming and being,
Your selfhood tends towards the seeming;
So plunge into your seeming being:
In you exist the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should understand
Your own soul's living powers.*

*Let strive within the thrust of will
Rising out of all the seeming
With creative actual self it rises;
Your life in full should turn to it:
It's filled with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic force in the spirit-I.*

The Guardian of the Threshold has spoken a mantric verse to us, of which we should not only receive its content, but rather with our whole feeling we should enter into the weave and life of the spiritual world. Therefore, this mantric verse is shaped so that in its rhythm it appears as having moved downward from the spiritual world. Each line begins with a stressed syllable, followed by an unstressed syllable. So, we have in the first verse:

[While speaking the trochaic rhythm symbols (— ∪) are placed above the first syllables of each line and then spoken with the appropriate stress]

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Seeming world is what you see,
Selfhood's being hides in you;

Delve down beneath the seeming:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood's being should revere the
Guiding Beings of your spirit.

This coming down by the spiritual world to us is to be felt in the trochaic rhythm. Only then do we receive this verse correctly in our souls. Only when this speaking down to us by the spiritual world is with this intonation do we receive this verse in our souls correctly, feeling it deeply within us:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:
Seeming world is what you see,
Selfhood's being hides in you;
Delve down beneath the seeming:
Etheric essence flows in you;
Selfhood's being should revere the
Guiding Beings of your spirit.

The next verse is the opposite: Now we should rise with our feeling to being. Here [the first syllable] we are below: here [the second syllable] we strive upward to being: The unstressed [low] tone is before the stressed [high] tone:

[while speaking, the iambic rhythm symbols are placed over the first two syllables of each line, and it is spoken with the corresponding intonation:]

Perceive within the flow of feeling:
Within you mingle seeming and being,
Your selfhood tends towards the seeming;
So plunge into your seeming being:
In you exist the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should understand
Your own soul's living powers.

We must live in these words, which are mantrically united in this rhythm:

Perceive within the flow of feeling:
Within you mingle seeming and being,
Your selfhood tends towards the seeming;
So plunge into your seeming being:
In you exist the cosmic-psychic forces;
Your selfhood then should understand
Your own soul's living powers.

That we have entered in reality is expressed in that we first "revere", which is an inner soul function; in that we then "understand", where we gradually come alongside the process; in that we first arrive at the "guiding Beings", who are to guide us; then the "living powers", which weave and live through life. In one mantric verse all is in the right place and all is integrated in the organism of the whole.

The third verse tells us how we perceive being directly in the will. We stand alongside being. Two high-toned syllables begin:

[While speaking the spondaic symbols (— —) are placed over the first two syllables of each line on the blackboard and the lines are spoken with the corresponding emphasis:

Let strive within the thrust of will
Rising out of all the sham
With creative actual self it rises;
Your life in full should turn to it:
It's filled with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic force in the spirit-I.

We have now come farther. It is no longer "understand"; It is "grasp", which is an action. The "Creative cosmic force" instead of "living powers" is placed at the beginning of the line to indicate the complete reversal we make when rising from "sham" to "being".

The beginning of each line of the third verse is therefore to be felt in its spondaic rhythm. Here we have trochaic ["trochaic" is written alongside the first verse]; here iambic ["iambic" is written alongside the second verse]; here spondaic ["spondaic" is written alongside the third verse].

Let strive within the thrust of will
Which rises out of all the seeming
With creative actual self it rises;
Your life in full should turn to it:
It's filled with cosmic-spirit-force;
Your inner self should truly grasp
Creative cosmic force in the spirit-I.

After the Guardian of the Threshold has presented this to our souls, he makes us aware of how we should integrate ourselves into the cosmos, into the world with all its forces if we want to advance in spiritual knowledge. For what is within us is at first not distinguishable according to its place, whereas in the cosmos it is ordered. In the cosmos, we can indicate the definite place. Within us everything is interwoven. But we do not achieve real knowledge if we do not rise up to the cosmic forces and the cosmic powers — if we remain subjective in ourselves, remaining in our own skin, if we do not go out of ourselves and let our body become the whole world. Then will our soul, our narrow humanity, feel itself to be a member of the cosmos. The spirit will integrate our narrow humanity into the whole cosmos, into the whole world.

We must carry this out, as the Guardian of the Threshold indicates when he shows us how from the depths of the earth, which draws all the beings by gravity, forces arise which also draw us down, which bind our will to the earth if we don't make ourselves free by inner striving. Our gaze goes earthward if we want to localize our will. We must feel ourselves one with the earth's gravity, feel drawn by the earth and make the effort to free ourselves from the earth's gravity if we want to let our will to be one with the cosmos.

Feel how the depths of earth
Thrust their forces on your being,
On the members of your body.
You will lose yourself in them
If your willing trusts itself
Powerlessly to their striving;
They would darken in you the I.

Thus, speaks the Guardian of the Threshold to our willing on behalf of Michael at the yawning abyss of being.

And in wanting to integrate our feeling into the cosmos, he does not direct us to the depths, but to the horizontal reaches of the world, where the forces swing from west to east, from east to west, permeating us. These are the same forces that grasp our feeling. We must feel the divine godly powers, who send their spiritual light in these pulsing waves from the horizontal directions if we wish to integrate our feeling into the cosmic distance. In order to integrate our willing into the vertical, feel it bound below and freed above, we must be able to send our feeling into the cosmic distance. Then there will be light in our feeling. Then something goes through our feeling which also goes through us, just as the sun illuminates the earth's air when it moves from east to west.

However, in all that streams through us we must be loving. The force of love alone, which lives and courses through humanity, can accomplish what is asked of us. Then wisdom will course through us, and we will feel ourselves to be in the wide circles in which the sun moves, as feeling humanity, as Self, strong for true, good spiritual creativity.

In respect to feeling, the Guardian of the Threshold, at the yawning abyss of being, says this to us as feeling human beings:

Feel how from the cosmic distance
Godly powers their spiritual light
Let illuminate your psychic being.
Be yourself loving in them, and
They'll create, wisdom-weaving,
You as Self within their circles,
Strong for the good, spirit creating.

And when the Guardian of the Threshold wants to speak to our thinking so that it integrates itself in the cosmos, he doesn't direct us down to the will, which should rise upward; he doesn't direct us to feeling in the wide circle in which the sun moves, but he indicates the heights, the heavenly heights where alone the self can live selflessly if it wants to receive the powers of thought in what comes with grace from above, if it wants to follow a higher striving. We stand below, the Word is above. We must be inwardly courageous to hear the Word, for

only if we courageously strive for wisdom and knowledge does the cosmic Word resound from above, full of grace, speaking about humanity's true wisdom.

Again, the Guardian of the Threshold speaks to us at the yawning abyss of being:

Feel how in heavenly heights
Selfhood can selflessly live,
When it wants, striving to follow,
Spirit-filled, powers of thought,
And courageously hear the Word
That resounds with grace from above
Into the true being of man.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian instructs us on Willing, Feeling, Thinking:

*Feel how the depths of earth
Thrust their forces on your being,
On the members of your body.
You will lose yourself in them
If your willing trusts itself
Powerlessly to their striving;
They would darken in you the I.*

*Feel how from the cosmic distance
Godly powers their spiritual light
Let illuminate your psychic being.
Be yourself loving in them,
And they'll create, wisdom-weaving,
You as Self within their circles,
Strong for the good, spirit creating.*

*Feel how in heavenly heights
Selfhood can selflessly live,
When it wants, striving, to follow,
Spirit filled, powers of thought,*

*And courageously hear the Word
That resounds with grace from above
Into the true being of man.*

We must look above if our thinking wants to unite itself with the forces of the cosmos. The realm of cosmic circling distance is where we must feel ourselves to be if our feeling wants to unite itself with the cosmic forces. Below is the place where we must look to insert our earthbound willing, which we should make free above, into the cosmic realms. Everywhere — above, in the distance and below — everywhere is special Being. We must feel it. The Guardian of the Threshold, on behalf of Michael, points us there and he tells us what we'll find above, in the middle and below.

He instructs us further about the heights, the middle and below, because he wants to instruct us about thinking, feeling and willing. This is what he says:

The light does battle with gloomy powers
In that realm, where your thinking
In spirit-being longs to enter.
You find, striving lightward,
Your Self, taken from you by spirit;
You can, if darkness entices you,
The Self in matter lose.

We are placed between light and darkness. Light wants our Self, darkness wants our Self. We are to find the path between light and darkness to come to the Self. That is what lies in the Guardian of the Threshold's admonition.

Th Guardian speaks to our feeling:

The warmth does battle with the cold
In that realm, where your feeling would
In spirit-interweaving live.
You find, loving warmth, your Self
In spirit-longing blown away;
You can, if cold does harden you,
The Self in sorrow grind to dust.

Again, we are standing between polar opposites with our feeling: between the loving warmth, between warm love and cold hardness, the hardening cold. We must find the path between them if our Self would find itself.

And about the third realm, where the will originates, the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

Thus, life does battle with death
In that realm, where your will
Would act with spiritual creation.
You find, holding on to life,
Your Self vanishing in spirit's power;
If death's power binds you fast,
You can your Self constrict to nothing.

Life and death: We can lose our will to life, we can lose it to death; in life feel it vanish, in death feel it constricted.

We must seek for the path. The Guardian urges us to do so. It will be the subject we begin with in the next lesson.

The Guardian once more points out how we must seek the path to arrive at our human Self. He speaks with earnest words, for it is not easy to find the inner strength that holds and carries and leads the Self to find what it does not have in normal earthly life. We will see later how the Guardian gives us the means to do so.

Next Saturday, when this mantric verse will be written on the blackboard, we will hear the Guardian further as he gradually points out the ways we can go astray — which we must know about in order to find the right path.

*

But now we must again consider, looking back at earthly life — which we must do every time we enter the esoteric — so now let us again consider the admonition which was spoken to humankind in the past by all the Beings and events, which speaks to humankind in the present and which will speak to humankind in the future:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

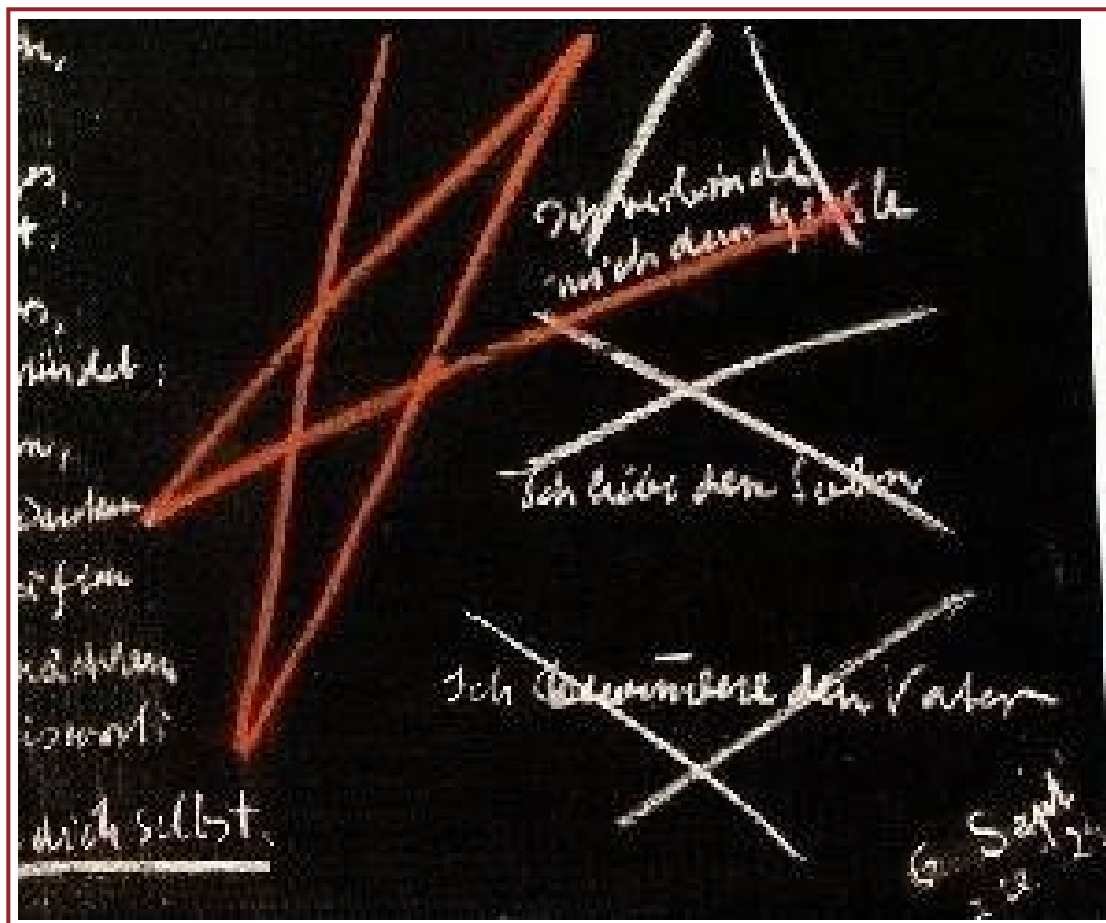
Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

When all that streams through this Michael-School from the Guardian on Michael's behalf, when here the instruction in the rightfully existent Michael-School penetrates our soul, then we may be sure, if we are honest and open minded, that Michael's strength will stream through this room, which may be indicated by Michael's sign:



[in red]

and by the seal-gestures, through which Michael lets the RoseCross stream enter the RoseCross temple, the strength which humanity needs today for its esoteric life, which here acts from the threefold source of the cosmos — from the divine Father-principle, from the Christ-principle, from the principle of the Spirit, so that the RoseCross verse is united with the Michael-Gesture-seal:

Ex deo nascimur



[lower seal-gesture]

In Christo morimur



[middle seal-gesture]

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus



[upper seal-gesture]

which must be felt so that the gestures are understood as:

I revere the Father

[lower seal-gesture]

I love the son

[middle seal-gesture]

I unite with the spirit

[upper seal-gesture]

Once more:

[Michael-Sign-Gesture]

[together with the seal-gestures is spoken:]

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus

*

The mantric verses which are given in this School may only be possessed by those who are members of this School. In the case of someone who is a member of the School and is not present during a lesson, so does not have the verses, he can obtain them from another member who has them. For this it is necessary to request permission from Dr. [Ita] Wegman or from me. So, when someone wants to receive the verses because he was not able to have them here, it is necessary to ask either Dr. Wegman or me. But not the one who wants them is to ask, but the one who gives them. This must be said as a foregone conclusion.

This is not some administrative measure, but in every case where the verses are passed on this must be observed, because it is the start of the occult act through which the verses are received.

Those members who have recently joined may only receive the verses up to the lesson in which they have participated. Only in special cases, which must be judged individually, may the request be made for the later verses to be given. By mail — that is, by a means other than verbally — the verses may not be passed on from one to another.

If anyone should write down anything else but the verses, he is obliged to only keep what he has written for a week, and then burn it. What is communicated here in the rightfully existing Michael School

only has importance through verbal communication — this is an inner occult law —, with the exception of the mantric verses.

It must be understood, so that these things are not thought to be childishly oriented towards sectarianism, that if these occult verses are passed on to others in a way that is not permissible, they lose their effectiveness, for the act of passing on belongs to the effectiveness of the School. It is because of these occult facts that the handling of the verses is so strictly required.

*

The activities for tomorrow are: At 10:30 a.m. the course for Pastoral Medicine; in the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. the course for theologians; in the evening a lecture for members, and at 5 p.m. a eurythmy performance. The speech course is at 12 o'clock as usual.

[1] According to the stenographic notes, "guiding being" is singular here. However, later, and in other places, the plural is used, "guiding Beings". The meaning here seems also to be plural. [trans.]

Lesson 23 (Recapitulation of Lesson 4)

13 September 1918, Dornach

My dear sisters and brothers,

It is not possible every time to give the corresponding introduction about the task and meaning of the School and about membership in the School. Therefore, although a large number of new members are again present, I will not give the introduction, but will continue from where we left off last time, and I must remind the members who are to give the previous mantras to the newcomers in the usual way, that they must do so under the conditions which I will mention at the end of this lesson. They should also describe the conditions for acceptance in this School.

*

We shall begin by again letting our souls hear the words which are spoken by all the Beings and processes of the world to the human being who wishes to be worthy of the name, and who has an unbiased sense that in them lies the exhortation to seek true self-knowledge, a self-knowledge that leads to knowledge of the world. And we are exhorted from all sides, from all the Beings of all the kingdoms of nature and all the kingdoms of spirit to this self-knowledge in the true sense of the word, which is the path to world-knowledge. Thus, all the Beings of nature and of the spirit exhorted humans in the past, exhort them in the present, and will exhort humans in the future. These exhorting words that urge the soul of man, if he wants to hear them, from all sides, from the east and the west, from the south and the north, from above and below, may also today begin to describe what this Michael-School should mean:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

*

We have seen how the seeker of knowledge approaches the Guardian of the Threshold, how — after the seeker of knowledge has stood there shattered by the impression of the three beasts, which show the true nature of his present willing, feeling and thinking as they appear before the visage of the spiritual world — how he is gradually lifted up by the Guardian of the Threshold.

And we have already heard what the Guardian of the Threshold speaks to the one he wants to lift up, how he points, on the one hand, above, where a battle is taking place between the light and the dark powers in the realm from which the force of our thinking streams into our humanity. The Guardian of the Threshold thinks that we need this image. We need — if we wish to feel in the right way, by seeking knowledge, the origins of our thinking, the force of our thinking in our

humanity — to look up to that realm from which our thinking comes, where however a terrible battle rages between the powers of light, the light which wants to guide thinking along the right track, and the powers of darkness, who want to divert thinking from the right track and lead it along paths of aberration. Our thinking is rooted above. We must know it to be so rooted if we want to be knowledgeable in the battle between light and darkness.

And then, if we understand what striving towards the light is, we find that we must remain erect. And we must know that we are involved with the battle between light and darkness: The light wants to bring us to a state of spiritual powerlessness, so to speak; the darkness wants to make us lose ourselves in matter. But we must seek the state of equilibrium between them — not letting ourselves be overtaken by light, nor letting the darkness transform us into matter, but to stand firmly in our selfhood and find the equilibrium for our thinking between light and darkness.

And then when we consider our feeling, we must see — in that realm which reaches out into the horizontal, into the cosmic distances — how we are involved in the battle between the warmth of soul and the coldness of soul.

In the warmth of soul are working all the luciferic powers, the powers of beauty, the powers of brightness, the powers who want to give us divine forces without our own effort. We would be unfree and lacking independence if they were to catch us.

But on the other side are the powers of cold, the coldness of soul that is permeated by ahrimanic Beings who would cause us to lose our Selves in the cold. We must find the equilibrium between that spiritual blissfulness into which the forces of warmth, the forces of heat, of fire wish to bring us, and that region into which, with enormous all-embracing intellectuality, the ahrimanic powers wish to seduce us with coldness. We must maintain our equilibrium between both of them in order to find the right sense of feeling for knowledge.

Then, when we observe our willing, we must look below. There is the realm of the earth and of gravity from which the force of our will comes for our earthly life. For the earth does not only contain the force of gravity; spiritually, it also contains the force of human will. Once again, we stand face to face with two powers — the powers of life and the powers of death. We can succumb with our willing to the powers of life. Then it is as though the powers of life want to seize us, use our will forces in the cosmos. We must hold our Self erect, and find the equilibrium between these powers of life and the powers of death, the latter wanting to confine us in a constricted space in order to eternally interweave our will with materiality.

The Guardian of the Threshold exhorts us at this point to maintain ourselves in equilibrium between light and darkness, in equilibrium between warmth and cold, in equilibrium between life and death. For we may not only belong to the power of the light. In light alone we would be benumbed, dazzled. We may not devote ourselves to the darkness alone, for then we would lose ourselves in the substance of darkness. We must strive for what is striven for in all the world.

Wherever you look, my sisters and brothers, light and darkness intermingle. Look at your hair. The light plants it in your head. But it must be permeated with darkness, otherwise your hair would be entirely rays of light. Look at your whole body: it is woven of light. But it could have no solidity if darkness were not also interwoven in it. Look at any object, my sisters and brothers! Blossoming plants: they are created from light; but the powers of darkness must press up from the soil so that from light and darkness what the plants represent in their solid consistency — the nature of plants on earth — can be found.

Just as in all of nature a balance between light and darkness is found, so must the human being strive psychically for it in the spiritual world if he wants to be a real seeker after knowledge. And it is also the case for equilibrium between warmth and cold, and for equilibrium between life and death.

So, there we are at the yawning abyss of being, still looking, as behind us the gleaming colorful kingdoms of nature, to which we belong with our senses, become darker and darker as it becomes clear to us that our real being is not revealed by all of wondrous sensory nature, nor is it what leads us to self-knowledge. In front of us, like a black wall, is still the border of the dark realm, into which we must go so that there will be light within by means of the force which we ourselves bring. We are still standing at the yawning abyss of being, but have become bolder in confidence that through the Guardian's admonitions we will grow wings to cross the abyss in order to enter the darkness, and there is light in the darkness.

This is one of the last of the Guardian's admonitions:

The light does battle with powers of darkness
In that realm, where your thinking
In spirit-being longs to enter.
You find, striving lightward,
Your Self, taken from you by spirit;
You can, when darkness entices you,
The Self in matter lose.

The warmth does battle with the cold
In that realm, where your feeling would
In spirit-interweaving live.
You find, loving warmth, your Self
In spirit-longing blown away;
You can, if cold does harden you,
The Self in sorrow grind to dust.

Thus, life does battle with death
In that realm where your will
Would act with spiritual creation.
You find, holding on to life,
Your Self vanishing in spirit's power;
If death's power binds you fast,
You may constrict the Self to nothing.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian at the abyss exacting equilibrium:

*The light does battle with powers of darkness
In that realm where your thinking
In spirit-being longs to enter.
You find, striving lightward,
Your Self, taken from you by spirit;
You can, when darkness entices you,
The Self in matter lose.*

*The warmth does battle with the cold
In that realm, where your feeling would
In spirit-interweaving live.
You find, loving warmth, your Self
In spirit-longing blown away;
You can, if cold does harden you,
The Self in sorrow grind to dust.*

*Thus, life does battle with death
In that realm, where your will
Would act with spiritual creation.
You find, holding on to life,
Your Self vanishing in spirit's power;
If death's power binds you fast,
You may constrict the Self to nothing.*

You will find, my dear sisters and brothers, that if you devote yourselves to these mantric worlds with the right conviction and with peace in your souls, with a feeling of sacrificial devotion to the spirit, you will find that what instills equilibrium in the soul is present in the words themselves.

As seekers after knowledge, we stand now before the Guardian of the Threshold at the yawning abyss of being. Next the Guardian of the Threshold teaches us how we, in wanting to choose the right direction between light and darkness, warmth and cold, life and death, can find our own Self.

In no other way can we do this, my dear sisters and brothers, than by pondering the following: In order to achieve true knowledge it is necessary that we become one with the world, that we have a feeling respecting the world as a finger would if it could feel for itself, feel itself to be a part of the entire human body. If the finger could feel for

itself it would say: I am only a finger as long as I am a part of the human body, when the human body's blood is my blood, when the human body's pulsation is my pulsation. If I am cut off, I cease being a finger. The finger loses its meaning when separated from the organism to which it belongs and only as part of which it can be a finger.

The human being must learn to feel in this way in respect to the entire world. We are members of the spirit-soul organism of the entire world, and only seem to be separated from the spirit-soul organism of the world. We must connect in the right way to the spirit-soul organism of the world and must know that around us the elements earth, water, air, fire are spread, and we must learn to feel that our bodily nature — for it is composed of these elements — is at one with these elements.

The Guardian of the Threshold teaches us that we should do this, and how. Just consider exactly what learning streams in those mantric verses the Guardian of the Threshold has given us, which have brought us to the abyss of being.

My dear sisters and brothers, think that you tentatively touch some object with your finger. You know that the object is there where you touch it. You touch an object. You have the feeling of being at one with this object, because at the moment you touch it the sense of touch is what makes a finger, or whatever you touch it with, at one with the object. Now think that you as a whole are like a finger, a touching finger. You are standing on the earth, on the element earth. You are standing here because the earth's main property is the element of gravity. You are touching the earth with the soles of your feet, regardless of whether you are standing on the floor of a room or outside on the bare earth. The point is that you feel, in standing, that you are touching the earth's gravitational element. You could be standing above on a mountain, or on a tower: you sense — just as you sense at the tip of your finger the hard and the soft, the warm and the cold — in the process of touching you sense the unity in your soles of your feet, where you sense the weight of gravity.

The Guardian of the Threshold says this when he admonishes us in the following way:

O man, touch within your body's entire being
How earthly forces support you in existence.

That earthly forces are our support, that the earthly element supports us so we don't sink down, is what the Guardian of the Threshold is telling us now.

Then he leads us further, so that we not only feel that we are like a whole finger, but that we also feel what is within the finger: it is the element of water, of fluid. For everything which is in the human being — something also known by physical science — is born from the fluid element. Solid is isolated from fluid, as ice is from water. We must rise to the sensation of the element of water. Out in the world everything is of a fluid nature. Our own formative forces are formed in us by the fluid element. Just as we feel the earth as our support, we also feel, in that we feel our organs, that we are formed as human beings out of the fluid element. It creates the formative forces for us. Our lungs and our livers are solidly formed, but they solidify from out of the fluid element, from out of the element of water. Just as we feel the earth to be our support, we also feel, in that we feel our organs, that the water element forms us as human beings. The water forces are our sculptors; the earth is our support. Therefore, the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

O man, experience in the circle of your touch

(We can touch everywhere, but when we feel the touching itself ...)

O man, experience in the circle of your touch,
How water-beings are your being's sculptors.

Now the Guardian of the Threshold continues to admonish us. He teaches us how we can also unite with the powers of air. We breathe in the air. We know that if we breathe in the air in the wrong way we feel it; so, it has to do with our feelings. We have feelings that make us fearful, that breach the coherence of our existence. Just as the water element shapes us, so does the air element care for us. The Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

O man, now feel in all your life's interweaving
How powers of air are your caregivers in existence.

Now the Guardian leads us farther on to the warmth element. We feel ourselves united internally with warmth. We feel the earth outside of us as support. We know little about how the water forces shape us, during growth, for example; that stays in the subconscious. The powers of air thrust themselves in only when they are abnormal, when they don't work normally. But we feel united with warmth when we have the right amount in us. Our souls and our whole being become warm when we feel warmth from without. We stiffen when we must experience cold from without. Warmth and cold are at one with us in a completely different way in the elemental world. There they are neither merely supporters, nor our sculptors, nor our caregivers — they are our true helpers in physical existence. The Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

O man, think in all the streams of feeling,
How fire-powers are helpers in your existence.

If we heed all that is entailed in these demands, we will find the path to conscious unification of our corporeality with the elements. And in different degrees our corporeality is one with the elements. At first the earth-element supports us in an exterior, mechanical way. The earth-element is support for us; it is mechanical and exterior. It will become more inward, but still consists of formations which do not reach the soul; water-beings form us, are our "sculptors". When we become one with the air-elements, we rise to the level of morality. The air-element is no longer a mere exterior designer, it is our caregiver. And our feelings are of anxiety if we do not breathe in the right way. The powers of air are "caregivers"; warmth and cold are "helpers", enabling us to be earthly beings. They are fire-powers, now wholly at the moral level.

The summation of the Guardian of the Threshold's admonitions with respect to the escalation of the elements:

O man, observe yourself in the elemental kingdom.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard.]

The Guardian's teaching:

*O man, touch within your body's entire being
How earthly forces support you in existence.*

*O man, experience in all the circle of your touch,>
How water-beings are your being's sculptors.*

*O man, now feel in all your life's interweaving
How powers of air are your caregivers in existence.*

*O man, think in all the streams of feeling,
How fire-powers are helpers in your existence.*

We have here the escalation [the words are underlined on the blackboard.]: "support", "sculptors", "caregivers", "helpers".

We also have another escalation. For in a mantric verse every word is in the right place, and there is no word there that only serves to fill an empty space. Everything coincides with its inner meaning with which we should unite ourselves in meditation on the mantric verse. We have an escalation [underlined on the blackboard] "touch", "experience", "feel", "think". It is a special escalation. So in meditation we must also sense the inner, meaningful structure of such a mantric verse.

Once the Guardian has said this, he sums it up again in one line:

[It is written on the blackboard:]

O man, observe yourself in the elemental kingdom.

Thus, the Guardian leads us to an inner experience of the verses, through which we can unite our corporeality with the elements to which it belongs.

Then he guides us further on to the soul. Here he doesn't point us to the elements earth, water, air, fire; here he points us to the planets. He points out to us how we should feel about what mutually draws the planets' orbits around the earth, how one planet or another draws the orbit. The orbits have a relationship and speak to each other when the

human being rises in his soul to this secret of the universe-pointing, planetary powers. Then he lives with his soul in the spiritual kingdom of the cosmos, just as he had previously lived with his body in the elemental kingdom. We can only psychically feel to be at one with the cosmos if we bring ourselves to live into the kingdom of the planets and their orbits. The Guardian of the Threshold tells us this with these words:

O man, let rule within your depths of soul
The universe-pointing planetary powers.

[It is written on the blackboard.]

*O man, let rule within your depths of soul
The universe-pointing planetary powers.*

Again, the Guardian of the Threshold sums up the direction-giving forces in these two lines for how the soul can feel to be at one with the secrets of the planets:

[written on the blackboard]

O man, become yourself...
(which means: make yourself existent)
... through the cosmic orbits.

The cosmic orbits of the various planets are drawn together into one cosmic orbit. We have thereby felt body and soul to be at one with the cosmos: the body with the earthly elements, the soul with the planets.

If we want the spirit to feel at one with the universe, we can neither look to the elements nor to the secrets of the planets, rather must we look to the stars. For there is the power with which we must feel our spirit to be at one with in the distant universe, if we wish to feel ourselves to be members of this universe in the true sense. There the cosmos begins to intone the music of the spheres. Therefore, the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

O man, preserve within your spirit's creation
The planets' words proclaimed in heaven.

[It is written on the blackboard.]

*O man, preserve within your spirit's creation
The planets' words proclaimed in heaven.*

Again, the Guardian of the Threshold summarizes the requirement in one line:

O man, create yourself through heaven's wisdom.

Every moment our spiritual existence is a creation of our Self.

[It is written on the blackboard.]

At every moment our spiritual existence is a creation of our Self.

If we sense and feel this in the right way, we are internalized by the Guardian of the Threshold. We recall how the words of self-knowledge were intoned from all creation still in an abstract form, how they rang out to us from all sides of natural and spiritual existence. But now the phrase: "O man, know thyself", is clarified in all its parts. It now consists of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine parts.

"O man, know thyself" should be seen as nine rays of light, so to speak. Then it will be filled with what our meditation needs.

That is how we should feel. And, in a certain sense, we should pledge to the Guardian of the Threshold that we will adhere to his admonition:

O man, touch within your body's entire being
How earthly forces support you in existence.

O man, experience in all the circle of your touch,
How water-beings are your being's sculptors.

O man, now feel in all your life's interweaving
How powers of air are your caregivers in existence.

O man, think in all the streams of feeling,
How fire-powers are helpers in your existence.

O man, observe yourself in the elemental kingdom.

O man, let rule within your depths of soul
The universe-pointing planetary powers.

O man, become yourself through the cosmic orbits.

O man, preserve within your spirit's creation
The planets' words proclaimed in heaven.

O man, create yourself through heaven's wisdom.

We make a kind of pledge to the Guardian of the Threshold that we
will always adhere to his admonitions, letting them run through our
soul as mantras.

Again, and again we look back, and at every step we feel bound to
remember what is happening on this side of the threshold. And on this
side of the threshold every stone and every plant, every tree, every
cloud, every spring, every rock, every lightning, every thunder has
called to us:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

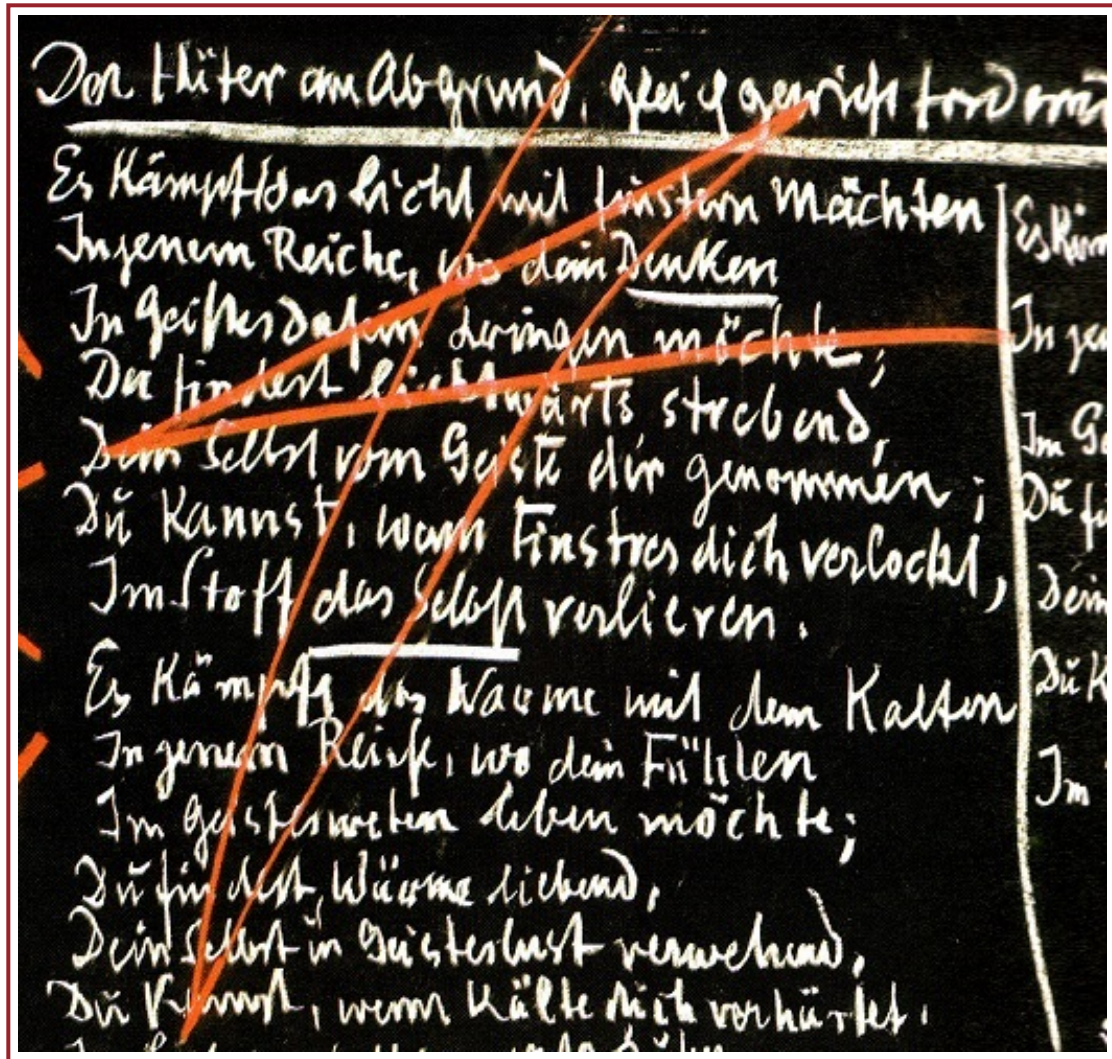
It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign

In the soulless void of space
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destructive flow.

Thus, when these words of the Guardian of the threshold ring out with full spiritual force in this room — words which he as the serving member of Michael's power, the reigning power of our time — when these words ring out we can be certain, because this esoteric school has been founded by Michael's might itself, that Michael is present with his force, with his spirit, with his love, that Michael is psycho-spiritually present among us.

And that can be confirmed — here where responsibility is felt by the leadership of the School towards the power of Michael — that nothing else streams through this School than what is present in the holy will of Michael. It may be confirmed by Michael's sign and Michael's seal; this Michael-Sign [in red]:



and the Michael-seal, which confirms that Michael-Power enters into the true Rosicrucian training and is thus conjoined with what is being taught in the Michael School with Michael's seal, which the Rosicrucian endowment seals in the Rosicrucian verse accompanied by the seal-signs:

Ex deo nascimur



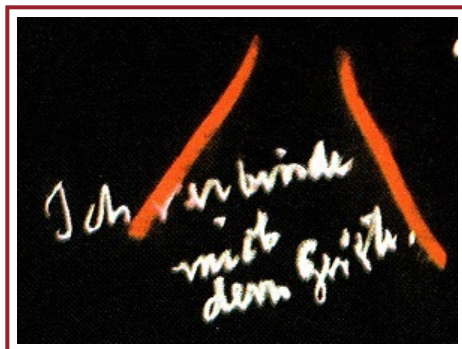
[seal gesture]

In Cristo morimur



[seal gesture]

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus



[seal gesture]

and that means:

I revere the Father

[first seal gesture]

I love the Son

[middle seal gesture]

I unite with the Spirit

[third seal gesture]

"I revere the Father": in saying "Ex deo nascimur", this feeling passes through our soul;

"I love the Son": in saying "In Cristo morimur", this feeling passes silently through our soul;

"I unite with the Spirit": is silently felt when saying "Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus".

The mantric verses come to you, my sisters and brothers, with the sign and seal of Michael:

[Michael Sign]

[Together with the seal gestures is spoken:]

Ex deo nascimur

In Cristo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

*

Only those who have been accepted as members of this School may possess the verses which are imparted here. Those who cannot be present during a lesson when verses have been given, may receive them from those who have received them in the School itself. However, in order to receive the verses, permission must first be granted by either Dr. Wegman or by me. The request to Dr. Wegman or to me can only be made by the one who wants to give the verses to another. Therefore, the one who wants to receive them should not request them; it would serve no purpose. He can go to someone and ask that he be given them; but the one who gives them must ask permission in every case. This is not an administrative rule, but an occult arrangement which must be followed, because the handing over must begin with this real act.

The request may not be done in writing — it has happened, so I must be clear about it — but must be done orally, except when exceptional circumstances make an oral understanding impossible. Least of all in esoteric matters should even the hint of bureaucracy exist. Everything must be alive, just as it should be in the Anthroposophical Society.

Furthermore, whoever writes down more than the verses is obliged to keep what has been written for only one week and then to burn it. For it is not good that they somehow remain longer. They can go in all possible directions. Esoteric material must be handled in this way; it is not an arbitrary rule. In esoterica, everything is determined from true occult foundations. And if esoteric mantric verses are revealed in an incorrect way by the members who have the right because they either received the verses here during a lesson or by the correct way as described — if they are received by others in an incorrect way, they lose all their spiritual force. That is an occult law. And in the spiritual world there are laws which may not be ignored without punishment. So, this is not an arbitrary rule, but one which obeys an occult law.

*

Now for some announcements. Tomorrow at 9:30 a.m. the course about Pastoral Medicine will continue, then at 12 noon the course for Speech Formation and drama; in the afternoon at 3:30 p.m. the course for Theologians. At 5 p.m. there will be an eurythmy performance. The next Esoteric Lesson, in which the Michael teachings will be rounded out, will take place on Monday at 8:30.



Lesson 24 (Recapitulation of Lesson 5)

15 September 1918, Dornach

My dear sisters and brothers,

New members have again come to this School today. It isn't possible to repeat every time the introduction which describes the duties and meaning of this Michael School. Therefore, I ask the members who wish to give the verses to the new members, to do so in the manner I will describe at the end of the Lesson, and to give them the introduction, which everyone who wishes to be a member of this School must necessarily know.

*

And so, we will also begin directly today to inscribe in our souls the words which sound forth, to those who are open-minded enough, from all the kingdoms of nature and the hierarchies of the world which surround us as human beings. In the past, these words sounded forth to man from all the stones and plants, clouds, stars, from the sun and the moon, from the springs and the rocks. They sound forth to him in the present; they will sound forth to him in the future.

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space

Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's soulless void
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

My dear sisters and brothers, in the description of the path of knowledge we have reached the place where we stand before the Guardian at the abyss of being. The Guardian of the Threshold has made clear to us that what surrounds us in the exterior world can never reveal our own being to us; how our observation of nature, what on and from the earth lives and moves, what shines and speaks from the realm of the stars — to the extent we can perceive it with the senses and with our reason — all that offers nothing to clarify the being of our own self; that the brightness, this glistening in the sunshine, this living and interweaving which is so grand and powerful, so beautiful and magnificent in the outer world, remains dark and gloomy for our true self-knowledge.

Then it was described how we approach the Guardian little by little, who appears to us in the figure of a spiritual cloud, thus showing us an image of ourselves, which in turn shows us what we should strive for as human beings in order to achieve self-knowledge.

Then we reached the Guardian of the Threshold. He showed us what the true shape of our willing, feeling and thinking is before the countenance of the gods. He showed us how being fainthearted and having fear of knowledge lives in us, as hate for knowledge, as doubt about the knowledge that is nevertheless in us, because the character of our times has driven it into us. He showed us the animal form of our willing, feeling and thinking. It must be a shattering experience for us when the Guardian of the Threshold awakens the forces which lead to true self-knowledge in our souls.

Then the Guardian of the Threshold raised us, first showing us, however, how our thinking, as we use it in normal life, is the corpse of the living thinking which was in us before we descended to physical-sensory existence. He showed us how our body, in earthly existence, is a coffin for the deceased living thinking, which lies in the coffin as a corpse. But we use this corpse for our usual abstract thinking between birth and death in order to understand the things of the physical-sensory world.

Once we grasp how dead this thinking is, we can learn from the corpse that lies before us. We look at this corpse. We say to ourselves: This corpse could never have come into being the way it is now. It is what remains of a human being whose soul and spirit were within it. The living person, the ensouled person, the spiritualized person must have existed beforehand in what lies before us as a corpse. Thus, we approach the reality of our thinking when we become aware of its deadness, and realize that it is the corpse of the living thinking that was in us before we descended into physical-sensory earthly existence.

Then the Guardian reminds us that our feeling is only half-alive, whereas our willing is fully alive, but we are only conscious of this externally.

The Guardian of the Threshold also reminds us that in order to gradually find the transition to living thinking, we should look up to the heavenly heights; that to grasp the nature of feeling we should look out to the cosmic reaches, and to gain an idea of the nature of will we should look to the world's depths, to the earthly depths.

But at the same time the Guardian shows us how we are placed with our thinking — when we look up to the cosmic thinking in which our earthly-physical thinking is rooted — between light and darkness; how the light can be dangerous if we devote ourselves unilaterally to it, how the darkness can be dangerous if we devote ourselves unilaterally to it, how we must seek our direction and goal in the middle between light and darkness if we are to find the truth, how we stand in the middle between warmth and cold with our feeling, and how we can vanish in the sensual embers of feeling if we surrender ourselves to the warmth, and on the other hand harden in the cold.

The Guardian of the Threshold indicates to us how we should walk in the middle between soul-warmth and soul-cold on the Christ-path. The Guardian of the Threshold indicates to us that when we seek willing in the earthly depths we find ourselves in the middle between life and death; how life would have us vanish in timidity; how death would have us cramped in nothingness; that we must findwilling in the Middle Way. That, my dear sisters and brothers, is what the Middle Way is — as it has been described since ancient Mystery times — which the human being must tread if he wants to follow the path to the spirit.

The Guardian of the Threshold, before whom we stand as the earnest first representative of Michael, for the real leader of this School is Michael, gives us further guidance: how we can escape from this *apparent* thinking, from this dead thinking into the living essence of thinking. For this we must be prepared above all to strictly adhere to the laws which are prescribed for every esotericist in golden letters — he must only seize the gold — which the Guardian of the Threshold now repeats to us.

He makes us attentive to the yawning abyss of being before us, which we must fly over, because with earthly feet we cannot cross; how we will have then entered the spiritual world, for there on the other side of the yawning abyss deep, night-cloaked darkness is still before us. But we must enter beyond the yawning abyss of being into that deep, night-cloaked, cold darkness. Out of it warmth must come to us, out of it must come light which illumines our own Self, which warms our own Self. We cannot find the firm support-point in the spirit if, whenever we are over there, we do not remember the pledge that our soul makes, now that we are in this situation, after having received the previous admonitions from the Guardian of the Threshold, who now says:

Do not forget that as long as you are an earthly human being, even when you have crossed over to the spiritual world, that once you have returned you must adhere to the laws of the earth. When you enter the spiritual world with your thinking, you may not believe that when you return and organize your work and your thoughts in the earthly environment you may fly around dreaming within the earthly environment. You must reserve the flying for your thinking when you are in the spiritual world. You must practice deep, inner, intimate

modesty, always wanting to be a man among men when you cross back to the ordinary world of ordinary consciousness. It is precisely by wishing to stay modest in the world, by abstaining from using the laws of the spiritual life in the ordinary world, that you will have the strength to grasp thinking in a way that it can serve you in spiritual worlds.

The Guardian of the Threshold therefore teaches us about thinking thus:

You climb down to the earthly element
With forces of your will unfolding;
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,
Your animal-likeness will be shown
To you by your own force of thought;
The fear you feel of self you must
Transform into courage of soul.

We must go through this by letting the mantric verse work on us. We must, if we wish to enter into the essential element of the earth, that means in the spiritual element of the earth; we must, my dear sisters and brothers, come to the point where we realize that our thinking is at first animal-like. We must experience fear of our own Self that is still animal-like; then the fear will give birth to its opposite and become the courage we need. That is the Guardian of the Threshold's urgently strong, earnest admonition, which cuts deeply into the heart. He admonishes us that we should feel this way when we tread the earth-element. We have already heard about treading the elements from the Guardian of the Threshold.

He admonishes us further: when, as feeling beings, we enter the fluid element, in the world of the water-beings, that we should not be aware of fear of our own Self, but we should be aware of how we sleep dreaming in this water element, which is our sculptor, as we have seen. And it is just when we become conscious that we live a plant-like existence in our earthly human feeling, that this feeling awakens us, for it shows us how lame our Self is. We will awaken once we have the humility to recognize the lameness of our Self.

Thirdly, when we feel ourselves to be in the air element with our willing — first in the earth-element with thinking, then in the water-element with feeling, then with willing in the air-element — then we will feel in this air-element that we have nothing in willing except what our normal memory gives us: memory-image-forms. We must seize these image-forms, which rest passively in our thoughts, with the will; then we are grasping the air-element in inner images. And our own soul will appear to us as if it were ossified. If we eliminate the earth and the air in thought and imagine ourselves wanting to breathe in the air-element, how ossified will we seem. But just by feeling this death by cold that we pass through, the spiritual fire will come to us, which we need in order to really grasp our willing.

The verses are profound, which the Guardian of the Threshold presents to our souls. Only if we observe them well and have fear of ourselves and know that we are nullified if we only perceive the earth in thought, will we have the courage in our souls for living thinking. When we sense how lame in feeling we are on earth, half living and lame, will the strength grow in us which allows us to awaken, so that we are awake in spiritual life, with the feeling we had before we descended to earthly physical existence. Then, when we have willingly descended into the air-element with our memory, we feel sclerotic and shivering with cold. But it is just when we feel this shivering from the cold the opposite happens, the spiritual fire awakens, showing us that our earthly willing is sleeping, but rooted in the living willing which was in us before we descended to earthly existence. We must learn to remember our existence before we descended to earthly existence.

In respect to feeling, the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

You live with the water-element
Through feeling's weaving dream alone;
To wake pervading water's being
Will show the soul in you
To be a sluggish plant-like being;
But lameness of your Self
Must Lead to self-awakening.

In respect to willing, the Guardian speaks:

You sense in the waves of air
The image-forms of memory only;
Through willing to seize the essence of air,
Your own soul will threaten you
As coldly hardened stone;
But self-hood's death by cold,
It must give way to spirit-fire.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard with the corresponding underlining:]

The Guardian speaks with great earnestness:

*You climb down to the earthly element
With forces of your will unfolding
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,
Your animal-likeness will be shown
To you by your own force of thought
The fear you feel of self you must
Transform into courage of soul.*

*You live with the water-element
Through feeling's weaving dream alone;
To wake pervading water's being
Will show the soul in you
To be a sluggish plant-like being;
But lameness of your Self
Must Lead to self-awakening.*

*You sense in the waves of air
The image-forms of memory alone;
Through willing to seize the essence of air,
Your own soul will threaten you
As coldly hardened stone;
But self-hood's death by cold,
It must give way to spirit-fire.*

We descend from thinking to feeling in memory when we let this verse work on us. And when we arrive at the depths of memory — where soul-life otherwise vanishes because the images of memory arise anew — there is the boundary, just as a mirror is a boundary. What comes

to us from without arrives at something like a memory-wall, then it returns again and again. If one does not look behind the mirror, one does not see behind the memory-wall. But here the Guardian of the Threshold advises us that we must push through what is otherwise a boundary in order to enter the realm of spirit.

After the Guardian of the Threshold has referred us more to our interior with his admonishing verses and has left us time to process the contents of the verses in the soul — for when we use these mantric verses in meditation, we must allow ourselves a very long time, especially at this point, so they can work in us with their force and really bring our I downward through thinking, feeling and remembrance to what lies behind all remembrance — then the Guardian tells us how we should comport ourselves in respect to the outer world.

He draws our attention again up to the light, which however only lives in us in what *seem* to be thoughts. It is light that thinks in us. When the light pervades us, it thinks in us. But in earthly life light is only the appearance of a thinking that thinks itself. If we don't go beyond it, untrue spiritual being will lead us to the illusion of self-hood rather than to true self-hood. So we must realize that if we only concentrate on thinking, we will wind up with the illusion of self-hood. But it is just this understanding of ourselves as earthly human beings, after having gone through the delusion of self-hood — through thinking, which, however, is capable of carrying us over the abyss of being to grasp the world's hardships and problems — that will enable us to gradually find support for experiencing existence in thought.

From light's shining force
Your thoughts you retain within;
When shining light in you itself does think,
Will then an untrue spirit-being cause
Illusion of self-hood to arise in you.
Reflecting on the needs of earth
Preserves your human state of being.

Now the Guardian of the Threshold teaches us how in feeling, at first, we only retain the wonderful, all-embracing forms of the world. But when we only retain these forms in feeling, our spiritual experience remains powerless. Self-hood suffocates if we always only stare, feeling, at what has been formed in the world. But if we begin to love all that is worthy in the world around us, we find being in feeling and we rescue our humanity.

The world's forms you only retain
In feelings held fast within;
When world-form feels itself in you,
The powerless experience of spirit
Will stifle in you the sense of self-hood;
But love of all that's worthy on earth
Will rescue for you your human soul.

Generally, we try to hatch thoughts from earthly values. We only retain the illusion of light if we don't consider the earth's weighty problems. We retain what is formed on the earth only in vague feelings if we don't experience this earthly interweaving of forms and gestalt with love.

And what can we retain of the world's life by willing? Our willing exists in the world's life. But if we only retain it by willing, we again fail to reach being. When the life of the world completely engulfs us, destructive spiritual exaltation kills the experience of Self. Immersion in the world's willing causes spiritual exaltation to erupt, which kills us. But if we develop the will in spiritual dedication to the higher worlds, if we think about what we are willing in the physical-sensory world in a way that the gods act in us, who inspire and give impulse to our willing, if we will in the service of the gods, then God lets his being give impulse to us as humans, and we sense real being in godly permeated willing.

You only retain of worldly life
The will within;
If worldly life takes hold in full,
Destructive spirit exaltation
Will kill experience of Self in you;
But spirit-dedicated earthly willing
Allows the God in man to reign.

These are the three admonitions which the Guardian of the Threshold calls out to us in the most earnest moments.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard:]

The Guardian speaks as though the Cosmic-Word itself were resounding:

*From light's shining force
our thoughts you retain within;*

— It is as though the Guardian wanted to bring our attention to what we are actually doing. He says that we have not yet gotten over forming mere thoughts about light's shining —

*When shining light in you itself does think,
Will then an untrue spirit-being cause
Illusion of self-hood to arise in you.
Reflecting on the needs of earth
Preserves your human state of being*

*The world's forms you only retain
In feelings held fast within*

— Once again, the admonition that in our vague, unfocused feelings only what is so wonderfully formed by the world is alive. At first the forming of the world is apprehended in the microcosm through the vagueness of feelings —

When world-form feels itself in you

— that is, not when we sense the world-form with our feelings, but when the world-form penetrates us, the macrocosm into the microcosm —

*When world-form feels itself in you,
Experience of spirit is powerless,*

— we become aware of our own powerlessness —

*When world-form feels itself in you,
Experience of spirit is powerless,
And stifles in you the sense of self-hood;
But love of all that's worthy on earth
Will rescue for you your human soul.*

We need this rescuing, for we are about to cross over the abyss. If we only carry over the thoughts instilled by the illusion of light, if we only carry over the vague feelings about world-form, then spiritual exaltation destroys the true light on the other side; powerless feeling, asleep, destroys the experience of the spiritual. We need awareness of the earth's needs, of all that the earth suffers, in order to be worthy to cross over to the spiritual world and not be destroyed by worldly thinking. We need love for what is worthy on the earth in order not to be turned to dust if we cross over with vague feelings. And thirdly, for willing we need this:

*You only retain of worldly life
The will within;
If worldly Life takes hold in full,*

— and it will do so over there —

*Destructive spirit exaltation
Will kill experience of Self in you;
But spirit-dedicated earthly willing
Allows the God in man to reign.*

We may not merely carry over to the spiritual world what we have on this side. We must carry over a stronger soul than we have here. We must prepare the soul:

[As the following is spoken, the words between quotation marks are underlined on the blackboard:]

On the other side, we find "light's shining force". It lives in our thinking. We need "Reflecting on the needs of earth". Compassion for all the earth's suffering will preserve our "human state of being".

Over there, because we are coming to the World-formation, we don't only need our "feelings", we need "love for all that's worthy on earth"; then our "human soul" will be rescued. Here [in the first verse]: preserve our human state of being; here [in the second verse:] the human soul is rescued.

We must enter the full "worldly life", which in our "willing" is only a weak reflection, is too flimsy to pass over. And we must develop "spiritually developed earthly willing" for the "god in man" to reign.

This is the escalation:

Light's shining force
World-formation
love for all that's worthy on earth

Thoughts
Feelings
Willing

We need:
Reflecting on the needs of earth,
Love for all that's worthy on earth,
Spiritually developed earthly willing;

for we need:
to preserve our human state of being,
to rescue the human soul,
to receive the reigning God within us.

That, my dear sisters and brothers, is what the Guardian places before our souls so that we may develop the wings of soul needed to cross over.

In the next esoteric lesson, to be held on Wednesday, it will be necessary that we receive the mantras through the Guardian of the Threshold — who in this case is Michael's representative at the threshold to the spiritual lands — the mantras which are the first that we speak when we arrive in the spiritual realm, which, however, appears before the human being when receiving these mantras as deep, night-cloaked, cold darkness.

Today, though, after this has been shown to our souls, let us again contemplate what speaks to us from all being, encouraging us toward all that the Guardian of the Threshold has placed before us with such firmness:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

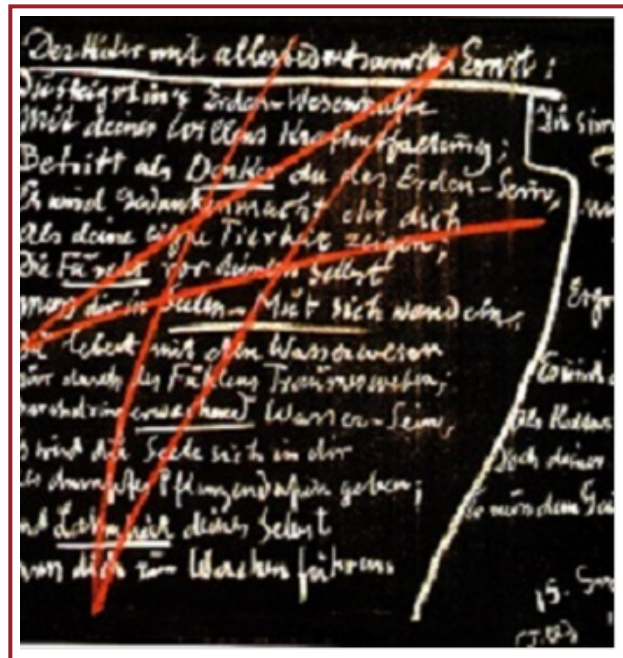
Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

Create the Word, feeling foreign
In space's the soulless void
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

And what has been placed before our souls by the Guardian of the Threshold's words is Michael's message in this rightfully established Michael School. If we receive them with the right attitude, Michael's being is present in this room, consecrating and strengthening what has been placed before our souls. Therefore, it may be accompanied by Michael's Sign. Michael's Sign is:



[in red]

and Michael's Seal, which he has impressed on the Rosicrucian mood for centuries, and which is expressed in the dictum:

ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus

The first words, "I revere the Father", are spoken accompanied by the gesture:



The second words, "I love the Son" are accompanied by the gesture:



The third words, "I unite myself with the Spirit", are accompanied by the gesture:



The first gesture means:

I revere the Father

the second gesture:

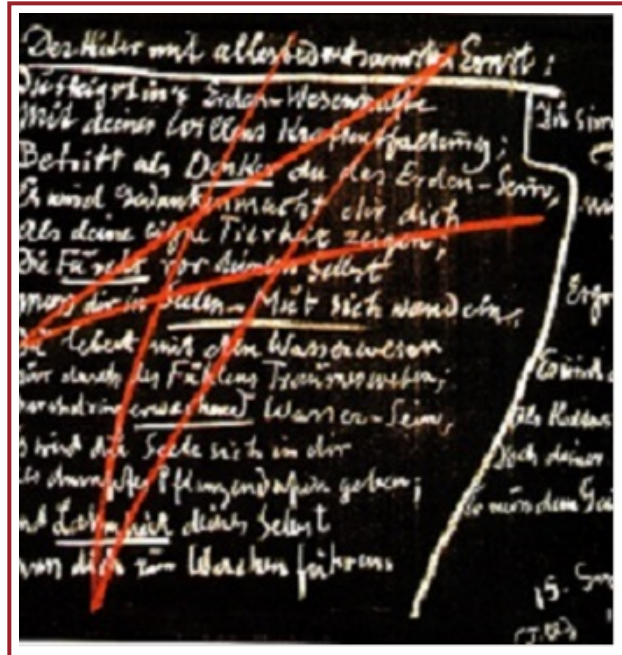
I love the Son

the third gesture.

I unite myself with the Spirit.

Thus, we may understand what is spoken as having been strengthened by Michael's sign and confirmed by Michael's Seal, which is thus, thus and thus, [indicating the Seal gestures on the blackboard] which is impressed over the Rosicrucian words.

So, should the verses live, which have been given through Michael's Sign, and sealed by the Michaelic Rosicrucian-School for your souls:



[Michael Sign]

The following is spoken, accompanied by the Seal Gestures:

ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

My dear sisters and brothers, the mantric verses which are given in this School may only be possessed by the School's rightful members, that is, those who have the blue membership certificate. Someone who could not be present at a lesson after the date of his admittance at which he could have been present, may receive the verses given after the date of his admittance from another member who has rightfully received them here in the School. For this it is necessary to obtain permission from either Dr. Wegman or myself.

This is not an administrative measure, but it is a basis of an occult school that a real action precedes something like this. Only the person who wants to give the verses to another may make the request to Dr.

Wegman or to me, not the one who wants to receive them. Therefore, one can request the verses from another. But permission may not be requested by the one who is to receive the verses, but the one who is to give them. It would be useless for the recipient to ask.

Whoever copies something other than the mantras may keep it for a week; thereafter he is obliged to burn it, for what lives in this School should only live within the School and not outside it. This has nothing to do with power or arbitrary measures. It is all based on occult laws. Because if anything falls into the wrong hands, it loses its effectiveness for those for whom it is intended. If misuse prevails in that mantric verses or the contents of what is given here are given to the wrong people, the mantric verses and what is being given here lose their effectiveness for those who are present. These are facts, not some kind of arbitrary measures.

*

The program for tomorrow is: again at 9.30 the Pastoral Medicine lesson, at 12 o'clock the speech-formation course, at 5.30 the course for theologians and at 8 o'clock the lecture for members.



Lesson 25 (Recapitulation of Lesson 6)

17 September 1918, Dornach

My dear sisters and brothers,

Once again, I must say that the introduction about the character and the responsibilities connected with the School cannot be repeated for the new arrivals each time. Therefore, I must request that those of you who were already here and have the mantras inform the new members concerning the contents of the introduction.

Today we will once again begin with the words which contain the fundamental exhortation to the human being, which resound to him from all the kingdoms of nature and from all the spiritual hierarchies, if he has the necessary sensibility, to seek his own being, and also exhort him to recognize, through his own being, the world in its true spiritual nature. They resound from all that interweaves and lives in the earthly depths, in water and air, in warmth and light, from what lives in the mountains and springs, in rocks, in the plants and animals, in the physical human form, in human souls, in human spirits, what lives in the residents of the stars, in the spiritual hierarchies — it resounds thus:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,
The Word create, feeling foreign
In space's soulless void,

Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

My dear sisters and brothers, the description of the spiritual path which leads from the sunny, light-filled world in which we live on earth appears on the other side of the yawning abyss of being at first as a gloomy, night-cloaked darkness. The path which leads us to where we become aware that, when we seek our own being in all that lives in the depths, flows in the air, all that creeps and flies, in all that our senses perceive in the majestic glow of the stars, in the powerful depths of universal space, in the immeasurably distant flow of time, that all that does not contain our being, the true source of our humanity, that it becomes gloomy when we look here for our humanity. The description has led us thus far to show that we must find the way past the Guardian of the Threshold, who has told us so much about the meaning of the spiritual world, over to what is still night-cloaked, black gloom, so that it can become bright there, and in this brightness the light arises to illumine before the eyes of our soul our own being, and therewith the being and essence and interweaving of the world.

It must be clear to us that in the moment — and we have come so far in the description — when we have crossed over the abyss of being, past the Guardian of the Threshold, in that moment an important change takes place in the human being, that is, in ourselves.

Let us look, my dear sisters and brothers, at our human existence as it is between birth and death on earth: we grasp the world thinking, we grasp the world feeling, we act in the world by willing. But thinking, feeling and willing are interwoven in our human earthly existence. If we want to carry out something in the near future, we consider it first, so what we carry out is already present as a seed in our thoughts. We see it flowing out in impulses of will. We feel that it is worthy. We feel love flowing to this or that being. Because we feel it, we form a

thought about it. Or we go beyond that and carry out a deed of love towards the being, we let ourselves grow wings of love, and are urged forward to willing. But all that — thinking, feeling, willing — is closely related to our humanity as it unfolds between birth and death in the physical world. We are at one in thinking, feeling and willing.

And the truth is that we are only really awake in our thoughts. They are bright and clear, although the Guardian of the Threshold had revealed them to be illusory. They are bright and clear, we are awake in them.

Our feeling is darker and less clear. We are closer to existence in feeling, but the content of what we feel is like a dream, so that we can only speak of dream-feeling, even when awake.

The will, however, as it emerges from our being, remains at first completely unclear to our normal consciousness. We have the thought that we want this or that; the thought appears, grasps the organism; the organism acts, carries out the thought; we see what we have carried out, again with thought. But the will itself rests in deep sleep, as do the things in our soul rest between falling asleep and awakening.

But the initiate sees the thoughts in their living state, which they were in before the human being had descended from the supersensible world to the sensory one. He sees radiant being in the thoughts. But this radiant being he sees is not the illusion of thoughts as in ordinary thinking.

We stand beside the Guardian of the Threshold. The abyss of being is there; before us — beyond the abyss, beyond the threshold — is the black, night-cloaked gloom; but from out of the darkness gleaming, living shapes are moving. We say to ourselves — because we sense that the kind of thoughts we had as physical persons have abandoned us — we say to ourselves: There is our flowing, living thinking. It doesn't belong to us now, it belongs to the world. Light on light, thought extracts itself from the black gloom. We know that thought, all our thinking, is there as the first brightness within the black gloom that we are approaching.

And then we see something further down. We have the feeling — and the Guardian of the Threshold points to it with an admonishing gesture — we see how the darkness below is becoming fire-like. Fire, dark fire yes, but fire that we can sensepsychically, spreads out below us. What we recognize as our willing comes towards us over the abyss of being. The initiate gradually learns the following: What happens when thinking merges with willing? The thought — of what is wanted — is grasped; then this thought merges with corporeality as beneficent fire. What brings the will to existence is warmth, which is fire when our own will meets us from out of the darkness.

And between this warmth, from which our willing streams toward us across the abyss of being (for our human will is a mere reflection of our cosmic will) — between this warm, dark out-streaming from below, which has at most a whiff of bluish-violet, and the bright lights of thoughts above, between both there is an interweaving, flowing warmth rising, light descending. Light-enveloped warmth rising, warmth-enveloped light streaming down: that is our feeling.

It is a powerful picture which the Guardian of the Threshold draws. And now we know that when we cross over from the sensory world, from the world of physical reality in which we are between birth and death, into the world of the spirit, then we will be — in thinking, feeling and willing — no longer the unity that we are here; there we are Three. In the universe, we are Three: our thinking merges with light across the threshold; our will becomes fire; our feeling becomes light-enveloped fire.

We must have the courage to expand and intensify the Self, the I, so that it holds the Three together when we cross over. We can do this once we are permeated with what could otherwise be a banality: that our head is the source of all our senses and thinking: All our senses and thoughts are distributed over the whole body, but what is especially expressed in our head is that in its roundness, with an opening below, it imitates the shape of the universe. If we can say to ourselves in all seriousness and inner ardency: my head is inwardly and outwardly an imitation of the world's shape, we feel then, in that we want to view the head from within, how this perspective expands to include the universe, which is only concentrated in our head for our earthly vision.

We should then intensely feel how our heart, the physical expression of our soul, does not only beat because of what is in our body, because of what is enclosed within the skin; we breathe in the air, which is the impetus of the heartbeat, we breathe it out again. The world in all its grandeur and majesty participates in our heartbeat. What is sensed in our heart is not merely what is within us: it is the universal pulse-beat.

If we consider how our limbs work through willing, it gives us the strength to not only will what is within us. Consider for a moment how the forces of heredity are in us when we are born, how the forces of karma, which we have acquired through many, many earth-lives, live in our willing. Let us think of all that, and feel: when we will, world-force lives in our limbs, not merely human force.

Just think, my dear sisters and brothers, while still here at the Guardian of the Threshold's side he points over to the brightly lit, universally living and acting thoughts; to what wells up as warmth, light-bringing, light-filled; to what spiritually wafts over us from below like warm wind — the universe's fire, which is the ur-force of the will.

So we hear, resounding, what the Guardian of the Threshold has to say to us in this situation:

Behold the Three

(thinking, feeling, willing; man is split in three)

Behold the Three,
They are the One,
When you in earthly life
the human imprint bear.

Experience the head's cosmic form

The Guardian makes this sign:

[It is drawn on the blackboard.]

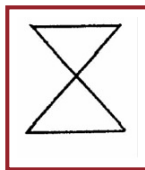


so that we stop and feel the head's cosmic form in this closed, upward pointing triangle. Let us concentrate on this.

Feel the heart's cosmic beat

The Guardian makes this sign:

[It is drawn on the blackboard.]

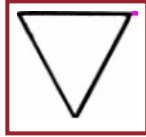


for us to feel in this sign the wave-like pulse of the universe, which crosses in the heart.

Consider the cosmic force of the limbs.

The Guardian of the Threshold makes the other sign:

[It is drawn on the blackboard:]



We should concentrate on this line in order to sense the mantric force of this line and of the whole verse.

Then the Guardian of the Threshold strengthens it again:

They are the Three,
The Three, which as the One
In earthly being live.

This is the verse by which the Guardian announces how we are to prepare — through forceful courage, through ardent striving for knowledge — to sense the wings which carry us over from the One to the Three. In the physical world, we are the One. In the spiritual world, we are the Three, which we experience in imaginative pictures.

[Written on the blackboard]

The Guardian reminds us:

*See the Three,
They are the One,
When you in earthly life
The human imprint bear.*

[Alongside the first sign on the blackboard is written:]

Experience the head's cosmic shape
the cosmic shape can be experienced in the head

[Alongside the second sign is written:]

Sense the heart's cosmic beat
the cosmic beat can be sensed in the heart

[Alongside the third sign is written:]

Consider the limbs' cosmic force
the cosmic force can be considered in the movement of the limbs.

The escalation is:

[The following words are underlined:]

Experience
Sense
Consider

Shape
Beat
Force

The three lines must be strengthened by concentrating on these figures.

[Written:]

They are the Three,
The Three, which as the One
In earthly being live.

My dear friends, when we are standing here in earthly existence — and we are still doing so, we are just preparing to cross to the spiritual world — we ascribe to our head our spirit, in that it contains thoughts. At first, though, this spirit is only apparent. The thoughts are the appearance of the spirit. We ascribe the thoughts to our head, that is, we ascribe the spirit to our head, because the spirit lives in the form of thoughts during earthly existence.

But we can do something else, recalling the Guardian of the Threshold's admonition. In this situation, as we are preparing to cross over the abyss of being, we must endeavor to concentrate on the force we normally use when we move a limb, when we walk or stand, when our will pervades us. We must endeavor to concentrate to the extent that we will each thought, as though it were being pushed out. We must sense the thought being pushed out as when we stretch out an arm: thus, reality passes through the will into the thoughts. Then the things perceived by our senses, whereas they came to us previously as the appearance of color or tone, now stream toward us from the multifaceted sensory appearance as cosmic will.

My dear sisters and brothers: Learn to extend your thoughts out to the world as you learn to stretch out your hands through willing. Just as the objects of the world respond when you extend your will to them, offering resistance, so do the spirits offer resistance when you extend your thoughts to them, in that the will permeates them. If we do this, we are interweaving reality in wisdom. The Guardian of the Threshold's admonishes us once again.

The Guardian's last admonition:

*The head's spirit,
You can will it;*

(otherwise we only think it, now we will it; and when we do so, willing becomes something different)

And willing

(the willing of thoughts)

*provides you with
The senses' multi-forming heaven-weave;
You interweave with wisdom.*

The next thing the Guardian of the Threshold points to is the heart, in which the rhythm of our humanity is concentrated. We cannot bring anything except feeling into the heart, that is, feeling here in the

sensory world between birth and death. But we must also bring the feelings to the heart when we are in the spiritual world.

If we could feel the heart as if the world were feeling our heart, because we are, after all, in the world, then our feeling would be different. Just as willing becomes "the senses' multi-forming heaven-weave", so feeling becomes something which must be conceived of in a way that we can say — Look: thinking, the spirit's head, becomes the will; feeling remains feeling, but rays out to thinking on one side and willing on the other. It is both at the same time. Therefore, at this point we must get used to concentrating on a line in which we interweave what rays upward and downward.

This line must read as follows: "And feeling becomes your will's thinking, your thinking's will, the awakening seed of cosmic life." Then you live in the glow. This is not a dying away glow, it is the world's revelation in beauty, which can also be called "glow" in the sense of "gloria". The glow here means gloria.

Thus, the Guardian's second admonition is:

The heart's soul,
You can feel it;
And feeling becomes for you
The awakening seed of cosmic life:
Will's thinking, thinking's will.
You live in the glow.

[This second verse is written on the blackboard and "heart's" and "feeling" are underlined:]

*The heart's soul,
You can feel it;
And feeling becomes for you
The awakening seed of cosmic life:
Will's thinking, thinking's will.
You live in the glow.*

You must, my dear sisters and brothers, by practicing this, try to think that — the will's thinking, the thinking's will — flow together in one, because it is so in the world.

The third thing to which the Guardian of the Threshold points is the force of our limbs. The Guardian of the Threshold demands that that our spirit wills our limbs, that we do not feel that what we do is the result of exerting our own force, but that we observe it as if we stepped out of our bodies and were standing beside ourselves. Then the will's thinking becomes the thinking which we unfold here: the will's goal-oriented human striving. And now we recognize the virtue of human diligence, what human will can accomplish in the world's evolution. The guardian of the Threshold admonishes us:

[The third verse is written on the blackboard and "limbs" is underlined.]

*The limbs' force,
You can think it
And thinking becomes
The will's goal-oriented human striving.
You strive in virtue.*

The escalation is:

[Now the following three words are underlined:]

weave
live
strive.

The other escalation is:

wisdom
glow
virtue.

Now I will read the lines as they appear to us at first when the Guardian speaks them to us:

The head's spirit,
You can will it;
And willing becomes for you
The senses' multi-formed heaven's interweaving.
You interweave in wisdom.

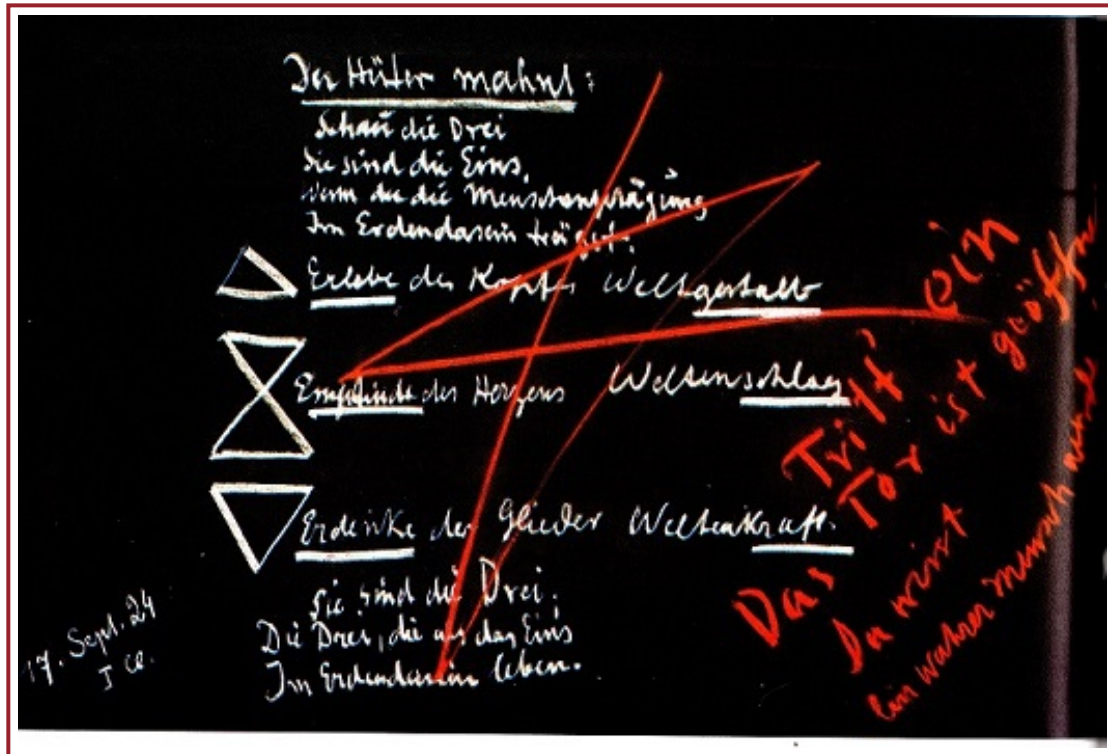
The heart's soul,
You can feel it;
And feeling becomes for you
The will's thinking, thinking will's
Awakening seed of cosmic life.
You live in the glow.

The limbs' force,
You can think it;
And thinking becomes
The will's goal-oriented human striving.
You strive in virtue.

That is the Guardian of the Threshold's last admonition.

That is the decisive point which is indicated by the words which are spoken here as the words Michael himself speaks, because this Esoteric School has been founded and is sustained by Michael and his force. Now we have come to the important point in our instruction where, if we have conscientiously practiced all that we have learned, it gives us wings to fly over the yawning, deep abyss of being.

Everything which has been said in this Michael School shall again be accompanied by the sign and seals of Michael; for all has been given in such a way that while it resounds through the space of this School, Michael is present, which may be confirmed by his sign:



[Michael-sign (in red)
 Come in, the door has opened, you will become a free human being]

and which may be confirmed by his seal, which he has impressed on the threefold Rosicrucian verse:

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus

the seal makes us feel the first line in this gesture:

[The lower seal is drawn on the blackboard.]



[lower seal-gesture]

the second line in this gesture:

[the middle seal gesture is drawn on the blackboard]



[middle seal gesture]

the third verse in this gesture:

[the upper seal gesture is drawn on the blackboard]



[upper seal-gesture]

As we know, this first gesture means [beside the lower gesture is written:]

I revere the Father

We feel this as we say "Ex deo nascimur" and confirm it by the gesture, which is Michael's seal.

The second gesture means [beside the second gesture is written:]

I love the Son

We feel this while saying "In Christo morimur", thus expressing the feeling through what lies in the Michael-Seal.

The third gesture means:

I unite with the spirit

It accompanies, in feeling, "Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus". It is the gesture which is Michael's seal upon the third part of the Rosicrucian verse.

Thus, Michael's Sign and Seal accompany the path onward, which will be followed in this School for spiritual development:

[the Michael-Sign is made]

[The following three lines are spoken, accompanied by the three seal-gestures:

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

Then the moment comes when the Guardian of the Threshold's decisive words resound as though coming from Michael, as though from the cosmic distances. After the Guardian has said how we are to prepare ourselves — and we feel this preparation to be necessary — then his words resound as though coming from Michael, as though coming from the cosmic distances:

Come in.
The door has opened.
You will become
A true human being.

We must create the feeling that we are not speaking ourselves, but that as we are speaking it becomes objective, that we hear it, as if it is coming from the other side:

[Across the mantra "See the three" on the blackboard, the following is written in red chalk:]

Come in.
The door has opened.
You will become
A true human being.

In the following lessons, what resounds on the other side of the threshold will be described.

But now let us again consider — for all real development always leads back to the starting point — how from all the beings of the world the challenge speaks to us about what we have learned from the Guardian's mouth:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,

The Word create, feeling foreign
In space's soulless void,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

Once more — confirming all, confirming Michael's presence — the sign
and seal of Michael:

[the Michael-sign is made]

[The following is spoken together with the seal-gestures:]

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

The mantric verses given here in order to practice contain the force necessary to experience what is described here. Only the members of this Class may possess them, no one else. If someone who belongs to the School cannot attend a lesson during which he would have received the corresponding verse, he may receive it from another member who was present. But for each time this happens permission must be received either from Dr. Wegman or myself. However, the one who is to receive the verse may not request permission, but only the one who is to give it.

Once permission has been granted to give someone the verses, it continues to hold good for that particular person. For every other person, permission must be obtained from Dr. Wegman or myself. It would be useless for the one who wants to receive the verses to request permission; only the one who is to give them should ask. So, if one wants to have the verses, he must go to someone who has them legitimately. The latter should then ask for each individual to whom he wishes to give them.

If someone makes notes of something else, other than the verses, he is only authorized to keep them for one week; after that they must be burned. We must really observe the occult rules. An occult rule is contained in all I have said and insist upon. This is not an arbitrary administrative measure, but because if esoteric things fall into the wrong hands, then, my dear sisters and brothers, the mantras lose their force. It is simply based on an occult law.

*

At twelve o'clock tomorrow is the Speech Formation course; at 10.45 the Theology course; at five o'clock the Pastoral Medicine course and at eight o'clock the lecture for members.



Lesson 26 (Recapitulation of Lesson 7)

20 September 1918, Dornach

My dear sisters and brothers,

Since the Christmas Conference an esoteric breath flows through the whole Anthroposophical Society. And those members of the Anthroposophical Society who have taken part in the general members' lectures will have noted how this esoteric breath flows through all the work within the anthroposophical movement now, and should do so in the future.

This was a necessity which, above all, flows from the spiritual world, from where the revelations come which should live in the anthroposophical movement.

Therefore, the necessity arose to create a certain nucleus for anthroposophical esoteric life, to create real esoteric life, and therewith the necessity arose to build a bridge to the spiritual world itself.

In a certain sense the spiritual world had to manifest the will for the creation of such a School. For an esoteric school cannot be created by human arbitrariness, nor from that human arbitrariness called "human ideals"; rather must this esoteric school be the body for something which flows out of spiritual life, so that everything that occurs in such a school presents the outer expression of an activity which in reality occurs in the spiritual world itself. Therefore, this esoteric school could not have been created without first asking the will of Michael, which since the last third of the nineteenth century has been guiding human affairs - something which I have often mentioned here in members' lectures.

In the course of time this will of Michael again and again cyclically intervenes in human affairs from the spiritual world. And when we look back in the evolution of time, we find that this same Michael-Will - which we can also call the Michael Reign - was active in the spiritual affairs of humanity, in the great questions of civilization before the

Mystery of Golgotha, in the time of Alexander in Greece through the Chthonian and Celestial mysteries, and which was to spread to Asia and Africa. Where the Michael-Will reigns, there is always cosmopolitanism. What differentiates people on earth is overcome during the Michael age.

The most important influence, related to Aristotle and to Alexander, which was under the impulse of Michael, was followed by that of Oraphiel, and after Oraphiel came the Anael impulse, the Zachariel impulse, then the Raphael impulse, then the Samael impulse, then the Gabriel impulse, which extended into the 19th century. And since the seventies of the nineteenth century we are again under the sign of Michael's reign. It is in its beginnings. But Michael's impulses must flow into all legitimate esoteric activities in a conscious manner - what can be clear to you, my sisters and brothers, through the general lectures for members.

And everything connected with the Christmas Conference leads to what is constituted as the basis of the anthroposophical movement's formation of this Esoteric School inspired and guided by Michael. It therefore rightfully exists in our times as a spiritual institution. All those who want to be rightful members of this School must accept this in their lives with the deepest sincerity. They must feel that they don't merely belong to an earthly community, but to a supersensible community, whose guide and leader is Michael himself. Therefore, everything communicated here is not to be understood as my words, insofar as they are the content of the lessons, but rather as what Michael communicates in an esoteric manner to those who feel they belong with him in this age. Therefore, what these lessons contain will be Michael's message for our age.

And it is because of this that the anthroposophical movement will receive its true spiritual strength. For this it is necessary that what membership in this School means be taken with the utmost earnestness. It is really necessary, my dear sisters and brothers, truly and deeply necessary, that it be indicated in the utmost earnest manner the sacred earnestness with which the School must be taken.

And here within the School it must be repeatedly said: in anthroposophical circles there is much too little earnestness for what really flows through the anthroposophical movement, and at least the

esoteric members of the Esoteric School must be in the forefront of what humanity can gradually develop as the necessary earnestness. Therefore, it is necessary that the leadership of the School retain for itself the right to allow only those to enter as rightful, worthy members of the School who, in every aspect of their lives, want to be worthy representatives of anthroposophy; and the decision about whether this is the case or not must lie with the School's leadership.

Do not consider this, my sisters and brothers, as a limitation of freedom. The School's leadership must also have its freedom and be able to recognize who belongs to the School and who does not, just as each one is free to decide whether to belong to the School or not. So, a free, ideal-spiritual contract, so to speak, between each member of the School and the leadership must be agreed upon. In no other way could esoteric development be called healthy, especially not one which is worthy of the fact that this Esoteric School exists under the direct force of the Michael impulse itself.

Conscientious care of the mantric verses so that they do not fall into unauthorized hands is the first requisite; but also, to really be a worthy representative of the anthroposophical cause.

I only need to mention a few things to show how little the anthroposophical movement is still grasped with complete earnestness. It has happened that members of the School have reserved their seats by placing on them the blue membership certificates, which gives them the right to participate in the School. [1] It has happened in the Anthroposophical Society that whole piles of the News Sheets, only intended for members, have been found on the trolley cars that run from Dornach to Basel. And I could add many other examples to this list. And amazing things happen as a result of this lack of earnestness. Even with things that in everyday life are taken seriously, at the moment when those within the anthroposophical movement are expected to do so, they do not take them seriously.

These are things which must be considered in connection with the firm structure that this School must have. Therefore, these things must be said, because if they are not observed, one cannot worthily receive what is given here in the School as revelations from the spiritual world. At the end of each lesson, your attention is expressly drawn to

the fact that the being of Michael is present while the revelations from the spiritual world are given, and are confirmed by Michael's sign and seal.

All these things must live in the members' hearts. And worthiness, profound worthiness must reign in all that is bound even in thought to the School. For only in this way what today is to be carried through the world as an esoteric stream can live. And that includes the duties incumbent on each individual.

The mantric verses written here on the blackboard can only be possessed, in the strictest sense of the word, by those who have the right to be present. And if a member of the School is unable to attend a lesson during which mantric verses are given, another member, who has the verses, may give them to him; but it must be for each individual case, that is, for each person to whom the verses are to be given, that permission must be requested, either from Dr. Wegman or from me. Once permission is granted in respect to a person, it remains valid. But permission must again be requested for each other individual. This is not an administrative rule, it is an occult rule that must be strictly adhered to. For every act of the School must be connected to the School's leadership: and that begins with having to request permission from the School's leadership for acts having to do with the School. Not the one who is to receive the mantras may ask, but only the one who is to give them, using the modality that I have just described. If someone takes notes on what is said here, except for the mantras, he is obliged to keep them for only one week, and then to burn them.

All these things are not arbitrary rules, but they relate to the occult fact that esoteric matters are only effective if they are embraced by the School members' attitude. The mantras lose their effectiveness if they fall into the wrong hands. And it is a rule so firmly inscribed in the cosmic order, that the following once happened and a whole group of mantras, which had been in effect within the anthroposophical movement, have been rendered ineffective.

I was able to give mantric verses to a number of people; I also gave them to a certain person, who had a friend. The friend was somewhat clairvoyant. And it happened that while the two friends were sleeping in the same room, the clairvoyant friend, when the other one merely

repeated the mantra in thought, surreptitiously copied it and then did mischief with it by giving it to others as coming from himself. It was necessary to look into the matter, which revealed why the mantra became ineffective for all those who possessed it.

Therefore, my dear sisters and brothers, you must not take these things lightly, for esoteric rules are strict; and when someone has made such an error, he should not excuse himself by claiming that he was unable to avoid it. Of course, if someone runs through a mantra in his mind, and someone else copies it clairvoyantly, he certainly can do nothing about it. Nevertheless, the rules are applied with an iron necessity. [2]

I mention this so that you can see how little arbitrariness is involved, and how these things are being read from the spiritual world and that the practices of the spiritual world apply. Nothing is arbitrary in what occurs in a rightly existing esoteric school. And the earnestness from this esoteric school should stream out to the whole anthroposophical movement. For only then will this School be what it should be for the anthroposophical movement. But when something is done which only springs from personal motives and then it is pretended that it is because of devotion to the anthroposophical movement- well, I don't mean to say that it should not happen, because obviously, people today must be personal - but then it is also necessary that truth lives in what is personal, that for instance if someone comes here to Dornach for personal pleasure he should admit it and not pretend otherwise. There's nothing wrong with coming to Dornach for personal pleasure, in fact it is good. But one should admit it and not sidestep it by declaring pure dedication to spiritual life.

I mention this; I could just as well mention another example, which is more real, for it is really the case that when most of our friends come to Dornach, a will to sacrifice is involved, and that only in the least of cases is untruthfulness involved. But I've chosen this example because it is the least applicable and thus the least harmful. If I had mentioned other examples, what I would like to have as a calm prevailing mood in the hearts and souls of all who are sitting here now could not exist in the necessary degree.

After that introduction, I would like to start with the verse that is the beginning and end of Michael's proclamation to all unbiased human beings, and which contains what all entities in the world are saying, if one listens to them with the soul. For from all that lives in the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, what sparkles down from the stars, what acts into our souls from the domains of the hierarchies, from all that crawls under and on the earth as worm-life, from what speaks in rocks and springs and fields and thunder and clouds and lightning; all these spoke to unbiased human beings in the past, speak at the present and will speak in the future:

O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,
The Word create, feeling foreign
In space's soulless void,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

The previous lesson ended, my dear sisters and brothers, with the Guardian of the Threshold giving the last admonitions before one passes over the yawning abyss of being; the Guardian of the Threshold spoke the weighty, moving words:

Come in,
The gate has opened;
You will become
A true human being.

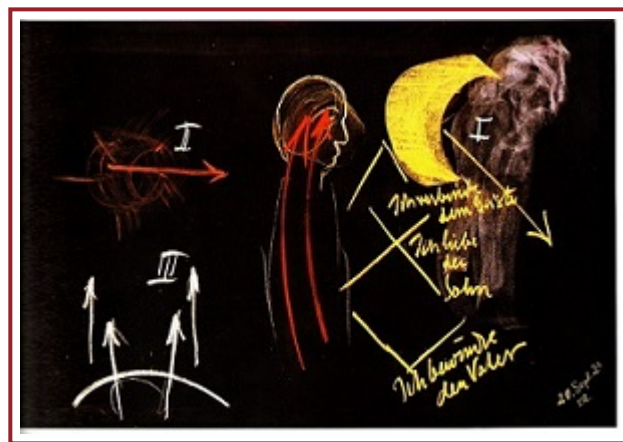
Our souls and hearts have been exposed to the important, weighty, meaningful words spoken by the Guardian of the Threshold on behalf of Michael. And everything he said was to prepare us for the attitude we must have when we come over after the gate has been opened - over the yawning abyss of being, where one does not come walking with earthly feet, where one flies with the spiritual wings that grow when the soul is imbued with a spiritual attitude, with spiritual love, with spiritual feeling.

And now, now, my dear sisters and brothers, will be described what the human being experiences when he stands on the other side of the yawning abyss of being. The Guardian of the Threshold indicates to him: turn around and look back! Until now you have been looking at what appeared to you as black, night-cloaked gloom, about which you had to say that it will become inner light and will illumine your own Self. With the last admonitions — the Guardian of the Threshold says — I let it become lighter, at first most gently. You feel now the first light around you. But turn around, look back!

And now, when he who has crossed over the yawning abyss of being and turns around and looks back, he sees himself as an earthly human being, what he is during his physical incarnation, over there in the part of his being that he has left behind and which now lies in the earthly sphere. He observes his own human self there. He has embodied himself in spiritual being with his spirit-soul. The earthly environment is over there now. He stands there in the region, in which we first were with all our humanity, where we saw what crawls beneath and flies above, where we saw the sparkling stars, the warmth-giving sun, where we saw what lives in the wind and weather, and where, knowing that despite all its majesty, how the sun blazes and illumines, despite all the beauty and greatness accessible to the senses, we said to ourselves: our own humanity is not here; we must seek it on the other side of the yawning abyss of being, in what seems at first, to the senses, to be black, night-cloaked gloom.

The Guardian of the Threshold has shown, by the three beasts, what we actually are. Now will be described how in the gloom that is beginning to be light, we should begin to look back on what we as humans are in the sensory world, together with what was our only world in sensory earthly existence.

And now the Guardian of the Threshold points directly back there to the earthly man, which we ourselves also are during earthly existence, and to which we must continually return, into which we must always penetrate when we leave the spiritual world and return to our earthly duty. For we may not become dreamers and go into raptures, we must return completely to earth life. Therefore the Guardian of the Threshold directs us to look at the person who stands over there, who we ourselves are, in a way that at first draws our attention to what this person is. [An outline of a human being is drawn on the blackboard.]



He knows that he perceives the outer world through the senses, which are mostly situated in the head, and that he perceives his thinking through the impulse of the head.

But the Guardian of the Threshold now says: Look into this head. It is like looking into a dark cell, for you do not see the creative light within it. The truth is that what you had as thinking over there in the sensory world is mere seeming, mere images, not much more than mirror-images.

The Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us to be very aware of this, but also to be aware that what is only appearance in earthly thinking is the corpse - as we have heard in previous lessons - of a living thinking in which we were immersed in the soul-spiritual world before we descended to this earthly life. There thinking lived! Now

thinking rests as dead thinking, as seeming thinking in the coffin of our bodies. And all the thinking we use in the sensory world is dead thinking. It was alive before we descended.

And what has this thinking accomplished? It has created everything that is within the head, within this dark cell - as it appears to the senses - that is light-creating essence. The brain, which rests within as thinking's support, has been created by living thinking. [The interior of the head, yellow, is drawn on the blackboard.] It is living thinking that creates the support for our earthly semblance of thinking.

Observe the brain's convolutions, observe what you carry within the dark cell that enables you to think, my sisters and brothers, observe the semblance of thinking in the dark cell, then you will find in what is felt above as thinking [drawing: red arrows] from out of which streams the force of will into thinking, so that each thought is streamed through with will. How the will streams into thinking can be sensed.

And now we look back from the other side of the threshold at how that other person, who we ourselves are, has waves of will streaming out of his body into the head, which create the will, and finally, when we follow them back to the turning points of time which lead to our previous incarnations, how they create the waves of thought from worlds past into our present incarnation and form our heads, all of which makes the semblance of thinking in this incarnation possible.

Therefore, we must be strong, the Guardian of the Threshold tells us, and imagine dead thinking being cast out into the cosmic nothingness, for it is only seeming. And the willing that then arises we should consider as what comes over from previous incarnations and interweaves and works, making us thinkers. Within [drawing: yellow] are the creating cosmic thoughts. These creating cosmic thoughts enable us to have human thoughts.

Therefore, the first words the Guardian of the Threshold speaks after he has let us cross the threshold, and after he has announced that the gate has opened, that we can become true human beings, the first words he speaks are:

See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the gloomy spirit-cell
Willing arises from the body's depths;
Let be cast, through your strength of soul,
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;
And willing, it will arise
As cosmic thought's creation.

The first words we hear on the other side, as we look back at the figure, which we ourselves are:

[The first mantra is written on the blackboard, together with a heading. Blackboard writing is always in italics.]

The Guardian is heard in the brightening darkness:

I

See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the gloomy spirit-cell
Willing arises from the body's depths;
Let be cast, through your strength of soul,
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;
And willing, it will arise
As cosmic thought's creation.

And then the Guardian of the Threshold adds - and one must strain to hear him: Now imagine that you are observing that figure on the other side who you yourself are; you turn around again and look into the darkness and try with all your inner imaginative force of remembrance - as one does when retaining a physical after-image in the eye. Try with all your strength to draw before you something like a gray outline of what you saw over there, but avoid drawing anything except the outline of the figure. [It is drawn.]

Then, if one succeeds in seeing this gray outline of a figure, behind it appears an image of the moon [a sickle moon, yellow, is drawn], the gray figure before it.

If one is able to keep inner calm, one sees the moon in the distance. The gray figure outline is also there, but it is active in us. And if we practice this over and over, we feel we have arrived at the spiritual figure of the head that we had over there, not the physical human figure, but at the spiritual figure of the head that we had over there, if we can feel what karma brings to us from previous earthly incarnations. [yellow arrow at the right of the sickle moon.]

Therefore, you should meditate on this picture that I have drawn here, the sickle moon with this arrow; let the mantra unfold, with this picture as the marker for the gradual familiarization with what forcefully comes over from previous earthly existences.

And secondly, the Guardian of the Threshold points with a stronger gesture to what feeling is to the person over there, who we ourselves are, and he admonishes that we are to see this feeling as a dim dream. In fact, we see feeling - which makes the person over there more real than thinking, for thinking is illusion, whereas feeling is half reality - we see the person's feeling enfold in numerous dream-pictures during the day. We learn by observing it that feeling, for the spirit and in the spirit, is dreaming.

But what kind of dreaming is feeling? In this feeling, not only the individual dreams, but within it the whole surrounding world dreams. Our thinking is our own. That's why it's illusion. The world lives in our feeling. The world's existence is within it.

Now we must achieve, to the extent possible, tranquility of heart, the Guardian warns, so that we can extinguish what lives and interweaves as feeling in the dream-pictures, just as dreams are extinguished in deep sleep. Then we can reach the truth of feeling, and we can see human feeling interwoven with the cosmic life that is present in spirit in all our surroundings. And then the real spiritual human being appears to us, who in his body lives at first in his half-existence. The human being appears to us from out of sleeping feeling. We feel ourselves to be on the other side of the threshold, on the other side of the yawning abyss of being, for feeling has fallen asleep and the cosmic creative powers, which live in feeling, have appeared around us.

See in feeling's weaving in the soul,
How in sleep's dim-like dawning
Life streams in from cosmic distance;
Let in sleep through tranquil heart
Human feeling waft away hushed;
And cosmic life spiritualizes
As the human being's power.

[This second part is written on the blackboard.]

II

See in

(Before it was "behind", here it is "in"; all the words in a mantric verse are important.)

feeling's weaving in the soul,

(Before it was "thinking", here "feeling"; there "sensory light", here "weaving in the soul"; "weaving" is much more real than merely semblance of light.)

[In the first part "thinking" and "sensory light", and in the second part "feeling's" are underlined.

*How in sleep's dim-like dawning
Life streams in from cosmic distance;*

(There it was "Willing arises from the body's depths;", here "Life streams in from cosmic distance;")

[In the third line of the first part "Willing" is underlined, and in the second part "Life".]

*Let in sleep through tranquil heart
Human feeling waft away hushed;*

It is enhanced: Here [in the first part] it involved letting flow through the soul's force; here [in the second part] one must waft away human feeling. [the word "waft" is underlined.]

And cosmic life spiritualizes

— here [in the first part] it was the willing that is still in the human being; here it is cosmic

As the human being's power.

— the enhancement relative to cosmic thought's creation. —

[In the first part "cosmic thought's creation" and in the second part "human being's power" are underlined.]

The Guardian of the Threshold indicates to us that we should look back once again at the gray figure that stands over there, which we are ourselves in earthly life, but this time after having turned away, in our minds we turn it around in a circle. We will find, when we rotate the figure, that the sun appears behind it and rotates with it. [It is drawn - left, red]. And we will realize that at the moment we are brought into physical existence from the spiritual world, our etheric body has been compressed from the cosmic ether. Therefore, just as the first verse belongs to this [the drawing of the gray figure and the first verse are numbered "I"], this second verse belongs to this. [The drawing of the red rotating form and the second verse are numbered "II".]

Then the Guardian of the Threshold refers us to our will, which is active in our limbs. And he strongly draws our attention to the fact that whatever relates to the will is in a sleeping state, even when we are awake. He explains how as the thought works downward - I explained it last time, so may say it now -, how as the thought carries warmth downward into our limbs' movement so that it becomes will: this becomes clear in spiritual cognition and spiritual seeing. Normal consciousness hides this when we are sleeping, as it hides life in general during sleep. Now we should observe the will in the limbs as though sunken in deep sleep. The will is asleep. The limbs are asleep. We should see this as a firm mental image. Then, when it is firm, we realize how thinking, the source of willing in earthly man, sinks down into the limbs. Then it becomes light in him. The will becomes bright. It wakes up. When we first see it in its sleeping state, we find that it wakes up when thinking sinks downward and light from below streams upward, which is the force of gravity. Feel the force of gravity in your

legs and arms when you let them relax: that is what streams upward, and which meets with the downward streaming thinking. We observe human will transformed into its reality and thinking appearing as what ignites the will in man in an enchanting, magical way. That is the truly magical effect of thinking on the will. It is magic. Now we become aware of it. The Guardian of the Threshold says:

See above the bodily effects of will,
— in the aura —
How into sleeping fields of activity
Thinking sinks down from head forces;
Let through the soul's vision of light
human will transform itself;
And thinking, it appears
As the magical essence of will.

[This third verse, with underlining, is written on the blackboard.]

III

See above the bodily effects of will,

How into sleeping fields of activity

Thinking sinks down from head forces;

Let through the soul's vision of light

human will transform itself;

And thinking, it appears

As the magical essence of will.

Now we imagine that the Guardian of the Threshold again points to the person over there, who we are ourselves, telling us to look and retain the picture, but not to turn around, but to let this picture sink below the surface of the earth beneath where the figure is standing. We look over there. There stands the one who we ourselves are. We make the picture and develop the strong force to look below, as

though a lake were there and we were looking at this image as now being within the earth, but not as a mirror-image, but as an upright figure. [Draws.]

We imagine this picture: the earth [A white arc is drawn.] belonging to the third verse [This drawing and the third verse are given the number III.] We imagine: how the earth's gravitational forces rise, how the gravitational forces illuminate the limbs, feet and arms [white arrows]. In later observation, we acquire an idea of how gods and humans cooperate between death and a new birth to arrange karma.

That is what the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes us about when he speaks to us for the first time after we have crossed over the yawning abyss of being.

See behind thinking's sensory light,
How in the gloomy spirit-cell
Willing arises from the body's depths;
Let be cast, through your strength of soul,
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;
And willing, it will arise
As cosmic thought's creation.

See in feeling's weaving in the soul,
How in sleep's dim-like dawning
Life streams in from cosmic distance;
Let in sleep through tranquil heart
Human feeling waft away hushed;
And cosmic life spiritualizes
As the human being's power.

See above the bodily effects of will,
How into sleeping fields of activity
Thinking sinks down from head forces;
Let through the soul's vision of light
human will transform itself;
And thinking, it appears
As the magical essence of will.

The circle always closes. We are looking again at the starting point, listening to all the beings and all the processes of the world:

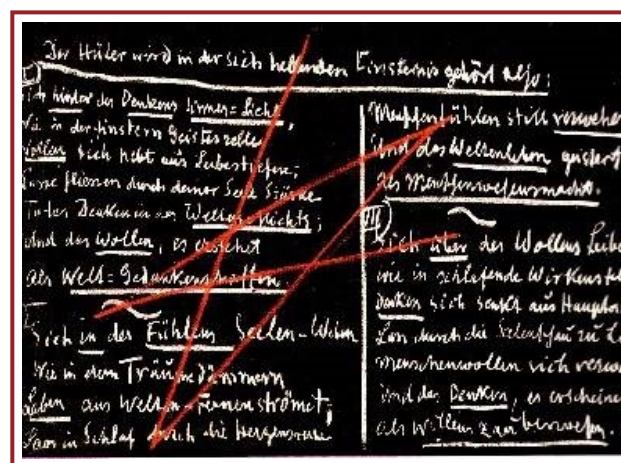
O man, know thyself!
So resounds the Cosmic-Word.
You hear it strong in soul,
You feel it firm in spirit.

Who speaks with such cosmic might?
Who speaks with such depth of heart?

Does it work through distant radiant space
Into your senses' sense of being?
Does it ring through weaving waves of time
Into your life's evolving stream?

It's you yourself who,
In feeling space, in experiencing time,
The Word create, feeling foreign
In space's soulless void,
Because you lose the force of thought
In time's destroying flow.

By this affirmation, Michael is present in this, his rightfully existing
School. His presence is confirmed by his sign, which should loom over
everything given in this School:



[Michael Sign - in red]

It is confirmed by his seal, that he has impressed on the esoteric striving of the Rosicrucian School, and which lives on symbolically in the threefold verse:

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus

And as Michael impresses his seal, the first sentence is spoken with this gesture:

[draws: Image 1, the lower seal gesture, yellow]

The second sentence with this gesture:

[draws: Image 1, the middle seal gesture, yellow]

The third sentence with this gesture:

[draws: Image 1, the upper seal gesture]

The first gesture means:[3]

I esteem the Father

It lives mutely as we say: "Ex deo nascimur".

[lower seal gesture]

The second gesture means:

I love the Son

It lives mutely as we say: "In Christo morimur".

[middle seal gesture]

The third gesture means:

I unite with the Spirit

It lives mutely in the Sign, which is Michael's Seal, as we speak: "Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus".

[upper seal gesture]

Thus, today's Michael affirmation is confirmed by means of his Sign and Seals:

[Michael's Sign]

[spoken with the seal gestures:]

Ex deo nascimur

In Christo morimur

Per spiritum sanctum reviviscimus.

Translator's notes:

[1] It is a fairly common practice in Germany and Switzerland for people who come early to a function to place a paper, notebook, or hat on a chair to reserve their places.

[2] It seems to me, although the editors of the German original say nothing about it, that Rudolf Steiner was being ironic here, that a School member gave the mantra to his unauthorized friend, who then passed it on to others, and that the member then used the "clairvoyant" story as an excuse.

[3] The Michael Sign and Seals: From the stenographic notes of the seven recapitulation lessons, it is not possible to determine when Rudolf Steiner only wrote the words on the blackboard or when he spoke the words and wrote them, or only spoke them.

This was the last Lesson for the Esoteric School. Rudolf Steiner was unable to continue because of illness. He died on March 30, 1925.



An Open Letter to Frank Thomas Smith

January 9, 2017

Source: <https://anthropopper.com/tag/southern-cross-review/>

Dear Frank,

You have asked for comments on your "*Apologia*" for publishing your translations of the lessons of the First Class of the School of Spiritual Science and making them available for anyone to read in your *Southern Cross Review*.

When you first began publishing your translations, I wrote to say that I did not on the whole agree with what you were doing and now that you have completed this very long task, which must have been a labour of love on your part, I would like to add a few more thoughts.

I will refer here to what Steiner himself wrote about the First Class for people who were not members of the School of Spiritual Science. These comments were set out in various letters published between January and June 1924 and originally printed in the News Sheet issued by the Goetheanum. Steiner had very clear guidelines for both how the content of the lessons should be received and also for what was expected of people who wanted to become members of the School. I would like to look at these indications of Steiner's, to see which of them might still apply today.

We could start by looking at what Steiner said were his intentions for the School:

"...what we need is the place which gives what is given nowhere else: namely, that which can guide man into the spiritual world. And that is intended to be the content, in the strictest sense of the word, of the School of Spiritual Science." (Lecture at Dornach, 18th January 1924)

Steiner also gave an outline of the nature of the classes:

"... the aim is to give insight into the experience of the 'threshold' between the sensory and supersensible world. For those who really seek knowledge of the human being it is necessary to understand how everything that 'nature' reveals in the way of beauty, grandeur and nobility cannot lead to the human being. The inner human being, working in the external world, does not have his source in the natural but in the spiritual world. But into the latter the senses and the brain-bound intellect cannot penetrate. These inevitably cease their activity where the human being seeks to engage with the world of his origin. But where this activity ceases the human being initially finds himself incapable of perceiving anything. He gazes into his surroundings and, as though it were 'nothing', the darkness appears to him that is present due to this incapacity. This incapacity can only give way to spirit-beholding capacities as the human being becomes aware of higher forces within himself which form the 'spiritual senses' in the same way that the physical forces of the organism form the body's senses. This depends on a complete transformation of the inner life from one form of existence to the other. In this transformation, a person must not lose the one form of existence before he acquires the other. A proper process of transformation results from the right mode of experience at the 'threshold'. Knowledge of the human being in his true essence is only possible from a perspective beyond the threshold. Someone who wishes to absorb with healthy human reason the communications of a seer that come from the realm beyond the threshold must also have a picture of what the seer experienced at the threshold. He only becomes able to properly judge the supersensible realm when he is also aware of the conditions under which knowledge of this supersensible realm is gained.

One will only be able to give content to the words with which the results of supersensible vision are expressed when one understands what the seer underwent before he acquired the power to form such words. If one does not understand this, it appears as if the words do not

signify supersensible but sensory things – and this leads to confusion. The words become deceptive, and instead of knowledge, illusion arises." (GA260a)

Was Steiner trying to keep these things secret? Definitely not; he said that the Anthroposophical Society is "an absolutely public Society like any other Society...not in the least hedged-in from the outer world...we must not be in the least bit narrow-minded when it comes to the admission of members." When speaking about the relation of the individual member to the Society, he emphasised: "What we may call the teaching and spiritual impulses of this Society can be understood by every one if only he will use his everyday human intelligence...you do not need any kind of initiation or the like."

But Steiner also said that most people "do not like to admit that the spiritual can be clearly seen and understood. Most people have not the necessary courage. They find it comforting to say: 'The spiritual world is that which a man divines but cannot understand – it is the great secret.' Now spiritual science always consists in the unveiling of this secret – so that the secret is made manifest before the world." (30th January 1924)

So from the foregoing, it is clear that Steiner did not wish to prevent anyone from knowing about, or finding access to the spiritual world – quite the contrary. This would seem to accord, Frank, with your desire for openness about the text of the Class lessons. But this does not mean that it was right for people to come to these lessons with no preparation.

On the contrary, he advised that only those people who had been members of the Anthroposophical Society for two years should apply to join the First Class:

"... for two years, one should endeavour to find one's bearings in all that the Anthroposophical Society already contains...Whoever has not been in the Society for two years will not be well advised to enter a Class at once."

Steiner's reasons for saying this seem to have had at least some of their foundations in what he perceived as the necessity for community: "...you must go into the Society, or into its several groups, not merely in order to learn what is there said or even debated, but simply because the human beings are there. You must be able to go there for the sake of human beings...The human being needs the human being." (ibid)

As far as applicants for Class membership were concerned, Steiner addressed those who were involved with what he called 'playing at esotericism' and the creation of cliques: "You find it too difficult to get to grips with the esoteric content of life itself; you find it comfortable to talk about the esoteric. When esotericism passes from mouth to mouth, no matter with what unction, then it is idle esoteric chatter...this among other things does untold harm... Therefore within the Classes, in future, the question of trust and confidence will have to be taken most earnestly. It will be quite invalid for people to say: 'Having been in the Society for two years, I now have a claim to be received into a Class.' " (ibid)

If members of the General Anthroposophical Society (GAS) were inclined to cliquishness and esoteric chatter, then Steiner and the Society leadership reserved the right not to admit them to the Class: "Whoever wishes to gain entry merely for the sake of curiosity, or in the hope of hearing something different in the Classes than he can hear in the General Society, should therefore think again and rather decide not to seek entry...The point is that those who are in the Class should become the true representatives of the anthroposophical cause...The care of the anthroposophical cause will be in the hands of the School...the School of Spiritual Science must consist of those who feel themselves through and through as representatives of the anthroposophical cause." (ibid)

Steiner felt that the GAS provided people with spiritual knowledge, and anyone could become a member of this without taking on further responsibilities. But he also felt that: "...we must have a group of people who penetrate through the exoteric to the esoteric, and this cannot be achieved unless one shoulders definite responsibilities. For if none could be found to take on these responsibilities, then...anthroposophy would not be able to exist...it will be essential

that all members of the Class also state their complete willingness to cultivate anthroposophy in the world and to stand as its representatives." (3rd February 1924)

So, Frank, it seems to me that by publishing on the internet the Class lessons, you have done several things which could be unhelpful:

- You have short-circuited the two-year period of preparation that Steiner thought was necessary and which could be done by joining the Society
- By putting them online, you have taken the Class lessons outside the context of human community which Steiner thought was essential
- You have made the texts available to people who may not be ready for such esoteric concepts and thereby could be "put off"; and by so doing, have perhaps deprived them of an opportunity to benefit from these lessons within the proper and supportive context of a group.
- You have given scoffers and opponents the chance to quote these lessons, which are bound to seem fantastic and absurd to those who have as yet no understanding of the spiritual world from which we all come
- You have given opportunities, specifically warned against by Steiner, for spiritual tourists to engage in esoteric chatter without getting to grips with the esoteric content of life itself.
- The lessons are steeped in esoteric knowledge and require much background preparation from the student. They are not to be read or talked about like stories from a newspaper, or thought about with our everyday kind of thinking. So these texts are not for intellectual or casual reading, but require a certain cast of mind, as well as preparation and commitment, before engaging with them.

Do you still feel that publishing the Class lessons was a good idea, Frank?

Yours sincerely,

Jeremy

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Read & Write



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