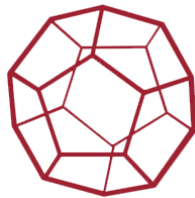


# Secrets of the Threshold

GA 147



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GA 147

by

*Rudolf Steiner*

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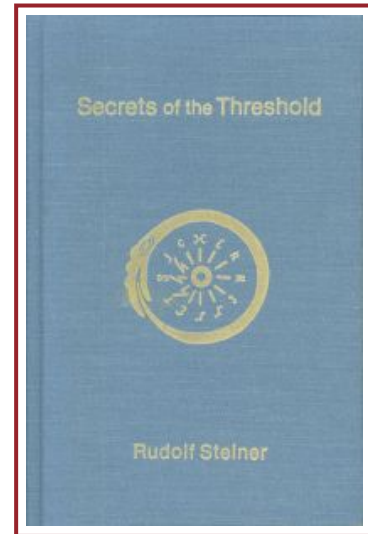
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## Summary

These lectures, given just after the first performance of *The Souls' Awakening*, give details of the experience of spiritual development and the crossing of the threshold of the spiritual world. Steiner says that humanity now stands at this threshold and the keys to crossing are self-knowledge, self-control and a clear recognition of the working of Lucifer and Ahriman. These lectures contain some of Steiner's most significant insights into the path to higher knowledge.



The eight lectures presented here were given between August 24 and August 31 of 1913 in Munich. In the Collected Edition of Rudolf Steiner's works in German, the volume containing the German texts is entitled *Die Geheimnisse der Schwelle* (Vol. 147 in the Bibliographic Survey). They were translated from the German by Ruth Pusch.



## Foreword

This cycle of lectures has had four German editions, in Berlin 1914 (Cycle 29), in Berlin 1930, edited by Adolf Arenson, in Freiburg in 1955 by the Novalis Verlag and in 1982 by the Rudolf Steiner Verlag. The first English translation edited by H. Collison was published in 1928 by Anthroposophical Publishing Co., London and Anthroposophic Press, New York.

Rudolf Steiner gave these lectures twice on the same day, mornings and evenings, in the "Princes' Hall" of the Cafe Luitpold in Munich. The performances of the two Mystery Dramas at the *Volkstheater*s were also given twice. The title of the drama receiving its first performance was given in the program announcements as "The Awakening of Maria and Thomasius (or The Other Side of the Threshold)."

A list of the Munich performances and lecture cycles will be found on the next page. A fifth Mystery Drama was planned for the summer of 1914, and a cycle "Occult Hearing and Occult Reading" would have been given August 18 – 27, but the beginning of World War I prevented any further Munich Festivals. In Dornach four lectures with the title *Occult Reading and Occult Hearing* were given in October, 1914. (Rudolf Steiner Press, 1975).

A word to new readers of Rudolf Steiner seems necessary. As with many of Steiner's lecture cycles a certain familiarity with anthroposophy on the part of the listeners was assumed. This means acquaintance at a minimum with his introductory writings such as *Theosophy* or *Occult Science*. The reader unfamiliar with these works is advised to turn first to these books as a way of increasing his understanding and appreciation of this volume.



# Words of Welcome

24 August 1913, Munich

You have heard, my dear friends, that our Drama Festival had to begin this year with a cancellation. To my great regret we have not been able to give the performance we had intended of *The Soul Guardian* (*La Soeur Gardienne*) by our dear friend Edouard Schuré. Even though there were many good reasons for this postponement, it was especially unfortunate in that just at this time, just in this place, the important message in our friend's work should have been brought before our hearts and souls. This dramatic presentation of the undercurrents and fluctuations in human evolution could have given us a better understanding of the tempestuous happenings of our own day as they come and go. The ordinary intelligence of western Europe, schooled nowadays only at the physical level, is unable to throw light on the deeper substrata of these events.

If you look carefully and ponder the events in eastern Europe, you will find significant issues agitating what one can call the folk souls there. What is happening can only be explained by studying the currents surging below the surface of the physical world into the lives of the peoples. (Two short wars in the Balkan, 1912 – 1913, which prepared the way for World War I in 1914.) It is odd how little understanding of heart and soul the western Europeans — with all their intelligence — bring to the roots deep beneath these convulsive movements.

Because of these immediate happenings, therefore, it would seem to be a hint of destiny to see a drama that brings to the surface such national antagonisms. It would have been fascinating not only as an artistic creation but also as a stimulus to our understanding of present-day happenings. It would have brought before our soul vision two contrasting groups of characters: in one, the impulse from the ancient Celtic folk soul still to be found in western Europe; in the other, the genuine Franco-Roman element. We would have been able to see the waves surging out of occult depths playing into our human world and revealing themselves outwardly in the life of the senses. In Schuré's drama, in fact, we are shown that through certain happenings a falsehood is spreading abroad in the physical world, in such a way that relationships among the characters give expression to this untruth. Then — as if from unfathomed depths of soul life (in this

case, from what is alive in the secrets of the blood) — a certain amount of truth pours into the false relationships of the sense world. The drama would have brought all this before our inner eye. It is indeed important in our time to let such things work on our hearts, for the force of national feelings lying below the surface is erupting before us right now here in Europe, and these feelings and forces cannot be understood unless we turn our soul vision upon them.

There is little difference, basically, in these outer happenings today from those that were agitating the hearts and minds of the peoples of eastern and southeastern Europe many centuries ago and are even now erupting fatefully into external life. One can say that destiny is being carried out imperceptibly for the outside world, a destiny connected with something that is only a symptom on the physical plane and can be expressed in four syllables. The seeds for what is now manifesting itself so fatefully were sown when that famous, much disputed *filioque* controversy, inflaming the emotions of the European peoples, divided them into a separate East and West. How can our modern mentality nowadays understand the contention that led to the division of eastern and western Europe: whether what is known as the Holy Spirit originates from the Father God above, as the Eastern church has it, or originates from both Father and Son (*filio*), as the West maintains?

There were valid reasons for the West at that time to *add filioque* to the origin of the Holy Spirit from the Father; involved in this were all the forces of culture and civilization developing for the future of Europe. The theological quarrels arising out of this Credo need not concern us here. Of importance are the soul events expressing themselves once upon a time in such a way that the former unified faith was divided between those who said that the Spirit comes from the Father and the Son, while others believed that the Spirit originates only from the Father.

That statement expresses what is working into our own time, bubbling and boiling under the surface, something that can be understood only when you venture a little way into the mysterious activity in the occult depths of the folk souls. At the moment that the dogma of the Spirit emanating from both the Father and the Son was enforced by the Carolingian sword — for it was not the papal church but the imperial power that was effective — at that moment the ground was laid within European culture for all those powerful, emotional waves we see surging upward today.

If we could have immersed ourselves in Schuré's drama, quite a few rays of light would have illuminated present happenings. The reason for postponing it was the otherwise happy circumstance that so many applications came in for *The Guardian of the Threshold* and *The Soul's Awakening*, the title of our latest play, that many friends would have had to be turned away if we had kept to the original program. It might have been possible to keep to it; everything was ready: the scenery was all finished, every costume was made — so that if the situation just described had not arisen, this third play could have been performed. But then a number of our friends would have had to be turned away from the festival, and it is naturally more fitting to postpone one of the dramas than to exclude from the events any of those who wish to be present.

What we would have gained from a performance of *The Soul Guardian* lies in the fact that it is the work of our highly esteemed friend, Edouard Schuré. When we hear this name, we should realize that through Schuré's book *The Great Initiates (Les Grands Initiés)* and his other work, he has been in a sense the first standard-bearer of the western esotericism to which we have resolved to devote ourselves. Again and again, we should remember the influence that Edouard Schuré has had on our present-day culture and for the future of human development. Therefore not only do I wish from the depths of my heart but also from the hearts of all those friends assembled here to express our great joy in having Edouard Schuré here among us again for this Munich lecture and drama festival. He will be present at the morning lectures as well as on those occasions when we are all together; you will happily find yourselves then in the presence of the man whose lofty spirit, whose insight into esoteric relationships led him from inner conviction to place himself at our side again during the battle we have recently been saddled with, (Struggles in the Theosophical Society.) as you all know, a battle that we did not seek but that was thrust upon us. The close bond with Edouard Schuré was shown us, too, by his frank letter, (To Charles Bleck, President of the Theosophical Society in France, March 1, 1913, announcing Schuré's resignation from the Society which had offered him honorary membership in 1907.) which has been frequently printed also in our "Mittellungen" and in our friend Eugene Levy's excellent booklet *Mrs. Annie Besant and the Crisis in the Theosophical Society*. He stood with us in the struggle that has thrown significant rays of light on where the truth and where an enmity against the truth (for it must be called this) are to be found in connection with our endeavors.



It is altogether typical of the other side that after all this time they have decided to withdraw their senseless accusations of my being a Jesuit, but you can't help noticing their deep-seated reluctance and their desire to draw a veil over this admission. They couldn't accomplish this, however, without adding what one can well call an insulting disparagement of the contents of Edouard Schuré's public letter, written out of his earnest sense for truth. The difficulties of bringing about this Munich Festival, never in any case an easy task, have been increased by the strife thrust upon us (which we will not go into any further), strife that has cost us so much labor and thought and which was truly unnecessary, just as it is unnecessary to continue it.

It would be important now to note briefly for our friends what has been done to bring out the truth. Besides the letter just mentioned and our friend Levy's excellent book that can now be had also in German, I will mention the brochures by Dr. Unger, Frau Wolfram, Herr Walther, to be available with other books at the book table, writing truly wrong from our friends who undoubtedly had something better to do than to enter into an unnecessary battle for the truth. Therefore, for their sake, it is important for the pamphlets not only to be written but also to be *read*. The time will come, too, when those of our friends who are serious about the truth will have to know what has been happening, un-edifying as the knowledge may be. It is clear that all this has been holding up our work in Munich very badly.

When I come now to speak about this work — as I should like to do again this year — the following must be said: for the people carrying out backstage all the difficult, nerve-racking jobs for this festival, the canceling of one of the dramas did not make their tasks a whit easier. Since the organization as a whole had to be overturned, the work not only was not lessened but was decidedly increased. Therefore please don't assume that with the omission of one of the plays, the burden of the preparations will have been made lighter, for just this main part of the organization, under Fraulein Stinde and Grafen Kalkreuth and their assistants, was considerably more difficult.

This year too I feel the need to point wholeheartedly to the devoted, selfless way in which such a large group of our friends has dedicated itself to bringing about this Munich gathering of ours. It could never take place without the dedication of so many of our friends. This year, as in the past, preparations had to begin in June. Our crew of artists, the gentlemen Linde, Hass and Volckert, had again to devote an enormous amount of

time to the work, which they delivered, as mentioned before, completely finished; with them, a whole troop of faithful individuals were busy, working quietly behind the scenes even before the scenery came into being. It is wonderful indeed and will ever and again be a wonder to encounter so much self-sacrifice in this work. To mention a typical example: one of our friends who was asked to undertake two important parts, one in *The Guardian of the Threshold* and *The Soul's Awakening*, the other in the Schuré drama, didn't really know whether his strength would hold out through the many necessary rehearsals of the three plays and yet he cheerfully took on the task. All these things bear witness to the selfless dedication that has been growing in a wide circle of friends in our Anthroposophical Society. All those who had to begin their tasks so early, the artist-painters, also Fraulein von Eckhardtstein in charge of the costumes, have been at it since June. The people taking part in the performances are at work the whole day, so that they can hardly undertake anything else. They will forgive me for not naming them all, for they are well known to our friends in the Anthroposophical Society. In view of the long, long list that I would have to read off, they will not be offended if this year again I speak in general about those who have contributed their help. I must say that my heart is overwhelmed with gratitude to them, as are the hearts of each one of you, I am sure, who have been able to enjoy what our friends have prepared for this Munich festival.

Even though to some extent our enemies are springing up on every side, we can also see how our work and our efforts are received ever more widely. Many friends have been attracted by what one can call a new branch of our endeavors, consisting of expressive gesture, expressive movement carried out with beauty and dignity, something one has usually termed art of the dance. A few of you have had the chance to discover what has been shown here as *eurythmy* and there will be a further opportunity, for at one of our social gatherings this week we want to show our friends something more of this branch of our activity. (See Rudolf Steiner, *An Introduction to Eurythmy* (Spring Valley, Anthroposophic Press, 1984).)

This, dear friends, is in substance what I had to say in a personal way before beginning our lecture cycle.



# Lecture I

24 August 1913, Munich

If you will think back to the dramatic scenes we have had before us these last few days, you will find that they lead into what we will consider in this lecture cycle. First of all, I would like to call to mind Scenes Nine, Ten and Thirteen of *The Souls' Awakening*. These are scenes whose effect one could call simple and straightforward. After the happenings in the Spirit Realm (Scenes Five and Six) and the Egyptian initiation (Scenes Seven and Eight), some people might have expected a much more forceful sequel coming before their eyes of soul, more tragic, perhaps, or more emphatic in speech, not just a subsiding into inner quietness. However, anything formed differently in Scenes Nine, Ten, and Thirteen would appear untruthful to the occult eye.

We see on stage various developments of soul. It should be said immediately that we have also given theoretical descriptions of the development into higher worlds, and these contain points of reference for every person on his or her path towards the spiritual world. Nevertheless, soul development is necessarily different for each one, according to his own special nature, character, temperament and circumstances. We can therefore gain a deeper understanding of an esoteric soul development only when we observe its diversity: how differently it takes place in Maria, how differently in Johannes Thomasius, how differently in the other characters of the drama.

Scene Nine is first of all directed to that psychological moment when the consciousness breaks into Maria's soul of the experiences that had penetrated to her very core but not altogether consciously during the devachanic (Devachan, devachanic (Sanskrit, deva-divine being) The spirit world. In *An Outline of Occult Science* Steiner describes it as "The manifestation of the Spirit World in its fullness.") time before birth and in the ancient Egyptian initiation. In what was presented to us as "Spirit Realm," we are concerned with soul experiences between death at the end of a medieval incarnation and birth into our present time. The events of all four Mystery Dramas, with the exception of the episode in *The Souls' Probation* that represents the spiritual review of his previous life by Capesius, take place at the present time, a time linked to the spiritual past spent in Devachan,

between the death of the various characters after their incarnation in the Middle Ages (this being the content of the episode mentioned) and their present life.

The experiences of the devachanic period differ according to the preparation our souls have made on earth. It must be understood that it is a significant experience when a soul can go through what is called the Cosmic Midnight with consciousness. Souls that are not prepared for it will sleep through that part of the time called the Saturn period of Devachan (one can designate the successive periods a soul undergoes between death and a new birth as connected with the various planets: Sun, Mars, Mercury periods, and so on). Many souls sleep through the whole Cosmic Midnight. Souls that have been prepared are awake in this period of their spiritual life, but there is no guarantee that souls so prepared will also bring a clear memory of this experience into their life on earth when they come back into physical existence.

Maria and Johannes were well prepared for the experience of the Cosmic Midnight during their time in the spirit between death and new birth. Nevertheless a kind of soul darkness prevailed at the beginning of their earth lives, continuing over long periods of time and shrouding the experience of the Cosmic Midnight; then at a later stage of their present life, this rose to the surface. It reappeared only when a certain inner calmness and resolution of soul was reached. Significant and profound are the experiences of the Cosmic Midnight when the soul is awake to them. The earthly memory of all this must come as a calm inner experience, a luminous inner experience, for the effect of such a perception of the Cosmic Midnight is this: what formerly was only subjective, working inwardly as soul force, now appears as a living being or beings before the soul. As shown in Scene Nine of *The Souls' Awakening* it presents itself before Maria in the forms of Astrid and Luna as real beings. To Johannes Thomasius the Other Philia becomes a living being of the spiritual world, and to Capesius, Philia, in Scene Thirteen. These characters had to learn to feel perceptively that what before this were only abstract forces within themselves now could appear to them in a spiritually tangible form.

What comes to souls spiritually tangible as genuine self-knowledge has to appear in complete soul quietness, the result of meditation: this is essential if such happenings are to be experienced in the true sense of the word for genuine strengthening of the soul. If a person wanted to experience the Cosmic Midnight as retrospective memory or to experience what is shown as the Egyptian initiation not in the clear light of meditation but as intense

tragedy, he would not be able to experience them at all. For the spiritual happening that is taking place in the soul would place itself like a dark veil before it, so that any impressions recede from observation. A soul that has experienced the Cosmic Midnight and in its deepest core received a momentous impression of the kind shown in Scenes Seven and Eight of *The Souls' Awakening* can remember the past happening only when the soul in completely lucid calmness can perceive thoughts approaching, thoughts about earlier experiences in the spiritual life or in the former earth life. This is what is expressed in the words at the beginning of Scene Nine:

---

*A star of soul ... there ... at the spirit shore ...  
it draws near ... nears in spirit brightness ...  
my Self it brings... and nearing,  
its light gains strength ... gains calmness too.  
You star within the circuit of my spirit ... what,  
approaching, shines on my beholding soul?*

*(Rudolf Steiner, The Souls' Awakening, contained in Four Mystery Dramas, (Vancouver, Steiner Book Centre, 1978).)*

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Only when the soul is in this calm mood, so that the experience does not whirl in upon it with tragic vehemence, can one feel the arising memory of the Cosmic Midnight and the experiences of the previous incarnation as occultly true. When it is experienced and lived through, the Cosmic Midnight has a profound significance for a person's emotional life. There one lives through what can only be expressed as follows: In the Cosmic Midnight things are experienced that he hidden deep, deep down under the surface, not only of the sense world but also under the surface of the various worlds to which a dawning clairvoyance can lead. The sense world recedes, and also there recedes from clairvoyant vision in some of those who have already been able to discern various layers below the sense world, what we may call (and we will speak of it at length later on) — the *Necessities* in cosmic events. The Necessities are rooted in the foundations of things, where also the deepest part of the human soul rests. This, however, evades the physical gaze and also the dawning clairvoyant gaze, revealing itself to the latter only when something is experienced like the Saturn period scenes. One may therefore say that to such a clairvoyant gaze, which indeed must first appear between death and a new birth, it is

as if lightning flashes were crossing the soul's whole field of vision, lightning whose terrifying brilliance was illumining the Cosmic Necessities, which at the same time were themselves so blindingly bright that the cognitive gaze dies away in the radiant light. Then from this expiring glance of cognition there come forth picture forms that enweave themselves into the cosmic web like the forms from which grow the destinies of the cosmic beings. One discovers in the foundations of the Necessities the fundamental causes of human destinies and those of other beings, but only when one gazes with glances of cognition that die away in the knowing, destroyed by the lightning flashes; they then remodel themselves as if into forms that have died but that live on as the impulses of destiny in life.

All that a true self-knowledge can discover in itself — not the self-knowledge so bandied about in Theosophical ranks but the highly serious self-knowledge that comes to pass in the course of esoteric life (Theosophical Society: The German section of the Theosophical Society, headed by Rudolf Steiner until 1912, diverged from the beginning from the rest of the Theosophical Society which was headed by Annie Besant. In 1912, the German section broke away and the Anthroposophical Society was founded.) — all that a soul can perceive within itself, with all the imperfections it has to ascribe to itself, all this is heard at the cosmic midnight as if enwoven into rolling cosmic thunder, rumbling in the underground of existence.

All these experiences may take place with great anguish and solemn resolve between death and a new birth as an awakening at the Cosmic Midnight. If the soul is mature enough to allow the consciousness of this to enter the physical sense world, it must happen in the quiet clarity of the meditative mood hinted at by Maria at the beginning of Scene Nine. What, however, the soul has perceived within its spiritual life must have preceded this, as if something of itself, something belonging intimately to itself but not always dwelling in what one can call the Self, had approached from world distances. The mood in which something in the spirit world approaches one like a part of oneself, yet as though coming from far away: this was attempted in the words Maria speaks in the Spirit Realm (Scene Six):

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*The flames are nearing — nearing with my thinking  
from distant cosmic soul-shores of my being. —  
A heated battle nears — and my own thinking  
must battle with the thoughts of Lucifer;*

*within another soul my thinking fights. —  
Hot light is wafted — out of fierce dark coldness. —  
It flashes lightnings, this hot light of soul —  
the light of soul — in cosmic fields of ice —*

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The memory of the experience that can be expressed in such words as this can be rendered again in the words of Maria mentioned above at the beginning of Scene Nine ("A star of soul ..."). What, however, the soul has to feel in order to have such a memory of the Cosmic Midnight must also lie in one's earth life, for here the human soul goes through events which bring to it the moods of inner anguish, inner resolve, inner dread, that one can only express in such words given to Maria to speak at the end of Scene Four. Indeed, one has to have felt that the individual self tears itself away from what one generally calls the inner life; that the power of thinking, with which one feels so confidently connected in life, tears itself out of the inner being and seems to go off towards the far, far limits of one's field of vision; and one must have found alive in oneself as soul presence what is expressed in such words — though naturally these will seem complete nonsense, overflowing with contradictions, to the sort of comprehension limited to the external senses and tied to the brain. One must first have experienced the feeling of one's own self moving away, of one's thinking moving away, if one is to live through again in complete calm the memory of the Cosmic Midnight. The memory during earth life must be preceded by the experience of the Cosmic Midnight in the spiritual life, if what is in Scene Nine should take place.

To make this possible, however, there must again have been the soul mood expressed at the end of Scene Four. The flames do in truth take flight; they do not come earlier into earthly consciousness; they do not approach the calm of meditation, before they have first fled away, until this soul mood has become a truth:

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*The flames are fleeing ... fleeing with my thinking;*

*-----  
And there at distant cosmic shores of soul  
a furious battle ... my own thinking fights ...  
at flowing nothingness — cold spirit light ...  
my thinking wavers, reels ... cold light ...  
it strikes out of my thinking flaming waves of darkness ...*

*what now emerges from the fierce, dark heat?  
in red flames storms my Self ... into the light ...  
into cold light ... of cosmic fields of ice.*

---

These things are linked together; their being connected in this way strengthens the inner soul faculties. What at first was only an abstract soul force now steps before the soul in a spiritual body, so that in one sense it is a special entity, on the other hand it belongs to one's self, as Astrid and Luna appear to Maria. These beings, who are real and at the same time perceived as soul forces, appear in such a way that they can stand on stage with the Guardian of the Threshold and with Benedictus as they do in Scene Nine. The most important thing is to sense the mood of this scene so that in a quite different, individual manner, when the inner soul force corresponding to the Other Philia takes on bodily form, an awakening takes place, that is, the memory of the Cosmic Midnight and of the ancient Egyptian time in Johannes Thomasius. To such a finely attuned soul as Johannes Thomasius the words of the Other Philia: "Enchanted weaving of your own being..." have a special meaning, as well as what is connected with them during the rest of the Mystery Drama. Because of this, the Spirit of Johannes' Youth, Benedictus and Lucifer appear as they do at the end of Scene Ten. It is important to bring before the mind's eye in just this scene how Lucifer approaches Johannes Thomasius and the same words are spoken that were heard at the end of Scene Three in *The Guardian of the Threshold*. In these words one discovers how the battle Lucifer wages moves through all the worlds and through every human life, and one also discovers the mood that resounds out of the words of Benedictus in answer to Lucifer. Try to feel what lies in these words which sound from Lucifer both in *The Guardian of the Threshold* at the end of Scene Three and in *The Souls' Awakening* at the end of Scene Ten:

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*Lucifer: I mean to fight.  
Benedictus: And fighting serve the gods.*

---

Let us note very carefully something else at this point, that although the same words are spoken in these two places, they can be spoken so that in each place they mean something quite different. What they mean at the end of Scene Ten of *The Souls' Awakening* is determined by the fact that



the preceding words of Maria are transformed from words spoken in *The Guardian of the Threshold*, while in Maria's soul there lives what she had spoken:

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*Maria, as you have desired to see her,  
does not exist in worlds of radiant truth.  
My holy, solemn vow rays forth new strength  
to hold for you what you have gained.*

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She says now:

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*You'll find me in bright fields of light ...*

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She no longer says:

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*And you will find me in cold fields of ice ...*

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but

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*You'll find me in bright fields of light  
where glowing beauty brings forth powers of life.  
Seek me in grounds of worlds where souls  
must struggle to achieve their feeling for the gods  
through love, which in the All beholds the Self.*

---

The words are turned around from what they are in Scene Two of *The Souls' Awakening*. It is through this that the dialogue between Lucifer and Benedictus at the end of Scene Ten: "*I mean to fight*" — "*And fighting serve the gods,*" becomes entirely different from what it was at the end of Scene Three in *The Guardian of the Threshold*. In understanding this, light is shed on something of an ahrimanic thrust, one can say, that prevails in all intellectual thinking, in the whole intellectual culture of today.

It is one of the most difficult things for people with this superficial faculty of intellect in our modern culture to realize that the same words in a different context mean something different. Modern civilization is such that people think that the words they use — in so far as they have been coined on the physical plane — must always mean the same thing. Here we have precisely the place where Ahriman has people most firmly by the throat, and where he hinders them from understanding that words only become living in their deepest sense when one looks at them in the connection in which they are uttered. Nothing that reaches out beyond the physical plane can be understood if one does not keep this occult fact in mind. It is especially important today that an occult fact of this kind should work upon our hearts and souls as a counterbalance to the external intellectual life that has taken firm hold of every human being.

Among the many things that have to be considered in these Mystery Dramas, notice how indeed in *The Souls' Awakening* the remarkable figure of Ahriman steals in quietly at first, (*The Souls' Awakening*, Scene 3.) how it seems to insinuate itself among the other characters and how it continually gains in significance towards the end of the drama. I shall endeavor to bring out for you a special piece of writing about Lucifer and Ahriman, and other things as well, entitled *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*; (Rudolf Steiner, *A Road to Self-Knowledge* and *The Threshold Of The Spiritual World* (London, Rudolf Steiner Press, 1975).) it will be on hand during this lecture course, for these seem to me the subjects particularly necessary to illumine for our friends at this time. It is not easy to get a clear understanding of such figures as Ahriman and Lucifer. Perhaps it may be useful for some of you to observe how precisely in *The Souls' Awakening* he who is not quite in a fog about the ahrimanic element in the world may be able to think of things which someone else through unconscious ahrimanic impulses may be thinking, too, but in a different frame of mind. There will be many among you, dear friends, who can enter into all the circumstances which stream into such words as those expressed by Ahriman while he is insinuating himself among the various persons:

---

*Do not permit him to confuse you quite.  
He guards the threshold faithfully indeed,  
although he shows himself in borrowed clothes  
which you have patched together in your mind  
from odds and ends that look like melodrama.  
You as an artist could, of course, avoid*

*producing him in such a wretched style,  
though later you will surely do it better.  
But even his distorted image serves.  
It does not need too much of emphasis  
to show you what his present stature is.  
You should take notes of how the Guardian speaks:  
too mournful is his tone, too much of pathos. —  
Forbid him this, and he will show to you  
from whom today he borrows to excess.*

*(The Souls' Awakening, Scene 13.)*

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I can imagine that many people — from some aesthetic point of view or other — will shake their heads at the way these Mystery Dramas are put before us. My dear friends, these objections as well as others raised against anthroposophy can be set aside by those who put themselves in the mood of Ahriman. The hypercritical people of our time who denounce anthroposophy certainly belong to those described by the poet: "The devil's never noticed by some folk, even when he has them by the neck!" We can judge these opponents of anthroposophy a bit by what Ahriman is saying here while he prowls around. He meets us in his more serious form when the death of Strader gradually plays into the events presented in the drama; it comes about then that the forces flowing out of this death must be sought by soul vision in the effect they have on everything else that happens in *The Souls' Awakening*.

It must be said again and again that this awakening takes place in different ways. For Maria it happens that, through special circumstances, the soul forces that find their bodily-spiritual expression in Luna and Astrid appear before her soul. For Johannes Thomasius it takes place when he experiences in himself the enchanted weaving of his inner being, on the Other Philia's appearance in a spiritually palpable form, if one may use such an absurd expression. For Capesius it happens through Philia in a still different way. In many other forms this awakening can gradually dawn upon souls, for instance, as we see it dawn upon Strader in Scene Eleven. Here we do not meet what we have just described as the spiritually tangible forms of Luna, Philia, Astrid and the Other Philia; we have the still imaginative pictures that radiate spiritual experiences into the physical

consciousness. This stage of the awakening of the soul that takes place in Strader can be represented only by such an imaginative perception as the image of the ship in Scene Eleven.

In yet another form can the awakening of the soul gradually prepare itself. You will find this, carefully planned, after Ahriman has been shown in his deeper significance in Scene Twelve: it is hinted at in Scene Thirteen in the conversation between Hilary and Romanus. Let your mind's eye rest on what has been happening in Hilary's soul between the events in *The Guardian of the Threshold* and those of *The Souls' Awakening*, expressed in these words of Hilary:

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*My friend, I thank you for these occult words.  
I've heard them often; for the first time now  
I feel the secret meaning they contain.  
The cosmic ways are hard to penetrate.  
And I, dear friend, am called upon to wait  
until the spirit shows me the direction  
which is in keeping with my spirit sight.*

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What are the words Romanus had spoken? (Rudolf Steiner, *The Probation of the Soul*, contained in *Four Mystery Dramas*.) They are words that Hilary has heard again and again from the place where Romanus stands in the Temple, words that Romanus has so often spoken at this place, yet until this experience, they had passed before the inner vision of Hilary without the deeper understanding one can call understanding of life. It is also a bit of soul awakening for someone to wrestle his way to an understanding of what he has taken in as thought-forms, grasping them pretty well and even lecturing about them but still without having a living, vital understanding. He may have absorbed everything of anthroposophy contained in books, lectures and cycles, may have even imparted it to others, perhaps to their great benefit, and yet discover this: to understand as now Hilary understands the words of Romanus is only possible after a certain experience for which he must calmly wait. This is a definite stage of the awakening of the soul.

O if only a good number of our friends could put themselves into this mood of waiting! If only they could adopt this frame of mind, of awaiting the approach of something whose description in advance both as theories

and explanations has apparently been clear enough and yet misunderstood — then something would take place in their souls that is expressed by Strader's words in Scene Three of *The Souls' Awakening*. Strader stands there between Felix Balde and Capesius, stands there in a remarkable way — he stands there so that literally he hears every word they say and could repeat it, and yet he cannot understand it. He knows what it is, can even consider it to be wisdom, but now he notices that there is something that can be expressed in the words:

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*Capesius and Felix, both ... to me ...  
conceal dark meaning in transparent words ...*

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Our supremely clever people today will perhaps concede that by chance this or that person can hide meaning — clear meaning — in obscure words. However, it will not easily be granted by these clever people that an obscure meaning can be hidden in clear words. Nevertheless for human nature to concede that in clear words an obscure meaning may be hidden is of the two the higher acknowledgment. Many sciences are clear, as are many philosophies, but something important would happen for the further evolution of mankind if philosophers would finally confess that — although in all philosophical systems they had certainly produced stuff that was clear and ever clearer, so that anyone could say, "These things are clear!" — yet there may be in clear words an obscure meaning. Something important would take place if the many people who think themselves supremely clever, reckoning what they know to be wisdom (and to some degree rightly so), if they could only place themselves before the world as Strader places himself between Felix Balde and Capesius and learn to say:

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*I often understood — what you are saying; —  
I took it then for wisdom; — but no word  
of what you say has meaning for me now.  
Capesius and Felix, both — to me —  
conceal dark meaning in transparent words.*

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Just imagine some modern philosopher or one from the past, who has brought together in his own way a plausible clear system of philosophy, and who will take a stand by the side of his philosophy (which is of course in its own way the result of all human thought), saying, "I've usually found this comprehensible. Everything I've written I've taken for wisdom — and yet not a single word in all these phrases can I understand. Even in those I wrote myself, much of it is incomprehensible: these pronouncements seem to hide a dark meaning in clear words."

Well, one cannot easily imagine such a confession coming from one of our recent or slightly older philosophers, nor from one of the highly clever men of our materialistic, or as it's called in more grandiose style, our monistic age either. And yet it would be a blessing for our present life if people could assume the attitude towards the thoughts and other cultural achievements that Strader assumed towards Felix Balde and Capesius. If only such people might become more and more numerous, and if only anthroposophy could in very truth contribute something directly to this *self-knowledge!*



## Lecture II

*25 August 1913, Munich*

You will have seen that the soul experiences of those who appear in *The Souls' Awakening* take place on the boundary between the physical sense world and the super-sensible spiritual worlds. It is of great significance to the science of the spirit to seize this border region with the inner eye, for it is only natural that at first everything of the super-sensible world that the human soul can experience is an unknown territory from the viewpoint of our faculties and soul experiences in the physical sense world.

When a person has become familiar with the spiritual world by means of the various methods we have apprehended, that is, when the soul has learned to observe, explore and perceive outside the physical body, then such existence and perception in the spiritual world makes it necessary for the soul to develop quite special capacities, special strengths. When during its earth existence the soul is striving towards clairvoyant consciousness, whether already clairvoyant or wishing to become so, it should of course be able to stay outside the body in the spiritual world and then as an earth being come back again into the physical body, living as a human earth person, a normal sense-being within the sense world.

We may therefore say that the soul in becoming clairvoyant must be able to move in the spiritual world according to its laws, and it must ever and again be able to step back over the threshold into the physical sense world, behaving here — to put it in plain terms — correctly and sensibly. Since the faculties of the soul for the spiritual world must be and are different from those the soul employs for the physical senses and the rest of the physical body, the soul has definitely to acquire mobility, if it wants to become clairvoyant. Then it can perceive and take in the spiritual world with the necessary faculties for it, returning across the border and now experiencing the sense world with what is necessary here. The gaining of this adaptability, the capacity of transformation, is never easy. If we are to estimate correctly, however, the differences between the spiritual and physical sense world, we must keep clearly within our mind's eye precisely this border region between the two worlds and the threshold itself over which the soul must pass when it wants to leave one world and enter the other. We shall see in the course of these lectures how injurious it can be

for the soul in many different ways to carry the habits of one world into the other, when — in one or the other direction — the threshold has to be crossed.

Our conduct when passing over this threshold is made especially difficult by the presence of beings within the world order that play a certain role in the happenings shown in *The Souls' Awakening* and the other dramas: the luciferic and the ahrimanic beings. Indeed, in order to gain the right relationship to the transition between one and the other world that we've been speaking about, it is necessary to know how to conduct ourselves in the right way towards both kinds of beings, the luciferic and the ahrimanic. Now it would certainly be convenient — and this solution is chosen at least theoretically by very many souls — to say: "Yes, indeed, Ahriman seems to be a dangerous fellow. If he has such an influence on the world and on human affairs, the simplest thing to do is to banish from the human soul all the impulses that come from him." This might seem to be the most convenient solution, but to the spiritual world it would be about as sensible as if someone, in order to restore the balance to a pair of scales, were to take off whatever was weighing down the lower one. These beings we call Ahriman and Lucifer are right here in the world, they have their task in the universal order, and one cannot sweep them away. Besides, it is not a question of annihilating them, but — as in the case of the weights on both sides of the scales — the ahrimanic and luciferic forces must balance each other in their influence on human beings and on other beings. We do not bring about the true activity of any of the various forces by removing it but by placing ourselves in the right relationship to it. We have the wrong attitude to these luciferic and ahrimanic beings if we simply say that they are bad and harmful. Although these powers rebel in a certain sense against the general order of the universe — which had already been designed before they entered it — this does not stem from the fact that they invariably have to exercise a harmful activity, but rather that — like the others whom we have met as lawful members of the higher worlds — they have a definite sphere of activity in the sum total of the universe. Their opposition to and rebellion against the cosmic order consists in their going beyond their own sphere; they exert beyond this sphere the forces they should employ only within their lawful domain. From this standpoint let us consider Ahriman or the ahrimanic beings.

We can best characterize Ahriman by saying: he is the Lord of Death, far and wide the ruler of all the powers that have to bring about in the physical sense world what this world has to have, the annihilation and death of its entities. Death in the sense world is a necessary part of its



organization, for otherwise the beings in it would accumulate to excess, if destruction of life were not at hand. The task of regulating this in a lawful way fell to Ahriman from the spiritual world; he is the ruler of the ordering of death. His sovereign domain is the mineral world, a world that is utterly dead. One can say that death is poured out over the whole of the mineral world. Furthermore, because our earth world is constituted as it is, the mineral world and its laws pervade all the other kingdoms of nature. Plants, animals, human beings — all are permeated, as far as they belong to the earth, by the mineral; they absorb the mineral substances and, with them, all the forces and laws of the mineral kingdom; they are subject to these laws insofar as they are part of the being of the earth. Therefore whatever belongs justifiably to death extends also into the higher regions of the lawful rule of Ahriman. In what surrounds us as external nature, Ahriman is the rightful Lord of Death and should not be regarded as an evil power but as one whose influence in the general world order is fully legitimate. We will enter into a right relationship with the sense world only when we bring a creditable interest to bear upon it, when our interest in the sense world is so reasonable that we can see everything in it without greedily demanding eternal life for any of its physical forms; on the contrary, that we can do without them when they meet their natural death. To be able to rejoice rightly in the things of the sense world but not to be so dependent on them as to contradict the laws of death and decay — this is the right relationship of the human being to the sense world. To bring about this right relationship to growth and decay, the human being has the impulses of Ahriman within himself; for this reason they pulsate in him.

Ahriman, however, can overstep his bounds. In the first place, he can so far overdo that he sets to work on human thinking. A man who does not see into the spiritual world and has no understanding of it will not believe that Ahriman can put his fingers upon human thinking in a very real way — nevertheless, he does! Insofar as human thinking lives in the sense world, it is bound to the brain, which according to universal law is subject to decay. Ahriman has to regulate the passage of the human brain towards decay, but when he oversteps his territory, he develops the tendency to loosen this human thinking from its mortal instrument, the brain, in order to make it independent. He tries to detach the physical thinking directed to the sense world from the physical brain, into whose current of decay this thinking should merge when the human being passes through the gate of death. Ahriman has the tendency, when he admits man as a physical being into the stream of death, to snatch his thinking out of the current of decay. Throughout a man's whole life Ahriman is always fastening his claws into

this thinking activity and working on the human being so that his thinking will tear itself away from destruction. Because Ahriman is active in this way in human thinking and because men bound to the sense world naturally perceive only the effects of the spiritual beings, those who are thus in the clutches of Ahriman feel the impulse to wrench their thinking out of its place in the great cosmic order. The result is the materialistic frame of mind; this is the reason men want to apply their thinking only to the sense world, and the people who refuse to believe in a spiritual world are the ones particularly obsessed by Ahriman: it is he who enters their thinking and prevails upon its remaining in the sense world. First of all, if a person has not become a practical occultist, the result for his inner attitude will be that he becomes a rank, coarse-grained materialist who wants to know nothing about spiritual matters. It is Ahriman who has enticed him into this, only he doesn't notice it. For Ahriman, however, the process is the following: when he succeeds in severing the physical thinking from its brain-bound foundation, he throws shadows and phantoms out into the world which swarm then through the physical world; with these, Ahriman is continually trying to establish a special ahrimanic kingdom.

Unremittingly he lies in wait when man's thinking is about to pass into the stream wherein man himself will journey through the gate of death; there Ahriman lurks, on the watch to snatch away and hold back as much of this thinking as possible, and to form out of it, to tear from its mother-soil, shadows and phantoms that will people the physical world. Occultly observed, these phantoms drift around in the physical world disturbing the universal order; they are creations that Ahriman brings about in the way just described. We will have the right feeling for Ahriman when we appreciate his lawful impulses, for when he lets them enter our souls, we have a correct relationship to the sense world. However, we must be watchful that he does not tempt us in the way I have indicated. Certainly the policy some people choose is more convenient when they say: "Very well, we shall push every ahrimanic impulse out of our souls." But nothing will be accomplished with this dislodgment except that the other side of the scales will be brought right down — and whoever through mistaken theories succeeds in driving ahrimanic impulses out of his soul falls prey to those of Lucifer.

This shows itself particularly when people, shying away from the right relationship to the ahrimanic powers, despise the sense world and root out their joy in it. Then they reject their former good relationship and in order not to become attached to it, they crush all their interest in the physical world. With this comes a *false* asceticism, which in its turn offers the most

powerful handle to the entrance of the unlawful luciferic impulses. The history of asceticism could very well be written by presenting it as a continuous allurements of Lucifer. In false asceticism a person exposes himself to this kind of seduction because instead of rightly balancing the scales, using thus the polarity of forces, he does away with one side altogether.

However, when the human being makes a correct estimate of the physical sense world, Ahriman is fully justified. The mineral world is his very own kingdom, the kingdom over which death is poured out continuously. In the higher kingdoms of nature Ahriman is the regulator of death insofar as he affects the course of events and the creatures lawfully. What we can trace as super-sensible in the external world, we call for certain reasons spiritual; what is more active inwardly within the human being, we assign to the soul. Ahriman is a more spiritual being; Lucifer is more soul nature. Ahriman can be called the lord of all that takes place in external nature; Lucifer penetrates with his impulses into the inner nature of man.

Now there is also a lawful task belonging to Lucifer, one quite in accordance with the universal cosmic order. In a certain way Lucifer's task is to tear man and everything in the world pertaining to the soul away from living and being absorbed in the physical-sensory alone. If there were no luciferic power in the world, we would dream along in the perceptions streaming into us from the external world and in what comes to us from that world through the intellect. That would be a kind of dreaming away of human soul existence within the sense world. There are indeed impulses which will not tear our souls away from the sense world as long as they are bound temporarily to it but which raise our souls to a different sort of living, feeling and rejoicing from the kind the sense world can offer. We need merely to think of what humanity has been seeking as artistic development. Wherever the human being creates something through his imagination and his soul life of feeling, no longer clinging dully to the sense world but rising above it, Lucifer is the power that tears him out of that world. A large part of what is uplifting and liberating in the artistic development of mankind is inspired by Lucifer. We can designate something else as the inspiration of Lucifer: the human being has the chance through luciferic powers to free his thinking from a mere photograph-like copying of the sense world; he can raise himself above this in freedom, which he does, for instance, in his philosophy. From this point of view, all philosophizing is the inspiration of Lucifer. One could even write a history of the philosophical development of mankind, insofar as this is not pure positivism — that is, does not keep to the external materialistic —

and could say: the history of the development of philosophy is a continual testimony to the inspiration of Lucifer. All creative work, in fact, that rises above the sense world we owe to Lucifer's rightful activities and powers.

However, Lucifer too can overstep his domain, and the rebellion of the luciferic beings against the cosmic order is due to their overstepping their place. Lucifer has the tendency continually to do this by contaminating the feeling life of the soul. Ahriman has more to do with our thinking, Lucifer with the feelings, with the life of the emotions, passions, impulses and desires. Lucifer is lord over everything of soul feeling in the physical sense world. He has the tendency to detach and separate this feeling life of the soul from the physical world, to spiritualize it, and to set up, one can say, on a specially isolated island of spiritual existence a luciferic kingdom composed of all the soul feeling he can seize and carry off from the sense world. Whereas Ahriman wants to hold back thinking to the physical sense world and make shadows and phantoms of it, visible to elementary clairvoyance as floating, wafting shadows, Lucifer does the opposite: he takes what is soul feeling in the physical sense world, tears it out and puts it in a special luciferic kingdom set up as an isolated kingdom similar to his own nature, in opposition to the general cosmic order.

We can form an idea about how Lucifer can get at human beings in this way by considering with all our heart and soul a phenomenon in human life that we will speak about later in more detail: the phenomenon of love in the widest sense of the word, the foundation of a true moral life in the world order of humanity. Concerning love in its widest sense, the following has to be said: when love appears in the physical sense world and has its effect on human life, it is absolutely protected from every unlawful luciferic attack if the love is for another person and for that other person's own sake. When we are met by some other human being or by one belonging to another kingdom of nature in the physical world, that being meets us with certain qualities. If we are freely receptive to these qualities, if we are capable of being moved by them, they then command our love and we cannot help loving that other being. We are moved by the other being to love it.

Where the cause of love lies not in the one who loves but in the object of love, this form and kind of love in the sense world is absolute proof against every luciferic influence. But now if you observe human life, you will soon see that another kind of love is playing its part, in which a person loves because he himself has certain qualities that feel satisfied, or charmed, or

delighted, when he can love this or that other being. Here he loves for his own sake; he loves because his disposition is thus or so, and this particular disposition finds its satisfaction in loving someone else.

This love, which one can call egoistic love, must also exist. It really has to be present in mankind. Everything we can love in the spiritual world, all the spiritual facts, everything that love can cause to live in us as a longing for and an impulse upwards into the spiritual world, to comprehend the beings of the spiritual world, to perceive the spiritual world: all this springs naturally from a sentient love for that world. This love for the spiritual, however, must — not *may* but *must* — come about necessarily for our own sake. We are beings whose roots are in the spiritual world. It is our duty to make ourselves as perfect as we can. For our own sake we must love the spiritual world in order to draw as many forces as possible out of it into our own being. In spiritual love a personal, individual element — we can call it egoistic — is fully justified, for it detaches man from the sense world; it leads him upwards into the spiritual world; it leads him on to fulfill the necessary duty of continually bringing himself further and further towards perfection.

Now Lucifer has the tendency to interchange the two worlds with each other. In human love whenever a person loves in the physical sense world for himself with a trace of egoism, it occurs because Lucifer wants to make physical love similar to spiritual love. He can then root it out of the physical sense world and lead it into his own special kingdom. This means that all love that can be called egoistic and is not there for the sake of the beloved but for the sake of the one who loves, is exposed to Lucifer's impulses.

If we consider what has been said, we will see that in this modern materialistic culture there is every reason to point out these luciferic allurements in regard to love, for a great part of our present-day outlook and literature, especially that of medicine, is permeated by the luciferic conception of love. We would have to touch on a rather offensive subject if we were to treat this in greater detail. The luciferic element in love is actually cherished by a large section of our medical science; men are told again and again — for it is the male world especially pandered to in this — that they must cultivate a certain sphere of love as necessary for their health, that is, necessary for their own sake. A great deal of advice is given in this direction and certain experiences in love recommended that do not spring from a love for the other being but because they are presumed indispensable in the life of the male. Such arguments — even when they are clothed in the robes of science — are nothing but inspirations of the

luciferic element in the world; a large portion of science is penetrated simply by luciferic points of view. Lucifer finds the best recruits for his kingdom among those who allow such advice to be given to them and who believe that it is imperative for the well-being of their person. It is absolutely necessary for us to know such things. Those words I quoted yesterday must be emphasized again and again: People never notice the devil, either in luciferic or ahrimanic form, even when he has them by the collar! People do not see that the materialistic scientist who gives the advice just mentioned is under the yoke of Lucifer. They deny Lucifer because they deny all the spiritual worlds.

We see therefore that what is great and sublime on the one hand, what carries and uplifts the evolution of humanity depends on Lucifer. Mankind must understand how to keep the impulses that come from him in their rightful place. Wherever Lucifer makes his appearance as the guardian of beauty and glory, as the patron of artistic impulses, there arises in humanity from his activity great and sublime power. But there is also a shadow-side to Lucifer's activity. He tries everywhere to tear the emotional side of the soul away from the sense organism and make it independent, permeated with egoism and egotism. Thus there enters into the emotional soul nature the element of self-will and other such tendencies. A person can then form for himself in freewheeling activity — with a generous hand, one can say — all sorts of ideas about the universe. How many people indulge in philosophizing, shake it out of their sleeves, without troubling themselves in the least as to whether their speculations are in accord with the general course of universal order! These eccentric philosophers are actually found in great numbers all over the world. In love with their own ideas, they fail to counterbalance the luciferic element with the ahrimanic one that always asks whether everything man acquires by his thinking in the physical sense world actually squares with the laws of the physical world. So we see these people running around with their opinions, which are just a lot of fanatic enthusiasms incompatible with the cosmic order. It is from the shadow side of the luciferic impulse that all these fanatic enthusiasms, the egoistic and confused opinions, the eccentric ideas and false, extravagant idealism arise. Most significantly, however, it is on the borderland or threshold between the sensible and the super-sensible that these luciferic and ahrimanic elements confront us, when we look with the eyes of clairvoyant consciousness.

When the human soul takes on the task of making itself capable of looking into the spiritual world and gaining insight there, it takes on itself, more than anything else, a task that otherwise is carried out by the

subconscious guidance of soul life. Nature and its laws take care that in everyday life man does not often transfer the customs and regulations of one kingdom into another; the natural order would be entirely out of control if the separate worlds were to get mixed up together. We emphasized a moment ago that love for the spiritual world must evolve in such a way that the human being develops in himself first and foremost an all-pervasive inner strength, as well as a craving for self-improvement. He has to fix his eye on himself when he nurtures his love for the spiritual world. If, however, he transfers to the senses the kind of ardour that can guide him in the spiritual world to what is most sublime, it will lead him into what is most detestable. There are people who have in their outward physical experience and in their everyday activities no special interest in the spiritual world. It is said such people today are not uncommon. But nature does not permit us to use the ostrich strategy in her affairs. The ostrich strategy, as you know, consists in the bird sticking his head in the sand and believing that the things he doesn't see are not there. Materialistic minds believe that the spiritual world is not there; they do not see it. They are true ostriches.

Nevertheless, in the depths of their souls, the craving for the spiritual world does not cease to exist merely because they deaden themselves and deny its reality. It is actually there. In every human soul, however materialistic, the desire and love for the spiritual world is alive, but people who deaden their soul nature are unconscious of the craving.

There is a law that something repressed and deadened at one point will break out at another. The consequence of the repression of the egoistic impulse towards the spiritual world is that it thrusts itself into the sensual desires. The kind of love due the spiritual world hurls itself away from there into the sensual impulses, passions and desires, and these impulses become perverse. The perversity of the sensual impulses and their repellent abnormalities are the mirror image of what could be noble virtues in the spiritual world, were human beings to use for the spiritual world all the forces poured out into the physical world. We must consider this seriously: what finds expression in the sense world as loathsome impulses could — if they were used in the spiritual world — accomplish there something of the most sublime character. This is immensely significant.

You see how in this regard the sublime is changed into the horrible when the boundary between the physical sense world and the super-sensible world is not observed or valued in the right way. Clairvoyant consciousness should develop so that the clairvoyant soul can live in the super-sensible

worlds according to the laws of those worlds; then it must be able to return to its life in the body without letting itself be led astray in the everyday physical sense world by the laws of the super-sensible worlds.

Suppose a soul could not do this — then the following would take place. We shall see that the soul in passing the boundary region between one world and the other learns most of all how to conduct itself in the right way through meeting the Guardian of the Threshold. But suppose a soul, having made itself clairvoyant (this can very well happen) had through various circumstances become clairvoyant without rightfully meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold. Such a soul could see into the super-sensible worlds clairvoyantly and have perceptions there, but it would return then to the physical sense world after entering wrongfully the spiritual world and merely nibbling at dainties there. Such eaters of sweet things in the spiritual world are numerous and it can truly be said that nibbling there is far more serious than it is in the sense world. After nibbling at the spiritual world, it happens very often that a person takes back into the sense world what he has experienced, but the experience shrinks and condenses. A clairvoyant of this kind, one who does not conduct himself according to the laws of the universal order, returns to the physical sense world bringing with him the condensed pictures and impressions of the super-sensible worlds. He will no longer merely look out and ponder the physical world but while he lives within his physical body he will have before him the after-effects of the spiritual world in pictures quite similar to those of sense except that they have no relation to reality, are only illusions, hallucinations, dream pictures.

A person who is able to look in the right way into the spiritual world will never again confuse reality and the fantastic. In this the philosophy of Schopenhauer, in so far as it is erroneous, refutes itself. In the case of its greatest mistake — that our whole environment is nothing but our mental picture — it refutes itself even in the sense world. If you press Schopenhauer's statement, it will show itself up as a fallacy, for you will be guided by life itself to distinguish between iron heated to 900 degrees that is actually perceptible and the imagined iron of 900 degrees that will cause no pain. Life itself reveals the difference between reality and fancy when one lives in the real world with the capacities belonging to it. Even Kant's statement by which he formulated his so-called proof of God, that is, that a hundred imagined dollars are just as valuable as a hundred real ones — that, too, will be contradicted by life. Certainly a hundred imagined dollars contain just as many pennies as a hundred real ones, but for all that there is a difference that comes strongly to the fore in real life. I would



recommend anyone who considers Kant's statement to be correct to try to pay a hundred dollar debt with imagined currency; he will notice the difference at once.

If this is the case in the physical sense world when one really stands firmly in it and observes its laws, it is the same for the super-sensible worlds. If one only nibbles at the latter, one will have no protection against mistaking illusion for truth; when the pictures shrink and condense, one takes what should be merely picture for reality. The sweets, too, that such a person carries within himself out of the spiritual world are a special booty for Ahriman to pounce on. From what he can pull out of ordinary human thinking he gets only airy shadows, but — to put it plainly — he gets well padded shadows and plump phantoms when he presses out of human body-individualities (as well as he can) the false illusory pictures created by nibbling on the sly in the spiritual world. In this ahrimanic fashion the physical sense world is populated by spiritual shades and phantoms that offer serious resistance to the general cosmic order.

From all this, we see how the ahrimanic influence can encroach most strongly when it oversteps its boundaries and works against the general cosmic order; it turns to evil, especially in the perversion of its lawful activity.

*There is no essential evil.* Everything evil arises from this, something that is good in one direction is put to use in the world in another direction and thereby turned into evil. In a somewhat similar way the luciferic influence, the inducement to so much that is noble and sublime, may become dangerous, exceedingly dangerous, particularly to the soul that has become clairvoyant. This happens in just the opposite situation. We looked before at what happens when a soul nibbles at the spiritual world, that is, perceives something there, but then on returning to the physical sense world does not tell itself: "Here you may not use the same kind of thought pictures that are right for the spiritual world." In this case the soul is exposed in the physical world to the influence of Ahriman. But the opposite can take place. The human soul can carry into the spiritual world what should belong only to the physical sense world, namely the kinds of perception, feeling, and passion that the soul must necessarily develop to a certain degree for the physical world. None of the emotions cultivated here, however, should be carried into the spiritual world if the soul is not to fall victim to the temptations and allurements of Lucifer to an unusual degree.

This is what was attempted to some extent in Scene Nine of *The Souls' Awakening* in presenting Maria's inmost soul attitude. It would be quite wrong for anyone to require in this scene something as dramatically tumultuous and exciting as what one likes to have in superficial physical drama. If Maria's inner nature were such that at the moment of receiving the memories of the devachanic world and of the Egyptian period, her soul had experienced disturbing passions, disturbing desires, it would have been hurtled back and forth by these waves of emotion. A soul that cannot receive the impulses of the spiritual world with inner calm, in absolute tranquillity, rising above all outward physical drama, will suffer in the spiritual world a fate that I can only render in the following picture: Imagine to yourselves a being made of rubber flying in all directions in a space enclosed on all sides, flying against a wall and thrown back from it, flying against another wall, thrown back again, flying back and forth like this in turbulent movement on the waves of the emotional life. This actually happens to a soul that carries into the spiritual world the kind of perception, feeling and passion belonging to the sense world. Something further happens. It is not pleasant to be thrown back and forth like a rubber ball as if one were in a cosmic prison. Therefore in such a case the soul that is clairvoyant follows chiefly the special policy of the ostrich; as a matter of fact, the soul stupefies itself in regard to this being thrown back and forth; it dulls its consciousness so that it is no longer aware of it. It therefore believes that it is not being thrown back and forth. Lucifer can then come all the closer, because the consciousness is dulled. He lures the soul out and leads it to his isolated kingdom. There the soul can receive its spiritual impressions but, received in this island kingdom, they are completely luciferic.

Because self-knowledge is hard to come by and the soul has the greatest difficulty in becoming clear about certain of its qualities, because, too, people are bent on getting as quickly as possible into the spiritual world, it is not at all to be wondered at that they say to themselves: I am already mature enough; I will of course be able to control my passions. As a matter of fact, it is more easily said than done. There are certain qualities that particularly challenge our control. Vanity, ambition, and similar things sit so deeply entrenched in human souls that it is not easy to admit to oneself: You are vain and ambitious! You want power! When we look into ourselves, we are usually deceived about just those emotions that are the very worst ones. To carry them into the spiritual world means that a person will most easily become the prey of Lucifer. And when he notices how he is thrown hither and thither, he does not willingly say: This comes from

ambition or from vanity — but he looks for the way to deaden the soul. Then Lucifer carries him off into his kingdom. There, of course, a person may receive insights but these do not correspond to the cosmic order, which had already been designed before Lucifer began his meddling. (See Rudolf Steiner, *The Guardian of the Threshold*, Scene 7. Contained in *The Four Mystery Dramas*.) They are spiritual insights of a thoroughly luciferic nature. He may receive the most extraordinary impressions and judge them to be absolute truths. He may tell people about all sorts of incarnations of this person or that, but these will simply be purely luciferic inspirations.

In order that the right relationship should come about at her "Awakening," Maria had to be presented, at the moment when the spiritual world was to rush in on her with such vehemence, as a person who could well appear absurd to someone like one of our fine young theater critics. A dainty little modern critic might well say: "After finishing the Egyptian scene, there sat Maria as if she had just had breakfast, experiencing these things without a bit of lively drama." And yet anything else would be untrue at this stage of her development. Only Maria's quiet calmness can represent the truth of her development, as the rays of spiritual light fall upon the scene. We see from this how much depends on the soul mood, mastering within itself all the emotions and passions that are significant only for the physical sense world, if the soul is to cross the threshold of the spiritual world in the right way; otherwise it will experience there the necessary consequence of what remains of sensual feeling. Ahriman is the more spiritual being; what he carries out in the way of unlawful activity, of the unlawful activity he can create, flows more or less into the general world of the senses. Lucifer is more a being of soul; he tries to draw emotional soul elements out of the sense world and embody them in his special luciferic kingdom, where for every human being — according to the egoism rooted in his nature — Lucifer wants to ensure the greatest possibility of segregated independence.

We see from this that when we want to form a judgment of such beings as Ahriman and Lucifer, it cannot be a question of simply calling them good or bad. Instead we have to understand what is the lawful activity, what is the right domain of these beings and where their unlawful activity, the overstepping of their limits, begins. For through the fact that they go beyond their limits, they entice human beings to an unlawful overstepping of the boundary into the other world, taking with them the faculties and laws of this world. The scenes of *The Souls' Awakening* deal particularly with what is experienced in passing back and forth across the boundary between the physical sense world and the super-sensible world. In this

lecture today I wanted to make a beginning by describing some of the things that must be carefully watched in the borderland between the two worlds. Tomorrow we will go further into this.



## Lecture III

26 August 1913, Munich

When speaking about the spiritual worlds as we are doing in these lectures, we should keep the following well in mind: the clairvoyant consciousness which the human soul can develop in itself will change nothing in the nature and individuality of a person, for everything entering that consciousness was already long present in man's nature. Knowing a thing is not the same as creating it; a person learns only to perceive what is already there as a fact. Obvious as this is, it has to be said, for we must lead our thoughts to realize that the nature of the human being is hidden in the very depths of his existence; it can be brought up out of those depths only through clairvoyant cognition. It follows from this that the true, inmost nature of man's being cannot be brought to light in any other way than through occult knowledge. We can learn what a human being actually is not through any kind of philosophy but only through the kind of knowledge based on clairvoyant consciousness. To the observation we use in the sense world and to the understanding limited to the sense world, the being of man, the true, inmost nature of man, lies in hidden worlds. Clairvoyant consciousness provides the point of view from which the worlds beyond the so-called threshold have to be observed; in order to perceive and learn, quite different demands are made on it from those in the sense world.

This is the most important thing: that the human soul should become more or less accustomed to the fact that the way of looking at and recognizing things that for the sense world is the correct and healthy one is not the only way.

Here I shall give the name elemental world to the first world that the soul of a human being enters on becoming clairvoyant and crossing the threshold. Only a person who wants to carry the habits of the sense world into the higher super-sensible worlds can demand a uniform choice of names for all the points of view the higher worlds can offer. (At the close of this course of lectures and also in my small book coming out in a day or two, *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*, I shall point out the connection between the terms chosen here — for example, elemental world and those

in my books *Theosophy* and *Occult Science*, soul world, spirit world, and so on — in order that people do not look for contradictions in a superficial way where they do not exist.)

Fully new demands meet the life of soul when it steps over the threshold into the elemental world. If the human soul insisted on entering this world with the habits of the sense world, two things might happen: cloudiness or complete darkness would spread over the horizon of the consciousness, over the field of vision, or else — if the soul wanted to enter the elemental world without preparing itself for the peculiarities and requirements there — it would be thrown back again into the sense world. The elemental world is absolutely different from the sense world. In this world of ours when you move from one living being to another, from one happening to the next, you have these beings and events before you and can observe them; while confronting and observing them, you keep your own distinct existence, your own separate personality. You know all the time that in the presence of another person or happening you are the same person that you were before and that you will be the same when you confront a new situation; you can never lose yourself in another being or happening. You confront them, you stand outside them and you know you will always be the same in the sense world wherever you go.

This changes as soon as a person enters the elemental world. There it is necessary to adapt one's whole inner life of soul to a being or event so completely that one transforms one's own inner soul life into this other being, into this other event. We can learn nothing at all in the elemental world unless we become a different person within every other being, indeed unless we become similar to a high degree to the other beings and events.

We have to have, then, one peculiarity of soul for the elemental world: the capacity for transforming our own being into other beings outside ourselves. We must have the faculty of metamorphosis. We must be able to immerse ourselves in and become the other being. We must be able to lose the consciousness which always — in order to remain emotionally healthy — we have to have in the sense world, the consciousness of "I am myself." In the elemental world we get to know another being only when in a way we inwardly have "become" the other. When we have crossed the threshold, we have to move through the elemental world in such a way that with every step we transform ourselves into every single happening, creep into every single being. It belongs to the health of a person's soul that in passing through the sense world, he should hold his own and assert

his individual character, but this is altogether impossible in the elemental world, where it would lead either to the darkening of his field of vision or to his being thrown back into the sense world.

You will easily understand that in order to exercise the faculty of transformation, the soul needs something more than it already possesses here in our world. The human soul is too weak to be able to change itself continuously and adapt itself to every sort of being if it enters the elemental world in its ordinary state. Therefore the forces of the human soul must be strengthened and heightened through the preparations described in my books, *Occult Science* and *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* from these the life of soul will become stronger and more forceful. It can then immerse itself in other entities without losing itself in the process. This being said, you will understand at once the importance of noting what is called the threshold between the sense world and the super-sensible world. We have already said that the clairvoyant consciousness of a human being on earth must go back and forth continually, that it must observe the spiritual world beyond the threshold while it is outside the physical body and must then return into the physical body, exercising in a healthy way the faculties which lead it to the right observation of the physical sense world.

Let us suppose that a person's clairvoyant consciousness, when returning over the threshold, were to take back into the sense world the faculty of transformation it has to have in order to be at all aware of the spiritual world. The faculty of transformation I've been speaking about is a peculiarity of the human etheric body, which lives by preference in the elemental world. Now suppose that a person were to go back into the physical world keeping his etheric body as capable of transformation as it has to be in the elemental world. What would happen? Each of the worlds has its own special laws.

The sense world is the world of self-contained forms, for here the Spirits of Form rule. The elemental world is the world of mobility, of metamorphosis, of transformation; just as we continually have to change in order to feel at home in that world, all the beings there are continually changing themselves. There is no enclosed, circumscribed form: all is in continual metamorphosis. A soul has to take part in this ever-changing existence outside the physical body if it wants to unfold itself there. Then in the physical sense world we must allow our etheric body, as an entity of the elemental world capable of metamorphosis, to sink down into the physical body. Through this physical body I am a definite personality in the

physical sense world; I am this or that distinct person. My physical body stamps my personality upon me; the physical body and the conditions of the physical world in which I find myself make me a personality. In the elemental world one is not a personality, for this would require an enclosed form. Here, however, we must note that what the clairvoyant consciousness recognizes in the human soul is, and always has been, present within it. Through the forces of the physical body, the mobility of the etheric body is restrained only for the time being. As soon as the etheric body sinks back into the physical encasement, its powers of movement are held together and adapted to the form. If the etheric body were not tucked into the physical body as if into a tote bag, it would always be impelled to continuous transformation.

Now let us suppose that a soul, becoming clairvoyant, were to carry over into the physical world this desire of its etheric body for transformation. Then with its tendency towards movement, it will fit rather loosely into the physical body, and thus the soul can come into contradiction with the physical world that wants to shape it into a definite personality. The etheric body, which always wants to move freely, can come back over the threshold in the wrong way, every moment wishing to be something or someone else, someone that may be quite the opposite of the firmly imprinted form of the physical body. To put it even more concretely: a person could be, say, a Scandinavian bank executive, thanks to his physical body, but because his etheric brings over into the physical world the impulse to free itself from physical constraints, he may imagine himself to be the emperor of China. (Or, to use another example, a person may be — let us say — the president of the Theosophical Society, and if her etheric body has been loosened, she may imagine that she has been in the presence of the Director of the Universe.) (Leadbeater wrote that he had "stood with Mrs. Besant in the presence of the Director of the Universe." Mrs. Besant was at that time the President of the Theosophical Society.)

We see that the threshold that sharply divides the sense world from the super-sensible world must be respected absolutely; the soul must observe the requirements of each of the two worlds, adapting and conducting itself differently on this side and that. We have emphasized repeatedly that the peculiarities of the super-sensible world must not unlawfully be carried over when one comes back into the sense world. If I may put it more plainly, one has to understand how to conduct oneself in both worlds; one may not carry over into one world the method of observation that is right for the other.



First of all then, we have to take note that the essential faculty for finding and feeling oneself in the elemental world is the faculty of transformation. But the human soul could never live permanently in this mobile element. The etheric body could as little remain permanently in a state of being able to transform itself, as a human being in the physical world could remain continually awake. Only when we are awake can we observe the physical world; asleep, we do not perceive it. Nevertheless we have to allow the waking condition to alternate with the sleeping one. Something comparable to this is necessary in the elemental world. Just as little as it is right in the physical world to be continually awake, for life here must swing like a pendulum between waking and sleeping, so something similar is necessary for the life of the etheric body in the elemental world. There must be an opposite pole, as it were, something that works in the opposite direction to the faculty of transformation leading to perception in the spiritual world. What is it that makes the human being capable of transformation? It is his living in imagination, in mental images, the ability to make his ideas and thoughts so mobile that through his lively, flexible thinking he can dip down into other beings and happenings. For the opposite condition, comparable to sleep in the sense world, it is the will of the human being that must be developed and strengthened. For the faculty of transformation: thinking or imagination; for the opposite condition: the will.

To understand this, we should consider that in the physical sense world the human being is a self, an ego, an "I." It is the physical body, as long as it is awake, that contributes what is necessary for this feeling of self. The forces of the physical body, when the human being sinks down into it, supply him with the power to feel himself an ego, an I. It is different in the elemental world. There the human being himself must achieve to some degree what the physical body achieves in the physical world. He can develop no feeling of self in the elemental world if he does not exert his will, if he himself does not do the "willing." This, however, calls for overcoming something that is deeply rooted in us: our love of comfort and convenience. For the elemental world this self-willing is necessary; like the alternation of sleeping and waking in the physical world, the condition of "transforming oneself into other beings" must give way to the feeling of self-strengthened volition. Just as we have become tired in the physical world and close our eyes, overcome by sleep, the moment comes in the elemental world when the etheric body feels, "I cannot go on continually changing; now I must shut out all the beings and happenings around me. I will have to thrust it all out of my field of vision and look away from it. I

now must will myself and live absolutely and entirely within myself, ignoring the other beings and occurrences." This willing of self, excluding everything else, corresponds to sleep in the physical world.

We would be mistaken if we imagined that the alternation of transformation with strengthened ego feeling were regulated in the elemental world just as naturally as waking and sleeping are in the physical world. According to clairvoyant consciousness — and to this alone it is perceptible — it takes place at will, not passing so easily as waking here passes into sleep. After one has lived for a time in the element of metamorphosis, one feels the need within oneself to engage and use the other swing of the pendulum of elemental life. In a much more arbitrary way than with our waking and sleeping, the element of transforming oneself alternates with living within with its heightened feeling of self. Yes, our consciousness can even bring it about through its elasticity that in certain circumstances both conditions can be present at the same time: on the one hand, one transforms oneself to some degree and yet can hold together certain parts of the soul and rest within oneself. In the elemental world we can wake and sleep at the same time, something we should not try to do in the physical world if we have any concern for our soul life.

We must further consider that when thinking develops into the faculty of transformation and begins to be at home in the elemental world, it cannot be used in that world in the way that is right and healthy for the physical world. What is thinking like in our ordinary world? Observe it as you follow its movement. A person is aware of thoughts in his soul; he knows that he is grasping, spinning out, connecting and separating these thoughts. Inwardly he feels himself to be the master of his thoughts, which seem rather passive; they allow themselves to be connected and separated, to be formed and then dismissed. This life of thought must develop in the elemental world a step further. There a person is not in a position to deal with thoughts that are passive. If someone really succeeds in entering that world with his clairvoyant soul, it seems as though his thoughts were not things over which he has any command: they are living beings. Only imagine how it is when you cannot form and connect and separate your thoughts but, instead, each one of them in your consciousness begins to have a life of its own, a life as an entity in itself. You thrust your consciousness into a place, it seems, where you don't find thoughts that are like those in the physical world but where they are living beings. I can only use a grotesque picture which will help us somehow to realize how different our thinking must become from what it is here. Imagine sticking your head into an anthill, while your thinking comes to a stop — you would

have ants in your head instead of thoughts! It is just like that, when your soul dips down into the elemental world; your thoughts become so alive that they themselves join each other, separate from each other and lead a life of their own. We truly need a stronger power of soul to confront these living thought-beings with our consciousness than we do with the passive thoughts of the physical world, which allow themselves to be formed at will, to be connected and separated not only sensibly but often even quite foolishly. They are patient things, these thoughts of our ordinary world; they let the human soul do anything it likes with them. But it is quite different when we thrust our soul into the elemental world, where our thoughts will lead an independent life. A human being must hold his own with his soul life and assert his will in confronting these active, lively, no longer passive thoughts. In the physical world our thinking can be completely stupid and this does not harm us at all. But if we do foolish things with our thinking in the elemental world, it may well happen that our stupid thoughts, creeping around there as independent beings, can hurt us, can even cause real pain.

Thus we see that the habits of our soul life must change when we cross the threshold from the physical into the super-sensible world. If we were then to return to the physical world with the activity we have to bring to bear on the living thought entities of the elemental world and failed to develop in ourselves sound thinking with these passive thoughts, wishing rather to hold fast to the conditions of the other world, our thoughts would continually run away from us; then hurrying after them, we would become a slave to our thoughts.

When a person enters the elemental world with clairvoyant soul and develops his faculty of metamorphosis, he delves into it with his inner life, transforming himself according to the kind of entity he is confronting. What is his experience when he does this? It is something we can call sympathy and antipathy. Out of soul depths these experiences seem to well up, presenting themselves to the soul that has become clairvoyant. Quite definite kinds of sympathy and antipathy appear as it transforms itself into this or that other being. When the person proceeds from one transformation to the next, he is continually aware of different sympathies or antipathies. Just as in the physical world we recognize, characterize, describe the objects and living beings, in short, perceive them when the eye sees their color or the ear hears their tones so correspondingly in the spiritual world we would describe its beings in terms of particular sympathies and antipathies. Two things, however, should be noted. One is that in our usual way of speaking in the physical world, we generally

differentiate only between stronger and weaker degrees of sympathy and antipathy; in the elemental world the sympathies and antipathies differ from one another not only in degree but also in *quality*. There they vary, just as yellow here is quite different from red. As our colors are qualitatively different, so are the many varieties of sympathy and antipathy that we meet in the elemental world. In order therefore to describe this correctly, one may not merely say — as one would do in the physical world — that in diving down and entering this particular entity one feels greater sympathy, while in immersing oneself in another entity one feels less sympathy. No! Sympathies of all sorts and kinds can be found there!

The other point to note is this: Our usual natural attitude to sympathy and antipathy cannot be carried over into the elemental world. Here in this world we feel drawn to some people, repelled by others; we associate by choice with those who are sympathetic and wish to stay near them; we turn away from the things and people who are abhorrent and refuse to have anything to do with them. This cannot be the case in the elemental world, for there — if I may express it rather oddly — we will not find the sympathies sympathetic nor the antipathies antipathetic. This would resemble someone in the physical world saying, "I can stand only the blues and greens, not the red or yellow colors. I simply have to run away from red and yellow!" If a being of the elemental world is antipathetic, it means that it has a distinct characteristic of that world, which must be described as antipathetic, and we have to deal with it just as we deal in the sense world with the colors blue and red, not permitting one to be more sympathetic to us than the other. Here we meet all the colors with a certain calmness because they convey what the things are; only when a person is a bit neurotic does he run away from certain colors, or when he is a bull and cannot bear the sight of red. Most of us accept all the colors with equanimity and in the same way we should be able to observe with the utmost calmness the qualities of sympathy and antipathy that belong to the elemental world. For this we must necessarily change the attitude of soul usual in the physical world, where it is attracted by sympathy and repelled by antipathy; it must become completely changed. There the inner mood or disposition corresponding to the feelings of sympathy and antipathy must be replaced with what we can call soul-quiet, spirit-peacefulness.

(See *The Souls' Awakening*, Scene 4. The Guardian of the Threshold says:  
You see myself, too in delusion's form  
while vain desires are joined to inner sight

and spirit peacefulness as sheath of soul  
has not yet taken hold of your whole being.)

With an inwardly resolute soul life filled with spirit calm, we must immerse ourselves in the entities and transform ourselves into them; then we will feel the qualities of these beings rising within our soul depths as sympathies and antipathies. Only when we can do this, with such an attitude toward sympathy and antipathy, will the soul, in its experiences, be capable of letting the sympathetic and antipathetic perception appear before it as images that are right and true. That is, only then are we capable not merely of feeling what the perception of sympathies and antipathies is but of really experiencing our own particular self, transformed into another being, suddenly rising up as one or another color-picture or as one or another tone-picture of the elemental world.

You can also learn how sympathies and antipathies play a part in regard to the experience of the soul in the spiritual world if you will look with a certain amount of inner understanding at the chapter of my book *Theosophy* that describes the soul world. You will see there that the soul world is actually constructed of sympathies and antipathies. From my description you will have been able to learn that what we know as thinking in the physical sense world is really only the external shadowy imprint, called up by the physical body, of the thinking that, lying in occult depths, can be called a true living force. As soon as we enter the elemental world and move with our etheric body, thoughts become — one can say — denser, more alive, more independent, more true to their own nature. What we experience as thought in the physical body relates to this truer element of thinking as a shadow on the wall relates to the objects casting it. As a matter of fact, it *is* the shadow of the elemental thought-life thrown into the physical sense world through the instrumentality of the physical body. When we think, our thinking lies more or less in the shadow of thought beings. Here clairvoyant spiritual knowledge throws new light on the true nature of thinking. No philosophy, no external science, however ingenious, can determine anything of the real nature of thinking; only a knowledge based on clairvoyant consciousness can recognize what it is.

The same thing holds good with the nature of our willing. The will must grow stronger, for in the elemental world things are not so obliging that the ego feeling is provided for us as it is through the forces of the physical body. There we ourselves have to will the feeling of ego; we have to find out what it means for our soul to be entirely filled with the consciousness, "I will myself"; we have to experience something of the greatest

significance: that when we are not strong enough to bring forth the real act of will, "I will myself," and not just the thought of it, at that moment we will feel ourselves falling unconscious as though in a faint. If we do not hold ourselves together in the elemental world, we will fall into a kind of faint. There we look into the true nature of the will, again something that cannot be discovered by external science or philosophy but only by the clairvoyant consciousness. What we call the will in the physical world is a shadowy image of the strong, living will of the elemental world, which grows and develops so that it can maintain the self out of its own volition without the support of external forces. We can say that everything in that world, when we grow accustomed to it, becomes self-willed.

Above all, when we have left the physical body and our etheric body has the elemental world as its environment, it is through the innate character of the etheric body that the drive to transform ourselves awakens. We wish to immerse ourselves in the other beings. However, just as in our waking state by day the need for sleep arises, so in the elemental world there arises in turn the need to be alone, to shut out everything into which we could transform ourselves. Then again, when we have felt alone for a while and developed the strong feeling of will, "I will myself," there comes what may be called a terrible feeling of isolation, of being forsaken, which evokes the longing to awaken out of this state, of only willing oneself, to the faculty of transformation again. While we rest in physical sleep, other forces take care that we wake up; we don't have to attend to it ourselves. In the elemental world when we are in the sleeping condition of only willing ourselves, it is through the demand of feeling forsaken that we are impelled to put ourselves into the state of transformation, that is, of wanting to awaken.

From all this, you see how different are the conditions of experiencing oneself in the elemental world, of perceiving oneself there, from those of the physical world. You can judge therefore how necessary it is, again and again, to take care that the clairvoyant consciousness, passing back and forth from one world to the other, adapts itself correctly to the requirements of each world and does not carry over, on crossing the threshold, the usages of one into the other. The strengthening and invigorating of the life of soul consequently belongs to the preparation we have often described as necessary for the experience of super-sensible worlds.

What must above all become strong and forceful are the soul experiences we can call the eminently moral ones. These imprint themselves as soul dispositions in firmness of character and inner resolute calm. Inner courage and firmness of character must most especially be developed, for through weakness of character we cripple the whole life of soul, which would then come powerless into the elemental world; this we must avoid if we hope to have a true and correct experience there. No one who is really earnest about gaining knowledge in the higher worlds will therefore fail to give weight to the strengthening of the *moral* forces among all the other forces that help the soul enter those worlds. One of the most shameful errors is foisted on humanity when someone takes it on himself to say that clairvoyance should be acquired without paying attention to strengthening the moral life. It must be stressed once and for all that what I described in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* as the development of the lotus flowers that crystallize in the spirit body of a student-clairvoyant may indeed take place without attention to supportive moral strength but certainly ought not to do so.

The lotus flowers must be there if a person wants to have the faculty of transformation. That faculty comes into existence when the flowers unfold their petals in a motion away from the human being, in order to grasp the spiritual world and adhere to it. Whatever a person develops as the ability to transform himself is expressed for the clairvoyant vision in the unfolding of the lotus flowers. Whatever he can acquire of a strengthened ego-feeling becomes inner firmness; we can call it an elementary backbone. Both of these must be correspondingly developed, the lotus flowers so that one can transform oneself, and an elementary backbone so that one can unfold a strengthened ego in the elemental world.

As mentioned in the lecture yesterday, what develops in a spiritual way can lead to a high order of virtues in the spiritual world, but if this is allowed to stream down into the sense world, it can bring about the most terrible vices. It is the same with the lotus flowers and elementary backbone. By practicing certain methods it is also possible to awaken the lotus flowers and backbone without aiming for moral firmness — but this no conscientious clairvoyant would recommend. It is not merely a question of attaining something or other in the higher worlds, but of knowing what is involved. At the moment we pass over the threshold into the spiritual world, we approach the luciferic and ahrimanic beings, of whom we have already spoken; here we meet them in quite a different way from any confrontation we might have in the physical world. We will have the remarkable experience that as soon as we cross the threshold, that is, as

soon as we have developed the lotus flowers and a backbone, we will see the luciferic powers coming towards us with the intention of seizing the lotus flowers. They stretch their tentacles out towards our lotus flowers; we must have developed in the right way so that we use the lotus flowers to grasp and understand the spiritual events and so that they are not themselves grasped by the luciferic powers. It is possible to prevent their being seized by these powers only by ascending into the spiritual world with firmly established moral forces.

I have already mentioned that in the physical sense world the ahrimanic forces approach us more from outside, the luciferic more from within the soul. In the spiritual world it is just the opposite: the luciferic beings come from outside and try to lay hold of the lotus flowers, whereas the ahrimanic beings come from within and settle themselves tenaciously within the elementary backbone. If we have risen into the spiritual world without the support of morality, the ahrimanic and luciferic powers form an extraordinary alliance with each other. If we have come into the higher worlds filled with ambition, vanity, pride or with the desire for power, Ahriman and Lucifer will succeed in forming a partnership with each other. I will use a picture for what they do, but this picture corresponds to the actual situation and you will understand that what I am indicating really takes place: Ahriman and Lucifer form an alliance; together they bind the petals of the lotus flowers to the elementary backbone. When all the petals are fastened to the backbone, the human being is tied up in himself, fettered within himself through his strongly developed lotus flowers and backbone. The results of this will be the onset of egoism and love of deception to an extent that would be impossible were he to remain normally in the physical world. Thus we see what can happen if clairvoyant consciousness is not developed in the right way: the alliance of Ahriman and Lucifer whereby the petals of the lotus flowers are fastened onto the elementary backbone, fettering a person within himself by means of his own elemental or etheric capacities. These are the things we must know if we wish to penetrate with open eyes and with understanding into the actual spiritual world.





## Lecture IV

27 August 1913, Munich

The soul, as it becomes clairvoyant, will progress further, beyond the elemental world we have been describing in these lectures, and it will penetrate the actual spiritual world. On ascending to this higher world, the soul must take into account even more forcefully what already has been indicated. In the elemental world there are many happenings and phenomena surrounding the clairvoyant soul that remind it of the characteristics, the forces, and of *all* sorts of other things in the sense world, but rising into the spiritual world, the soul finds the happenings and beings totally different. The capacities and points of view it could get on with in the sense world have to be given up to a far greater degree. It is terribly disturbing to confront a world that the soul is not at all accustomed to, leaving everything behind it has so far been able to experience and observe. Nevertheless, when you look into my books *Theosophy* or *Occult Science* or if you recall the recent performance of Scenes Five and Six of *The Souls' Awakening*, it will occur to you that the descriptions there of the real spiritual world, the scientific descriptions as well as the more pictorial-scenic ones, use pictures definitely taken — one can say — from impressions and observations of the physical sense world.

Recall for a moment how the journey is described through Devachan or the Spirit-land, as I called it. You will find that the pictures used have the characteristics of sense perception. This is, of course, necessary if one proposes to put on the stage the spirit region, which the human being passes through between death and a new birth. All the happenings must be represented by images taken from the physical sense world. You can easily imagine that stage hands nowadays would not know what to do with the sort of scenery one might bring immediately out of the spiritual world, having nothing at all in common with the sense world. One therefore faces the necessity of describing the region of spirit with pictures taken from sense observation. But there is more to it than this.

You might well believe that to represent this world whose characteristics are altogether different from the sense world, one has to help oneself out of the difficulty with sense-perceptible images. This is not the case. When the soul that has become clairvoyant enters the spiritual world, it will really

see the landscape as the exact scenery of those two scenes of the "Spirit Region" in *The Souls' Awakening*. They are not just thought out in order to characterize something that is entirely different; the clairvoyant soul really is in such scenery and surrounded by it. Just as the soul surrounded in the physical sense world by a landscape of rocks, mountains, woods and fields must take these for granted as reality if it is healthy, the clairvoyant soul, too, outside the physical and etheric bodies can observe itself surrounded in exactly the same way by a landscape constructed of these pictures. Indeed, the pictures have not been chosen at random; as a matter of fact they are the actual environment of the soul in this world. Scenes Five and Six of *The Souls' Awakening* did not come about in just this way because something or other of an unknown world had to be expressed and therefore the question was considered, "How can that be done?" No, this world pictured here is the world surrounding the soul that it to some degree simply forms as an image.

However, it is necessary for the clairvoyant soul to enter into the right relationship to the genuine reality of the spirit world, the spirit-land that has nothing at all in common with the sense world. You will get some idea of the relationship to the spiritual world which the soul has to acquire from a description of how the soul can come to an understanding of that world. Suppose you open a book. At the top of the page you find a line slanting from the left above to the right below, then a line slanting from bottom left to top right, another line parallel to the first and still another parallel to the second; then come two vertical lines, the second shorter than the first and connected at the top to its center. Then comes something like a circle that is not quite closed with a horizontal line in its center; finally come two equal vertical lines joined together at the top. You don't go through all this when you open a book and look at the first thing that stands there, do you? You read the word "when." You do not describe the *w* as lines and the *e* as an incomplete circle, and so on; you read. When you look at the forms of the letters in front of you, you enter into a relationship with something that is not printed on the page; it is, however, indicated to you by what is there on that page.

It is precisely the same with the relationship of the soul to the whole picture-world of the spirit region. What the soul has to do is not merely to describe what is there, for it is much more like reading. The pictures before one are indeed a cosmic writing, a script, and the soul will gain the right inner mood by recognizing that this whole world of pictures — woven like a

veil before the spiritual world — is there to mediate, to manifest the true reality of that world. Hence in the real sense of the word we can speak of reading the cosmic script in the spirit region.

One should not imagine that learning to read this cosmic writing is anything like learning to read in the physical world. Reading today is based more or less on the relation of arbitrary signs to their meaning. Learning to read as we have to do for such arbitrary letters is unnecessary for reading the cosmic script which makes its appearance as a mighty tableau, expressing the spiritual world to the clairvoyant soul. One has only to take in with an open, unbiased inner being what is shown as picture-scenery, because what one is experiencing there is truly reading. The meaning itself can be said to flow out of the pictures. It can therefore happen that any sort of interpreting the images of the spiritual world as abstract ideas is more a hindrance than a help in leading the soul directly to what lies behind the occult writing. Above all, as described in *Theosophy* and in the scenes of *The Souls' Awakening*, it is important to let the things work freely on one. With one's deep inner powers coming sometimes in a shadowy way to consciousness, there will already have been surmises of a spiritual world. To receive such hints, it is not even necessary to strive for clairvoyance — bear this well in mind. It is necessary only to keep one's mind and soul receptive to such pictures, without setting oneself against them in an insensitive, materialistic way, saying, "This is all nonsense; there are no such things!" A person with a receptive attitude who follows the movement of these pictures will learn to read them. Through the devotion of the soul to the pictures, the necessary understanding for the world of the spirit will come about.

What I have described is actual fact — therefore the numerous objections to spiritual science coming from a present-day materialistic outlook. In general, these objections are first of all rather obvious; then, too, they can be very intelligent and apparently quite logical. Someone like Ferdinand Fox, (Ferdinand Fox Reinecke. See *Guardian of the Threshold*, Scenes 1 and 8; *The Souls' Awakening*, Scene 12, where there is the remark: "*Ahriman goes off and returns with the Soul of Ferdinand Fox, whose figure is a sort of copy of his own.*") who is considered so supremely clever not only by the human beings but also, quite correctly, by Ahriman himself, can say, "Oh yes, you Steiner, you describe the clairvoyant consciousness and talk about the spiritual world, but it's merely a collection of bits and pieces of sense images. How can you claim — in the face of all that scenery raked together from well-known physical pictures — that we should experience something new from it, something we cannot imagine without approaching the spiritual world?"

That objection is one that will confuse many people; it is made from the standpoint of present-day consciousness apparently with a certain justification, indeed even with complete justification. Nevertheless when you go more deeply into such objections as these of Ferdinand Fox, you will discover the way to the truth: The objection we have just heard resembles very much what a person could say to someone opening a letter: "Well, yes, you've received a letter, but there's nothing in it but letters of the alphabet and words I already know. You won't hear anything new from all that!" Nevertheless, through what we have known for a long time we are perhaps able to learn something that we never could have dreamed of before. This is the case with the picture-scenery, which not only has to find its way to the stage for the Mystery Drama performance but also will reveal itself on every side to the clairvoyant consciousness. To some extent it is composed of memory pictures of the sense world, but in its appearance as cosmic script it represents something that the human being cannot experience either in the sense world or in the elemental world. It should be emphasized again and again that our relation to the spiritual world must be compared to reading and not to direct vision.

If a man on earth, who has become clairvoyant, is to understand the objects and happenings of the sense world and look at them with a healthy, sane attitude, he must observe and describe them in the most accurate way possible, but his relation to the spiritual world must be different. As soon as he steps across the threshold, he has to do something very much like reading. If we look at what has to be recognized in this spirit land for our human life, there is certainly something else that can demolish Ferdinand Fox's argument. His objections should not be taken lightly, for if we wish to understand spiritual science in the right way, we should size up such objections correctly. We must remember that many people today cannot help making objections, for their ideas and habits of thought give them the dreadful fear of standing on the verge of nothingness when they hear about the spiritual world; therefore they reject it.

This relationship of a modern human being to the spiritual world can be understood better by discovering what someone thinks about it who is quite well-intentioned. A book appeared recently that is worth reading even for those who have acquired a true understanding of the spiritual world. It was written by a man who means well and who would like very much to come by knowledge of the spiritual world, Maurice Maeterlinck; (Maurice Maeterlinck (1862 – 1949), Belgian poet who wrote his metaphysical, "Symbolistic" drama, poetry and prose in French. Dramas include "Melisande" and "The Blue

Bird." He won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1911.) it has been translated with the title *Concerning Death*. In his first chapters the author shows that he wants to understand these things. We know that he is to some extent a discerning and sensitive person who has allowed himself to be influenced by Novalis, among others, that he has specialized somewhat in Romantic mysticism and that he has accomplished much that is very interesting — theoretically and artistically — in regard to the relationship of human beings to the super-sensible world. Therefore as example he is particularly interesting.

Well, in the chapters of *Concerning Death* in which Maeterlinck speaks of the actual relationship of the human being to the spiritual world, his book becomes completely absurd. It is an interesting phenomenon that a well-meaning man, using the thinking habits of today, becomes foolish. I do not mean this as reproof or criticism but only to characterize objectively how foolish a well-intentioned person can become when he wishes to look at the connection of the human soul to the spirit world. Maurice Maeterlinck has not the slightest idea that there is a possibility to so strengthen and invigorate the human soul that it can shed everything attained through sense observation and the ordinary thinking, feeling and willing of the physical plane and indeed, even that of the elemental world. To such minds as Maeterlinck's, when the soul leaves behind it everything involved in sense observation and the thinking, feeling and willing related to it, there is simply nothing left. Therefore in his book Maeterlinck asks for proofs of the spiritual world and facts about it. It is of course reasonable to require proofs of the spiritual world and we have every right to do so — but not as Maeterlinck demands them. He would like to have proofs as palpable as those given by science for the physical plane. And because in the elemental world things are still reminiscent of the physical world, he would even agree to let himself be convinced of the existence of the spiritual world by means of experiments copied from the physical ones. That is what he demands. He shows with this that he has not the most rudimentary understanding of the true spiritual world, for he wants to prove, by methods borrowed from the physical one, things and processes which have nothing to do with the sense world. The real task is to show that such proofs as Maeterlinck demands for the spiritual world are impossible.

I have frequently compared this demand of Maurice Maeterlinck to something that has taken place in the realm of mathematics. At one time the university Math departments were continually receiving treatises on the so-called squaring of the circle. People were constantly trying to prove geometrically how the area of a circle could be transformed into a square.

Until quite recently an infinite number of papers had been written on the subject. But today only a rank amateur would still come up with such a treatise, for it has been proved conclusively that the geometrical squaring of the circle is not possible.

What Maeterlinck demands as proof for the spiritual world is nothing but the squaring of the circle transferred to the spiritual sphere and is just as much out of place as the other is in the realm of mathematics. What actually is he demanding? If we know that as soon as we cross the threshold to the spiritual world, we are in a world that has nothing in common with the physical world or even with the elemental world, we cannot ask, "If you want to prove any of this to me, kindly go back into the physical world and with physical means prove to me the things of the spiritual world." We might as well accept the fact that in everything concerned with spiritual science we will get from the most well-meaning people the kind of absurdities that — transferred to ordinary life — would at once show themselves to be absurd. It is just as if someone wants a man to stand on his head while continuing to walk with his feet. Let someone demand that and everyone will realize what nonsense it is. However, when someone demands the same sort of thing in regard to proofs of the spiritual world, it is clever; it is a scientific right. Its author will not notice its absurdity and neither will his followers, especially when the author is a celebrated person. The great mistake springs from the fact that those who make such claims have never clearly grasped man's relation to the spiritual world.

If we attain concepts that can be gained only in the spiritual world through clairvoyant consciousness, they will naturally meet with a great deal of opposition from people like Ferdinand Fox. All the concepts that we are to acquire, for instance, about reincarnation, that is, the truly genuine remembrances of earlier lives on earth, we have to gain through a certain necessary attitude of the soul towards the spiritual world, for only out of that world can we obtain such concepts. When there are impressions, ideas, mental images in the soul that point back to an earlier life on earth, they will be especially subject to the antagonism of our time. Of course, it can't be denied that just in these things the worst foolishness is engaged in; many people have this or that experience and at once relate it to this or that former incarnation. In such cases it is easy for our opponents to say, "Oh yes, whatever drifts into your psyche are really pictures of experiences you've had in this life between birth and death — only you don't recognize them." That is certainly the case hundreds and hundreds of times, but it should be clear that a spiritual investigator has an eye for these things. It

can really be so that something that happens to a person in childhood or youth returns to consciousness completely transformed in later life; then perhaps because the person does not recognize it, he takes it for a reminiscence from an earlier life on earth. That can well be the case. We know within our own anthroposophical circles how easily it can occur. You see, memories can be formed not only of what one has clearly experienced; one can also have an impression that whisks past so quickly that it does not come fully to consciousness and yet can return later as a distinct memory. A person — if he is not sufficiently critical — can then swear that this is something in his soul that was never experienced in his present life. It is thus understandable that such impressions cause all the foolishness in people who have busied themselves, but not seriously enough, with spiritual science. This happens chiefly in the case of reincarnation, in which so much vanity and ambition is involved. For many people it is an alluring idea to have been Julius Caesar or Marie Antoinette in a former life. I can count as many as twenty-five or twenty-six Mary Magdalenes I have met in my lifetime! The spiritual investigator himself has good reason to draw attention to the mischief that can be stirred up in all this. Something more, however, must be emphasized.

In true clairvoyance, impressions of an earlier life on earth will appear in a certain characteristic way, so that a truly healthy clairvoyant soul will recognize them quite definitely as what they are. It will know unmistakably that these impressions have nothing to do with what can arise out of the present life between birth and death. For the true reminiscences, the genuine memories of earlier lives on earth that come through scrupulous clairvoyance, are too astonishing for the soul to believe it could bring them out of its conscious or unconscious depths by any humanly possible method. Students of spiritual science must get to know what soul experiences come to it from outside. It is not only the wishes and desires, which do indeed play a great part when impressions are fished up out of the unknown waters of the soul in a changed form, so that we do not recognize them as experiences of the present life; there is an interplay of many other things. But the mostly overpowering perceptions of former earth lives are easy to distinguish from impressions out of the present life. To take one example: a person receiving a true impression of a former life will inwardly, for instance, experience the following, rising out of soul depths: "You were in your former life such and such a person." And at the moment when this occurs, he will find that, externally, in the physical world, he can make no use at all of such knowledge. It can bring him further in his development but as a rule he has to say to himself, "Look at

that: in your previous incarnation you had that special talent!" However, by the time he receives such an impression, he is already too old to do anything with it. The situation will always be like that, showing how the impressions could not possibly arise out of one's present life, for if you took your start from the ordinary dream or fantasy, you would provide yourself with quite different qualities in a former incarnation. What one was like in an earlier life is something we ordinarily cannot imagine, for it is usually just the opposite of what we might expect. The genuine reality of an impression arising through true clairvoyance may show in one way or another our relationship to another person on earth. However, we must remember that through incorrect clairvoyance many previous incarnations are described, relating us to our close friends and enemies; this is mostly nonsense. If the perception you receive is truly genuine, it will show you a relationship to a person whom it is impossible at the time to draw near to. These things cannot be applied directly to practical life.

Confronted with impressions such as these, we have to develop the frame of mind necessary for clairvoyant consciousness. Naturally, when one has the impression, "I am connected in a special way with this person," the situation must be worked out in life; through the impression one should come again into some sort of relationship with him. But that may only come about in a second or third earthly life. One must have a frame of mind able to wait patiently, a feeling that can be described as a truly inward calmness of soul and peacefulness of spirit. This will contribute to our judging correctly our experience in the spiritual world.

When we want to learn something about another person in the physical world, we go at it in whatever way seems necessary. But this we cannot do with the impression that calls for spirit peacefulness, calmness of soul, and patience. The attitude of soul towards the genuine impressions of the spiritual world is correctly described by saying,

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*To strive for nothing — wait in peaceful stillness,  
one's inner being filled with expectation.  
(The Soul's Awakening, Scene 3)*

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In a certain respect this frame of mind must stream out over the entire soul life in order to approach in the right way its clairvoyant experiences in the spirit.



The Ferdinand Foxes, however, are not always easy to refute, even when inner perceptions arise of which one can say, "It is humanly not possible for the soul with its forces and habits acquired in the present earth life to create in the imagination what is rising out of its depths; on the contrary, if it were up to the soul it would have imagined something quite different." Even when one is able to point out the sure sign of true, genuine, spiritual impressions, a super-clever Ferdinand Fox can come and raise objections. But one does not meet the objections of those who stand somewhat remote from the science of the spirit or of opponents who don't want to know anything about it with the words, "One's inner being filled with expectation." This is the right mood for those who are approaching the spiritual world, but in the face of objections from opponents, one should not — as a spiritual scientist — merely wait in expectation but should oneself raise all those objections in order to know just what objections are possible.

One of these is easy to understand today, and it can be found in all the psychological, psychopathological and physiological literature and in the sometimes learned treatises that presume to be scientific, as follows: "Since the inner life is so complicated, there is a great deal in the subconscious that does not rise up into the ordinary consciousness." One who is super-clever will not only say, "Our wishes and desires bring all sorts of things out of soul depths," but will also say, "Any experience of the psyche brings about a secret resistance or opposition against the experience. Though he will always experience this reaction, a person knows nothing of it as a rule. But it can push its way up from the subconscious into the upper regions of soul life." Psychological, psychopathological and physiological literature admit to the following, because the facts cannot be denied: When someone falls deeply in love with another person, there has to develop in unconscious soul depths, side by side with the conscious love, a terrible antipathy to the beloved. And the view of many psychopathologists is that if anyone is truly in love, there is also hatred in his soul. Hatred is present even if it is covered over by the passion of love.

When such things emerge from the depths of the soul, say the Ferdinand Foxes, they are perceptions that very easily provide the illusion of not coming from the soul of the individual involved and yet can well do so, because soul life is very complex. To this we can only reply: certainly it may be so; this is as well-known to the spiritual investigator as it is to the psychologist, psychiatrist or physiologist. When we work our way through all the above-mentioned literature dealing with the healthy and unhealthy

conditions of soul life, we realize that Ferdinand Fox is a real person, an extremely important figure of the present day, to be found everywhere. He is no invention. Take all the abundant writing of our time and as you study it, you get the impression that the remarkable face of Ferdinand Fox is springing out at you from every page. He seems nowadays to have his fingers in every scientific pie. To counteract him, it must be emphasized again and again, and I repeat it in this case gladly: to prove that something is reality and not fantasy is only possible through life experience itself. I have continually said: The chapter of Schopenhauer's philosophy that views the world as a mere mental image and does not distinguish between idea and actual perception can be contradicted only by life itself. Kant's argument, too, in regard to the so-called proof of God's existence, that a hundred imaginary dollars contain just as many pennies as a hundred real dollars, will be demolished by anyone who tries to pay his debts with imaginary and not real dollars.

Therefore the training and devotion of the soul to clairvoyance must be taken as reality. It is not a matter of theorizing; we bring about a life in the realm of spirit by means of which we can clearly distinguish the genuine impression of a former life on earth from one that is false, in the same way that we can distinguish the heat of an iron on our skin from an imaginary iron. If we reflect on this, we will understand that Ferdinand Fox's objections about the spiritual world are really of no importance at all, coming as they do from people who — I will not say, have not entered the realm of spirit clairvoyantly — but who have never tried to understand it.

We must always keep in mind that when we cross the threshold of the spiritual world, we enter a region of the universe that has nothing in common with what the senses can perceive or with what we experience in the physical world through willing, thinking, and feeling. We have to approach the spiritual world by realizing that all our ability to observe and understand the physical sense world has to be left behind. Referring to perception in the elemental world, I used an image that may sound grotesque, that of putting one's head into an ant hill — but so it is for our consciousness in the elemental world. There the thoughts that we have do not put up with everything quite passively; we plunge our consciousness into a world (into a thought-world, one might call it) that creeps and crawls with a life of its own. A person has to hold himself firmly upright in his soul to withstand thoughts that are full of their own motion. Even so, many things in this elemental world of creeping and crawling thoughts remind us of the physical world.

When we enter the actual spiritual world, nothing at all reminds us of the physical world; there we enter a world which I will describe with an expression used in my book *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*: "a world of living thought-beings." Our thinking in the physical world resembles shadow-pictures, shadows of thoughts, whose real substance we find in the spiritual world; this thought-substance forms the beings there whom we can approach and enter into. Just as human beings in the physical world consist of flesh and blood, these beings of the spiritual world consist of thought-substance. They are themselves thoughts, actual thoughts, nothing but thoughts, yet they are alive with an inner essential being; they are living thought-beings. Although we can enter into their inner being, they cannot perform actions as if with physical hands. When they are active, they create relationships among themselves, and this can be compared to the embodiment in the sense world of thoughts in speech, a pale reflection of the spiritual reality. We can accustom ourselves to experience the living thought-entities in the spiritual world. What they do, what they are, and the way they affect one another, forms a spirit language. One spirit being speaks to another; thought language is spoken in the realm of the spirit! However, this thought language in its totality is not only speech but represents the deeds of the spiritual world as well. It is in speaking that these beings work, move, and take action.

When we cross the threshold, we enter a world where thoughts are entities, entities are thoughts; however, these beings of the spiritual world are much more real than people of flesh and blood in the sense world. We enter a world where the action consists of spiritual conversation, where words move, here, there, and everywhere, where something happens because it is spoken out. We have to say of this spiritual world and of the occurrences there what is said in Scene Three of *The Guardian of the Threshold*:

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*At this place words are deeds  
and further deeds must follow them.*

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All occult perception attained for mankind by the initiates of every age could behold the significance in a certain realm of this spirit conversation that is at the same time spirit action. It was given the characteristic name, "The Cosmic Word."

Now observe that our study has brought us to the very center of the spiritual realm, where we can behold these beings and their activities. Their many voices, many tones, many activities, sounding together, form the Cosmic Word in which our own soul being — itself Cosmic Word — begins to find itself at home, so that, sounding forth, we ourselves perform deeds in the spiritual world. The term "Cosmic Word" used throughout past ages by all peoples expresses an absolutely true fact of the spirit land. To understand its meaning at the present time, however, we have to approach the uniqueness of the spiritual world in the way we have tried to describe in this study.

In the various past ages and peoples, occult knowledge has spoken with more or less understanding of the Cosmic Word; now, too, it is necessary, if mankind is not to be devastated by materialism, to reach an understanding for such words about the spiritual world, from the Mystery Drama:

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*At this place words are deeds  
and further deeds must follow them.*

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It is imperative in our time that when such words are spoken out of the knowledge of the spiritual world, our souls should feel their reality, should feel that they represent reality. We must be aware that this is just as much an exact characteristic of the spiritual world as when in characterizing the physical sense world we apply ordinary sense images.

Just how far our present age can bring understanding to bear on such words as "Here in this place words are deeds and further deeds must follow them" will depend on how far it takes up spiritual science and how well people today will be prepared to prevent the dominating force of materialism that otherwise will plunge human civilization into impoverishment, devastation and decay.

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## Lecture V

28 August 1913, Munich

I should like to help everyone understand, if I can, the characteristics of the spiritual realms we are studying in these lectures. For this reason, I am going to add a little story to shed light on the questions we have already considered and on those ahead of us. (See also Rudolf Steiner, *Three lectures on the Mystery Dramas*, (Spring Valley, Anthroposophic Press, 1983).)

Some time ago Professor Capesius was inwardly quite disturbed and puzzled. It came about in the following way. You will have noticed in *The Portal of Initiation* that Capesius is a historian, a professor of history. Occult research has shown me that a number of well-known modern scholars have become historians through a particular connection with an Egyptian initiation in the third post-Atlantean epoch, either directly within an initiation cult or else by being attracted in some way or other to the Temple Mysteries. You will notice that Capesius is a historian who depends not only on external documents; he tries also to penetrate to the historical ideas that have played a part in human evolution and in the development of civilization.

I must admit that in characterizing Capesius in *The Portal of Initiation*, *The Probation of the Soul*, and *The Guardian of the Threshold*, I was continuously aware of his link to the Egyptian cult of initiation shown in detail in Scenes Seven and Eight of *The Souls' Awakening*. We must keep in mind that what Capesius's soul experienced during his Egyptian incarnation forms the foundation for his later destiny and for his present-day soul. Capesius has therefore become a historian, concerned in his professional life chiefly with what has been brought about in successive epochs by the varying character of peoples, civilizations and individuals.

One day, however, Capesius came across some literature about the philosophy of Haeckel. Up to then he had not paid much attention to these ideas, but now he studied various articles on Haeckel's atomistic view of the world. This was the reason for his tortured state of mind; a peculiar mood descended on him when he met this atomistic philosophy at a relatively late period in his life. His reason told him: We really cannot get behind natural phenomena properly unless our explanations involve atoms

by way of a mechanistic conception of the universe. In other words, Capesius came more and more to recognize what is, in a sense, the one-sided correctness of atomism and a mechanistic view of nature. He was not one to fight fanatically against a new idea, for he had confidence in his own intelligence, which seemed to find these ideas necessary to explain the natural phenomena around him. Yet it troubled him. He said to himself, "How desolate, how unsatisfying for the human soul this conception of nature is. How poorly it supports any ideas one would like to acquire about spirit and spiritual beings or about the human soul!"

Capesius was thus driven back and forth by doubt; therefore he set out — almost instinctively, I might say — on the walk he so often took when his heart was heavy, to the Baldes' little cottage. Talking over things with those warmhearted people had many times provided him with a real emotional lift, and what Felicia Balde gave him in her wonderful fairy tales had refreshed him. And so he went there. As Dame Felicia was busy in the house when he arrived, he met first his good friend Felix, whom he had gradually grown fond of. Capesius confided his troubles to Felix, describing the doubts that the knowledge of Haeckelism and the atomistic theory had brought. He explained how logical it seemed to apply it to the phenomena of nature, but on the other hand how barren and disheartening such a conception of the universe is. In his distress, Capesius more or less sought help for his state of soul from his fatherly friend.

Now Felix is quite a different character from Capesius. He goes his own unique way. Turning aside at once all Haeckel's ideas and theories, he explained how the matter really stands. He said: "Certainly there must be atoms; it is quite correct to talk about them. But we have to understand that atoms, in order somehow to form the universe, must stratify and arrange themselves in such a way that their relationships correspond in measure and number; the atoms of one substance form a unit of four, another of three, another of one or two; in this way the substances of earth came about."

It seemed to Capesius, who had a good grasp of history, that this was somewhat Pythagorean. He felt that a Pythagorean principle had the upper hand in Felix, who was arguing that there is nothing we can do about the atoms themselves but that within them we find the wisdom of measure and number. More and more complicated became the argument, with ever more complicated numerical relationships, where — according to Felix — cosmic wisdom in combining the atoms revealed itself as a spiritual principle among them. More and more complicated became the structures

that Father Felix built up for Capesius, who gradually was overcome by a peculiar mood. You could describe it by saying that he had to strain every nerve so much in deciphering this complicated stuff that, even though the subject interested him immensely, he had to suppress a desire to yawn and to sink into a kind of dream state.

Before our good professor dropped completely into a dream, however, Dame Balde joined them and listened for a while to the expounding of numbers and structures. She sat there patiently, but she had a peculiar habit. When something not altogether pleasant or congenial bothered her, and she had to control her boredom, she would clasp her hands together and twirl her thumbs around each other; whenever she did this, she was able to swallow her yawns. And now after she had twirled her thumbs for a short time, there came a pause. She could finally try to stir up Capesius with a refreshing story, and so Felicia told her good friend the following tale.

Once upon a time there stood in a very lonely region a great fortress. Within it lived many people, of all ages; they were more or less related to one another and belonged to the same family. They formed a self-contained community but were shut off from the rest of the world. Round about, far and wide, there were no other people nor human settlements to be found, and in time this state of things made many of the people uneasy. As a result, a few of them became somewhat visionary, and the visions that came to them might well, from the manner in which they appeared, have been founded on reality.

Felicia told how a great number of these people had the same vision. First, they saw a powerful figure of light, which seemed to come down out of the clouds. It was a figure of light bringing warmth with it as it came down and sank into the hearts and souls of the people in the fortress. It was really felt — so ran Felicias' story — that something of glory had come down from the heights of heaven in this figure Of light from above.

But soon, Felicia continued, those who had the vision of light saw something more. They saw how from all sides, from all around the mountain, as though crawling out of the earth, there came all kinds of blackish, brownish, steel-grey figures. Whereas it was a single figure of light coming from above, there were many, many of these other forms around the fortress. Whereas the figure of light entered into their hearts and their souls, these other beings — one could call them elemental beings — were like besiegers of the fortress.

For a long time the people, of whom there was a fairly great number, dwelled between the figure from above and those besieging the fortress from outside. One day, however, it happened that the form from above sank down still further than before, and that the besiegers come closer in towards them. An uncomfortable feeling spread among the visionaries in the fortress — we must remember that Felicia is telling a fairy tale — and these visionaries, as well as all the others, fell into a kind of dream state. The figure from above divided into separate clouds of light, but these were seized upon by the besiegers and darkened by them, so that gradually the people of the fortress were held in a dream. The earth life of the people was thereby prolonged for centuries, and when they came to themselves, they found that now they were divided into small communities scattered over many different parts of the earth. They lived in small fortresses that were copies of the great, original one they had inhabited centuries before. And it was apparent that what they had experienced in the ancient fortress was now within them as strength of soul, soul richness and soul health. In these smaller fortresses they could now bravely carry on all sorts of activities, such as farming, cattle raising and the like.

They became capable, hard working people, good farmers, healthy in soul and body.

When Dame Felicia had finished her story, Professor Capesius felt as he usually did, pleasantly cheered. Father Felix, however, found it necessary to provide some explanation for the images of the story, for this was the first time Felicia had told this particular tale. "You see," Felix began, "the figure that came from above out of the clouds is the luciferic force, and the figures that came from outside like besiegers are the ahrimanic beings...." and so on; Felix's explanations became more and more complicated. At first Dame Felicia listened, clasping her hands together and twirling her thumbs, but finally she said, "Well, I must get back to the kitchen. We're having potato pancakes for supper and I don't want them to get too soft." So she slipped away.

Capesius sank into such a heavy mood through Felix's explanations that he no longer could listen properly and though he was really very fond of Father Felix, he could not altogether hear what was being explained.

I must add that what I have just been relating happened to Capesius at a time when he had already met Benedictus and had become what one could call his pupil. He had often heard Benedictus speak about the luciferic and ahrimanic elements, but though Capesius is an extremely intelligent man,



he never could quite fathom these remarks of Benedictus. Something seemed to be missing; he could not begin to understand them. So this time when he left the Balde cottage, he turned over in his mind the story of the fortress that multiplied itself. Almost every day he pondered the tale.

When he later came to Benedictus, Benedictus noticed that something had taken place in Capesius. Capesius himself was aware that every time he recalled the story of the fortress, his soul was peculiarly stirred within him. It seemed as if the story had worked upon his inner being and strengthened it. Consequently he was continually repeating the tale to himself — as if in meditation. Now he came to Benedictus, who perceived that the forces of Capesius' soul had been newly strengthened.

Benedictus began therefore to speak about these things in a special way. Whereas earlier Capesius — perhaps because of his great learning — would have had more trouble grasping it all, he now understood everything extremely well. Something like a seed had fallen into his soul with Felicia's story and this had fructified his soul forces.

Benedictus said the following. Let us look at three different things: First, consider human thinking, human concepts, the thoughts that a person carries around within himself and ponders when he is alone to help him understand the world. Everyone is able to think and to try to explain things to himself in complete solitude. For this he doesn't need another person. In fact, he can think best when he shuts himself up in his own room and tries as best he can, in quiet, self-contained pondering, to understand the world and its phenomena.

Now then, said Benedictus, it will always happen to a person that a feeling element of soul rises up into his solitary thoughts, and thus there will come to every individual thinker the tempting attraction of the luciferic element. It is impossible for someone to ruminare and cogitate and philosophize and explain everything in the world to himself without having this impulse coming out of soul sensitivity as a luciferic thrust into his thinking. A thought grasped by an individual human being is always permeated to a great extent by the luciferic element.

Capesius had earlier understood very little when Benedictus spoke about luciferic and ahrimanic elements, but now it was clear to him that there must lurk in the solitary thoughts a person forms in himself the allurements of luciferic temptation. Now, too, he understood that in the human activity of individual thought Lucifer will always find a hook with which he can

snatch a human being out of the forward-moving path of world evolution; then, because a person separates himself with this kind of thinking from the world, he can be brought to the lonely island that Lucifer — himself separated from the rest of the cosmic order — wants to establish, setting up on that island everything that separates itself into a solitary existence.

Benedictus, after directing Capesius's attention to the nature of lonely, personal, inner thinking, said, Now let us look at something else. Consider what writing is: a remarkable factor of human civilization. When we look at the character of thought, we have to describe it as something that lives in the individual human being. It is accessible to Lucifer who wants to lead our soul qualities out of the physical world and isolate them. This solitary thinking, however, is not accessible to Ahriman, for it is subject to the normal laws of the physical world — that is, it comes to life and then passes away. Writing is different. A thought can be put into writing and snatched from destruction; it can be made permanent. I have sometimes pointed out that Ahriman's effort is to reclaim what is alive in human thinking as it goes toward destruction and to anchor it in the physical sense world. That is what typically happens when you write something down. The thoughts that otherwise would gradually disperse are fixed and preserved for all time — and thus Ahriman can invade human culture.

Professor Capesius is not the sort of reactionary who wants to forbid the teaching of writing in the early grades, but he understood that with all the books and other reading matter people are piling up around themselves, the ahrimanic impulses have entered the evolution of human culture. Now he could recognize in solitary thought the luciferic temptation, in what is written or printed, the ahrimanic element. It was clear to him that in the external physical world, human evolution cannot exist without the interplay of ahrimanic and luciferic elements everywhere in everything. He realized that even in our forward-moving evolution, writing has gained greater and greater importance (and to recognize this, one does not have to be clairvoyant but need only look at the developments of the last couple of hundred years). Ahriman is therefore continually gaining in importance; Ahriman is seizing more and more influence. Today when the printed word has acquired such immense significance — this was quite clear to Capesius — we have built great ahrimanic strongholds. It is not yet the custom (spiritual science has not brought things completely to the point where the truth can be openly spoken in public) that when a student is on his way to the library, he would say, "I've got to hole up and cram for an exam in such and such a subject down at Ahriman's place!" Yet that would be the truth.

Libraries, great and small, are Ahriman's strongholds, the fortresses from which he can control human development in the most powerful way. One must face these facts courageously.

Benedictus then had something more to explain to Capesius. On the one hand, he said, we have the thoughts of the individuals, on the other, the written works that belong to Ahriman — but between them there is something in the center. In whatever is luciferic we have a single whole; men strive after unity when they want to explain the world to themselves in thought. In what is written, however, we have something that is atomistic. Benedictus now disclosed what Capesius could understand very well, for his mind and heart had been so enlivened by Dame Felicia's tale.

Between these two, solitary thought and writing, we have the Word. Here we cannot be alone as with our thinking, for through the spoken word we live in a community of people. Solitary thinking has its purpose and a person needs no words when he wants to be alone. But speech has its purpose and significance in the community of other human beings. A word emerges from the solitude of the single individual and unfolds itself in the fellowship of others. The spoken word is the embodied thought but at the same time, for the physical plane, it is quite different from thought. We need not look at the clairvoyant aspects I have mentioned in various lectures; external history shows us — and being a historian, Capesius understood this very well — that words or speech must originally have had quite a different relationship to mankind from what they possess today.

The further you go back into the past, you actually come — as occult research shows — to one original language spoken over the whole world. Even now when you look back at ancient Hebrew — in this regard the Hebrew language is absolutely remarkable — you will discover how different the words are from those in our own languages of western Europe. Hebrew words are much less ordinary and conventional; they possess a *soul*, so that you can perceive in them their meaning. They themselves speak out their inner, essential meaning. The further you go back in history, the more you find languages like this, which resemble the one original language. The legendary Tower of Babel is a symbol of the fact that there was really once a single primeval human language; this has become differentiated into the various folk and tribal languages. That the single common language disintegrated into many language groups means that the spoken word moved halfway towards the loneliness of thought. An individual does not speak a language of his own, for then speech would lose its significance, but a common language is now found only among

groups of people. Thus the spoken word, has become a middle thing between solitary thought and the primeval language. In the original common language one could understand a word through its sound quality; there was no need to try to discover anything further of meaning, for every word revealed its own soul. Later, the one language became many. As we know, everything to do with separation plays into Lucifer's hands; therefore as human beings created their different languages, they opened the door to a divisive principle. They found their way into the current that makes it easy for Lucifer to lift human beings out of the normal progress of the world, foreseen before his own advent; Lucifer can then remove them to his isolated island and separate them from the otherwise progressive course of human evolution.

The element of speech, the Word, finds itself therefore in a middle state. If it had been able to remain as originally foreseen, without Lucifer's intervention, it would belong to a central divine position free from the influence of Lucifer and Ahriman; then, in accordance with the progress of the divine world order, mankind could have set sail on a different current. But language has been influenced on the one side by Lucifer. While a thought grasped in solitude is the complete victim of the luciferic forces, the Word itself is laid hold of only to a certain extent.

On the other hand, writing, too influences language; the further mankind progresses, the more significant is the effect of the printed word on spoken language. This comes about when folk dialects, which have nothing to do with writing, gradually disappear. A more elegant kind of speech takes their place, and this is even called "literary speech." The name indicates how speech is influenced by writing, and you can still notice how this happens in many localities. I am often reminded how it happened to me and my schoolmates. In Austria where there are so many dialects all mixed up together, the schools insisted on the pupils' learning the "literary speech," which the children to a great extent had never spoken. This had a peculiar result; I can describe it quite frankly, for I myself was exposed to this literary language over a long period of my life, and only with the greatest effort could I get rid of it. It sometimes even now slips through. Literary speech is peculiar in this: that one speaks all the short vowels long and all the long vowels short, whereas dialect, the language born out of the spoken word, pronounces them correctly. When you mean the *Sonne*, "sun" that is up there in the sky, dialect says d'Sunn. Someone, however, who has gone through an Austrian school is tempted to say, *Die Soone*. Dialect says, *der Sun* for *Sohn* ("son"); the school language says *der Sonn*.

English	German	Dialect	Literary Speech
sun	<i>Sonne</i> (short vowel)	<i>Sunn</i> (short)	<i>Soone</i> (long)
son	<i>Sohn</i> (long vowel)	Sun (long)	<i>Sonn</i> (short)

This is an extreme example from an earlier time, of course, but it illustrates my point.

You see how writing works back on the spoken language: it generally does work back on it. If you look at how things have developed, you will find that language has already lost what grows out of the earth and soil and is most vital, most elemental, most organic; people speak more and more a book language. This is the ahrimanic element in writing, which continually influences the spoken word from the other side. However, someone who wants to go through a normal development will easily notice from the three things Benedictus gave Capesius as examples, how senseless it is to wish to eliminate Ahriman and Lucifer from human evolution.

Consider these three activities: solitary thought, the spoken word, and writing. No sensible person, even when he fully recognizes the fact of Lucifer's influence on thinking and Ahriman's influence on writing, will wish to root out Lucifer where he is so obviously at work, for this would mean forbidding solitary thought. Admittedly, for some people this would be a most comfortable arrangement, but chances are that none would be willing to advise it openly. On the other hand, we would not want to do away with writing. Just as the positive and negative electric charge indicates a polarity in external physical nature, we will also have to agree that the contrasting ahrimanic and luciferic elements have also to exist. They are two polarities, neither of which we can do without, but they must be brought into the right relationship to measure and number. Then the human being can move between them in the middle ground by way of the spoken word — for indeed the Word was meant to be the vessel for wisdom and insight, the vehicle of thoughts and mental images. A person could say, "I must so train myself in using words that through them I allow everything self-willed and merely personal to be corrected. I must take into my soul the wisdom that past ages have unlocked out of the word. I must pay attention not only to my own opinion, not only to what I myself believe or can recognize correctly through my own ability, but I must respect what has come down

through the various cultures, through the efforts and wisdom of the various races in human evolution." This would mean bringing Lucifer into the right relationship to the Word. We would not do away with isolated thinking but, realizing that the spoken word belongs to the community, we would try to trace it back through long periods of time. The more we do this, the more we give Lucifer his rightful influence. Then instead of merely submitting to the authority of the Word, we protect its task of carrying earth wisdom from one epoch of civilization to the next.

On the other hand, if someone fully understands the matter, he must take it on himself not to submit to the rigid authoritarian principle that belongs to writing — whether it be most holy in content or completely profane — for otherwise he will fall victim to Ahriman. It is clear that for the external materialistic world we have to have writing, and writing is what Ahriman uses to detach thinking from its course toward destruction; this is his task. He wants to hold thinking back from flowing into the stream of death: writing is the best means of keeping thoughts on the physical plane. In full consciousness, therefore, we must face the fact that writing, which carries the ahrimanic element in itself, must never gain the upper hand over mankind. Through our vigilance we must keep the Word in the middle position, so that on the left and on the right — both in our thinking and in our writing — the two polar opposites, Lucifer and Ahriman, are working together at the same time. This is where we should stand and it will be the right place if we are clear in mind and heart that there must always be polarities.

Capesius took hold of all this that he heard, with his soul forces strengthened by Felicia. His attitude to what Benedictus was explaining was quite different now from earlier explanations that Benedictus had given him of the luciferic and ahrimanic elements. Fairy tales flowing out of the spiritual world were more and more fructifying the forces of his soul, so that Capesius himself perceived how inwardly strengthened and fortified his soul capacities had become. In Scene Thirteen of *The Souls' Awakening* this is represented; a soul force within Capesius designated as Philia appears to him as a spiritually tangible being, not as a merely abstract element of his soul. The more Philia becomes alive in his soul as a real being the more Capesius understands what Benedictus expected from him. At the time when he had first heard the enlivening story of the fortress that multiplied itself into a great number of such buildings, it did not at first affect him. In fact, he almost began to slumber; then when Father Felix was talking about the atoms, he really was practically asleep. Now, however, with his soul so matured, Capesius recognized the threefoldness

inherent in the whole stream of world evolution: on one side the luciferic solitary thought, on the other, the ahrimanic writing, the third, the middle state, the purely divine. He now understood the number three as the most significant factor in cultural development on the physical plane; he surmised that this number three can be found everywhere. Capesius viewed the law of number in a different way than before; now, through the awakening of Philia within him, he perceived the nature of number in world evolution. Now too, the nature of measure became clear: in every threefoldness there are two polarities, which must be brought into an harmonious balance with each other. In this, Capesius recognized a mighty cosmic law and knew that it must exist, in some way or other, not only on the physical plane but also in higher worlds. We shall have to enlarge upon this later in more precise descriptions of the divine spiritual world. Capesius surmised that he had penetrated to a law acting in the physical world as though hidden behind a veil and in possessing it, he had something with which he could cross the threshold. If he were to cross the threshold and enter the spiritual world, he must then leave behind him everything stimulated merely by physical experience.

Number and measure — he had learned to feel what they are, to feel them deeply, to fathom them, and now he understood Benedictus, who brought up other things, at first fairly simple ones, to make the principle fully clear. "The same predominance of the triad, of polarity or opposition in the triad, of harmonious balance," Benedictus told Capesius, "is found in other areas of our life. Let us look from another point of view at thinking, mental images, or ideas. First of all you have mental images; you work out for yourself the answers to the secrets of the universe. The second would be pure perception; let us say, simply listening. Some people are more likely to ponder about everything introspectively. Others don't like to think but will go around listening, will receive everything through listening, then take everything on authority, even if it's the authority of natural phenomena, for there is, of course, a dogma of external experience, when one is pushed around willingly by the superficial happenings of nature."

Benedictus could soon show Professor Capesius also that in lonely thinking there lies the luciferic attraction, whereas in mere listening, or in any other kind of perceiving, there is the ahrimanic element. But one can keep to the middle path and move between the two, so to speak. It is neither necessary to stop short at abstract, introspective thinking wherein we shut ourselves away within our own souls like hermits, nor is it necessary to devote ourselves entirely to seeing or hearing the things our eyes and ears perceive. We can do something more. We can make

whatever we think so inwardly forceful that our own thought appears before us like a living thing; we can immerse ourselves in it just as actively as we do in something heard or seen outside. Our thought then becomes as real and concrete as the things we hear or see. That is the middle way.

In mere thought, close to brooding, Lucifer assails man. In mere listening, either as perception or accepting the authority of others, the ahrimanic element is present. When we strengthen and arouse our soul inwardly so that we can hear or see our thoughts while thinking we have then arrived at meditation. *Meditation is the middle way.* It is neither thinking nor perceiving. It is a thinking that is as alive in the soul as perception is, and it is a perception of what is not outside man but a perception of thoughts. Between the luciferic element of thought and the ahrimanic element of perception, the life of the meditating soul flows within a divine-spiritual element that alone bears in itself the rightful progress of world events. The meditating human being, living in his thoughts in such a way that they become as alive in him as perceptions of the outside world, is living in this divine, on-flowing stream. On his right are mere thoughts, on his left the ahrimanic element, mere listening; he shuts out neither the one nor the other but understands that he lives in a threefoldness, for indeed life is ruled and kept in order by number. He understands, too, that between this polarity, this antithesis of the two elements, meditation moves like a river. He understands that in lawful measure the luciferic and ahrimanic elements must be balanced in meditation.

In every sphere of life the human being can learn this cosmic principle of number and measure that Capesius learned after his soul had been prepared through Benedictus's guidance. A soul that wants to prepare itself for knowledge of the spiritual world gradually begins to search everywhere in the world, at every point that can be reached, for the understanding of number, above all the number three; it begins then to see polar opposites revealed in all things and the necessity for these opposites to balance each other. A middle condition cannot be a mere flowing onward, but we must find ourselves within the stream directing our inner vision to the left and to the right, while steering our vessel, the third, middle thing, safely between the left and right polarities.

In recognition of this, Capesius had learned through Benedictus how to steer in the right way upwards into the spiritual world and how to cross its threshold. And this every person will have to learn who wants to find his



way into spiritual science; then he will really come to an understanding of the true knowledge of higher worlds.



# Lecture VI

*29 August 1913, Munich*

A few more remarks may be added to what was said in yesterday's lecture. We have seen how necessary it is — in order to cross the threshold rightly and enter the spiritual world with clairvoyant consciousness — to leave behind us all the perceptions of the physical world as well as everything we ordinarily think, feel, and will in this world. We have to be prepared to confront beings and happenings whose characteristics bear no relation at all to what can be perceived in the sense world. First, we have to strengthen the soul and its faculties, and then these strengthened, fortified soul faculties must be carried upwards with us. When we cross the threshold into the spirit realm, we must take something with us. We have pointed out that everything the sense world can give us, as well as the ideas and feelings we acquire there, are all images of what is perceptible to the senses. Nothing we acquire in this way can be of use in the spiritual world.

On the other hand, whatever is not an image of the sense world and has no significance for it — although it can there be aroused, called forth and given shape in free, inner soul experience — must be carried up into super-sensible worlds. In the last lecture we suggested using certain images of triads in their numeric relationships, images of the harmonious working together of opposites (especially the luciferic and ahrimanic elements) and of the intermediate condition. Such ideas have no immediate significance for the physical world — one can get on quite well without them — but one must have formed them in the physical world in order to carry them into spiritual worlds. That is why we tried to show through the teachings of Benedictus how the luciferic, the ahrimanic and the middle condition work into the triad of thought, word and writing in the development of human culture.

In connection with this I would like to mention something that can be of greatest use in understanding the life of humanity when looked at in the right way; it is what people from now on must acquire if our civilization is ever to progress properly. People will eventually see that they can no longer make do with the ideas that easygoing human beings today like to form in order to understand the times and social conditions. In Europe

there are folk groups that speak different languages and there are also those that differ in their script. The western Europeans write with what are called Roman letters, but others use an entirely different form of writing, which is known as Black Letter or Gothic; these exist side by side. This is a significant phenomenon for anyone wishing to form a judgment about European culture. Although such things seem unimportant, they are symptoms arising out of very deep foundations of existence. When folk groups use different forms of writing, they will come to a genuine, mutual understanding only by taking up spiritual initiatives and aims together. Nations writing a different script give the ahrimanic impulse special points of attack; it is not enough to look for mutual understanding merely based on the requirements of the physical plane. A spiritual element must be taken up by both peoples, and through this, harmony can be sought. For nations that write with Roman letters, it will be necessary — in order to understand one another — to carry the spiritual element so far that understanding takes place even in regard to facts on the physical plane. One who understands such things can recognize this in regard to the relationships in European national life. It is of deep significance that in Central Europe both kinds of writing, expressing the peculiar relationship of ahrimanic and luciferic elements, exist side by side. The reason for this is that here a middle condition cannot be reached without special difficulties: the Roman alphabet, exposed more to the ahrimanic element, must be brought into a certain opposition to the Gothic, which is more open to the luciferic element; it shows a certain trend that in their handwriting many people have to mix together both scripts. Such an intermingling of scripts is of immense importance, for it points to something lying deep in the substrata of the soul, i.e., that such people have to come to terms with both the luciferic and ahrimanic elements in a special way. Much will depend on their making a tremendous effort (if they are writing in German) not to fall into Gothic when they intend to write Roman and not to fall into Roman when they intend to write Gothic. It is becoming more and more necessary to observe life in such minute details and to look at the symptoms which bring to the surface what is happening in hidden depths. In this way we shall learn how to acquire in the physical sense world the concepts, ideas and feelings we can carry fruitfully across the threshold into the realm of the spirit.

We will certainly have to recognize what extraordinary talent — even genius — for superficiality there is in our modern culture in regard to anything expressing itself as spirituality. Somehow we will have to acquire in the physical world the concepts for what shines out of the spiritual world

and sends its rays into the physical sense world. Let us therefore look at another sphere where the luciferic and ahrimanic elements play into the physical world; we will speak first of the realm of art. In this we still hold to what has already been said, that in all human artistic development the luciferic element plays a part, that the luciferic element is present to the greatest extent in the development of art. But something more must be added. There are, in general, five principal arts to be found in the physical world: the art of building or architecture, sculpture, painting, music and poetry. Other arts combine and mix together the elements of these five; the art of the dance, we could say, is a combination of several arts. When one rightly understands dance, one does so on the basis of fundamental preconditions in the other arts. Naturally these can be combined.

Of the five arts, architecture and sculpture are those most particularly open to the ahrimanic impulse. In these arts we are concerned with form. To accomplish anything in architecture and sculpture we must find our way into the form element, which is dominant on the physical plane, for here the Spirits of Form are the ruling forces. To get to know them, one must plunge into their spiritual element, as I said before, when speaking figuratively of putting one's head into an ant hill. A person who has anything to do with sculpture must plunge his head into the living element of the Spirits of Form. In the realm of the physical world these Spirits work cooperatively with the ahrimanic element.

It is important, we will see, especially in such cases, not simply to assert in a superficial way that we have to protect ourselves from the ahrimanic element. We should always realize that such beings as the luciferic and ahrimanic ones have their particular domains, where normally they live and work, and that bad effects come about only when they overstep their boundaries. The ahrimanic impulses have their absolutely legitimate domain in architecture and sculpture.

On the other hand, we find that music and poetry are two arts where luciferic impulses are at work. Just as thought takes place in the solitude of the soul and thereby separates it from the rest of the world, the experience of music and poetry, too, belongs to our inner nature where these arts directly meet the luciferic impulse. In architecture and building we have to consider folk differences, simply because wherever Ahriman is, Lucifer will play a part as well, but these arts are directed only to some extent by the character of a people; in general this element remains neutral. However, poetry is essentially bound to the luciferic element, which comes to

expression in the differences of folk character. Although one notices this less in music, here too things lead to differentiation, much more than in architecture and sculpture.

In this we see again that in order to form concepts for the higher worlds we cannot get on in the comfortable way many people would like to do. It is absolutely correct to say that the ahrimanic element works in architecture and sculpture, the luciferic more in music and poetry, yet it must also be said: as soon as we have to do with concepts that are valid also in the higher worlds, it is not so easy to answer the question once and for all, "In sculpture is Ahriman more active, or is Lucifer?" It is certainly easy in the physical world to answer the question, "What color is common chicory?" with the statement, "It is blue." People would like things to be as easy as that for the higher worlds, but it is wrong to suppose that one can obtain such quick answers. Still, although all this holds good, the following is true. In architecture it is generally the case that the ahrimanic impulse is the stronger, but in sculpture the luciferic influence opposing Ahriman can be so strong that in some sculptural works Lucifer is more dominant than Ahriman. Nevertheless, what we said before is correct, for in the spiritual world there is not only the faculty of metamorphosis but one can say, everything is everywhere. In truth, every spiritual element tries to permeate everything. There can be luciferic sculpture and though poetry is chiefly under the influence of Lucifer, the ahrimanic influence can work very strongly on music, so that we can find music with more of Ahriman than of Lucifer.

In the middle between what is generally ahrimanic in architecture and sculpture and what is luciferic in poetry and music lies painting. In a way it is a neutral region but not such that we can comfortably settle down and say to ourselves, "Now I'll go ahead with painting, for here neither Lucifer nor Ahriman can get at me." Actually it is just here in the middle that we are exposed on both sides most strongly to their attacks; at every moment we must be on our guard. In the realm of painting we are in the highest degree vulnerable to one or the other influence. The middle line is always the place where we have to bring about, in the very strictest sense of the word, the harmonious balance of polarities by means of human will and human action.

Looking at the sphere of art as we have done — it could have been any other sphere — you see that we acquire certain concepts without which, of course, we can manage quite well on the physical plane. For it is obvious that when we are willing to remain shallow and superficial, we can get

along easily enough on this plane even if we don't find music luciferic and architecture ahrimanic! But if we want to manage without such concepts, we will not be able to form on the physical plane any ideas, thoughts, or feelings that will strengthen our soul and enable it to cross the threshold successfully and rise into the realm of spirit; we will have to remain here below on the physical plane.

We must therefore acquire concepts, feelings and ideas for the realm of the spirit if we really wish to cross the threshold, and while these must indeed be invoked by the physical, they will nevertheless have to rise above the physical-sense realm. Then with strengthened soul we will cross the threshold and become familiar with this world already characterized as a place of living thought-beings, engaged in spiritual conversation. With our strengthened soul we will become familiar with a world of beings that consist of thought-substance; through this thought-substance they are more alive, more individual, more real than any human being on earth. These beings within their thought-substance are just as real as any man of flesh and blood on the physical plane. We can gradually find our way in this world where a thought-language passes between one being and another, and where our soul is forced to carry on thought-conversations with the thought-beings if we want to arrive at a relationship with them. I have intimated this in my book *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*; more details can now be added. Because of the great responsibility in writing all this, I have tried to avoid in the book a systematic description and instead have put in aphoristic form the things that can be useful even if you have already absorbed everything in earlier lecture cycles and books.

As living thought-beings, we have to adjust to the spiritual realm of which it can be said:

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*At this place words are deeds  
and further deeds must follow them.*

*(The Guardian of the Threshold, Scene 3.)*

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A human being in the physical world carries out his actions through the movement of his hands; we have described how thoughts, living within the cosmic Word, are also direct actions. Whatever is spoken accomplishes a deed. That is what matters in the spiritual world. A being is active towards

another being; a being is active in relation to the external spiritual world around it; both of these actions are contained in spirit conversations. The spoken word is action. Therefore we have to bring ourselves upward into spirit regions in order to find ourselves as living thought-beings among other living thought-beings. We must conduct ourselves as do the other thought-beings, that is, allow our own words to be actions, to put it simply.

What do we find in those spirit regions? No longer do we find for our own use what we find down in the physical or even in the elemental worlds. This self that we carry through the physical and elemental worlds is the sum total of our experiences, gathered together from the impressions of the physical world and from everything on the physical plan that thinking, feeling and willing developed in our soul. But neither the impressions nor the feeling, thinking, and willing as they meet us on the physical plane have any significance at all in the spiritual world. There, instead of the so-called human self of the physical and elemental worlds, we find something else; namely, the part of oneself that indeed is always present in the depths of soul even though the ordinary physical consciousness can not know it. Like another being we will find our other self; this second self we find in the spiritual world.

At the close of these lectures, as in the closing section of *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*, I shall indicate for anyone who wants to ferret out contradictions, how the terms employed here are related to the terminology I used in *Theosophy* and *Occult Science*. But here it can be said: a person lives in his physical body in the physical world around him. When he comes away from it and has experiences outside the physical body, he is having those experiences in his etheric body with the elemental world around him; and when he comes out of that world as well, he is experiencing the spiritual realm in his astral body. With this experience — feeling oneself in the astral body — there will be a meeting in the spiritual world, the meeting with the other self, the second self, (See *The Guardian of the Threshold*, Scene 10.) of which Johannes Thomasius speaks at the end of *The Guardian of the Threshold*, and which stands throughout the whole action of *The Souls' Awakening* at the side of the first self of Johannes Thomasius, summoning forth his experiences. Let me describe the essence of this other self; it is what a person comes to recognize when he learns within his astral body to perceive and feel and observe in the spiritual world. It is what lives from one life on earth to another, from incarnation to incarnation. In moving from one life on earth to the next one, between death and a new birth, it weaves itself so mysteriously into our being that

the physical consciousness usually cannot perceive this other self, for it is actually within the spiritual world even though bound up with our physical being.

How is this other self active? It has just been said that it belongs to the realm of the spirit as a living thought-being among other living thought-beings, whose words are deeds; they accomplish all they do through what we can call Inspiration. The second self acts inspiringly in man's nature. What does it inspire? Our karma, our destiny. Here we discover a mysterious process: whatever our experience, whether painful or joyous, whatever it is that happens in our life, it is inspired by our other self, working from the spiritual world into this one. If you are walking along the street and something happens to you that seems accidental, it is inspired by your other self from out of the spiritual world. So you see that something like Inspiration in the spiritual world reveals itself on the physical plane and brings about your destiny in large and small happenings. Your destiny is inspired by your other self, out of the realm of the spirit.

A clairvoyant soul entering this realm perceives in the spirit-conversation a revelation of what can be put into the phrase: *words are deeds*. However, everything that happens in the spiritual world stamps itself upon the physical World. Whether you see a stone, a plant, a cloud, or lightning — behind all these stand spiritual beings and spiritual processes. Furthermore, behind the physical events of your destiny stand spiritual beings and spiritual processes. What are they? Inspirations! They are brought about by a conversation in the spiritual world. The cosmic Word is active as the inspirer of human destiny! This is of great significance for your spiritual perception on meeting your other self. You no longer think then of your human personality within its ordinary limits alone, for you extend yourself — and this must include your other self — to cover your entire destiny. You are only then a truly whole human being when — in just the same way that you say, "This finger is part of myself and belongs on the physical plane to my ego" — you also say, "It is part of myself to bang my thumb or take a painful fall, for all these things are inspired by my other self."

However, we must bear in mind just how we meet this other self on crossing the threshold into the realm of spirit. Again and again we must recollect and make clear to ourselves that in all we have learned, observed and experienced in the physical world and even in the elemental world, there is nothing in them similar to the characteristics of the spiritual world



where thoughts are living beings. If we were to enter the spirit realm only with what we have discovered in the physical and elemental worlds, then we would be confronting nothingness. What indeed can we bring into this realm? Let us consider the question carefully. The soul must become accustomed not to perceive or think or feel or will in the spirit realm as it does in the physical or in the elemental worlds. All of that must be left behind. However, it must *remember* what it perceived, thought, felt, willed in the physical world. Just as we carry into later periods of life the memories of earlier times, so must we carry over into the spirit realm out of the physical plane everything that has been strengthened and invigorated in our soul. We must enter the spiritual world with a soul that recollects the physical world.

Then we have to endure a certain experience that can be described in the following way: Imagine a moment in your ordinary earth life when all your sense perception suddenly stops; when you can no longer see nor hear, no longer are able, to think or feel or desire anything new. Every kind of life activity stops. You would know only what you remember. In exactly this situation you find yourself, when you rise into the spiritual world with clairvoyant consciousness. There is nothing there at first that will provide new perceptions. Your understanding comes only through remembering; your existence depends on what has remained to you of your memories. Your soul is aware that it can say of itself, "You now are only what you once were; your existence consists of your past; present and future have no meaning for you; your being is made up of what you have been." One could perhaps say all this easily enough — but to see oneself as nothing but memory, with no perception of the present moment, to speak of one's being as a mere 'has been,' is a remarkable experience.

When the clairvoyant soul has penetrated so far and endured this experience, then for the first time the human being will begin to have a true understanding for the being whose name has now been mentioned so often, for Lucifer. The human soul, in passing out into the spirit realm, realizes for a moment, "You are only a being of the past." Lucifer is the one who has become in the cosmic order forevermore such a being of the past, a mere has-been, a remnant of earth epochs that have died away, of what cosmic epochs had brought to his soul. And Lucifer's life — because the other divine-spiritual beings of normal earth evolution have condemned him to the past — consists in fighting with the aid of his past to gain a present and future.

Thus Lucifer stands before the clairvoyant vision, preserving in his life and soul the divine spiritual glories of world creation, yet condemned to realize, "They were once yours." And now this eternal struggle begins: fighting to add present and future to his past in the cosmic order. To perceive the macrocosmic resemblance of Lucifer to the microcosmic nature of the human soul as it crosses the threshold between the elemental and the spiritual worlds is to perceive the profound tragedy of this figure of Lucifer. And then we begin to divine something of the great cosmic secrets resting deep in the womb of existence, where not only one being struggles with another but even an epoch of time confronts another in battle, as they evolve into beings. A true picture of the world begins to take shape, pouring deep earnestness and dignity into the soul. Here we will sense something that can be called the breath of Eternal Necessities, such as those experienced in the World Midnight — where lightnings flash into existence, illumining even the figure of Lucifer, but they:

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*... die on recognition,  
and dying shape themselves to scripts of fate  
forever actively engraved in souls.*

*(The Souls' Awakening, Scene 6.)*

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The human soul itself, as it grows into life in the spiritual worlds, has a moment where it is a mere "has-been" and confronts nothingness; it is a single point in the universe, experiencing itself only as a point. But then this point becomes a spectator and begins to observe something else. Our human soul, become microscopic, has at first no content — just as a single dot has none, but now it finds itself belonging as a third entity to two others. The first to make its appearance is what lives in our memory. This is like an external world which we look back on, saying, "All that is my past." At first, without really knowing it, we ourselves stand there next to this past existence that we have brought across the threshold into the spiritual world, providing it with a life as thought-being. If then we have a feeling of utter calmness in our soul, whatever we have brought there as our past begins a spirit conversation with the living thought-beings around it. We can observe — like an objective spectator, standing nearby, though at the same time a mere dot — the other two beginning their conversation. Whatever we have brought with us in the way of thought content unfolds a spirit conversation in cosmic language with a spiritual, living thought-being

of that realm; there we listen to what our own past discusses with the living spiritual being. At first we are like nothing at all, but then, even as a nothing, we are born through listening to our own past converse with the spiritual beings of the spirit realm. Listening begins to fill us with new inward contents. We learn now to recognize ourselves when we are like a single point and feel ourselves as such, listening to the conversation of our own past with a living spiritual being. And the more we take in of this spirit conversation between our own past and the future, the more we actually *become* we ourselves become a spirit being.

In this process in the spiritual world we find ourselves within a triad. One member of the triad is our own past being, which we have carried up into the spiritual world; we have won it for ourselves in so far as it was able beforehand to reveal its spirituality in the sense world, and then across the threshold to perceive itself as our past life. The second member of the triad is the whole spiritual environment; the third member is our self. This is the threefoldness of the spiritual world: Within the triad, through the antithesis of past life and living spiritual being, the third, the middle part, the mere point-like part, develops itself and becomes — through listening to the spirit conversation of the other two — more and more filled out: a being that is developing itself within the spiritual world. In that world we thus "become" ourselves in clairvoyant consciousness.

This is what I wanted to convey to you — using words, of course, that are limited because they have to be borrowed from the language of the physical world. However, one has to try as well as possible with such words to characterize these sublime and profound relationships. For it is through these relationships alone that we can come to know our true being. And this, as I said, we receive in the spiritual world through listening to the two other thought-beings. It has been the task of this cycle of lectures to try to lead us toward understanding our true nature.



## Lecture VII

30 August 1913, Munich

We have talked during these lectures about the way the clairvoyant consciousness ascends into super-sensible worlds, where the true being of man, which is native there, can be thoroughly fathomed. And we have tried in these last few days to show how the human soul, crossing the threshold in its ascent, first passes through the elemental realm and then enters the spiritual world. We showed, too, how the soul meets with what we may call the other self of man.

The ascent could be described in the following way. At first we have a human being living in the physical body in the physical-sense world. When he sheds this physical organism, he goes on living in the etheric body, with the elemental world as his environment. (I have promised for tomorrow to clarify things for those troubled by a sense of possible confusion between the terms used here and in my book *Theosophy*.) When a person has shed his etheric body also, he ascends to the spirit world itself and this then forms his environment during the time he is living in his astral body, where he experiences his other self. We have emphasized that we experience this other self, which continues from incarnation to incarnation, in such a way that we feel almost as though we — as a third entity — were confronting two other entities. As a point-like being, we confront what we might call our past, brought into the spirit world in the form of memory and transformed into something spiritual by being brought there. And this past of ours begins a conversation in the region where living thought-beings converse. A spiritual conversation of this kind begins when the soul, as though newborn, has to listen to its own past conversing with the spiritual environment, thereby ripening and growing as a living thought-being itself.

Now a great many things can be observed in the process of growing into these spiritual worlds. Let us take the case, for a better understanding, of an ideally normal ascent into the spiritual world, in other words, the ascent of a soul in a completely undisturbed condition. Of course, hardly any such soul exists. That is exactly the reason why I tried to describe the spiritual path as I did, not just in general terms but dramatically as happens with every soul that starts out from its own particular departure point, making an ideally normal ascent out of the question.

*Every soul has its own individual spiritual path.* (See *Three Lectures on the Mystery Dramas* (note 13).) This can naturally be demonstrated only by showing how the individual ascent takes place, as, for example, in the case of Maria, Johannes Thomasius, Capesius, and Strader. But we can leave this for the moment. Let's picture instead how it would be if a soul's ascent were the ideal one, an example in which all the most ideal conditions for crossing the threshold and entering the spiritual world were met. Such a soul, on encountering its other self in the spiritual world, would not experience this encounter as though it were looking at a photograph of itself. Instead, what is subjective in the physical-sense and elemental worlds and what lives in our souls as abstract subjectivity, namely, the soul forces of thinking, feeling, and will, which we say are inside us, are now no longer within us. The thinking, feeling, and will we have in the physical world confront us objectively as a trinity on meeting our other self in the spiritual world. Encountering this trinity, we have to realize that these three are the self. I tried to represent them in the figures of Philia, Astrid, Luna; they are very real figures. There are as many of them in the world as there are human souls; once you know one, you know them all; it's like knowing all oat grains when you have seen one. But we should be clear that what is usually only a pale, shadowy presence in the human soul, becomes on meeting the other self a living trinity, experienced as three distinct entities. We ourselves are Philia, Astrid and Luna, but they are nevertheless thoroughly independent living thought-beings.

What a sufficiently strengthened soul must be aware of is that it is itself the unity of these three beings. And one must be further aware that what is called thinking, feeling and will is maya, the shadow cast into the soul by these three. Soul sickness would consist either in not recognizing oneself as these three beings in the spiritual world, seeing them as entities with whom one has nothing to do, or in an incapacity to keep them unified, perceiving instead one part of the soul as Luna, another as Astrid and a third as Philia. But it takes an ideal soul development, hardly to be found in human beings, to see this other self in its complete threefoldness.

We have to say, if we want to see things as they are, that the beings called Lucifer and Ahriman send their impulses into the physical-sense world. We have noted their influence there in a great many areas. But human souls that have taken the path of clairvoyant consciousness come into far more intensive touch with them on leaving the physical world and attempting to enter higher realms. Then Ahriman and Lucifer come at such souls and do their best to influence them in various directions.

Let us use the following to illustrate some of their actions. The human soul is pretty complicated and has many conflicting tendencies which it cannot control. These live deep down within it, beyond the reach of our ordinary consciousness. As I have already mentioned, the experience of entering the elemental world can be likened to the grotesque act of sticking one's head into an ant hill. As we stick our consciousness into the elemental realm, every thought becomes an individual living thought-being and begins to lead an independent life, in which our consciousness is immersed.

Now the clairvoyant has the following experience. All human beings have elements in their souls beyond their full control, elements to which they are emotionally attached. Ahriman becomes particularly active towards these especially intense attachments. The soul contains portions that can be pried loose from its entirety, and because we do not fully control these components, Ahriman pounces on them. Through Ahriman's unjustified activity, overstepping his proper domain, a tendency arises for those parts of man's etheric and astral being that are inclined to separate from the rest of the soul's life and become independent to be formed by Ahriman and even given human shape.

As a matter of fact, there are all sorts of thoughts sitting in us that are capable of taking on human form. When Ahriman has the chance to make these parts of the soul independent and give them human shape, they confront us in the elemental world as our *Doppelgänger*, or double. We have to be aware that everything changes as soon as we leave our physical body and enter the elemental world. One can't encounter oneself while in the physical body, but we can be in an etheric body on entering the elemental world and still see this etheric body from outside as one sees the double.

In terms of its substance, the double is a large part of the etheric body. We retain part of that body, but another part of it separates off and becomes objective. We look at it and see that it is part of ourselves, to which Ahriman has given our own shape. Ahriman tries to squeeze everything to make it conform to physical laws. The physical world is ruled by the Spirits of Form, who share this rulership with Ahriman. Therefore Ahriman can shape part of the human being into the double.

This encounter with the double is in the nature of an elemental phenomenon. It can happen as a result of subconscious soul impressions and impulses even to a person who is not clairvoyant. The following can

occur: Somebody or other may be an *intrigant* and thereby have done harm to other people. He may have gone out and set another intrigue in motion. On returning home, he may enter his study, where papers are lying on his desk, papers that may contain things he made use of in his intrigues. Now what may happen, despite the cynical cast of his ordinary consciousness, is that his subconscious may be seized by these impulses to make intrigues. He comes in, looks at his desk — and what does he see? He sees himself sitting there!

It's an uncomfortable encounter, to enter one's own room and see oneself sitting at the desk. But such things belong to the realm of the possible; they happen often and most easily to those given to intrigue. What one encounters is indeed the double. The double is one among many tasks I have set myself to tackle in the two plays, *The Guardian of the Threshold* and *The Souls' Awakening*. We know that the double is experienced by Johannes Thomasius. It is due to his peculiar development and to the strange experiences he has lived through that he has these encounters with the double in the scenes shown; (See *The Probation of the Soul*, Scene 5.) Ahri-man can form a part of his soul in such a way at this soul fragment — essentially a part of his etheric body — is filled with self-seeking soul elements. This sort of thing occurs only when the preconditions are such as those in Johannes Thomasius's case. You can get quite an idea of Johannes's particular soul in the course of the four dramas. A certain stage in his soul development is also indicated at the end of *The Guardian of the Threshold*. (See *The Guardian of the Threshold*, Scenes 9 and 10.) Such a stage is reached by many seekers on the spiritual path.

Let us summarize how things stand with this Johannes Thomasius. Looking back to the *Portal*, we find him, as it were, experiencing the higher world. But how does he experience it? We might say that if we observe him only in this early part of the dramas, *The Portal of Initiation*, he hasn't advanced very far — not beyond what might be called "imaginative soul experiences," with all the imbalance and mistakes attendant on them. All the experiences presented there are subjective, except for the scenes that are not part of the action, the Prelude and the Interlude preceding Scene Eight. All the other action is the subjective imaginative experience of Johannes Thomasius; he doesn't get beyond this stage in the Portal. Everything we see on the stage should be conceived as happening in Johannes's soul as imaginative insight. This is very clear from the stage directions, which — except for the two scenes mentioned — require Johannes to be on stage throughout; this is very tiring for the actor. Even though in the Temple scene at the end of the drama, Johannes Thomasius

says all sorts of things that theoretically have objective validity, we might agree that people say a lot of things in various temples that do not reflect maturity, for which a longer growth period is needed. But words are not what matter here; we see from the whole presentation that we are dealing with the subjective imaginations of Johannes Thomasius.

New developments come about in *The Probation of the Soul*. A higher ascent is brought about by Johannes's achieving impressions of earlier earth lives. This does not remain in the realm of imagination but extends into the objective world where spiritual facts are encountered, which exist independently of his soul. We move away from his subjectivity into the objective world. In the course of these first two plays, Johannes gradually frees himself from his subjective state and enters the objective spiritual world. That was why it happened so naturally — since in *The Probation of the Soul* Johannes was achieving the first stage of actual initiation — that Lucifer gains the seductive influence shown at the end of the play. (*The Probation of the Soul*, Scene 12.) Thus conditions are met that allow the further development of a soul like that of Johannes Thomasius, as portrayed in *The Guardian of the Threshold*.

In this play Johannes Thomasius is brought into the objective spiritual world. His work impels him at first to a more subjective encounter with Ahriman there; as a result of this meeting, Johannes develops an egotism counter to the divine world order. But now begin his objective experiences and these are Lucifer's domain. Here we are definitely no longer dealing with the merely subjective but with a picturing of the spiritual world apart from man. The spiritual world is a spiritual experience just as the physical world is a physical one.

Johannes Thomasius now enters the objective spiritual world for the first time. This means that he is able to bring in with him all the possibilities of erring of which the soul is capable, especially his strange relationship to Theodora. Johannes enters the higher world, burdened with all the slag of his lower self, but even so, confronting the higher world. If I may use a shallow term for it, I would have to say that Johannes Thomasius falls occultly in love with Theodora. Certain physical impulses intrude into the higher world in this relationship. As he goes through all this, Johannes Thomasius reaches the point described at the end of *The Guardian of the Threshold*. Here he experiences his ordinary self, belonging to the physical and elemental worlds, as well as the other self he met upon entering the spiritual world. In Scene Nine, the Morning Walk, as well as in Scene Eleven, the Temple, in the presence of Hilary, Johannes reaches what one



might describe as his inner sensing of both these two selves. But it is clear that he has not yet created any balance in the relationship between the ordinary and the other self; he wavers back and forth between the two. Considering that at the end of the *Guardian* and thus at the beginning of *The Souls' Awakening*, Johannes Thomasius stands before us as a soul who feels the separate yet parallel activity of these two selves, we can understand that much exists in his soul-being that can be dug out, so to speak. At first Ahriman digs out the double. But there is more in Johannes's soul to be extracted.

Let me emphasize that I am not describing all this as a commentary on the dramas\* but in order to make use of what they portray to illustrate actual spiritual conditions and spiritual reality. If we consider human karma, the lawful order of human destiny, we must say that there is a great deal of fulfilled karma in the human soul but also much that is unfulfilled. We have gone through a great deal in a former earth life that requires harmonizing; for the moment it may be lying unresolved in the depths of the soul. Every soul has unresolved karma of this kind.

\* (After his introductory words, Rudolf Steiner added, "Because of so many requests each year I've taken up my pen and made not only a beginning but have something worked out as a kind of explanation of our four mystery dramas. But each time I've laid the thing aside for the same reason I indicated in the "Remarks" introducing *The Souls' Awakening*: 'I am averse to adding material of this kind to a portrayal intended to speak for itself.' It is disagreeable to me to make an intellectual commentary on something that truly had no theoretical or intellectual origin but stands complete in all its scenes like an inspiration from the spiritual world. I could really say nothing more about it intellectually than anyone else would do who went into the matter. When things are given in this way, there is a definite need to let them speak for themselves, and not to suck them dry with clear theoretical thinking. However, we may be able to address several points in this lecture cycle.")

Johannes Thomasius has to become conscious of an especially large amount of unresolved karma, when his inner being separates into his ordinary and his other self. When this happens, much of his unresolved karma is separated from him. Those elements are detached that are readily felt by every soul gradually developing clairvoyance to be detaching themselves. Such souls are born into physical existence possessing the game qualities all young people have. Even clairvoyants start out in life as ordinary children do, to their own benefit; we do not always find them ready to become, the sort of person Krishnamurti was made into.

(Krishnamurti: in 1911 Mrs. Besant had named this young Hindu boy as the newly appeared Christ; later as a young man, Krishnamurti repudiated this attribution.) Then a moment comes — a karmically determined moment — when the spiritual world lights up. But it often happens — and this is important — that a clairvoyant soul experiences the sight of its own youth as though it were an objective being, (Rudolf Steiner, *Mysterienstaetten des Mittelalters* (GA 233a), (Jan. 5, 1924), (Dornach Switzerland, Rudolf Steiner Verlag). Not available in English.) when the soul is in an extremely elegiac or tragic mood. We behold our outgrown youth and ask ourselves, what would have become of this now almost alien youth, if we had not found our way into a spiritual clairvoyance? A real splitting apart takes place. One experiences a kind of rebirth and looks back to one's own youth as to something alien. We have to say of a great deal of the karma of our youthful years that it cannot be resolved in this incarnation. Much of this karma lies buried and will have to be resolved later, or else one has to make an effort to start working it out now. Johannes's soul is burdened by much unresolved karma.

Unresolved karma of this kind and the looking back at one's younger self as though at someone else are both inwardly experienced. Lucifer finds entry here; he can take away a substantial part of the etheric body and, as it were, ensoul it with the unresolved karma. It becomes a shadow-being under Lucifer's influence, a being like that portrayed in the Spirit of Johannes's Youth. A shadow-being of this kind is an actual being. It is there, separate from Johannes Thomasius, but involved in gruesome concerns, running as it does counter to the world order. This shadow-being outside Johannes Thomasius ought really to be within him; the fact that it is *not* has caused what we feel to be the tragic fate of this being, which lives outside as a part of his etheric body in the elemental and spiritual worlds.

A person who has this important, meaningful experience gathers from it the insight that his unresolved karma has loaded a burden of cosmic debt upon himself and has created a being that rightly belongs not outside but within him. The Other Philia makes Johannes Thomasius aware in *The Souls' Awakening* that he has given birth to a soul-child, who suffers a sort of illegitimate existence off by itself. The remarkable thing about growing up into the spiritual world is that one encounters one's own being but can encounter it in multiple, spiritually objective copies. In Johannes Thomasius's case we are dealing with manifold duplication. One part of his being comes to meet him as his double, and then another part — for karma belongs to the essential nature of a human being — comes as the Spirit of his Youth.

And now a third element enters the picture, for Johannes is not yet ready to undergo what Maria has gone through. She has had a relatively normal development. In Scene Nine, Astrid and Luna appear to her — not in the company of the real Philia — just these two soul forces. This is still a comparatively normal development. It would have been completely normal for Maria to have experienced the presence of all three, with thinking, feeling, and will so objectified that Maria felt them to be a unity. But such a normal development scarcely exists. Let me emphasize that the soul forces I tried to characterize here are real figures, so that the situation described is fully possible. Maria's conscientious soul and intellectual soul are more evenly developed than her sentient soul; she therefore meets Astrid and Luna but not Philia. A soul like hers still has a highly normal development.

However, Johannes Thomasius's development deviates considerably from the normal. First of all, his double appears. As he nears his other self, the double and then the Spirit of his Youth appear. All this accompanies his approach to the other self, because the latter brings these inner conditions to light. If Johannes Thomasius were to get really close to the other self, he would be confronted by all three soul forces. But he has to undergo a great deal that looms up on the way to his other self. Since Johannes does not at once attain to the other self, he is met by the Other Philia, who is more closely related to his subjectivity. The Other Philia is, in a sense, the other self. But the other self, which is still resting in the soul's depth and has not fully separated from it, is still connected with what in the physical world is most similar to the spiritual realm. This soul force is also linked with an all-prevailing love and because of this, it can guide us into higher worlds. And so the Other Philia, the third figure, is encountered by Johannes Thomasius on the way to his other self. If a soul were to meet all three soul forces, it wouldn't have to contend with any obstacles. As it is, however, the whole being of man can take objective form and appears in the outside world in its entirety. That is the case when we see the Other Philia at the end of Scene Two of *The Souls' Awakening*.

Now I explained to you that as a man grows into the elemental world and even into the spiritual world, he must acquire the capacity to transform himself, because everything in those worlds is always in a state of transformation; nothing there remains in static or finished form. Finished form exists only in the physical realm, whereas in the elemental world everything is mobile and capable of change.

But since everything is constantly changing, mixups can occur. If one is not alert enough, one can mistake one being for another. That is what happens to Johannes Thomasius: first the Other Philia appears and later on he mistakes the double for her. Mistakes of this kind can happen very easily. We must realize that we have to work our way very gradually to an exact beholding of higher worlds and that because of the constant change there, mixups can well occur. And the way these mistakes come to light is extraordinarily significant for the course of a soul's development.

Johannes has had an experience three times over, (*The Souls' Awakening*, Scenes 2, 4, 10.) as you will remember; the nature of this experience is due to the particular way he has developed. The first is with the Other Philia, the second with the double, the third again with the Other Philia — a triad of experiences. Everything in the world comes in threes! If we don't find them, we should look for them. The fact that Johannes Thomasius encounters the Other Philia twice and the double only once, and on one occasion mistakes one for the other, is due to the stage of development he has achieved. His perceiving of his soul-child, the Spirit of his Youth, goes back to the same fact. Of course, Lucifer helped create this child, which now exists as an independent being. It is one of the most shattering experiences the clairvoyant can have to find the spiritual world peopled by shadowy beings created by Lucifer from parts of unresolved Karma. We can find many such shadow-beings, which we ourselves, prompted by Lucifer, have placed in the spiritual world through our unresolved karma. These experiences with shadow-beings correspond to the point our soul development has reached.

Let us assume that Johannes Thomasius's case had been different. He would have made two mistakes, would have been wrong twice and once right, have seen the double twice and the Other Philia once. But the actual fact was that he was too caught up in subjectivity. Maria, in contrast, has gone so far in the direction of objectivity as to be confronted by two soul forces. But Johannes has to strengthen his soul to a point where what still remains rather subjective can confront him objectively: "enchanted weaving of one's own being." These words strengthen his soul. And as this enchanted weaving of his own being becomes more evident and brings him closer to his other self, Johannes confronts himself in his double, in the Spirit of his Youth and in the Other Philia.

Johannes Thomasius would have to have a different make-up to experience this triad differently — making two mistakes, let's say, and seeing the double twice. He would not have seen just one Spirit of his

Youth as *The Souls' Awakening* has it; he would instead have seen many of his soul-children in the realm of shadows. Here great secrets of soul life make themselves felt.

You can see from all I've been saying that the clairvoyant path to man's true being is complicated, for the soul itself is complex. To approach it means to ascend step by step into spiritual realms. It means also that you become a being of memory, a being of the past, for you become aware that you are not in the present nor for the moment have you any future. You are what you have been and carry your past into the present. Your further spiritual growth is then such that what you have thus carried into realms of the spirit, what you experience spiritually, starts a spiritual conversation with the surrounding spirit world. You grow as you listen to this conversation of your own past with the living thought beings of the spiritual world. But when you feel yourself thus transposed into the spirit world wherein you come upon your other self, you will also have a feeling that can be described like this: "You are now indeed in the spiritual world. You can find your other self as a spiritual being, due to the fact that you are living in the realm of the spirit clothed in the astral body. But as yet you cannot find your ultimate true being in this world. In spite of ascending into spiritual realms, you cannot yet find the being whose shadow is your ego in the physical world." One learns little by little what a significant experience one must still undergo in order to penetrate to the true ego, the true inner being, enveloped in the other self.

Man's being is indeed complex and lives far down in the soul's depths. And actually to reach the real ego requires living through a variety of experiences. It has been emphasized how one can penetrate into the spiritual world with memory, how no new impressions are received, how what one has been must be allowed to speak, and how one, now a point-like being, must listen to the spiritual conversation between one's past and one's spiritual environment. We retain this memory. It also stays with us between death and rebirth.

The memory of real sensory existence between birth and death stays firmly present in the soul between death and rebirth. But if one penetrates to the true ego after having become clairvoyant, one comes to realize that a decision, a spiritual deed is necessary. And it can be said of it: This must be a strong, determined decision of the will, to root out, to forget the memory of what we have been, in all its detail. With this we come to something that was also dimly apparent in earlier clairvoyant and cognitive stages of experience. In Scene Three of *The Souls' Awakening* where

Strader stands at the abyss of his existence, there is a foreshadowing of this experience that one has in spiritual realms. But one stands in the fullest sense of the word at the abyss of existence when one makes the decision in true freedom and energy of will, to blot out and forget oneself.

All these things are completely true of all human beings; nevertheless people are unaware of them. Every night we are required to blot ourselves out, without being conscious of it. But it is an entirely different matter fully consciously to give over to destruction and to forget one's remembering ego — to stand in the spiritual world as a nothing on the edge of the abyss of nothingness. This is the most shattering experience one can have; one must approach it with great confidence that the true ego will be brought to us out of the cosmos. And this is indeed the case.

We know, after we have achieved forgetfulness on the edge of the abyss, that everything we have ever experienced is blotted out, and this we did ourselves. But out of an as yet unknown world — a world I might call super-spiritual — our real ego, whose only remaining concealment has been the other self, comes toward us. Only now do we meet our true ego, whose shadow or maya as it exists in the physical world is the lower ego. For man's true ego belongs to the super-spiritual world. All this is inner experience: the ascent to the super-spiritual realm, the perceiving of a completely new world at the edge of the abyss, the receiving of the true ego from this world.

I wanted this description to serve as a bridge to tomorrow's lecture. You should mull it over. We will continue tomorrow, linking up with what I have said today in regard to the encounter that takes place at the edge of the abyss.



## Lecture VIII

*31 August 1913, Munich*

We come now to the end of this cycle of lectures, during which thoughts about the so-called "culture" of the present day may well have occurred to you. We have had to direct our attention in some detail to the remarkable way the ahrimanic and luciferic forces penetrate this culture. A discerning person who has some understanding of the insights of spiritual science will look objectively at modern life and surely perceive all its confusion and chaos. For many years it has been my custom to point to this as little as possible and instead, by helping to open up the spiritual world, to use our time together in a more positive way. But it must be emphasized, now as always, that a good many misunderstandings have crept into our work, into our active efforts, through this self-imposed moderation — the word is indeed not chosen arrogantly; even so, we shall not deviate greatly from this custom of ours. And in consideration of this, two things are essential: first, a clear, objective understanding that evolution, the development of the post-Atlantean world, has led far and wide to the chaotic, complex, to some extent inferior, second-rate condition of modern civilization, but that for this there is a certain valid necessity. It is not enough merely to criticize; a clear, objective understanding is needed.

On the other hand, we have to oppose the chaos and confusion of modern intellectual life with clarity of vision, as long as we are supported by the perspectives revealed by spiritual science. Ever and again we have well-meaning, good-natured friends exclaiming that here or there something quite anthroposophical has appeared; then we have to recognize the deficiency of these so-called anthroposophical things. I have said I would not deviate from my custom, but now, at the end of this cycle, I would like to refer to at least one especially grotesque example of this tendency. There are those nowadays who like to blow themselves up into a professional stance without the least understanding of anything — and people who don't practice discrimination can very easily be carried away, given the chance, by high-sounding phrases. This must really disappear from our circles. We must acquire, each one for himself, the power of clear, objective discrimination. Then we would have a better idea than has been the case up to now of the relationship of second-rate movements and individuals to our own movement.

Tendencies of this kind come up in many different ways. I would like to mention just one of them, not to criticize or to lay before you a case of specific hostility toward our work but merely to characterize the problem. A publisher in Berlin (Dr. Ferdinand Maack, ed., *Chymische Hochzeit*, (Berlin, Hermann Barsdorf Verlag, 1913).) has brought out an edition of *The Chymical Wedding* and other writings of Christian Rosenkreuz. Many of our friends and others interested in occult movements will obviously snap up this new reprint of works that have never been easy to find. But now there is an *Introduction to the Chymical Wedding* that really outdoes everything imaginable in grotesque erudition — I won't give it a more exact name. Let me read you a few lines of this *Introduction*, on page 2, without going any further into the rest of the article.

"When we approach the occult sciences with precise critical methods" — with these words, many people will be misled — "one will soon be aware that from this point on, one can get in touch with the two poles mentioned above." I shall not discuss what these poles are, for it is all merely ...; I will forego any description. "For this the newly formulated concept of Allomatics is especially valuable, as under its guidance one easily masters difficulties coming from both sides." Allomatics is something that will impress many people. "Allomatics is the study, the science and the philosophy of the Other (the word is derived from Greek *allos*, the other, in contrast to *autos*, self). Allomatics teaches the nothingness and nonexistence of the Ego. Everything is and comes from the non-Ego, from outside, from above, from below, in short, from the Other."

All this erudition continues throughout the article, in order to prepare the reading public for *The Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreuz*. I would call it — and I am not speaking from animosity but with objective logic — absolutely the same thing as originating a "Pearology" or "Pearomatics" in the place of xenology or allomatics. With exactly the same logic that this remarkable duffer derives the world from I and non-I, we could also derive the world from a pear and everything not a pear, that is, the Other of the pear. We could use the same words and concepts in order to explain the whole world as pear and non-pear. Nothing is missing from the world and its phenomena, according to this gentleman, if we explain it by means of Pearomatics, the doctrine of pear and non-pear instead of the doctrine of Ego and the Other.

Allomatics is presented as a work of great learning, with parallels to embryology in order to appear erudite. Its tone is that of many academic works that are taken seriously and are often honestly received by our



friends — I say this again not with animosity but in fact in a spirit of brotherliness — as though they were important works and not merely the products of our inferior age. This points up a lack of discrimination between what has inner value and what is pure nonsense at a low level of literature. Since the author of this introduction is also one of the people who originated or repeated the foolish Jesuit tale, (Dr. Ferdinand Maack, *Zweimal Gestorben*. (Leipzig, 1912).) it can be said quite objectively that we can estimate from this the kind of opposition springing up lately from all sides against our movement. It is important to achieve the right attitude to everything in occultism that, creeping out of so many corners of the world, is regarded by many as of equal significance to profound, scrupulous spiritual science. Another important thing to acquire, if you wish to profess honestly your allegiance to spiritual science, is the right sensitivity to these various gentlemen and their writings; this sensitivity will lead to ignoring them instead of kowtowing and hailing everything they bring out. One should actually suggest to them that instead of taking the time to produce such writing, they could make themselves more useful to humanity in other ways, for instance by taking up fretsaw work.

We really must look at such things with complete objectivity; we must get used to sizing up correctly and turning our backs on very many ingredients of modern culture. For this we need only the right kind of thinking and the sensitivity to such people and their work. One thing we have to be clear about: the phenomena of our time are perfectly comprehensible if we remember how the ahrimanic and luciferic forces have thrust themselves into human development.

Every impulse and tendency of human evolution changes from age to age; in the same way, as I have often pointed out, the ahrimanic and luciferic influences also change. Our epoch is to some degree a sort of reversed repetition of the Egyptian-Chaldean age, but as a reversed repetition the luciferic and ahrimanic forces generally play a different role today in the external culture. During the ancient Egyptian-Chaldean age the human soul, looking out on what was happening, could say: From one side the ahrimanic influence is coming; from another, the luciferic. In this ancient civilization the distinction, outwardly, could still be made. However, by the Greco-Roman age one can say that Lucifer and Ahriman confront the human soul directly and hold themselves in balance there. Anyone who enters deeply into the fundamental nature of the Greco-Roman civilization will be able to observe the state of balance between Lucifer and Ahriman. But in our time it has changed again. Lucifer and Ahriman now are in league together in a kind of partnership in the outer world. Before these

forces reach the human soul, they are knotted together externally. In ancient times the skeins of influence from Ahriman and Lucifer were quite separate, but nowadays we have them tangled and knotted together within the development of our civilization. It is extremely difficult for a human being to unravel the entanglement and find a way out of it. Everywhere in our cultural happenings we find luciferic and ahrimanic threads interwoven in a higgledy-piggledy mixture, stirring up a great deal of violent political agitation and even playing into many of the abstract ideas and superficial proceedings in full swing now and in times to come; until we are clear about this, we will not be able to form a sound judgment of the conditions around us.

We need to be watchful of the chaotic entanglement of luciferic and ahrimanic threads. For no one today is more challenged to come to terms with these forces than he who is on the path of spiritual knowledge, he who is trying to arm his soul with clairvoyant capacities in order to discover something he cannot know with his ordinary consciousness: the real being of man. This must always be the true goal of spiritual science. From the descriptions already given, it is evident that as soon as a person approaches the higher worlds, he has to step across a threshold. As an earth-being who has made his soul clairvoyant, he must go back and forth across that threshold and know how to conduct himself rightly in the spiritual world on the far side, as well as on this side in the physical world. Both in lectures and now repeatedly in our Mystery Dramas, this important threshold experience has been referred to as the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold.

A person can actually ascend into the spiritual worlds — this has often been said — and have quite a few experiences there without having a meeting with the Guardian, something that is partly terrifying but on the other hand highly significant, indeed of infinite importance for the sake of a clear, objective perception of those worlds. I have pointed to this and everything connected with it in my book, *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*, at least as far as I could while treating the material in an aphoristic way. I have gone further in the course of these lectures, and now I should like to add only a few details to characterize the Guardian of the Threshold. Should I try to describe everything about the meeting with the Guardian, I would indeed have to hold another long cycle of lectures.

May I point out again that when a human being leaves his physical body in which he lives with the physical world around him, he enters the elemental world and lives in his etheric body, just as in the physical world

he lives in the physical body. Then when he leaves the etheric body clairvoyantly, he lives in the astral body surrounded by the spiritual world. We have pointed out that on leaving the astral body the human being can then be within his true ego. Around him will be the supra-spiritual world. When he enters this world, he has finally attained what he has always possessed in the depths of his soul, his true ego. He reaches now the spiritual world in such a way that his true ego, his other self, is revealed, actually enveloped in the element of living thought-being.

All of us walking about on the physical plane have this other self within us, but our ordinary consciousness not only is not aware of it but cannot know that we will not perceive it until we ascend into the spiritual and supra-spiritual worlds. Our true ego is actually our constant companion within us, but when we meet it on the threshold of the spiritual world, it is there in a remarkable way, in fact one can say, decked out quite peculiarly. There on the threshold our true ego is able to clothe itself in all our weaknesses, all our failings, everything that induces us to cling with our whole being either to the physical sense world or at least to the elemental world. Thus we confront our own true ego on the threshold.

Abstract Theosophy can simply say: that is oneself, the other self, the true ego. But in the face of the actual reality, we won't find much meaning in the phrase: it is oneself. Of course, we all move about in the spiritual world in the form of our other self, but there we are entirely another. When we dwell consciously in the physical world, our other self is actually very much another, a stranger to us, a being that is much more foreign to us than any other person on earth. And this other self, this true ego, decks itself out in our weaknesses, in everything we should really forsake but don't wish to forsake, habits of the physical sense existence that we still hang on to when we wish to cross the threshold. And there on the threshold we actually meet a spirit being different from all other spiritual beings we could meet in the super-sensible worlds. The other beings appear to us in coverings more appropriate to their nature than those of the Guardian of the Threshold. He arrays himself in everything that arouses in us not only anxiety and distress but also disgust and loathing. He clothes himself in our weaknesses, in things that bring us to admit: Our fear of separating from him makes us shudder, or it makes us blush, overcome with shame, to have to look at what we are, at what the Guardian has wrapped himself in. While indeed this is a meeting with oneself, it is more truly the meeting with another entity.

To get past the Guardian of the Threshold is not at all easy. Actually it is much easier to behold the spiritual world than it is to behold it rightly and truthfully. To catch a few impressions of the spiritual world, especially in our modern time, is not all that difficult. To enter that world, however, in such a way that we behold it in its full reality, we must be well prepared for the meeting with the Guardian, however long it delays in coming to us; then we will experience the spiritual world correctly. Most people, or at least very many of them, get as far as the Guardian. The important point is that we should come consciously to him. Every night we stand unconsciously before the Guardian. Certainly he is a great benefactor of mankind in not allowing himself to be seen, for very few human beings could endure it. To bring into consciousness what we experience every night unconsciously is to meet the Guardian of the Threshold. People usually get just to the edge of the boundary where, one can say, the Guardian stands. But at that moment, something very peculiar happens to the soul: it perceives this moment in a twilight state between consciousness and unconsciousness and will not allow it to come to full consciousness. On that borderline the soul has the impulse to see itself as it really is, clinging to the physical world with all its weaknesses and faults, but this is unbearable. Before the event can become fully conscious, the soul — through its utter loathing — deadens, as it were, its awareness. Such moments of the soul's obliterating its consciousness are the best points of attack for the ahrimanic beings.

We come indeed to the Guardian of the Threshold by developing a sense of self that is especially strong and forceful. We have to strengthen our sense of self, if we wish to rise into the spiritual world. But in the process of strengthening our sense of self, we also strengthen all the tendencies, habits, weaknesses and prejudices that are held back and limited in the external world through our education, through custom and through the outward culture. On the threshold, the luciferic impulses assert themselves strongly from within, and when the human soul tends to deaden its awareness, Lucifer immediately unites with Ahriman, with the result that the entrance to the spiritual world is barred.

If a person with a healthy inner life searches out the insights of spiritual science without dwelling in a state of morbid craving for spiritual experiences, nothing particularly harmful will happen at the boundary line. If he attends to everything that should be attended to in the form of rightful, genuine spiritual science, nothing more will happen than that Lucifer and Ahriman balance each other for the striving soul at the threshold and the soul simply does not enter the spiritual world. But when

the person has a special craving to get in, a so-called "nibbling at the spiritual world" can take place. (See Lecture II in this volume.) Ahriman then, condensing what the soul has "nibbled," pushes into the soul's consciousness what otherwise couldn't enter it. With this, the person experiences in condensed form what he has taken from the spiritual world, so that it looks exactly like the reproduction of physical impressions. In short, he will be the victim of hallucinations and illusions; he will believe he has approached a spiritual world, because he has come as far as the Guardian of the Threshold. However, he has not passed the Guardian but has been thrown back because of his nibbling at the spiritual world. Everything he took in has condensed to what could contain genuine pictures of that world but does not contain the most important element, the one that will guarantee the soul a clear perception of the truth and the value of what he sees.

In order to pass the Guardian of the Threshold in the right way, it is absolutely necessary to develop self-knowledge: truly genuine, unsparing self-knowledge. It is a neglect of one's duty to the progress of evolution if one refuses to rise into the spiritual worlds, should karma make it possible in this present incarnation. It would indeed be wrong to say to oneself, "I shall not enter the spiritual worlds for fear of going astray." We should strive as intensely as we can to enter them. On the other hand, we must clearly understand that we may not shrink from what the human being is most apt and most willing to shrink back from: genuine, truthful self-knowledge. Nothing is actually so difficult in life as plain, honest self-knowledge. What a lot of queer things one can find in this regard! One meets people who continually emphasize out of their ordinary consciousness that they're doing this or that with complete selflessness, that they desire simply nothing at all for themselves. In trying to understand such souls, we often find that they really believe it's so, and yet, in their subconscious they are thoroughgoing egoists and want only what suits themselves. Oh, we can also find people who out of their upper consciousness, let's say, make speeches, lay down the law, publish things and in a few short pages put down words such as love and tolerance eighteen to twenty-five times, actually without having the very slightest trace of love or tolerance in their make-up. There is nothing we can be so easily deceived about as ourselves, if we fail to watch continually the practicing of honest, sterling self-knowledge. However it is difficult indeed to practice self-knowledge in a direct way. People have shut their eyes to it so completely that instead of acknowledging what they are at the present time, it has happened that they prefer to admit to being apes during the

Moon epoch (Besant and Leadbeater, *Man: Whence, How and Whither*.) — actually prefer that to acknowledging what they are today, so great can be our delusions in contrast to the moral obligation of genuine, honest self-knowledge.

A good exercise for someone striving in the spiritual sphere would be to say every so often something like this: "I will think back over the last three or four weeks — or better still, months — letting all the important happenings in which I was involved pass before my inner eye. I will deliberately disregard whatever injustice may have been done to me. I will omit all the excuses for my difficulties that I've expressed so frequently, such as, for instance: it was someone else's fault. I will not for a moment consider that any other person could have been to blame but I myself." When we reflect on how constantly we are inclined to make others and not ourselves responsible for what we don't like, we will be able to judge how valuable such a review of our life can be, in which we knowingly eliminate thoughts of injustice done to us and in which we do not allow criticism or blame of another person to arise. If you undertake such an exercise, you will discover that you are gaining a totally new relationship to the spiritual world. Such an effort will bring about a great change in the disposition and mood of one's soul.

In seeking the path to clairvoyance, the extreme difficulty of entering the higher worlds without danger, as we have said repeatedly, shows how essential it is not to come apart, not to fall to pieces, when we have to "put our head into the ant hill." We need then an immensely strengthened consciousness of self, such as a person may not develop in the physical world if he is not to be a rank egoist. In higher worlds, however, if he wants to maintain himself, stay aware of himself, realize himself, he must enter those worlds with an intensified feeling of self. Then, on coming back to the sense world, he must also have the ability to do away with this consciousness of self, in order not to be a thoroughgoing egoist. Thus, two contrasting statements can be made: in the higher worlds of spiritualities, man needs a strengthened consciousness of self; but in contrast, despite the strong feeling of self that one must find in the spirit world, what one must find in the physical world is that the spirit must *come to life* in a particular way: in all that one can describe as *love* in the physical world, the capacity for love, for sympathy and compassion, for the sharing of joys and sorrows.

Those who enter clairvoyantly into the higher worlds, know that what Maria says in *The Souls' Awakening* is true, (See Maria's speech in *The Souls' Awakening*, Scene 2.) that really the ordinary sense-consciousness we have on the physical plane is a kind of sleep when compared to what we feel and experience in higher worlds; our entrance there is an awakening. That human beings living in the physical world are asleep in relation to the experience of higher worlds, is absolutely true. It is only because they are always asleep that they are not aware of sleeping. What the clairvoyant soul crossing the threshold experiences in the spiritual world is an awakening into a strengthened feeling of self. In the physical world, on the other hand, there can be an awakening of the self through *love*, the kind of love characterized in one of our first lectures here as "the love for another person's disposition and qualities, for him and for his sake." That kind of love is protected from the luciferic and ahrimanic influences and in the physical sense-world is actually under the sway of the, good, progressive powers of the universe. The character of love is most clearly evident in the experiences of clairvoyant consciousness. The egoism we develop in the physical world, without being willing to acquire self-knowledge, shows up when it is carried into spiritual worlds. Nothing is so disturbing, nothing can be so bitter and disheartening as to experience the result of our failure to develop love and compassion in the physical world. Ascending into the spiritual world, we are filled with anguish by the selfishness and lack of love we have achieved in the physical-sense world. When we cross the threshold, everything is revealed, not only the obvious but also the hidden egoism that rages in the depths of men's souls. Someone who with outward egoism frankly insists that he wants this or that for himself is perhaps much less egoistic than those who indulge in the dream that they are selfless, or those who assume a certain egoistic self-effacement out of theosophical abstractions in their upper consciousness. This is especially the case when the latter declaim their selflessness in all sorts of repetitions of the words "love" and "tolerance." What a person carries up into higher worlds in the form of an unloving lack of compassion is transformed into hideous, often terrifying figures he meets on entering the spiritual worlds, figures that are extremely disturbing for the soul.

At this point comes one of the very significant moments that should be taken into account when we speak about the kinds of knowledge and experience we meet in higher worlds. As soon as a person comes into those worlds and finds himself in a region of loathsome things, it would then be best for him to face them boldly, with courage, while admitting to himself, "Yes, I have indeed carried all this egoism up into the higher

worlds ... it would truly be best for me to face this egoism boldly and honestly." But the human soul usually tends to shake off these repulsive things before becoming thoroughly conscious of them, and gives a kick, one can say, just as horses do, to get rid of these disagreeable forms. And then, at the very moment when we get rid of the results of our egoism, Lucifer and Ahriman have an easy game with the soul: in partnership, it is not at all difficult for them to lead the human soul into their special kingdom where they can produce all sorts of spiritual worlds, which the human being will take for the truly genuine one grounded in the cosmic order. We can say that developing truly genuine love and thoughtful, honest compassion are the right preparation for the soul that wants to find its way clairvoyantly into the spiritual worlds. When you reflect a little on how hard it is to acquire true compassion and the true capacity for love in this world of ours, you will not find these words completely unimportant.

We should be clear that these descriptions, characterizing our crossing the threshold into the spiritual world, will lead to a truly genuine knowledge of the being of man. It is only through such descriptions that we will discover what man really is, and discover too our relationship to the way the human being approaches the higher, spiritual worlds, this time between death and a new birth, in a somewhat different but still natural way.

Here I must say a few words about something I pointed out in the last chapter of *The Threshold of the Spiritual World*. From earlier descriptions in *Theosophy* and *Occult Science* we know that when we step through the portal of death and lay aside our physical body, we still have the etheric body for a short time, perhaps only a few days; then we put this aside as well. Now we can say that after putting aside the etheric body, we are at first within the astral body; in the astral body the soul goes on a sort of further journeying. The etheric body is laid aside; its destiny depends on the world which it now enters, the elemental world. You remember that we discussed how the force of transformation holds sway in this elemental world. Everything is in continual change. The etheric body, separated now from the human soul, is delivered up to the elemental world and there goes through its destined transformations. In the following years, for some a shorter time, for others longer, we live within the astral body in what from the standpoint of clairvoyant consciousness can be called the elemental world. However, in the period immediately after death we find that the soul has a quite definite impulse. In the physical world we are not apt to look continually at our own liver, spleen or stomach — for this would be impossible. We simply cannot see inside the body. People on the



physical plane are not in the habit of turning their eyes inward into the body; they look instead at the world around them. But just the opposite is the case after we have passed through the portal of death and live in the world that is called the Soul World in my *Theosophy*. There the characteristic tendency of the soul is to direct its particular attention to the destinies of its own etheric body. The soul's outer world, its environment, consists of the transformations our etheric body passes through during the whole kamaloka time. We observe how the elemental world takes our etheric body into itself. If one has been "a decent sort" here on the physical plane, one will see how the "decentness" gets on well with the laws of the elemental world. If one has been "a bad sort," one will see how poorly the etheric body (for it has had its share in being "a bad sort") gets on with the laws of this world; it is everywhere rejected. Even though our etheric body has been laid aside, we direct our whole attention to it. By looking at the ever-changing fate of our etheric body, we are made aware of what we once were: this is our kamaloka experience.

People should not criticize anthroposophy for saying all this. Aristotle and others taught quite differently: for example, that this looking back on one's own destiny after death would last a whole eternity; a man might live to be eighty or ninety years old and then would have to look eternally at what he had done to his own etheric body. Anthroposophy teaches the truth, that this looking back on the etheric body and on the destinies we have brought about in it by what we have been, lasts one or two or three decades. And this is our environment in the elemental world, an environment formed by beings similar to the human etheric body and by the transformations of these beings as well as by the transformations of the human etheric body itself. One can describe this pictorially and come to the same characterization that I have given in my book *Theosophy* as the passage of the soul through the soul world.

In order to describe the spiritual world in the right way, one cannot keep pedantically to the hard and fast concepts so useful in the physical world. We should be clear that our whole environment during the kamaloka time is dependent on our mood of soul, dependent in such a way that the elemental world we have just described gradually adapts itself to the soul world. In the elemental world more than anything else one sees a dispersing, little by little, of etheric substance, which as it evanesces can be described from stage to stage as has been done in my *Theosophy*

The time comes, in this period between death and a new birth, when there takes place what the clairvoyant consciousness has to bring about somewhat less naturally, as we have discussed earlier. After laying aside his etheric body, the human being lives in his astral body, until the time comes when this astral body detaches itself from the true ego; it is in the ego that he will live from that point onwards. This detaching of the astral body is quite unique; it is not like a snake slipping off its skin but rather a loosening on every side, a growing larger and larger until the astral body becomes one with the whole cosmic sphere. In doing this, it becomes ever thinner, while being absorbed by the whole surrounding world. At first one stands, in a sense, in the very center of one's own spiritual environment. On every side the astral body loosens itself and is absorbed in all directions, so that the environment we have about us after death, after this loosening, consists of the spiritual world and also of all that has been absorbed into it from our own astral body. We see this astral body of ours gradually go forth, becoming less and less distinct, of course, as it grows larger. We feel ourselves within the astral body — as has been described in many lectures — and nevertheless separate from it. These things are extremely difficult to describe. To picture it, just imagine a great swarm of gnats. From a distance it looks like a dark-colored ball, but when the gnats fly off in all directions, there's no longer anything to be seen. It is just the same with the astral body. While being absorbed by the whole cosmic sphere, it becomes less and less distinct. We watch it gradually drifting away until it is lost. What is lost is the astral body that is always with us when we pass through the gate of death; one can call it our past, what we once were. It was our link with the experiences we had in the physical world, living in our physical and etheric bodies. We see our own being, as it were, disappearing into the spiritual world, and this experience is very similar to the one created voluntarily by a human being seeking the discovery of his true ego in the spiritual world. The harrowing and significant impression that someone can have who is journeying on the path to a clairvoyant consciousness takes place naturally after death as just described. After death, however, a real forgetting takes place, all the sooner the less the soul proves to have been prepared and strengthened. Selfless, unegoistic souls, often criticized as weak in physical life, are precisely the strong ones after death; for a long time they will be able to watch the memories that had urged them on from physical existence towards the spiritual world. The so-called strong egoists are the puny souls after death; their astrality, dispersing gradually as a sphere, leaves them very quickly.

And now the time has come when everything one can remember disappears. It returns, but in an altered manner. Everything lost is brought back to us again. In the way it gathers together, it shows — as a consequence of what has departed — what it should become: A befitting new life must be constructed according to karma on the foundation of the old earth life. Thus there thrusts in from infinity towards a central point what must return to our consciousness from oblivion and be given back to us; with this we can become carpenters of a new life shaped by karma. In this sense an experiencing of nothing but oneself within the true ego, which is a kind of forgetting, takes place at the middle point between death and a new birth.

Today most human souls are still so little prepared for this forgetting that they experience it in a sort of spiritual soul-sleep. Those who are ready for it, however, experience just at this moment of forgetting, which is the transition from the preceding earth life to the preparation of the coming one, what is called the Cosmic Midnight in *The Souls' Awakening*. The scene of the Cosmic Midnight, in which one can enter deeply into the necessities of existence, is indeed connected with the most profound mysteries of human existence. We can say that the mystery of the human being, his true nature in which he lives between death and a new birth, is something the ordinary consciousness can never discover, although it discloses itself to the clairvoyant soul. We have described here, from the standpoint of the clairvoyant consciousness, the experience of having one's astrality absorbed by the spiritual world; it has also been described exactly, step by step, as the actual spirit-land in my *Theosophy* and *Occult Science*. What comes naturally to the soul after death can be brought about voluntarily for the clairvoyant consciousness; this has been described in *Theosophy*. The same terms are used here as in *Theosophy* and *Occult Science*.

We have tried in both this lecture cycle and in the drama cycle to characterize the nature of the cosmos and the entity of man, who has a share in the cosmos. After such a discussion, it may perhaps be permissible to add for any person setting out on the path here described that he will need to continue it to some extent on his own. On trying to penetrate ever more deeply into *The Souls' Awakening*, you will notice that so many answers to the mysteries of life are dawning on you that you realize, the dramas are there to unveil and reveal the mysteries.

I can point out an example to you. Try to experience further in meditation what is shown in *The Souls' Awakening* and what I have said here about Ahriman as the Lord of Death in the world. Beginning with Scene Three this appears clearly, but it was already hinted at in Scene One with the words Strader says to the Business Manager, "And yet will come what *has to come about*." The Manager hears in these few words something like a gentle whisper from the spiritual world; it gives rise to the beginning of his spiritual discipleship. There it is more or less hinted at, but gradually, from Scene Three onwards, we see more and more clearly how the moods and forces preparing the death of Strader are coming closer. We shall not understand why Theodora appears and tells Strader what she will do for him in the spirit-land, unless we get the feeling — though a somewhat vague one, as it has to be at this point — that something important can be expected. In the same scene, we shall not perceive rightly what Benedictus means when he describes his clairvoyance as being impaired unless we can feel how the forces of Strader's approaching death are influencing this clairvoyance. In Scene Eleven, a simple, straightforward but very significant scene, we shall not get the right impression of the dialogue between Benedictus and Strader unless we connect Strader's visionary picture with his presentiment that everything he is using to strengthen his soul will turn its destructive, power at some time on himself; unless, too, we connect this with the repetition of Benedictus's speech about his spirit vision being impaired, so that we have a premonition of what is looming ahead. The mood of the approaching death of Strader is diffused over the whole, development of even the other persons in this play from Scene Three onwards. When you bring this together with what has been said about Ahriman as the Lord of Death, you will enter more and more deeply into knowledge that leads to the mysteries of the spirit, especially by considering also how Ahriman takes a hand in the mood of the drama, which is dominated by Strader's death impulse.

Again, the last meeting of Benedictus and Strader, a meeting intended to be of real significance towards the end of the drama, as well as the final monologue of Benedictus, cannot be understood unless we bear in mind both the rightful and the unlawful interference of Ahriman in the world of the human soul and in the Word of cosmic realms. These things were not intended merely to pass through your minds, but in order for you to immerse yourselves more and more deeply in them.

It is an objective fact rather than criticism to point out how clearly it can be shown that the published writings and lecture-cycles of the last three or four years have really not been read as they could have been read in order

to grasp what was implied or even what was stated quite obviously. This is not meant as a reproof — far from it. No, it is said because almost every year at the close of the Munich lecture course, through everything having to do with it, thoughts stand before the soul that sound an alert concerning the presence of our Anthroposophical Movement in the modern world. One has to consider what should be the rightful place of the Movement within the chaotic happenings of our present so-called culture. Clear, awakened thinking about this rightful place of the movement will not be reached unless we keep one thing in mind: *that our present-day life will most certainly stagnate and become sclerotic unless it receives refreshment and healing from the flowing springs of serious, genuine occultism.* On the other hand, just such a series of lectures that makes us aware perhaps of the need to turn to spiritual science could also stress something important to everyone of us: *the feeling of responsibility.*

In the deepest layers of our souls is imprinted everything connected with our feeling of responsibility, as are our efforts to understand how this movement of ours can make itself felt, the movement that is so urgently needed today, even with all its faults and darker sides. There, too, in those deepest layers we perceive in various ways the kind of movement ours should be and what, quite understandably, it only can be at present. This can hardly be expressed in words, and the one who bears it rooted deeply in his heart will preferably not put it into words. For sometimes this responsibility weighs so heavily on one's soul that it seems thoroughly disheartening. Disheartening, because the occultists are turning up on every side today and so little of the necessary feeling of responsibility is at hand.

Certainly for the healing and development of humanity we would welcome the blossoming of anthroposophical wisdom as the finest and greatest thing that could happen now and in the near future; at the same time, we would also like to welcome, as the best and often the most satisfying addition to it, the feeling of responsibility streaming into and awakening every individual who is taken hold of by spiritual science. Still more highly should one value the emergence of a feeling of responsibility.

In truth, we would consider our movement especially fortunate if we could see it flowing out into the world with this feeling of responsibility as a lovely echo on all sides. Many of those who are sensitive to the meaning of responsibility would be able to bear things more easily if they could observe an abundance of such echoes. Still, there are many things that one can only hope for and await in the future; one must have faith while

waiting, and have confidence that the human soul through its own integrity will grasp what is right and trustworthy, and that what ought to happen will really happen. As we now separate after this course of lectures, we can clearly feel all this. Actually, one would so much like to leave in each soul something that could awaken it and radiate as warm enthusiasm for our movement but also as a feeling of responsibility for it.

The most splendid sign and seal on our spiritual scientific striving would be for us all to be able to feel how strongly linked together we are — even when we are far apart — in a true spirit community of souls having a similar warm enthusiasm for our movement, a similar love and devotion to it, and at the same time with a feeling of responsibility for it.

And now let these be my parting words to you as we go our separate ways after the time we have spent here together: May the reality and truth of the spiritual life grow ever stronger through our heart's participation in it, so that we are still together, even when we are separated in space. Let us be united by the reality of the warm enthusiasm alive in us, radiating from an open-hearted, devoted participation in the truth. And let us combine with it a genuine, upright awareness of responsibility, or at least an effort to attain it, for all that is sacred to us and so urgently needed for the world. Such a feeling brings us immediately together in the spirit. Whether our destiny brings us together in space, whether our destiny scatters us apart to our various tasks and occupations in life, our hearts will certainly be united by our enthusiasm and our feeling of responsibility. Joined together in this way, we are entitled to hopeful trust and confidence in the future of our movement, for it will then make its way into our culture, into the spiritual development of humanity, as it must do. It will find its way and find its home, so that we discern our anthroposophy like a gentle sounding from the spiritual world that brings warmth to our hearts.

What ought to happen will happen — and it must happen. Let us try to be so equal to this spiritual community of ours that insofar as it lies in us, what ought to happen, what must happen, shall happen through us.



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