

The Lectures of Rudolf Steiner

Blood is a Very Special Fluid

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The title of today's lecture no doubt reminds you of a passage in Goethe's *Faust*, when Faust, representing striving man, enters into a pact with evil powers, represented by the emissary from hell, Mephistopheles. Faust is to sign the pact in blood. At first he regards this as a joke, but Goethe undoubtedly meant the words spoken by Mephistopheles at this point to be taken seriously: "Blood is a very special fluid."

Goethe [Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832) was a German poet, novelist, and playwright.] commentators usually provide curious interpretations of this passage. You will be aware that so much has been written about Goethe's *Faust* that it can fill libraries. I naturally cannot go into what every commentator has said about this particular passage, but it all amounts more or less to what is said by a recent commentator, Professor Jacob Minor. [Jacob Minor (1855–1912) was professor of philology.] Like others, he regards Mephistopheles' remark to be ironic, but Minor adds a curious sentence. I quote it in order to illustrate the amazing things said about Goethe's *Faust*. Minor states: "The devil is an enemy of blood." He goes on to point out that as blood invigorates and sustains human life, the devil, being an enemy of the human race, must of necessity be also an enemy of blood. Minor is quite right when he further demonstrates that in sagas and legends blood always plays the kind of role it plays in Goethe's *Faust*. The oldest version of the Faust legend clearly describes how Faust makes a slight cut in his left hand with a penknife, dips a quill in the blood in order to sign the agreement, and as he does so, the blood, flowing from the wound, forms the words: "Oh man, escape!"

This is all quite correct, but what about the remark that the devil is an enemy of blood and for that reason demands the signature written in blood? Can you imagine anyone wishing to possess the very thing he abhors? The only reasonable interpretation of the passage is that Goethe, as well as earlier writers of Faust legends, wishes to show that the devil regards blood as especially valuable, and that to him it is important that the deed is signed in blood rather than in neutral ink. The supposition must be that the representative of the powers of evil believes, or rather is convinced, that he will gain a special power over Faust by possessing at least a drop of his blood. It is quite obvious that Faust must sign in blood, not because the devil is his enemy, but because he wants to have power over him. The reason behind this passage is a strange premonition that if someone gains power over an individual's blood, one gains power over the person. In short, the feeling is that blood is a very special fluid and it is the real issue in the fight for an individual's soul between good and evil.

A radical change must come about in our modern understanding and evaluation of the sagas and myths handed down since ancient times. We cannot go on regarding legends, fables and myths as childlike folklore or pretentiously declare them to be poetical expressions of a nation's soul. The poetic soul of a nation is nothing but a fantasy product of donnish officialdom. Anyone with true insight into the soul of a people knows with certainty that the contents of fables and myths, depicting powerful beings and wonderful happenings, is something very much more profound than mere

invention. When with knowledge provided by spiritual research we delve into sagas and myths, allowing the mighty primordial pictures to act on us, we begin to recognize the profound ancient wisdom they reveal.

To begin with, one naturally wonders how it was possible for primitive man, with his unsophisticated views, to depict in the form of fables and myths, cosmic riddles that are unveiled and described in exact terms by means of modern spiritual research. This at first seems very surprising. However, as further research reveals how these ancient fables and myths came into existence, one ceases to be amazed, and all doubt vanishes. One discovers that myths and fables, far from containing naive views, are filled with primordial wisdom. A thorough study of myths and fables yields infinitely more insight than today's intellectual, experimental sciences. Admittedly the approach to such a study must be with spiritual scientific methods. Whatever legends have to say about blood is important, because in earlier times an individual's inherent wisdom made him aware of the true significance of blood, this special fluid that in human beings is a stream of flowing life.

Whence this wisdom came in ancient times is not our concern today; it will be the subject of a later lecture, though an indication will be given at the close of this one. Today we shall look at the significance of blood in human evolution and its role in cultural life. However, our discussion will not be from a physiological, or any other natural scientific point of view, but from that of spiritual science. It will be a help if before pursuing our subject we remind ourselves of a maxim that originated within the civilization of ancient Egypt, where the priestly wisdom of Hermes held sway. This maxim, which expresses a fundamental truth, is known as the Hermetic maxim and runs as follows: As above, so below.

All kinds of trivial explanations of this saying are to be found, but the one that concerns us today is the following. It is obvious to spiritual science that the world accessible to our five senses, far from being complete in itself, is a manifestation of a spiritual world hidden behind it. This hidden world is called, according to the Hermetic axiom, the "world above, or the upper world." The sense world spread all about us, perceptible to our senses and accessible to our intellect, is called the "world below," and is an expression of the spiritual world above it. The physical world is therefore not complete to the spiritual researcher, but is a kind of physiognomic expression of the soul and spirit world behind it, just as when looking at a human face one does not stop short at its shape and features, but recognizes them as an expression of the soul and spirit behind them.

What everyone does instinctively when faced with an ensouled being, the spiritual researcher does in regard to the whole world. The axiom, As above, so below, when applied to a human being, means that a person's soul impulses come to expression on the face. A hard, coarse face denotes coarseness of soul, a smile inner joy, and tears inner suffering.

Let us now apply the Hermetic axiom to the question: What is wisdom? Spiritual science has often pointed to the fact that human wisdom is related to experience, particularly to painful experience. For someone actually in the throes of pain and suffering, the immediate experience will no doubt be inner discord. But when pain and suffering have been conquered, when only their fruits remain, a person will say that from the experience a measure of wisdom is gained. The happiness, enjoyment and contentment life brings one gratefully accepts; but more valuable by far, once it is overcome, is the pain and suffering, for to that people owe what wisdom they possess. Spiritual science recognizes in wisdom something like crystallized pain; pain transformed into its opposite.

It is interesting that modern research, with its more materialistic approach, has come to the same conclusion. A book well worth reading was published recently about the mimicry of thought. The writer is not an anthroposophist, but a natural scientist and psychologist. He sets out to show that a

person's thought life reveals itself in the physiognomy, and draws attention to the fact that a thinker's facial expression always suggest assimilated pain.

Thus, you see emerging, interspersed with more materialistic views, a confirmation of an ancient maxim that originated from spiritual knowledge. This will happen more and more frequently; you will find ancient wisdom gradually reappearing within the framework of modern science.

Spiritual research confirms that everything that surrounds us in the world: the configuration of minerals, the covering of vegetation, the world of animals, is the physiognomic expression of the life of spirit behind it. It is the "below" reflecting the "above." Spiritual science maintains that what thus surrounds us can be properly understood only when one has knowledge of the "above," that is, knowledge of the prototypes, the primordial beings from whom it all originated. Today we shall turn our attention to that which creates on earth its physiognomic expression in the blood. Once the spiritual background of blood is understood, it will be recognized that such knowledge must of necessity influence our spiritual and cultural life.

The problems human beings are facing today are momentous and pressing — especially educational problems involving not only the young but also entire populations. These particular problems are bound to increase as time goes on. The great social upheavals taking place make this evident to anyone. Demands causing anxiety are continually made, whether in the guise of the woman question, the labor question or the peace question. These are all problems that become understandable once insight is gained into the spiritual nature of blood.

Another question, similar in nature, which is again coming to the fore, is that of race. The racial problem cannot be understood unless one understands the mysterious effect when blood of different races is mingled. And finally, there is the problem of colonization that also belongs in this category. This problem has become even more pressing since attempts have been made to tackle it more consistently than was formerly the case. It arises when cultivated people are to share their lives with uncultivated people. Certain questions ought to be asked when attempts are made to tackle the problem: To what extent is it possible for a primitive people to assimilate a strange culture? Can a savage become civilized? What here comes under consideration are vital and far-reaching questions of existence, not just concern about doubtful morality. It is unlikely that one will find the right way of introducing a strange culture to a people if it is not known whether it is on an ascending or descending line of evolution; whether this or that aspect of its life is ruled by its blood. When the significance of blood is discussed, all these things come under scrutiny.

The physical composition of blood will be known to you from science in general. In humans, and also in the higher animals, blood is truly the stream of life. Our inner bodily nature is in contact with the external world through the fact that we absorb into the blood the life-giving oxygen from the air, a process by which the blood is renewed. The blood that meets the instreaming oxygen acts as a kind of poison, as a kind of destroyer within the organism. This blue-red blood, by absorbing the oxygen, is transformed into red, life-giving blood through a process of combustion. This red blood that penetrates all parts of the organism has the task to absorb directly into itself substances from the outer world, and deposit them as nourishment along the shortest route within the body. Humans and the higher animals must of necessity first absorb nutritive substances into the blood, then, having formed the blood, absorb into it oxygen from the air and finally build up and sustain the body by means of the blood.

A knowledgeable psychologist once remarked that the blood circulating through the body is not unlike a second person who, in relation to the one made of bone, muscle and nerve, constitutes a kind of outer world. And indeed our entire being constantly takes from the blood what sustains it,

and gives back what it cannot use. One could say that a person carries in his or her blood a double (*Doppelgänger*) who, as a constant companion, furnishes him or her with renewed strength and relieves a person of what is useless. It is entirely justified to refer to blood as a stream of life and compare its importance with that of fibre. What fibre is for the lower organism. blood is for the human being as a whole.

The distinguished scientist Ernst Haeckel [Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) was a German biologist who supported Darwin's theory of evolution and his theory of ontogeny or the development of an individual organism.] has probed deeply into nature's workshop, and in his popular works he quite rightly points out that blood is the last to develop in an organism. When tracing the stages of development in a human embryo, one finds rudiments of bone and muscle long before there is any indication of blood formation. Only late in embryonic development does formation of blood and blood vessels become apparent. This leads natural science to rightly conclude that blood made its appearance only late in world evolution, and that forces already in existence had first to reach a stage of development comparable to that of blood before they could accomplish what was necessary in the human organism. When as embryos human beings repeat once more the earlier stages of human evolution, they adapt to what existed before blood first made its appearance, This a person must do in order to achieve the crowning glory of evolution: the enhancement and transmutation of all that went before into that special fluid that is blood.

If we are to enter into the mysterious laws of the spiritual realm that hold sway behind blood, we must first take a brief look at some of the basic ideas of spiritual science. You will come to see that these basic ideas are the "above," and that this "above" comes to expression in the laws that govern blood, as it does in all other laws, as if in a physiognomy.

There are in the audience some who are acquainted with the basics of spiritual science; they will allow a brief repetition for the sake of others who are present for the first time. In any case, repetitions help to make these basic ideas clearer, as light will be thrown on them from a different aspect. In fact, what I am going to say may well appear as just a string of words to those who as yet know nothing about spiritual science, and are therefore unfamiliar with this outlook on life. However, when ideas behind words seem to have no meaning, it is not always the ideas that are at fault. In this context a witty remark made by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg [Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (1744–1799) was a physicist and satirical writer.] is apt. He said: If a head and a book collide and the result is a hollow sound, it is not always the book's fault. So, too, when some of our contemporaries pass judgment on spiritual truths, which to them seem like a string of words, it is not always spiritual science that is at fault. However, those acquainted with spiritual science will know that the references made to higher beings are to beings that really do exist, even if they cannot be found in the physical world.

Spiritual science recognizes that humans, as they appear in the sense world to physical sight, represent only a part of their true being. In fact, behind the physical body there are several more principles that are invisible to ordinary sight. Human beings have the physical body in common with the so-called surrounding lifeless mineral world. In addition, they have a life body, or ether body. What is here understood by ether is not that of which natural science speaks. The life body or ether body is not something speculative or thought out, but is as concretely visible to the spiritual senses of the clairvoyant as are physical colors to physical sight.

The ether body is the principle that calls inorganic matter into life and, in lifting it out of lifelessness, weaves it into the fabric of life. Do not for a moment imagine that the life body is something the spiritual investigator thinks into the lifeless. Natural science attempts to do that by imagining something called the "principle of life" into what is found under the microscope, whereas

the spiritual investigator points to a real definite entity. The natural scientist adopts, as it were, the attitude that whatever exists must conform to the faculties a person happens to have; therefore, what he or she cannot perceive does not exist. This is just about as clever as a blind person saying that colors are nothing but a product of fantasy. The person to pass judgment on something must be the one who has experienced it, not someone who knows nothing about it.

Nowadays one talks of "ignorabimus" and "limits of knowledge"; this is possible only as long as human beings remain as they are. But, as spiritual science points out, we are constantly evolving, and once we develop the necessary organs, we will perceive, among other things, the ether body, and will no longer speak of "limits of knowledge." Agnosticism is grave obstacle to spiritual progress because it insists that, as human beings are as they are, their knowledge can only be limited accordingly. All that can be said to this is that then human beings must change, and when they do they will be able to know things they cannot now know things they cannot now know.

Thus, the second member of a person's being is the ether body, which one has in common with the vegetable kingdom.

A human being's third member is the astral body. This name, as well as being beautiful, is also significant; that it is justified will be shown later. Those who wish to find another name only show that they have no inkling as to why the astral body is so named. In humans and animals, the astral body bestows on living substance the ability to experience sensation. This means that not only do currents of fluid move within it, but also sensations of joy, sorrow, pleasure and pain. This capacity constitutes the essential difference between plant and animal, although transitional stages between them do exist.

A certain group of scientists believes that sensation should be ascribed also to plants, but that is only playing with words. Certainly some plants do react when something approaches them, but it has nothing to do with sensation or feeling. When the latter is the case, an image arises within the creature in response to the stimulus. Even if certain plants respond to external stimuli, that is no proof that they experience inner sensation. The inwardly felt has its seat in the astral body. Thus, we see that creatures belonging to the animal kingdom consist of physical body, ether or life body, and astral body.

Human beings tower above the animal through a specific quality, often sensed by thoughtful natures. In his autobiography, Jean Paul [Jean Paul (Jean Paul Friedrich Richter, 1763–1825), German author.] relates the deep impression made upon him when, as a small child, standing in the courtyard of his parent's house, the thought suddenly flashed through his mind: "I am an 'I,' I am a being who inwardly calls himself 'I.' " What is here described is of immense significance, yet generally overlooked by psychologists. A subtle observation will illustrate what is involved: In the whole range of speech, there is one small word that in its application differs from all others. We can all give a name to the objects in this room. Each one of us will call the table, "table," the chairs, "chairs," but there is one word, one name that can only refer to the one who speaks it: the little word "I." No one can call someone else "I." The word "I" must sound forth from the innermost soul to which it applies. To me, everyone else is a "you," and I am a "you" to everyone else.

Religions have recognized that the "I" is that principle in us that makes it possible for the human soul to express its innermost divine nature. With the "I" begins what can never enter the soul through the external senses, what must sound forth in its innermost being. It is where the monologue, the soliloquy, begins in which, if the path has been made clear for the spirit's entry, the divine Self may reveal itself.

In religions of earlier cultural epochs, and still in the Hebrew religion, the word "I" was called: "The unutterable name of God." No matter how it is interpreted according to modern philology, the ancient Hebrew name for God signifies what today is expressed by the word "I." A hush went through the assembly when the initiate spoke the "Name of the Unknown God"; the people would dimly sense the meaning contained in the words that resounded through the temple: "I am the I am."

Thus, the human being consists of physical body, ether body, astral body and the "I" or the essential inner being. This inner being contains within itself the germ of the three further evolutionary stages that will arise out of the blood. They are: Manas or Spirit Self, in contrast to the bodily self; Buddhi or Life Spirit; and a human's true spiritual being: Atma or Spirit Man, which today rests within us as a tiny seed to reach perfection in a far-off future; a stage to which at present we can only look to as a far-distant ideal. Therefore, just as we have seven colors in the rainbow and seven tones in the scale, we have seven members of our being that divide into four lower and three higher.

If we now look upon the three higher spiritual members as the "above" and the four lower as the "below," let us try to get a clear picture of how the above creates a physiognomic expression in the below as it appears to physical sight. Take first what we have in common with the whole inorganic nature, that is, that which crystallized into the form of a person's physical body. When we speak of the physical body in a spiritual-scientific sense, it is not what can be seen physically that is meant, but the combination of forces behind it that constructed this form. The next member of our being is the ether body, which plants and animals also possess, and by means of which they are endowed with life. The ether body transforms physical matter into living fluids, thus raising what is merely material into living form. In animal and human the ether body is permeated by the astral body, which calls up in the circulating fluid inner participation of its movement, causing the movement to be reflected inwardly.

We have now reached the point where the being of humans can be understood insofar as they are related to the animal kingdom. The substances, such as oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, sulphur, phosphorus, and so forth, out of which our physical body is composed, are to be found outside in inorganic nature. If the substances transformed by the ether body into living matter are to attain the capacity to create inner mirror images of external events, then the ether body must be permeated by the astral body. It is the astral body that gives rise to sensations and feelings, but at the animal level does so in a specific way.

The ether body transforms inorganic substances into living fluids; the astral body transforms living substance into sensitive substance. But — and of this please take special note — a being composed of no more than the three bodies is only capable of sensing itself. It is only aware of its own life processes; its existence is confined within the boundaries of its own being. This fact is most interesting, and it is important to keep it in mind. Look for a moment at what has developed in a lower animal: inorganic matter is transformed into living substance, and living mobile substance into sensitive substance. The latter is to be found only where there is at least the rudiment of what at a higher stage becomes a developed nervous system.

Thus, we have inorganic substance, living substance, and nerve substance capable of sensation. In a crystal you see manifest certain laws of inorganic nature. (A crystal can be formed only within the whole surrounding nature.) No single entity could exist by itself separated from the rest of the cosmos. If we were to be transferred a mile or two above the earth's surface, we would die. Just as we are conceivable only within the environment to which we belong, where the necessary forces exist that combine to form and sustain us, so too, in the case of a crystal. A person who knows how to look at a crystal will see it as an individual imprint of the whole of nature, indeed of the whole

cosmos. Georges Leopold Chrétien Cuvier [Georges Leopold Chretien Couvier (1769–1832) was a French comparative anatomist and the founder of paleontology.] is quite right when he says that a competent anatomist is able to deduce from a single bone to what kind of animal it belongs, as each kind has its own specific bone formation.

So you see that in the form of a crystal a certain aspect of the whole cosmos is reflected, just as an aspect of the whole cosmos is imprinted on living substance. The fluid circulating in a living creature is a small world that mirrors the great world. When substance possesses not only life, but also experiences inner sensation, it mirrors universal laws; it becomes a microcosm that dimly senses within itself the whole macrocosm. As the crystal is an image of cosmic form, so is sentient life an image of cosmic life. The dullness of consciousness in simple creatures is compensated by its immense range, for mirrored in it is the whole cosmos.

The constitution of humans is simply a more intricate structure composed of the three bodies already found in simple sentient creatures. If you consider people while disregarding their blood, you have beings built up from the same substances as those to be found in their environment. Like the plant, human beings contain fluids that call mineral substances to life, which in turn incorporate a system of nerves. The first nerves to appear are those of the so-called sympathetic nervous system. In humans it extends along both sides of the vertebral column, forming a series of knots from which it branches out and sends threads to the various organs, the lungs, the digestive tract and so on.

In the first instance, the sympathetic nervous system gives rise to the kind of sentient life just described. But a person's consciousness does not reach down far enough to experience the cosmic processes it mirrors. The surrounding cosmic world out of which the human being, as a living being, is created, mirrors itself in the sympathetic nervous system. There is in these nerves a dull inner life. If human beings could dive down consciously into the sympathetic nervous system, while the higher nervous system fell asleep, they would behold in a world of light the workings of the great cosmic laws.

Human beings once had a clairvoyant faculty that has been superseded. However, it can still be experienced, if through certain measures the function of the higher nervous system is suspended, setting free the lower consciousness. When that happens, the world is experienced through the lower nervous system in which the environment is mirrored in a special way. Certain lower animals still have this kind of consciousness. As explained, it is extremely dull, but provides a dim awareness of a far wider aspect of the world than the tiny section perceived by humans today.

At the time when evolution had reached the stage of the cosmos being mirrored in the sympathetic nervous system, another event occurred in human beings. The spinal cord was added to the sympathetic nervous system. The system of brain and spinal cord extended to the organs, through which contact was established with the outer world. Once their organisms had reached this stage, humans were no longer obliged to be merely a mirror for the primordial cosmic laws; the mirror image itself now entered into relationship with the environment. The incorporation of the higher nervous system in addition to the sympathetic nervous system denoted the transformation that had occurred in the astral body. Whereas formerly it participated dully in the life of the cosmos, it now contributed its own inner experiences.

Through the sympathetic nervous system, a being senses what takes place outside itself; through the higher nervous system, what takes place within itself. In individuals at the present stage of their evolution, the highest form of the nervous system is developed; it enables people to obtain from the highly structured astral body what is needed to formulate mental pictures of the outer world. Therefore, a person has lost the ability to experience the environment in the original dull pictures.

Instead, individuals are aware of their inner life, and build within the inner self a new world of pictures on a higher level. This world of mental pictures mirrors, it is true, a much smaller section of the outer world, but does so much more clearly and perfectly.

Hand in hand with this transformation, another one occurred on a higher evolutionary level. The reorganization of the astral body became extended to the ether body. Just as the ether body through its reorganization became permeated with the astral body, and just as there was added to the sympathetic nervous system that of the brain and spinal cord, so what was set free from the ether body — after it had called into being the circulation of living fluids — now transformed these lower fluids into what we call "blood."

Blood denotes an individualized ether body, just as the brain and spinal cord denote an individualized astral body. And through this individualizing comes about that which expresses itself as the "I."

Having traced man's evolution up to this point, we notice that we are dealing with a gradation in five stages: First the physical body (or inner forces); second the ether body (or living fluids, to be found also in plants); third the astral body (manifesting itself in the lower or sympathetic nervous system); fourth the higher astral body emerging from the lower astrality (manifesting itself in the brain and spinal cord); and finally the principle that individualizes the ether body.

Just as two of humanity's principles, the ether, and astral bodies, have become individualized, so will the human being's first principle, built up out of external lifeless substances, that is, the physical body, become individualized. In present day humanity there is only a faint indication of this transformation.

We see that formless substances come together in the human body, that the ether body transforms them into living forms, that through the astral body the outer world is reflected and becomes inner sensation, and finally this inner life produces of itself pictures of the outer world.

When the process of transformation extends to the etheric body, the result is the forming of blood. This transformation manifests itself in the system of heart and blood vessels, just as the transformation of the astral body manifests in the system of brain and spinal cord. And, as through the brain the outer world becomes inner world, so does this inner world become transformed through the blood into an outer manifestation as the human body. I shall have to speak in similes if I am to describe these complicated processes. The pictures of the external world made inward through the brain are absorbed by the blood and transformed into vital formative forces. These are the forces that build up the human body; in other words, blood is the substance that builds the body. We are dealing with a process that brings the blood into contact with the outer world; it enables it to take from it the most perfect substance, oxygen. Oxygen continually renews the blood, endowing it with new life.

In tracing human development, we have followed a path that leads from the outer world to humanity's inner world and back to the outer world. We have seen that the origin of blood coincides with our ability to face the world as an independent being, a being able to form his or her own pictures of the external world from its reflection within the self. Unless this stage is reached, a being cannot say "I" to itself. Blood is the principle whereby "I-hood" is attained. An "I" can express itself only in a being who is able independently to formulate the pictures the outer world produces within the self. A being who has attained "I-hood" must be able to take in the outer world and recreate it within the self.

If we possessed only a brain without a spinal cord, we would still reproduce within ourselves pictures of the outer world and be aware of them, but only as a mirror image. It is quite different when we are able to build up anew what is repeated within ourselves; for then what we thus build up is no longer merely pictures of the outer world; it is the "I." A being who possesses brain and spinal cord will not only mirror the outer world, as does a being with only the sympathetic nervous system, but will also experience the mirrored picture as inner life. A being who in addition possesses blood will experience inner life within the self. The blood, assisted by oxygen taken from the outer world, builds up the individual body according to the inner pictures. This is experienced as perception of the "I".

The "I" turns its vision inwards into a person's being, and its will outwards to the world. This twofold direction manifests itself in the blood, which directs its forces inwards, building up a person's being, and outwards towards the oxygen. When humans fall asleep they sink into unconsciousness because of what the consciousness experiences within the blood, whereas when they, by means of sense organs and brain, form mental pictures of the outer world, then the blood absorbs these pictures into its formative forces. Thus, the blood exists midway between an inner picture-world and an outer world of concrete forms. This becomes clearer if we look at two phenomena. One is that of genealogy, that is, the way conscious beings are related to ancestors, the other is the way we experience external events.

We are related to ancestors through the blood. We are born within a specific configuration, within a certain race, a certain family and from a certain line of ancestors. Everything inherited comes to expression in our blood. Likewise, all the results from an individual's physical past accumulates in the blood, just as within it there is prepared a prototype of that person's future. Consequently, when the individual's normal consciousness is suppressed, for example under hypnosis or in cases of somnambulism or atavistic clairvoyance, a much deeper consciousness becomes submerged. Then, in a dreamlike fashion, the great cosmic laws are perceived. Yet this perception is nevertheless clearer than that of ordinary dreams even when lucid. In such conditions all brain activity is suppressed, and in deep somnambulism even that of the spinal cord. In this condition what the person experiences is conveyed by the sympathetic nervous system; the individual has a dull, hazy awareness of the whole cosmos. The blood no longer conveys mental pictures produced by the inner life through the brain; it only conveys what the outer world has built including everything inherited from ancestors. Just as the shape of a person's nose stems from his or her ancestors, so does the whole bodily form. In this state of consciousness a person senses his ancestors in the same manner that waking consciousness senses mental pictures of the outer world. A person's blood is haunted by his ancestors; he dimly participates in their existence.

Everything in the world evolves, also human consciousness. If we go back to the time when our remote ancestors lived, we find that they possessed a different type of consciousness. Today, during waking life we perceive external objects through the senses, and transform them into mental pictures that act on our blood. Everything a person experiences through the senses is working in not only his blood but also in his memory. By contrast, a person remains unconscious of everything bestowed by ancestors. We know nothing about the shape of our inner organs. In the past all this was different; at that time the blood conveyed not only what it received from outside through the senses, but also what existed in the bodily form, and as this was inherited, we could sense our ancestors within our own being.

If you imagine such a consciousness enhanced, you will get an idea of the kind of memory that corresponded to it. When our experiences are confined to what can be perceived through the senses, then only such sense perceptible experiences are remembered. A person's consciousness comprises only his experiences since childhood.

In the past this was different, because the inner life contained all that was brought over through heredity. A human's mental life depicted ancestors' experiences as if they were his own. A person could remember not only his own childhood, but his ancestors' lives, because they were contained in the pictures absorbed by his blood. Incredible as it may seem to the modern materialistic outlook, there was a time when human consciousness was such that an individual regarded both his and his forefathers' physical experiences as his own. When someone said: "I have experienced...," he referred not only to personally known events but also to events experienced by his ancestors. It was a dim and hazy consciousness compared with modern human waking consciousness, more like a vivid dream. However, it was much more encompassing, as it included not only his own life but the lives of ancestors. A son would feel at one with his father and grandfather, as if they were sharing the same "I." This was also the reason he did not give himself a personal name but one that included past generations, designating what they had in common with one and the same name. Each person felt strongly that he was simply a link in a long line of generations.

The question is how this form of consciousness came to be transformed into a different one. It happened through an event well-known to spiritual historical research. You will find that every nation the world over describes a significant moment in history when a new phase of its culture began — the moment when the old traditions begin to lose their influence, and the ancient wisdom that had flowed down the generations via the blood begins to wane, although the wisdom still finds expression in myths and sagas.

A tribe used to be an enclosed unit; its members married among themselves. You will find this to be the case in all races and peoples. It was a significant moment in the history of mankind when this custom ceased to be upheld — the moment when a mingling of blood took place through the fact that marriage between close relations was replaced by marriage between strangers. Marriage within a tribe ensured that the same blood flowed through its members down the generations; marriage between strangers allowed new blood to be introduced into a people.

The tribal law of intermarriage will be broken sooner or later among all peoples. It heralds the birth of the intellect, which means ability to understand the external world, to understand what is foreign.

The important fact to bear in mind is that in ancient times a dim clairvoyance existed out of which arose sagas and legends, and that the clairvoyant consciousness is based on unmixed blood, whereas our awakened consciousness depends on mixed blood. Surprising as it may seem, marriage between strangers has resulted in logical, intellectual thoughts. This is a fact that will increasingly be confirmed by external research, which has already made a beginning in that direction. The mingling of blood extinguishes the former clairvoyance and enables humanity to reach a higher stage of evolution. When a person today goes through esoteric training and causes clairvoyance to reappear, that person transforms it to a higher consciousness, whereas today's waking consciousness has evolved out of the ancient dim clairvoyance.

In our time, a person's whole surrounding world in which he acted came to expression in the blood; consequently, this surrounding world formed the inner in accordance with the outer. In ancient times it was more a person's inner bodily life that came to expression in the blood. A person inherited, along with the memory of his ancestors' experiences, also their good or bad inclinations; these could be traced in his blood. This ancestral bond was severed when blood became mingled through outside marriages. The individual began to live his own personal life; he learned to govern his moral inclinations according to his own experiences. Thus, ancestral power holds sway in unmixed blood; that of personal experience in mixed blood.

Myths and legends told of these things: "That which has power over thy blood has power over thee." Ancestral power over a folk came to an end when the blood, through being mingled with foreign blood, ceased to be receptive to its influence. This held good in all circumstances.

Whatever power wishes to subjugate a person will have to exert an influence that imprints itself in his blood. Thus, if an evil power wishes dominance over an individual, it must gain dominance over his or her blood. That is the profound meaning of the quotation from Faust, and the reason the representative of evil says: "Sign your name to the pact in blood; once I possess your name written in your blood, I shall have caught you by the one thing that will hold man. I shall then be able to pull you over to my side." That which possesses a person's blood possesses that person, and possesses the human "I. "

When two groups of human beings confront one another, as used to be the case in colonization, then only if there is true insight into evolutionary laws is there any possibility of foreseeing if the foreign culture can be assimilated. Take the case of a people that is very much at one with its environment, a people into whose blood the environment has as it were inserted itself. No attempt to graft upon it a foreign culture will succeed. It is simply impossible, and is also the reason why in certain regions the original inhabitants became extinct when colonized. One must approach such problems with insight and realize that anything and everything cannot be forced upon a people. It is useless to demand of blood more than it is able to endure.

Modern science has discovered recently that if blood from one animal is mixed with that of another not akin to it, the two types of blood prove fatal to one another. This is something that has been known to spiritual knowledge for a long time. Just as unrelated types of blood if mixed cause death, so is the old clairvoyance killed in primitive humanity when blood from different lines of descent are mingled. Our modern intellectual life is entirely the outcome of the mingling of blood. Once this approach is adopted it will be possible to study what effect the mingling of blood has had on the various people in the course of history.

Thus, when the blood of animals from different evolutionary stages is mixed the result is death, whereas that is not the case when the species are related. The human organism survives when, through marriage, blood is mingled with strange blood; here the result is the extinction of the original animal kind of clairvoyance, and the birth in evolution of a new consciousness. In other words, something happens in humans, but on a higher level, that is similar to what happens in the animal kingdom where strange blood kills strange blood. In the human kingdom strange blood kills the hazy clairvoyance that is based on kindred blood.

Therefore, it is a destructive process that gave rise to the modern human wakeful day-consciousness. The kind of spiritual life that resulted from intermarriage has been destroyed in the course of evolution; while the very thing that destroyed it, that is, marriage between strangers, gave birth to the intellect and today's lucid consciousness.

What is able to live in a person's blood lives in that person's "I." Just as the physical principle comes to expression in the physical body, the ether body comes to expression in the system of living fluids, and the astral body in the system of nerves, so does the "I" come to expression in the blood. Physical principle, ether body and astral body are the "above" blood; the "I" forms the center; and physical body, living fluids and nervous system are the "below." Therefore, whatever power wishes to dominate humans must take possession of their blood.

These are things that must be taken into account if progress is to be achieved in practical life. For example, just because the "I" comes to expression in the blood, a people's racial character can be destroyed through colonization, when more is demanded than the blood can endure.

Not till Beauty and Truth become part of a person's blood does he truly possess them. Mephistopheles wants power over Faust's "I"; that is why he seizes Faust's blood. So you see that the quotation, which is the Leitmotiv of this lecture, arose out of profound knowledge. *Blood is indeed a very special fluid.*

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