

# The Lectures of Rudolf Steiner

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## The Children of Lucifer and the Brothers of Christ

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GA 97

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*27 Aug 1909, Munich*

In the preceding lecture it has been shown to what extent the external world is an illusion, concealing the spiritual world behind it. The consciousness of the seer penetrating through this illusion represents one path to the spiritual world. It has, however, also been shown that everything in the inner life of the soul, thinking, feeling, sensations, as also the more complicated phenomena of conscience, and so on, form a kind of veil concealing a spiritual world. And the consciousness of the seer penetrating these veils represents the other path into the spiritual world. The existence of these two different paths has been known at all times to men who sought for initiation. Hence we find that a distinction was made by ancient peoples between upper and lower gods. In the Mysteries of all epochs it was taught that at a certain stage of initiation man enters the world of the upper and of the lower gods, but a great distinction was made between them. Man has no influence upon the way in which the outer world confronts him in the many coloured tapestry of colour impressions, warmth impressions etc., or in the phenomena of the elements of fire, air, water and earth. The sun rises in the morning; it sheds its rays of light over the earth, and according to the different conditions set up the external world of the senses appears; when man penetrates through these outer phenomena, he reaches the spiritual world.

Man is not in a position to destroy this world of the senses through his own resources, because he cannot materially affect the outer phenomena surrounding him; the sense world is placed before him by the spiritual beings of whom it is an expression and manifestation; through his own power he cannot impair it. At initiation he is able to penetrate the veil of the sense world, but he must leave it just as the spiritual beings have shaped and fashioned it.

The relation of a man to his own inner life is different. His perceptions, feelings, will, his thinking and the development of his conscience depend upon the extent to which he has worked upon the evolution of his soul life. Man cannot evoke a pure or an impure red or green colour from the dawn or from a plant: but the corruption of his soul life may well give rise to grotesque feelings and bad moral judgements; he can submit in a greater or lesser degree to the dictation of his conscience; in his fancies he can devote himself to beauty or to ugliness, to true or to false thought images. Through his own conduct a man modifies or changes the veil spread over the spiritual world by the inner life of the soul. And because what we see behind the veil of our own soul-life depends upon whether this veil itself is pure or corrupt, it is easy to understand that in cases where the inner life is corrupt or but slightly developed when the ascent into the spiritual worlds, or descent to the realm of lower spiritual beings takes place, grotesque images in the form of false, nonsensical abnormal concepts and forces, may be called into being. For this reason it came about that in every age a distinction was made between the ascent to the upper gods and the descent to the lower gods, and that this descent was regarded as more essentially dangerous than the ascent to the upper gods, and on this latter path, through the veils of the inner life to the spiritual worlds, very high demands were made of the pupil of the Mysteries and of Occult Science.

Mention had to be made of this, because these two paths to the spiritual world have played a great role in human evolution and because the East and the West and the relation between the 'Children of Lucifer' and the 'Brothers of Christ' can only be rightly understood if their existence is taken into account. **In the outer world, which to the ordinary human eye is apt to appear a motley web of many and varied facts and phenomena, there is nothing which is not guided by wisdom, nothing in which spiritual beings, spiritual forces and facts do not come into play; and we understand the matter aright only when we have realised that the spiritual events have been brought together under the direction of those powers which have been described from many different aspects.** To understand why a certain form of wisdom has flourished in the East and why the future of the Christian impulse depends upon the development of powers residing in the West, we must consider the origin and historical trend of the two worlds (East and West).

We know that the spiritual life of the present had its origin in old Atlantis. That an ancient spiritual life developed upon a land in the West lying between modern Europe and America, and that such Asiatic, African and American civilisations as exist are the last remnants of those of ancient Atlantis. Atlantis is the Father and Motherland of all the cultured life of today. Before the mighty catastrophe which changed the face of the globe into its present configuration, there were to be found in old Atlantis species of men very different from those of the present time, men guided by high initiates and leaders. A civilisation developed there essentially under the influence of an ancient clairvoyance, and men possessed a natural and instinctive faculty for penetrating through the outer veils of the sense world to the higher spiritual world as well as through their own soul life to the lower gods. Just as it is natural to men of the present day to see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and so on, it was natural for men of that time not only to see colours and hear in the outer world, but to be aware of spiritual beings as realities behind these colours and tones. In the same way it was natural for men at that time not only to hear the voice of conscience but also to perceive those spiritual beings called Erinyes by the Greeks. The old Atlanteans were intimately acquainted with a spiritual world. The purpose of human evolution implies that men are gradually to rise up out of this old instinctive but spiritually perceptive consciousness and push forward to the consciousness proper to our modern time. It was necessary for men to go through this stage of life on the physical plane. It was not possible to guide the whole evolution of mankind from the spiritual world in such a simple way that one stream of humanity should pass from old Atlantis over the regions of Europe and Africa into Asia, and that everything should develop, as it were, along straight lines. Evolution is never a simple, straight line of development from a single germ; another factor has to come in, and a very simple analogy will show that this is the case. Consider a plant. The seed is put into the earth and out of it develop the elementary organs of the plant, the leaves, and later, the calyx, stamen, pistils and so on. Now if development is to continue in plant life, as we know it, it is essential that something else should happen. The formation of the fruit from the blossom depends upon fecundation the fertilising substances of one plant must pass over to another, for the fruit could not develop simply out of the blossom. A stream of influences from outside has to be introduced in order that development may progress. What may be perceived in the plant is a picture of universal life and is also an indication of the laws of spiritual life. It is quite false to believe that in spiritual life a stream of culture arises here or there and continually produces new offshoots from itself. This may happen for a time, but it would no more suffice to bring about what is to come to pass, than would the blossom, without fertilisation, be able to produce the fruit. At a certain definite point of cultural evolution, a side influence must come in, a spiritual fertilisation of human development. Just as in plant life the male and female elements develop independently, so in human evolution from the time of Atlantis there had to be formed not one stream but two, passing from old Atlantis towards the East. It was necessary that these streams of civilisation should develop separately for a while, and then meet again to fertilise each other at a definite period. We can follow these two streams of human evolution if we examine the records of spiritual seer-ship. One stream of evolution is formed by the transmigration of certain

peoples from old Atlantis to more northerly regions, touching territories which now include England, the north of France, and thence extend to the present Scandinavia, Russia and into Asia as far as India. In this movement were to be found peoples of various kinds, forming the vehicle of a definite spiritual life. A second stream went a different way, in a more southerly direction, through southern Spain and Africa to Egypt and thence to Arabia. Each of these two streams of civilisation goes its own way until they meet to fructify each other at a later point of time.

Now wherein consists the difference between these two streams of culture? Men belonging to the northern stream were more adapted for the use of the outer senses of external perception their tendency was to look outwards to the veil of the surrounding world. There were initiates among these northern men who showed them the way to the spiritual worlds where the upper gods were to be found — gods who are reached by penetrating through the veils of the outer sense world. To this category belong the beings revered as the Northern Germanic gods. Odin, Thor, etc., are the names of divine beings to be found behind the outer veil of the sense world. Men belonging to the southern stream were differently constituted. These peoples had a greater tendency to delve into their soul life, into their inner nature. Let us say — and do not take the word amiss — the northern peoples had a greater gift for observing the world, the southern peoples for brooding over their own soul life, seeking the spiritual world through this inner veil. Hence it is not a matter for wonder that the gods of the descendants of the southern stream belonged to the Nether World and were rulers of the soul life. Consider the Egyptian Osiris. Osiris is the divinity found by man on Passing through the gate of death; Osiris is the god who cannot live in the external sense world. He lived there in ancient times only, and as the new era approached he was overcome by the powers of the sense world, by the evil Set; and since then he has lived in the world entered after death, accessible only by plunging into the immortal, permanent human principle which passes from incarnation to incarnation. This was why Osiris was felt to be most intimately bound up with the inner life of man.

Here we have the fundamental difference between the northern and the southern peoples. There was, however, one race who in the first period of the post Atlantean epoch combined both qualities. This race was specially selected to follow both paths leading to the spiritual world and along each of them to discover that which was serviceable and right for that epoch, being possessed of the capacity both for attaining the spiritual world behind the external sense world and also for finding the spiritual world behind the veil of their own soul life by sinking into the mystical depths of their inner nature.

This faculty, in the first epochs at all events of the old Atlantean era, was possessed by all men — and connected with it was a very definite experience. If a man who is only able to reach the spiritual world through the external sense world and to find the upper gods hears that somewhere else on the earth there are other gods, he does not understand them aright. But where the two faculties of penetrating through the external sense world and through the veil of the soul life are united, a man makes the very significant discovery that what is to be found behind the veil of the soul life is exactly the same, in essence, as that behind the veil of the outer sense world. A uniform spiritual world is revealed from without and from within. If a man should get to know the spiritual world by both paths, he realises their unity. The people of ancient India were in a position to realise the unity of spiritual life. When the super-sensible sight of the ancient Indian was directed outwards he perceived spiritual beings holding together and coordinating external phenomena. When he sank into his inner nature he found his Brahman; and he knew what he found behind the veil of his soul life to be identical with that which, passing through the Cosmos on mighty pinions, created and fashioned the external world. Such mighty conceptions — fruits of ancient Atlantean culture, preserved over the post Atlantean times — still influence us. But evolution, remember, does not progress by the mere transformation or preservation of the old, but by the bringing to birth of other streams of evolution so that mutual enrichment may take place. If we follow up the northern stream of evolution into Asia, we find that the Indian people traveled the farthest, and after amalgamation with other elements,

built up ancient Indian culture. But more to the north, in the region of Persia, we find an ancient civilisation known in later history as the Zarathustrian culture. When we investigate this Zarathustrian culture with super-sensible sight, we find that the characteristic of its people was to look more to the outer world, and to advance towards the spiritual world by this path. In view of this characteristic it is evident why Zarathustra, the leader of this ancient Persian culture, attached less importance to inner, mystical absorption, and why he was in a way opposed to it. Zarathustra pointed more particularly to the external sense world and to the visible sun, in order to call men's attention to the existence behind this visible sun of a spiritual Solar Being, Ahura Mazdao. This is an exact instance of the path followed by initiates of the northern peoples. The highest form of this more external realisation of the spiritual world was developed in ancient Persian culture under the leadership of the original Zarathustra. This form of outer perception was less and less perfect the further the peoples had lagged behind the ancient Persians who pressed on to Western Asia. [1] Other peoples remained behind in Asia and Europe, but the tendency of them all was to look more towards the external world, and all their initiates chose the path of pointing out to their followers the spiritual world behind the veil of the outer sense world. In Europe, if we make use of spiritual sight, we find in that wonderful Celtic culture which really underlies all other European culture the remnant of what arose as a result of the cooperation of the mind of the peoples with the wisdom of the initiates. Today Celtic wisdom has very largely been lost, and can be deciphered only to a certain extent by those who have spiritual vision. Wherever ancient Celticism still shines out as the fundamental basis of other European civilisations, there you have an echo of still older European civilisations which, although their paths were in reality the same, remained with the mighty Zarathustrian culture in so far as the characteristics of their peoples were concerned. According to the external distribution of the people their path to the spirit differed.

It must be understood that the interplay of man with the external world, whether it be the external spiritual world or the external sense world, has no effect upon him. Experiences that arise are not a kind of cosmic reflection, but exist in order to bring about the progress of humanity in a perfectly definite way. Now what, in reality, is man of a particular epoch? Man is the result or product of the activities of cosmic powers surrounding him, and is fashioned according to the way in which these cosmic powers permeate him. A man who inhales healthy air develops his organs correspondingly, and the same thing happens to the spiritual organism of a man who absorbs one or another kind of spiritual life and culture. Since the bodily organism is a product of the spiritual it is affected accordingly. Human evolution is a continuous process and so it is clear that in all the peoples of this northern stream the development of the external bodily qualities is noticeable, for the forces and powers of the outer world — everything that can fashion from without — were the special ones which streamed into them. Through these outer forces was developed what can be seen and perceived outwardly. Hence in these peoples, we find not only a development of warlike qualities, but also an instrument of ever increasing suitability for penetrating the external world; the brain itself grows to greater perfection under the influence of these external forces. The fundamental factors, therefore, for understanding the external world are present in men belonging to this northern stream, and only from them could be derived that spiritual culture which led finally to the mastery of the powers and forces of external nature. It may be said that the principal task of these people consisted in perfecting man's outer instrument, that part of him which is perceptible from without, not only in a physical but also in an intellectual, moral and aesthetic sense. More and more of the spirit was poured into the outer corporeality. Physical corporeality was developed to greater and greater perfection, and so the individual souls passing from one incarnation to another were generally able to find better vehicles in succeeding births, not only in a physical, but also in a moral sense.

Now let us enquire what special characteristic developed among the peoples who took the more southern way. It was of course the refinement of the life of the soul, the inner life. The conception of conscience is not to be found in olden times among those peoples whose task was the spiritualisation

of the outer corporeal qualities. Conscience as a conception arises from among the southern peoples; among them the inner life of the soul was enriched with ideas and conceptions to such an extent that it finally developed into that wealth of secret hermetic science possessed by the ancient Egyptians which amazes us even today. The wisdom of the Egyptians, held in such high honour by those who have knowledge of such matters, could only arise as the result of the development of the inner soul life. All the art and the wisdom which man had to develop from within appeared in the stream of evolution, wherein less importance was attached to the spiritualisation of the external corporeality than to the refinement and elaboration of the inner forces of the soul.

Let us now consider Greek sculpture. When a Greek sculptor wished to represent a physical body purified and spiritualised; he produced a type of the northern peoples. All the external forms of Zeus, of Aphrodite, of Pallas Athene, are racial types of the north. Where it was a matter of indicating the inner development of the life of the soul, it was necessary to show that forces develop invisibly within the soul, and then such a figure as Hermes or Mercury was produced. The form of Hermes is that of the African peoples, and it differs from the figures of the other gods; the ears are different, so is the hair, and the eyes are narrow and unlike the eyes of the northern types. — It was known that this type of humanity represented the vehicle of the scientific element, of wisdom, of everything which works upon the soul, and with this was connected the conception of Hermes as messenger to the lower gods.

Again we might characterise the difference between the two evolutionary streams by saying that the northern peoples worked at the production of a human being whose outer bodily form is an image of the spirit; whereas the southern peoples were busy developing the invisible forces of soul, perceptible only when the gaze is directed inwards (to the inner life). The northern races created the outer aspect of the image of divinity in man; the southern peoples created the invisible soul-image of the godhead in the inner life.

Thus the gods of the southern peoples are invisible divinities which man contacts in his inner nature, who arouse a certain fear and dread, but who from another aspect inspire trust and confidence. It has been pointed out that a man sees these gods of the inner world according to his own nature; if he is morally developed he confronts these gods with moral qualities of soul and their true image is revealed; their essence flows into him and he experiences inner illumination and enlightenment. If a man is immoral and his conceptions are bad, or ugly, or untrue he perceives a distorted image of this world of the gods; fearful demoniacal shapes and figures appear, even as the most beautiful face is twisted and caricatured if observed in a spherical mirror. This is why a man confronting these inner gods might feel them to be friendly, intimate spiritual companions, pouring forces into the very depths of soul life, belonging to him in the most intimate sense, strengthening and illuminating him; but if he saw them in images distorted by his own qualities, horror and terror might arise; he could be tormented, persecuted and led to the wildest excesses of life just because of their manifestation in the grotesque image of his lower passions. From this we may judge why care was taken that no unprepared human being should meet these particular gods; but where access was made possible to the spiritual world a preliminary development of the moral nature was imperatively demanded, and a very thorough preparation was ensured; the initiates were never tired of giving warning about the dangers awaiting weak souls at the meeting with these gods.

In accordance with the nature of the powers holding sway in the spiritual world accessible to the southern peoples it is called the world of Lucifer, the Light-bearer. It is a world, spiritual and divine in its nature, illumined in the inner being of man by a light invisible to outward sight and which has to be acquired by the process of individual perfecting. This was the path which people of the southern evolutionary stream took to the world of Lucifer.

As we have seen, the ideal before the more northern stream was the production of a human individuality, so perfect, so full of spirit, so noble in regard to everything in life between birth and death, that the outer body should be a worthy vessel for spirituality of the very highest order. And in Zarathustra, <sup>[2]</sup> the being who had most truly shown the way to the spiritual world behind the veil of sense phenomena, there arose the thought that an outer body must be created by so moral, intellectual and spiritual a force as should bring it to the highest point of spirituality of which an external body is capable. And since this thought first arose in Zarathustra, he set himself the task of reaching an increasingly lofty standard of perfection, living through every succeeding incarnation in bodies of higher moral, aesthetic and intellectual qualities. Zarathustra, then, brought these physical qualities to such a point of excellence that his body became not a mere image of the divine world of spirit, but a vessel for the reception of the Godhead otherwise to be seen only behind the veil of the sense world. That to which the old Zarathustra had pointed as the world of Sun Beings behind the physical sun, as the hidden spirit of the Good — Ahura Mazdao, needed, as it approached nearer and nearer to the earth, to find a dwelling place within a body of great spiritual perfection. And so in one of his incarnations, Zarathustra appeared in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, a body so spiritualised, so noble that into its external corporeality could be poured that spiritual essence formerly to be found only behind the veil of the sense world. [*This will show how erroneous is the statement that Dr. Steiner has ever identified Christ with Zarathustra. This he has never done, any more than he has declared Christ to be the same being as Buddha.*] The human body which had been developed in the northern evolutionary stream by the turning of the external gaze to the spiritual world was prepared for the reception of the spiritual essence concealed behind the sense world. For in this manner, preparation was made for the mighty event of the reception of the spirit behind the sense world, invisible to all save spiritual sight, upon earth, and its maturing there for three years in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Hence it devolved upon the northern peoples not only to develop an understanding of what lay behind the sense world, but to prepare for the possibility of that spirit flooding our earthly world, of the being heretofore hidden behind the sun, treading the earth for three years, as man among men. Thus Lucifer had entered into humanity in the southern peoples, and Christ into the northern peoples, each in conformity with the characteristics of the two streams of evolution. We ourselves live at a time when the two streams must unite as the male and female fertilising substances of plants coalesce; we live at a time when the Christ who was drawn from outside as an objective Being into the purified body of Jesus of Nazareth must be understood through deep contemplation on the part of the soul, and its union with the world of spirit to be discovered in the inner being, the world arising from Lucifer's kingdom. In this way will come to pass the mutual fertilisation of these two evolutionary streams of men. It has already begun; it began at the moment indicated in the story which tells us that the sacrificial blood of the Christ flowing from the Cross was received into the vessel of the Holy Grail and brought to the West from the East, where preparation for the understanding of the incarnation of Christ had been made in a very definite way by cultivating that which represents the light of Lucifer. In this way the union of these two streams in humanity will become more and more complete. Whatever mankind of the present time may say or do, the healing of the future humanity will be accomplished by the fact that within the union of the two streams, the mighty Christ Being, guiding as He does the evolution of the universe and of man, is understood through the light received by the soul from within, out of the kingdom of Lucifer. (The above statement has led some of Dr. Steiner's critics to infer that he sees the human soul as an union of the Christ with Lucifer. A careful study of Dr. Steiner's lectures will show there is no reason for the inference.) Christ will give the substance, Lucifer the form, and from their union will arise impulses which shall permeate the spiritual evolution of mankind, and bring about what the future has in store for the healing and the blessing of the peoples.

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# Notes

1. ⚠ These are not the Persians of whom history tells but ancient, pre-historic peoples, inhabiting the region which, in later times, was known as Persia. The 'Ancient Indians' mentioned in these lectures are even earlier.
2. ⚠ The Zarathustra to whom reference is here made, is not, of course, the historical figure, but an ancient pre-historic ancestor. In olden times it was the custom for the successors of a great Individuality to retain his name through long periods of time.

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