

SUPERSENSITIVE PAN

RUDOLF STEINER

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*A Course of five lectures given at The Hague, 13th to  
18th November, 1923, on the occasion of the founding  
of the Anthroposophical Society in Holland.*

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The following is among the many lecture-courses by Rudolf Steiner, of which the shorthand reports (unrevised by the lecturer) have been published during or after his life-time. It was given to an audience familiar with the general background and terminology of his anthroposophical teaching. In his autobiography, *The Course of my Life*, Rudolf Steiner emphasizes the distinction between his written works and these reports of lectures which were given as oral communications and were not intended for print. For an intelligent appreciation of the lectures, it should be borne in mind that certain premises were taken for granted when the words were spoken. "These premises," he writes, "include, at the very least, the anthroposophical knowledge of Man and of the Cosmos in its spiritual essence; also what may be called 'anthroposophical History,' told as an outcome of research into the spiritual world."

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## LECTURE I

The Hague, 13th November, 1923.

My dear Friends,

The theme proposed for our lectures is: Supersensible Man, as he can be perceived and understood out of Anthroposophical wisdom. We shall try to give expression to this knowledge and understanding of man from many different sides; and as the number of lectures has unavoidably to be small, I will plunge at once into the heart of the subject.

To speak of man as a supersensible being at once raises the question of the way in which man is regarded at the present day. For a long time now there has been no mention of supersensible man, not even among persons of an idealistic turn of mind. The ordinary culture and knowledge of our age never speaks of the man who passes through births and deaths. In the course of centuries it has become quite natural to us to believe and even to teach our children in the schoolroom that the Earth is no more than a speck of dust, as it were, in the Cosmos, while upon this speck of dust, as an infinitely smaller speck of dust, man moves through the Universe with a delirious rapidity—man, who is utterly insignificant in relation to the great Universe. Because this conception of the Earth as a speck of dust has permeated every mind and heart, men have completely lost the possibility of relating the human being to what lies beyond the earthly realm. Something is, however, speaking to men to-day, even if they do not realise it, even if it remain in the realm of the unconscious—speaking to them to-day in clear and unmistakable tones, urging them to turn their attention

once again to the supersensible nature of their own being, and therewith of the universe. For in the course of the last few centuries, my dear friends, materialism has found its way into our very knowledge of man. What is this materialism, in reality? Materialism is the kind of thought which regards man as a product of the substances and forces of the Earth. And although there are many who declare that the human being is not composed entirely of earthly substances and forces, we have, truly speaking, no science which concerns itself with whatever it is in man that does not originate from earthly substances; and when people declare to-day—in all good faith from their point of view—that the eternal in man can, none the less, be in some way apprehended, the statement is not really quite honest. It is not a matter simply of contradicting materialism. It is diletantism to imagine that this is what we should be doing on every possible occasion. Theories based upon materialism, which either cast doubt upon or deny altogether the existence, or at any rate the possibility of knowledge, of a spiritual world, are not of first importance; what is significant is the tremendous weight and power of materialism. Of what use is it in the long run, when people say, either out of some inner perception or out of religious tradition, that the thinking, feeling and willing of man must surely have an existence independent of the brain, if then modern science comes along and by one means or another—and it is generally, as you know, in pathological cases that research into the brain is instituted—disposes of the brain bit by bit and gives the appearance of disposing at the same time bit by bit of the human soul? Or what sense is there again in allowing intuitive feelings or religious tradition to speak of the immortality of the life of soul, and then, when a man is ill in his soul, be unable to think of anything that will help him except cures for the brain or the nervous system? It is materialism that has brought us all this knowledge and research. Many of those who are ready

to refute materialism to-day do not really know what they are doing. They do not appreciate the tremendous significance of the detailed knowledge which materialism has brought in its train; they have no notion of the consequence of materialism for our whole understanding of man.

Let us then take this for our starting point. We will look at the human being and study him quite honestly from the aspect of what modern science knows about him. Such a study will reveal much. From all that physiology, biology, chemistry and other sciences can contribute towards an understanding of the human being, we shall learn how the different known substances and forces of the world and the Earth come together to build up muscle, bone, nervous system, blood system, the several senses—in short, the whole human being of whom modern science speaks. Approaching modern science in this way in its most successful manifestation, we come upon a remarkable fact. Take, for instance, the knowledge comprised in what a medical student has to learn as the foundation for his work of healing. Having acquainted himself with certain preparatory sciences, he passes on to those which are fundamental to medicine. Let us imagine that we have before us, collected together in a handbook, everything he has to learn about the human organism, until he arrives at the point where he must pass on to specialised knowledge. If we now ask ourselves:—To what does all this knowledge amount? What does the student know of man?—we must answer:—He knows a great deal, he knows everything that can be known to-day. (For, when we turn to the psychologists, to those who set out to understand the life of soul, we find an atmosphere of doubt and uncertainty.) In natural science we have no hesitation in recognising sound and valuable results of research,—so good indeed that the scientific lecturers are often unequal to their task. If students are apt to be bored by what they have to listen to in preparation for their medical

studies, it is not the fault of the natural science but of those who expound it. We should never speak of science as "boring," but rather of "boring" professors! Truly the fault does not lie with science, for science has undoubtedly good solid matter to offer. However God-forsaken are many of those who expound science to-day, science herself has the co-operation of good Spirits. When, however, we turn from these achievements of genuine and scholarly research and listen to what psychologists and philosophers have to say about the soul or the eternal part of man, we very soon realise that, apart from what has come from earlier traditions, it is all words, words, words, which lead nowhither. If out of the deepest needs of his soul a man turns to-day to psychology or philosophy, he will not merely be bored, he will find nothing whatever to answer his questions. In our present age it is natural science alone that has something to offer to those who are seeking knowledge.

But now what does this natural science teach us about man? It speaks of that in man which comes into existence at conception or birth and passes away at death. Nothing more! If we are honest, we must admit that science has not anything more to offer. The only course left open to one who is a genuine seeker in this domain is therefore to turn his attention to what cannot, in our day, be attained by the accustomed methods of science, namely, to the founding of a real *science of the soul and spirit*, based, as was ancient spiritual knowledge, upon experience in and observation of the spiritual. Such a science is to be attained only by methods indicated in my books "Knowledge of the Higher Worlds," "Occult Science" and others,—methods which enable a man actually to perceive the spiritual, and to speak of it as he speaks of that which lies before him in the world of sense and has led to the development of a genuine and sound natural science. What the Earth has to offer to the eyes of sense, what can be made the object of experiment has not, of course,

by any means been exhausted,—although it is well on the way! But this can at most yield knowledge of man as a transient, material being, living in time. To look out beyond the earthly realm is not possible, so long as we are trying to understand the human being by the methods of natural science. For if we have eyes only for the earthly we can see nothing but the transient part of man.

As we shall find, however, even this transient part of man can never be explained in and from itself. Even here we are led, perforce, to look away from the Earth to the Earth's cosmic environment. When modern science does this, it does little more than calculate the distances of the stars, describe their courses, examine them with a spectroscope and state how far the phenomena of light which reveal themselves there admit of the conclusion that the stars contain the same substances as are found on Earth. This science of the world that is beyond the Earth does not, in point of fact, get beyond the Earth at all! It is powerless to do so. To-day, therefore, I want to begin our study by placing before you certain facts for which we shall find detailed confirmation in the later lectures of the course.

If, instead of limiting our observation to the Earth, as is customary in science to-day, we direct our gaze to what lies beyond the Earth, to the world of the Stars, we have, first, the *planetary system*, those heavenly bodies which are manifestly connected in some way with the Earth, and which are involved both in movements which man thinks he has discovered to be movements around the Sun, similar to the movement of the Earth around the Sun, and also in movements which are performed together with the Sun in one direction or another in cosmic space. Such are the results that can be attained by observation and calculation; but they afford nothing that can be applied to the being of man himself. This kind of observation has indeed nothing to offer us for our knowledge of man.



Supersensible sight leads us at once to something new. We turn our gaze to the planetary bodies outside the Earth: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, then the Earth herself, Venus, Mercury, Moon—regarding the Moon not merely as a satellite but as a planet. Modern science calculates that Saturn, for example, with its immense orbit, takes a long time, thirty years, to move around the Sun; Jupiter needs a much shorter time; Mars still less, and so on. Let us say, we look out into the star-strewn heavens and see a star, a planet at a particular spot in the sky; somewhere else we see a different star—Saturn, Jupiter, or whatever it may be. Now what is thus revealed to the eyes of sense—Jupiter here, Saturn there—has also an *ether sphere*. It is embedded in a fine, delicate ether-substance. If we can perceive the ether as well, we see that Saturn, for instance—this curiously formed planet, looking like a globe surrounded with rings—accomplishes something in the ether around it. Saturn is not inactive in relation to the ether in which the whole planetary sphere is contained and enclosed. Seen with the eye of the spirit, Saturn rays out forces. From Saturn radiates something that can be perceived as *form*. The physical planet Saturn is only one part of the picture—a part that gradually fades away before the eye of the spirit. One has the feeling that the Spirits of the World have placed Saturn there in his position in the heavens on our behoof as it were, in order that we may have a direction in which to focus our gaze. To the eye of the spirit, it is as if someone were to make a dot on the black-board, draw something around it and then rub the dot out again. This is actually what happens in spiritual sight. Saturn is blotted out, but what is around Saturn becomes clearer and clearer and tells a marvellous story. If we have reached the point where Saturn itself is blotted out and we behold the “form” or “figure” that has been worked into the ether, we find that this form extends as far as Jupiter, where the same process is repeated. Jupiter is blotted out and what

comes into being in the ether spreads out, spreads out very far; until once again a form arises in the ether, which combines with the form from Saturn to produce a picture in the heavens. We come to Mars, and the same thing happens again. Then we come to the Sun. Whereas the outer, physical Sun blinds and dazzles, we find it is not so with the spiritual Sun. All the dazzling quickly dies away when we gaze at the spiritual Sun, and a great, majestic, living picture arises from all that is inscribed into the ether—a picture that extends also to Venus, Mercury, Moon. We have, now, a complete picture with its different parts.

Some of you may here suggest that there will be occasions when Saturn, for instance, is standing at a place in the heavens where he cannot come in contact with the picture formed by Jupiter. In a wonderful way, this too is provided for. The contact is brought about in the following manner. If you were to start from a certain point lying in the East, in Asia, and draw a line right through the centre of the Earth to the other side and then extend it out into the Cosmos, you would have drawn a line that is of the greatest significance for the whole field of spiritual sight. When Saturn lies outside this line, we must carry over the picture that arises from Saturn to the line; this fixes it. The pictures are fixed by means of this line. Wherever we may have found the Jupiter-picture or the Saturn-picture—and they have to be sought for—they are fixed for our sight by being brought to this line. We have thus, finally, one single picture. Our planetary system presents a complete picture. Do you know what this picture is? We unriddle it and discover what it is—a great cosmic picture of the human skin with the sense-organs. If you take the skin of a human being, including with it the sense-organs, and try to draw the picture which corresponds to it in the heavens, it proves to be what I have just described. The planetary system inscribes into the cosmic ether what is present

in the human being—differentiated and specialised by earthly conditions—in the spatial picture of the surface of the skin including the sense-organs. That, then, is the first thing. We discover a connection between the human being, on Earth, in respect to the form given him by the skin which encloses him, and the planetary system which shapes, forms, and builds into the ether, the archetypal, heavenly picture of earthly man.

Now we make a second discovery. We look at the planets *in movement*. If we watch any particular planet, then the Ptolemaic and the Copernican systems will give us each a different picture of its course. That can very well be; the pictures of planetary movements can be interpreted in many ways. But what is far more important is that we should now be able to behold all these movements together. Suppose we are looking at Saturn, the planet that has the longest way to go and needs the longest time in which to complete his orbit. The movement of Saturn seen in conjunction with the movement of Jupiter gives a picture. Looking now at all the planets together in this way in their several movements, we have before us once again one complete picture, arising this time from the movements of the planets. The picture does not tally with the astronomical descriptions of the planetary movements. Strange to say, spiritual sight does not find the pictures of ellipses which you can see drawn in astronomical maps. When we follow Saturn, for example, with spiritual sight, he reveals to us something which, in conjunction with other movements, forms itself into a figure of eight, a kind of lemniscate. Into this form enter manifold other planetary movements. So, once again, we have a picture. This picture arising from all the planetary movements reveals itself to us as the heavenly picture of what comes to expression in the human being in the nerves and the neighbouring glands. The archetypal picture of the human skin and sense-organs is found by spiritual sight in the order and grouping of the planets. We have now

seen what happens when we pass from this to the picture of the planetary movements. If we draw an outline of the human form, we can have the feeling: This outline represents the *form* of the planetary system; but when we draw in the nervous system and the secreting glands, then with every stroke we are drawing a physical picture of the *movements* of the planetary system as they are seen with the eye of the spirit.

We can now take another step forward in our spiritual observation of the Cosmos. Having reached the point where we obtain a picture of the movements of the planets by drawing into our outline of the human form the nerves and neighbouring glands, we can go further. The several movements fade away. As we rise from Imagination to Inspiration, the movements vanish. This is of extraordinary significance. "Seeing" in the narrower sense ceases, and we begin to "hear" in the spirit. What was previously movement becomes dim and confused, until it is like a picture seen in a mist. But out of this misty picture the *Music of the Cosmos* begins to form—the Cosmic Rhythms become audible for us in the spirit. And we ask ourselves: What is it we must now add to our outline of the human form, to correspond with these Cosmic Rhythms?

In the sphere of Art, as you know, all manner of transformations are possible. When we have drawn our outline of man and then drawn within it the nervous system, we have the feeling that we have been literally painting or drawing. But now it is not so easy to paint what we hear in the realm of Cosmic Music, for it is all rhythm and melody. If we are to represent it in our picture, we must take a brush and, following the nervous system, quickly make *here* a dab of red, *there* a dab of blue, here again red, there again blue, and so on, all along the lines of the nervous system. Then at certain places we shall feel impelled to stop, we can go no further; we must now paint into the picture a definite "form," to express what we have heard in the spirit.

We can indeed transform it into drawing, but if we want to place it within the contour-line, we find that at certain points we are obliged to go *beyond* the line and paint a new and different form, because here the rhythm blue-red, blue-red, blue-red, suddenly becomes melody. We feel we must paint in this form—and the form is what the melody sings to us! *Cosmic Rhythm—Cosmic Melody*. When we have completed the picture, we have before us Cosmic Music made perceptible in space, the Cosmic Music which becomes audible to the ear of the spirit when the picture of the planetary movements grows dim and disappears. And what we have now drawn into our picture is none other than the path along which the blood flows. When we come to an organ—to heart or lung, or to organs which take into themselves either something from the outside world or substances from within the body itself—at these points we must paint a form which attaches itself in some way to the channels of the blood. Then we get heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, stomach. From the Cosmic Music we learn how to draw these organs of secretion, and how to insert them into the blood system in our picture.

Now we go a stage further. We pass from Inspiration to Intuition. Something new arises out of the Cosmic Music. The tones begin to blend with one another; one tone works upon another and we begin to hear *meaning* in this Cosmic Music. The Cosmic Music changes into speech—*Cosmic Speech* that is spoken forth by the Universe. At the stage of Intuition, what was known in earlier times as the Cosmic Word becomes audible. We must now draw something else into our picture of the human being. Here we must proceed just as we proceed in ordinary everyday writing, where we express something by means of words that are formed of letters. In our picture of man, we must express the meaning of the single Cosmic Words. We find that when we give expression to these Cosmic Words and bring that expression into the drawing, we have before us a

picture of the *muscular* and *bony systems* in the human being. It is just as though someone were to tell us something which we then write down. Cosmic Speech tells us something—and we draw it into the picture. In what the world beyond the Earth tells us, we have thus been able to find the human being in his totality.

But now there is another and essentially different experience that comes to us in the course of this spiritual observation. Let us return to what was said at the beginning of the lecture about the form that is inscribed in the ether by the planetary bodies. While we are engaged in this spiritual observation, knowledge of the earthly vanishes for us; it remains as a memory only. But it must be there as memory; if it were not, we should have no stability, no balance, and these are essential if we are to be knowers of the spirit. A knowledge of the spirit that excludes physical knowledge is not good. Just as in physical life we must be able to remember—for if the faculty of remembering what we do and experience is lacking, we are not in good health—so, in the realm of spiritual knowledge we must be able always to remember what is there in the physical world. In the sphere where we experience the formative activities of the planetary system, the other kind of knowledge which we had on Earth—all that is given us in the wonderful achievements of physical science—is for the moment entirely forgotten. However well and thoroughly we have known our Natural Science here on Earth, in every act of spirit-knowledge we have always again and again to remember it, we have to recall to our consciousness what we have learnt in the realm of the physical. We must say to ourselves at every turn: That is the solid ground upon which I have to stand. But it withdraws from us, it becomes no more than a memory. On the other hand, we begin now to have a new perception, which is as vivid in comparison with physical knowledge as is immediate present experience compared

with remembered experience. We perceive that while we are beholding the form-giving power of the planetary sphere we are within an entirely new environment. Around us are the Beings of the Third Hierarchy: Archai, Archangels, Angels. In this form-creating activity lives the Third Hierarchy. A new world arises before us. And now we do not merely say: From the world of the planets has come the human form in its Cosmic Archetype! Now we say: Beings of the Third Hierarchy, Archai, Archangels and Angels, are working and weaving at this cosmic archetype of the form of man!

It is possible here in earthly existence to attain to perception of the world of the Hierarchies, by means of supersensible knowledge. After death, every human being must necessarily experience such knowledge, and the better he has prepared himself—as he can prepare himself—during earthly existence, the easier it will be for him. On Earth, when a man wants to know what he is like in his form and figure, he can look at himself in a mirror, or he can have his photograph taken. After death no such means exist,—either for himself or in regard to his fellowmen. After death he has to look away to the formative working and weaving of the planets. In what the planets reveal, he beholds the building up of his form. There we recognise our own human form. And working and weaving through it all are the Beings of the Third Hierarchy,—the Angels, Archangels and Archai.

We can now progress further on our upward path. When we have recognised that the weaving life of Angels, Archangels and Archai is connected with the form of the human skin and the sense-organs that belong to it, we can advance a step further in our knowledge of man's relation with the world beyond the Earth. Only, let us first be quite clear how differently we have now to think of the human form or figure. Here on Earth we describe a man's figure, or perhaps his countenance. One man's

forehead, we say, is of such and such a shape; another has a nose of a particular shape; a third has mournful eyes; a fourth laughing eyes,—and so on. But there we stop. Cosmic knowledge on the other hand reveals to us in everything that goes to make up the human form the working and weaving of the Third Hierarchy. The human form is in truth no earthly creation. The Earth merely provides the substance for the embryo. The Archai, Archangels and Angels work in from the Cosmos, building up the human form. If we now advance further and come to perceive the confluence of the planetary movements, of which confluence the nervous system and the secreting glands are an after-copy, we find, interwoven with the movements of the planets, the Beings of the Second Hierarchy: Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis. Beings of the Second Hierarchy are active in the shaping of the cosmic archetype of the nervous and glandular systems in man. It is thus at a later period after death—that is to say, some time after we have learned to understand the human form from its cosmic archetype—that we ascend to the world of the Second Hierarchy, and realise that the earthly human being to whom we now look back as a memory was fashioned and created in his nervous and glandular systems by the Exusiai, Kyriotetes and Dynamis. Then we no longer regard the human being as the product of forces of electricity, magnetism and the like; we take knowledge of how he as physical man has been built up by the Beings of the Second Hierarchy.

We go still further and ascend to the sphere of Cosmic Music—Cosmic Melody and Cosmic Rhythm, where we find yet another cosmic archetype of the being of man. This time we do not move onward in the Hierarchies. It is the same Beings—the Beings of the Second Hierarchy—who are at work here too, but they are engaged in a different kind of activity. It is difficult to express in words wherein their first work—upon the nervous system—differs from their work upon the

rhythmic blood-system, but we may think of it in the following way. In their work upon the nervous system, the Beings of the Second Hierarchy are looking downwards, towards Earth. In their work upon the blood system they are looking upwards. Both the nervous system and the blood system (as well as the organs connected therewith) are created by the same Hierarchy, but their gaze is at one time turned towards the Earth and at another upwards to the spiritual world, to the heavens.

Finally, at the stage of Intuition where we behold how the muscular and bony system of man is woven into being by the world of the Cosmic Word, the Cosmic Speech, we come to the First Hierarchy—the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. We have now reached the stage which corresponds approximately to the middle point of the life between death and a new birth, spoken of in my Mystery Plays as the “Midnight Hour of Existence.” Here we have to see how all those parts of man’s organism which enable him to move about in the world are woven and created by the Beings of the First Hierarchy.

Thus, when we look at the human being with supersensible knowledge, behind every part of him we see a world of spiritual, cosmic Beings. When in our present age we try to understand man, we are accustomed to study first the bony system. We begin, do we not, with the skeleton,—although even from a superficial point of view there is not much sense in that, for the skeleton has been formed and built out of the fluids in the human organism. The skeleton was not there first! It is merely a residue from the fluids, and can only be understood in that sense. But what is the usual method of procedure? We have to learn the various parts of the skeleton—arms, hands, bones of the upper arm, bones of the lower arm, bones of the hands, bones of the fingers and so on. With most of us it is a question merely of learning it all by heart. We do the same with the muscles—although this is decidedly more difficult. Then we come to the

various organs and learn about them too in the same way. And all these things we have learnt go round in our minds in a most confused way,—a fact, let me say, that is not without significance! There lurks, however, in all healthy minds a longing to know more, a longing to know what is behind it all, to know something of the mystery of the world. A real study of man should begin with the skin and the sense-organs. This would lead us to the Hierarchy of Angels, Archangels, Archai. We should then go on to the nerves and glandular system; this would lead us to the Second Hierarchy, to Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis. And we would find these same Beings at work when we came to consider the blood system and the organs directly connected with it. Then, passing on to what enables man to move—to his muscular and bony systems, we would reach the realm of the First Hierarchy, and see in the muscles and bones of the earthly human being the deeds of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

It is possible thus to describe ascending ranks of Hierarchical Beings—from the Third to the Second to the First. As we describe all the influences that pour down upon the Earthly world from the world beyond the Earth, and behold therein the deeds of the Hierarchies, a wonderful and amazing picture rises up before us. Gazing upon the ranks of the Hierarchies we see at work, below, Beings of the Third Hierarchy—Angels, Archangels, Archai; then we behold Beings of the Second Hierarchy—Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis—working and weaving together in the Cosmos; finally, Beings of the First Hierarchy—Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones. Only now at last does an intelligible picture of the human body rise up before our sight. We gaze upon the ranks of the Hierarchies and upon Their deeds; and as we let the eye of the spirit dwell upon Their deeds,—lo, MAN stands there before us!

As you see, a mode of observation opens up here which begins

at the very point where ordinary observation ends. Yet it is this kind of observation alone that can lead us beyond the gates of birth and death; no other can tell of what stretches beyond birth or beyond death. For, all that has now been described becomes a matter of *experience*. In what way it becomes actual experience the coming lectures will show. On Earth we have around us the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms and also what the physical human kingdom accomplishes in the earthly sense. We direct our gaze to all that proceeds from mineral, plant, animal and physical man. But when we have passed through the gate of death and are living between death and a new birth, we gaze upon activities of the spiritual world that are directed upon the being of man, we behold man verily as a product of the activity and deeds of the Spiritual Hierarchies. Moreover, as we shall come to see later, only in this light do the forms and structures of the other beings on Earth besides man become intelligible.

In preparation for the further lectures, let me also add the following. Think of the animal. There is something about an animal that is reminiscent of the human form—but reminiscent only to a limited extent. How is this? It is because the animal cannot be an after-copy of the planetary form that is inscribed in the ether. Man alone can become an after-copy of this form, because he follows the direction of that line which, as I told you, focuses for him the planetary form. If the human being were to remain a little child who never learns to walk but always crawls, if he were destined to this—which of course he is not—then he could not become an earthly image of the planetary forms. He must, however, become an image of them, he must grow up into the planetary forms. This the animal cannot do. The animal can only unfold its life in accordance with the *movements* of the planets; it can copy only their movements. You can see this revealed in every single part of the animal's body. Take

the skeleton of a mammal. You have the bones of the spine with their typical vertebra form. These are a faithful copy of the planetary movements. However many vertebræ a snake has, for example, every single one is an earthly copy of planetary movements. The Moon, as the planet nearest to the Earth, exercises a particularly strong influence upon one part of the animal: the skeleton develops, forming the different limbs; then it is all drawn together, as it were, in the vertebra form. After the Moon come the other planets, Venus and Mercury, moving in spiral forms. Then comes the Sun. The Sun influence tends, as it were, to finish off and complete the structure of the skeleton. We can even indicate a definite point in the spine where the Sun is working. It is where the spine begins to show a tendency to change into head-structure. In the head-structure we have the spinal vertebræ transformed. At the point where the bones of the spine rise up, become "puffed out" as it were—this is how Goethe and Gegenbaur describe it—to become head-bones, there work Saturn and Jupiter. When, therefore, we follow the direction of the skeleton from behind forwards, we must pass from Moon right through to Saturn if we are to understand the bony structure of the animal. We cannot relate the form of an animal to the ether form of the planets; we must go to the movements of the planets if we are to understand it. That which is worked by the human being into his glandular system is, in the case of the animal, worked into its whole form and structure. Of the animal, then, we have to say: It is not possible for the animal to arrange and order its being in accordance with the form or figure radiated by the planets. The animal can copy only the movements of the planets.

In ancient times men visualised this movement of the planetary bodies by saying: The paths of the planets go through the Zodiacal constellations. The Ancients knew how to describe the courses of Saturn and the other planets as each takes its way through

the constellations of the Zodiac. From their knowledge of the animal, they understood the connection between the forms of animals and the Zodiac,—which is rightly called “Zodiac” (animal circle). The essential point for us is that the animal does not copy the forms inscribed in the ether by the planets; it is man alone who does this. Man can do it because his organism is adapted to take the upright posture. Therefore does the planetary form become in him an archetype, whereas what we find in the animal is only an imitation of the planetary movements.

We have, then, before us a spiritual, supersensible picture of man. For in everything I have described—skin, nervous system, blood system, muscles, bones—there are, to begin with, only forces. At first it is all a kind of picture of forces. At conception and birth it joins with the physical embryo provided by the Earth and receives into itself earthly forces and substances. This picture—a purely spiritual but at the same time definite picture—is then filled out with earthly substances and forces. Man comes down to Earth as a being formed and fashioned by the Heavens. He is at first wholly supersensible, he is a supersensible being to his very bones. Then he unites with the embryonic germ; he takes it up. At death he lets it fall again; he passes through the gate of death—once more a spirit-form.

In conclusion, let us look once again at the human being as he passes through the gate of death. The physical form he could see when he looked into a mirror or at a photograph of himself, is no longer there. Neither is it of any interest to him. The cosmic archetypal picture, inscribed in the ether,—upon that he now turns his gaze. During his earthly life this archetypal picture was present in him; it was anchored, as it were, in his ether body. He was not conscious of it, but it was there all the time within his physical being. Now, after death, he sees what his own form really is. The picture he now sees is radiant and shining. The forces streaming from this archetypal picture have the same

effect as a radiant body—only, here it is to be understood in the etheric sense. The Sun shines physically. This cosmic picture of man shines spiritually; and because it is a spiritual picture it has power to illuminate quite other things. Here, in earthly life, a man who has done good or evil deeds may stand in the Sun for as long as he will, his hair and so forth will be lighted up by the rays of the Sun, but not his good and evil deeds, as qualities. The luminous picture of his own form which a man experiences after death, sends out a spiritual light which lights up his moral deeds. And so, after death, the human being discovers in the cosmic picture which is there before him something that illumines his own moral deeds. This cosmic picture is *within* us during earthly life, sounding faintly as conscience. After death we behold it objectively. We know that it is our own self, and that we *must* have it there. We are inexorable with ourselves after death. This luminous picture does not relent or react to any excuses such as we are wont to make in earthly life, where we are only too ready to make light of our sins and flaunt our good deeds. An inexorable judge shines out from man after death, shedding a brilliant light upon the worth of his actions. Conscience becomes, after death, a *cosmic impulse* which works outside us.

Such are the paths that lead from earthly man to supersensible man. Earthly man—the being who comes into existence at birth and passes away at death—can be understood in the light of Anthropology. Supersensible man, who merely permeates himself with earthly substances in order to manifest in the outer world, can only be understood in the light of Anthroposophy. And this is what we have set out to do in the course of these lectures.

## LECTURE II

The Hague, 14th November, 1923.

My dear Friends,

In our lecture yesterday, we tried to relate man to the Cosmos. Our aim was to create a foundation for a deep and full understanding of the supersensible being of man. To-day, I want to carry a little further what was said in that lecture, inasmuch as we have also to consider the supersensible nature of man when his physical and etheric bodies have been laid aside, when, that is, he has passed through the gate of death and is traversing the path which stretches between death and a new birth.

I propose, therefore, to give to-day—dealing more externally as it were, with the supersensible—a kind of description of what reveals itself to Imaginative perception in regard to this existence between death and rebirth. This will provide a basis for understanding man in his soul and spirit.

We must, however, be clear from the outset that it is really quite incorrect to speak of the physical being of man apart from the soul and spirit. The physical part of man, the physical body that we perceive in the world of sense, is permeated through and through by soul and spirit. The form of the brow, the form of the features, and countenance,—everything that belongs to the human form, man only has, inasmuch as it is given him by spiritual forces. We need not therefore be surprised that those who are possessed of the faculty of spiritual sight continue to speak of the “form” or “figure” of the human being even after he has passed through the gate of death. For it is indeed

so; to Imaginative cognition a man who has passed through death reveals a form. In comparison with something physically observed it is, of course, no more than a kind of shadow-picture; it is, nevertheless, clear and very impressive. The first thing that strikes us about this form or figure is that it is “external”. Our idea of man in his soul and spirit must of course be moral and spiritual; we shall however find that we can unfold no genuine and sound conception of supersensible man unless, to begin with, we speak of these Imaginations, these picture-forms, which man still “wears” as it were, even after he has passed through the gate of death.

At death the physical body is laid aside. We need not stay to consider what happens to it, for the particular way in which dissolution takes place is of far less importance than people think. The dissolution of the physical body, whether it be through burning or through decomposition, is a concern only of the other human beings. It is of no great importance for the life after death; we need, therefore, only say here that the physical body dissolves away into outer Nature, into the forces of outer Nature. The etheric body also dissolves, quite soon after death. The two outer manifestations of man's being having been thus laid aside, something releases itself from these two enveloping sheaths (the word “sheath” is not really quite accurate). Those who are sufficiently endowed with Imaginative cognition are able to perceive what it is that is thus released after death from the two sheaths. It is a figure or form—a form which, to begin with, bears some resemblance to the physical form of the human being. But this *spirit-form*, as I will call it, is involved in a constant process of transformation. I have spoken of the life between death and a new birth on many occasions and from many different points of view, for only so is it possible to develop an adequate idea of it. To-day I propose to speak from still another point of view. By bringing together what is given



at different times, you will be able gradually to build up a complete picture.

This spirit-form of the human being is involved, as we said, in a constant process of change. More and more it approaches what can only be described by saying: The spirit-form becomes one great "physiognomy." To the Imaginative sight possessed by the Initiate and also by one who has passed through the gate of death, a kind of physiognomy makes its appearance. But this physiognomy is the whole human being, not merely part of him. The whole human being, in his spirit-form, presents a physiognomy that is the expression of his being in its moral and spiritual inwardness. After death a bad man will not have the same appearance as a good man. A man who has made strenuous efforts during his life on Earth will not look the same as one who has lived thoughtlessly or wantonly. But we do not find this expressed merely in the "countenance." In fact, the actual countenance loses much of the physiognomical expression that was stamped upon it in physical life, and what is retained tends to become more and more indefinite. In contrast to this, the other parts of the body become singularly expressive—particularly the region where the inner organs of breathing are situated. The physiognomical form assumed by this region reveals the permanent qualities in a man's character. The whole breast system takes on a definite physiognomical appearance within the spirit-form after death and reveals whether the man was possessed of courage or whether he was timid, whether he approached life with a certain boldness and bravery or whether he invariably shrank away from the buffets of life, and so forth.

The arms and hands also become peculiarly expressive after death. From the arms and hands one can, in effect, read the biography of the human being between birth and death—most clearly of all from the hands, which even in physical life are full of significance and divulge much to an intelligent observer.

The way in which a man moves his fingers, how he holds out his hand to us, whether he only offers his finger tips or gives a warm hand-shake—all this can tell a very great deal. Much can also be learned by studying the forms assumed by the hands when a man is sitting quietly, or when he is at his work. Such things pass unnoticed, as a rule; but human beings become much more interesting, when we observe what they do with their hands and fingers, for here they divulge what they really are. After death this is true in a far higher degree; the life-history can be read from the appearance assumed by the arms and hands.

It is the same with other organs. Everything becomes expressive, everything becomes physiognomy. After death the human being wears his moral-spiritual physiognomy.

Yesterday's lecture showed us how the human being is built up and "formed" by the Cosmos and how the skin and sense-organs are an expression of the form that is inscribed into the cosmic ether. After death, the form that is given to man by the skin which encloses him becomes a physiognomical expression of his moral and spiritual being; and it remains so for a considerable time.

As human beings begin to find their way into this new kind of life, they meet there other human beings with whom, in earthly life, they have had a companionship of spirit, mind or heart. And no pretence is possible any longer between them. For what each man is, and what his feeling is toward his fellow-man, is faithfully expressed in the physiognomy I have described. During this period of the life after death—it follows the period of "trial," of which I do not propose to speak to-day—men live together with those with whom destiny has in any way connected them in the last earthly life,—or in any other earthly life. They learn to know one another thoroughly, for they behold the physiognomical forms of which we have been speaking. Life consists, in this period, in learning to know those with whom

one is connected by destiny. You must try to imagine what a close and intimate mutual scrutiny this is. The word sounds perhaps a little commonplace, but it expresses the reality. Each human being stands fully revealed before the other, with the whole meaning of their common destinies unveiled. In this way they are continually going past one another, meeting one another.

It is during this period of existence that the human being who has become such a "physiognomy" learns to know the Beings of the Third Hierarchy—the Angels, Archangels and Archai. For these Beings are themselves always, by their inherent nature, physiognomy. They have come forth from the Beings of the higher Hierarchies and let their whole nature of spirit and soul be impressed upon their spirit-form, making it thus perceptible to Imaginative vision. This contact with the Beings of the Third Hierarchy is thus an experience which is added to that of association with our fellowmen with whom we are connected by destiny. The spectacle of all the other human beings with whom we are connected by destiny is, of course, full of variety. Among them are, for example, some who on Earth would have preferred to have us at the opposite side of the globe, but are nevertheless bound to us by destiny. We know exactly what feelings they have harboured about us and what they have done to us. The spectacle is indeed one of very great variety! And among these wandering forms move the Beings of the Third Hierarchy, figures radiant and shining like the Sun. The words I use, are, of course, comparative; one has after all no other possibility than to employ earthly language. But we are speaking here of absolute reality, when we tell how during this period after death man meets the other human beings who are bound to him by destiny. Strange to say, it is only those with whom he is connected by destiny that a man can perceive and understand. Human souls to whom he is not actually bound by destiny remain to

all intents invisible to him. He has no means of reading their moral-spiritual physiognomy. He does not notice them,—nor can he, for it is precisely the link of destiny which gives one the power to see. If it were the fate of human beings here on Earth to see with their physical eyes as they see in this period after death, they would not see very much; for here on Earth men like to be passive in their seeing and let the objects rise up before them. In our present epoch of civilisation people are little inclined to bestir themselves, in order to be awake to their environment. Many of those who are devoured to-day by a passion for the cinema, many of those who crave for impressions to which they can passively surrender themselves, would, if they were equipped here on Earth with the same kind of sight as after death, not see their fellowmen at all. For after death our sight of other human souls depends entirely upon our *attentiveness*, which has then, of course, been implanted in us by the way in which destiny binds us to them. The first period of the life after death is thus a time when we learn to know one another; and during this time we learn also to know how souls are received in the spiritual world by the Beings of the Third Hierarchy. We behold the joy with which the Angels, Archangels and Archai receive the spirit-forms of human beings,—or again, we perceive how little joy they experience in meeting them. We observe what impression human souls make upon those Beings of the Hierarchies who stand nearest to them in the invisible world.

Then comes another period. The souls who have been learning to know one another, who have been continually gazing upon one another, begin now, in a way that belongs to the life after death, to have understanding the one for the other. They begin to understand spiritually the moral-spiritual physiognomies.

The first period after death is really a life of memories pure and simple. Each single human being lives together with those



to whom he belongs. It is of course an existence that is of the "present" in the sense that we live and move and act amid all that is taking place between the souls of men and the Beings of the Third Hierarchy; nevertheless we are living all the time in a kind of remembrance of earthly life. But now comes a time when we begin to have spiritual understanding, when we begin to grasp—in the manner of the spiritual world, of course—what these moral and spiritual physiognomies of our fellowmen signify. We learn to understand our fellowmen in such a way that we can say to ourselves: This physiognomy I see before me reveals such and such, it points back to certain phases of destiny which he and I shared in common—and so on. We have of course experienced this already in the first period after death, when we beheld our common destinies. But now in the second period the experience is of a kind that leads us to say: Having lived our life together in a manner that is now revealed to us through mutual understanding of our physiognomies, our future life together must take such and such a course. We begin to understand the possibility of a future for our common destiny; we begin to have a feeling for how relationships that have been begun in earthly life may develop further. We see—as it were in perspective—how the woven threads of destiny will work themselves out in the future, the threads of common destiny which are revealed in the physiognomical spirit-forms of which I have spoken. This experience becomes more and more intimate—so intimate indeed that there is a "growing together," a veritable "growing together" in soul and spirit.

As the soul passes on further in this phase of existence, what was on Earth the most expressive part of man's being is found to be gradually disappearing. The *head* disappears, dissolving away in a kind of spiritual mist. In proportion as the head thus disappears from view, a change comes over the features of the physiognomical spirit-form. The features alter: something comes

to view there now which points as it were from the past on to the future. At this time the human being is borne into the Spirit indwelling the planetary movements, the Spirit indwelling the forces of the planetary spheres; until the moment comes when human beings who belong together approach the spiritual Sun. The planetary forces bring them into the spiritual Sun; and now all the experiences they have undergone together in the past, and the germs too of future experience, are carried with them into the spiritual Sun. It is really childish to think of the Sun as a globe of gas out there in the universe. This is merely the aspect of the Sun that is revealed to the Earth. When we behold it with the eyes of the spirit, with the eyes of the soul, which we have after death, looking upon it from without in the great Universe, the Sun shows itself as a spiritual Being, or rather as a colony of spiritual Beings. And there, in among the spiritual Beings, move the human souls who have passed into the spiritual Sun, not merely each with his own spirit-content, but all of them carrying thither too their related destinies. And this whole "system" of human souls, together with the judgements passed upon them by the Beings of the Second and Third Hierarchies, shines out into the universe, into the Cosmos.

To form a true conception of the Sun, we must think along the following lines. If we look at the Sun from the surface of the Earth it appears to us like a shining, radiant orb. We could make a drawing of it. The usual idea is that if we were to go up in a balloon and inspect the Sun from high above the Earth, it would have exactly the same appearance as it has when we look at it from the Earth. This, however, is quite erroneous. If we wanted to make a picture, a sense-perceptible picture of how the Sun looks to spiritual vision, we should have to show spiritual radiations pouring out from the Sun into the wide spaces of the Cosmos. We see from the Earth only that aspect of the Sun which shines towards the Earth. But something now appears

to spiritual sight which gradually changes until it becomes audible to spiritual hearing, becomes a note, a motif—oftentimes grand and imposing—in the Cosmic Music. It comes from what the souls of human beings have experienced on Earth and are now experiencing after death. All this is carried into the Sun existence and radiates thence into the Cosmos. When this happens, the human being—in his spirit-form, of course,—has himself already assumed the form of the Sun. The words sound strange, but facts must be described as they are, for we are telling of realities. All that was, after passage through the gate of death, physiognomy, spirit-form, is now, as it were “rounded off,” and when the human being has arrived—speaking spiritually—in the Sun, he has himself become a “spirit-sphere.” Within this spirit-sphere the Cosmos is reflected. Our whole being becomes a spiritual sense-organ. But the impressions we receive are no longer impressions of Earth. We have become, as it were, all eye—eye of the spirit—and we receive in the eye of the spirit the impression of the whole Cosmos. We feel ourselves one with the whole wide Universe. And what we were before, on Earth—that we feel as something outside us. The whole Universe is reflected in us as in an eye of the spirit, and we feel ourselves one with the destinies we have experienced, both in ourselves and in connection with other human souls.

Having lived for a time in this phase of existence, we pass gradually into the sphere of the First Hierarchy—the sphere of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones; and we unite ourselves with them. Thus, we are united first with the Third Hierarchy, when we move among those souls who are bound to us by destiny, going about among them in our moral and spiritual physiognomy. Then we are carried by the planetary forces into the spiritual Sun existence, where we unite with the Second Hierarchy, but are still outside the First. Finally, when our own Sun existence has made us feel one with the whole Cosmos, we

unite with the First Hierarchy, with Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones. And then our interest begins to awaken in souls other than those with whom destiny has already connected us, souls who only now, in the life between death and new birth, enter for the first time our sphere of destiny. We become able to perceive human souls who will in future lives be connected with us. Meanwhile, under the influence of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, we begin to see mighty changes taking place in those with whom we were already connected by destiny. The closer the connection, the more perceptible the changes. To begin with, I will describe them more from their outer aspect. When we look with physical eyes at someone who is walking, we see how he puts first one foot in front, then the other and so moves forward. As we watch him, we see what we might call a series of “momentary exposures.” But to those who with imaginative perception look at a human being in this sphere of existence after death, it is as though in the form which the legs assume with every step, is contained the whole destiny of the man, the destiny he is undergoing and has himself moulded in his earthly life. Nor is destiny carried only in the legs; in the arms too we bear the content of our destiny, namely, the good and bad deeds we have done to our fellow-men. The way a human being moves reveals something that calls for a passing of judgement in the Universe, and the judgement then becomes a part of his destiny. And in the blood-stream, seen with the eye of the spirit in this sphere of existence, is revealed the inner destiny which has been created by the human being’s attitude to life, by the way in which he reacted inwardly to his experiences. These revelations of destiny can be seen for a long time after one has entered upon this sphere of existence; one beholds them continually in the forms and structure of the limbs, indeed in all the forms of man with the exception of head and chest. On Earth the sight of a human being walking past one without

head or chest would hardly be pleasant, but in the sphere between death and a new birth it is quite different, there everything is moral and spiritual. The spectacle is indeed infinitely grander than the spectacle of a human head on Earth can ever be. This is what human souls bound together by destiny experience during their spiritual Sun existence in the period which I have called in my Mystery Plays the "Midnight Hour of Existence." Here, in accordance with the degree in which they belong together, souls unite in working at the transformation of what they were in the preceding earthly life. The eye of the spirit can perceive what is happening in detail. For example, what is contained in the legs is changed and worked upon, that it may form the lower jaws for the next earthly life. Arms and hands are transformed to become the upper jaws with the nerves belonging to this region. You must, of course, understand that all this is perceived *spiritually*. For spiritual perception, the whole of the lower man is transformed into the upper man.

This change is not brought about by the individual human being alone, but by all those human beings who belong together. The degree in which they are joined by destiny determines the extent to which they work upon each other. And through this working together, spiritual kinships are formed which later on lead human beings to find one another in earthly life, to come together in life. Thus, the spiritual kinships which bring us together with other human beings in a more or less intimate manner, originate in the life between death and birth. It is actually so that the spirit-form of the head as it will be in the next incarnation comes into being as a result of the working together of human beings who belong together by destiny. This is a work that is done in spirit-land, and it is far greater in content and in significance than any work that is done on Earth.

So you see, just as we can describe in pictures what happens

to man between birth and death, just as we can draw pictures of physical earth-life, so can we describe in all definiteness and detail what happens to him between death and a new birth. The process of transformation that goes on in the limb system and in the system of metabolism of the blood is a marvellous and awe-inspiring process. You must, however, always remember that this transformation, which takes place in the phase of spiritual existence lying midway between death and a new birth, is a transformation of man's moral and spiritual qualities. Of that which emerges from the process—we must say of it now that it *resounds* as Cosmic Music. This form of man that is shaped in the likeness of the Sun, and is a mirror wherein the whole Universe is reflected, expresses in cosmic tone man's outer form and figure. It is not now—to use a comparison—as if one had a visual idea of man; we receive in cosmic sound the idea of the transformed being of man's lower organism.

As time goes on, man becomes a part of the Cosmic Word itself. What at first was all a blending of melodies, of harmonies, forms itself now into articulate parts of the Cosmic Word. Man "speaks forth" his own being—speaks it forth from the Cosmos. There is thus a period between death and the next birth when man's being is veritably a spiritual "word"—no paltry word consisting of few syllables, but an infinitely expressive word, comprising in its utterance the whole being of man as man, as well as the individual being of the man in question. When this point of time has been reached between death and a new birth, man is possessed of a deeply mysterious knowledge, and he sends out into the Cosmos the revelation—perceptible to divine and spiritual Beings—of what he himself is.

When one human being works in this way upon another, helping to bring it about that the lower man is transformed into what will be the upper man (for that which was formerly the upper man has by now faded right away), when there is this

working together, dependent always on the degree to which the one human being was already connected with the other and itself determining the connection there will be between them in the future, then this work of metamorphosis is verily a kind of moulding and sculpting in the spirit. Man then takes up, as it were, what is spiritually moulded in forms and works upon it, until it changes to sounding music and—finally—to *speech*.

Thus at the first stage after death the human being moves among the spirit-physiognomies of those who are connected with him by destiny: he beholds these physiognomies. Human beings learn to know each other in the spirit-form, they learn to know each other's moral and spiritual qualities. But at this first stage it is a beholding only, a seeing; although it means that the souls come into intimate connection, it is no more than a beholding. Then begins the period which I described as that of the growth of mutual understanding. The one begins to understand the other; he gazes deeply upon him and looks into his inner nature, knowing the while that the sure working of destiny will link the future to the past. Then the great process of transformation begins, where the one is able to work upon the other out of a profound knowledge and understanding, and the plastic moulding of the spirit is taken up and changed to music and to speech. And here we come to something more than understanding; the one human being is able to speak to the other his own warmth-filled, creative word. On Earth we speak with our organs of speech; by means of these we tell each other what we know. Our words live in the physical body as something fleeting and transient; and when we express what we want to say by means of our speech-organs, in that moment we completely shut off that which lives behind the merely material. But now imagine that what a man thus utters, what goes over into the fleeting word, were an expression of himself, were not alone a manifestation of him, but were at the

same time his very being. Such is the intercourse of human beings in the middle period of the time between death and a new birth—differentiating each his own being and revealing themselves one to another. Word meets word; articulate word meets articulate word; inwardly living word meets inwardly living word. The human souls are themselves words; their symphony is the symphony of the spoken Cosmic Word in its very being. There, men live in and with one another; there is no such thing as impenetrability. The word which is the one human being merges into the word which is the other human being. And it is there those links of destiny are formed which work on into the next incarnation and express themselves in the sympathy or antipathy which one human being feels when he encounters another. The feeling of sympathy or antipathy is a reflection of the intercourse which took place in spirit land in the middle phase of the life between death and a new birth. There we spoke with one another, we ourselves were the speech; here on Earth we have the shadowy reflection of it in the feeling we experience when we find one another again. For this is how we have to understand our life. What we experience on Earth together with other human beings—we are to hear in that an echo, in the life of feeling, of what we ourselves once were in the creative Word, when—between death and a new birth—we spoke forth our being. That is a time when in very truth men live for one another. And when we live for one another on Earth, it is, as it were, a projection from the spiritual on to the Earth of a real and true togetherness.

Having lived through this period of time, man enters upon another, when he begins gradually to depart from the Beings of the First Hierarchy—the Seraphim, Cherubim, and Thrones—and to come again into the realm of the Second Hierarchy, into the realm of the forces which the planets bring to bear on one another. Perceptions of the Universe now come to him—

perceptions which were not previously there to the same degree, for before he could only follow them in the other beings around him. The Universe now begins to arise before him as an outer Universe. He learns also of his relation with beings whose destinies are not bound to his; he comes to know his connection with human souls who first appeared within his orbit of experience during the middle period of time between death and rebirth. This happens on the return journey, when man comes down again into the planetary spheres and therewith into connection with the Beings of the Second Hierarchy. He has of course been with them before, but the connection is now of a different kind. The First Hierarchy has gradually faded away again from sight, until at last it is not there at all. The germs—spirit-germs, to begin with—for the new plastic forming of the human being, for the new breast-system and the new limb-system, begin to appear. Little by little, man forms and builds up anew his spiritual prototype. The utterance of his own being that he spoke forth in the Cosmic Word becomes once again the Music of the Spheres, and out of the Music of the Spheres is born the plastic image of his being. So he draws near to the moment when he is ready to enter into connection with an embryonic germ provided for him by a father and mother. For it is a spirit-form, a spiritual entity, coming down from the spiritual world into physical existence on Earth, which is the real essence and self of the human being. The physical embryo which, as it were, comes to meet him is only there for the purpose of enabling him to make a connection with earthly substances and permeate himself with them.

Full and rich in content is the life between death and a new birth! The work upon which the souls of human beings are engaged is none other than an interworking between them and Beings of the higher worlds. But the whole nature of the life between death and a new birth is different altogether from

the manner and character of life here on Earth. And if we would progress in our study and attain to an ever clearer and clearer comprehension of the supersensible being of man, we must understand the following.

We live in the physical world of Earth. We perceive the outer world through our senses. Of that which we perceive we must say: It is *perceptible* and it is *physical*,—for the physical is all we can perceive in this earthly life. Above this world lies another, to which our ether body belongs, that pervades and permeates the physical body. This second world is *imperceptible* to man's physical faculty of perception. It is also not physical; it is *superphysical*. Bordering therefore on our perceptible, physical world there is another that is imperceptible and superphysical. It is the world next our own, and it is the dwelling-place of the Beings of the Third Hierarchy—the Angels, Archangels and Archai. To a man living in physical incarnation on Earth who does not develop spiritual sight, this world is imperceptible; it is also not physical. True, it manifests its working in the physical world, but it is not physical.

Then there is a third world. This third world is also not physical; in this respect it is similar to the etheric world. It too is *superphysical*. But the strange thing is that this third world is *perceptible*. It is perceptible from our earthly world. Thus, we have come to a world which reaches into our world and is perceptible; but because it is superphysical, men are not able to explain it in its true nature. To this world that is superphysical but perceptible, belongs, for example, all that streams to us in the light of the Sun. The Spirit-Beings who people the Sun are superphysical, and yet perceptible to us on Earth. For it is nonsense to think that the light of the Sun is merely what the physicists believe it to be. The light of the Sun is the manifestation of the Sun-Beings. The Sun-Beings are perceptible, but they appear to man in a form which he cannot interpret. The light of the

stars, the light of the Moon and other light beside that of the Sun and Moon and Stars is perceptible, but that which lies behind it as Being is not rightly understood by man. Here, then, we have a world that is perceptible, but superphysical, bordering on the world that is physically perceptible. It is very important to grasp the characteristics of the different worlds:

- (1) Our own world—perceptible and physical.
- (2) The second world, bordering on the first. In this world live the Angels, Archangels and Archai. It is imperceptible and superphysical—the dwelling place of the Third Hierarchy and also of human beings while they are living in community with the Third Hierarchy during the life between death and a new birth.
- (3) The third world is perceptible and superphysical. It is the dwelling-place of the Second Hierarchy.

And then there is still another:

- (4) An imperceptible, physical world.

We have then, when the fourth is added, a complete list of all possible worlds: perceptible and physical, imperceptible and superphysical, perceptible and superphysical, imperceptible and physical. For this fourth world is imperceptible and yet physical. How are we to envisage it? It is in our midst, it is present in a physical sense, but it is imperceptible. Think for a moment. If you lift your leg from the ground, it is heavy, the force of gravity is working upon it. The force of gravity works physically but is imperceptible to ordinary sense-perception. You have inner experience of this force of gravity, but it is physically imperceptible. It is the same with certain other things. You experience within you, albeit in feelings which you cannot explain, what was known to an earlier, more instinctive Spiritual Science as the "mercurial" tendency. You have continually within you this tendency to the drop-form—in the albumen constituents, that are perpetually trying to form themselves

in you; once more, something physical, but imperceptible in its essential configuration. Then there is a living process of combustion, of burning, that takes place within you. It works physically, and lives in your will—but you are not aware of it. It is imperceptible and physical. Within this world, the world of the imperceptible and physical, dwell the Beings of the First Hierarchy—the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

This opens up quite a new aspect of our study. When we pass through the gate of death, we go out, first of all, into the imperceptible and superphysical. We disappear, as it were, from the world. At the second stage we enter the sphere of the Second Hierarchy; we come into the perceptible and superphysical. During this phase of existence, we learn to understand our destinies, we learn to read them in the flowing, flooding light of the Sun and the Stars. One who has learned to gaze into the essence of this light does not look up vacantly at the Sun, or out into the far distances to the spheres of the Stars; he knows that in this moving, flowing light the threads of human destiny are being woven. It is the perceptible, yet superphysical, world, and in it live the dead, the seemingly dead.

And while man is accomplishing once more this metamorphosis for the earthly, he is—on Earth. Only, the world in which he sojourns there between death and new birth is now the imperceptible and physical world; he lives in the force of gravity, in the mercurial and phosphoric tendencies. (How these forces and tendencies develop, we shall gradually learn to understand.) We are thus first withdrawn from life into the invisible, and then return again in an imperceptible manner, to be once more withdrawn, that we may prepare ourselves for the future—perceptible and physical—life on Earth. The road between death and new birth leads from the perceptible, physical life on Earth, through the other conditions, to the imperceptible, physical life on Earth. This is the Midnight Hour of Existence.



Then we make our way back, and enter once again into physical existence on Earth.

So far we have been able only to give a rough sketch, but in the lectures that are to come the sketch will be amplified in all its details. You will at any rate have seen that we need not rest content with general abstract thoughts about the life of man between death and a new birth. We can show, for example, how in order to prepare for his future life in a visible world man comes to Earth between death and a new birth in an invisible manner. How much deeper will be our understanding of earthly life when we know that human spirits who are in the Midnight Hour of Existence are living within physical Earth existence; that we have around us here on Earth not only those who are incarnate in physical bodies, but also, as an integral and spiritual part of Earth existence, those who are living through the Midnight Hour—the middle, that is, of their life between death and a new birth! The reason why we are not aware of them is because they are experiencing Earth existence not at the Noontide, but at the Midnight Hour.

In the following lectures we shall go more fully into all these things.

### LECTURE III

The Hague, 17th November, 1923.

(Afternoon).

My dear Friends,

We tried in the first lecture of this Course to form some idea of the way in which man, here on Earth, is related to Beings and forces belonging to worlds beyond the Earth. Then, in the second lecture we spoke of the life of the human being in the supersensible world between death and a new birth. In the present lecture I want to follow this up a little further. As our study proceeds, we shall find that a complete and inwardly harmonious picture will rise up before us.

We have seen that when a human being has passed through the gate of death and come into the supersensible world, he reveals himself there to Imaginative vision in a spirit-form. You must understand, of course, that perception of the spiritual is quite different from perception of an object in the world of sense. For instance, those who are endowed with the faculty of spiritual vision will say: "Yes, I saw the phenomenon, but I could not tell you anything about the size of it." The phenomena of the spiritual world are not spatial in the sense that a material object presented to the eye is spatial. Nevertheless, we can only describe them in such a way that they seem to resemble a visual image seen by the physical eye—or whatever other sense-impression we make use of in our description. You must bear this in mind in connection with all the descriptions I shall now be giving of what takes place in the supersensible.

When a human being has passed through the gate of death, the spirit-form of his head gradually fades away. On the other hand, the whole of the rest of his form becomes "physiognomy," a physiognomy which expresses, for instance, how far the man was, in earthly life, a good man or a bad man, a wise man or a fool. These qualities can remain hidden in the material world; an out-and-out villain can walk about with an absolutely innocent face. But when the gate of death has been passed, they can no longer be concealed. There is no doing it with the face, for the face fades right away; and the rest of the form, which grows more and more like a physiognomy, allows nothing to be hid. We have, moreover, to remember that when a human being passes into the spiritual world, his whole relation to the universe changes. The faculty of thinking, especially that abstract thinking by which men set so much store on Earth, is by no means prized yonder in the spiritual world. No value is attached in the spiritual world to the faculty of which the head is the instrument; it is quite useless there. We have to leave behind us the thinking of which we are so proud and by means of which we evolve thoughts about the phenomena of the material world. It is only on Earth that there are philosophers! The kind of philosophy that consists in abstract thinking must be left behind. The further we pass out into the spiritual, supersensible world, the more does our life of soul become a beholding, a perceiving. The thoughts which are in the objects come to us with the very act of perception. Here on Earth *we evolve* the thoughts; yonder in the spiritual world the thoughts are revealed by the things themselves; the thoughts come to us. Thought is achieved by means of perception. Nor is this true only of thought. Everything man has to undergo comes to him, in the spiritual world, in perception.

We have around us in the world of sense-perception certain phenomena which help us to describe the spiritual world in which

man lives between death and a new birth. We look up to the stars. What the stars and planets of our system reveal to sense-perception on Earth is merely their *outward* aspect. In their inner reality they are something quite different; they are hosts of Spiritual Beings who have gathered together in diverse ways at the places where the stars appear in the heavens. When we look at a star with our physical eyes—what it really means is that there, in that particular direction, is a colony of Spiritual Beings in the Cosmos. The physical star we see merely gives us the *direction*; it is, if you like, a kind of signpost. Descriptions of the stars as given by physical science are of quite secondary importance, for physical science is dealing with what are no more than signs to indicate direction. The fact that somewhere in the sky we see a star means that in that direction there is a colony of Spiritual Beings.

The first sphere into which the human being passes after death is the sphere of the Moon; that is to say, he enters the region of the Spiritual Beings who have their dwelling-place in the Moon. What kind of Beings are these?

From what has been said in my book *Occult Science*, you will know that the Moon was not always out in the heavens where it is now. As a matter of fact, there are many strange things to be observed about the Moon. It is curious, for instance, that in ordinary text-books and school-books no mention is made, as a rule, of the fact that every year the Moon is coming nearer to the Earth. Most people are not aware of this, because they do not find it in the text-books; it is true, nevertheless. The Moon was not always out there in the Cosmos; there was a time when the Moon and its substance were within the Earth. The Moon then separated from the Earth and passed out into the Cosmos. It is therefore only in the course of Earth evolution that the Moon has become a dwelling place in itself for Spiritual Beings. And for what kind of Spiritual Beings?

In my books and lectures I have often spoken of the great primeval Teachers who lived among men in very ancient times of Earth evolution. When we look back with real understanding to ancient times, we cannot but be filled with deep inner reverence for the marvellous wisdom that was given long since to men on Earth by these great, superhuman Teachers. For the first Teachers of the human race on Earth were not themselves human; they were Beings standing higher in the scale of evolution than man, and in the Mysteries they appeared not in physical but in ether bodies—which, since then, they have for the most part laid aside, for they are now in astral bodies. These primeval Teachers left the Earth and passed out into the Cosmos—to the Moon. The heavenly body we know as the Moon is therefore the colony, out in the Cosmos, of the primeval Teachers of mankind. There they have their dwelling, in the Moon. To crude perception the outer aspect of the Moon reflects merely the light of the Sun. But for a finer perception the Moon mirrors a vast number of cosmic forces. And what is reflected thence to the Earth from the forces of the Cosmos is connected with all that is sub-human in man—with what man has to-day in common with animal nature. We find, therefore, in the Moon these high Spiritual Beings who were once the primeval Teachers of mankind, and at the same time, together with them, the animal forces of man's nature.

This is the first region the human being enters when he has passed through the gate of death; here his first experiences are undergone. Try to form a living picture of how, with his moral—or immoral—physiognomy, a human being comes into the region of the physical and spiritual radiations of the Moon and how, to begin with, he sees himself and other human beings each with his physiognomy. He does not see with physical eyes; he becomes aware of the others through a kind of "feeling" perception—almost a kind of touching, but touching from a

distance. Let me try to describe it to you in the following way. A human being comes into the vicinity of another being in this region. He has his physiognomy which is mobile in itself—as it were, soft and pliable. He draws near to the other being, and at once tries to give himself a physiognomy similar to that revealed by the other being. But if a man who was an out-and-out villain in earthly life and has now passed through the gate of death were to attempt to do this in the proximity of one who has been a saintly man, in order that he might perceive and feel what the saintly man is in *his* physiognomy, he would not find it possible. Despite all his efforts he would continue to give himself the physiognomy of a villain. He can do no otherwise. You will realise from this that for a certain period of time after death a man is only capable of seeing other human beings who in respect of their moral qualities were of like nature with himself in Earthly life. This is the first impression that is experienced by the human being, the first of many powerful impressions that are at the same time like so many judgements passed upon him. For man really feels the experience as a dispensation of strict justice. He stands there under the constant impression: As those others are, so are you yourself; you can move only among human beings who are like yourself! It is so, indeed. Man does not see those who are different from himself; to begin with, he simply cannot see them.

Now the particular forces which are contained in this Moon environment do not permit of the Angels drawing near to man. The Angels—in their lovely form—cannot, to begin with, come into the neighbourhood of the human being. For the Moon is the heavenly body of which the Earth has rid herself; she has, as it were, put it out into the Cosmos. It is true that with the Moon have gone also, as we saw, the holy Teachers and Sages; but there are present, in addition, in its vicinity Ahrimanic Beings. Ahrimanic forms are to be seen there. And so it comes

about that when a man sees other human beings in physiognomies that are the reverse of good, and has the impression that he is seeing *himself* along with them, then he and they seem, to his despair, to resemble the Ahrimanic forms that appear in this region. The Angels are hidden from his sight because they have forms into which he cannot yet find his way again. He sees other human beings in forms that are all differing expressions of evil, and he notes the resemblance of these to the Ahrimanic forms. This, then, is the second impression which comes to man in the Moon sphere: You yourself resemble the Ahrimanic forms! Once again is a stern judgement passed upon man after death.

The third experience makes an impression which never leaves the human being. It begins with the realisation that in the first region through which he has to pass are the wise and holy primeval Teachers of early humanity. But now he cannot help feeling that a mysterious connection exists between the Ahrimanic beings with whom he comes in contact in the way described, and these primeval Teachers of mankind. From the human point of view it is of course quite understandable that men will judge such things as I am telling you in the attitude of the famous King of Spain who was once shown a map of the stars and their movements and the whole solar system and, finding it very difficult to grasp, said that if God had left him to create the Universe he would have made it much simpler, it was all far too complicated! It is not to be wondered at that numbers of people think very much the same and are for ever wanting to correct something in the Divine Plan of the Universe. Human beings have, as you know, infinite faith in their own power of insight. There was actually a philosopher who said: "Give me matter, and I will make a universe." That philosopher was Kant. It is a good thing he was not given matter, for he would have made something perfectly horrible out of it!

So, too, when people hear about Ahrimanic beings, they cannot understand why these beings have not long ago given up all hope of gaining the victory over the Earth Spirits. Human beings know quite well that the ultimate victory will not be with the Ahrimanic beings. But Ahriman does not know it! He strives unceasingly for victory. And out of this striving for victory there arises a strange and remarkable connection between those Ahrimanic beings who belong chiefly to the Moon sphere and the wise, primeval Teachers of mankind. Let me put it in this way. The Ahrimanic beings are continually trying, in their sinister way, to flatter and cajole these primeval Teachers, they would so much like to win them over to their side! For what is it these Ahrimanic beings are trying to achieve? They would like to hold the Earth fast at a certain point in its development and not allow it to make any further progress. It is Ahriman who is constantly saying: "The evolution of human beings has reached a certain point, and now it must come to a standstill; they must not evolve any further. I have resolved that human beings shall harden at this point and continue their further journey in the Cosmos as hardened, rigidified beings—not as beings involved in a progressive evolution." This is what is whispered every night into the ears of men by the Ahrimanic beings. And it is what the Ahrimanic beings desire in regard also to the Earth itself; they want to hold it fast at a given point in its evolution.

And now think of the great primeval Teachers of man. It was they who left behind them on Earth what we know as the ancient, primordial Wisdom. This ancient Wisdom has grown dim in the course of the ages and is no longer understood. Once upon a time, in the old Mystery-sanctuaries, it was taught to men; but that could not continue. For if human beings had gone on receiving this Wisdom, they would not have made progress. Above all, they would not have attained to freedom,

to free inner spiritual activity; they would not have acquired free will. The wisdom was by its very nature able to speak only to the *instincts* of men, not to clear, self-conscious deliberation. It was thus for the well-being of humanity that at a certain moment these great Teachers should withdraw. If they had never lived on Earth man would have been without an initial impetus for his evolution. But when they had once given the impetus which enabled him henceforth to continue his evolution independently, they withdrew from the Earth and went to the Colony of the Moon. As long as the primeval Teachers were still upon Earth, the Ahrimanic beings did their utmost to keep them there in order that the instinctive Wisdom should remain as it was. Even to-day, when a man has passed through the gate of death and come into the Moon sphere, they think they can still do something; and so they try again and again to cajole and persuade these primeval Teachers to approach the dead. They cannot achieve their end, least of all in the case of those human beings who wear a physiognomy of evil. None the less, the Ahrimanic beings continue to draw near to the souls of human beings in the Moon sphere and goad them on by pointing to the great primeval Wisdom and saying: "That was once all there for you!" Human beings who wear features of evil have, therefore, now to pass through a third experience. The Ahrimanic beings speak to them of the primeval Teachers of mankind. But they, with their nature, cannot see these Teachers. They gaze into an empty void.

This experience makes a profound and lasting impression. Once again man feels that a judgement has been passed upon him. For the thought lies heavy on his soul: "Those who gave the human race its first impulse are hidden from me; I cannot see them, I am spurned and rejected." Powerful and acute is the experience that comes thus to human beings who do not show a physiognomy expressive of the good.

These are the three impressions which must needs come to man when, with a physiognomy of evil, he passes over into the world that lies beyond the gate of death. And it must of course be remembered, that no human being is wholly good; in the very best of men there is, after all, a great deal that is bad. Hence it falls to the lot of a great many human beings to undergo, at any rate in part, the experiences here described. But the more a man is able to assume the physiognomy of the good after death, the more readily will he behold those whom he has through his goodness come to resemble, and the less will he respond to the Ahrimanic beings. Their influences will fall away from him; on the other hand he will have understanding for the Angel Beings who now enter the sphere in which he is living. And that will enable him to permeate his being with forces,—to begin with, forces especially of *will*. For it is not thought or reflection, but first and foremost the faculty of will that man possesses after death. Will becomes itself perception, becomes man's whole world of life. He has to perform an act of will whenever he wants to perceive anything. For he must form and fashion himself in accordance with what he wants to see. That is, he must will. He must become like what he wills to perceive. It is above all the will that is developed when a man has passed through the gate of death, and upon it work, for good or ill, the impressions of which I have spoken in connection with the Moon sphere.

The next sphere into which the human being passes is that of Mercury. By this time—and often at the cost of great suffering—the human being has been able so far to adjust his physiognomy to the forces of the supersensible world that he has laid aside the physiognomy of evil and has gradually come to resemble the forms of the Angels, Archangels and Archai. The process is in many cases slow, but eventually man enters the sphere of Mercury, the dwelling-place of the beings of the Third Hier-

archy, and has to live there among them and undergo what I have already described. This is the sphere in which he gradually unfolds *understanding* of what, previously, was more or less blank perception—although it exercised a potent influence upon the domain of his will. In the Mercury-sphere understanding for all that has been perceived begins to dawn within man. In the present age human life is such that those who investigate these matters with Imaginative perception have tragic experiences. For the state in which the souls of the dead find themselves in this Mercury sphere depends to a great extent upon whether, here on Earth, they were materialists and rejected in thought and deed everything of a supersensible nature, or whether they had understanding for the supersensible. A man who in earthly life rejected all that transcends the material, confronts the Beings in the Mercury sphere with comparatively little understanding. It is the same when he comes to the next sphere, where he lives among Beings who also belong to the Hierarchy of Angels, Archangels and Archai but have reached a somewhat higher stage of development. If a man was a rank materialist in earthly life, he has no understanding at all of the Beings in the Venus sphere. For here the forces of cosmic love pour down upon him. If he has not acquired on Earth the capacity of love, the region he now enters is strange and foreign to him in the highest degree. The forces of cosmic love flood his being in the Venus sphere if, on Earth, he possessed the faculty of love; but if, on Earth, he consciously or unconsciously harboured hatred in his breast, these forces of the Venus sphere are changed within him into forces of *wrath*. This is the mystery of man's sojourn in the Venus sphere. For those who bring with them from Earth considerable remains of forces of hatred, it is as though metamorphosed forces of love—forces, that is, of wrath and fury—were to rise up within them from out of their will. Man sees himself in a manifestation that impels him to say: It must all be

subdued, it must be chastened and brought into harmony with the Cosmos. It is ultimately always the *will* that receives, shall I say, special care and nurture in the Venus sphere—the will, which in earthly man has its seat in the limb and metabolic system in the lower part of his organism, that is to say, in the part of man that becomes after death “physiognomy.” It is therefore the will that comes to expression in this physiognomy.

All this time man is coming, by degrees, to resemble the Beings that are present in the spiritual Cosmos, and he is gradually passing on into the sphere of the Sun. In the Sun sphere the forces work chiefly on that in man which in its earthly reflection we know as *feeling*. What the Sun shows us, when we look up to it with our physical eyes, is its outward aspect only. In its inner aspect the Sun is the great cosmic meeting-place of all those Spiritual Beings who guide and direct the destinies of the Earth and of the men on Earth. The Sun is, above all, the colony of the Beings of the Second Hierarchy—the Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis. Whereas before entering the Sun sphere man lives only among human beings with whom he is linked by destiny, others now approach him. His circle of acquaintances—if one may be allowed the expression—grows wider and wider. This takes place in the sphere of the Sun. Here, too, a new and particularly vivid experience befalls man.

There below him lies another world—the Earth he has left behind but which he must tread again. In the Sun sphere, as you have heard, the metamorphosis of man's being takes place; here is wrought out the great change of which I have told you, when man's lower being is transformed into the upper being in preparation for the next earthly life. The legs are wrought into the spirit-form of the lower jaw, the arms into the spirit-form of the upper jaw and cheek-bones, and so on. This is a wonderful work which proceeds in the spiritual world, and in comparison with it any work that is done on earth in whatsoever domain is

utterly insignificant. Great and majestic is the work that is accomplished by man in the spiritual world in union with higher spiritual Beings! There, in the sphere of the Sun (using the word in its wider sense) the secret of man's being is worked out. But now comes another experience.

If we are healthy in soul and spirit during our life on Earth, we are bound to realise that there is another world, a spiritual world, even if we cannot pierce through to it with actual knowledge. We take the existence of the spiritual world for granted; we say that beyond the material world there is a supersensible world. This is how it is in earthly life. But during existence in the Sun sphere between death and a new birth, it is the other way round. In his Sun existence, an experience befalls man that teaches him to speak of a world beyond—but *this* "world beyond" is the *Earth*! It is an intensely living experience, not so much now of one's own destiny, but of the whole intrinsic character of Earth existence. And there is one feature of it which you can observe and should test for yourselves. People of to-day can hardly yet succeed in this, but you must try. When you are reading history and following it back through the centuries, it may well be that you have a curious experience. You are living now in the year 1923. You go back through history—through the world war, through still earlier events, until you come at length to the period, let us say, between the years 1500 and 1550. There you begin to feel that it is all familiar to you. Consider for a moment an intimate experience of this kind. You seem to know all about events that happened several centuries ago. You say to yourself: Surely I must have had a share in these events! A superficial student will immediately conclude that this was the period of his previous incarnation on Earth. This is, however, in most cases incorrect. As a rule it is that period between death and rebirth when, in the Sun sphere, you experienced most vividly your connection with earthly existence.

Earth life presented itself to you then as a "beyond," very much as the supersensible life presents itself to you on Earth as a "beyond."

Let us now pause for a moment in our study of man's path of evolution after death. We have seen that when man has gone away from the Earth he completes first the Moon existence, then enters upon the Mercury existence, then Venus and then the Sun. Of what follows we shall speak later on. But now it must be clearly understood that these events and processes are not isolated events and processes in the spiritual world but are all related to what happens on the physical Earth. And the relationship is of a distinctive character. The Moon existence is permeated through and through with the Beings of whom we have been speaking to-day—the great primeval Teachers of the human race. In a remote age of antiquity they left the Earth and went out into the Cosmos to form the cosmic colony of the Moon. But in later times we may still find here and there human beings, initiated in the Mysteries, who were possessed of quick inner sight and hearing, and could apprehend the wisdom which had once been living on Earth thanks to the presence of these primeval Initiates. Thus, in the ancient Indian period of civilisation there was still present in the Mysteries a living knowledge of the Wisdom of the Moon Initiates. There must we look, to find the source of all that can so deeply stir our wonder and admiration in the echoes we still possess of ancient Indian Wisdom. Nor is this all. Influences continue to pour down from the super-earthly world in which man lives between death and a new birth,—and the influences change with each succeeding epoch. As time goes on, their power grows continuously weaker; that is to say, human beings grow gradually less and less conscious of these influences. The Mercury influences, for example, were particularly strong during the period of ancient Persian civilisation, but human beings were

already becoming less conscious of them: the myth of Ahura Mazdao is the outcome of a somewhat darkened knowledge of the influence exercised upon the Earth by Mercury. During the Egypto-Chaldean epoch the Venus influences were principally at work. Then came the wonderful epoch of Greek culture, continuing on into the Latin, when the Sun influences worked upon the Earth with greatest strength. Man was, however, in this Graeco-Latin epoch still less observant of such influences. Two factors were working together. When in his existence between death and a new birth man entered the Sun sphere, he felt an urgent desire to experience the Earth *from the Sun*. That is one factor. The second is that everything connected with the Sun and the nature of the Sun had a very strong influence upon the Greeks. All that the forces of the Sun give to the Earth had a deep meaning for them, especially for those generally known as the Athenians, in contrast to the Spartans. Yet everywhere in Greece the Sun, in its spiritual aspect as well, exercised a remarkably deep influence on the whole form and development of civilisation. Throughout this phase of evolution there was a strong aptitude on Earth for the perception of the spiritual, the purely spiritual, in the starry heavens. Perception of the material aspect of the heavens did not really begin until the time of our fifth Post-Atlantean period, which is, as you know, only a few hundred years old. The fact that these influences are working in our time indicates that we have passed out of the region where men feel themselves related, on Earth, to the feeling they had of being in the Sun-existence between death and a new birth. We to-day are much more susceptible to what follows. After the time spent in the Sun man comes to the domain of Mars. The strongest cosmic influence working upon humanity to-day is the impulse which comes from Mars existence. We can become acquainted with these Mars influences between death and a new birth when the Noontide hour of existence

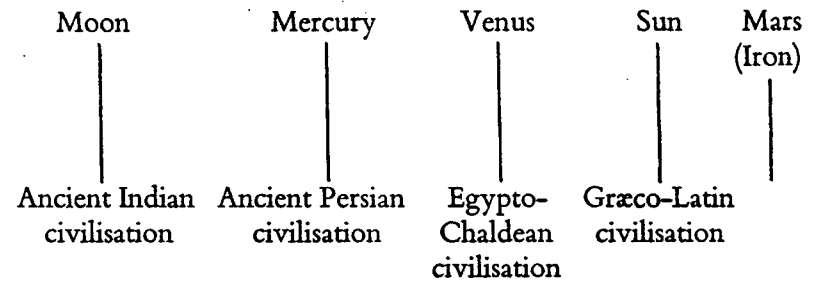
has been passed and we begin once again to approach the Earth. It must not, however, be thought that the influences connected with the Sun existence cease to work upon a man when he has passed into the Mars sphere. The Sun extends the sphere of its activity over those planetary phases of existence which follow. The Sun's influences remain; but the Mars existence begins to be a significant factor in what happens on Earth. I shall speak further, of the journey of the human being through the Mars existence, but I want now to connect what we have just been learning of the spiritual world with what we find at work precisely in our own, fifth Post-Atlantean age.

In our time we are learning what cosmic battle is. We can "sense" it taking place. Most of us cannot unravel its mysteries; but we know that in cosmic existence war is being waged to-day between all manner of good and evil spirits. And here the Sun existence acquires a particular significance for our age. It is exceedingly difficult to-day for the results of spiritual insight to make any headway in face of material science! People are so proud of the fact that physics has investigated the Sun! The Sun is described for us in scientific text-books; but these descriptions, instead of stimulating in us a true conception of the Sun, really serve only to put our minds off the track. What then is actually the influence of the Sun in regard to the Earth to-day? I will indicate one only of its activities. It may seem to you that I am descending here into very material realms that are in strange contrast to the spiritual events of which we have been speaking; but what I am now going to say is of importance for the further progress of the studies upon which we are engaged.

You are, of course, familiar with the phenomenon of the Sun-spots which appear with a certain regularity. Dark spots are observed on the Sun. These Sun-spots and their meaning are the cause of much dispute in material science, but a more accurate research would reveal the following. A constant impulse arises



from within the Sun to throw out Sun-substance into the Universe through these dark portals. And the Sun-substance thus thrown out appears within our solar system in the form of *comets, meteors and shooting stars*. Now it is particularly in our age that the Beings who rule over the Universe from within the Sun are casting forth these comets, meteors and shooting stars. They did so in earlier times as well, but in our time this activity of theirs has a new significance. You will remember I said how in earlier times it was the purely spiritual impulses in the starry system that were particularly at work. In our time it is the impulses contained in the *iron thrown out from the Sun* that have special significance for human beings. And these impulses are used by Him whom we know as the *Michael Spirit*, in the service of the spiritual in the Cosmos. In our age there are thus present in the Cosmos impulses which were not working with the same strength in earlier periods of civilisation. This cosmic iron, in its spiritual nature, makes it possible for the Michael Spirit to mediate between the supersensible and the material on Earth. We find, therefore, on the one side a spirit of warfare abroad in the world man enters, when in our time he reaches to what lies behind outer sense-existence. When a man crosses the Threshold with supersensible sight and instead of directing his gaze to matters which concern him personally turns his attention to great affairs of the Universe which underlie our whole civilisation, then he sees warfare and battle, spiritual battle. There is strife, there is war and conflict in the spiritual, behind the veils of existence. And the iron which, even to the point of physical manifestation, is thrown out by the Sun Spirits into the Cosmos—with this iron Michael arms Himself for His task in the cosmic war. For Michael has the task of helping humanity to go forward in the right way in face of these Powers of Strife behind the veils of civilisation. On the one hand—battle and warfare. On the other hand—the labours and strivings of Michael.



Now all this is again connected with the development of man's freedom, man's free spiritual activity. As earthly men we have iron in our blood. If we were beings with no iron in our blood, the feeling and impulse of freedom would still be able to arise in our souls, but we should not have bodies which could be used for putting this impulse into operation. That we are able not only to conceive the idea of freedom, but also to feel in our body the power to make the body itself into a bearer of the impulse of freedom, is due to the fact that in our age we can learn how Michael takes the cosmic iron, which was cast out also in former times, into His service. And we ourselves, if we understand the Michael impulse aright, can learn how to place the iron that we have within us into the service of the impulse of spiritual freedom. Matter in any case has meaning for us only when we learn to understand it as an expression of the Spiritual in the Universe. In this age what we have to learn is to make the right use of the iron in our blood. For wherever iron is, there too is the impulse for the development of freedom. This is true in the Cosmos and true also in man. It was out of a deep instinct that the Initiates of old ascribed iron to Mars—iron which has a significance for human blood, and therewith also a cosmic significance.

These things can be known to-day through Spiritual Science. It is not a question of a revival of ancient traditions but of a



re-discovery by Spiritual Science itself. If Anthroposophy is found to be in agreement with ancient lore, that does not show that Anthroposophy is merely a revival of the old. Anthroposophy investigates things by studying them in their own intrinsic nature. Their significance is then brought home to one anew when one finds that men had this same knowledge long ago under the influence of the ancient Divine Wisdom possessed by those Beings who afterwards took their departure to the Moon and to-day people the cosmic colony of the Moon.

The age in which we live is, therefore, also bound up with the experiences through which man passes between death and rebirth. Perception of what is happening on Earth is strongest during the period of existence in the Sun-sphere, but it is always there after death in greater or less degree. From the super-earthly regions in which he lives between death and a new birth, man is perpetually looking down at the earthly world. If it were not so, the earthly world would become foreign to him during the long journey between death and a new birth.

The experiences of man in the supersensible world can be described in many ways. Yesterday I described them to you in another way; now I have been describing them to you in connection with the world of stars and with what takes place on Earth in the consecutive epochs of civilisation. All these descriptions must gradually be built up together into one whole. It would be a mistake to say: Yes, but how is it that on one occasion you describe man's life between death and rebirth in one way and on another occasion in quite a different way? If a man goes to a city once or twice or three times, he will certainly describe things differently, as his knowledge of the city grows. The details of all his descriptions have then to be put together. In the same way must the descriptions of man's experiences in the supersensible world be brought together, be considered and pondered in all their connections. Thus alone can we gain an

impression of what the supersensible world really is and what man experiences there. This was the point I wanted to reach in the present lecture. In the lecture this evening I will speak of further experiences undergone by the human being in his existence between death and a new birth.

## LECTURE IV

The Hague, 17th November, 1923.  
(Evening).

My dear Friends,

In the lecture this afternoon the life between death and a new birth was pictured as a journey, and we considered the sense in which the positions of certain stars in the heavens can be taken as viewpoints whence we may behold this journey of man through certain spiritual regions. Before proceeding further, we will study in a little more detail how we must picture this journey through regions indicated for us by certain heavenly bodies.

It might seem that the supersensible existence of man between two earthly lives has been adequately presented in such a book as Theosophy. For the early stages of study, that is quite true, but you will surely agree that knowledge must also progress and expand. As we go further in our study we have constantly to bear in mind the oneness of the Universe, we have to remember that there is an unbroken, harmonious interplay between the supersensible and the sensible worlds. The conditions of existence in the different regions through which man passes between death and a new birth express themselves outwardly in the relationships of space and of time that exist between the heavenly bodies concerned. When, therefore, we speak of these spiritual regions in terms of heavenly bodies, we are using a correct picture. There is a connection between the place of a visible star in the heavens and some particular region of supersensible life. As an objection to this it could be said that the life which stretches between death and a new birth cannot be conceived in terms of space or at most only to a very limited degree. That

is perfectly true, but supersensible existence is nevertheless reflected into space. The world that is beyond space and beyond time, plays into space and into time; and as man's thinking and ideation have necessarily to be in terms of space and time, the imagery of the stars in the heavens is an excellent one for giving a picture of the supersensible. One thing, however, we must not omit to make clear. We are taught in physics that the processes we have in the physical world—processes that are subject to the force of gravity—undergo a change, when we go out into space. Physical science tells us the exact proportion in which the force of gravity decreases. We are taught that the force of gravity (and also the intensity of light) decreases in proportion to the square of the distance. Science will not, however, admit that the same is true in relation to *all* knowledge of material things which has been acquired here on Earth. Science has derived this knowledge from the Earth; and if the figures which apply to gravity and light in the immediate environment of the Earth have to be modified as we go out into space, it is not unreasonable to suppose that only so long as we remain in the actual environment of the Earth are we justified in applying the scientific knowledge of to-day. Just as the power of gravity decreases in proportion to the square of the distance, so does the truth of our conclusions decrease, the further we are away from the Earth. When the astronomer or astro-physicist tries with ordinary thinking to determine, for instance, what is happening in some nebula out in cosmic space, it is just the same as if one set out to calculate, according to the conditions prevailing on the Earth, the weight of a stone in that nebula far away in the heavens. It ought not therefore to surprise us when Spiritual Science says: Here on Earth things present such and such an aspect, but out in the cosmos they are in reality quite different. On Earth we see the Moon as it appears in the sky. In reality the Moon is a cosmic colony of many Beings—I described it to

you in the last lecture. It is the same with all the stars and constellations. This fact must be borne in mind throughout our present study.

The lectures so far have brought us to the point where, during his life between death and a new birth, man passes into the Sun sphere. In this region the spirit-form of the lower part of the human being is transformed into the head of the next earthly life. It must of course be remembered that man's path between death and new birth is such that he passes through all these planetary spheres *twice*. After death he passes, first of all, into the Moon sphere, then he goes on into the Mercury sphere, the Venus sphere and the Sun sphere. That is as far as we came in our description. In the Sun sphere the lower man begins to be transformed into the upper man. The limb structures are transformed—spiritually, of course, at this stage—into the future head-system. This work of metamorphosis is a work of infinite grandeur and sublimity. Those who study the human head merely as a physical structure have no notion of all the manifold work that has to be performed in the Cosmos in order to bring into being the spirit-germ of the human head,—which later on will unite with the physical embryo. After this work has been begun in the Sun sphere, man passes into the Mars sphere, then into the Jupiter sphere and into the Saturn sphere. The Saturn sphere is really the last, for Uranus and Neptune do not come into consideration here. During all this time, work is proceeding upon the spirit-germ of the head. Man's path then leads him still further out into the cosmic expanse, out into the wide ocean of the cosmos, where the work of metamorphosis continues, until the time comes for him to take the path of return. Then, going back through the regions of Saturn, Jupiter and Mars to the region of the Sun, he comes again at length to the sphere of the Moon. Of the path of return we shall hear later on; at this point we will consider the experiences through which

the human being passes, after his time in the region of the Sun is over.

Before he reaches the Sun sphere, man's experiences are for the most part closely connected with *himself*. In the last lecture I told you how man wears a physiognomy which expresses his good and bad qualities and how this enables him to see other beings similar in nature to himself. I told you how he gradually changes his spirit-form and comes to resemble the beings who belong to the supersensible world, and how then he is able to behold the Beings of the Third Hierarchy and the Beings also of the second Hierarchy. If we want to describe the human being up to the stage of the Sun existence we must fix our attention on his spirit-form or figure, and describe that. But having entered the Sun region man undergoes an experience which I called *living his way into the Cosmic Music*, the Music of the Spheres. He hears, in cosmic harmony and cosmic melody, the meaning, as it were, of all the interworking of the starry worlds. For this working together of the stars, which is at the same time an expression of the working together of the Spiritual Beings that are in these regions—this it is, ultimately, that comes to revelation in cosmic harmony and cosmic melody. It is chiefly the life of *feeling* in its spiritual metamorphosis that is quickened and stimulated in the Sun existence. Every experience man has is like cosmic melody and cosmic harmony vibrating through his entire being. What we need at this stage of life between death and a new birth is not anything of the nature of theory, nor indeed anything that lends itself at all to expression in words. What we need is to feel—with a universal feeling that fills our being through and through—the harmonies and melodies born from the interworkings of the different orders of Beings in the Cosmos.

Then a further experience comes to us, an experience which reveals unmistakably the connection between the physical world

of sense and the supersensible, superphysical world. When we pass into the Sun existence where the melodies and harmonies of the spheres—the whole Music of the Spheres—sound to us from every direction of the Cosmos, we are still aware of the last remnants of one of the spiritual faculties we possessed during earthly existence, we can still feel the last remnants of *speech*. At this stage of existence between death and a new birth, our spirit-form has already fallen away and we have come to resemble in form the cosmic sphere itself; our form has undergone metamorphosis into what will become head in the next incarnation. Everything about it that was still reminiscent of the form we bore in earthly existence has by this time fallen right away. But the faculty of soul that enabled us to speak, to make our thought articulate in words, follows us, and being present with us in memory brings a kind of discord into the Music of the Spheres. Yes, discord is introduced into the Music of the Spheres, by reason of the fact that man carries right up into Sun existence the remnants of his faculty of speech. And this discordant element that is brought by man into the Sun existence becomes the basis for the work of certain higher Spirits whose task it is to help forward Earth existence from the Cosmos. For it is when they see what comes to expression in human speech and language as it is to-day, that they take knowledge of how things have degenerated on the Earth and grown corrupt. In none of its European or American forms to-day is speech a faculty that emerges from the being of man with elemental power. It may be that what speech once was will be able to come again on Earth in the following way. Some of us are learning *Eurhythm*. What happens when one learns *Eurhythm*? To-day we lightly utter words without the faintest inkling of how the configuration of the words is connected with the inner life and experience of the soul. To speak words to-day is really nothing but an acquiescence in convention. It never occurs to people that

when they say “a” (ah)—as a sound, by itself—they are expressing something which as pure sound springs from astonishment or wonder in the soul. When we utter the sound “b,” we mean that we are covering something, enveloping it, wrapping it round. Consonantal sounds invariably signify *forms*; vowel sounds express *feelings*, the inner life and being of the soul. The “b” sound is primordially connected with an act of covering. “B” is really the “house.” If I say “a” (ah), this is an expression of a wonder that is felt in the very depths of the soul. The consonantal sound of “t” expresses a settling oneself down, making a halt, staying there. “D” is the same, but has a gentler shade of meaning, less abrupt. Suppose I utter the (German) word “Bad.”\* If I were to go back to the origin of the word, to the time when it was still *felt* and *seen*, I would have to say: The water is around me like an enveloping sheath: “b.” It is comfortably warm: ah! (Now I am at the sound “a.”) I shall stay in it: “d.” The whole experience is contained in the word itself. To speak in such a way seems to us almost absurd, for nowadays no actual experience is any longer connected with words. If we wanted to experience the word “B-a-d” we should have to say: “The house in which I feel wonder, in which I sit.” In reality speech is filled through and through with soul; man’s inner experience of soul streams into and permeates it.

In days of yore this was felt and known. In the original, primitive tongues, speech was born from perception of feeling and of form—feeling in the vowel, form in the consonant. To-day these elements are no longer associated with speech; it has become a mere matter of convention. In *Eurhythm*, however, the sounds—“b,” “a,” “d”—are changed back again into the gestures that correspond to them. In making the gestures, the *Eurhythmist* begins again to *experience* speech. One may cherish the hope that if love for *Eurhythm* is born

\* English “bath.”

in ever widening circles, humanity will be able to find its way back to what was contained in primitive tongues,—to a speech that is felt and seen. So will Eurhythmy in the future be something more than it is to-day; it will be man's guide and show him how the life of soul and spirit can be borne along on the surging waves of speech. To-day we have come to the point when speech is so little articulated—let alone, ensouled—that numbers of people cannot really be said to “speak” at all. They “spit” the words out! Speech as it is to-day is certainly not born from the life of soul! It is enough to make one despair, when one has to listen to words that have no longer any soul in them, any life,—nay, are not even articulated.

So it comes about that in our day a shrill discord sounds up from Earth into the Cosmic Music when man enters the Sun existence after death. And this quality that has crept into speech makes manifest to certain Spiritual Beings the degeneration that earthly existence has suffered, showing them too at the same time how the right forces and impulses can be found that will lead once again to an ascent.

Man continues his wandering and comes into the Mars existence. What do we mean when we say: Man comes into the Mars existence? It is now no longer possible, you must remember, to speak of man in his spirit-form, for by this time he is wholly changed; he has become a spiritual image of the great cosmic sphere. On and on leads the path, through the spheres of Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, out into the surging waves of the Cosmos. In the Mars region the human being lives among the “population” of Mars—if I may so express myself. The inhabitants of Mars are discovered to be either discarnate human souls or Beings of the Hierarchies, but above all those of the Hierarchies from whose entire being *Cosmic Speech* sounds forth into universal space. For man is now in the region where Cosmic Music becomes Cosmic Speech. At first he hears it; then he is himself

interwoven into the Cosmic Speech. Instead of the imitative speech of humanity, he hearkens to a speech that is creative, a speech out of which things are born and have their being. During man's passage through the sphere of Mars he acquires conscious knowledge of the Beings who people this region. The spiritual population of Mars consists of Beings who are the Knowers of the Cosmic Speech. There are other Beings too,—for example, Beings who are warlike in nature. But so far as man is concerned, the most important Beings in the Mars sphere are those who in their whole nature are Cosmic Word. They are the Guardians of the Cosmic Speech.

Man's journey then leads him into the region of Jupiter where dwell the Beings who are the guardians of the *Cosmic Thoughts*. These Beings radiate thought-beings into our planetary system and its environment. Through this region also man must pass, and he is involved there in a process of metamorphosis which I can only describe in a rather prosaic way.

Picture to yourselves that man becomes a kind of image of the cosmic sphere; that is to say, his whole being is really the spirit-germ of the head as it will be in his next life on Earth. In the Sun existence, having experienced the shrill discord set up by earthly speech, he learns to lay aside this earthly speech. During his passage through Mars he becomes part of the Cosmic Speech, he grows one with it, and begins also to lay the foundation for an understanding of Cosmic Speech. For it is like this. The metamorphosis of the lower man has begun—the legs into the lower jaw, the arms into the upper jaw, and so on. In community with the Beings of the Hierarchies the human being builds the spirit-germ of his future head. But, to begin with, this head is built for understanding the *Cosmos*—not the Earth! It learns first to understand Cosmic Speech, Cosmic Thoughts. Cosmic Thoughts and Cosmic Speech find a home in the human head; just as here on Earth man knows of minerals, plants and animals,

so, during his journey through the spheres of Mars and Jupiter, he is made acquainted with the mysteries of the spiritual Universe. We shall never have a true feeling or perception of the nature of man until we realise in clear consciousness that between death and rebirth the human being has learned to know the names of the wonderful and majestic Beings of the higher Hierarchies, has learned to understand the work and creative activities of these Beings in the Cosmos, has learned to follow in his thought—not little everyday problems of personal life, such as, How am I to get back to Amsterdam?—but such a question as: How is one world-epoch born out of another through the workings of the higher Hierarchies? So much for man's experience in his passage through Jupiter.

Now comes the passage through the Saturn existence. Saturn bestows upon the human being what I will call *Cosmic Memory*—for in the Saturn sphere dwell those Spiritual Beings who preserve the memory of everything that has ever come to pass in our planetary system. Saturn is the mighty bearer of the memory of all the happenings of our planetary system. Just as in the Mars sphere man learns the speech of the Gods, and in the Jupiter sphere the thoughts of the Gods, so in his first passage through the Saturn existence he learns to know all that lives in the memory of the Gods of our planetary system. Hence it comes about that man's head in the spiritual spheres—which is the spirit-germ of his future earthly head—receives incorporated into it everything that enables him to be a citizen of the Cosmos and to live in the Cosmos among the Beings of the higher Hierarchies, even as he lives on earth among the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms.

Then, having been so deeply enriched in his spirit-existence that he has learned to understand the speech of the great world, the speech of the Macrocosm in the widest sense of the word, man passes out of the spheres of planetary activity and enters

the sphere of activity of the Fixed Stars. Here the work upon the primal germ of the human head, the pre-figuring and shaping of it, is brought to completion by influences pouring in from infinitudes of spiritual worlds.

The time has now come for man to take the path of return. He comes again, first, into the Saturn sphere. The fact that during his earlier sojourn in the Saturn sphere he received into himself the planetary memories, enables the foundation to be laid now in his head for the faculty of memory that will be necessary in his life on Earth. The cosmic memory implanted into his being is, as it were, made "earthly." Cosmic memory is transformed again into the germ of the faculty of human memory. And in the Jupiter sphere, all that man acquired through having perceived the thoughts of the Gods, is transformed on the path of return into the faculty to conceive human thoughts which can then be reflected in ordinary consciousness when the germ of the head unites with the physical embryo.

On the return path through the Saturn sphere the detailed elaboration of the metamorphosis of the lower man into the various parts of the head-organisation can also begin. This is a wonderful work,—one human being working upon another, in accord too with the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. Verily, the work that is wrought here for the forming of the human head is like the creation of a whole world. For in the sphere of existence between death and rebirth of which I am now speaking, each single human head is seen to be a wonderful world,—a world of infinite variety and detail; and the work upon it calls for the devotion of human beings who are linked together by destiny, with the co-operation also of Beings of the Hierarchies who, knowing the mysteries of the Cosmos, understand how such a human head must be built and formed.

Wonderful it is beyond all telling, to come in this way to a knowledge of what is in man. Nor can such knowledge ever

lead to pride or conceit. Yonder, between death and a new birth, the world in which we live sees to it that we do not succumb to pride! It would be, my dear friends, an absurdity to fall victim to human pride and arrogance among the Beings of the Hierarchies, among Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones! The human being must remain for ever little in comparison with the Beings among whom he works. And when in this earthly existence a man comes to learn of what he is in the great Macrocosm between death and a new birth, he has good reason to say to himself: "You have not brought very much with you into earthly existence! You have no great cause to pride yourself upon your present condition; nor have you any occasion to be particularly proud of what you were among the Gods!" What *can* grow within us as the result of looking upon the life of man between death and a new birth is a sense of responsibility which makes us say: "We must strive with all our might to be worthy even here on earth, of being 'man.'" For this is indeed what we feel, when we measure the significance of being "man" by the work performed upon the human being by the Gods in the period that lies between death and a new birth.

Going now further on his path of return, man comes again into the Mars existence, where the work upon his being continues. It is here that the spirit-germs for the new body are added—for the breast system and for the limb structures, as they will be in the next earthly life. For it is really so, that the foundations of the limbs of the previous earthly life come forth as the foundations of the head in the new incarnation, and so now during man's passage through the planetary world on the way to his next earthly life the germs for breast system and limb structures have to be laid anew. It must of course always be remembered that these germs are spiritual; the whole process is a spiritual process. As man passes again through Mars existence, the lofty spirituality with which he was imbued during his first passage

through the Mars sphere, and which enabled him to experience the cosmic Word, is now transformed into spiritual substance of a somewhat lower order—into that spiritual substance from out of which, later on, the human Ego manifests itself. It is also during this return journey through the Mars sphere that the spirit-germ of the larynx and lung formations are added.

Man comes then again to the Sun. The second passage through the Sun sphere is significant in the highest degree. Since he completed his first sojourn in the Sun existence, man has passed through the spheres of Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, to the world of the Stars, and then made the return journey through Saturn, Jupiter and Mars. All this time his whole being has been given over to the Cosmos; he has become one with the Cosmos, one with the World-All. He has been living in the Cosmos; he has learned cosmic speech, he has learned to weave cosmic thoughts into his being, he has been living, *not* within his own life of memory—that only dawns for him later—but within the memory of the whole planetary system. He has felt himself one with the Beings of the higher Hierarchies in his memory of the cosmic thoughts and of the cosmic speech. Now however, when he returns once again to the Sun, he begins to shut himself off more as an individual being. Very faintly the feeling dawns that he is becoming separate from the Cosmos. This is connected with the fact that the first foundations of the heart are now being laid within him. The return journey continues. For the second time man passes through the Venus sphere and the Mercury sphere, where the spirit-germs of the other organs have to be implanted within him.

At the moment of entrance for the second time into the Sun existence—all these happenings and processes take a very long time, and long before man enters upon earthly existence he experiences, as we shall see, what is for him a very significant turn of destiny—at the moment when, out in the Cosmos,



the spirit-germ of the heart is laid within our being on the return journey to the earth, there is of course not yet a physical heart. True, there is already an indication of a physical heart form, but it is surrounded and inter-woven with all that constitutes the worth of the human being as the outcome of his previous earthly lives. The fact that we receive into ourselves in the Sun sphere the first germ of the physical heart is less important than the fact that in this germ of the heart is concentrated all that we are morally, all our qualities of soul and spirit. Before the spirit-germ of the heart unites with the embryonic germ of the future body, the heart in man is a spiritual being, a moral being of soul and spirit out in the Cosmos; only later does this moral being of spirit and soul—which man now feels living within him, which man has, as it were, acquired in the course of his return journey to Earth—unite with the embryo. This concentration, in the germ of the heart, of his whole soul-and-spirit being is experienced by man in communion with the sublime Sun Beings—those Sun Beings who rule over the creative forces of the planetary system and therewith of earthly existence. Let me try to describe it to you in a picture. The expressions may sound strange but they are really appropriate.

At the time when this cosmic heart is bestowed upon man, he is living among those Spiritual Beings of the Hierarchies in whose hand lies the leadership of the whole planetary system in its connection with earthly existence. The experience is one of infinite grandeur and splendour. It is difficult to find words to describe what the human being experiences in this phase of existence. In a certain respect his feeling resembles a feeling he can have in physical existence. For just as in physical existence he feels that he is bound up with his heart-beat, with the whole activity of the heart, so, out in the Macrocosm, through his macrocosmic spiritual heart, he feels himself at, one with his whole being of soul and spirit. The moral being of soul and

spirit which he has become at this moment of his experience is, as it were, a spiritual heart-beat within him. His whole being seems now to be in the Cosmos, in the same way as his heart-beat is in him; he becomes aware also of a kind of circulation in connection with this heart-beat. Just as on Earth we feel in the heart-beat the blood circulation and breathing which give rise to it, so, when on the return journey through the Sun existence we begin to be aware of the beating of our spiritual, macrocosmic heart, it feels to us as though streams or currents were uniting this spiritual heart-beat with the Beings of the Second Hierarchy. Even as the blood flows to the heart from the veins in the physical organism, so into our being of spirit-and-soul pour the words of the Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis,—what they have to say concerning the World and the World's judgement upon man. The words and sounds of the spirit of the World-All are the circulation that now centres itself in this spiritual, macrocosmic heart, in this human being of soul and spirit. There, at the centre, beats the spiritual heart of man. And the beat of the spiritual heart of man is the heart-beat of the world in which he is living. The blood-stream of this world is the deeds of the creative Beings of the Second Hierarchy, the forces which stream out from them. And just as the blood-stream on Earth centres itself in the heart where it is unconsciously experienced by man, so at this point of time between death and a new birth it is given to man, as a grace bestowed, to hold and cherish within him a cosmic heart—one of the organs of perception, one of the cosmic hearts, created out of the pulse-beat of the Macrocosm, even the deeds of the Beings of the Second Hierarchy. For let it be remembered that the physical heart is a *sense* organ, which *perceives* the movement of the blood, not a "pump" as the physiologists imagine. The spirituality and vitality of the human being—these it is that cause the movement of the blood.

The return journey continues—through the Mercury and the

Venus spheres. But before this, indeed in that cosmic moment when the human being feels himself living in very truth within the spiritual heart of the Cosmos, his gaze has already fallen upon the line of generations, at the end of which stand the parents who will give him birth. The connection with the line of generations is, as you see, made relatively soon. We are born of father and mother, our parents again have each of them father and mother, and these too have their father and mother. This takes us back about a hundred years. But we must go further back, through many centuries; for long before a human being is born on Earth, he has united himself with the line of generations which culminates in the family into which he is born. It is quite early that the connection with the line of generations is determined, namely, when man is passing through the Sun existence for the second time. And in his passage through the cosmic colonies of Venus and Mercury he can, so to speak, arrange for his destiny to be brought as closely as possible into line with the outer experiences that must come to him through being born into a particular family and a particular nation.

After this, man comes again into the sphere of the Moon. Let me remind you how during his first passage through the Moon sphere man's thoughts were directed, for good and also for ill, to the primeval Teachers of the human race, to the starting-point of earthly existence, when superhuman Teachers imparted superhuman wisdom to the men of Earth. When he comes down into the Moon existence for the second time, there is less inducement for him to turn his attention to what was on Earth long ago. For now the period of time that man spends—above, in the Cosmos—in this Moon existence, is the same period of time as takes its course on Earth below between conception and birth. Man's embryonic life runs hand in hand with a particular cosmic development. Up there in the Moon sphere he is passing through a definite phase of evolution while below, stage by

stage, the physical embryo is being prepared—the physical embryo with which he then gradually unites.

How does this macrocosmic life of the human being take its course during this second period of evolution in the Moon sphere? What does man accomplish there?

In all the experiences I have been describing, man's *consciousness* is far clearer and more awake than the ordinary consciousness of his life on Earth. It is most important to distinguish the various degrees of human consciousness. Consciousness during dream-life is dull, consciousness during waking life is clear, consciousness after death still clearer. As a dream is to reality, so is all our life on Earth in comparison with the clarity of our consciousness in the life after death. Moreover, at each new stage in the life after death, consciousness becomes still clearer, still more alert.

When we pass through the Moon existence on the upward journey, consciousness grows clearer owing to the fact that in the Moon sphere we come into the environment of the wise, primeval Teachers of humanity. Clearer and ever clearer grows our consciousness as we pass on through the spheres of Mercury and Venus; and its clarity continues to be intensified every time we enter a new sphere of the heavens. But when we are returning again and approaching a new life on Earth, consciousness is dimmed and darkened stage by stage. During the phase of Mercury existence on the return journey, we still have a consciousness that is clearer than any consciousness can be in ordinary earthly existence. But when we come to the Moon sphere, and are in an environment that reveals to us what man was at the beginning of earthly evolution, then our consciousness begins to be obliterated. In the same sphere where, on the upward journey, the supersensible world first lit up for us in a clearer consciousness than was possible on Earth, consciousness is now dimmed. We are returning to the Earth and consciousness becomes ever dimmer and dimmer, until it remains in us only

as growth-force—the power of growth that is present in the little child, the dreaming little child. Consciousness has dimmed into dream! This is the moment when the being of soul-and-spirit can unite with the physical embryo. In order that this momentous event may come to pass, in order that the human being at a certain point of his development make connection with the physical embryo, he must pass through a Moon evolution in communion with the primeval Teachers of humanity, while the physical embryo down below is passing through its ten lunar months in the body of the mother. And the Moon evolution that he has to undergo consists in this—that a whole host of the Teachers of mankind are engaged in the task of dimming down the cosmic consciousness which the human being still possessed during his Mercury existence, toning it down to the dream consciousness in which he lives at the beginning of his life on Earth.

Physical man, with all that we can see of him here on Earth, is, in truth, only to be understood in the light of a knowledge of supersensible man. And supersensible man can never be explained by the facts of Earth, but only by the facts of the great World, the Macrocosm. My object in these lectures has been to show you how earthly man is born as Spirit-man out of the Spiritual Cosmos.

It remains for us in the lecture to-morrow to study in this connection the significance of earthly life itself, in so far as the being who is spiritual and superhuman passes over into this earthly life. We shall come to understand the significance of the fact that when he passes through the gate of death the human being carries out again into the spiritual world what remains to him of all he has acquired and experienced in earthly life. Having, therefore, learned to understand, in some of its aspects, the spirit nature of man, his supersensible being, we will return to-morrow to the study of the connection between supersensible man and physical man.

## LECTURE V

The Hague, 18th November, 1923.

My dear Friends,

We have tried, so far as is possible in a few short hours, to picture the journey of man through the supersensible world. For that is the world in which man verily lives his life between death and a new birth. But in the physical world too, where man is living in his physical and etheric bodily nature,—here too his forces extend into the supersensible world. In the physical world he feels his supersensible existence more or less as a riddle; and unless he be able to find at least a partial solution to the riddle, his soul will not attain inner harmony, inner balance, inner security. Nay, more, his life will lack energy and vigour; and human love that is really worthy of the name will be beyond him.

A study of man as he is on Earth presents an aspect in relation to his supersensible being which can give us insight into the reason why the Divine-Spiritual worlds have sent him down to this world of the physical senses. It is, after all, in the physical world that appeal has to be made to man to interest himself in knowledge concerning the supersensible world. We would have to deal quite differently with the riddles of the supersensible world if we were going to speak of them to the dead, to those who are passing through their existence between death and a new birth. It will accordingly be well, in bringing our study to a certain conclusion to-day, to take the indications that have been given in the last few days concerning the mysteries of the supersensible world, and let them light up again in our hearts in connection with the sojourn of man on Earth.

Let us think, to begin with, of man as he is here in earthly life,—of ourselves, that is. We have in the first place our senses. Our senses give us information of all that is around us; they are the occasion of our earthly joy and happiness and also of our earthly suffering and pain. We are apt to forget how very much sense impressions and sense experiences signify in life. Studies such as we have been pursuing in this course of lectures take us beyond the life of the senses into spiritual regions, and it might well seem that the tendency of Spiritual Science would be to lead to an undervaluing of the life of the senses, making us feel that it is, after all, of secondary importance and that we should flee from it even while we are still in earthly life. Such a feeling can never be the *final* outcome of Spiritual Science. It can only serve to bring home to us that there is an inferior way of taking the life of the senses incompatible with the dignity and nobility of human existence, but that it is possible for man to lose the life of the senses in its less worthy aspects, and find it again in its deeper meaning from a higher, supersensible angle of vision. We would naturally shrink from studying things in their spiritual aspect if we were obliged to tell ourselves that all the loveliness and wonder of the world of nature which makes such a deep impression on our souls, all the beauty of plants, of the blossoming flowers, of the ripening fruits, all the majesty of the starry heavens, mean so little in human life that they must be regarded as beneath our notice in comparison with spiritual-scientific knowledge. This is not so at all. If you look back to the impulses given by Initiates and Masters in different epochs for the enhancement of the dignity of human life, you will find that the words uttered by Initiates never undervalue the beauty, the splendour, the majesty of the earthly life of the senses. Wonderful, full of poetry and artistic imagination are often the words used by Initiates to express the most lofty supersensible truths! Think only of the image of the lotus flower—to take one

example among many—and you will realise that the Initiates have never considered it unworthy to speak of the development of spiritual life in imagery drawn from the world of the senses. They have invariably held that in the contemplation of the sense-world something is immediately present, or can at any rate be discovered, that leads man on to the highest.

The sense-world, however, as man perceives it in ordinary consciousness, cannot in itself afford him satisfaction. And for this reason. The impressions that come to man through his eyes, ears and other senses, are indeed connected with his Ego, with its whole life and development, but they can do nothing to promote the inner stability of the Ego. There they cannot help man. We turn our gaze outward to the beauty and splendour of the flowers; we have before us a world of infinite variety. We turn our gaze inward, to our Ego; and for ordinary consciousness it seems, to begin with, as if this Ego is vanishing away from us. It seems to be just a point within us, a spiritual point, capable of saying little more than the mere word "I." Nor can we wonder at this. We need only consider how man's senses have to be wholly surrendered to the world if they are to mediate between him and the world. The eye, in order that it may see, must renounce itself. It must be completely transparent if the splendour and beauty of the outer world of sense is to shine through it in all the lustre and radiance of colour. It is the same with the other senses. We really know nothing of our senses. Is there, then, any way by means of which we can begin to know and understand what they are in their real nature? There is indeed, but here again we must tread the path which leads to the supersensible world. Knowledge even of the senses has to be sought in the supersensible world.

You are familiar with the descriptions I have given of the paths which lead to the higher worlds. Try to picture livingly the consciousness that can develop into Imaginative cognition.

In a certain respect we withdraw from physical perception of the outer world when we enter into Imaginative cognition. But the most interesting thing of all that happens on this path is the following. I will describe it for you in a picture.

When, in meditation—in accordance with the exercises given in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment*—you draw near to the world of Imagination, when, that is, as a result of your strivings, your etheric being begins to emerge from your physical being and this first supersensible member begins itself to possess a kind of consciousness, you can as it were, “catch” yourself at a stage that lies between ordinary sense-perception and Imaginative vision. You have not yet advanced to a fully developed Imaginative vision, but you are on the way to it. We will now suppose that a man who is already on the way to Imaginative vision goes into some high mountainous region that is particularly rich in primeval silicious rock. Forces of soul will be readily quickened in him where there is an abundance of quartz-containing silicious rock. Certain inner faculties of soul can, as it were, suddenly spring to development as a result of a vivid impression caused by silicious rock on high mountains. Ordinarily, this kind of rock is slightly transparent, slightly translucent. But when our faculties of soul have pressed forward to the stage of which I have spoken—at that moment silicious rock becomes wholly transparent. We climb up on to a high mountain, and behold, the silicious rock appears to us with the transparency of glass. We feel moreover that something is streaming out from our own being and uniting with it. Here, at the outermost surface of the Earth, by a kind of natural surrender of our consciousness we become one with the whole Earth’s surface. It is as though our eyes were sending out rays that enter right into the silicious rock; and in that moment we begin to feel ourselves one with the whole Earth. When we have this experience, beginning at the

same time to feel ourselves one with the whole World, with the Cosmos, then, if we are to attain, not to a dream, nor to any abstract thought, but to a first actual realisation of oneness with the Cosmos, we must carry the experience further. An inner consciousness can light up within us which I may perhaps express in the following words. “Thou, O Earth, art not alone in the World-All! Thou, O Earth, together with me and all the other beings upon thee, art verily one with the great World-All!” Living in this experience of oneness with the silicious rock, we no longer see the Earth separated from the rest of the Universe. We see the Earth as an ether-sphere, emerging from the sphere of the cosmic ether.

This is a first feeling that can come over us. Many an ancient song, many an ancient myth, brimful of wonderful revelations, rings to us across the ages from a literature born in the time when mankind was possessed of instinctive clairvoyance. People read these songs and myths to-day, and like to persuade themselves that they are uplifted in heart and soul by what they read. But the truth contained therein eludes them. It is quite impossible to experience, or to have any insight into the real mood and feeling of the Bhagavad Gita, for example, or of other Indian and Oriental literature, without having at least begun to learn, through spiritual knowledge, in how real a sense man can become one with the Earth and thereby one with the Cosmos. Many a time the mood of such a song will have been born from a realisation of oneness with the Cosmos, a kind of “going in consciousness” with the light—even with the light that penetrates the hard silicious rock, so that now the light enfills and permeates it with the human soul itself, making this hard rocky substance into a cosmic eye through which man gazes out into the wide expanses of the Cosmos.

It is indeed so, that when out of real knowledge we begin to describe supersensible man, we find ourselves quite naturally



turning away from abstract, theoretical expressions. We cannot help speaking a language in which the whole feeling-content of the human soul is united with the ideas. In all our study of supersensible man we must realise in the depths of our hearts that knowledge of the supersensible cannot be clothed in words without making will and feeling one with the thoughts and ideas, without letting our *whole being* pour into the words. Life has, we all know well, to be endured and much that life brings is hard to bear. But for one who is conscious of the deeply human quality of supersensible knowledge, the thing that is hardest of all is to listen to this supersensible knowledge being expressed in theories and abstractions. The pain that is caused him by hearing people speak of the supersensible world in a theoretical manner, is just like the physical pain caused to a finger by putting it into a flame.

When further progress has been made in supersensible knowledge, when, through Imagination, we understand the working of the supersensible forces in the human being during earthly life, then we can go on to attain the knowledge that belongs to Inspiration. Through Inspiration we can gaze into what man was before birth, before he descended to earthly existence, and also into what he will be when he has passed through the gate of death. We can look upon all that I have been describing to you in these lectures,—the journey through the different planetary regions, where the forming of the “physiognomy” takes place, and then the process of metamorphosis from an earlier to a later earthly life. At the stage of Inspiration we can follow the human being in his whole journey through the several starry worlds.

Now this knowledge, by means of which we can penetrate to the depths of our inner being, receives a new quality, a new colouring when we realise that what has been described in connection with the life stretching between death and a new birth lives within us even during our life on this physical Earth.

It is all there within man when he is on Earth—tiny and insignificant as he appears from a spatial point of view, standing there in his physical body, enclosed by his skin. Within him live all the splendours of the Cosmos, and we must not omit to tell of these when we are describing the true and essential being of man. Man belongs to the worlds of the stars and to yet higher worlds—the worlds of the Hierarchies. And in such measure as our knowledge is able to penetrate to what is thus living within us—this earthly heritage of what we were in our true being, between death and a new birth—we can at the same time do something more. We can penetrate to the depths of our Earth planet, to the veins of the metals—lead ore, silver ore, copper ore—we can learn to perceive what lives in the rocks through the presence there of the metals and their ores. Seen with the eyes of sense, the metallic substances are little more than indications of different kinds of earth. But if we are able to gaze into the Earth with that spiritually sharpened perception which we owe to the supersensible part of our being, the metallic substances in the Earth can give rise to wonderful experiences. The copper, silver and gold within the Earth begin to speak a language full of richness and mystery. Then something happens which brings us, men living on the Earth, into close kinship with the living soul of the Earth herself. The metallic ores tell us something; they become for us cosmic memories.

Think for a moment how it is with you when in quietude of soul—inwardly active quietude of soul—you let old memories rise up within you, memories which bear on their wings many an event of long ago. You feel as if you were living through past experiences, as if you were together again with many a one who has been dear to you in the course of your life, maybe with many a one long since gone hence. You are wafted right away from the present moment, you are living in the sorrows and joys of days gone by.

An exactly similar experience arises—but on a majestic scale—when, imbued with a spirit-knowledge that is also felt, you become one with the veins of metal in the Earth. It is not now as it was with the silicious rock which carried you out with seeing eyes, out into the cosmic spaces; in this new experience it is as though you became one with the very body of the Earth. And as you listen inwardly to the wonderful story told by the metals, you say to yourself: “Now I am one with the inmost beat of the soul and heart of the Earth herself. I have memories which are not my own personal memories; memories of the Earth herself are sounding into my being,—memories of earlier times, of ages when she was not yet the Earth we know, when there were no animals, no plants upon her surface, least of all any minerals in the bosom of the Earth. I remember, together with the Earth, those ancient days when the Earth was one with the other planets of our planetary system. I remember ages when there was no separate Earth, because the Earth was not yet dense, not yet firm in herself as she is to-day. I remember the time when the whole planetary system was a living organism of soul, and human beings indwelt this living organism, in quite a different form.” Thus do the veins of the metals in the Earth lead us to the Earth’s own memories.

Now this experience leads us on to see quite clearly why it is that we have been sent down to the Earth by the Divine Beings who rule over the World-Order.

Living thus in the Earth’s memories, we feel for the first time the true measure of our thinking. Having once taken hold in this way of the Earth’s memories, we feel how our thinking is bound up with the Earth. And the moment we make the Earth’s memories our own, we have around us the Beings of the Second Hierarchy, the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes. This, then, is the way whereby we can have around us even in earthly life those Beings who, as we have heard, are round us again

during a certain period of our life between death and a new birth. We know now with full conviction that we come in contact with these Beings of the Second Hierarchy while we are incarnated on Earth between birth and death. The task of these Beings is not only that of working together with us between death and rebirth at the metamorphosis of our being; they have also their part in the whole forming and shaping of the Cosmos. We are able now to see how these Beings of the Second Hierarchy are entrusted by the spiritual World-Order with the task of bringing about in the Earth what is wrought there by virtue of the metallic ores.

Let us look back once more at the experience we had with the silicious rock. We were not then able to grasp the fact of which I am now going to speak, for at that stage it was not sufficiently clear. Only now at last does full clarity come from the marvellous experience of perceiving the Earth’s memories in the veins of the metals. Having once reached this further stage, we can go back again and understand something which perhaps, to begin with, we did not understand. When our consciousness is borne out into the universe on the wings of the light that fills and pervades the silicious rock, the Beings of the Third Hierarchy—Angels, Archangels and Archai—are all around us. We know now that what the ordinary eyes of sense tell us when we go up a high mountain is not really true. Neither do our eyes tell us true when we descend into the deep places of the Earth and gaze upon the veins of the metals. On a high mountain, among the silicious rock, around and over the rocky peaks weave the Angels, Archangels and Archai; and when we go down into the Earth we find the Beings of the Second Hierarchy moving in the paths of the veins of the metals. Once again therefore we can say to ourselves that even during earthly life we are in the company of spiritual Beings who are connected with our own innermost being in the life which extends from death to a new birth.

In our life after death we pass consciously, after a time, into the world of the Angels, Archangels and Archai. In the discarnate state we unfold a consciousness in which we know that these Beings of the Third Hierarchy are around us, just as on Earth the three or four kingdoms of Nature are around us. When, in this higher state of consciousness, we behold the Angels, Archangels and Archai, all that the senses on Earth can perceive has of course vanished, for our senses have been given over, with our body, to the elements. Between death and a new birth we can see nothing that the senses perceive in earthly life. But the Angels, Archangels and Archai tell us—I can use this expression, for it exactly accords with the reality—the Angels, Archangels and Archai relate to us the story of what they are doing down below on the Earth. They tell us that they are not only active in the life which we ourselves are now sharing with them. They whisper softly into our souls: “We take our share too in the creative work of the Cosmos, we are creative Beings in the Cosmos and we look deep down in the Earth and behold in what earthly forms the silicious rock and kindred substances are fashioned.” And then man realises, when he is among the Angels, Archangels and Archai, that he must come down again to Earth. He learns to know these Beings of the Third Hierarchy between death and a new birth, and he hears them speak in wonderful manner of their deeds upon the Earth. He knows then that he can only *behold* these their deeds, by descending to Earth, clothing himself in a physical, human body and partaking in the world of sense-perception.

The deepest mysteries of sense-perception—not only of perceptions connected with the silicious rock on high mountains, but the deepest mysteries of all sense-perception—are revealed to us in wonderful words by the Beings among whom we live between death and a new birth. The beauties of material Nature on Earth are so full of greatness and mystery that the memories we

take with us through the gate of death are only seen in their full and true light when we hear the Angels, Archangels and Archai describing to us all that our eyes have been able to see, our ears to hear and our other senses to perceive down here in earthly life.

Such is the connection between the physical and the super-physical; such too the connection of man's physical life with his superphysical life. The universe is full of splendour, and it is right that what we see in material existence should delight and uplift us. Its real mysteries we learn to know when we have passed through the gate of death. The more we have learned to rejoice in the physical world, the more deeply we have entered into all the joys which the sense-world has to bestow, the greater the measure of understanding we shall bring to the world of the Angels, who are waiting to tell us of these mysteries which here on Earth we do not yet understand and shall only learn to understand when we have passed over into the superphysical world. The same is true of our relation to the Second Hierarchy, the Exusiai, Kyriotetes, Dynamis, among whom we also live for a certain period between death and a new birth. We can, on Earth, come into a special relation to these Beings when, following the path of the light into the veins of the metals in the Earth, we awaken within us the Earth's memories. But here again, only when we have come over yonder into the region of the Beings of the Second Hierarchy are we able to understand all the experiences we have had on Earth in connection with the metals.

One of the most wonderful experiences man can have is to be able to investigate and prove the manifold connections that exist between the metals and the health of man, and I have good hope that the Anthroposophical Movement will do a great deal to open up the truly beautiful aspect of this field of knowledge. Every metal and every metal-compound has its relation to the health of man. As man goes through life, whether in health or



disease, he is in connection all the time with that which gives to the Earth her memories—namely, the metals and their various compounds. We must get beyond mere theorising as to the healing influences of lead and lead compounds, of copper and copper compounds, and so forth. These substances are all extremely significant and important remedies, if we know how to prepare them in the right way, and we must not be satisfied with speaking in an abstract manner of the wonderful connections between the metals and the being of man. A feeling of holy awe does indeed even now arise within us when we contemplate the veins of metal in the depths of the Earth, but we must go a step further and develop also a deepened insight into the marvellous connection of the metals with the being of man—a connection which is revealed to us only when we have first studied the human being in health and in disease. As I indicated, it is to be hoped that the Anthroposophical Movement will be able to spread this knowledge in the hearts and minds of men, for it is of the greatest importance. In times gone by it was not so important, because men knew instinctively the connections, for example, between the lead-process or the silver-process with some process in the human head. In days of yore these connections were spoken of a great deal. Nowadays people read what was written long ago without understanding a single word. Approaching it from the point of view of modern science, they talk of it as if it were nothing but empty abstractions. When through Anthroposophical knowledge man attains to the deepened feeling and insight which can come to him in contemplation of the wonderful connection between the metals of the Earth and the sickness and health of the human being, then indeed he will carry up into the spiritual world through the gate of death something that will help him to understand the speech of the Second Hierarchy. The greatest mysteries of the world will be able to reveal themselves to him, precisely

because he has prepared himself in this way on Earth and brings with him the necessary understanding. For it is really so, my dear friends. We learn what Anthroposophy has to teach us not merely for the sake of satisfying human curiosity, but in order that the knowledge may bear fruit after we have passed through the gate of death. For only what we learn and receive through spiritual science can bring us into a right relation, between death and a new birth, to those Spiritual Beings whom we must needs contact with our whole being, since it is they who are then our cosmic environment.

It is thus possible to give a detailed picture of how we come into relation with the Beings of the Hierarchies between death and a new birth. But there is still a further experience that can befall us as we pass through those regions, and it must now be described.

When we can grasp the connection between the metals in the Earth and the being of man in health and disease, secrets of Nature are revealing themselves to us. Within these secrets something more lies hid. We hear the Beings of the Second Hierarchy speaking of the nature of gold, silver, lead, copper and the other metals. But in our relation to the great spiritual world, it is with us now as it is here on Earth when we are beginning to learn to read and it dawns upon us that learning to read will enable us to fathom many a world-mystery which might otherwise remain for ever beyond our ken. I say this only by way of comparison, for the speech through which we learn to understand the Beings of the Second Hierarchy in a certain sphere of existence between death and a new birth—the speech which tells of the metals and their relation to man in health and disease—will only be true when, in the spiritual world, we can hear it, not as prose, but as cosmic poetry,—let me rather say, when we ourselves rise to the level of cosmic poetry. At first we listen in much the same way as someone with no appreciation

of poetry may listen to the recitation of a poem. But just as we can, on Earth, learn—unless we are quite devoid of poetic feeling—to appreciate what is contained in the swing of the verse, in the rhythm, in the whole artistic form of the poem, so is it possible for us, after death, to rise from the prose to the poetry of that world beyond the Threshold, from the speech of the Second Hierarchy which tells us of the relation of the metals to man in health and disease, to a higher stage, where we understand the mysteries of moral existence in the Universe,—that moral life in which not only human souls but the divine souls of all the Beings of the Hierarchies are involved. We have come to a region where the mysteries of the *life of soul* begin to lie open before us.

Then we can go a step further. I have described the experiences that can be ours when we go up a mountain, and again when we go down a deep mine. It was all still and quiet; we contemplated the crystals at rest on the ridges of rock, and the veins of the metals at rest in the bosom of the Earth. Now we can go further and contemplate something else that is usually only regarded from the prosaic aspect of utilitarian considerations. Such considerations are not to be despised; we must always have our feet planted firmly on the Earth if we want to penetrate into the spiritual world healthy in soul and body. But suppose we are looking at a metal that is passing, under the influence of intense heat, from the solid into the liquid condition. Then, if we can get beyond the utilitarian point of view, wonderful revelations will be vouchsafed to us. If we walk through foundries and watch how the iron becomes glowing and fluid in the furnaces, above all if we can watch metallic ores such as antimony ore being led over from the solid into the liquid and by and by into other conditions, then if we can receive deep into our soul the impression of this destiny of metallic substance in fire, an entirely new element will be born in the spiritual knowledge that has awakened within

us; we shall receive a strong and profound impression of the mysteries of our own existence.

Think of the human being in relation to the animal. (I have frequently spoken of this.) Anatomical comparisons, such as are made to-day, comparing the bones, muscles, and even the blood of man and animal reveal the existence of certain affinities. But the secret of what it is that places man higher than the animal cannot be discovered until we give attention to some facts that have more significance than is generally realised. The spine of the animal lies in the horizontal direction, parallel with the surface of the Earth, whereas man stands upright. The faculty of speech is denied to the animal, whereas man not only speaks, but from speech evolves thought. When we observe how the faculties of speaking and thinking begin to unfold in a little child and how its body rises into the upright position that it may have the right orientation for human life on Earth, we are then beholding the marvellous forces by means of which the child finds its bearings in the dynamics of the universe. And then we see how the forces of orientation living in the limbs of a little child express themselves also in the melody, in the articulation of speech. We see the human being building and forming himself in the sense world. We see the formative forces working calmly and quietly within him. Wonderful it is beyond all telling to watch month by month how the little child gradually leaves off crawling and begins to stand upright, how his limbs and body orientate themselves to the dynamics of the universe! Then the faculties of speaking and thinking begin to emerge, as it were, from the bodily nature. There is no more beautiful sight than to watch a little child learning to walk, to speak and to think. But now if on the one hand we can contemplate this process in all its wonder and calm majesty, beholding it with mind at rest, sensitive to its surpassing beauty, and if on the other hand we are able to look with a higher power of vision at the metals

melting in the fire, then we can perceive there, in its spirit form, the force by means of which the child can learn to walk and to speak. The archetype of this power is revealed to us when the flames lay hold of the metal, melt it and make it fluid. The more fluid, the more volatile the metal becomes, the more clearly are we able to perceive the inner resemblance between this process—which really constitutes the destiny of the metal—and the process which, smelted and volatilised in the fires of the Cosmos, enables the little child to walk, to speak and to think.

We know now that the activity of the Beings of the First Hierarchy—the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones—is a two-fold activity. They speak to us out of that spiritual world into which we pass during the middle period of our life between death and a new birth, they reveal to us there the mysteries of planetary life; and they work down also into the visible world. Here, in the visible world, the influences of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones are active in the little child as he learns to walk, to speak and to think, and we behold also their working wherever fire has part in the process of the Earth, wherever metals melt and are fused in fire. Our Earth has been built up by the smelting and fusing of metals in the cosmic fire. In the smelting of the metals by the cosmic fires, we see the deeds of Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones within the earthly world. We gaze back into remote ages of the past when the metals, all aglow and incandescent through the power of fire, played an essential part in the coming-into-being of the Earth's body. The Thrones, above all, were active in this process, though with them worked always the Seraphim and Cherubim. The Cherubim it is who play the chief part in the unfolding of the child's faculties of walking, speaking and thinking. But everywhere the Beings of the First Hierarchy work and weave together in unison.

With this kind of knowledge, death in earthly life is linked on to resurrection in the life beyond the Threshold. For when such

knowledge reveals the kinship of the cosmic fires by which the metals are melted, with the powers that make man truly *man*, then the whole world becomes one and we realise that there is no difference between the earthly life that stretches from birth to death and life in the spiritual world beyond the Threshold. The life between death and a new birth is a metamorphosis of earthly life. By knowing how the one passes over into the other, we realise that the one is but a different form of the other. When the soul is deepened by this knowledge, then an understanding of still other mysteries can be added. This further understanding can also be reached on quite another path.

If you think about what I have told you of the connection of the melting and dissolving of metals in fire with the unfolding of the faculties of walking, speaking and thinking in the little child, if you place these pictures before your imagination, meditating upon them and deepening thereby your understanding, then a power will quicken and strengthen your soul and enable you to find the solution of a great riddle—the riddle of the working of karma, or human destiny. In between what happens when a child learns to walk, to speak and to think and what happens when metals become fluid and volatile under the influence of great heat,—amid all the sulphurous and phosphoric glow and gleam of colour in the burning metal, amid the working of the right and true transition from animal to man that takes place in the little child as he learns to walk, to speak and to think, karma stands revealed. There lies the way to a true understanding of karma. Karma is a supersensible reality that works straight into the very deeds and actions of man's life.

Rising up therefore in this way in meditation, we learn to know the mysteries of destiny that weave through our life. On the one side we have the picture of the destiny of the metal in the fire, on the other side the picture of the essential and primordial destiny of man when he descends to Earth, expressed in the

learning to walk, to speak and to think. Within these pictures man can find revealed as much of the riddle of destiny as he needs for his life.

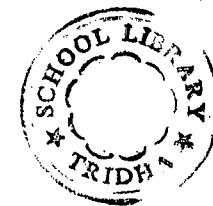
So it is, that for the riddle also of human destiny supersensible man speaks into the world in which "sensible" man is living. Of this too I wanted to speak to you, for it belongs essentially in our study of supersensible man. Such a study can never be merely a matter of assimilating theories. In order to understand the being of man we must reach out on every hand to the mysteries of the universe—mysteries of Nature and mysteries of Spirit. For man is intimately and closely bound up with all the mysteries of the Natural as well as of the Spiritual Universe. Man is in truth a universe in miniature. Only it must not be imagined that what takes place out in the great expanses of the Cosmos takes place in exactly the same way in the microcosm. The majestic flames of cosmic fire that rise up from the molten metals stream out to the boundaries of cosmic space—for boundaries there are! Try, my dear friends, to picture to yourselves these cosmic fires in which the metals are being smelted and made volatile. What is thus made volatilé streams out into cosmic space, to return once again in powers of light, radiations of warmth and light. And what thus returns from cosmic space enables the tiny child who cannot yet speak or walk but only crawl, to become a child who stands and walks. Upward and outward radiate the streaming forces from the molten metals, and when they have gone far enough out into the cosmos they turn and come back again and are then the forces which enable the child to stand upright. Here you have a picture of ascending and descending cosmic forces, as they work in the universe, and of their many metamorphoses and variations.

You will now also be able to understand the true meaning of something which in days of yore was connected with the science of those times, namely, the priestly sacrifice. The sacrificial

flame, together with what was burning in it, was sent forth into cosmic spaces to the Gods that it might come down again thence to work in the world of men. As he stood before the fire on the altar the priest would say: "To thee, O Flame, I commit what is mine on Earth, that the Gods may receive it when the smoke rises upward. May that which is borne upwards by the Flame be changed into divine Blessing and pour down again to Earth as creative and fructifying power!"

Thus, as we listen to the words of the priest of olden time, who is speaking of supersensible worlds, we may hear how he too gives utterance to the cosmic mysteries in the midst of which man stands.

This, my dear friends, is what I wanted to say to you about the supersensible nature of man, anthroposophically perceived and understood.



Publications recommended for study include, among many others, the following:

**RUDOLF STEINER:**

*Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man*

*An Outline of Occult Science*

*Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*

*Christianity as Mystical Fact*

*Man's Life on Earth and in the Spiritual World*

*The Deed of Christ and the opposing Spiritual Powers, Lucifer, Ahriman, Mephistopheles, Asuras*

*World History*

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Supersensible man.

Rudolf Steiner

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