

Between Death
and
Rebirth



Rudolf Steiner

Between Death and Rebirth

By Rudolf Steiner

Ten Lectures given in Berlin between 5th
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Translated by E. H. Goddard and Dorothy S.
Osmond

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Synopsis

Lecture One, Berlin, 5th November, 1912

All the forces of the soul must be activated if the essence of Anthroposophy is to be grasped. Subjects must be studied from constantly new sides. Since the last third of the nineteenth century the soul need only be duly prepared and revelations will flow from the spiritual world. Activity in the physical world, quietude in the spiritual world. Since 1899, spiritual influences must take effect inwardly instead of being occasioned by outer events. These lectures will deal chiefly with the life after death when the Kamaloka period is over. After death relationships between individuals continue as they were during life on Earth. Homer's seership. Michelangelo and the Medici tombs in Florence. Our attitude to spiritual knowledge can establish the seeds of a

true morality. Companionship or isolation in the planetary spheres after death depend upon moral and religious attitudes of soul in earthly life. For karmic adjustments, return into the physical body is essential.

Lecture Two, Berlin, 20th November, 1912

Consciousness of the 'I' acquired as the result of contacts and collisions with the external world and with the body when waking from sleep. Between birth and death a human being may reduce the value of his 'I' as the result of causing suffering to others. Effects of the destruction thus caused remain in his astral, etheric and physical bodies; the forces able to repair the damage to these sheaths cannot be drawn from the Earth but only from the planetary spheres after death. Particular qualities acquired on Earth determine whether companionship or isolation will be experienced by the soul after death when passing through the spheres of Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. Experiences during Initiation closely akin to those undergone during the life after death. Understanding of every human soul without

distinction of creed necessary for Initiation as it is in the Sun sphere. The meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek contains a deep secret of the evolution of humanity. The distinction between Christianity and other faiths. The Mystery of Golgotha was fulfilled for all men, not only for those who call themselves Christians. “Ye shall be as Gods” — difference in implications of these words if uttered by Lucifer or Christ. Forces needed for renewal of the etheric body in the next incarnation must be drawn from the Sun sphere, for renewal of the astral body from the other planetary spheres.

Lecture Three, Berlin, 3rd December, 1912

Relationships established during existence on Earth cannot, to begin with, be changed during the life after death. From the possible suffering caused by this realisation the power is acquired to change conditions in later karma. Those living on Earth are able to have a great influence on those who have died. Reading to the dead. Opposition to Anthroposophy in the upper consciousness may take the form of longing for it in the

subconsciousness. Necessity of mediation between the physical world and the spiritual world. Possibilities which do not become reality on the physical plane exist as forces and effects in the spiritual world. Actual experiences are only a fractional part of the possibilities. The purpose of Anthroposophy is fulfilled in the creation of an actual link between the physical and spiritual worlds. The relation of the soul to the body. Analogy of the plant and its connection with the Sun. Man belongs to the Universe, not only to the Earth. Only during the last four centuries has consciousness of this connection been lost. The Christ Impulse imparts feeling of kinship with the Macrocosm. A twelfth century allegory.

Lecture Four, Berlin, 10th December, 1912

After death the human being draws forces from the stellar world to the extent to which he developed moral and religious qualities during life on Earth. Man is not meant to witness what happens to him during sleep, i.e. the restoration of forces used up during waking life. Processes of cognition lie within the field of man's consciousness but the

life-giving process does not. The expulsion from Paradise. The purpose of life between death and rebirth is that forces may be drawn from the stellar world for shaping the following incarnation. Difference between the life after death and the condition of sleep is fundamentally one of consciousness only. Direct astronomical vision in ancient Egypt but no logical thinking. In the Graeco-Latin epoch there was only remembrance of what had formerly been direct vision. By the time of Copernicus men had eyes only for physical globes in space. Kepler's spiritual insight into the connection of certain events with heavenly constellations. Anthroposophy is a torch by which the spiritual world is illumined for us from a certain time onwards during life after death. Forces once drawn from the stellar worlds must now be drawn from men's own souls. This is the mission of the Earth.

Lecture Five, Berlin, 22nd December, 1912

This was a special lecture given “as a kind of Christmas gift” on the subject of Christian Rosenkretz and Gautama Buddha: their missions

and achievements in the spiritual history of mankind.

Lecture Six, Berlin, 7th January, 1913

In our fifth post-Atlantean epoch the sixth is prepared in the souls of men by increasing understanding of the Christ Impulse and of the Mystery of the Holy Grail. The latter is connected with the mission of Buddha in the Mars sphere referred to in the preceding lecture. Of the members of man's being it is the 'I' or Ego which, basically speaking, passes through all the periods of existence between birth and death and death and rebirth. But this 'I' must not be confused with the 'I' recognised in earthly life. The true 'I' is the actor in the processes of learning to walk, to speak and to think. There is a natural correspondence between the true form of man and those faculties. The human form stems from the Spirits of Form. These Spirits are opposed by backward Luciferic Spirits who suppress the consciousness proper to the Ego. The bodily organs are pervaded by the Spirits of Form quite differently in each case. Contrast between the head and the rest of the

physical body. At a certain stage of development, physical mobility can be held still while complete mobility of the corresponding etheric organs is maintained. Between death and rebirth man experiences the higher 'I' of which he is unconscious during earthly life between birth and death.

Lecture Seven, Berlin, 14th January, 1913

Cyclic seven-year periods in life. Coming of the second teeth marks the culmination of the formative process which works from within the human being. Growth, however, continues until checked by forces working from outside (see diagram). The work of the 'regular' Hierarchies and of the Luciferic Beings belonging to those Hierarchies. Essential changes take place in the course of time both in life on Earth and after death. 'Public Opinion' and its influence. St. Paul's profound esoteric knowledge exemplified in his teaching of the 'first Adam' and the 'second Adam'. Progressive dimness of man's life of soul after death until the Mystery of Golgotha when the new impulse was given to spiritual life. The

Baptism by John the Baptist and its effects. In the life of soul men were under the leadership of the Third Hierarchy to a far greater extent than was the case after the Mystery of Golgotha. The power and influence of the Luciferic beings have no significance in man's life after death. The effect of the Buddha's influence in the Mars sphere (see Lecture Five). In the future it will be characteristic of those who are to become spiritual leaders on Earth that a fundamental change takes place in their whole character when they have reached a certain age. This is the result of the Buddha's influence in the Mars sphere during their life between death and rebirth. Rosicrucianism has always recognised this.

Lecture Eight, Berlin, 11th February, 1913

The greatest mysteries of existence are within man himself. The thoughts conceived by divine-spiritual Beings in the past live on in the present mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, just as our memory-pictures continue into our present life. With our memory we grasp a tiny corner of world-creation, namely what has passed over from

creation into existence. From the viewpoint of sleep we behold what is hidden from waking life. Results of destructive processes during waking life are repaired during sleep. Processes of destruction in the organism are the precondition of the life of soul. Experiences during the life between death and the new birth. At a certain point there is a reversal of vision. Everything that was outside us in life on Earth becomes our inner world. Preparation of the body of the future earthly existence. When the soul encounters in the spiritual world that which bears a new life germinally within it, this is an experience of the moment of the last death in reverse. Vision of spiritual realities gradually lost by human souls in the course of evolution. Men are now beginning to be interested only in what is sub-sensory, e.g. vibrations, wave lengths, the working of forces. The mission of Anthroposophy is to counter the withering of man's inner spirituality.

Lecture Nine, Berlin, 4th March, 1913

Spiritual investigation discloses that the supersensible forces needed by man in order to

mould his body and also his destiny are received by him from the Beings of the Hierarchies whom he contacts between death and rebirth. Rejection of spiritual ideas in earthly life means loneliness and darkness in the spiritual world after death, also inability to mould the physical organs efficiently for the next incarnation. Individuals after death are approached by Luciferic or Ahrimanic beings according to their attitude to spiritual knowledge while on Earth. The power exercised by Ahrimanic beings during a soul's life after death can be recognised in characteristics of three successive incarnations. An example: egotistic mysticism in one life, hypochondria in the next, defective thinking in the third. Acting out of love rather than merely out of a sense of duty enables contact to be made after death with spiritual beings who send down to the physical world forces that promote health. Life in the spiritual world depends upon the mode of our life in the physical body on Earth. Relationship with the Buddha can be established during the life between death and rebirth even if there had been no contact in earthly life, but this remains an exceptional case. Nothing can replace

the significance of our connection with the Earth. Words of Leonardo da Vinci. Anthroposophy can bridge the gulf between the living and the dead.

Lecture Ten, Berlin, 1st April, 1913

Reference to the book *Theosophy*, Chapter III on the Soul World, the Soul in the Soul World after Death, the Spiritland, the Spirit in the Spiritland after Death. These descriptions are more closely related to inner conditions of the soul, whereas in the present lecture-course the descriptions are of great cosmic conditions and the functions of the planetary spheres. Experiences of the soul after death in Kamaloka and final discarding of longings connected with earthly life. Passage through the planetary spheres. Quotation from the book *Theosophy* with special reference to experiences in the Mars region and the mission of Buddha (Lecture Five). At the beginning of the seventeenth century Brahmanism was absorbed into Buddhism in the cultural life of India. Events on Earth are reflected images of happenings in the Heavens. The fruits of the soul's experiences beyond the Saturn sphere between death and

rebirth make progress of culture on Earth possible. The stream of spirituality which has its centre of gravity in the Mystery of Golgotha comes from Old Sun. The death on Golgotha was only seemingly a death; in reality it was the birth of the Earth-Soul.

LECTURE ONE

I am very glad to be able to speak here again after a comparatively long absence. Those of you who were present at our meeting in Munich earlier this year [From 25th to 31st August, 1912, eight lectures were given with the following general title: *On Initiation, Eternity and the Passing Moment. On Spiritual Light and Darkness of Life.*] or have heard something about my Mystery Play, *The Guardian of the Threshold*, will have realised what the attitude of the soul must be if an adequate conception is to be acquired of the content of Spiritual Science or, let us say, of Occultism.

A great deal has been said previously about the Luciferic and Ahrimanic beings. The aim of *The Guardian of the Threshold* was to show that the essential nature of these beings can be revealed only by studying them very gradually and from

many different aspects. It is not enough to form a simple concept or give an ordinary definition of these beings — popular as such definitions are. My purpose was to show from as many different sides as possible, the part played by these beings in the lives of men. The Play will also have helped you to realise that there must be complete truthfulness and deep seriousness when speaking of the spiritual worlds. This, after all, has been the keynote of the lectures I have given here. It must be emphasised all the more strongly at the present time because there is so little recognition of the seriousness and value of genuine anthroposophical endeavours. If there is one thing that I have tried to emphasise in the lectures given over the years, it is that you should embark upon all your anthroposophical efforts in this spirit of truthfulness and earnestness, and become thoroughly conscious of their significance in world-existence as a whole, in the evolutionary process of humanity and in the spiritual content of our present age. It cannot be emphasised too often that the essence of Anthroposophy cannot be grasped with the help of a few simple concepts or

a theory briefly propounded, let alone a programme. The forces of the whole soul must be involved. But life itself is a process of Becoming, of development. Someone might argue that he can hardly be expected to ally himself with an Anthroposophical Movement if he is immediately faced with a demand for self-development and told that he can only hope to penetrate slowly and gradually to the essence of Anthroposophy; he may ask how he can decide to join something for which he can prepare only slowly. The rejoinder to this would be that before a human being can reach the highest stage of development he already has in his heart and in his soul the sense of truth which has led mankind as a whole to strive for such development, and he need only devote himself open-mindedly to this sense of truth, with the will for truth which lies in the depths of his soul unless prejudices have led him astray. He must avoid empty theories and high-sounding programmes. Man is able to sense truth where it genuinely exists. Honest criticism is therefore always possible, even if someone is only at the very beginning of the path of attainment. This,

however, does not preclude him from attributing supreme importance to anthroposophical endeavour.

In our present age there are many influences which divert men from the natural feeling for truth that is present in their souls. Over the years it has often been possible to indicate these misleading influences and I need not do it again today. My purpose is to emphasise how necessary it is — even if there is already some knowledge of occult science — to approach and study things again and again from constantly new sides. One example of what I mean is our study of the four Gospels. This autumn I brought these studies to a provisional conclusion with a course of lectures on the Gospel of St. Mark. These studies of the Gospels may be taken as a standard example of the way in which the great truths of existence must be approached from different sides. Each Gospel affords an opportunity to view the Mystery of Golgotha from a different angle, and indeed we cannot begin really to know anything essential about this Mystery until we have studied it from the four

different viewpoints presented in the four Gospels.

In what way have our studies over the last ten or twelve years demonstrated this? Those of you who want to be clear about this need only turn to my book *Christianity as Mystical Fact*, the content of which was first given in the form of lectures, before the foundation of the German Section of the Theosophical Society. Anyone who seriously studies this book will find that it already contained the gist of what I have since said in the course of years, about the Mystery of Golgotha and the four Gospels. Nothing, however, would be more unjustified than to believe that by knowing the contents of that book you would *ipso facto* have an adequate understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. All the lectures given since the book appeared have been the natural outcome of that original spiritual study; nowhere are they at variance with what was then said. It has furthermore been possible to open up new ways for contemplating the Mystery of Golgotha, thus enabling us to penetrate more and more deeply into its significance. The attempt has been made to

substitute direct experience of the spiritual facts for concepts, theories and abstract speculations. And if, in spite of it all, a feeling of a certain lack still exists, this lack is due to something that is inevitable on the physical plane, namely, the time factor. Hence I have always assumed that you would have patience and wait for matters to develop gradually. This is also an indication of how what I have to say to you during this coming winter should be understood.

In the course of years we have spoken a great deal of the life between death and a new birth. The same subject will, however, be dealt with in the forthcoming lectures, the reason being that during this last summer and autumn it has been my task to undertake further spiritual research into this realm and to present an aspect of the subject which could not previously be dealt with. It is only now possible to consider certain matters which bring home the profound moral significance of the supersensible truths pertaining to this realm. In addition to all other demands to which only very brief reference has been made, there is one which

in this vain and arrogant age is a cause of offence to numbers of individuals. But we must not allow it to deter us from the earnestness and respect for truth that are due to our Movement. The demand will continue to be made that by dint of earnest, intimate efforts we shall learn to be receptive to knowledge brought from the spiritual world.

For some years now the relationship of human beings living on the physical plane to the spiritual worlds has changed from what it was through almost the whole of the nineteenth century. Until the last third of that century men had little access to the spiritual worlds; it was necessary for evolution that only little of the content of those worlds should flow into the human soul. But now we are living in an age when the soul need only be receptive and duly prepared and revelations from the spiritual worlds will be able to flow into it. Individual souls will become more and more receptive and, being aware of their task in the present age, they will find this inflow of spiritual knowledge to be a reality. Hence the further demand is made that anthroposophists shall not

turn deaf ears to what can make its way into the soul today from the spiritual worlds. Before entering into the main theme of these lectures I want to speak of two characteristics of the spiritual life to which special attention must be paid.

Between death and the new birth a human being experiences the realities of the spiritual world in a very definite way. But he also experiences these realities through Initiation; he experiences them too if his soul is prepared during his life in the physical body in a way that enables him to participate in the spiritual worlds. Hence it is true to say that what takes place between death and the new birth — which is, in fact, existence in the spiritual world — can be revealed through Initiation.

Attention must be paid to two points which emerge from what has often been said here; they are essential not only to experience of the spiritual worlds but also to the right understanding of communications received from these worlds. The difference between conditions in the spiritual world and the physical world has often been

emphasised, also the fact that when the soul enters the spiritual world it finds itself in a sphere in which it is essential to become accustomed to a great deal that is the exact opposite of conditions in the physical world. Here is one example: If, on the physical plane, something is to be brought about by us, we have to be active, to use our hands, to move our physical body from one place to another. Activity on our part is necessary if we are to bring about something in the physical world. In the spiritual worlds exactly the opposite holds good. I am speaking always of the present epoch. If something is to happen through us in the spiritual worlds, it must be achieved through our inner calm, our inner tranquillity; in the spiritual worlds the capacity to await events with tranquillity corresponds to busy activity on the physical plane. The less we bestir ourselves on the physical plane, the less we can bring about; the more active we are, the more can happen. In the spiritual world, the calmer our soul can become, the more all inner restlessness can be avoided, the more we shall be able to achieve. It is therefore essential to regard whatever comes to pass as

something bestowed upon us by grace, something that comes to us as a blessing because we have deserved it as the fruit of inner tranquillity.

I have often said that anyone possessed of spiritual knowledge is aware that 1899 was a very significant year; it was the end of a period of 5,000 years in human history, the so-called Lesser Kali Yuga. Since that year it has become necessary to allow the spiritual to come to men in a way differing from what was previously usual. I will give you a concrete example. In the early twelfth century, a man named *Norbert* [St. Norbert, c. 1085–1134. In 1121 founded the Order of Norbertines. In 1126 he became Archbishop of Magdeburg.] founded a religious Order in the West. Before the idea of founding the Order came to him, Norbert was a loose-living man, full of sensuality and worldly impulses. One day something very unusual happened to him; he was struck by lightning. This did not prove fatal, but his whole being was transformed. There are many such examples in history. The inner connection between Norbert's physical body, etheric body,

astral body and Ego was changed by the force contained in the lightning. It was then that he founded his Order, and although, as in so many other cases, it failed to fulfil the aims of its founder, in many respects it did good at the time. Such 'chance' events, as they are called nowadays, have been numerous. But this was not a chance happening; it was an event of world-karma. The man was chosen to perform a task of special importance and to make this possible, particular bodily conditions had to be created. An outer event, an external influence, was necessary.

Since the year 1899 such influences on the souls of men must be purely inner influences, not exerted so definitely from outside. Not that there was an abrupt transition; but since the year 1899, influences exerted on the souls of men must more and more take effect inwardly. You may remember what I once said about *Christian Rosenkreutz* — that when he wishes to call a human soul to himself, it is a more inward call. Before 1899 such calls were made by means of outer events; since that year they have become more inward.

Intercourse between human souls and the higher Hierarchies will become more and more dependent upon inner exertions, and men will have to apply the deepest, most intimate forces of their souls in order to maintain this intercourse with the Beings of the Hierarchies.

What I have just described to you as an incisive point in life on the physical plane has its counterpart in the spiritual world — visibly for one who is a seer — in much that has taken place between the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. At this time there were certain tasks which it was incumbent upon the Beings of the Hierarchies to carry out among themselves, but one particular condition must be noted. The Beings whose task in the spiritual worlds was to bring about the ending of Kali Yuga, needed something from our Earth, something taking place on our Earth. It was necessary that in certain souls who were sufficiently mature there should be knowledge of this change, or at least that such souls should be able to envisage it. For just as man on the physical plane needs a brain in order to develop

consciousness, so do the Beings of the Hierarchies need human thoughts in which their deeds are reflected. Thus the world of men is also necessary for the spiritual world; it co-operates with the spiritual world and is an essential factor — but it must co-operate in the right way. Those who were ready previously or are ready now to participate in this activity from the human side, would not have been right then, nor would they be right now, to agitate in the way that is customary on the physical plane for the furtherance of something that is to take place in the spiritual world. We do not help the Spirits of the higher Hierarchies by busy activity on the physical plane, but primarily by having some measure of understanding of what is to happen; then, in restfulness and concentration of soul, we should await a revelation of the spiritual world. What we can contribute is the inner quietude we can achieve, the attitude of soul we can induce in ourselves to await this bestowal of grace.

Thus, paradoxical as it may seem, our activity in the higher worlds depends upon our own inner

tranquillity; the calmer we can become, the more will the facts of the spiritual world be able to come to expression through us. Hence it is also necessary, if we are to participate effectively in a spiritual Movement, to be able to develop this mood of tranquillity. And in the Anthroposophical Movement it would be especially desirable for its adherents to endeavour to achieve this inner tranquillity, this consciousness of Grace in their attitude to the spiritual world.

Among the various activities in which man is engaged on the physical plane it is really only in the domain of artistic creation, or where there is a genuine striving for knowledge or for the advancement of a spiritual Movement, that these conditions hold good. An artist will assuredly not create the best work of which his gifts are capable if he is perpetually active and is impatient to make progress. He will produce his best work if he can wait for the moment when Grace is vouchsafed to him and if he can abstain from activity when the spirit is not speaking. And quite certainly no higher knowledge will be attained by one who

attempts to formulate it out of concepts already familiar to him. Higher knowledge can be attained only by one who is able to wait quietly, with complete resignation, when confronted by a problem or riddle of existence, and who says to himself: I must wait until the answer comes to me like a flash of light from the spiritual worlds. Again, someone who rushes from one person to another, trying to convince them that some particular spiritual Movement is the only genuine one, will certainly not be setting about this in the right way; he should wait until the souls he approaches have recognised the urge in themselves to seek the truths of the spiritual world. That is how we should respond to any illumination shining down into our physical world; but it is particularly true of everything that man can himself bring about in the spiritual world. It may truly be said that even the most practical accomplishments in that realm depend upon the establishment of a certain state of tranquillity.

I want now to speak of so-called spiritual healing. Here again it is not the movements or

manipulations carried out by the healer that are of prime importance; they are necessary, but only as preparation. The aim is to establish a condition of rest, of balance. Whatever is outwardly visible in a case of spiritual healing is only the preparation for what the healer is trying to do; it is the final result that is of importance. In such a case the situation is like weighing something on a pair of scales: first, we put in the one scale what we want to weigh; in the other scale we put a weight and this sets the beam moving to right and left. But it is only when equilibrium has been established that we can read the weight. Something similar is true of actions in the spiritual worlds.

In respect of knowledge, of perception, however, there is a difference. How does perception come about in everyday life on the physical plane? Everyone is aware that with the exception of certain spheres of the physical plane, objects present themselves to us from morning until evening during the waking life of day; from minute to minute new impressions are made upon us. It is in exceptional circumstances only that we,

on our side, seek for impressions and do with objects what otherwise they do to us. This, however, is already near to being a searcher for knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is a different matter. *We ourselves* must set before our soul whatever is to be presented to it. Whereas we must be absolutely *quiescent* if anything is to come about, to happen through us in the spiritual world, we must be uninterruptedly *active* if we really desire to understand something in the spiritual world. Connected with this is the fact that many people who would like to be anthroposophists find that the knowledge we are trying to promote here is too baffling for them. Many of them complain: in Anthroposophy one has to be always learning, always pondering, always busy! But without such efforts it is not possible to acquire any understanding of the spiritual worlds. The soul must make strenuous efforts and contemplate everything from many sides. Mental pictures and concepts of the higher worlds must be developed through steady, tranquil work. In the physical world, if we want to have, say, a table, we must acquire it by active effort. But in the spiritual

world, if we want to acquire something, we must develop the necessary tranquillity. If anything is to happen, it emerges from the twilight. But when it is a matter of knowing something, we must exert every possible effort to create the necessary Inspirations. If we are to 'know' something, effort is essential; the soul must be inwardly active, move from one Imagination to another, one Inspiration to another, one Intuition to another. We must create the whole structure; nothing will come to us that we have not ourselves produced in our search for knowledge. Thus conditions in the spiritual world are exactly the opposite of what holds good in the physical world.

I have had to give this introduction in order that we may agree together, firstly, as to how certain facts are discovered, but secondly, how they can be understood as more is said of them. In these lectures I shall deal less with the life immediately following death — known to us under the name of Kamaloka — the essential aspects of which are already familiar to you. We shall be more concerned to study from somewhat new points of

view those periods in the life after death which follow the period of Kamaloka.

First of all it is important to describe the general character of that life. The first stage of higher knowledge is what may be called the 'Imaginative' life, or life filled with true, genuine visions. Just as in physical life we are surrounded by the world of colours, sounds, scents, tastes, mental pictures which we form for ourselves by means of our intellect, so in the spiritual world we are surrounded by 'Imaginations' — which can also be called 'visions'. But we must realise that these Imaginations or visions, when they are true in the spiritual sense, are not the imagery of dream but realities. Let us take a definite case.

When a human being has passed through the Gate of Death he comes into contact with those who died before him and with whom he was connected in some way during life. During the period between death and the new birth we are actually together with those who belong to us. Just as in the physical world we become aware of objects by seeing their colours, hearing their sounds and so

on, in the same way we are surrounded after death, figuratively speaking, by a cloud of visions. Everything around us is vision; we ourselves are vision in that world just as here on Earth we are flesh and bone. But this vision is not a dream; we know that it is reality. When we encounter someone who is dead and with whom we previously had some connection, he too is 'vision'; he is enveloped in a cloud of visions. But just as on the physical plane we know that the colour 'red' comes, let us say, from a red rose, on the spiritual plane we know that the 'vision' comes from the spiritual being of someone who passed through the gate of death before us. But here I must draw your attention to a particular aspect, especially as it is experienced by everyone who is living through this period after death. Here on the physical plane it may, for example, be the case that at least as far as we can judge, we ought to have loved some individual but have loved him too little; we have, in fact, deprived him of love or have hurt him in some way. In such circumstances, if we are not stonyhearted, the idea may occur to us that we must make reparation. When this idea

comes to us it is possible to compensate for what has happened. On the physical plane we can modify the previously existing relationship but during the period immediately following Kamaloka, we cannot. From the very nature of the encounter we may well be aware that we have hurt the person in some way or deprived him of the love we ought to have shown him; we may also wish to make reparation, but we cannot. During this period all we can do is to continue the relationship which existed between us before death. We perceive what was amiss but for the time being we can do nothing to make amends. In this world of visions which envelops us like a cloud, we cannot alter anything. The relationship we had with an individual who died before us remains. This is often one of the more painful experiences also associated with Initiation. A person experiences much more deeply the significance of his relation to the physical plane than he was able to do with his eyes or his intellect, but for all that he cannot directly change anything. This, in fact, constitutes the pain and martyrdom of spiritual knowledge, in so far as it is

self-knowledge and relates to our own life. After death, relationships between individuals remain and continue as they were during earthly life.

When recently this fact presented itself to my spiritual sight with tremendous force, something further occurred to me. During my life I have devoted a great deal of study to the works of *Homer* and have tried to understand many things contained in these ancient epics. On this particular occasion I was reminded of a certain passage. Homer, by the way, was called by the Greeks the 'blind' Homer, thus indicating his spiritual seership. In speaking of the realm through which men journey after death, Homer calls it the 'realm of the Shades in which no change is possible'. Here once again I realised that we can rightly understand much that is contained in the great masterpieces and revelations of mankind only by drawing upon the very depths of spiritual knowledge. Much of what will lead to an understanding of humanity as a whole must depend upon a new recognition by men of those great ancestors whose souls were radiant with

spiritual light. Any sensitive soul will be moved by the recognition that this ancient seer was able to write as he did only because the truth of the spiritual world shone into his soul. Here begins the true reverence for the divine-spiritual forces which stream through the world and especially through the hearts and souls of men. This attitude makes it possible to realise how the progress and development of the world are furthered. A very great deal that is true in the deepest sense is contained in the works of men whose gifts were on a level with those of Homer. But this truth which was once directly revealed to an ancient, dreamlike clairvoyance, has now been lost and must be regained on the path leading to spiritual knowledge.

In order to substantiate still further this example of what has been bestowed upon humanity by creative genius, I will now speak of something else as well. There was a certain truth which I strongly resisted when it first dawned upon me, which seemed to me to be paradoxical, but which through inner necessity I was eventually bound to

recognise.

The spiritual investigation on which I was engaged at that time was also connected with the study of certain works of art. Among them was one which I had previously seen and studied although a particular aspect of it had not struck me before. I am speaking now of the Medici tombs in the Chapel designed and built in Florence by Michelangelo. Two members of the Medici family, of whom no more need be said at present, were to be immortalised in statues. But Michelangelo added four so-called 'allegorical' figures, named at his suggestion, 'Morning' and 'Evening', 'Day' and 'Night'. 'Day' and 'Night' were placed at the foot of one statue; 'Morning' and 'Evening' at the foot of the other. Even if you have no particularly good photographs of these allegorical figures, you will easily be able to verify what I have to say about them.

We will begin with 'Night', the most famous of the four. In guide-books you can read that the postures of the limbs in the recumbent figure of 'Night' are unnatural, that no human being could

sleep in that position and therefore the figure cannot be a good symbolic presentation of 'Night'. But now let me say something else. Suppose we are looking at the allegorical figure of 'Night' with occult vision. We can then say to ourselves: when a human being is asleep, his Ego and astral body have left the physical and etheric bodies. It is conceivable that someone might visualise a particular posture which most accurately portrays that of the etheric body when the astral body and Ego have left. As we go about during the day our gestures and movements are conditioned by the fact that the astral body and Ego are within the physical and etheric bodies. But at night the astral body and Ego are outside and the etheric body alone is in the physical body. The etheric body then unfolds its own activity and mobility, and thus adopts a certain posture. The impression may well be that there is no more fitting portrayal of the free activity of the etheric body than that achieved by Michelangelo in this figure of 'Night'. In point of fact, the movement is conveyed with such precision that no more appropriate presentation of the etheric body under such

circumstances can be imagined.

Now let us turn to the figure of 'Day'. Suppose we could induce in a human being a condition in which his astral and etheric bodies were as quiescent as possible and the Ego especially active. No posture could be more fitting for the activity of the Ego than that portrayed by Michelangelo in the figure of 'Day'. The postures are not allegorical but drawn directly and realistically from life. The artist has succeeded in capturing as it were for earthly eternity the postures which in the evolutionary process most aptly express the activity of the Ego and the activity of the etheric body.

We come now to the other figures. First let us take that of 'Evening'. If we think of how, in a healthily developed human being, the etheric body emerges and the physical body relaxes — as also happens drastically at death — but if we think, not of actual death but of the emergence of the etheric body, the astral body and the Ego from a man's physical body, we shall find that the posture then assumed by the physical body is accurately portrayed in the

figure of 'Evening'. Again, if we think of the activity of the astral body while there is diminished activity of the etheric body and Ego, we shall find the most precise representation in Michelangelo's figure of 'Morning'. So on the one side we have the portrayals of the activity of the etheric body and of the Ego (in the figures of 'Night' and 'Day') and on the other side the portrayals of the physical and astral bodies (in the figures of 'Evening' and 'Morning').

As already said, at first I resisted this conclusion, but the more carefully one investigates the more one is compelled to accept it. What I have wanted to indicate here is how the artist is inspired by the spiritual world. Admittedly, in the case of Michelangelo the process was more or less unconscious but in spite of that his creations could only have been produced by the radiance of the spiritual world shining into the physical. Occultism does not lead to the destruction of works of art but on the contrary to a much deeper understanding of them; as a result. a great deal of what passes for art today will in the future no

longer do so. A number of people may be disappointed but truth will be the gainer! I could well understand the foundation of the legend that has grown up in connection with the most elaborate of these figures. The legend is to the effect that when Michelangelo was alone with the figure of 'Night' in the Medici Chapel in Florence, he could make the figure rise up and walk. I will not go further into this, but when we know that this figure gives expression to the 'life-body', the significance of the legend is obvious.

The same applies in many cases — in that of Homer, for instance. Homer speaks of the spiritual realm, a realm of the Shades in which there can be no change or alteration. But when we study the conditions prevailing in the period of life following Kamaloka, we begin to have a new understanding of works of a divinely blessed man such as Homer. And a great deal will be similarly enriched through Spiritual Science.

Useful as it may be to indicate these things, they are not of prime importance in actual life. Of prime importance is the fact that mutual

relationships are continually being formed between one human being and another. A man's attitude towards another individual will be very different if he detects a spiritual quality in him or thinks of human beings as pictured by a materialistic view of life. The sacred riddle that every human being should be to us can only be this to our feelings and perceptions when we have within our own soul something that is able to throw spiritual light upon the other soul. By deepening our contemplation of cosmic secrets — with which the secrets of human existence are connected — we shall learn to understand the nature of the man standing before us; we shall learn to silence our preconceptions and to feel and recognise the true qualities of the individual in question. The most important light that Spiritual Science can give will be the light it throws upon the human soul. Thereby sound social feelings, also those feelings of love which ought to prevail between human beings, will make their way into the world as a fruit of true spiritual knowledge. We shall recognise that our grasp of spiritual knowledge alone can help this fruit to grow and

thrive. When Schopenhauer said: “To preach morality is easy; to establish morality is difficult”, he was giving expression to true insight. After all, it is not so very difficult to discover moral principles, neither is it difficult to preach morality. But to quicken the human soul at the point where spiritual knowledge can germinate and develop into true morality capable of sustaining life — that is what matters. Our attitude to spiritual knowledge can also establish within us the seeds of a truly human morality of the future. The morality of the future will either be built on the foundations of spiritual knowledge — or it will not be built at all!

Love of truth requires that we acknowledge these things; it requires us to deepen our anthroposophical life; and above all to bear in mind what has been said today as an introductory fact, namely, that whereas *knowledge* demands *activity, action* in the spiritual world demands of us inner *tranquillity*, in order that we may prove worthy of Grace. You will now be able to understand that during the period between death

and the new birth, when we are confronting another being, we can realise through the activity we then unfold whether we have deprived him of love or done anything to him that we ought not to have done. But, as I have said, during this period we cannot induce the tranquillity of soul that is necessary if the wrong is to be righted. In the lectures this winter I shall be describing the period during which it is actually possible in the natural course of the life between death and the new birth, to establish conditions in which change can be made possible — in other words, when a person's karma can be influenced in a certain way. We must, however, carefully distinguish between the point of time we have just been considering and the later period between death and the new birth when the tasks are different.

It remains to be said that there are certain conditions which will enable a human being to live through his existence after death in a favourable or an unfavourable way. It will be found that the mode of existence of two or more human beings after the period immediately following their life in

Kamaloka depends largely upon their moral disposition on Earth. Human beings who displayed good moral qualities on Earth will enjoy favourable conditions during the period immediately following Kamaloka; those who displayed defective morality will experience bad conditions.

I should like to sum up what I have been saying about the life after death in a kind of formula, although as our language is coined for the physical world and not for the spiritual world, it cannot be strictly exact. One can only try to make it as exact as possible. If, then, there has been a good moral quality in our soul, we shall become 'sociable' spirits and enjoy companionship with other spirits, with other human beings or with Spirits of the higher Hierarchies. The opposite is the case if a genuine moral quality has been lacking in us; we then become solitary spirits, spirits who find it extremely difficult to move away from the clouds of their visions. To feel thus isolated as a spiritual hermit is an essential cause of suffering after death. On the other hand it is characteristic of the

companionship of which I have spoken, to be able to establish the connection with what is necessary for us. It takes a long time after death to live through this sphere which in occultism is called the Mercury-sphere.

The moral tone of the soul is naturally still decisive in the next sphere, the Venus-sphere; but new conditions then begin. In this sphere it is the religious disposition of the soul that is decisive. Individuals with a religious inner life will become sociable beings in the Venus-sphere, quite irrespective of the creed to which they belonged. On the other hand, individuals without any religious feelings are condemned in this sphere to complete spiritual self-absorption. Paradoxical though it may seem, I can only say that individuals with predominantly materialistic views and who scorn religious life, inevitably become spiritual hermits, each one living as it were confined in his own cell. Far from being an ironical comparison, it is true to say: all those who are supporters of 'monistic religion' — that is to say, the opposite of true religion — will find themselves firmly

imprisoned and be quite unable to find one another.

In this way the mistakes and errors committed by the soul in earthly life are corrected. On the physical plane errors are automatically corrected but in the life between death and the new birth, errors and mistakes on Earth, also our thoughts, become facts. In the process of Initiation too, thinking is a real fact and if we were able to perceive it, an erroneous thought would stand there before us, not only in all its ugliness but with all the destructive elements it contains. If people had no more than an inkling that many a thought signifies a destructive reality they would soon turn away from many of the thoughts circulating in Movements intent upon agitation. It is part of the martyrdom endured in the process of Initiation that thoughts gather around us and stand there like solidified, frozen masses, which we cannot in any way dislodge, as long as we are out of the body. If we have formed an erroneous thought and then pass out of the body, the thought is there and we cannot change it. To change it we must go back

into the body. True, memory of it remains, but even an Initiate is only able to rectify it when he is in the physical body. Outside the body it stands there like a mountain. Only in this way can he become aware of the seriousness of the realities of life.

This will help you to understand that for certain karmic adjustments a return into the physical body is essential. The mistakes do indeed confront us during the life between death and the new birth; but the errors have to be corrected while we are in the physical body. In this way compensation is made in the subsequent life for what happened in the previous life. But what must be recognised in all its strength and fallaciousness stands there, unchangeable to begin with, as in the case of things in the spiritual world according to Homer. Such knowledge of the spiritual world must penetrate into our souls and become perception and feelings, and as feelings they form the basis for a new conception of life. A monistic Sunday sermon may expound any number of moral principles but as time will show, they will produce

very little change, because in the way they are presented the concepts can have a real effect only when we recognise that for a certain period after death whatever is a burden on our karma will confront us as a direct reality. We recognise the burden but it remains as it is; we cannot change it now; all we can do is to recognise and accept the burden fully and deepen our nature accordingly.

The effect of such concepts upon our souls is that they enable us to have the true view of life. And then there will follow all that is necessary to further the progress of life along the paths laid down by those who are the spiritual leaders of mankind; we shall thus move forward towards the goals that are set before man and mankind.

LECTURE TWO

It has already been announced that our studies in these Group Meetings during the winter are to be concerned with the life between death and the new birth. Obviously, what will be said from a comparatively new point of view will become thoroughly clear only when the whole course of lectures has been given. It must be taken for granted that a great deal will consist in the communication of findings of investigation carried out during recent months. It is only as our studies progress that understanding can become more complete. Let us, however, begin with a brief consideration of man's nature and constitution — a study that everyone can undertake for himself.

The most important and most outstanding fact revealed by an unprejudiced observation of man's life is surely the existence of the human Ego, the

'I'. A distinction must however be made between the 'I' itself and the 'I' consciousness. It must be clear to everyone that from the time a child is born the 'I' is already active. This is obvious long before the child has any 'I'-consciousness, when in the language he uses he speaks of himself as if he were another person. At about the third year of life, although of course there are children in whom this happens at an earlier age, the child begins to have some consciousness of himself and to speak of himself in the first person. We know too that this year, although it varies in many individuals, marks the limit before which, in later life, a human being is unable to recall what his soul has experienced. There is thus a dividing line in the life of a human being: before it there is no possibility of any clear and distinct experience of himself as 'I'. After that point he can experience himself as an Ego, as 'I'; he finds himself so at home in his 'I' that he can again and again summon up from his memory what his 'I' has experienced.

Now what does unprejudiced observation of life teach us about the reason why the child gradually passes from the stage when he has no experience of his 'I' to the stage when this experience comes to him? A clear observation of life can teach us that if from the earliest periods after birth a child were never to come into any sort of collision with the outer world, he could never become 'I'-conscious. You can discover for yourselves how often you become conscious of your 'I' in later life. You have only to knock against the corner of a cupboard and you will certainly be made aware of your 'I'. This collision with the outside world tells you that you are an 'I' and you will hardly fail to be aware of that 'I' when you have given yourself a hard bump! In the case of a child these collisions with the outside world need not always cause bruises but in essence their effect is similar — to some extent at least. When a child stretches out his little hand and touches something in the outside world, this amounts to a slight collision and the same holds good when a child opens his eyes and light falls upon them. It is actually by such contacts with the world outside that the child

becomes aware of his own identity. Indeed his whole life during these early years consists in learning to distinguish himself from the world outside and thus becoming aware of the self, the 'I', within him. When there have been enough of these collisions with the outside world the child acquires self-consciousness and says 'I' of himself. Once 'I'-consciousness has been acquired the child must therefore keep it alive and alert. The only possibility of this, however, is that collisions shall continue to take place. These collisions with the world outside have completed their essential function once the child has reached the stage where he says 'I' of himself, and there is nothing further to be learnt by this means as far as the development of consciousness is concerned. Unbiased observation, for instance, of the moment of waking will, however, help everyone to realise that this 'I'-consciousness can be maintained only by means of 'collisions'.

We know that this 'I'-consciousness, together with all the other experiences, including those of the astral body, vanishes during sleep and awakens

again in the morning. This happens because as a being of soul-and-spirit, man returns into his physical and etheric bodies. Again collisions take place — now with the physical and etheric bodies. A person who is able — even without any occult knowledge — to observe the life of soul accurately, can have the following experience. When he wakes in the morning he will find that a great deal of what his memory has preserved rises again into his consciousness: mental pictures, feelings and other experiences rise up into consciousness from its own depths. If we investigate all this with exactitude — and that is possible without any occult knowledge provided only there is some capacity for observing what the soul experiences — we shall find that what rises up into consciousness has a certain impersonal character. We can observe too that this impersonal character becomes more marked the longer ago the events in question took place — which means, of course, the less we are participating in them with our immediate ‘I’-consciousness. We may remember events which took place very long ago in our life, and when memory recalls them we may

feel that we have as little directly to do with them as we have with experiences in the outside world which do not particularly concern us. What is otherwise preserved in our memory tends continually to break loose from our 'I'. The reason why, in spite of this, we find our 'I' returning each morning clearly into our consciousness is that we come back into the same body. Through the resulting collision our 'I'-consciousness is awakened again each morning. Thus just as the child develops consciousness of his 'I' by colliding with the external world, we keep that consciousness alert by colliding each morning with our inner being. This takes place not only in the morning but throughout the day; our 'I'-consciousness is kindled by the counter-pressure of our body. Our 'I' is implanted in the physical body, etheric body and astral body and is continually colliding with them. We can therefore say that we owe our 'I'-consciousness to the fact that we press inwardly into our bodily constitution and experience the counter-pressure from it. We collide with our body.

You will readily understand that this must have the consequence which always results from collisions, namely that damage or injury is caused, even if it is not at once noticed. Collisions of the 'I' with the bodily constitution cause slight injuries in the latter. This is indeed the case. Our 'I'-consciousness could never develop if we were not perpetually colliding with our bodily make-up and thereby destroying it in some way. It is in fact the sum-total of these results of destruction that ultimately brings about death in the physical world. Our conclusion must therefore be that we owe the preservation of our 'I'-consciousness to our own destructive activity, to the circumstance that we are able to destroy our organism perpetually.

In this way we are destroyers of our astral, etheric and physical bodies. But because of this, our relation to those bodies is rather different from what it is to the 'I'. Everyday life itself makes it obvious that we can also work destructively upon the 'I', and we will now try to be clear as to how this may happen.

Our 'I' is something — never mind for the moment exactly what — that has a certain value in the world. Man feels the truth of this, but it is in his power to reduce that value. How do we reduce the value of our 'I'? If we do harm to someone to whom we owe a debt of love, we shall actually at that moment have reduced the value of our 'I'. This is a fact that every human being can recognise. At the same time he can realise that as a human being never fulfils his ideal value, his 'I' is really occupied throughout his life in reducing his own value, in bringing about his own destruction. However, as long as we remain poised in our own 'I', we have constant opportunity in life to annul the destruction we have caused. We are capable of this even though we do not always manage to do it. Before we pass through the gate of death we can make compensation in some form for undeserved suffering caused to another person. If you think about it you will realise that between birth and death it is possible for man to reduce the value of his 'I' but also ultimately to make good the destruction that has been brought about.

But in the case of the astral, etheric and physical bodies there is no possibility of being able to do this at the present stage of man's evolution. He is unable to work consciously on these bodies as he can do in the case of his 'I', for the reason that he is not, in the real sense, conscious in these members of his being. The destruction for which a man is continually responsible remains in his astral, etheric and physical bodies but he is not in a position to repair it. And it is easy to understand that if we were to come into a new incarnation with the forces of the astral, etheric and physical bodies as they were at the end of our previous incarnation, those bodies would be useless. The content of the life of soul is always the source and the sum and substance of what comes to expression in the bodily constitution. The fact that at the end of a life we have a brittle organism is evidence that our soul then lacks the forces necessary to sustain its vigour. In order to maintain our consciousness and keep it alert we have been continually damaging our bodily sheath. With the forces that are still available at the end of one incarnation we could do nothing in the next. It is

necessary for us to reacquire the forces that are able to restore freshness and health within certain limits to the astral, etheric and physical bodies, and to make them of use for a new incarnation. In earthly existence — as is evident even to external observation — it is possible for man to damage these bodies but not to restore them to health. Occult investigation reveals that in the life between death and the new birth we acquire from the extra-terrestrial conditions in which we are then living the forces able to restore our worn-out sheaths. Between death and the new birth we expand into the Universe, the Cosmos, and we have to acquire the forces which cannot be drawn from the sphere of the Earth from the heavenly bodies connected with the Earth. These heavenly bodies are the reservoirs of forces needed for our bodily sheaths. On the Earth man can acquire only the forces needed for the constant restoration of the 'I'. For the other members of his being the forces must be drawn from other worlds.

Let us consider the astral body first. After death the human being expands, quite literally expands,

into all the planetary spheres. During the Kamaloka period, as a being of soul-and-spirit, man expands to the boundary demarcated by the orbit of the Moon around the Earth. Beings of various ranks are involved in the process. After that he expands until the Mercury sphere is reached — Mercury as understood in occultism. Thence he expands to the spheres of Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter and finally Saturn. The being who has passed through the gate of death becomes in the real sense a Mercury dweller, a Venus dweller and so on, and in a certain sense he must have the faculty to become thoroughly acclimatised in these other planetary worlds. How does he succeed or fail in this respect?

In the first place, when his Kamaloka period is over, a man must himself possess some quality that will enable him to establish a definite relationship with the forces in the Mercury sphere into which he then passes. If the lives of various human beings between death and the new birth are investigated, it will be found that they differ greatly in the Mercury sphere. A clear difference is

evident according to whether an individual passes into the Mercury sphere with a moral disposition of soul, with the outcome of a moral or an immoral life. There are of course nuances of every possible degree. A man with a moral quality of soul, who bears within him the fruits of a moral life, is what may be called a spiritually 'social' being in the Mercury sphere; it is easy for him to establish relationships with other beings — either with people who died before him or also with beings who inhabit the Mercury sphere — and to share experiences with them. An immoral man becomes a hermit, feels excluded from the community of the other inhabitants of this sphere. Such is the consequence in the life between death and the new birth of a moral or immoral disposition of soul. It is important to understand that morality forges our connection and relationship with the beings living in this sphere and an immoral disposition of soul encloses us as it were in a prison. We know that the other beings are there but we seem to be within a shell and make no contact with them. This self-isolation is an outcome of an earthly life that was unsociable

and lacking in morality.

In the next sphere, which we will call the Venus sphere — in occultism it is always so named — a man's contact with it is mainly dependent upon a religious attitude of soul. Contact with the beings of this sphere can be established by individuals who during their life on Earth came to realise that everything transitory in physical things and in man himself is after all related in some way to immortality; thus they had a feeling that the attitude of soul in every individual should incline to divine-spiritual reality. On the other hand, anyone who is a materialist and cannot direct his soul to the Eternal, the Divine, the Immortal, is condemned in the Venus sphere to be imprisoned within his own being, in isolation. Particularly in connection with this sphere we can learn from occult investigation how in our astral body during life on Earth we create the conditions of existence as they will be in the Venus sphere. On the Earth we must already develop understanding of and inclination for what we hope to contact and experience in that sphere. Let us consider for a

moment the fact that human beings living on the Earth during entirely different epochs — as was both inevitable and right — were connected with divine-spiritual life through the various religions and prevailing conceptions of the world. The only way in which human evolution could progress was that out of the one source — for example the religious life — at different times and for very different peoples, according to their natural traits and climatic and other conditions of existence, the varying religious principles were imparted by those destined for this mission. These religious principles stem from one source but are graduated according to the conditions prevailing among particular peoples. Humanity today is still divided into groups determined by their religious tenets and views of the world. But it is through what is thereby formed in our souls that we prepare our understanding of and possibility of contacts in the Venus sphere. The religions of the Hindu, of the Chinese, of the Mohammedan, of the Christian, prepare the soul in such a way that in the Venus sphere it will understand and be attracted to those individuals whose souls have been moulded by the

same religious tenets. Occult investigation shows clearly that whereas nowadays men on Earth are divided by race, descent and so forth, and can be distinguished by these factors — although this will change in the future and has already begun to do so — in the Venus sphere in which we live together with other human beings there are no such divisions. The only division there depends upon their religious principles and conceptions of the world while they were on the Earth. It is true that to some extent a classification according to race is possible because this classification on Earth — even according to religion — is still, in a certain respect, a matter of racial relationships. All the same, it is not the element of race that is decisive, but what the soul experiences through its adherence to the principles of a particular religion.

We spend certain periods after each death within these spheres; then our being expands and we pass on from the Venus sphere to the Sun sphere. In very truth we become, as souls, Sun dwellers between death and the new birth. Something more than was necessary in the Venus sphere is required

for the Sun sphere. If we are to fare well in the Sun sphere between death and the new birth, it is essential to be able to understand not merely one particular group of human beings but to understand and find points of contact with all human souls. In the Sun sphere we feel isolated, like hermits, if the prejudices of one particular faith render us incapable of understanding a human being whose soul has been filled with the principles of a different faith. An individual who on the Earth regarded one particular religion only as valuable is incapable in the Sun sphere of understanding adherents of other religions. But the consequences of this lack of understanding are not the same as they are on Earth. On the Earth men may live side by side without any inner understanding of each other and then separate into different faiths and systems of thought. In the Sun sphere, however, since we interpenetrate one another, we are together and yet at the same time separated in our inner being; and in that sphere every separation and every lack of understanding are at once sources of terrible suffering. Every contact with an adherent of a different faith

becomes a reproach which weighs upon us unceasingly and which we cannot escape because on Earth we did not educate ourselves in this respect.

Taking the life between death and the new birth as a starting-point, what is now to be said will in a certain sense be easier to understand if reference is made to Initiation. What the Initiate experiences in the spiritual worlds is in a certain respect closely akin to experiences undergone in the life between death and rebirth. The Initiate has to make his way into the same spheres, and were he to maintain the prejudices resulting from a biased, one-sided view of the world, he would undergo similar suffering in the Sun sphere. It is therefore essential that Initiation should be preceded by thorough understanding of every religious faith spread over the Earth, also understanding of what is taking place in every individual soul regardless of the creed or system of thought to which it adheres. Otherwise, whatever has not been met with understanding becomes a source of suffering, as if towering mountains were threatening to crash

down upon one, as if explosions were discharging their whole force upon one. Whatever lack of understanding due to one's own narrow prejudices has been shown to human beings on Earth, has this effect in the spiritual worlds.

It was not always so. In pre-Christian times the process of evolution did not require men unconditionally to acquire this understanding of every human soul. Humanity was obliged to pass through the phase of a one-sided attitude. But those who were trained for some kind of leadership in the world were obliged to acquire, either consciously or less consciously, an understanding for every human being without distinction. Even when some individual was to be the leader of a particular people he would be required to develop a measure of understanding for every human soul. This is indicated magnificently in the Old Testament in the passage describing the meeting between Abraham and Melchizedek, the priest of the Most High. Those who understand this passage know that Abraham, who was destined to become the leader of his

people, underwent an Initiation at this time — even if not in full consciousness as is the case in later Initiations. Abraham's Initiation was connected with realisation of the Divine element that can flow into all human souls. The passage which tells of the meeting of Abraham with Melchizedek contains a deep secret connected with the evolution of humanity. But men had gradually to be prepared to become more and more qualified for a fruitful existence in the Sun sphere.

The first impulse in the evolution of our Earth towards a fruitful existence in the Sun sphere was given by the Mystery of Golgotha, after preparation for it had been made by the people of the Old Testament — about which there will be more to say. It is not essential at the moment to deal with the question as to whether Christianity in its development hitherto has achieved all its goals and possible fruits. Needless to say, in its various sects and denominations Christianity has produced only one-sided aspects of its essential principle; in certain of its tenets, and as a whole, it is not on the level of certain other faiths. What really matters,

however, is its potentiality of development, what enrichment it can give to one who penetrates more and more deeply into its essential truth.

We have already tried to indicate these possibilities of development. There is infinitely much to be said, but one matter only shall now be mentioned because it can throw light upon the point under consideration at the moment. If we have a genuine understanding of the different faiths we find one outstanding characteristic, namely that in the earlier periods of Earth evolution the individual religions were adapted to the particular races, tribal stocks or peoples. There is still evidence of this. Only one who has been born a Hindu can be an orthodox adherent of the Hindu religion today. In a certain respect the earlier religions are racial religions, folk-religions. Do not take this as disparagement but simply as characterisation. The different religions, although deriving from the primal source of a universal world-religion, were given to the peoples by the Initiates and adapted to the specific tribal stocks and races; hence in that sense there is something

egoistic about them. Peoples have always loved the religion that has been determined by their own flesh and blood. In ancient times, when a religion stemming from a Mystery Centre had been established among a particular people, a bodily stranger who wanted to start another religion among them did not do so, but instead founded a second Mystery Centre. People were always given a leader from their own tribe or clan.

In this respect true Christianity is very different. Christ Jesus, the Individuality to whom the Christians turn, was least active among the people and in the area on the Earth where He was born. In respect of religion, can conditions in the Western world be equated with those existing in India or China where folk-religions still survive? No, they cannot! The regions where we ourselves are living could be equated with India and China only if here, in Middle Europe, we were, for example, faithful followers of Wotan. We should then be at the same stage and the element of religious egoism would be in evidence here too. But in the West this aspect has disappeared, for the West accepted a

religion that was not confined to any particular folk-community. This fact must be remembered. The influences which bound blood to blood and were a determining factor in the founding of the old religious communities, played no part in the spread of Christianity. The life of *soul* was the essential factor and in the West a religion unconnected with a single people or folk-community was adopted. Why has it been so? It is because in its deepest roots and from the very beginning Christianity was meant to be a religion for all men without distinction of belief, nationality, descent, race, and whatever separates human beings from one another. Christianity is rightly understood only when it is realised that it is concerned solely with the essentially human element in all men. The fact that in its early phases and also in our own times sects have arisen from Christianity should be no cause of apprehension; for Christianity makes possible the evolution of the "human universal". It is also true that a great transformation will have to take place within the Christian world if the roots of Christianity are to be rightly understood. A distinction will have to be

made between *knowledge* of Christian tenets and the *reality* of Christianity.

St. Paul did in fact begin to make this distinction and those who understand his words can realise something of what they mean, although up to now understanding has been rare. When St. Paul made it clear that belief in Christ Jesus was not the prerogative of Judaism, and spoke the words, “Christ died not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles”, this was an enormous contribution to the true conception of Christianity. It would be quite false to maintain that the Mystery of Golgotha was fulfilled only for those who call themselves Christians. The Mystery of Golgotha was fulfilled for *all* men! This is indeed what St. Paul meant in the words just quoted. What passed over from the Mystery of Golgotha into earthly life has meaning and significance for *all* that life. Grotesque as it may still seem today to those who do not distinguish between knowledge and reality, it must nevertheless be said that he alone understands the roots of Christianity who can view an adherent of a different religion — no matter

whether he calls himself Indian, or Chinese, or anything else — in such a way that he asks himself: To what extent is he Christ-like? The fact of knowing this is not what really matters; what *does* matter is that such a person knows the reality of Christianity — in the sense that it is not essential to know physiology provided that digestion takes place. A man whose religion has failed to bring about in him a conscious relationship to the Mystery of Golgotha has no understanding of it, but that does not entitle others to deny him the reality of Christianity. Not until Christians become so truly Christian that they seek for the Christ-like principle in all souls on Earth — not when they have implanted it in the souls of others by attempts at conversion — not until then will the root principles of Christianity have been understood. All this belongs to Christianity when rightly understood. Distinction must be made between the *reality* of Christianity and an *understanding* of it. To understand what has been present on the Earth since the Mystery of Golgotha is a great ideal, the ideal of supremely important knowledge for the Earth — knowledge that men

will gradually acquire. But the *reality* itself has come to pass; the Mystery of Golgotha was fulfilled.

Our life in the Sun sphere after death depends upon what relationship we have established with the Mystery of Golgotha. The contact with all human souls that can be experienced in the Sun sphere is possible only if a relationship with the Mystery of Golgotha has been established in the way described. It is a relationship which ensures freedom from any still imperfect form of Christianity as practised in this or that sect. If we have no such relationship with the Mystery of Golgotha we condemn ourselves to becoming solitary individuals in the Sun sphere, unable to make contact with other human souls. There is a certain utterance which retains its power even in the Sun sphere. When in the Sun sphere we encounter another human soul we can become companions and not be thrust away from that soul, if these words have been preserved in our inner being: "When two or three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them." In the

Sun sphere all human souls can be united with one another in a true recognition of Christ. And this union is of tremendous significance. For in the Sun sphere a man must make a decision; he must acquire a certain understanding. And what this means can best be explained by referring to an extraordinarily important fact which every human soul would be able to realise but does not always do so. One of the most beautiful sayings in the New Testament occurs when Christ Jesus is endeavouring to make men conscious of the divine-spiritual core of being within them, of the truth that God is present as the divine spark in every human soul, that every human being has divinity within him. Christ Jesus emphasises this, declaring with all power and intensity: "Ye are Gods!" The emphasis laid upon the words shows that He recognised this as a rightful claim when a man applies its implications to himself. But this utterance was also made by another Being. The Old Testament tells us in symbolic words at what point in evolution it was made. At the very beginning of man's evolution, Lucifer proclaimed: "Ye shall be as Gods!" This is something that must

be noticed. A saying in identical terms is uttered by two Beings: by Lucifer and by Christ! “Ye shall be as Gods.” What does the Bible imply by giving emphasis to these two utterances? It implies that from Lucifer this utterance leads to a curse, from Christ to the highest blessing. Is there not a wonderful mystery here? The words hurled into humanity by Lucifer, the Tempter — when uttered by Christ to men are supreme wisdom. That what is really important is not the content of an utterance but from whom it comes — this fact is inscribed in letters of power into the biblical record. From an instance such as this let us feel that it behoves us to understand things in adequate depth and that we can learn a very great deal from what may lie openly before us.

It is in the Sun sphere between death and the new birth that again and again we hear the words spoken to our soul with all their force: Thou art a God, be as a God! We know with all certainty when we arrive in the Sun sphere that Lucifer meets us again and impresses the meaning of this utterance forcibly upon us. From then onwards we

can understand Lucifer very well, but Christ only if on Earth we have prepared ourselves to understand Him. Christ's utterance will have no meaning for us in the Sun sphere if by our relationship on Earth to the mystery of Golgotha we have not gained some understanding of it. Trivial as the following words may be, let me say this: In the Sun sphere we find two thrones. From the throne of Lucifer — which is always occupied — there sound the words of temptation, asserting our divinity. The second throne seems to us — or rather to many human beings — to be still empty, for on this other throne in the Sun sphere between death and the new birth, we have to discover what can be called the Akashic picture of Christ. If we can find the Akashic picture of Christ it will be for us a blessing — this will become evident in later lectures. But it has become possible to find that picture only because Christ came down from the Sun and has united Himself with the Earth and because we have been able to open our eyes of spirit here on Earth through understanding in some measure the Mystery of Golgotha. This will ensure that the throne of Christ in the Sun sphere does not

appear empty to us but that the deeds He performed while His dwelling-place was still the Sun sphere become visible. As I said, I have to use trivial words in speaking of these two thrones; this sublime fact can only be spoken of figuratively. But anyone who acquires more and more understanding will realise that words coined on Earth are inadequate and that one is obliged to resort to imagery in order to be intelligible.

Now we shall understand and find support for what we need in the Sun sphere only if on the Earth we have acquired something that plays not only into the astral forces but into the etheric forces as well. You will know from what I have previously said that the religions influence the etheric forces and the etheric body of man. A considerable spiritual heirloom is available for all of us inasmuch as forces from the Sun sphere are instilled into us if we have acquired understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. For it is from the Sun sphere that we must draw the forces necessary for the renewal of our etheric body for the next incarnation; whereas the forces necessary for our

astral body in the next incarnation must be drawn from the other planetary spheres.

Let nobody believe that what I have been saying is unconnected with the whole course of evolution. I have told you that already in pre-Christian times a leader of humanity such as Abraham was able at his meeting with Melchizedek (or Malkezadek) to acquire the forces needed for the Sun sphere. I am making no intolerant statement implying that man can acquire the forces necessary for establishing a right relationship to the beings of the Sun sphere through orthodox Christianity alone. I am stating a fact of evolution; another fact is that the time when it was still possible, as in ancient days, to behold the Akashic picture of Christ as the result of different means is drawing nearer and nearer to a close as evolution proceeds. Abraham's spiritual eyes were fully open to the Akashic picture of Christ in the Sun sphere. You must not argue that the Mystery of Golgotha had not then taken place and that Christ was still in the Sun sphere; for during that period Christ was united with other planetary spheres. It is indeed a fact that at that

time and even down to our own epoch, human beings were able to perceive what could be perceived in those spheres. And if we go still further back to those primeval ages when the Holy Rishis were the first Teachers of the people of ancient India, those Teachers certainly had knowledge of Christ who at that time was still in the Sun sphere, and they imparted this knowledge and understanding to their followers, although of course not using the later nomenclature. Although in those ancient times the Mystery of Golgotha was not yet within their ken, men were able, by drawing intimate truths from the depths of their being, to acquire from the Sun sphere what was needed for the renewal of their etheric bodies. But these possibilities ceased as evolution proceeded and this was necessary because new forces must perpetually be instilled into humanity.

What has been said is meant to indicate a fact of evolution. We are moving towards a future when it will be less and less possible for men during the period between death and the new birth to live through their existence in the Sun sphere in the

right way if they alienate themselves from the Christ Event. True it is that we must look for the Christ-like quality in each soul. If we are to understand the root of Christianity we must ask ourselves in the case of everyone we meet; how much in his nature is Christ-like? But it is also true that a man can sever himself from Christianity if he fails to become conscious of what it is in reality. And when we remind ourselves again of St. Paul's words, that Christ died not only for the Jews but also for the Gentiles, we must also add that if in the course of further progress men were more and more to deny the reality of the Mystery of Golgotha they would prevent what was done for their sake from reaching them. The Mystery of Golgotha was a deed of blessing for all mankind. Every human being is free to allow that event to influence him or not; but the effect of the influence will in future depend more and more upon the extent to which he is able to draw from the Sun sphere the forces required to ensure that his etheric body shall be rightly formed in his next incarnation. The immeasurable consequences of this for the whole future of the human race on

Earth will be considered in the forthcoming lectures.

Thus Christianity, admittedly little understood, yet always connected with the Mystery of Golgotha, is the first preparation if humanity is to regain the relationship to the Sun sphere. A second impulse would be the genuine anthroposophical understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha. After a human being has adjusted himself to existence in the Sun sphere his life expands further outwards, into the Mars sphere, for example. What is essential is that he not only establishes the right relationship to the forces of the Sun sphere but maintains this relationship when his life expands into the Mars sphere. In order that his consciousness shall not become dim, shall not fade away altogether after the Sun sphere but that he can carry it over into the Mars sphere, it is necessary in the present cycle of human evolution that spiritual understanding of the gist of our religions and conceptions of the world shall take root in the souls of men. Hence the endeavours to understand the essence of religions and systems of

thought. Spiritual-scientific understanding will eventually be replaced by another, quite different understanding of which men today cannot even dream. For certain as it is that a truth is right in an epoch possessed of a genuine sense of truth, it is also a fact that continually new impulses will make their way into the evolution of humanity. True indeed it is that what Anthroposophy has to give is right for a particular epoch, and humanity, having assimilated Anthroposophy, may bear it into later times as an inner impulse and through these forces also acquire the forces of the later epoch.

Thus it has been possible to show the relationship of man's life on Earth to the life between death and the new birth. Nobody can fail to realise that it is just as necessary for a human being to have knowledge, feeling and perceptiveness of the life between death and the new birth as of earthly life itself. For when he enters earthly life at birth, the confidence, strength and hopefulness connected with that life depend upon what forces he brings with him from the life between the last death and

the present birth. But again, the forces we are able to acquire during that life depend upon our conduct in the earlier incarnation, upon our moral and religious disposition or the quality of our attitude of soul. We must realise that whether the future evolution of the human race will be furthered or impeded depends upon our active and creative co-operation with the supersensible world in which we live between death and the new birth. If men failed to acquire the forces able to provide them with healthy astral bodies, the forces in their astral bodies would become ineffective and sterile and humanity would sink into moral and religious turpitude on the Earth. Similarly, if men failed to acquire the forces needed for their etheric bodies, as members of the human race they would wither away on the Earth. Every individual can ask himself the question: In what measure must I co-operate with the spiritual world in order that the Earth shall not be peopled by sickly bodies only? Anthroposophy is not knowledge alone but a responsibility that brings us into connection with the whole nature of the Earth, and sustains that connection.

LECTURE THREE

From what has already been indicated about the life between death and the new birth you will recall that during that period a human being continues, to begin with, to live in conditions and with relationships he himself prepared during his existence on Earth. It was said that when we again encounter some personality in the spiritual world after death, the relationship between us is, at first, the same as was formed during our existence on Earth and we cannot, for the time being, change it at all. Thus if in the spiritual world we come into contact with a friend or an individual who has predeceased us, and to whom we owed a debt of love but during life withheld that love from him, we shall now have to experience again the relationship that existed before death because of the lack of love of which we were guilty. We

confront the person in question in the way described in the last lecture, beholding and experiencing over and over again the circumstances created during the life before our death. For instance, if at some particular time, say ten years before the death of the person in question, or before our own death, we allowed the relationship caused by our self-incurred debt of love to be established, we shall have to live through the relationship for a corresponding length of time after death and only after that period has elapsed shall we be able to experience once again, during our life after death, the happier relationship previously existing between us. It is important to realise that after death we are not in a position to expunge or change relationships for which we had been responsible on Earth. To a certain extent change has become impossible.

It might easily be believed that this is inevitably a painful experience and can only be regarded as suffering. But that would be judging from the standpoint of our limited earthly circumstances. Viewed from the spiritual world things look

different in many respects. It is true that in the life between death and the new birth the individual concerned must undergo all the suffering resulting from the admission: I am now in the spiritual world and realise the wrong I committed, but I cannot rectify it and must rely upon conditions to bring about a change. An individual who is aware of this undergoes the pain connected with the experience, but he also knows that it must be so and that it would be detrimental for his further development if it were otherwise, if he could not learn from the experience resulting from such suffering. For through experiencing such conditions and recognising that they cannot be changed we acquire the power to change them in our later karma. The technique of karma enables these conditions to be changed during another physical incarnation. There is only the remotest possibility that the dead himself can change them. Above all during the first period after death, during the time in Kamaloka, an individual sees what has been determined by his life before death, but to begin with he must leave it as it is; he is unable to bring about any change in what he

experiences.

Those who have remained behind on Earth have a far greater influence on the dead than the dead has on himself or others who have also died have upon him. And this is tremendously important. It is really only an individual who has remained on the physical plane, who had established some relationship with the dead, who through human will is able to bring about certain changes in the conditions of souls between death and rebirth.

We will now take an example that can be instructive in many respects. Here we can also consider the life in Kamaloka, for the existing relationships do not change when the transition takes place into the period of Devachan. Let us think of two friends living on Earth, one of whom comes into contact with Anthroposophy at a certain time in his life and becomes an anthroposophist. It may happen that because of this, his friend rages against Anthroposophy. You may have known such a case. If the friend had been the first to find Anthroposophy he might himself have become a very good adherent. Such

things certainly happen but we must realise that they are very often clothed in maya. Consequently it may happen that the one who rages against Anthroposophy because his friend has become an adherent is raging in his surface consciousness only, in his Ego-consciousness. In his astral consciousness, in his subconsciousness he may very likely not share in the antipathy. Without realising it he may even be longing for Anthroposophy. In many cases it happens that aversion in the upper consciousness takes the form of longing in the subconsciousness. It does not necessarily follow that an individual feels exactly what he expresses in his upper consciousness. After death we do not experience only the effects of the contents of our upper consciousness, our Ego-consciousness. To believe that would be to misunderstand entirely the conditions prevailing after death. It has often been said that although a human being casts off physical body and etheric body at death, his longings and desires remain. Nor need these longings and desires be only those of which he was actually aware. The longings and desires that were in his sub-consciousness, they

too remain, including those of which he has no conscious knowledge or may even have resisted. They are often much stronger and more intense after death than they were in life. During life a certain disharmony between the astral body and the 'I' expresses itself as a feeling of depression, dissatisfaction with oneself. After death, the astral consciousness is an indication of the whole character of the soul, the whole stamp of the individual concerned. So what we experience in our upper consciousness is less significant than all those hidden wishes, desires and passions which are present in the soul's depths and of which the 'I' knows nothing.

In the case mentioned, let us suppose that the man who denounces Anthroposophy because his friend has become an adherent passes through the gate of death. The longing for Anthroposophy, which may have developed precisely because of his violent opposition, now asserts itself and becomes an intense wish for Anthroposophy. This wish would have to remain unfulfilled, for it could hardly happen that after death he himself would have an

opportunity of satisfying it. But through a particular concatenation of circumstances in such a case, the one who is on Earth may be able to help the other and change something in his conditions. This is the kind of case that may frequently be observed in our own ranks.

We can, for instance, read to the one who has died. The way to do this is to picture him vividly there in front of us; we picture his features and go through with him in thought the content, for example, of an anthroposophical book. This need only be done in thought and it has a direct effect upon the one who has died. As long as he is in the stage of Kamaloka, language is no hindrance; it becomes a hindrance only when he has passed into Devachan. Hence the question as to whether the dead understands language need not be raised. During the period of Kamaloka a feeling for language is certainly present. In this practical way very active help can be given to one who has passed through the gate of death. What streams up from the physical plane is something that can be a factor in bringing about a change in the conditions

of life between death and the new birth; but such help can only be given to the dead from the physical world, not directly from the spiritual world.

We realise from this that when Anthroposophy actually finds its way into the hearts of men it will in very truth bridge the gap between the physical and the spiritual worlds, and that will constitute its infinite value in life. Only a very elementary stage in anthroposophical development has been reached when it is thought that what is of main importance is to acquire certain concepts and ideas about the members of man's constitution or about what can come to him from the spiritual world. The bridge between the physical world and the spiritual world cannot be built until we realise that Anthroposophy takes hold of our very life. We shall then no longer adopt a merely passive attitude towards those who have passed through the gate of death but shall establish active contact with them and be able to help them. To this end Anthroposophy must make us conscious of the fact that our world consists of physical existence

and superphysical, spiritual existence; furthermore that man is on Earth not only to gather for himself the fruits of physical existence between birth and death but that he is on Earth in order to send up into the superphysical world what can be gained and can exist only on the physical plane. If for some justifiable reason or, let us say, for the sake of comfort, a man has kept aloof from anthroposophical ideas, we can bring them to him after death in the way described. Maybe someone will ask: Is it possible that this will annoy the dead, that he does not want it? This question is not entirely justifiable because human beings of the present age are by no means particularly opposed to Anthroposophy in their subconsciousness. If the subconsciousness of those who denounce Anthroposophy could have a voice in their upper consciousness, there would be hardly any opposition to it. For people are prejudiced and biased against the spiritual world only in their Ego-consciousness, only in what expresses itself as Ego-consciousness on the physical plane.

This is one aspect of mediation between the physical world and the spiritual world. But we can also ask: Is mediation also possible in the other direction, from the spiritual to the physical world? That is to say, can the one who has passed through the gate of death communicate in some way with those who have remained on the physical plane? At the present time the possibility of this is very slight because on the physical plane human beings live for the most part in their Ego-consciousness only and not in the consciousness connected with the astral body. It is not so easy to convey an idea of how men will gradually develop consciousness of what surrounds them as an astral or devachanic or other spiritual world. But if Anthroposophy acquires greater influence in the evolution of humanity, this will eventually come about. Simply through paying attention to the teachings of Anthroposophy men will find the ways and means to break through the boundaries of the physical world and direct attention to the spiritual world that is round about them and eludes them only because they pay no heed to it.

How can we become aware of this spiritual world?

Today I want to make you aware of how little a man really knows about the things of the world surrounding him. He knows very little indeed of what is of essential importance in that world. Through his senses and intellect he gets to know and recognise the ordinary facts of life in which he is involved. He gets to know what is going on both in the world and in himself, establishes some kind of association between these happenings, calls the one 'cause' and the other 'effect' and then, having ascertained some connection based either upon cause and effect or some other concept, thinks he understands the processes that are in operation. To take an example: We leave our home at eight o'clock in the morning, walk along the street, reach our place of work, have a meal during the day, do this or that to amuse ourselves. This goes on until the time comes for sleep. We then connect our various experiences; one makes a strong impression upon us, another a weaker impression. Effects are also produced in our soul, either of sympathy or antipathy. Even trifling reflection can

teach us that we are living as it were on the surface of a sea without the faintest idea of what is down below on the sea's bed. As we pass through life we get to know external reality only. But an example will show that a very great deal is implicit in this external reality. Suppose one day we leave home three minutes later than usual and arrive at work three minutes late; after that we carry on just as if we had left home at the usual time. Nevertheless it may be possible to verify that had we been in the street punctually at eight o'clock we might have been run over by a car and killed; if we had left home punctually we should no longer be alive. Or on another occasion we may hear of an accident to a train in which we should have been travelling and thus have been injured. This is an even more radical example of what I just said. We pay attention only to what actually happens, not to what *may* be continually happening and which we have escaped. The range of such possibilities is infinitely greater than that of actual happenings.

It may be said that this happening had no significance for our outer life. For our inner life,

however, it is certainly of importance. Suppose, for instance, you had bought a ticket for a voyage in the *Titanic* but were dissuaded by a friend from travelling. You sold the ticket and then heard of the disaster. Would your experience have been the same as if you had never been involved? Would it not far rather have made a most striking impression upon you? If we knew from how many things we are protected in the world, how many things are possible for good or for ill, things which are converging and only through slight displacement do not meet, we should have a sensitive perception of experiences of happiness or unhappiness, of bodily experiences which are possible for us but which simply do not come our way. Who among all of you sitting here can know what you would have experienced if, for example, the lecture this evening had been cancelled and you had been somewhere else. If you had known about the cancellation your attitude of mind would be quite different from what it now is, because you have no idea of what might conceivably have happened.

All these possibilities which do not become reality on the physical plane exist as forces and effects behind the physical world in the spiritual world and reverberate through it. It is not only the forces which actually determine our life on the physical plane that stream down upon us but also the measureless abundance of forces which exist only as possibilities, some of which seldom make their way into our physical consciousness. But when they do, this usually gives rise to a significant experience. Do not say that what has been stated, namely that numberless possibilities exist, that for example this lecture might have been cancelled, in which case those sitting here would have had different experiences — do not say that this invalidates karma. It does nothing of the kind. If such a thing were said it would imply ignorance of the fact that the idea of karma just presented holds good only for the world of realities within the physical life of men. The truth is that the spiritual life permeates our physical life and there is a world of possibilities where the laws operating as karmic laws are quite different. If we could feel what a tiny part of what we might have

experienced is represented by the physical realities and that our actual experiences are only a fractional part of the possibilities, the infinite wealth and exuberance of the spiritual life behind our physical life would be obvious to us.

Now the following may happen. A man may take serious account in his thoughts of this world of possibilities or perhaps not in his thoughts but only in his feelings. He may realise that he would probably have been killed in an accident to a train which he happened to miss. This may make a deep impression upon him and such happenings are able as it were to open the soul to the spiritual world. Occasions such as this with which we are in some way connected may actually reveal to us wishes or thoughts of souls living between death and the new birth.

When Anthroposophy awakens in men a feeling for possibilities in life, for occurrences or catastrophes which did not take place simply because something that might have happened did not do so, and when the soul abides firmly by this feeling, experiences conveyed by individuals with whom

there had been a connection in the physical world may be received from the spiritual world.

Although during the hurry and bustle of daily life people are for the most part disinclined to give rein to feelings of what might have happened, nevertheless there are times in life when events that might have happened have a decisive influence upon the soul. If you were to observe your dream-life more closely, or the strange moments of transition from waking life to sleep or from sleep to waking life, if you were to observe with greater exactitude certain dreams which are often quite inexplicable, in which certain things that happen to you appear in a dream-picture or vision, you would find that these inexplicable pictures indicate something that might have happened and was prevented only because other conditions, or hindrances, intervened. A person who through meditation or some other means makes his thinking more mobile, will have moments in his waking life during which he will feel that he is living in a world of possibilities; this may not be in the form of definite ideas but of

feelings. If he develops such feelings he is preparing himself to receive from the spiritual world impressions from human beings who were connected with him in the physical world. Such influences then manifest as genuine dream-experiences which have meaning and point to some reality in the spiritual world. In teaching us that in the life between birth and death karma holds sway, Anthroposophy makes it quite clear that wherever we are placed in life we are faced perpetually with an infinite number of possibilities. One of these possibilities is selected in accordance with the law of karma; the others remain in the background, surrounding us like a cosmic aura. The more deeply we believe in karma, the more firmly we shall also believe in the existence of this cosmic aura which surrounds us and is produced by forces which converge but have been displaced in a certain way, so that they do not manifest on the physical plane.

If we allow our hearts and minds to be influenced by Anthroposophy, this will be a means of educating humanity to be receptive to impressions

coming from the spiritual world. If, therefore, Anthroposophy succeeds in making a real effect upon culture, upon spiritual life, influences will not only rise up from physical life into the spiritual world but the experiences undergone by the dead during their life between death and the new birth will flow back. Thus here again the gulf between the physical and the spiritual worlds will be bridged. The consequence will be a tremendous widening of human life and we shall see the purpose of Anthroposophy fulfilled in the creation of an actual link between the two worlds, not merely a theoretical conception of the existence of a spiritual world. It is essential to realise that Anthroposophy fulfils its task in the real sense only when it permeates the souls of men as a living force and when by its means we not only comprehend something intellectually but our whole attitude and relationship to the world around us is changed.

Because of the preconceptions current in our times, man's thinking is far too materialistic, even if he often believes in the existence of a spiritual

world. Hence it is extremely difficult for him in the present age to picture the right relationship between soul and body. The habits of thought peculiar to the times tend to make him picture the life of soul as being connected too closely with the bodily constitution. An analogy may be the only means of helping to clarify what must be understood here.

If we examine a watch we see that it consists of wheels and other little metal parts. But do we look at our watch in the course of everyday life in order to study the works or the interplay of the wheels? No, we look at our watch in order to find out the time; but time has nothing whatever to do with any of the metal parts or wheels. We look at the watch and do not trouble about what there is to be seen inside the watch itself. Or let us take another example. When somebody speaks of telegraphing today he has the electric apparatus in mind. But even before electric telegraphy was invented, telegraphing went on. Provided the right signs, etc. are known it would be possible for people to speak from one town to another without any electric

telegraph — and perhaps the process would not be very much slower. Suppose, for instance, pillars or poles were erected along the highway between Berlin and Paris and a man posted on the top of each pole to pass on the appropriate signs. If that were done quickly enough there would be no difference between this method and what is done by means of the electric telegraph. Certainly the latter is the simpler and much quicker method but the actual process of telegraphing has as little to do with the mechanism of the electric telegraph as time has to do with the works in a watch.

Now the human soul has just as much and just as little to do with the processes of the human body as the communication from Berlin to Paris has to do with the mechanism of the electric telegraph. It is only when we think in this way that we can have a true conception of the independence of the soul. For it would be perfectly possible for this human soul with all its content to make use of a differently formed body, just as the message from Berlin to Paris could be sent by means other than the electric telegraph. The electric telegraph

merely happens to be the most convenient way of sending messages, given the conditions of our present existence, and in the same sense the body with its possibility of movement and the head above provides the most convenient means, in the conditions of our existence on Earth, for the soul to express itself. But it is simply not the case that the body as such has anything more directly to do with the life of the soul than the electric telegraph with its mechanism has directly to do with the transmission of a communication from Berlin to Paris, or a watch with time. It would be possible to devise an instrument quite different from our watches for measuring time. Similarly it is possible to conceive of a body — quite different from the one we use in the conditions prevailing on Earth — that would enable the soul to express itself.

How are we to picture the relation of the human soul to the body? A saying of Schiller, applied to man, is particularly relevant here: “If you are seeking for the highest and the best, the plant can teach it to you.” We look at the plant which

spreads out its leaves and opens its blossoms during the day and draws them in when the light fades. That which streams to the plant from the sun and the stars has been withdrawn. But it is what comes from the sun that enables the leaves to open again and the blossom to unfold. Out yonder in cosmic space, therefore, are the forces which cause the organs of the plant to fold up limply when they withdraw or unfold when they are active. What is brought about in the plant by cosmic forces is brought about in the human being by his own Ego and astral body. When does a human being allow his limbs to relax and his eyelids to close like the plant when it draws in its leaves and blossoms? When his Ego and astral body leave his bodily organism. What the sun does to the plant, the Ego and astral body do to the organs of the human being. Hence we can say: the plant's body must turn to the sun as man's body must turn to the Ego and astral body and we must think of these members of his being as having the same effect upon him as the sun has upon the plant.

Even externally considered, will it still surprise you to know what occult investigation reveals, namely that the Ego and astral body originate from the cosmic sphere to which the sun belongs and do not belong to the Earth at all? Nor will you be surprised, after what has been said in previous lectures, to realise that when human beings leave the Earth, either in sleep or at death, they pass into the conditions prevailing in the Cosmos. The plant is still dependent upon the sun and the forces operating in space. The Ego and the astral body of man have made themselves independent of the forces in space and go their own way. A plant is bound to sleep when the sunlight withdraws; in respect of his Ego and astral body, however, man is independent of the sun and planets which are his real home, and for this reason he is able to sleep by day, even when the sun is shining. In his Ego and astral body man has emancipated himself from that with which he is really united — namely the forces of the sun and stars. Therefore it is not grotesque to say that what remains of man on the Earth and in its elements after death belongs to the Earth and to its forces; but the Ego and astral body

belong to the forces of the Cosmos. After the death of the human being Ego and astral body return to those cosmic forces and pass through the life between death and rebirth within their spheres. During the period on Earth between birth and death, while the soul is living in a physical body, the life of soul which strictly belongs to the sun and the stars has no more to do with this physical body than time as such — which is in reality conditioned by the solar and stellar constellations — has to do with the watch and its mechanism of wheels. It is quite conceivable that if, instead of living on the Earth, we were born on some other planet, our soul would be adapted to a quite different planetary existence. The particular formation of our eyes and ears is not attributable to the soul but to the conditions prevailing on the Earth. All we do is to make use of these organs. If we make ourselves consciously aware of the fact that with our soul we belong to the world of the stars, we shall have taken a first step towards a real understanding of our relationships as human beings and our true human nature. This knowledge will help us to adopt the right attitude to our

conditions of existence here on Earth. To establish even this more or less external relationship to our physical body or etheric body will give us a sense of security. We shall realise that we are not merely beings of the Earth but belong to the whole Universe, to the Macrocosm, that we live within the Macrocosm. It is only because a man here on Earth is bound to his body that he is not conscious of his connection with the forces of the great Universe.

Wherever and whenever in the course of the ages a deepening of the spiritual life was achieved, efforts were made to bring this home to the souls of men. In point of fact it is only during the last four centuries that man has lost this consciousness of his connection with the spiritual forces weaving and holding sway in cosmic space. Think of what has always been emphasised: that Christ is the great Sun-Being who through the Mystery of Golgotha has united Himself with the Earth and its forces and has thus made it possible for man to take into himself the Christ-force on Earth; permeation with the Christ Impulse will include

the impulses of the Macrocosm and in every epoch of evolution it will be right to recognise in Christ the power that imparts feeling of kinship with the Macrocosm.

In the twelfth century a story, a splendid allegory, became current in the West. It was as follows: Once upon a time there was a girl who had several brothers, all of whom were as poor as church mice. One day the girl found a pearl, thereby becoming the possessor of great treasure. All the brothers were determined to share the wealth that had come her way. The first brother was a painter and he said to the girl: "I will paint for you the finest picture ever known if you will let me share your wealth." But the girl would have nothing to do with him and sent him away. The second brother was a musician. He promised the girl that he would compose the most beautiful piece of music if she would let him share her wealth. But she sent him away. The third brother was an apothecary and, as was customary in the Middle Ages, dealt chiefly in perfumes and other goods that were not remedial herbs but quite useful in

life! This brother promised to give the girl the most fragrant scent in the world if she would let him share her wealth. But she sent this brother away too. The fourth brother was a cook. He promised the girl that he would cook such good dishes for her that by eating them she would get a brain equal to that of Zeus and would be able to enjoy the very tastiest food. But she rejected him too. The fifth brother was an innkeeper (*Wirt*) and he promised to find the most desirable suitors for her if she would let him share her wealth. She rejected him too. Finally, or so the story tells, came one who was able to find his way to the girl's soul, and with him she shared her treasure, the pearl she had found.

The story is graphically told and it has been narrated in greater detail and even more beautifully by *Jakob Balde*, [Jakob Balde, born in Ensisheim, Upper Alsace, 4th January, 1604, died 9th August, 1668. Entered the Order of Jesuits in 1624. Was widely acclaimed during his life but after his death was neglected as a poet until the end of the eighteenth century. Herder translated

many of Balde's lyrics and brought his genius to the notice of scholars.] a lyric poet of the seventeenth century. There is also an exposition dating from the thirteenth century by the poet himself, so it cannot be called a mere interpretation. The poet says that he had wanted to portray the human being and the free will. The girl represents the human soul endowed with free will. The five brothers are the five senses: the painter is the sense of sight, the musician the sense of hearing, the apothecary the sense of smell, the cook the sense of taste, the innkeeper the sense of touch. The girl rejects them all, in order, so the story tells, to share her treasure of free will with the one with whom her soul has true affinity — with Christ. She rejects the attractions of the senses in order to receive that to which the Christ Impulse leads when it permeates the soul. The independence of the life of the soul — the soul that is born of the Spirit and has its home in the Spirit — is beautifully contrasted with what is born of the Earth, namely the senses and all that exists solely in order to provide a habitation — an earthly body — for the soul.

In order that a beginning may be made in the matter of showing that right thinking can lead beyond the things of everyday life, it will now be shown how reliable and well-founded are the findings of occult investigation when the investigator knows from his own direct vision of the spiritual world that the Ego and astral body of man belong to the world of the stars. When we consider how man is related to those members of his being which remain together during sleep, how this condition is independent of the world of the stars, as indicated by the fact that a man can also sleep in the daytime, and if we then make a comparison with the plant and the sunlight, we can be convinced of the validity of occult investigations. It is a matter of recognising the confirmations which can actually be found in the world. When someone asserts that the findings of occult research lack any real foundation, this is only a sign that he has not paid attention to everything that can be gathered from the external world and lead to knowledge. Admittedly this often calls for great energy and freedom from bias — qualities that are not always put into practice.

But it may well be insisted that someone who genuinely investigates the spiritual world and then passes on the results of his investigation to the world, passes it on, presumably, to sound judgement. Genuine occult research is not afraid of intelligent criticism; it objects only to superficial criticism which is not, properly speaking, criticism at all.

If you now recall how the whole course of the evolution of humanity has been described, from the Old Saturn period, through the periods of Old Sun and Old Moon up to our Earth period, you will remember that during the Old Moon period a separation took place; a second separation occurred again during the Earth period, one of the consequences being that the life of soul and the bodily life are more widely separated from each other than was the case during the Old Sun period. As a consequence of the separation of the Moon from the Sun already during the Old Moon period, man's soul became more independent. At that time, in certain intervals between incarnations, the element of soul forced its way out into the

Macrocosm and made itself independent. This brought about those conditions in the evolution of the Earth which resulted in the separation of the Sun from the Earth and later of the Moon, during the Lemurian epoch. As a consequence, a host of individual human souls, as described in detail in the book *Occult Science — an Outline*, [See PP. 177–9 in the translation by George and Mary Adams, *Rudolf Steiner Press*, 1963.] pressed outwards in order to undergo particular destinies while separated from the Earth, returning only at a later time. Now, however, it must be made clear that when a man has passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world which is his real home, he — or rather what remains of him — lives a life that is radically different from and fundamentally has very little relationship with the former earthly body.

In the next lecture we shall be able to learn what is necessary for more detailed knowledge of the life between death and the new birth.

LECTURE FOUR

In earlier lectures we have heard that the imperishable part of the human being which at death leaves the physical body and, to a considerable extent, the etheric body too, passes through a life between death and the new birth, and that during this period its forces are drawn from the world of the stars. We have also heard how the human being is able to draw these forces from the world of stars to the extent to which he developed moral and religious qualities during his life on Earth. It was said that, for example, from the region which receives forces radiated from the planet known in occult science as Mercury, a man will be able to draw the requisite forces if, during his life on Earth before death, he developed a genuinely moral disposition; from the Venus region he can draw the forces he needs for his

further life in the spiritual worlds, also for his subsequent life on Earth, if he developed a truly religious attitude before his death. To sum up, we may say that as long as a human being is making use of his senses, as long as he lets himself be guided and directed by the intellect that is bound to the brain as its instrument, he is connected with the forces of the Earth; in the life between death and a new birth he is connected with the forces radiating from the worlds of the stars. In man of the present age, however, there is a certain difference between his connection with the forces of the Earth during his physical life and his connection with the forces of the stars between death and the new birth. The forces which man draws into his consciousness during his earthly life, that is to say, the forces he experiences consciously during earthly life, contribute nothing essential to what he needs for the up-building and vitalising of his own being; for they give rise to catabolic processes, processes of destruction. Evidence for this is the simple fact that during sleep the human being has no consciousness. Why not? The reason is that he is not meant to witness

what happens to him during sleep. During sleep the forces used up during waking life are restored and man is not meant to witness this process, which is the antithesis of what is in operation during waking life and is concealed from human consciousness. The Bible uses profoundly significant words to express this fact. It is one of the passages in the Bible which, as is the case with all occult principles in religious records, is very little understood. In the story of the expulsion from Paradise it is said that the Divine Spirit resolved that when the human being had acquired certain characteristics, for instance, the faculty of distinguishing between good and evil, insight into the forces of *life* should be withheld from him. That is the passage in the Bible where it is announced that the human being was not to witness the revivification of his members either during sleep or during his entire existence on Earth. While man is awake the whole life-process is one of destruction, of wear and tear. During waking life nothing in man's being is restored. In the very earliest years of childhood, when any actual inflow of life can still be observed, the

child's consciousness is still dim and the whole restorative process is concealed from the human being in his later years. Evidence for this is the fact that he does not remember his earliest childhood. We can therefore say that the whole life-giving, restorative process is concealed from man's conscious life on Earth. Processes of perception, of cognition, lie within the field of his consciousness; the life-giving process does not.

This is different during the period of existence between death and the new birth. The purpose of the whole of that period is to draw into the being of man the forces which can build up and fashion the next life, to draw these forces from the world of the stars. But this process is not as things are on Earth, when man does not really know his own being. What, after all, does he know about the processes working in his organism? He knows nothing of them through direct perception and what is learnt from anatomy or biology conveys no real knowledge of his being but is something quite different. In the life between death and rebirth, however, a man beholds how forces from the

world of stars work upon his being, how they gradually rebuild it. From this you can gather how greatly perception between death and rebirth differs from perception on Earth. On Earth the human being stands at a particular point, directs his senses outwards and then his sight and hearing expand into space; from the centre where he is standing he faces the expanse of space. Exactly the opposite is the case during the life after death. There man feels as if his whole being were outspread and what he perceives is really the centre. He looks at a point. There comes a period between death and the new birth when the human being describes a circle which passes through the whole Zodiac. He looks out as it were from every point of the Zodiac, that is to say from different viewpoints, upon his own being, and he feels as if he were gathering from each particular section of the Zodiac the forces which he pours upon his being for the needs of the next incarnation. He looks from the circumference towards a centre. It is as if you could duplicate yourself, move around while leaving yourself at the centre, and could drink in the forces of the Universe, the life-giving

‘soma’ which, streaming as it does from different points of the Zodiac, assumes different characteristics as it pours into your being which you have left at the centre. Translated into terms of spiritual reality, this is actually how things are during the life between death and the new birth.

If we now think of the difference between a condition that is really very similar to life between death and rebirth, namely, the condition of sleep, this difference can be characterised very simply, although people who are not accustomed to these ideas will not be able to make much of it. Put simply, the condition of sleep can be characterised as follows.

When the human being sleeps during his earthly existence, that is to say when he has left his physical and etheric bodies and is living in his Ego and astral body which are then in the world of stars, he too is actually in that world. And it is a fact that our condition in sleep is objectively far more similar to the condition between death and rebirth than is usually imagined. Objectively, the two conditions are very similar. The only

difference is that during sleep in normal life the human being has no consciousness of the world in which he is living, whereas between death and the new birth he is conscious of what is happening to him. That is the essential difference. If the human being were to awake in his Ego and astral body when these members are outside his physical body during sleep he would be in the same condition as he is between death and the new birth. The difference is actually only a state of consciousness. This is a matter of importance because as long as the human being lives on Earth, therefore also during sleep, he is bound to his physical body. Nor does he become free from the physical body until it passes into the lifeless condition and undergoes a change at death. As long as the physical body remains alive, the union is maintained between the spiritual man, that is to say, Ego and astral body and the physical and etheric bodies.

Our conception of the state of sleep is, as a rule, too simple; and that is quite comprehensible because usually we describe things from one point of view only, whereas when a human being passes

into the higher worlds conditions are complicated. A complete picture becomes possible only as we progress patiently in Spiritual Science and learn to view things from all sides. We generally characterise the state of sleep — and rightly so — by saying that the physical and etheric bodies remain in the bed, while the Ego and astral body move outwards and unite with the forces of the stars. But correct as this is from one point of view, it nevertheless presents only one aspect of the matter, as we can realise if we consider from the standpoint of Spiritual Science the sleep that occurs at a more or less normal time. Objectively speaking, an afternoon nap is a quite different matter from ordinary sleep at night. What I have now said is concerned not so much with a man's ordinary state of health but rather with his whole relationship to the world. We will therefore not consider an afternoon nap but the sleep of a healthy human being, let us say at midnight, regarded from the standpoint of clairvoyant consciousness.

During the waking life of day there is a certain regulated connection between the four members of man's being: physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego. This connection can be indicated if I make sketches to show how the so-called aura of the human being appears to clairvoyant consciousness — but of course the sketches are only very rough.

The important point is that what may be called the auric picture of the Ego when a human being is asleep, actually becomes twofold. During the waking state the Ego-aura holds together in the form of an oval (A) but during sleep divides into two parts (B), one of which turns downwards as the result of a kind of gravity and spreads out below. This part of the Ego-aura appears to clairvoyance as a very dark area tinged with dark red shades. The other, upper part streams upwards from the head and then expands into the infinitudes of the world of stars. The Ego-aura is thus divided — in appearance at all events; we cannot, however, speak of an actual division of the astral aura.

This occult spectacle is a kind of pictorial expression of the fact that the human being; with the Ego-forces that permeate him in the waking condition, goes forth into cosmic space in order to be united with the world of stars and draw its forces into himself.

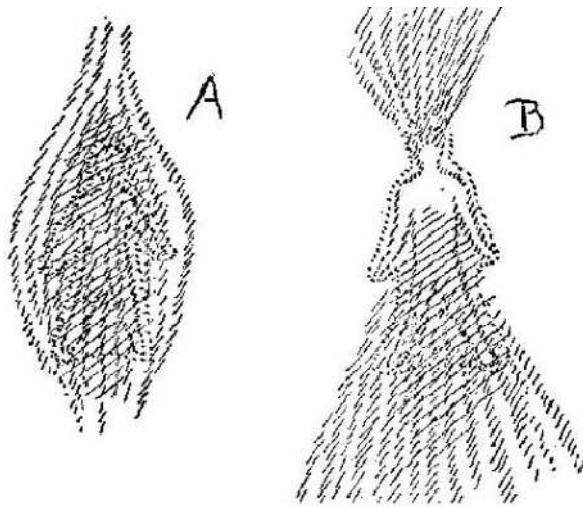


Diagram 1

(Note by translator. Dr. Steiner's drawings were probably made with coloured chalks which would have indicated the several members of man's being with greater clarity than is possible in the printed reproductions. Comments made in connection with

the drawings have been abbreviated as follows:

Figure A. Waking state. The physical body is indicated by the innermost darker dotted outline, the etheric body by the fainter dotted outline, the astral body by the sloping lines; the Ego-aura seems to envelop the human form.

Figure B. Indicates the difference in the auric picture while a human being is asleep. The upper part of the Ego-aura radiates outwards and upwards without defined limit, and the lower part radiates downwards without defined limit.)

Now that part of the Ego-aura which streams downwards and becomes dark and more or less opaque while the part streaming up wards is luminous and radiant — all this lower part is particularly exposed to the influence of Ahrimanic powers. The adjacent part of the astral aura is, on the other hand, particularly exposed to the Luciferic forces. The account that has been given — quite rightly from a certain standpoint — that the Ego and astral body leave the human being during sleep is, however, strictly true only as

regards the upper parts of the Ego-aura and astral aura. It is not correct as regards the parts of the Ego-aura and astral aura which correspond more to the lower areas of the human figure, particularly the lower parts of the trunk. Actually, during sleep, these parts of the astral aura and of the Ego-aura are more closely bound up with the physical and etheric bodies than is the case during the waking state, and below they are denser, more compact.

Now it is extremely important to know that in view of the evolution of our Earth and all the forces that have played their part in that evolution — which you will find described in the book *Occult Science — an Outline*, — it was ordained that man should not participate in this more lively activity of the lower aura during sleep, that is to say he was not to witness this activity. The reason for this was that the revitalising forces needed by man for the restoration of what has been used up during the waking hours, are kindled by the lower Ego-aura and lower astral aura. The vitalising forces must be drawn from these parts of the aura. That they work upwards and revitalise the whole

man depends upon the upper aura developing powers of attraction drawn from the world of stars; it can therefore attract the forces which rising from below, act restoratively. That is the objective process.

Understanding of this fact is the best equipment for understanding certain information available to one who studies ancient records or records based on occultism. You have always heard — and from a certain standpoint the statement is quite correct — that man leaves his physical and etheric bodies in the bed and goes forth with his astral body and Ego; this is absolutely correct as regard the upper parts of the Ego-aura and astral aura, especially of the Ego-aura. But if you study Eastern writings, you will find a statement that is exactly the opposite. It is stated there that during sleep what is otherwise present in man's consciousness penetrates more deeply into the body. This is the opposite description of sleep. And especially in certain Vedanta writings you will find it stated that the part of man of which we say that during sleep it leaves the physical and etheric bodies, sinks

more deeply into those bodies, and that what gives us the power of sight withdraws into deeper regions of the eye so that sight is no longer possible. Why is the process described in this way in Eastern writings? It is because the Oriental still has a different standpoint. With his kind of clairvoyance he pays more attention to what goes on *within* the human being; he pays less attention to the emergence of the upper aura and more to the permeation by the lower aura during sleep. Hence from his particular point of view he is right.

The processes which take place in the human being in the course of his evolution are very complicated and as evolution progresses it will become more and more possible for him to picture the whole range of these processes. But evolution consists in human beings having gradually acquired knowledge of particular processes, hence the differing statements in the different epochs. Although the statements seem to differ they are not for that reason false; they relate to the particular condition prevailing at the time. But the process of evolution as a whole becomes clear

only when all the various processes are taken into account.

We ourselves have now reached the point when it is possible to survey a certain definite portion of the process of evolution. There is a most significant difference in the whole attitude and disposition of man's soul when we observe its development during incarnations, let us say in the Egypto-Chaldean period, then in the Graeco-Roman period and then again in our own. Even externally it is not difficult to discover what the soul is experiencing. I think that even in this enlightened audience there will be quite a number of individuals who when they look at a star-strewn sky cannot locate the particular constellations or perceive how their positions change in the heavens during the night. Speaking generally it can be said that the number of individuals who are still well-informed about the starry sky will steadily decrease. There will even be people, among town-dwellers for example, whom one might ask in vain: Is there now Full Moon or New Moon? This does not in any way imply reproach, for it lies in

the natural course of development. What holds good for the soul now would have been utterly impossible during the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, particularly during its earlier periods. In those days men's insight into the heavens was very great. Our present age, however, has a definite advantage over the Egypto-Chaldean epoch, inasmuch as logical thinking — of which most people would be capable today if they were to make efforts — was quite beyond the men of that earlier epoch. They lived their lives and carried out their daily tasks more instinctively than we do today. It would be quite erroneous to imagine that when a building or, say, an aqueduct was to be constructed, engineers would sit in their offices and work out the project with the help of plans and the other methods employed nowadays. Engineers in those times no more worked from plans than the beaver does today when with such skill and accuracy he sets about building his den.

In those early times there was no logical, scientific thinking such as is general today; the activities of men during waking life were instinctive. They had

acquired their knowledge — and stupendous knowledge has been preserved from the Egypto-Chaldean epoch — in a quite different way. They knew about the secrets of the stars in the night, about the heavens, although they had no Astronomy of the kind that is available for men of the present age. They watched the spectacle presented by the stars in the heavens on successive nights and the whole power of the astral forces in space worked upon them, not merely the sensory impressions made by what they observed. For example, the passage of the Great Bear or of the Pleiades was an actual experience within them and the experience continued while they were asleep, for they were sensitive to the spiritual reality connected with the passage of a constellation such as the Great Bear across the heavens; together with the spectacle perceived by the senses they were inwardly aware of the living spiritual reality in cosmic space. Something came into their consciousness which ours today is quite unable to experience. Nowadays man has eyes only for the material picture of the stars in the sky. And being very clever he looks at a chart of the heavens into

which figures of animals are inscribed, and says: The ancients inscribed symbols here and there to represent their idea of the grouping of the stars, but we have now progressed sufficiently to be cognisant of the reality. A man of the modern age does not know that the ancients had actually seen what they inscribed into their charts; they drew something of which they had had direct vision. Some of them were more skilful draftsmen than others, but they drew what they had actually perceived. They did not, however, perceive in the way that is customary in physical life. When they experienced, for example, the passage of the Great Bear across the heavens at night they saw the physical stars implanted in a mighty spiritual Being whom they could actually perceive. But it would be childish to imagine that they saw an animal moving across the heavens in the way we should see a physical animal on the Earth. This experience of the passage of the constellation of the Pleiades, for example, across the heavens affected them intimately. They felt that the experience had an effect upon their astral bodies and caused changes there.

You can form an idea of this experience by picturing that there is a rose in front of you but you are not looking at it; you are merely holding it and what you experience is your own contact with it. You then form an idea of the rose. It was in this way that the ancients ‘contacted’ as it were with their astral bodies what they experienced about the constellation of the Great Bear; they ‘felt’ the astral reality and experienced their own contact with it. This brought about changes in their very being, changes which are still brought about today but are unnoticed.

Evolution leading into our modern scientific age with its power of rationalistic judgement consists in the fact that direct experience of spiritual processes has ceased and that we are left with the world of the senses and the brain-bound intellect. Thus when in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch men spoke of the spiritual Beings in space and drew figures of these Beings, inscribing physical stars as focal points, this was in keeping with the reality — which was an actual experience. Hence in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch men had a faculty of

perception far more in line with the life between death and rebirth than is our present physical consciousness. When it is realised how the astral body and the Ego experience what is happening in the heavens it is also obvious that we are then living outside our physical and etheric bodies and there is not the slightest reason for believing that a life in which such experiences occur is impossible when the physical and etheric bodies are actually laid aside (at death). Thus in the men of old it was a matter of direct knowledge that between death and the new birth they would experience the happenings in the world of stars. A man living in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch would have thought it ridiculous if anyone set out to prove to him the immortality of the soul. He would have said: 'But that needs no proof!' He would not even have understood what a proof is in our meaning of the word, for logical thinking did not yet exist. If he had learnt in an occult school what in the future would be meant by 'proof', he would still have insisted that it is unnecessary to prove the immortality of the soul, because in experiencing the nocturnal starry heavens one is already

experiencing something that is independent of the body. Immortality was thus an actual experience and the men of those times knew a great deal about what we today describe in connection with perception in the disembodied state.

And now, turning from the more remote worlds of stars to the planets, these men of old experienced the spiritual sphere that is connected, for instance, with Saturn. They were able to perceive — this is true especially of the earlier periods of the Egypto-Chaldean epoch — what remains of a human being during his life in the Saturn sphere between death and the new birth. People would have thought it very strange if it had been suggested to them that they should try to establish connection with Mars as is sometimes hinted at today, for they were quite conscious of being related to these worlds. If someone has knowledge of Saturn or Mars or other planetary sphere and can follow its functions in our planetary system, this leads to knowledge of the pre-earthly conditions of Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon described in the book *Occult Science — an Outline*. This was once

a matter of actual experience.

There would have been no need to lecture about it. All that was necessary would have been to make men conscious that it was simply a matter of inducing in those no longer capable of perceiving such things conditions which made perception possible. This could not otherwise have been achieved.

By the time of the Graeco-Latin epoch this state of things had already changed. Men had lost their sensitivity for everything I have been describing and *remembrance* of it alone remained. In the Graeco-Latin epoch, among the leading peoples, for example of Southern Europe, there was no longer any equal possibility of direct vision of the spiritual Beings of the heavens, but remembrance of that vision remained. Just as a man remembers today what he experienced yesterday, so did souls in the Graeco-Latin epoch still remember what they had experienced of the Universe in earlier incarnations. This radiated into the souls of men and was a living experience. *Plato* speaks of it as 'recollection', but men do not always call it so.

Progress in evolution consisted in the suppression of this direct experience and the development during the Graeco-Latin epoch of the faculty of judgement and the formation of concepts. Hence the earlier vision was bound to recede and could survive only as recollection, remembrance. This is exemplified most clearly of all in *Aristotle* who lived in the fourth century BC. and was the founder of logic, of the art of judgement; he himself was no longer able to perceive anything of the spiritual realities in the worlds of the stars, but in his writings he brings all the old theories back again. He does not speak of the physical heavenly bodies as we know them today but of the ‘Spirits of the Spheres’, of spiritual Beings. And a great many of his utterances were an enumeration of the individual planetary Spirits and of the fixed stars, finally leading to the one universal Godhead. The Spirits of the Spheres still play an important role in the works of Aristotle.

But even the remembrance in Graeco-Latin times of the Spiritual Beings in the Universe was gradually lost to humanity and it is interesting to

watch how the ancient knowledge disappears gradually as later epochs approach. The more spiritually minded among men still drew from their remembrance the consciousness that spiritual Beings are connected with all physical bodies existing in space — as Anthroposophy describes today. A great deal in this connection was presented magnificently by *Kepler*. But the nearer we come to modern times, the more does the possibility fade of even a remembrance of what the soul experienced in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch from contemplation of the heavens. As the age of Copernicanism approached even the remembrance that still survived in the Graeco-Latin epoch faded, and men had eyes only for the physical globes moving through space. Occasionally something plays into the consciousness of more modern men that there is still a possibility of gleaning from the constellations in the heavens genuine knowledge of spiritual events. Kepler, for example, set out independently to calculate from the stars the date of the birth of Jesus of Nazareth. Such a calculation was possible because Kepler's whole

being was still permeated through and through with spirituality. The same applies to his realisation that a certain constellation of stars in the year 1604 would be followed by further suppression of the ancient remembrances.

The nearer we come to the modern age the more is humanity dependent upon the physical senses and the brain-bound intellect, because what the souls of men experienced in ancient times has been thrust down into the deeper strata of consciousness. The souls of all of you once harboured the experiences known to men when they were still able to be aware of the spiritual life pervading cosmic spheres. This is everywhere present in the depths of your own souls. But it is not possible today to lead souls during the hours of darkness and guide their vision, let us say, to the constellation of the Great Bear and enable them to experience as realities the spiritual forces emanating from that group of stars. It is not possible because the powers of vision and perception lie in such depths of the soul. During sleep at night man experiences the heavens with

the radiating upper part of the aura but is not conscious of it. Hence for souls of the present age the right procedure is to raise into consciousness by valid methods the forgotten impressions received in olden times. And how is this done? As we do it in Anthroposophy! Nothing new is imposed upon souls but what they experienced in earlier epochs is drawn forth. What souls could no longer actually experience in the Graeco-Latin epoch but had not yet entirely forgotten — today it is entirely forgotten but can be drawn forth again. Anthroposophy is the stimulus for drawing forth the forces of knowledge which lie deep in the souls of men. All human beings who have partaken in evolution up to the time of Western culture have in the depths of their souls the conceptions which should be kindled to life through Anthroposophy; and the methods used in Anthroposophy are the stimuli for achieving this.

We will now consider the difference between these two attitudes to the world, between that of a human soul incarnated in the Graeco-Latin epoch and one incarnated today. We have heard that

during the Graeco-Latin epoch, in earthly life too, the soul had a certain connection with and capacity for perception of what is lived through in the period between death and the new birth. These experiences had not yet withdrawn into such deep strata of the soul. Hence in those very ancient times there was much less difference between men's consciousness on Earth and between death and rebirth than there is today. The ancient Greeks had some remembrance of what they had once experienced, but even so the difference was already great. Conditions today have reached the stage when between death and the new birth, consciousness can still be kindled in a human being in the Venus sphere if, on Earth, he has cultivated a moral and religious attitude of soul. But in and especially beyond the Sun sphere it is impossible for consciousness to be kindled if during his life on Earth a man has made no attempt to raise to the level of waking consciousness the concepts lying in the depths of the soul. Here, in earthly life, Anthroposophy seems to be a kind of theoretical world-conception which we master because it interests us. After death, however, it is a

torch which from a certain point of time onwards between death and rebirth illumines the spiritual world for us. If Anthroposophy is disdained here in the physical world, no torch is available in that other world and consciousness is dimmed. To pursue Spiritual Science is not merely a matter of imbibing so many theories; it is a living force, a torch which can illumine life. The contents of the spiritual teachings here on Earth are concepts and ideas; after death they are living forces! But this applies to consciousness only. It will be clear to you from what I said at the beginning of the lecture that already in earthly existence the spiritual ideas we acquire are life-giving forces. But a man cannot witness the outcome of these life-giving forces because knowledge of the powers from which they originate is withheld from him. After death, however, he actually beholds them. Here on Earth, Anthroposophy seems to be so much theory and the human being in his waking state has no consciousness of what is spiritually life-giving but nevertheless objectively present. After death man is a direct witness of how the forces he took into himself together with the

spiritual teachings received during his life on Earth have an organising, vitalising, strengthening effect upon what is within his being when he is preparing for a new incarnation.

In this way spiritual teaching actually becomes part of the evolution of humanity. But if this spiritual teaching were to be rejected — at the present time it suffices if only a few accept it but in the future more and more individuals must do so — then, as they return to incarnations on Earth, human beings will gradually find that they lack the life-giving forces they need. Decadence and atrophy would set in during the subsequent incarnation. Human beings would quickly wither, be prematurely wrinkled. Decadence of physical humanity would set in if the spiritual forces were not received. The forces that were once drawn by men from the worlds of stars must now be drawn from the depths of their own souls and used for furthering the evolution of humanity.

If you reflect about these matters you will be filled through and through with the thought that existence on Earth is of immense significance. It

was necessary that the human being should be so inwardly deepened by his union with the worlds of stars that the forces he had otherwise always drawn from those worlds would become the inmost forces of his soul and be drawn up again from its depths. But that can be done only on Earth. One could say: in primeval times the soma-juice rained down from the heavens into individual souls, was preserved there and must now be drawn forth again from those souls. In this way we acquire a conception of the mission of the Earth. And having presented this conception today we will proceed to study the life between death and the new birth in even greater detail.

LECTURE FIVE

I shall not be speaking today about the Christmas Festival as in previous years, for I propose to do that on Tuesday. I would ask you to think of what I shall say as a gift placed under the Christmas tree in the form of an anthroposophical Christmas study — a study which because of the significant knowledge it contains may well be the subject of lengthy reflection and meditation. At this Christmas season we may very properly think of an individual considered by many people to be a mythological or mystical figure but with whose name we ourselves connect the spiritual impulses of Western cultural life. I refer to *Christian Rosenkreutz*.

With this individuality and his activity since the thirteenth century we associate everything that has to do with the propagation of the impulse given by

Christ's appearance on the Earth and the fulfilment of the Mystery of Golgotha. On one occasion I also spoke of what may be called the last Initiation of Christian Rosenkreutz in the thirteenth century. Today I shall speak of a deed he performed towards the end of the sixteenth century. This deed is of particular significance because it linked with the Christ Impulse an achievement of supreme importance in the history of human evolution — an achievement before the time of the Mystery of Golgotha.

One of the innumerable factors which enable us to grasp the supreme significance of the Mystery of Golgotha in the history of mankind on Earth is the deed of Gautama Buddha, the founder of a different religion. Eastern tradition tells us that in the life usually spoken of as the Buddha life, Gautama Buddha rose in his twenty-ninth year from the rank of Bodhisattva to that of Buddhahood. We are aware of what that ascent means and also of the world-wide significance of the Sermon at Benares, the first great accomplishment of the Buddha who had

previously been a Bodhisattva. Of all this we are deeply conscious. Today we will think especially of one aspect only, namely, what it signifies in the history of worlds when a Bodhisattva rises to the rank of Buddhahood. The Eastern teaching — which does not differ from that of Western occultism in regard to this event — is that when a human being rises from the rank of Bodhisattva to that of Buddhahood, he need not henceforward incarnate on the Earth in a physical body but can continue his work in purely spiritual worlds. And so we recognise as a valid truth that the individuality who lived on Earth for the last time as Gautama Buddha has since then been present in lofty spiritual worlds continuing to influence evolution and sending impulses and forces from those spheres to further the development and stature of mankind.

We have also spoken of a significant deed of the Buddha, a deed that was his contribution to the Mystery of Golgotha. We have been reminded of the beautiful narrative in the Gospel of St. Luke concerning the shepherds who had gathered

together at the time of the birth of the Jesus Child described in that Gospel. [See the Lecture Course entitled *The Gospel of St. Luke*, given in Basle, 15th–26th September, 1909.] The narrative tells of a song which rang out from Angels and resounded in the devout, expectant souls of the shepherds. ‘Revelations shall tell of the Divine in the Heights and there shall be peace on Earth among men who are of good will.’ It is the song which tells of the revelation of the divine-spiritual forces in the spiritual worlds and the reflection of these forces in the hearts of men who are of good will. We have heard that the song of peace which then rang out was the contribution of the Buddha from spiritual heights to the Mystery of Golgotha. The Buddha united with the astral body of the Jesus Child of whom we are told in St. Luke's Gospel, and the song of Angels announced in that Gospel is to be understood as the influx of the gospel of Peace into the deed subsequently to be wrought by Christ Jesus. The Buddha spoke at the time of the birth of Jesus, and the song of Angels heard by the shepherds was the message from ancient, pre-Christian times, of peace and all-embracing human

love which were also to be integrated into the mission of Christ Jesus.

Thereafter the Buddha continued to be active in the advancing stream of Christian evolution in the West and special mention must be made of his further activity. The Buddha was no longer working in a human body but in the spiritual body in which he had revealed himself at the time of the birth of Jesus; and he continued to work, perceptible to those who through some form of Initiation are able to establish relationship not only with physical human beings but also with those sublime Leaders and Teachers who come to men in purely spiritual bodies.

A few centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha, in a Mystery school situated in the region of the Black Sea in the South of Russia, there were Teachers of great significance. What actually took place there can be no more than indicated — and even then half metaphorically. Among the Teachers present in the School in physical incarnations there was one who did not work in a physical body and could therefore be contacted only by pupils and

neophytes able to establish relations with Leaders and Teachers who appeared in this Mystery Centre in spiritual bodies. One such Teacher was the Being spoken of as Gautama Buddha. And in the seventh/eighth century after the Mystery of Golgotha this Being had a notable pupil. At that time the Buddha, in his true nature, was in no way concerned with propagating Buddhism in its old form, for he too had advanced with evolution. He had taken the Christ Impulse into the very depths of his being, had actually co-operated in its inception. What had still to be transmitted of the old form of Buddhism came to expression in the general tone and character of what the Buddha imparted in the Mystery Centre referred to above; but everything was clothed in a Christian form. It may truly be said that when the Buddha had become a Being who need no longer incarnate in a human body, he had co-operated from the spiritual world in the development of Christianity. A faithful pupil of his had absorbed into the depths of his soul the teaching which the Buddha gave at that time but which could not become the common possession of all mankind. It was teaching which

represented a union of Buddhism and Christianity. It implied absolute surrender to what is supersensible in human nature, the abandonment of any direct bond with the physical and earthly, complete dedication in heart and soul, not merely in mind and intellect, to what is of the nature of soul-and-spirit in the world; it meant withdrawal from all the externalities of life and absolute devotion in the inner life to the mysteries of the Spirit. And when that being who had been a pupil of the Buddha and Christ, who had learnt of the Christ through the Buddha, appeared again on Earth, he was incarnated as the person known in history as *Francis of Assisi*. Those who desire to understand from occult knowledge the absolutely unique quality of soul and manner of life of Francis of Assisi, especially what is so impressive about him because of its remoteness from the world and everyday experience — let them realise that in his previous incarnation he was a Christian pupil in the Mystery Centre of which I have spoken.

In this way the Buddha continued to work, invisibly and supersensibly, in the stream that had become part of the process of evolution since the Mystery of Golgotha took place. The figure of Francis of Assisi is a clear indication of what the effect of the Buddha's activity would have been in all subsequent times if nothing else had happened and he had continued to work as he had done while preparing Francis of Assisi for his mission in the world. Numbers and numbers of human beings would have developed the character and disposition of Francis of Assisi. They would have become, within Christianity, disciples and followers of Buddha. But this Buddha-like quality in those who became followers of Francis of Assisi would have been quite unable to cope with the demands that would be made of humanity in modern civilisation.

Let us remind ourselves of what has been said about the passage of the human soul through the various regions of the Cosmos between death and the new birth. We have heard how during that period of existence the soul of a man has to pass

through the planetary spheres, to traverse the expanse of cosmic space. Between death and the new birth we actually become inhabitants, in succession, of Moon, Mercury, Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn. We then draw our life together again in order to incarnate through a parental pair and undergo the experiences that are possible on Earth but not in other planetary spheres. Since the last death, every soul incarnated on the Earth has undergone the experiences that belong to the heavens. Through birth we bring into our existence on Earth the forces we have acquired in the various heavenly spheres.

Now let us remind ourselves of how life flows by on Earth, how at each new incarnation the human being finds that the Earth has changed and that his experiences are quite different. In the course of his incarnations an individual will have lived in pre-Christian times and have been incarnated again after the impulse of the Mystery of Golgotha had been given to evolution. Let us picture with the greatest possible clarity how the Earth evolves, descending from divine-spiritual heights to a

certain nadir. The impulse of the Mystery of Golgotha then made an ascent possible in the evolutionary process. The ascent is at present only beginning, but it will continue if human souls receive the impulse of this Mystery and so, later on, rise again to the stage they had reached before the temptation of Lucifer. Let us realise that, in accordance with the fundamental laws of evolution, whenever we return to the Earth through birth we find quite different conditions of existence.

The same applies to the heavenly spheres into which we pass between death and a new birth. Like our Earth, these heavenly bodies also pass through descending and ascending phases of evolution. Whenever we pass into a planetary sphere after death — let us say of Mars, or Venus, or Mercury — we enter different conditions and have different experiences receive different impulses, which we bring back again into physical existence through birth. And because the heavenly bodies are also undergoing evolution, our souls bring back different forces into each incarnation.

Today, because of the profound significance of the Christmas Festival, our thoughts are directed to the spiritual realities of cosmic space itself and we will consider a particular example of evolution. This example is revealed to occult investigation if that investigation is able to penetrate deeply enough into the spiritual nature of other planets and planetary systems as well as into that of the Earth. In the spiritual life of the Earth there was a descending phase of evolution until the time of the Mystery of Golgotha and thereafter a phase of ascent — now latent for the sole reason that a deeper understanding of the Christ Impulse is necessary. Similarly, there were phases of descent and ascent in the evolution of Mars, into whose sphere we pass between death and rebirth. Until the fifteenth/sixteenth century the evolution of Mars was such that what had always been bestowed upon it from the spiritual worlds was undergoing a phase of descent, just as was the case in the evolution of the Earth until the beginning of the Christian era. By the time of the fifteenth/sixteenth century it was necessary that the evolution of Mars should become a process of

ascent, for the consequences of the phase of descent had become all too evident in that sphere. As already said, when we pass again into earthly existence through birth we bring with us the impulses and forces gathered from the worlds of stars, among them the forces of Mars. The example of a certain individuality is clear evidence of the change that had come about in the forces brought by human beings from Mars to the Earth.

It is known to all occultists that the same soul which appeared on Earth in *Nicolas Copernicus*, [Born 1473, died 1543.] the inaugurator of the dawn of the modern age, had been previously incarnated from 1401 to 1464 in *Cardinal Nicolas of Kues, Nicolas Cusanus*. But how utterly different were these two personalities who harboured the same soul within them! Nicolas of Cusa in the fifteenth century was dedicated in mind and heart to the spiritual worlds; all his study was rooted in the spiritual worlds, and when he appeared again as Copernicus he was responsible for the great transformation which could have been achieved only by eliminating from the

conception of space and the planetary system every iota of spirituality and thinking only of the external movements and interrelationships of the heavenly bodies. How was it possible that the same soul which had been on the Earth in Nicolas of Cusa and was wholly dedicated to the spiritual worlds, could appear in the next incarnation in an individual who conceived of the heavenly bodies purely in terms of their mathematical, spatial and geometric aspects? This was possible because a soul who passed through the Mars sphere during the interval between the time of Nicolas of Cusa and that of Copernicus had entered into a phase of decline. It was therefore not possible to bring from the Mars sphere any forces that would have inspired souls during physical life to soar into the spiritual worlds. The souls who passed through the Mars sphere at that particular time could grasp only the physical and material nature of things. If these conditions on Mars had continued without change, if the phase of decline had been prolonged, souls would have brought with them from the Mars sphere forces that would have rendered them incapable of anything except a

purely materialistic conception of the world. Nevertheless the results of the decline of Mars were responsible for bringing modern natural science into existence; these forces poured with such strength into the souls of men that they led to triumph after triumph in the domain of materialistic knowledge of the world; and in the further course of evolution this influence would have worked exclusively for the promotion of materialistic science, for the interests of trade and industry only, of external forms of culture on the Earth.

It would have been possible for a class of human beings to be formed entirely under the influence of certain old Mars forces and interested in external culture only; these human beings would have confronted another class of individuals, composed of followers of Francis of Assisi, in other words, of Buddhism transported into Christianity. A Being such as the Buddha, having continued to work until the time of Francis of Assisi as previously indicated, would have been able to produce on the Earth a counterweight to the purely materialistic

conception of the world by pouring strong forces into the souls of men. But this would have led to the formation of a class of individuals capable only of leading a monastic life patterned on that of Francis of Assisi; and these individuals alone would have been able to scale the heights of spiritual life.

If this state of things had remained, humanity would have divided more and more sharply into two classes: the one composed of those who were devoted entirely to the interests of material existence on the Earth and the advancement of external culture, and the other class, due to the continuing influence of Buddha, would have consisted of those who fostered and preserved spiritual culture. But the souls belonging to the latter class would, like Francis of Assisi, have been incapable of participating in external, material forms of civilisation. These two categories of human beings would have become more and more sharply separated. As the inevitability of this state of things could be prophetically foreseen, it became the task of the individual whom we revere

under the name of *Christian Rosenkreutz* to prevent such a separation taking place in the further evolution of mankind on the Earth. Christian Rosenkreutz felt it to be his mission to offer to every human soul, living no matter where, the possibility of rising to the heights of spiritual life. It has always been emphasised among us and is clearly set forth in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds. How is it Achieved?* that our goal in the sphere of occult development in the West is not to rise into

spiritual worlds as the result of ascetic isolation from life but to make it possible for every human soul to discover for itself the path into the spiritual world. That the ascent into spiritual worlds should be compatible with every status in life, that humanity should not divide into two categories, one composed of people devoted entirely to external, industrial and commercial interests, becoming increasingly ingenious, materialised and animalised, whereas those in the other category would hold themselves aloof in a life patterned on that of Francis of Assisi — all this was the concern

of Christian Rosenkreutz at the time when the approaching modern age was to inaugurate the epoch of materialistic culture during which all souls would bring with them the Mars forces in their state of decline. And because there could not be within the souls of men the power to prevent the separation, it has to be ensured that from the Mars forces themselves there would come to man the impulse to work with his whole being for spiritual aims. For example, it was necessary that human beings should be educated to think in terms of sound natural scientific principles, to formulate ideas and concepts in line with those principles, but at the same time the soul must have the capacity to deepen and develop the ideas spiritually, in order that the way can be found from a natural scientific view of the world to lofty heights of spiritual life.

This possibility had to be created! And it was created by Christian Rosenkreutz, who towards the end of the sixteenth century gathered around him his faithful followers from all over the Earth, enabling them to participate in what takes place

outwardly in space from one heavenly body to another but is prepared in the sacred Mystery Centres, where aims are pursued leading beyond those of planetary spiritual life to the spiritual life of cosmic worlds. Christian Rosenkreutz gathered around him those who had also been with him at the time of his Initiation in the thirteenth century. Among them was one who for long years had been his pupil and friend, who had at one time been incarnated on the Earth but now no longer needed to appear in a physical incarnation: this was Gautama Buddha, now a spiritual Being after having risen to the rank of Buddhahood. He was the pupil of Christian Rosenkreutz. And in order that what could be achieved through the Buddha should become part of the mission of Christian Rosenkreutz at that time, a joint deed resulted in the transference of the Buddha from a sphere of earthly activity to one of cosmic activity. The impulse given by Christian Rosenkreutz made this possible. We will speak on another occasion in greater detail of the relationship between Gautama Buddha and Christian Rosenkreutz; at the moment it is simply a matter of stating that this relationship

led to the individuality of the Buddha ceasing to work in the sphere of the Earth as he had formerly worked in the Mystery Centre near the Black Sea, and transferring his activity to Mars. And so at the beginning of the seventeenth century there took place in the evolution of Mars something similar to what had come about at the beginning of the ascending phase of Earth evolution through the Mystery of Golgotha. What may be called the advent of the Buddha on Mars was brought about through Christian Rosenkretz and the ascending phase of Mars evolution began from then onwards just as on Earth the ascending phase of culture began with the Mystery of Golgotha.

Thus the Buddha became a Redeemer and Saviour for Mars as Christ Jesus had become for the Earth. The Buddha had been prepared for this by his teaching of Nirvana, lack of satisfaction with earthly existence, liberation from physical incarnation. This teaching had been prepared in a sphere outside the Earth but with the Earth's goal in view. If we can look into the soul of the Buddha and grasp the import of the Sermon at Benares we

shall witness the preparation of activity that was not to be confined to the Earth. And then we shall realise how infinitely wise was the contract between Christian Rosenkreutz and the Buddha, as the result of which, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Buddha relinquished his activity on the Earth through which he would have been able, from the spiritual world, to influence human souls between birth and death, in order henceforward to work in the Mars sphere for souls between death and rebirth.

This is the momentous outcome of what might be called the transference of the essence of the Christmas Festival from the Earth to Mars. As a result, all the souls of men, in a certain sense, pass through a phase of being followers of Francis of Assisi and thereby, indirectly, of the Buddha. But they do not pass through this phase on the Earth; they pass through their monasticism — to use a paradoxical expression — their adherence to Francis of Assisi, on Mars, and bring forces from there to the Earth. As a result, what they have thus acquired remains in the shape of forces slumbering

in their souls and they need not adopt a strictly monastic life in order to undergo the experiences undergone by intimate pupils of Francis of Assisi. This necessity was avoided by the transference of the Buddha to cosmic worlds by agreement with Christian Rosenkreutz whose, work on Earth now continued without the collaboration of the Buddha. If the Buddha had continued his activity on the Earth, all that he could have achieved would have been to make men into Buddhist or Franciscan monks and the other souls would have been abandoned to materialistic civilisation. But because what may be called a kind of 'Mystery of Golgotha' for Mars took place, during a period when human souls are not incarnated on Earth, these souls absorb, in a sphere outside the Earth, what they need for their further terrestrial existence, namely, an element of true Buddhism, which in the epoch after Christ's coming can be acquired only between death and a new birth.

We are now at the threshold of a great mystery, a mystery which has brought an impulse still operating in the evolution of mankind. Those who

genuinely understand this evolution know that any truly effective influence in life on the Earth inevitably becomes part of the general stream of evolution. The event that may be called the Mystery of Golgotha on Mars was different from the Mystery of Golgotha on Earth — less powerful, less incisive, not culminating in death. But you can have some idea of it if you reflect that the Being who was the greatest Prince of Peace and Love, who was the Bringer of Compassion to the Earth, was transferred to Mars in order to work at the head of the evolution of that planet. It is no mythological fable that Mars received its name because it is the planet where the forces are involved in most bitter strife. The mission of the Buddha entailed his crucifixion in the arena of the planet where the most belligerent forces are present, although these forces are essentially of the nature of soul-and-spirit.

Here, then, we face a deed of a Being whose destiny it was as a great servant of Christ Jesus, to receive and carry forward the Christ Impulse in the right way. We stand face to face with the mystery

of Christian Rosenkreutz, recognising his wisdom to have been so great that, as far as lay within his power, he incorporated into the evolution of mankind as a whole the other impulses that had been decisive factors in preparation for the Mystery of Golgotha.

A subject such as this cannot be grasped merely in terms of words or intellect; in its depth and range it must be *felt* — with the whole heart and soul. We must grasp what it signifies to be aware that among the forces we bring with us in the present epoch when we pass into incarnation on the Earth there are also the forces of the Buddha. Those forces were transferred to a sphere through which we pass between death and the new birth in order to enter in the right way into earthly life; for in this earthly life between birth and death it is our task to establish the right relationship to the Christ Impulse, to the Mystery of Golgotha. And this is possible only if all the impulses work together in harmony. The Christ descended from other worlds and united with the Earth's evolution. His purpose is to give to men the greatest of all impulses with

which the human soul can be endowed. But this is possible only if all the forces connected with the evolution of humanity take effect at the right point in the process of that evolution. The great Teacher of the doctrine of Nirvana, who exhorted men to liberate their souls from the urge for reincarnation, was not destined to work in the sphere of physical incarnation. But in accordance with the great Plan designed by the Gods — in which, however, men must participate because they are servants of the Gods — in accordance with this Plan, the work of that great Teacher was to continue in the life that lies in the realm beyond birth and death.

Try to feel the inner justification of this conception and in its light follow the course of evolution; then you will realise why the Buddha had necessarily to precede Christ Jesus, and how he worked after the Christ Impulse had been given. Think about this and you will understand in its true light the phase of evolution and of spiritual life which began in the seventeenth century and in which you yourselves are living; you will understand it because you will realise that before human souls

pass into physical existence through birth they are imbued with the forces that bear them forward.

At the time of an important Festival, instead of a seasonal lecture I wanted to lay under the Christmas tree, as a kind of Christmas gift, certain information about Christian Rosenkreutz. Perhaps some or even many of you will receive it as was intended — as a means of strengthening the heart and the forces of the soul. We shall need this strengthening if we are to live with inner security amid the harmonies and disharmonies of existence.

If at Christmastide we can be strengthened and invigorated by consciousness of our connection with the forces of the great Universe, we may well take with us from this centre of anthroposophical work something that was laid as a gift under the Christmas tree and as an encouragement can remain a living force throughout the year if we nurture it during our life from one Christmas season to the next.

LECTURE SIX

We have already considered certain aspects of man's life between death and rebirth, and a short time ago an account was given of the relationship between *Christian Rosenkreutz* and *Buddha*. This was done because since the time indicated then, the Buddha has been connected with the planetary sphere of Mars and because the human being, after experiencing the Christ Event in the Sun sphere between death and rebirth, passes into the Mars sphere and there undergoes an experience connected with Buddha in the form that is right for the present age, though not, of course, for the age when the individuality of whom we are now thinking lived on the Earth as Gautama Buddha. Genuine enlightenment about the being of man and his connection with the evolution of worlds is possible only if our understanding keeps abreast of that evolution.

We know that in the post-Atlantean era there have so far been five main consecutive epochs during which the human soul has undergone significant experiences. These epochs are: the ancient Indian, the ancient Persian, the Egypto-Chaldean, the Graeco-Latin, and our own. We also know that in each such epoch the next is prepared — as it were in germ. In our present epoch the sixth post-Atlantean period is already slowly being prepared in the souls of men. The preparation consists in human souls being helped to understand what is now spreading in the world in the form of occult teachings, of Spiritual Science. In this way not only will a knowledge of the being of man that is necessary for the future be promulgated but there will also be an ever deepening understanding of the Christ Impulse. Everything that contributes to this increasing understanding of the Christ Impulse is comprised for the West in what may be called the Mystery of the Holy Grail. This Mystery is also closely connected with matters such as the one spoken of recently, namely, the mission for Mars being delegated by Christian Rosenkretz to Buddha. This Mystery of the Holy Grail can

impart to men of the modern age knowledge that will help them to understand the life between death and rebirth in the way that is right for our time. This understanding depends upon resolute efforts to answer a question of vital importance, and unless we try to carry this question to greater depths than has hitherto been possible, we shall be unable to make further progress in our studies of man's life between death and the new birth. The question is this: Why was it that even in areas where Christianity was proclaimed in its deeper aspect, certain teachings were left in the background — teachings that must be introduced today into the presentation of Christianity in its more advanced form?

You are aware that everything connected with the subject of reincarnation and karma was left in the background not only in the outer, exoteric presentations of Christianity but also in the more esoteric expositions of past centuries. And many people who hear about the content of anthroposophical views, ask: How comes it that although Rosicrucianism must, we are told, be

included in everything that occultism has to give — how comes it that hitherto, indeed until our own time, Rosicrucianism did not contain the teachings of reincarnation and karma? Why had these teachings now to be added to Rosicrucianism?

To understand this we must again consider man's relationship to the world. The prelude to the advanced study we hope to reach in these lectures is already to be found in the book *Occult Science — an Outline*. But we must now consider closely how man is related to the world in our own main epoch, in the epoch that was preceded by the planetary stages of Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon.

We know that the human being on Earth consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body and the 'I' or Ego, together with everything that belongs to these members. We know, too, that when an individual passes through the gate of death he leaves behind him, first of all, his physical body; then, after a certain time, most of the etheric body dissolves into the cosmic ether and only a kind of

extract of it remains with him. The astral body accompanies him for a considerable time but again a kind of sheath of that body is cast off when the Kamaloka period is over. After that the extracts of the etheric and astral bodies are subject to the further transformation undergone by the human being between death and rebirth. In the innermost sphere the human 'I' remains unchanged. Whether the human being is passing through the period between birth and death in the physical body, through the period of Kamaloka when he is still completely enveloped by the astral body, or through the period of Devachan which lasts for the greater part of the time between death and rebirth — it is the 'I' or Ego which, basically speaking, passes through all these periods. But this 'I', the real, true 'I', must not be confused with the 'I' which the human being on Earth recognises as his own. Philosophers have a good deal to say about this 'I' of man in the physical body, which they think they understand. They say, for instance, that the 'I' is the principle that remains intact although everything else in the human being changes. The true 'I' does indeed remain but whether this can be

said of the 'I' of which the philosophers speak is another matter altogether. Anyone who insists on referring to the persistence of that 'I' of which the philosophers speak is refuted by the simple fact that during the night the human being sleeps, for then the 'I' of the philosophers is extinguished, is simply not there. And if during the whole period between death and rebirth conditions were the same as they are during sleep at night, to speak of the permanence of man's soul during that period would be meaningless. Fundamentally speaking, there would be no difference between the 'I' not being there at all or merely continuing to live knowing nothing of itself, as if it were something external. In the question of immortality it cannot be a matter of the 'I' simply being there, but it must also have some knowledge of itself. Thus the immortality of the 'I' of which human consciousness is first aware is refuted by every sleep at night, for then this 'I' is simply extinguished. The real, true 'I' lies much deeper, much, much deeper! How can we form an idea of this real 'I', even if we cannot yet claim to have any knowledge of occultism?

We can form a valid idea if we say to ourselves: the 'I' must be present in the human being even when he cannot yet say 'I', when he is still crawling on the floor. The real 'I' — not the 'I' of which the philosophers speak — is already present and manifests itself in a very striking way.

Our observation of the human being during the first months or even first years of his life will seem to external science to be quite without significance. But for one who is intent upon acquiring knowledge of the nature of man, this observation is of supreme importance.

To begin with, the human being crawls about on all fours and very special effort is required on his part to lift himself out of this crawling position, out of this subjection to gravity, into the vertical position and maintain this. That is one thing. The second is the following: We know that in the first period of his life the human being is not yet able to speak and has to learn how to do so. Try to remember how you first learnt to speak, how you learnt to utter the first word of which you were capable and to formulate the first sentence. Try to

remember this, although without clairvoyance you will be as little able to remember it as you can remember how you made the first effort to lift yourself from the crawling into the vertical position. And a third capacity is thinking. Remembrance does indeed go back to the time when you were first able to think, but not before that time.

Who, then, is the actor in this process of learning to walk, to speak and to think? The actor is the real, true 'I'! Now let us observe what this real 'I' does.

Man was ordained from the very beginning to walk upright, to speak and to think. But he is not at once capable of this. He is not immediately the being he is intended to become as a man of the Earth. He does not at once possess the capacities that enable him to participate in the evolving culture of mankind; he has to acquire these capacities gradually. In the earliest period of his life there is a conflict between the spirit living within him when he stands permanently upright and the spirit living within him while he is still

under the sway of gravity and crawls on all fours, while his faculties of speaking and thinking are still undeveloped. When the human being reaches the level ordained for him, when he can stand upright, walk, speak and think, he is an expression of the form proper to mankind. There is, in fact, a natural correspondence between the true form of man and the faculties of standing and walking upright, speaking and thinking. It is impossible to conceive of any other being who can walk as man does, that is to say with a vertical spine, and who can speak and think. Even a parrot is able to talk only because its form is upright. The fact that it is able to talk is connected fundamentally with the vertical position. Animals with an intelligence much greater than that of a parrot will never learn to talk because their backbone is horizontal, not vertical. Other factors too, of course, play their part. The human being is not at once able to adopt the posture ultimately ordained for him. The reason for this is that after the exertions made by his real 'I' or Ego which have enabled him to think, to speak and adopt the upright posture, the human being is ultimately embedded, as it were, in

the spheres of the Spirits of Form, the Exusiai. These Spirits of Form, known in the Bible as the Elohim, are the Beings from whom the human form actually stems; it is the form in which the human 'I' has its natural habitation and asserts itself during the first months and years of life.

But there is opposition from other Spirits who cast man down to a level below that of these Spirits of Form. To what category do these other Spirits belong?

The Spirits of Form are the Beings who enable man to learn to speak, to think and to walk upright. The Spirits who cast him down, causing him to move about on all fours and to be incapable in his earliest years of speaking and thinking in the real sense, are Spirits whom he has to overcome in the course of his life, who give him, to begin with, a perverted form. These Spirits ought really to have become Dynamis, Spirits of Movement, but fell behind in their evolution and have still not reached the level of the Spirits of Form. They are Luciferic Spirits who have come to a standstill in their evolution, who work upon man from outside,

consigning him to the sway of gravity out of which he must lift himself with the help of the true Spirits of Form.

Observing how a human being comes into existence through birth, in the efforts he makes to acquire capacities which he will need later on in life, we can perceive the true Spirits of Form battling with those other Spirits who ought already to have become Spirits of Movement but have remained at an earlier stage. We see the Spirits of Form battling with Luciferic Spirits who in this sphere are so strong and forceful that they suppress the consciousness belonging to the Ego. Otherwise, if Luciferic Spirits did not suppress this consciousness, the human being at this stage of his life would realise: You are a warrior; you are aware of your horizontal position and consciously desire to stand upright, to learn to speak and to think! All this is beyond his power because he is enveloped by the Luciferic Spirits. There we have a dim inkling of what we shall gradually come to recognise as the true 'I', in contrast to an 'I' which merely appears in the field of our consciousness.

At the beginning of this series of lectures it was said that we should endeavour to vindicate to healthy human reason what occultism and seership have to say about the nature of man. But this healthy human reason must be willing to recognise how during the earliest periods of his life the human being is only gradually finding his bearings in the physical world. Which part of him is most completely formed? His stature as a whole is still not particularly noticeable because there is inconsistency between the human being himself and his outer form. By his own efforts he has to make his way into the form destined for him. Which part of him is most completely finished — not only after but also before birth? The head! The head is the most fully developed of all the physical organs, even in the embryo. Why is this? The reason is that the Beings of the higher Hierarchies, the Spirits of Form, pervade and weave through all the organs of the human being quite differently in each case — the head in one way, the trunk to which the legs and arms are attached, in another. There is an essential difference between the head and the rest of man's physical body. If we observe

the human head with clairvoyance a remarkable difference is revealed between the head and, for example, the hand. When we move a hand, the physical hand and the etheric hand move together. But when a certain stage in the development of clairvoyance has been reached, the clairvoyant can hold the physical hands still and move the etheric hands only. To hold mobile parts of the body still and move only the corresponding etheric parts is a specially important exercise. If this is achieved, the clairvoyance of the future will develop to further and further stages, whereas to indulge in any way in unconscious, convulsive movements is a resurgence of Dervish practices which are already obsolete. Repose of the physical body is the requirement of modern clairvoyance; convulsive movements of every kind were characteristic of epochs now past. It would be a very noteworthy achievement if a clairvoyant were, for example, to hold his hands quite still in a certain position — perhaps crossed over the breast — and yet maintain complete mobility of the etheric hands. He would be keeping his physical hands still while engaging in all kinds of

supersensible activities with the etheric hands. This would be an indication of very marked development, coming to expression in conscious control of the hands.

Now there is one organ in man in which, even if he is not clairvoyant, the etheric part moves freely while the corresponding physical part remains immobile. This organ is the brain around which the cosmic Powers have placed the hard skull; the lobes of the brain would certainly like to move but they cannot. Thus the brain of an average human being is permanently in the condition of a clairvoyant who while he holds his physical hands still, moves the etheric hands only. The brain is seen by a clairvoyant to be something that comes out of the head like writhing snakes. Every head is, in fact, a Medusa head. This is a very real phenomenon. The essential difference between the human head and the rest of the body is that in respect of the rest of the body the human being will need to undergo a lengthy process of evolution to achieve what has already been achieved by the head in the way of ordinary

thinking. In a certain respect the strength of thinking lies in the ability of the human being, while he is thinking, to bring the brain to rest even down to the finer, invisible movements of the nerves. The more thoroughly he can keep the brain at rest while he is thinking, including the more delicate movements of the nerves, the subtler, more deliberate and more logical his thoughts will be.

So we can say that when the human being passes into physical existence through birth, it is his head that is the most perfect because in the head there has already been achieved what in the case of the hands — the part of the human being which expresses itself through gestures — can be achieved only in the future. In the evolutionary period of Old Moon the brain was still at the stage of the hands at the present time. On the Old Moon the head was still exposed in several places and not yet enclosed by the skull. Whereas it is now fixed and static in a kind of prison, it could then expand outwards on all sides. All this applies, of course, to the conditions of existence in the Old

Moon epoch, when man was still living in the fluid or watery element that had not yet condensed to the solid state. [See *Occult Science — an Outline*, pp. 137–161 in the Rudolf Steiner Press 1963 edition. The section on the Old Moon period of evolution is included in Chapter IV.] Even in a certain period of the ancient Lemurian epoch, when man had reached the stage of evolution recapitulating the Old Moon period — even then it was still the case that at the top of the brain there appeared not only the organ we have often mentioned, but a kind of efflux of thoughts. A formation like a fiery cloud was still to be seen over the head of man even as late as the Atlantean epoch. Without super-normal clairvoyance, simply with the clairvoyant faculty possessed by every single human being at that time, an Atlantean could see whether a man was or was not a thinker in the sense of that ancient epoch. Over the head of a man who was a thinker there was a luminous, fiery cloud but no such phenomenon was present in the case of one who was not.

These are matters of which we must have knowledge if we are to understand the transformation that takes place in man's nature when, after living in a physical body, he dies and passes into the other period of existence between death and the new birth. All the forces that have been at work to enable a human being to come into existence disappear when he is already in the physical world; but they become all-important when he has laid aside his physical body. During his life between birth and death man is quite unaware of the forces which moulded the physical brain. But everything of which he *is* aware between birth and death vanishes and is of no significance when he passes through the gate of death. He lives then within the forces of which he is unconscious during his physical life on Earth. Whereas during this physical life he experiences his 'I' as pictured during the waking state, in the period between death and the new birth he experiences that higher 'I' of which we can have a dim inkling when we contemplate how a human being learns to walk, to speak and to think. While a man is on Earth he is unaware of this 'I'; it does

not penetrate into his consciousness. What thus remains entirely concealed we can follow back as far as birth and before birth, even still further back, when we contemplate the life that takes its course after death. That which is most completely hidden because it has built up the human being and vanishes while he is living on Earth is most fully in evidence when he is no longer on Earth, namely during the period of his existence after death. The forces of which we can have a faint inkling only, the forces which, working from within, enable the human being to walk, which launch the sounds of speech, which make him into a thinker and mould the brain into becoming the organ of thinking — these are the forces of supreme importance during man's existence between death and the new birth. It is then that his true 'I' comes to life. Of this we will speak in the next lecture.

LECTURE SEVEN

During this Winter we have prepared the ground in various ways in order to understand with greater exactitude than has hitherto been possible man's life between birth and death in the physical world on the one side and on the other between death and rebirth in the spiritual world. And there will be still more to say about this subject in the coming months.

Efforts will be needed to draw together a number of details that will contribute towards a thorough understanding of this subject and throw new light upon many topics we have already studied from a different point of view. Today, then, I will ask you to think, above all, of the course of man's physical life — about which something has also been said in my book *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* — and of how it

progresses in cycles: one from birth until about the seventh year, or until the change of teeth; a second cycle from the change of teeth until puberty at about the fourteenth year; then a third cycle, and so on in periods of seven years. Even to ordinary observation it will be clear that this systematic arrangement into periods of seven years is well founded, but on the other hand it will also be evident that in the actual life of the human being other facts of incisive significance cut across these seven-year periods. We ourselves have repeatedly considered a crucial occurrence in a man's life which eludes this division into cyclic periods. It is the point of time back to which a man's memory extends in later life, the moment when he begins to feel and know himself as an 'I', when Ego-consciousness dawns in him. This experience does not by any means occur at exactly the same point of time, but in most cases it may be said that Ego-consciousness flashes up in the human being at some point between birth and the seventh year. And something similar can be said to hold good in the later period of a man's life. Although with less abruptness than the sudden flashing-up of Ego-

consciousness, there are other occurrences which as it were invalidate the regular seven-year cycle. We shall, however, always discover that whatever comes in this way into the life of man and cuts across the cyclic periods, occurs much more irregularly than the experiences connected with the actual seven-year cycles. You will hardly find two human beings whose memories go back to exactly the same point of time, that is to say who experienced the flashing up of consciousness of 'I' at the same age. Nor does the change of teeth occur at precisely the same age in different individuals. But why this is so in the latter case, we shall still have to consider.

When we study the cyclic periods already referred to and mentioned in my little book, *Education of the Child*, we shall notice that they begin in connection with the most physical, the most external member of man's being and are then concerned with the other, more inward members of his constitution. From birth until the seventh year development is connected primarily with the physical body, then for seven years with the

etheric body, then for seven years with the astral body, the sentient soul, and so on. The evolutionary factors pass over more and more decisively from the external to the inner nature of man. That is essentially characteristic of the seven-year periods.

What, then, is there to be said about occurrences which cut across these seven-year periods? The flashing-up of 'I'-consciousness during the first cycle is an emphatically inner event. For the sake of clarity, here let us consider something that seems to be in contrast with this flashing-up of Ego-consciousness. If we observe human life with discernment we shall find that the cessation of growth may be compared with some happening which cuts across the seven-year cycles of evolution. We will therefore think about the cessation of growth which after all occurs comparatively late in life, and study its implications.

The first seven-year period ends with the change of teeth. The appearance of the second teeth is, as it were, the final act of what may be called the

formative principle. The last contribution made by the forces that give the human being his form is when they drive out the second teeth. That is the culmination of the formative process, for the principle which builds up the human form is no longer in action. With the seventh year the formative principle ceases to be active. What comes about later on is only an expansion of what has already been established as form. After the seventh year there is no more remodelling of the brain. All that happens is growth of what is already established as basic form. Therefore we can say that the principle of form unfolds its activity specifically in the first seven years of the life of a human being. The principle of form stems from the Spirits of Form; thus these Spirits of Form are active in the human being during the first seven years of his life. It can therefore be said that when the human being enters into life through birth, his actual form is not complete. What happens is that the Spirits of Form continue their active intervention during the first seven years of life; the human being has then reached the point when his form merely needs to grow. The basis for the form

has been established by the seventh year, and the second teeth are what the formative principle still produces out of the human being. The formative principle has now come to its conclusion. Were its activity to continue, the second teeth would inevitably make their appearance later than is now the case.

Here we may ask: When these Spirits of Form have worked on the human being until the seventh year of his life, does everything they do for him come to an end?

The answer is 'No', for the human being goes on growing and the basic principles of his form develop still further. If nothing else intervened, growth would be able to continue without interruption. If we think only of the principles of form that are active in the human being until the seventh year there is no more reason in the case of man than in that of other beings why these forms should not continue to grow if nothing were to intervene. But something does intervene. When the human being stops growing, certain principles of form still have an effect upon him. They have

already been drawing near to him but now they unite in the fullest sense with his organism, lay hold of it, but in such a way that they now act as a hindrance, and further growth is prevented. The formative principles that are active until the seventh year of life allow the human being a certain elasticity. But at that point other formative principles approach him; their nature is such that they capture and confine what is elastic in the demarcated form, thus preventing any further growth. That is why growth stops at some point. When growth stops, this means that formative forces approaching from outside are at work. Whenever formative principles are active, whenever forms grow larger, provision must be made for the stoppage of growth by the appearance of counter-formative principles which oppose the first category as its polar antithesis. When man's form has developed until about the seventh year of life (indicated in the shaded portion of the diagram) this form can continue to grow.

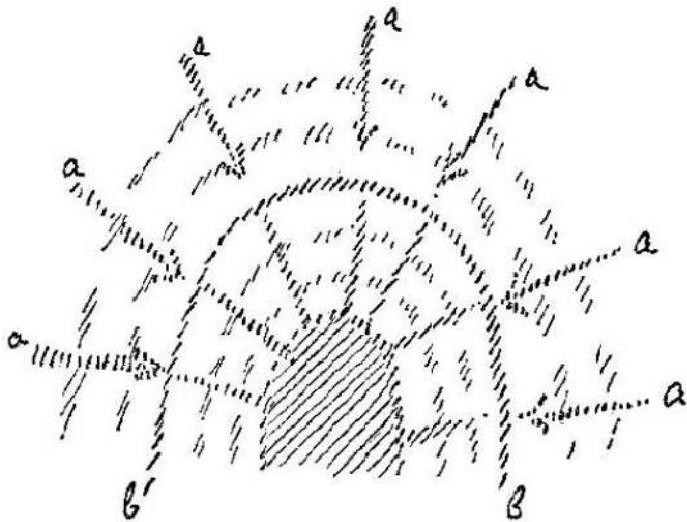


Diagram 2

The formative principles have been at work until the seventh year; these principles work from within. Then different formative principles work in opposition from outside, so that the human being can grow only to the limit indicated by the line b—b. It is really as if until the seventh year of his life the human being were given an elastic garment which he can constantly stretch and enlarge. But at a specific point of time he is given one that is not elastic; he is obliged to put it on, and thenceforth cannot grow beyond its limits.

We can therefore say that in the human being a confrontation takes place between two kinds of formative principles, one working from within and the other from without. The formative principles belonging to the first category come from the Spirits of Form, from those Spirits of Form who have passed through a perfectly normal process of evolution in the Cosmos. The formative principles working from without are not of the same kind. They come from Spirits of Form whose development has been retarded and who have acquired a Luciferic character. They are the factor which works in the purely spiritual domain, whereas the forces working in the material sphere have had a normal development; having evolved through the stages of Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon, they then pass to the Earth in the regular way and shape the human form from within. The 'irregular' Spirits of Form take what is presented to them and hold back its further development. Thus the process of growth in the human being is brought to a halt by these backward Spirits of Form. The Beings of the higher Hierarchies have the most varied tasks, among them the one that has

been characterised today.

We have now been able to consider many different aspects of the work of the ‘regular’ Hierarchies and also of the work of the backward spiritual Beings belonging to the different Hierarchies. In the book *Occult Science — an Outline* [See pp. 180 onwards in the Rudolf Steiner Press 1963 edition.] you can read how the human being reached the stage where through the Spirits of Form he could be endowed with the germinal foundation for the ‘I’, the Ego. We know that man received the germ of his physical body from the Thrones, of his etheric body from the Spirits of Wisdom, of his astral body from the Spirits of Movement, and the germinal foundation for the ‘I’ from the Spirits of Form. Bearing this in mind we can say that man, in his outer stature, has been organised by the regular Spirits of Form into an Ego-bearing being and that this comes into manifestation in the first seven-year cycle of his life. But then the backward Spirits of Form who are the opponents of the regular Spirits of Form, put a stop to his growth. This is actually the

antithesis of the first, most deeply inward experience in the human being, namely, the kindling of the consciousness of 'I' — the Ego. This happens in the early years of life, in the innermost realm of being. The outermost manifestation, the form, is checked at a later age, as a final act. Thus we perceive two evolutionary — but antithetical — processes in the human being. Of the one I have said that it comes from without and moves inward, taking hold of the sentient soul and so on, in the twenty-first year of life. Then there is another evolution proceeding from within outwards until the growth of the physical form is checked. The one evolution, the regular evolution, proceeds from the spiritual to the corporeal, from within outwards and is of interest especially for education. The other evolution — which is a much less regular and also more individual process — proceeds from without inwards and, when the human being has reached a certain age, it comes to expression in the completion of the outermost principle — the physical body.

It is very important that teachers should have knowledge of these two antithetical lines of evolution. Hence in the book *The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy* it was right to call attention to the first process of evolution which proceeds from within outwards, because it is only there that education is possible. On the other line of evolution — from without inwards — which is the line of individual development, it is impossible to make any actual impression. This is something of which account can be taken but which cannot be halted; neither can much be achieved in the way of education. And to be able to distinguish between where education is possible and where it is not, is of fundamental importance.

Just as the cessation of growth is caused by the backward Spirits of Form, the first actual manifestation of the 'I' in the human being during early childhood is the work of the backward Spirits of Will (Thrones). Between these two extremes there are other happenings which are to be attributed to backward Spirits of Wisdom and backward Spirits of Movement.

No adequate characterisation of man's life as a whole, including the existence between death and the new birth, is possible unless we take account of all the factors which have an effect upon him, and recognise that even in everyday life the influences of Luciferic beings take effect in many different ways. This influence is evident in other spheres as well. And as our endeavour in these lectures is to acquire a really fundamental understanding of man's life as a whole, we will not hesitate to think about matters which seem to be somewhat remote.

Attention shall first of all be drawn to a phenomenon from which it is evident that on the physical plane too, between birth and death, man's life has undergone essential changes in the course of evolution. If we realise this, it will, become evident that the life between death and rebirth has also changed. Those who think intellectually, but superficially, about life today may readily believe that, in essentials, things were always the same as they are at present. By no means was it so! And in certain cases we need go back only a few hundred

years to find that conditions were very different. Thus at the present time there is something that has a very great influence upon man's life of soul between birth and death but that simply did not exist in its present form only a few centuries ago. It is what we today mean by the expression 'public opinion'. Even as recently as the thirteenth century it would have been nonsense to speak of public opinion as we do today. A great deal is said nowadays against belief in authority, although in actual fact it exists in a much more oppressive form in our time than it did in these earlier, often despised centuries. In earlier centuries there were, of course, defects, but there was no blind belief in authority such as exists at present. This blindness of belief in authority is usually revealed by the fact that the authority in question cannot be specified. A person today will readily be floored when he is told that science has proved this or that. In earlier centuries, however, people attached more weight to authorities whom they encountered physically. Reference to an intangible 'something' is implied when it is said: 'There is scientific proof of it.' Such a saying urges belief in authority when

confronted with something incomprehensible. Such belief did not exist in earlier centuries. People belonging to our civilisation usually concern themselves very little with matters about which the simplest, most, primitive human being in earlier centuries endeavoured to have some knowledge — matters relating, for example, to health and illness. Why, it is asked today, should anyone need to know about health and illness? The doctors know about these matters and the problems concerned can be left to them. This is also an example of what comes into the category of intangible but sovereign authority. But countless other influences make their way into life; from earliest youth the human being becomes dependent upon them and his trends of judgement and feeling force themselves into our life! These living currents swirling around among human beings are usually referred to as ‘public opinion’ — and prompted the saying from philosophers: ‘Public opinions are mostly private errors.’ To realise this, however, is not as important as it is to be aware that public opinions exert tremendous power upon the life of an individual. It would be a complete

misconception of history to speak about the influence of public opinion upon the life of an individual living in the thirteenth century. In those days there were single personalities who admittedly exerted a great deal of authority either in affairs of Government or in practical life, and in these spheres it was obeyed. But at this time there was nothing resembling what impersonal public opinion has become today. Anyone who is unwilling to believe this on the basis of the occult facts should study the history of Florence during those centuries and in later times too — when the government of the city passed into the control of the Medici. The tremendous power of individual authorities will then be apparent, but there was no such thing as public opinion. It first arose in an epoch preceding our own by four or five centuries and one can speak of its actual beginning. Such things must be regarded as realities, for a world of swirling thoughts does indeed exist.

What is the origin of this public opinion which we often accept as something that cannot be verified? What *is* public opinion in reality? You may

remember that I have spoken of certain spiritual Beings belonging to the Hierarchy immediately above man — Beings who participate in various ways in the guidance and leadership of humanity. In my little book *The Spiritual Guidance of Man and Humanity*, you will find a great deal on the subject of spiritual Beings belonging to the higher Hierarchies. Now we know that the mightiest incision in the evolution of humanity was made by the Mystery of Golgotha. In that event there came to pass something that was most wonderfully expressed in the esoteric teaching of St. Paul. Paul spoke in simple language but the actual way in which he spoke was rooted in profound esotericism. It was not possible for him always to give out openly what he, as an Initiate, knew; for in the first place he wanted to speak to a wider circle of people and, secondly, it was not possible in his day to give out everything he knew in the way of which he would have been capable. Nevertheless his very presentation was based upon profound esoteric knowledge. We find, for example, that there is a deeply significant truth in the distinction he makes between the ‘first Adam’

and the 'higher Adam' — the Christ. According to Paul, the various generations of human beings are to be traced back to Adam, that is to say, the bodies of men descend from Adam. Hence it can be said that the physical increase of humanity over the Earth during the different periods, leads back finally to the physical body of Adam — Adam and Eve, naturally. We can then ask: What lies at the basis of the physical evolution of mankind from Adam onwards? Naturally, the evolution of souls! The physical bodies which have descended from Adam are the habitations of living souls. These souls had descended from cosmic worlds and had brought with them to the Earth a certain spiritual heritage, a spiritual endowment. But in the course of time this spiritual endowment had undergone decline. Individuals who lived, say, six or seven thousand years before the founding of Christianity had within them much stronger, more extensive spiritual forces than those who lived a mere thousand years before the Mystery of Golgotha. The spiritual heritage which once came to the Earth with human beings had gradually withered away in the soul. Now the life between death and

rebirth is of particular significance for this spiritual heritage. If we go back to the epoch long before the Mystery of Golgotha, we find that after death men had an active, inwardly illumined life of soul; but then this life of soul became dimmer and dimmer, darker and darker. An ever-fading life of soul came with human beings when they passed through death. This was particularly the case among the Greeks although they were the most advanced peoples then on the Earth, and their sages had every reason to say, in view of the stage reached in evolution: 'Better it is to be a beggar in the upper world than a king in the realm of the Shades.' We know that this saying was true when applied to the Greeks who lived a fully satisfying life on the physical plane; but as soon as they had passed through the gate of death their life became dim and shadowy.

In the fullest sense it is true that the spiritual life which men had brought with them to the Earth and which manifested after death as a somewhat dim clairvoyant consciousness, had become even dimmer. And especially in the fourth Atlantean

epoch, the Graeco-Latin epoch, during which the Mystery of Golgotha took place, the spiritual life had reached the stage of its greatest darkness.

The all-important purpose of the Baptism by John the Baptist was that some of those who sought to be baptised should be made conscious of the conditions just described. The individuals baptised by John were completely submerged in the water. As a result, the etheric body of these individuals was liberated from them and for a short time, while under the water, they became clairvoyant. John was able to reveal to them that there had been such deterioration in the life of soul in the course of time that a human being now possessed very little of the spiritual treasure that he had once been able to take with him through the gate of death and that could give him clairvoyant consciousness. A man whom John baptised in this way became aware that a revitalisation of the life of soul was essential, that something new must radiate into human souls in order that after death there might be a life in the real sense. This new impulse streamed into the souls of men through the

Mystery of Golgotha. You need only read my lecture-course entitled *From Jesus to Christ* and you will realise that a rich and abundant spiritual life streams from the Mystery of Golgotha into the souls of individuals who develop a relationship to that Mystery.

Hence Paul could say: just as the physical bodies of men descend from Adam, so will the content of their souls in greater and greater measure 'descend' from the Christ who is the second Adam, the spiritual Adam. It is a profound truth that Paul uttered here, clothed in his simple words. If the Mystery of Golgotha had not taken place, men would have become progressively empty in soul and would either have developed a longing only to live outside the physical body or to live on Earth with no other wishes or desires than for a purely physical life, and so would have become more and more materialistic. Because all development is a slow and gradual process there are still some peoples on the Earth who have not yet wholly lost the original spiritual treasure, who still retain some measure of it in spite of having failed to establish

any relationship to the Mystery of Golgotha. Individuals belonging to the most advanced peoples, however, can become conscious after death only to the extent to which they have learnt 'to die in Christ', as the second line of the Rosicrucian formula expresses it. And so in actual fact the Mystery of Golgotha has acted as illumination in men's souls.

With this clearly in mind we shall understand the gist of a question relating to man's evolution. It is the question: How came it that understanding of the Mystery of Golgotha enabled the content of man's soul to be carried into the sphere of his 'I', his Ego? How did this soul-content differ from what existed before the Mystery of Golgotha as an ancient heritage? The difference is that, before the Mystery of Golgotha, in respect of the content of their souls men were far less independent. They were under the direct guidance of the Beings we know as the *Angeloi*, *Archangeloi* and so on. Before the Mystery of Golgotha men were under the leadership of the Beings of the nearest higher Hierarchies to a far greater extent than was the

case after that event. Indeed the progress of these Beings themselves — Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai — consists in the fact that they have learnt to lead human beings in a way that respects their independence. Men were intended to live on the Earth in a state of greater and greater independence. The leading spiritual Beings of the higher Hierarchies have recognised this and therein consists their progress.

But it is possible for these Spirits too to remain behind in their evolution. Not all the Spirits who participated in the leadership of humanity have acquired through the Mystery of Golgotha the power to guide and lead men while ensuring their freedom. Among these Beings of the higher Hierarchies there are some who remained backward and have become Luciferic spirits. What we call ‘public opinion’ is an example of the way in which some of them are active. Public opinion is not created by human beings alone but also by a certain category of Luciferic spirits of the lowest rank — retarded Angeloi and Archangeloi. These spirits are only beginning their Luciferic career

and have not yet risen very high in the ranks of the Luciferic spirits, but they are definitely Luciferic in character. With the eye of seership one can perceive how certain spirits of the higher Hierarchies did not keep pace with evolution after the Mystery of Golgotha, how they adhere rigidly to the old kind of leadership and therefore cannot make any direct approach to men. Those who have kept pace with evolution can make regular and direct contact with men; the other spirits are incapable of this and they manifest their activity in the muddled, turbulent thinking that comes to expression as public opinion. The function of public opinion is intelligible only when it is realised that this is how it has made its way into human life.

Thus we have among us beings who abandon the regular course of evolution and become Luciferic in character. It is important that this should be known. The work of the Luciferic beings of whom we have already spoken and who now have great power, also began on a small scale. Indeed this is true in the case of the whole host of Luciferic

beings. Admittedly, on the Old Moon there was no public opinion as we know it but something that can be compared with it — a kind of guidance of men. Some among this host of Luciferic spirits of whom we have spoken are powerful and important beings, for example backward Spirits of Form who surge in upon the human being with such violence that they stop his growth. The others are merely the recruits; nevertheless this is the beginning of the career of the Luciferic spirits, a career which later on will assume a quite different dimension because the spirits become more and more powerful. Public opinion, which under the guidance and direction of certain Luciferic spirits of the lowest order, influences human beings because they absorb it between birth and death, must necessarily have its counterweight during the life between death and rebirth. That is to say, because a human being in his life between birth and death has been caught up into the current of public opinion described, he must experience the counterweight in his life between death and rebirth. Otherwise the following would ensue.

The backward spirits who are responsible for the creation of public opinion have no significance or power whatever in man's life between death and rebirth. They have relinquished all possibility of working in that sphere because they are active here, on the physical plane, in a spiritual way — indeed in a way that is only possible in the form of public opinion. A man can take no iota of anything like public opinion with him into the spiritual world and whatever element of it he might want to accompany him into the life after death would be entirely out of place. It must be said, although it will seem strange to many people, that life in Kamaloka becomes very difficult for one who clings to public opinion or has been caught in the coils of his own judgement very early in life. This applies particularly to persons who believe that within the world of public opinion there can still be independent judgement — which is an utter impossibility. For such people Kamaloka is admittedly difficult. But when the period of Kamaloka is over, public opinion has no weight or significance whatever, and after death it is irrelevant whether people adhered to nuances of it,

such as liberal or conservative, radical or reactionary. This has no significance whatever in the different groupings of human beings and moreover exists on Earth solely for the purpose of hindering men from making progress towards illumination of consciousness after death. The beings behind public opinion resolved to forgo the progress made possible by the Mystery of Golgotha. But the Mystery of Golgotha will become of greater and greater importance for the Earth's evolution. We must clearly understand that the future of the Earth's evolution cannot be assured simply by rectifying phenomena such as public opinion and the like which are inevitable in the course of evolution. Men can, however, become better in their own inner nature, therefore the process of evolution must take root more and more deeply in their inner life. In the future, men will be still more exposed to the pressure of public opinion, but inwardly they will have developed greater strength. This is possible only through Spiritual Science. But if man is gradually to become a match for those spirits who are now exerting their influence in public opinion as

recruits of the Luciferic beings, this will be possible only if, between death and rebirth too, he undergoes something that strengthens him inwardly, strengthens the principle in him that is *independent* of life on Earth. Whereas through the influence of public opinion he becomes more and more dependent upon earthly life, in the life between death and rebirth he must receive into his very self something that in the next life on Earth will make him ever freer from the influence of public opinion.

Connected with this is the fact that at the time when public opinion began to assume importance, the Buddha-realm was established in the Mars sphere — as we heard in the lecture at Christmas. Consequently between death and rebirth man passes through this Buddha-realm on Mars. *Christian Rosenkreutz* had entrusted to Buddha a special mission in the Mars sphere. And what would be futile on Earth, namely the desire to flee from the conditions of terrestrial existence — this is an experience which man must undergo between death and rebirth during his passage through the

Mars sphere. Among other things he strips off the incubus of public opinion which takes effect only on Earth. Many, even more overbearing influences will come in the future and it will be more than ever necessary to undergo the experience that is possible for man as a pupil of Buddha in the Mars sphere. Here on Earth, men can now be pupils of the Buddha in the orthodox sense only if they refuse to participate in the progress made by the most advanced people on Earth. But between death and rebirth Buddha unfolds what has developed from the teaching he gave on Earth, which was that man should free himself from the need for further incarnations. This has been developed into a doctrine that is inapplicable to the Earth, where life must progress from incarnation to incarnation. Thus the doctrine preached by Buddha on Earth contained the seed of what man must acquire in the disembodied state of existence. In this advanced form, Buddha's teaching is right for the period between death and rebirth. The Buddha himself appeared in the astral body of the Jesus-Child of St. Luke's Gospel [See the lecture-course, *The Gospel of St. Luke* given by Dr. Steiner

in Basle, September 1909, particularly lectures four to nine.] and Christ Himself leads men between death and rebirth through the Mars sphere, enabling them there to receive the Buddha's advanced teaching. Thus in the Mars sphere men can be emancipated from the tendency to uniformity resulting from the effects of public opinion which are detrimental for their further progress on Earth. Whereas in earlier times Mars was said to be the planet of warlike traits, it is now the Buddha's task gradually to transform these warlike traits in such a way that they become the foundation of the sense for freedom and independence needed in the present age. Whereas nowadays men have the tendency to surrender their sense of freedom and succumb to the fetters of public opinion, on Mars between death and rebirth they will strive to throw off these fetters and not bring them again into the life on Earth when they return to new incarnations.

It seems to me that here we have something that characterises most wonderfully how wisdom holds sway in the world, how everything that progresses

or remains backward is manipulated in such a way that the final outcome is harmony in the evolution of worlds. Man cannot achieve progress by keeping as it were to the middle line, although there are many who realise the uselessness of adopting a one-sided standpoint. Admittedly, we come across idealists, materialists and other ‘-ists’ who swear by their own standpoint, but truly great individuals such as *Goethe* do no such thing. They try to grasp material conditions by means of material thinking. When men of less eminence imagine that they have understood this, they say: truth lies in the middle, between two different standpoints. But that would be the same as if someone in practical life wanted to sit between two chairs! The truth cannot be found by a one-sided adoption of this or that standpoint but by applying the modes of knowledge appropriate either for materialism or idealism, The world does not progress by undeviating adherence to a middle course: a middle course is appropriate when the opposing sides are also present and are recognised as forces. If something has to be weighed, the two scalepans are needed as well as the beam. Thus

there must be a counterbalance to public opinion; and this is provided by Buddha's teaching in the Mars sphere — which would not be necessary if public opinion had never existed. Life needs antithesis; life progresses in and through polarity. Somebody might think that as the North and South Poles are antitheses, it would be better if neither existed! They are not, of course, antithetic in the sense implied by a certain Professor of whom it was said that because he had written his books in such haste he could not think about their contents and stated that civilisation could develop only in the middle zone of the Earth because at the North Pole people would freeze through cold and at the South Pole melt through heat! In another connection, of course, North and South Poles are genuine opposites and are necessary because progress is not achieved by adopting a neutral course but by the maintenance and harmonising of opposites. Thus what develops on Earth had to undergo a process that lies below the level of progress. Public opinion is of less value than the judgements which an individual can reach on a path of progress. Public opinion is sub-human and

it is this sub-human influence that is counteracted by the Buddha-stream through which man passes between death and rebirth. Both influences are necessary and it is extremely important to bear this in mind in connection with evolution.

It can therefore be said with truth: yes, there are indeed backward spirits, but everything that remains behind on the one side and on the other outstrips the evolutionary process, is manipulated by the wisdom of the Universe in such a way that harmony is the final result. The backward spirits are utilised to constitute the opposite pole to the spirits who have progressed to further stages.

If we look at life in this way it will be clear to us that in the future course of Earth evolution the human being will bring into life more and more qualities which will have greater weight and influence than the purely physical qualities. And it will be increasingly apparent that qualities other than the purely physical will have to be taken into account. Physical qualities will be evident, which — although they become manifest only gradually — can be traced back to infancy; but there will be

other qualities to which this does not apply and which show themselves in a marked form only comparatively late in life. A characteristic feature of evolution in the future will be the existence of an increasing number of individuals about whom it will inevitably be asked: What can have happened to that individual at a certain age in his life? He has completely changed; it is as though he has become a different being! Qualities that were completely absent in earlier life, that appear only when a certain age has been reached, will reveal themselves. This will happen in the case of souls who are the most highly developed and in whom a certain break in their life becomes evident. For the fact that an individual was a pupil of Buddha in the life between death and rebirth reveals itself only at a certain age. This would apply to persons of whom it can be said: Up to a particular point in their lives their individual qualities were in evidence; but then entirely new trends appeared and they were able to understand matters altogether different from those for which they had previously shown understanding. These will be individuals who in the future will be the vehicles

of true spiritual progress although they may simply be regarded as late developers, manifesting these qualities only late in life. In truth, however, the reason why these individuals display these qualities only in later life is that in previous incarnations on the Earth they had established the causes which enabled them to experience the spiritual life in the Mars sphere with particular intensity and so to acquire qualities which enabled them to bring a new impulse into the evolution of humanity. True spiritual culture will more and more be in the hands of individuals of this kind, who in their youth showed little aptitude for the spiritual standpoint they adopt in later life.

We now see that this is the reason why a certain fact has always been stressed in the Rosicrucian line of thought of which we ourselves have heard in the past, although it could not then be substantiated because our studies were not as advanced as they now are. Representatives of the Rosicrucian principle of Initiation in the West have always emphasised that it is impossible to discover in their childhood those who are to become

leading figures, because these are individuals who give evidence of that fundamental change in later life of which I have spoken. When a seer speaks of Buddha today, he knows that Buddha has faithfully adhered to what his teaching promised; he has continued to work for that in human nature which has no direct urge for physical embodiment and therefore does not appear at the beginning of life in a physical body but only when the physical body has undergone a certain development, when a certain stage towards spirituality has been reached. Then, at a later stage of life the gift of the Buddha to man becomes an effective influence.

All this must be borne in mind if we are to understand the whole process of man's development. What it signifies for each individual in his life between birth and death — of this we shall hear later.

LECTURE EIGHT

When with the normal perception belonging to outer existence we study human life in its relation to life in the rest of the Universe, we are observing only the smallest part of world-existence that is connected with man himself. In other words, what a man can observe if he is not prepared to penetrate behind the mysteries of existence, can throw no real light upon his essential nature and being. For when we look around us with the ordinary organs of perception, with the organ of thinking, we have before us only that which does not in any way contain the deepest and most significant secrets of existence. This fact will strike us most strongly of all if we succeed in developing, even to a comparatively small extent, the capacity to view life and the world from the other side, namely, from the side of sleep. What

can be seen during sleep is for the most part concealed from man's present faculty of perception. As soon as a person goes to sleep, from then until the moment of waking he really sees nothing at all. But if and when in the course of development the time comes when observation is also possible during sleep, most of what a man sees to begin with is connected with him as a human being but remains entirely hidden from ordinary observation. It is easy to understand why this is so, for the brain is an instrument of judgement, of thinking. Hence we must use or at least activate the brain when in everyday life we want to think or form judgements, but for that very reason we cannot see it. After all, the eye cannot see itself while it is actually observing something, and the same holds good of the whole organism. We bear it about with us but we cannot observe it in the real sense, we cannot penetrate it to any depth. We direct our gaze out into the world but in modern life we cannot direct this gaze into our own being.

Now the greatest mysteries of existence are not to be found in the outside world but within man himself. Let us recall what we know from Spiritual Science, namely that the three kingdoms of nature around us owe their existence to a certain retardation in evolution. Mineral kingdom, plant kingdom, animal kingdom are, fundamentally speaking, entities attributable to the fact that something remained backward in the evolutionary process. Normal progress in evolution has in point of fact been made only by beings who have reached the stage of human existence during the Earth period. When a man looks at the mineral, plant or animal kingdoms, he is really observing in the world that which amounts in his own existence to what he 'remembers', to the content of his memory of his actual experiences; he is in fact contemplating what has taken place in the past and still enjoys a certain existence. But he is not experiencing the living, invisible soul-life of the immediate present when he concerns himself only with his memory. The memory with all its mental pictures represents something that has been deposited in our living soul-existence, is fixed

there. All this is, of course, to be taken metaphorically, but the memories embedded in the soul are not the direct, basic elements of its life. The same applies to the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms in outer nature. The thoughts conceived by divine-spiritual Beings in the past live on in these kingdoms and they continue into present existence, just as our memory-pictures continue into our present life of soul. Hence we have in the world around us, not the thoughts of the immediately present, living, divine-spiritual Beings but the memory-pictures, the preserved thoughts of the Gods.

As to the content of our memory, this may well be of interest because with our memory we grasp a tiny corner of world-creation, we grasp what has passed over from creation into existence. Our memory-pictures are the first, the lowest, the most fugitive stage of created existence. But when we waken spiritually during sleep we see something quite different. We see nothing of what is outside in space, nothing of the processes manifesting in the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms or in the

external aspects of the human kingdom. But then we know that the essential realities which we are there beholding are the creative, life-giving principles working on man himself. It is actually as if everything else were blotted out and as if the Earth, observed from the viewpoint of sleep, contained nothing except Man. What would never be seen by day, in the waking state, is revealed when contemplated from the viewpoint of sleep. And it is then, for the first time, that knowledge dawns in us of the thoughts which the divine-spiritual Beings kept in reserve in order to work at the creation of man, at a level above that of mineral, plant and animal existence.

Whereas through physical perception of the world we see everything except the real being of man, through the spiritual perception exercised from the viewpoint of sleep, we see nothing except man — as a creation, together with happenings in the human kingdom — that is to say, from the viewpoint of sleep we see everything that is hidden from the ordinary perception of waking life. This accounts for the element of strangeness

that is present in our vision when we are contemplating the world from the viewpoint of sleep, in other words, when we become clairvoyant, having wakened spiritually during sleep.

Now the human body — and here I mean the physical and etheric bodies together — which lies in the bed during sleep, this human body itself has a singular appearance, a characteristic of which can be expressed in words somewhat as follows. Only in the very first years of a child's life does this human body as seen during sleep show a certain similarity with the weaving life and activity in the other kingdoms of nature. The body of a grown-up person, however, or of a child from a certain age onwards, when seen from the viewpoint of sleep, reveals a constant process of decay, of destruction. Every night during sleep the forces of destruction are ever and again subjugated by the forces of growth; what is destroyed by day is repaired during the night, but the forces of destruction are always in excess. And the consequence of this fact is that we die. The forces

that are renewed during the night are never the equal of those that have been used up during the waking life of day, so that in the normal life of the human being a certain surplus of destructive forces is always present. This surplus accumulates and the natural death of old age ensues when the destructive forces eclipse the upbuilding forces.

Thus when we observe the human being from the viewpoint of sleep we are actually witnessing a process of destruction — but without sadness. For the feelings we might have in our waking life about this process of destruction are absent when we see it from the viewpoint of sleep, because then we know that it is the precondition of man's true spiritual development. No being who did not destroy his body in some measure would be capable of thinking or of developing an inner life of soul. No life of soul as experienced by man would be possible if the process of growth were not opposed by processes of destruction. We therefore regard these processes of destruction in the human organism as the precondition of man's life of soul and feel the whole development to be

beneficial. Looked at from the other side of life, the fact that man's body can gradually be dissolved is felt to be a blessing. Not only do things look different when viewed from the other side of life but all our feelings and ideas are different; consciousness during sleep has always before it the spectacle of the body in decline — and rightly in decline.

Study of the life between death and rebirth, however, affords a different spectacle. A certain connection with the preceding life is experienced for a time after death. All of you are aware that this is the case during the period of Kamaloka; even after that period, however, the experience of connection with the previous life continues for a time. But then, at a certain point during the life between death and rebirth, a reversal of all ordinary vision and perception takes place, a reversal far more radical than takes place during sleep-consciousness. During existence on Earth we look out from our body into the world that is not our body; from the point of time to which I have just referred, between death and the new birth, we

direct hardly a gaze to the universe around us but look with all the great intensity at what may now be called the human body; we discern all its secrets. Thus between death and rebirth there comes a moment when we begin to take special interest in the human body. It is extremely difficult to describe these conditions and it can really only be done with halting words. There comes a time between death and the new birth when we feel as if the whole universe were within us and outside us only the human body. We feel that the stars and other heavenly worlds are within our being, just as here on Earth we feel that the stomach, the liver, the spleen, are within us. Everything that here, in life on Earth, is outside us becomes in that other life an inner world, and just as here we look outwards to the stars, clouds and so forth, in that other life we gaze at the human body. At which human body?

To understand this we must be clear that the new human being who at his next birth is to enter into existence, has for a long time previously been preparing his essential characteristics. Preparation

for a return to the Earth begins a long time before birth or conception. The conditions of central importance here are quite different from those accepted by modern statistical biology which assumes that when a human being comes into existence through birth he simply inherits certain traits from his father, mother, grandparents and the whole line of ancestors. Quite an otherwise attractive little book about Goethe has recently been published, in which his characteristic qualities are traced back to his ancestors. Outwardly speaking, that is absolutely correct in the sense I have often indicated, namely, that there is no contradiction between a scientific fact that is correctly presented and the facts brought forward by Spiritual Science. It is just as if someone were to say: Here is a man; how comes it that he is alive? It is because he has lungs inside him and there is air outside. Needless to say, that is quite correct. But someone else may turn up and say: This man is alive for an entirely different reason. A fortnight ago he fell into the water and I jumped in after him and pulled him out; but for that he would not be alive today! Both these assertions are

correct. In the same way, natural science is quite correct when it says that a man bears within himself characteristics inherited from his ancestors; but it is equally correct to attribute them to his karma and other factors. In principle, therefore, Spiritual Science cannot be intolerant; it is external natural science alone that can be intolerant, for example, in rejecting Spiritual Science. Someone may insist that he has preserved the characteristics of his own ancestors. But there is also the fact that from a certain point of time between death and rebirth a human being himself begins to develop forces which work down upon his ancestors. Long before an individual enters into physical existence there is a mysterious connection between himself and the whole line of his ancestors. And the reason why specific characteristics appear in a line of ancestors is that perhaps only after hundreds of years a particular individual is to be born from that ancestral line. This human being who is to be born, perhaps centuries later, from a line of ancestors, regulates their characteristics from the spiritual world. Thus Goethe — to take this example once again —

manifests the qualities of his ancestors because he worked continuously in the spiritual world with the aim of implanting into these ancestors qualities that were subsequently to be his. And what is true of Goethe is true of every human being.

From a specific point of time between death and rebirth, therefore, a human being is already concerned with the preparation of his later earthly existence. The physical body which a man has on Earth does not by any means derive in all details from the physical lives of his ancestors, nor indeed from processes that can operate on the Earth. The physical body we bear is in itself fourfold. It has evolved through the periods of Saturn, Sun, Moon and Earth. Its very first foundation was laid during the Old Saturn period; during the Old Sun period the etheric body was woven into this foundation; during the Old Moon period the astral body was added and then, during the Earth period, the Ego, the 'I'. As a result of these processes the physical body has undergone many changes. Thus we have within us the transformed Saturn foundation, the transformed Sun and Moon conditions. Our

physical human body is the product of transformed physical conditions. The only part of all this that is visible is what has come from the Earth; everything else is invisible. Man's physical body is visible because he takes in the substances of the Earth, transforms them into his blood and permeates them with something that is invisible. In reality we see only the blood and what has been transformed by the blood, that is to say, a quarter of the physical human body; the other three-quarters are invisible. In the first place there is an invisible framework containing invisible currents — all this exists in the form of forces. Within these invisible currents there are also the influences exercised by one current upon another. All this is invisible. And now this threefold entity is filled out, permeated by the foodstuffs that have been transformed into blood. It is through this process that the physical body becomes visible. And it is only when we come to deal with the laws governing this visible structure that we are in the earthly realm itself. Everything else stems from cosmic, not from earthly conditions and has already been prepared when, at the time of

conception, the first physical atom of the human being comes into existence. Thus what is later on to become the body of the human being has been prepared in past ages without any physical connection with the ultimate father and mother. It was then that the qualities transmitted by heredity were first worked into the process of development.

The human soul looks down upon what is thus being prepared from the above-mentioned point of time onwards between death and the new birth. It is the spiritual embryo, the spiritual seed of life. This is what constitutes the soul's outer world. Notice the difference between what is seen when we wake spiritually during sleep and have clairvoyant perception of the human body undergoing a process of continual destruction, and what is seen when our own inner organism is perceived as outer world. The outer world is then the inner man in process of coming into being. This means that we are then seeing the reverse of what is perceived clairvoyantly during sleep. During sleep we feel that our inner organs are part of the outer world, but otherwise what we see is a

process of destruction. From the above-mentioned time onwards between death and rebirth our gaze is focused upon a human body in process of coming into being. Man is unable to preserve any remembrance of what he has seen between death and rebirth, but the spectacle of the building of the wonderful structure of the human body is veritably more splendid than anything to be seen when we gaze at the starry heavens or at the physical world with vision dependent in any respect upon the physical body. The mysteries of existence are truly great, even when contemplated from the standpoint of our physical senses only, but far greater still is the spectacle before us when, instead of external perception of our inner organs, we gaze at the human body that is in process of coming into being with all its mysteries. We then see how everything is directed to the purpose of enabling the human being to cope with existence when he enters the physical world through birth.

There is nothing that can truly be called bliss or blessedness except vision of the process of creation, of 'becoming'. Perception of anything

already in existence is trivial compared with vision of what is in process of coming into being; and what is meant by speaking of the states of bliss or blessedness which can be experienced by man between death and rebirth is that during this period he can behold what is in process of coming into being. Truths such as these, that have been revealed through the ages and grasped by minds adequately prepared, are indicated in words to be found in the 'Prologue in Heaven' in Goethe's *Faust*:

*Das Werdende, das ewig wirkt und lebt,
Umfass' euch mit der Liebe holden Schranken,
Und was in schwankender Erscheinung schwebt,
Erfistiget mit dauernden Gedanken.*

May that which works and lives, the ever-growing,
In bonds of love enfold you, mercy-fraught,
And Seeming's changeful forms, around you
flowing,
Do ye arrest, in ever-during thought!

(Tr. Anna Swanwick, L.L.D., Bohn's Standard
Library)

The difference between vision in the world between birth and death and the world between death and rebirth is that in the former we behold what is already in existence and in the latter what is coming into being.

The thought might occur: Is a man, then, concerned only with the vision of his own being? No, that is not the case. For at the stage of coming into being this body is actually part of the outer world; it is the manifested expression of divine mysteries. And it is then that we realise for the first time why the physical body — which after all is only maltreated between birth and death — may be seen as the temple of cosmic mysteries, for it contains more of the outer world than is seen when we are within it during earthly existence. At that stage between death and rebirth what is otherwise outer world is our inner world; what is otherwise called Universe is now that of which we can say 'I' — and what we then behold is outer world. We must not allow ourselves to be shocked by the fact that when we are looking at our body — or rather the body that will subsequently be ours — all

other bodies which are coming into being must naturally also be there. This is of no significance because here it is simply a matter of number. In point of fact, differentiation between human bodies that can be of interest and importance to us has little significance until shortly before human beings enter into physical existence. For the greater part of the period between death and the new birth, when we are looking down upon the body that is coming into being, it is actually the case that the single bodies are differentiated only according to their number. If we want to study the essential properties of a grain of wheat, it will not make much difference whether we pick an ear from a grain of wheat in a particular field or go fifty paces farther on and pick one there. As far as the essential properties are concerned, one grain is as good as another. Something similar applies when between death and rebirth we are gazing at our own body; the fact that it is our own has significance only for the future because later on we are to inhabit it on the Earth. At the moment it interests us only as the bearer of sublime cosmic mysteries and blessedness consists in the fact that

it can be contemplated just like any other human body. Here we stand before the mystery of Number which will not be further considered now, but among many other relevant aspects there is this, namely, that Number — that is to say, multiple existence — cannot be regarded from the spiritual standpoint exactly as it is from the physical. What is seen in countless examples will again be seen as a unity.

Through the body we feel ourselves to be in the Universe and through what in physical life is called Universe we feel that we are living within our own Ego-hood. Such is the difference when the world is contemplated at one time from this world and at another from yonder.

For the seer, the most significant moment between death and the new birth is when the human being concerned ceases to concern himself only with his last life and begins to direct his attention to what is in process of coming into existence. The shattering impression received by the seer when, as he follows a soul between death and the new birth, this soul begins to be concerned with what is

coming into being — this shattering impression is due to the fact that the soul itself at this moment experiences a severe shock. The only experience comparable with it is the coming of death in physical existence, when the human being passes over from *life into being*. In the other case — although it is impossible to describe it quite exactly — the transition is from something connected with a life that ended in death to experience of the process of ‘becoming’, of resurrection. The soul encounters that which bears a new life germinally within it. This is the moment of death in reverse. That is why it is so immensely significant.

In connection with these things we must turn our minds to the course of human evolution on the Earth. Let us look back to an age, for example the ancient Egypto-Chaldean epoch, when our souls, looking out through physical bodies, did not see the stars merely as material bodies in the heavens; spiritual Beings were connected with the stars — although this experience occurred only in certain intermediate states during the life between birth

and death. The souls of men were deeply affected by this vista and in those times impressions from the spiritual world crowded in upon them. It was inevitable that in the course of evolution the possibility of beholding the spiritual should gradually cease and man's gaze be limited to the material world. This came about in the Graeco-Latin epoch, when men's gaze was diverted to an ever greater extent from the spiritual world and limited to the world of the senses. And now we ourselves are living in an era when it is becoming more and more impossible for the soul to see or detect spiritual reality in the life of the physical environment. The Earth is now dying, withering away, and man is deeply involved in this process. Thus whereas in the Egypto-Chaldean epoch men still beheld the spiritual around them, they now see only what is material and actually boast of having established a science which deals only with what is physical and material. This process will go to further and further lengths. A time will come when men will lose interest in the direct impressions of the world of the senses and will concentrate attention on what is sub-material, sub-sensory.

Today, in fact, we can already detect the approach of the time when men will be interested only in what is sub-sensory, below the level of the sense-world. This often becomes very obvious, for example when modern physics no longer concerns itself with colours as such. In reality it takes no account of the actual quality of colour but concerns itself only with the vibrations and oscillations below colour. In many books today you can read the nonsensical statement that a yellow colour, for example, is merely a matter of oscillations, wave-lengths. Observation here is already diverted from the quality of the colour and directed to something that is not in the yellow colour at all but yet is considered to be the reality. You can find books on physics and even on physiology today in which it is emphasised that attention should no longer be fettered to the direct sense-impression but that everything resolves itself into vibrations and wave-lengths. This kind of observation will go to further and further extremes. No attention will be paid to material existence as such and account will be taken only of the working of forces. Historically, one example

suffices in order to provide empirical evidence of this. If you refer to *du Bois-Reymond's* lecture 'On the Boundaries of Knowledge', given on 14th August, 1872, you will find a peculiar expression for something that *Laplace* already described, the expression 'astronomical knowledge of a material system' — that is to say when what lies behind a light- or colour-process is presented as something only brought about by mathematical-physical forces. A time will come when human souls — and some of those who are being educated in certain schools today will have the best possible foundations for this attitude in their next incarnation — will have lost real interest in the world of light and radiant colour and enquire only into the working of forces. People will no longer have any interest in violet or red but will be concerned only with wave-lengths.

This withering of man's inner spirituality is something that is approaching and Anthroposophy is there to counter it in every detail. It is not only our present form of education that helps to bring about this withering; the trend is there in every

domain of life. It is in contrast to everyday life when with our Anthroposophy we want to give again to the souls of men something that fertilises them, that is not only a maya of the senses but springs forth as spirit. And this we can do when we impart to human souls knowledge that will enable them to live in the true world in their following incarnations. We have to speak of these things in a world which with its indifference to form and colour is in such contrast to what we ourselves desire; for it is particularly in regard to colours that the world of today is preparing souls to thwart what we want to achieve. We must work not only according to the concepts and ideas of everyday existence but with cosmological ideas. Hence it is not a mere liking on our part when we arrange surroundings such as those to be seen in this room [Dr. Steiner recommended that restful and refreshing colours should be displayed in lecture halls and rooms used for the presentation and study of Spiritual Science, also in rooms for the sick.] but it is connected with the very nature of Spiritual Science. Immediate response to what is presented to the senses must again be generated

in the soul in order that active life in the spirit may begin. Now, in this incarnation, each one of us can assimilate Anthroposophy in the life of soul; and what is now assimilated is transformed into faculties for the new incarnation. Then, during his life between death and the next birth, the individual sends from his soul into his body that is coming into being influences which prepare his future bodily faculties to adopt a more spiritual view of the world. This is impossible for him without Anthroposophy. If he rejects Anthroposophy he prepares his body to see nothing but barren forces and to be blind to the revelations of the senses.

And now something shall be said that enables a seer to form a judgement of the mission of Anthroposophy.

When a seer today directs his gaze to the life between death and the new birth of souls who have already passed beyond the above-mentioned point of time and are contemplating the body that is coming into being for a further existence, he may realise that this body will afford the soul no

possibility of Developing faculties for the comprehension of spiritual truths. For if such faculties are to be part of life in the physical body, they must have been implanted before birth. Hence in the immediate future more and more human beings will be devoid of the faculties needed for the acceptance of spiritual knowledge — a state of things that has existed for some time already. Before the seer there will be a vista of souls who in previous lives deprived themselves of the possibility of accepting any knowledge of a spiritual kind. In their life between death and rebirth such souls can indeed gaze at a process of development, but it is a development in which something is inevitably lacking — that is the tragic aspect. These vistas lead to a grasp of the mission of Anthroposophy. It is a shattering experience to see a soul whose gaze is directed towards its future incarnation, its future body, beholding a budding, burgeoning process and yet being obliged to realise: something will be lacking in that body but I cannot provide it because my previous incarnation is responsible. In a more trivial sense this experience may be compared with being

obliged to work at something knowing from the outset that ultimately it is bound to be imperfect. Try to be vividly aware of the difference: either you can do the work perfectly and be happy in the prospect, or you are condemned from the outset to leave it imperfect.

This is the great question: are human souls in the spiritual world to be condemned in increasing numbers to look down upon bodies which must remain imperfect, or can this be avoided? If this fate is to be avoided, souls must accept during their life in physical bodies the proclamation and tidings of the spiritual worlds.

What those who make known these tidings regard as their task is verily not derived from earthly ideals but from the vista of the entire span of life, that is to say, when to life on Earth is added the period of existence between death and the new birth. Herein is revealed the possibility of a fruitful future for humanity, the possibility too of militating against the withering of the souls of men. The feeling can then be born in us that Spiritual Science *must* be there, *must* exist in the

world. Spiritual Science is a *sine qua non* for the life of mankind in the future but not in the sense that is applicable to some other kind of knowledge. Spiritual Science imparts *life*, not concepts and ideas only. But the concepts of Spiritual Science, accepted in one incarnation, bring life, inner vitality, inner forcefulness. What Spiritual Science gives to man is an elixir of life, a vital force of life. Hence anyone who regards himself as belonging to a Movement for the promulgation of Spiritual Science should feel Spiritual Science to be a dire necessity in life, unlike anything that originates from other unions and societies. The realisation of being vitally involved in the necessities of existence is the right feeling to have in regard to Spiritual Science.

We have embarked upon these studies of the life between death and rebirth in order that by turning our minds to the other side of existence we may receive from there the impulse that can kindle in us enthusiasm for Spiritual Science.

LECTURE NINE

At the time when materialism — mainly theoretical materialism — was in its prime, in the middle and still to some extent during the last decades of the nineteenth century, when the writings of *Buchner and Vogt* ('bulky Vogt' as he used to be called) had made a deep impression upon people who considered themselves enlightened, one could often hear a way of speaking that is occasionally also heard today, because stragglers from that epoch of theoretical materialism are still to be found in certain circles. When people do not flatly deny the possibility of a life after death, or even here and there admit it, they are wont to say: Well, there may be a life after death but why should we trouble about it during life on Earth? When death has taken place we shall discover whether there is indeed a future life, and

meanwhile if here on Earth we concern ourselves only with the affairs of earthly existence and take no account of what is alleged to come afterwards, we cannot miss anything of importance. For if the life after death has anything to offer we shall then discover what it is!

As I said, this way of speaking could be heard time and time again and this is still the case in wide circles today; in the way the subject is expressed it may often, in a certain respect, almost seem acceptable. And yet it is utterly at variance with what is disclosed to spiritual investigation when the facts connected with the life between death and rebirth are considered in their spiritual aspect. When a man has passed through the gate of death he comes into contact with many and infinitely varied forces and beings. He does not only find himself living amid a multitude of super-sensible facts but he comes into contact with definite forces and Beings — namely, the Beings of the several higher Hierarchies. Let us ask ourselves what this contact signifies for one who is passing through the period of existence between

death and the new birth.

We know that when an individual has spent this period of life in the supersensible world and passes into physical existence again through birth, he becomes in a certain way the moulder of his own bodily constitution, indeed of his whole destiny in the life on Earth. Within certain limits the human being builds and fashions his body, even the very convolutions of his brain, by means of the forces brought with him from the spiritual worlds when he enters again into physical existence through birth. Our whole earthly existence depends upon our physical body possessing organs which enable us to come in touch with the outer physical world, to act and moreover to think in that world.

If, here in the physical world, we do not possess the appropriately formed brain which, on passing through birth we formed for ourselves out of the forces of the supersensible world, we remain unable to cope with life in this physical world. In the real sense we are fitted for life in the physical world only when we bring with us from the spiritual world forces by means of which we have

been able to build a body able to cope with this world and all its demands. The supersensible forces which man needs in order to fashion his body and also his destiny are received by him from the Beings of the higher Hierarchies with whom he has made contact between death and the new birth. What we need for the shaping of our life must be acquired during the time that has preceded our birth since the last death. Between death and the next birth we must approach, stage by stage, the Beings who can endow us with the forces we need for our physical existence.

In the life between death and rebirth we can pass before the Beings of the higher Hierarchies in two ways. We may recognise them, understand their nature and essential characteristics, be able to receive what they can give us and what we shall need in the following life. We must be able to understand or at least to perceive what is being offered us and what we shall subsequently need. But we might also pass before these Beings in such a way that, figuratively speaking, their hands are offering gifts which we do not receive because

it is dark in the higher world in which we then live. Thus we may pass through that world with understanding, with awareness of what these Beings are offering us, or we may pass through it without understanding, unaware of what they wish to bestow. Now the way in which we pass through this spiritual world, which of the two ways we necessarily choose in our life between death and the new birth, is predetermined by the after-effects of the previous life and of earlier lives on Earth. A person whose attitude in his last life on Earth was unresponsive and antagonistic to all thoughts and ideas that may enlighten him about the supersensible world — such a person passes through the life between death and rebirth as if through a world of darkness. For the light, the spiritual light we need in order to realise how these different Beings approach us and what gifts we may receive from them for our next life on Earth — the light of understanding for what is here coming to pass cannot be acquired in the supersensible world itself; it must be acquired here, during physical incarnation on Earth. If, at death, we bear with us into the spiritual life no

relevant ideas and concepts, we shall pass unknowingly through our supersensible existence until the next birth, receiving none of the forces needed for the next life. From this we realise how impossible it is to say that we can wait until death itself occurs because we shall then discover what the facts are — whether indeed we shall encounter any reality at all after death. Our relationship to that reality depends upon whether in earthly life we have been receptive or antagonistic in our souls to concepts or ideas of the supersensible world that have been accessible to us and will be the light through which we must ourselves illumine the path between death and rebirth.

Something further can be gathered from what has been said. The belief that we have, so to say, only to die in order to receive everything that the supersensible world can give us, even if we have made no preparation for it — this belief is utterly false. Every world has its own special mission. And what a man can acquire during an incarnation on Earth he can acquire in no single one of the other worlds. Between death and the new birth he

is able, in all circumstances, to enter into communion with the Beings of the higher Hierarchies. But in order to receive their gifts, to avoid having to grope in darkness through life there or in fearful loneliness, in order to establish contact with those Beings and receive their forces, the ideas and concepts which are the light enabling the higher Hierarchies to be visible to the soul must be acquired in earthly life. And so an individual who in earthly life during the present cycle of time has rejected all spiritual ideas, passes through the life between death and rebirth in fearful loneliness, groping in darkness. In the next incarnation he will fail to bring with him the forces wherewith to build his body efficiently and mould his organs; he can fashion them in an imperfect form only and consequently he will be an inadequate human being in his next life.

We realise from this how Karma works over from one life to the next. In one life a man deliberately scorns to develop in his soul any relationship with the spiritual worlds; in the next life he has no forces wherewith to create even the organs

enabling him to think, feel or will the truths of spiritual life. He remains dull and indifferent to spiritual things and spiritual life passes him by as though in dream — as is so frequently the case today. On the Earth such an individual can take no interest in spiritual worlds; and his soul, after passing through the gate of death, is an easy prey for the Luciferic powers. Lucifer makes straight for such souls. Here we have the strange situation that in the next life in the spiritual world, the life that follows the dull, unreceptive one, the deeds and the Beings of the higher Hierarchies are indeed illumined for such an individual but in this case *not* as a result of what he acquired in earthly life but by the light which Lucifer sends into his soul. It is Lucifer who illumines the higher worlds for him when he passes into the life between death and rebirth. Now, he can, it is true, perceive the higher Hierarchies, recognise when they are offering their gifts to him. But the fact that Lucifer has tainted the light means that all the gifts have a particular colouring and character. The forces of the higher Hierarchies are then not exactly as the human being could otherwise have received them.

Their nature then is such that when the human being passes into his next life on Earth he can certainly form and mould his body, but he moulds it then in such a way that although he becomes an individual who is, admittedly, able to cope with the outer world and its demands, in a certain respect he is inwardly inadequate, because his soul is tinged with Lucifer's gifts or at least by gifts that have a Luciferic trend.

When we come across individuals who have worked on their bodies in such a way that they are able to make effective use of their intellect and acquire certain skills which will help them to raise their status in the world, although to their own advantage only, snatching at what is in their own interest, dryly calculating what is beneficial to themselves without any consideration for others — and there are many such people nowadays — in these cases the seer will very often find that their previous history was what has been described. Before they began to display their dry, intellectual, sharp-witted character in life, they had been led through their existence between death and rebirth

by Luciferic beings who were able to approach them because in the preceding incarnation they had lived an apathetic, dreamy existence. But these traits themselves had been acquired because such individuals had passed through an earlier existence between death and rebirth groping in darkness. The Spirits of the higher Hierarchies would have bestowed upon them the forces needed for fashioning a new life, but they were unable to receive these forces; and that in turn was because they had deliberately refused to concern themselves with ideas and concepts relating to a spiritual world. That is the karmic connection. Such examples do certainly occur; they appear before the eyes of spirit only too frequently when with the help of powers of spiritual investigation and knowing the conditions of human life, we penetrate into higher worlds.

It is therefore wrong to say that here on Earth we need concern ourselves only with what is around us in earthly existence because what comes later will be revealed in all good time. But the form in which it will be revealed depends entirely upon

how we have prepared ourselves for it here.

Another possibility may occur. I am saying these things in order that by understanding the life between death and rebirth, life between birth and death may become more and more intelligible.

When we study life on Earth with discernment, we see many human beings — and in our time they are very numerous — who can, as it were, only ‘half think’, whose logic invariably breaks down when faced with reality. Here is an example: A certain free-thinking cleric, an honourable man in all his endeavours, wrote in the first *Freethinkers' Calendar* as follows: Children ought not to be taught any ideas about religion for that would be against nature. If children are allowed to grow up without having any ideas about religion pumped into them, we find that they do not of themselves arrive at ideas of God, immortality, and so forth. The inference to be drawn from this is that such ideas are unnatural to the human being and should not be drummed into him; he should work only with what can be drawn from his own soul. As in many other cases, there are thousands and

thousands of people nowadays to whom an utterance such as this seems very clever, very subtle. But if only genuine logic were applied the following would be obvious: If we were to take a human being before he has learnt to speak, put him on a lonely island and take care that he can hear no single word of speech, he would never learn to speak. And so anyone who argues against children being taught any ideas about religion would logically have to say that human beings should not have to learn to speak, for speech does not come of itself. So our free-thinking cleric cannot propagate his ideas by means of his logic, for both he and his logic come to a halt when confronted by the facts. His logic can be applied to a small area only, and he does not notice that his idea, assuming one can get hold of it, cancels itself out.

Anyone who is alert to his surroundings will find that this inadequate, pseudo-thinking is very widespread. If with the help of supersensible research we trace the path of such an individual backwards and come to the regions through which his soul passed between the last death and the last

birth, when this illogical mentality was caused, the seer often finds that this type of human being, in his last life between death and rebirth, passed through the spiritual world in such a way that he encountered the spiritual Beings and forces while under the guidance of Ahriman; and that although those Beings would have bestowed upon him what he needed in life, they could not make it possible for him to develop the capacity for sound thinking. Ahriman was his leader and it was Ahriman who contrived that the gifts of the Beings of the higher Hierarchies could only be received by him in a form that would finally result in his thinking coming to a halt when confronting actual facts, and in his inability to make his thinking exhaustive and valid. A large proportion of those human beings — and their number is legion — who are incapable of genuine thinking today owe this to the fact that in their last life between death and rebirth they were obliged to submit to Ahriman's guidance; they had somehow prepared themselves for this in their last earthly life — that is to say, in the incarnation preceding the present one.

And what was the course of that preceding life as viewed by a seer? It is found that these were morose, hypochondriacal individuals, who shied away from facts and people in the world and always found it difficult to establish any relation with their environment. Very often they were intolerable hypochondriacs in their previous life; on medical examination they would have been found to be suffering from the type of illness occurring very frequently in hypochondriacs. And if we were to go still further back, to the life between death and rebirth that preceded the hypochondriacal incarnation, we should find that during that period such human beings were obliged again to forego the right guidance and could not become truly aware of what the gifts of the higher Hierarchies would have been. And how had they prepared themselves for this fate in the life preceding the last two incarnations? We should find that they had developed what it is certainly true to call a religious, pious attitude of soul but an attitude based on sheer egoism. They were people with a pious, even mystical nature emanating from egoism. After all, mysticism very often has its

origin in egoism. An individual of this type might say: I seek within myself in order that there I may recognise God. But what he is seeking there is only his own self made into God! In the case of many pious souls it becomes evident that they are pious only in order that after death one or another of their spiritual inclinations may bear fruit. All that they have acquired is an egotistic attitude of soul.

When in the course of spiritual research we trace the sequence of three such earthly lives, we find that in the first, the basic attitude of the soul was that of egotistic mysticism, egotistic religiosity. And when today we observe human beings with this attitude to life, we shall be able, by means of spiritual investigation to trace them back to times when souls without number developed a religious frame of mind out of sheer egoism. They then passed through an existence between death and rebirth without being able to receive from the spiritual Beings the gifts which would have enabled them to shape their next life rightly. In that life they became morose and hypochondriacal,

finding everything distasteful. This life again prepared them for the ensuing one when, having passed through the gate of death, Ahriman and his hosts became their leaders and the forces with which they were imbued manifested in the following earthly life as defective logic, as an obtuse, undiscerning kind of thinking.

Here, then, we have another example of three successive incarnations. And we realise again and again what nonsense it is to believe that we can wait until death to establish connection with the supersensible world. For how this connection is established after death depends upon the inner tendencies of soul acquired here on Earth towards the supersensible world. Not only are the successive earthly lives connected as causes and effects, but the lives between death and the new birth are also connected in a certain way as causes and effects. This can be seen from the following.

When the seer directs his gaze into the supersensible world where souls are sojourning after death, he will find among them those who during part of this life between death and rebirth

are servants of those Powers whom we may call the Lords of all healthy, budding and burgeoning life on the Earth. (In the very lengthy period between death and rebirth, innumerable experiences are undergone and in accounts of the present kind, parts only can be described.) Among the dead we find souls who for a certain length of time in the supersensible world co-operate in the wonderful task — for wonderful it is — of pouring, infusing into the physical world everything that can further the health of beings on the Earth, can help them to thrive and blossom. Just as in certain circumstances we can become servants of the evil spirits of illness and misfortune, so too we can become the servants of those spiritual beings who promote health and growth, who send down from the spiritual world into our physical world forces that help life to flourish. It is nothing but a materialistic superstition to believe that physical hygiene and external regulations are the sole means of promoting health. Everything that happens in physical life is directed by the beings and powers of higher worlds who are all the time pouring into

the physical world forces which in a certain way work freely, upon human or other beings, either promoting or harming health and growth. Certain specific spiritual powers and beings are responsible for these processes in health and illness. In the life between death and rebirth man co-operates with these powers; and if we have prepared ourselves in the right way we can experience the bliss of co-operating in the task of sending the forces which promote health and growth, from the higher worlds into this physical world. And when the seer enquires into why such souls have deserved this destiny, he becomes aware that in physical life on Earth there are two ways in which human beings can execute and think about what they want to achieve.

Let us take a general look at life. We see numbers of human beings who carry out the work prescribed for them by their profession or office. Even if there is no radical case of any one of these people regarding their work as if they were animals being led to the slaughterhouse, it is at least true to say that they work because they are

obliged to. Of course they would never neglect their duty — although of course anything may happen! In a certain sense it cannot be otherwise in the present phase of man's evolution; the only urge such people feel towards their work is that of duty. This does not by any means suggest that such work should be criticised root and branch. It should not be understood in this sense. Earth-evolution is such that this aspect of life will become more and more widespread; nor will things improve in the future. The tasks that men will have to carry out will become increasingly complicated in so far as they are connected with outer life and men will be condemned more and more to think and do only that to which duty drives them. Already there are hosts of human beings who do their work only because duty forces them to it, but on the other hand there will be people who look for a Society such as ours in which they can also achieve something, not simply from a sense of duty as in everyday life but for which they feel enthusiasm and devotion. Thus there are two aspects of a man's work: has it been thought out or done as an outer achievement

merely from a sense of duty, or has it been done with enthusiasm and inner devotion, solely out of an inner urge of his own soul? This attitude — to think and act not merely out of a sense of duty, but out of love, inclination and devotion — this prepared the soul to become a server of the beneficent Powers of health and salutary forces sent down from the supersensible world into our physical world, to become a servant of everything that brings health and to experience the bliss that can accompany these circumstances.

To know this is extremely important for the general well-being of man, for only by acquiring during life the forces that will enable him to cooperate with the Powers in question will he be able to work spiritually for an ever intensifying process of healing and betterment of conditions on the Earth.

We will now consider still another case, of one who makes efforts to adapt himself to his environment and its demands. This by no means applies to everybody. There are some people who take no trouble to adjust themselves to the world

and are never at home with the conditions either of spiritual or outer physical life. For example, there are individuals who notice an announcement that here or there an anthroposophical lecture will be given; they go to the place but almost as soon as they get seated, they are already asleep! In such cases the soul cannot adapt itself to the environment is not attuned to it. I have known men who cannot even sew on a button to replace one that has been torn off; that again means that they cannot adapt themselves to physical conditions. Countless cases could be quoted of people who cannot or will not adapt themselves to life. These symptoms are very significant, as I have said. At the moment, however, we will think only of the effects upon the life between death and rebirth.

Everything becomes cause and everything produces effects. A man who makes efforts to adapt himself to his environment, someone, that is to say, who can actually sew on a button or can listen to something with which he is unfamiliar without immediately falling asleep, is preparing himself to become, after death, a helper of those

Spirits who further the progress of humanity and send down to the Earth the spiritual forces which promote life as it advances from epoch to epoch. After death we can experience the bliss of looking down upon earthly life and co-operating with the forces that are perpetually being sent to the Earth to further its progress, but this is possible only if we endeavour to adapt ourselves to our environment and its conditions. To be rightly and thoroughly understood Karma must be studied in details, in details which reveal the manifold ways in which causes and effects are connected here in the physical world, in the spiritual world and in existence as a whole.

Here again light is thrown upon the fact that our life in the spiritual worlds depends upon the mode of our life in the physical body. Each world has its own specific mission; no two worlds have an identical mission. The characteristic phenomena and experiences in one world are not the same in another. And if, for example, a being is meant to assimilate certain things on Earth, it is on Earth that he must do so; if he misses this opportunity he

cannot acquire them in some other world. This is particularly the case in a matter which we have already considered but of which it will be well to be thoroughly aware. The matter in question concerns the acceptance of certain concepts and ideas needed by man for his life as a whole. Let us take an example that is near at hand. Anthroposophy is a timely and active force in our epoch. People approach and accept Anthroposophy during their life on Earth in the way known to you, but again the belief might arise that it is not necessary to cultivate Anthroposophy on Earth, for one will be in a position after death to know how things are in the spiritual worlds; that moreover the higher Hierarchies will also be there and able to impart to the soul what is necessary.

Now it is a fact that having passed through the phase of development leading to the present cycle of evolution, the human being, with his whole soul, has been prepared to contact on Earth the kind of anthroposophical life that is possible only while he is incarnated in a physical body. Men are predestined for this and if they fail they will be

unable to establish relationship with any of the spiritual Beings who might have been their teachers. One cannot simply die and then, after death, find a teacher who might take the place of what here, during physical life on Earth, can come to souls in the form of Anthroposophy. We need not, however, be dejected by the fact that many individuals reject Anthroposophy and it is therefore to be assumed that they will not be able to acquire it between death and the new birth. We need not despair about them for they will be born in a new earthly life and by that time there will be a strong enough stimulus towards Anthroposophy and enough Anthroposophy on the Earth for them to acquire it. In the present age despondency is still out of place, but that should not lead anyone to say: I can acquire Anthroposophy in my next life and so can do without it now. No, what has been neglected here cannot be retrieved later on.

When our German Theosophical Movement was still very young I was once giving a lecture about Nietzsche, during which I said certain things about the spiritual worlds. At that time it was customary

to have discussions and on this occasion someone got up and said that such matters must always be put to the test of Kant's philosophy, from which it would be evident that we can have no knowledge of these things here on Earth and can begin to know them only after death. That, quite literally, was what the man said. As I have repeatedly emphasised, it is not the case that one has only to die in order to acquire certain knowledge. When we pass through the gate of death we do not experience anything for which we have not prepared ourselves. Life between death and rebirth is throughout a continuation of the life here, as the examples already given have shown. Therefore as individuals we can acquire from the Beings of the higher Hierarchies only that for which we have prepared ourselves on Earth — perhaps by having become anthroposophists. Our connection with the Earth and our passage through the life on Earth have a significance which nothing else can replace.

A certain form of mediation is, however, possible in this connection and I have already spoken of it.

A person may die and during his lifetime have had no knowledge at all of Spiritual Science; but his brother or his wife or a close friend were anthroposophists. The man who has died may have refused to have anything to do with Anthroposophy during his life; perhaps he consistently abused it. Now he has passed through the gate of death and Anthroposophy can be conveyed to him in some way by other personalities on Earth. But there must be someone on Earth who passes on the knowledge to him out of love. Connection with the Earth must be maintained. This is the basis of what I have called 'reading to the dead'. We can render them great benefit even if previously they would listen to nothing about the spiritual world. We can help them either by putting what we have to say into the form of thoughts, conveying knowledge in this way, or we may take an anthroposophical book, visualise the personality concerned, and read to him from it; then he will learn. We have had a number of striking and beautiful examples in our Movement of how it has been possible in this way to benefit the dead. Many of our friends read to

those who have died. I recently had an experience that others too may have had. Someone asked me about a friend who had died very recently and it seemed that he was trying to make himself noticed by means of all kinds of signs, especially at night, creating disturbance in the room, rapping and so on. Such happenings are often indications that the dead person wants something; and in this case it was quite evident. In his lifetime the man had been very erudite but had always rejected any knowledge of the spiritual world that might come his way. It became obvious that he would greatly benefit if a particular Lecture Course containing the subject-matter for which he was craving, were read to him. In this way very effective help can be given beyond death for something left undone on Earth.

The fact that can convince us of the great and significant mission of Anthroposophy is that Anthroposophy can bridge the gulf between the living and the dead, that when human beings die they have not really gone away from us but we remain connected with them and can be active on

their behalf. If it is asked whether one can always know whether the dead soul also hears us, it must be said that those who do what has been described with genuine devotion will eventually become aware from the way in which the thoughts which they are sending to the dead live in their own souls that the dead person is hovering around them. But this is an experience, a feeling, of which sensitive souls alone are capable. The most distressing aspect is when something that might be a great service of love is not heeded; in that case it has been done unnecessarily for the person concerned, but it may still have some effect in the general pattern of worlds. In any case one should not grieve excessively about such lack of success. After all, it happens even here that something is read to people who do not listen!

These things may well give a true conception of the seriousness and worth of Anthroposophy. But it must constantly be emphasised that the conditions of our life in the spiritual world after death will depend entirely upon the manner of our life here on Earth. Even our community with

others in the spiritual world depends upon the nature of the relationship we sought to establish with them here. If there has been no relationship with a human being here on Earth it cannot be taken for granted that any connection can be established in the other world between death and rebirth. The possibility of being led to him in the spiritual world is as a rule dependent upon the contact established here on Earth — not necessarily in the last incarnation only but in earlier lives as well.

In short, both objective and personal relationships established here on Earth are the decisive factor for the life between death and the new birth. Exceptions do occur but must be recognised as such. What I said here at Christmastime (in Lecture Five) about the Buddha and his present mission on Mars is one such exception. There are numbers of human souls on the Earth who were able to contact the Buddha — even in his previous existence as Bodhisattva — as a result of inspirations received from the Mysteries. But because the Buddha was incarnated for the last

time as the son of Suddodana, then worked in his etheric body as I have described [See Lectures Three, Five and Six of the course, *The Gospel of St. Luke*] and has now transferred his sphere of activity to Mars, at the present time the possibility exists that even if we never previously came in contact with the Buddha, we can establish a relationship with him in the life between death and rebirth; and we can then bring the results of that contact with us into the next incarnation on Earth. But that remains an exceptional case. The general rule is that after death we find those individuals with whom we had actual contacts here on Earth and continue these relationships in that other state of existence.

What has now been said is closely related to the information given during this Winter about the life between death and the new birth, and the aim has been to show that if Anthroposophy remains simply a matter of theory and external science, it is only half of what it ought to be; it fulfils its true function only when it streams through souls as a veritable elixir of life and enables these souls to

experience in depth the feelings that arise in a human being when he acquires some knowledge of the higher worlds. Death then ceases to appear as a destroyer of human and personal relationships. The gulf between life here on Earth and the life after death is bridged and many activities carried out with this in mind will develop. The dead will send their influences into life, the living their influences into the realm of the dead.

My wish is that your souls will feel more deeply that life is enriched, becomes fuller and more spiritual when everything is influenced by Anthroposophy. Only those who feel this have the right attitude to Anthroposophy. What is of prime importance is not the knowledge that man consists of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego, that he passes through many incarnations, that the Earth too has passed through the several incarnations of Old Saturn, Old Sun and Old Moon, and so forth. The most important and essential need is to allow Anthroposophy to transform our lives in a way commensurate with

the Earth's future. This feeling can never be experienced too deeply, nor can we bestir ourselves too often in this connection. The feelings we bear with us from these meetings and then move through life under the stimulus of the knowledge of the supersensible worlds acquired here — these feelings are the really important element in anthroposophical life. Merely to have knowledge of Anthroposophy is not enough; knowledge and feeling must be combined. We must realise, however, how false it is to believe that without any understanding of the world we can do it justice. *Leonardo da Vinci's* saying is true: “Great love is the daughter of great understanding.” He who is not prepared to understand will not learn how to love.

It is in this sense that Anthroposophy should find entry into our souls, in order that from this influence which proceeds from our own being a stream of spirituality may find its way into Earth-evolution, creating harmony between spirit and matter. Life on the Earth will, it is true, continue to be materialistic — indeed outer life will become

increasingly so — but as man moves over the Earth he will bear within his soul the realisation of his connection with the higher worlds. Outwardly, earthly life will become more and more materialistic — that is the Earth's karma — but in the same measure, if Earth-evolution is to reach its goal, souls must become inwardly more and more spiritual. My purpose today was to make a small contribution towards understanding this task.

LECTURE TEN

*[As well as referring to Chapter III in the book *Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man* in connection with this lecture, students are advised to turn to *Occult Science — an Outline*, Rudolf Steiner Press 1963 edition, Chapter III, pp. 74–101. (Note by translator.)]*

We have undertaken to study the life between death and rebirth from certain points of view and the lectures given during the Winter endeavoured to present many aspects of this life; moreover it has been possible to make important additions to the more general descriptions contained in the books *Theosophy* and *Occult Science — an Outline*. Today we shall occupy ourselves chiefly with the question: How is the information given, for example, in the book *Theosophy* on the subject

of the life between death and rebirth related to what has been said in the course of the lectures given during the Winter?

In the book *Theosophy* there is a description of the passage of the soul after death through the Soul-World. This Soul-World is divided into a region of 'Burning Desires' (*Begierdenglut*), a region of 'Flowing Susceptibility' (*fliessende Reizbarkeit*), a region of 'Wishes' (*Wunsche*), a region of 'Attraction and Repulsion' (*Lust und Unlust*), and then into the higher regions of 'Soul-Light' (*Seelenlicht*), of 'Active Soul-Force' (*tatige Seelenkraft*), and the true 'Soul-Life' (*das eigentliche Seelenleben*). That was how the Soul-World through which the soul has to pass after death was described. Thereafter the soul has to pass through what is described as the Spiritland and this sphere, too, with its successive regions, is described in the book *Theosophy* by using certain earthly images: the 'continental' region of Spiritland, the 'oceanic' region, and so forth.

In the course of these lectures descriptions have been given of how the soul, having passed through

the gate of death, lays aside the physical body, then the etheric body, and then expands and expands, lives through regions which for reasons that were explained may be called the region of the Moon, then that of Mercury, of Venus, of the Sun, of Mars, of Jupiter, of Saturn, and then of the starry firmament itself. The soul or, let us say, the actual spiritual individuality of the human being concerned, continually expands, lives through these regions which enclose ever more extensive cosmic spaces and then begins to contract, becoming smaller and smaller, in order finally to unite with the seed which comes to it from the stream of heredity. And through this union of the human seed which the individual acquired through heredity with what has been absorbed from the great macrocosmic spheres, there arises the human being who is to embark on the course of earthly life, the being who is to live through his existence between birth and death.

Now as a matter of fact, what was said in the book *Theosophy* and in the lectures was fundamentally the same, and your attention has been called to

this. In *Theosophy* the description was given in certain pictures more closely related to inner conditions of the soul. In the lectures given here during the Winter the descriptions dealt with the great cosmic relationships connected with the functions of the several planets. It is now a matter of harmonising the two descriptions.

During the first period after death the soul has to look back upon what was experienced on Earth. The period of Kamaloka, or call it what you will, is a period during which the soul's life is still concerned entirely with earthly conditions. Kamaloka is fundamentally a period during which the soul feels bound to disengage itself gradually from any direct connections still persisting from the last incarnation on Earth. In the physical body on Earth the soul has experiences which depend upon the bodily life, indeed very largely upon sense-impressions. If you 'think away' everything that sense-impressions bring into the soul and then try to realise how much still remains in it, you will have a picture of a very meagre content indeed! And yet on final consideration you will be able to

say: When the soul passes through the gate of death, everything given by the senses comes to an end and whatever is left can at most only be memories of earlier sense-impressions. If, therefore, you think about how much of what is yielded by sense-impressions is left in the soul, it will be easy for you to form an idea of what remains of these impressions after death. Recall any sense-impressions experienced, for example, yesterday, while they are still comparatively vivid, and you will realise how pale they have already become compared with their former vividness; that will give you some idea of how little of what the sense-impressions have conveyed is left to the soul as remembrance. This shows you that basically all the soul's life in the world of the senses is specifically earthly experience. When the sense-organs fall away at death, all significance of the sense-impressions falls away as well. But because the human being still clings to his sense-impressions and retains a longing for them, the first region through which he passes in the life after death is the region of *Burning Desires*. He would like still to have sense-impressions for a

long time after death, but this is impossible because he has discarded the sense-organs. The life spent in longing for sense-impressions and being unable to enjoy them is life in the region of *Burning Desires*. It is a life that does actually burn within the soul and is part of the existence in Kamaloka; the soul longs for sense-impressions to which it was accustomed on Earth and — because the sense-organs have been laid aside — cannot have them.

A second region of the life in Kamaloka is that of *Flowing Susceptibility*. When the soul lives through this region it has already ceased to long for sense-impressions but still longs for thoughts, for thoughts which in life on Earth are acquired through the instrumentality of the brain. In the region of *Burning Desires* the soul gradually realises that it is nonsense to wish for sense-impressions in a world for the experience of which the necessary sense-organs have been discarded, a world in which no being can possibly have sense-organs formed entirely of substance of the Earth. The soul may long since have ceased to yearn for

sense-impressions but still longs to think in the way that is customary on Earth. This earthly thinking is discarded in the region of *Flowing Susceptibility*. There the human being gradually recognises that thoughts such as are formed on Earth have significance only in the life between birth and death.

At this stage, when the human being has weaned himself from fostering thoughts that are dependent upon the physical instrument of the brain, he is still aware of a certain connection with the Earth through what is contained in his *Wishes*. After all, wishes are connected with the soul more intimately than thoughts. Wishes have their own distinctive colouring in every individual. Whereas thoughts differ in youth, in middle life and in old age, a particular form of wishing continues throughout a man's earthly life. This form and colouring of wishes are only later discarded in the region of Wishes. And then finally, in the region of *Attraction and Repulsion*, man rids himself of all longing to be connected with a physical body, with the physical body which was his in the last

incarnation. While a man is passing through these regions, of Burning Desires, of Flowing Susceptibility, of Wishes, of Attraction and Repulsion, a certain longing for the last earthly life is still present. First, in the region of Burning Desires the soul still longs to be able to see through eyes, to hear through ears, although eyes and ears no longer exist. When the soul has finally cast off any such longing, it still yearns to be able to think by means of a brain such as was available on Earth. Having got rid of this longing too, there still remains the desire to wish with a heart as on Earth. Finally, the human being ceases to long for sense-impressions or for thoughts formed by his brain or for wishes of his heart, but a hankering for his last incarnation on Earth taken as a whole, still lingers. Gradually, however, he then rids himself of this longing too.

You will find that all the experiences in these regions correspond exactly with the passage of the expanding soul into the region called the Mercury sphere, an expansion through the Moon sphere into the Mercury sphere. On approaching the

Mercury sphere, however, the soul encounters conditions described in the book *Theosophy* as a kind of spiritual region of the Soul-World. Read the description of the passage of the soul through this region and you will see from what is said about the kind of experiences undergone there that what is generally called the unpleasant element of Kamaloka already comes to an end in the region of *Soul-Light*. This region of Soul-Light corresponds with what I have said about the Mercury sphere. If you compare what was said about the life of the soul when it has expanded to the Mercury sphere with what is contained in the book *Theosophy* about the region of Soul-Light, you will realise that endeavours were made to describe this region first from the aspect of inner influences of the soul and then from the aspect of the great macrocosmic conditions through which the soul passes.

If you read what is said in *Theosophy* about the 'Active Soul-Force', you will realise that the inner experiences undergone in that region are in keeping with what is decisive during the passage through the Venus sphere. It has been said that if

the soul is to pass in the right way through the Venus sphere it must have developed certain religious impulses during earthly life. In order to progress through the Venus sphere with companionship and not in compulsory isolation, the soul must be imbued with certain religious concepts. Compare what was said about this with the description given in the book *Theosophy* of the region of Active Soul-Force and you will find that they agree, that in one case the inner aspect of the conditions was described, in the other, the outer aspect.

The highest region of the Soul-World, the region of pure *Soul-Life*, is experienced by the soul in passing through the region of the Sun. So we can say that the sphere of existence in Kamaloka extends to and somewhat beyond the Moon sphere; then the more luminous regions of the Soul-World begin and extend to the sphere of the Sun. The soul experiences in the Sun sphere the region of true Soul-Life. We know that in the Sun sphere after death the soul comes into contact with the Light-Spirit, with Lucifer, who on Earth has

become the tempter, the corrupter. When the soul has expanded into the cosmos it comes more and more closely into contact with those forces which now enable it to develop what is needed for the next incarnation on Earth. Not until the soul has passed through the region of the Sun has it finished with the last earthly incarnation. As far as the region of *Attraction and Repulsion* is concerned, that is to say the region between the Moon and Mercury, the soul is still burdened inwardly with yearning for the last life on Earth; moreover even in the regions of Mercury, Venus and the Sun the soul is not yet completely free from the ties of the last incarnation. But then it must finally have finished even with everything that transcends merely personal experience; in the Mercury region with whatever moral concepts have or have not been acquired, in the region of Venus with whatever religious conceptions have been developed, in the region of the Sun with whatever understanding has been acquired of the 'human-universal' quality in existence — that which is not confined to any particular religious creed but is concerned with a religious life

befitting all mankind. Thus it is even the higher interests that can develop in the further evolution of humanity with which the soul has finished by the time it enters into the region of the Sun.

Then the soul passes into cosmic-spiritual life and finds its place in the Mars region. This region corresponds with what is described in *Theosophy* as the first sphere of the 'Spiritland'. This description portrays the inner aspect of the fact that the soul is spiritual to the extent of being able to behold as something external to itself the 'archetype', as it were, of the physical bodily organisation and of physical conditions on the Earth in general. The archetypes of physical life on Earth appear as a kind of 'continental' mass of the Spiritland. The external configurations of a man's different incarnations are inscribed in this 'continental' region. There we have a picture of what, in terms of cosmic existence, the human soul has to experience in the Mars region. It might seem strange that this Mars region which has repeatedly been described in these lectures as a region of strife, of aggressive impulses until the

beginning of the seventeenth century, should be said to be the first region of Devachan, of the true Spiritland. Nevertheless this is the case. Everything that on Earth belongs to the actual material realm and causes the mineral kingdom to appear as a purely material realm is due to the fact that on Earth the forces are engaged in perpetual conflict among themselves. This also led to the result that at the time when materialism was in its prime and material life was assumed to be the sole reality, the 'struggle for existence' was regarded as the only valid law of life on Earth. That is, of course, an error, because material existence is not the only form of existence evolving on Earth. But when the human being assumes embodiment on Earth he can only enter into the form of existence that has its archetypes in the lowest region of what is, for the Earth, the Spiritland. Read the description of the lowest region of Spiritland as given in the book *Theosophy*. I want to quote this particular chapter today in connection with our present studies. Towards the beginning of the description of the Spiritland you will find the following passage. [See Section III.4 in

Theosophy: An Introduction to the Supersensible Knowledge of the World and the Destination of Man, Rudolf Steiner Press, London, 1963.]

“The development of the spirit in Spiritland takes place through the man throwing himself completely into the life of the different regions of this land.”

Thus as the result of our studies in the course of the Winter we could now say that from the Mars region onwards the human soul begins to live more deeply into spiritual conditions of existence.

To continue:

“His own life as it were dissolves into each region successively; he takes on, for the time being, their characteristics. Through this they permeate his being with theirs, in order that his being may be able to work, strengthened by theirs, in his earthly life. In the first region of the Spiritland, man is surrounded by the spiritual archetypes of earthly things. During life on earth he learns to know only the shadows of these archetypes which he grasps

in his thoughts. What is *merely thought* on the earth is in this region experienced, *lived*. Man moves among thoughts; but these thoughts are *real beings*.”

Again, a little later:

“Our own embodiments dissolve here into a unity with the rest of the world. Thus here we look upon the archetypes of the physical, corporeal reality as a unity, to which we have ourselves belonged. We learn, therefore, gradually to know our relationship, our unity, with the surrounding world, by observation. We learn to say to it: ‘That which is here spread out around thee, thou art that.’ And that is one of the fundamental thoughts of ancient Indian Vedanta wisdom. The sage acquires, even during his earthly life, what others experience after death, namely, ability to grasp the thought that he himself is related to all things, the thought, ‘Thou art that’. In earthly life this is an ideal to which the thought-life can be devoted; in the Land of Spirit it is an immediate reality, one which grows ever clearer to us through spiritual experience. And man himself comes to know more and more

clearly in this realm that in his own inner being he belongs to the spirit-world. He is aware of himself as a spirit among spirits, a member of the Primordial Spirits, and he will feel in his own self the word of the Primordial Spirit: 'I am the Primal Spirit.' (The Wisdom of the Vedanta says, 'I am Brahman', i.e. 'I belong to the Primordial Being in Whom all beings have their origin'.)''

From this passage it is clear that when, during the life between death and rebirth man enters into the Mars region, he grasps the full significance of the saying, 'Tat tvam asi', 'Thou art that', and of the other saying, 'I am Brahman'. 'Tat tvam asi', 'Thou art that', is only an earthly rendering of what is a self-evident experience in the Mars region, the lowest region of Spiritland. If we now ask whence the wisdom of ancient India derived the deeply significant affirmations, 'Tat tvam asi', 'Thou art that', 'I am Brahman', we have now identified the region in question and those Teachers in ancient India are revealed to us as beings belonging to the Mars region but transferred to the Earth. To what was said years

ago in the book *Theosophy* about the Mars region, the lowest region of Devachan, there can now be added what we have heard in these lectures. namely, that at the dawn of the modern age the Buddha was transferred to this same region, the Mars region. Half a millennium before the Mystery of Golgotha, the Buddha — regarded as one who was to prepare spiritually for this Mystery — had come to the Earth, to the territory where Mars wisdom had been proclaimed since times primeval. And centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha he was, as we know, sent by an act of Rosicrucian wisdom to the Mars region in order to continue working there. (See Lecture Five.) In ancient times Brahmanism belonged intrinsically to the Mars region of the Cosmos. At the beginning of the seventeenth century after the Mystery of Golgotha, Brahmanism passed over into the Buddha-impulse and the reflection of this on Earth was the absorption of Brahmanism into Buddhism in the cultural life of India.

What takes place on Earth, therefore, is in a wide and ample sense an image of happenings in the

Heavens.

If you have read the chapter in *Theosophy* which deals with what you now know to be the Mars region and in which a self-evident expression is the 'I am Brahman', you will be able, if you read that chapter again, to picture how an event here on Earth is also an event in a region of the Cosmos, how this event can be understood, and how the Buddha-impulse as a cosmic happening is related to the circumstances described in the relevant chapter of that book. We shall realise that our studies during the Winter were closely linked with the theosophical work we began more than ten years ago. We then described the 'Spiritland' and a 'continental' mass of Spiritland; the lowest region of Spiritland was characterised in relation to the inner life of the soul. The description given was such that if you have understood it, you will realise that the Buddha-impulse has its place in the lowest region of Spiritland as described in these lectures. Here is an example of how the details of spiritual research harmonise with each other.

If we now pass on to consider the cosmic aspects of the second region of Spiritland as described from the inner point of view of the soul, we shall find that this second region, the ‘oceanic’ region of Spiritland corresponds with the Jupiter region. Further, if we pass to the third region of Devachan, the ‘Airy’ region of Spiritland, we shall find that it corresponds with the influences of the Saturn region. What was described in *Theosophy* as the fourth region of Spiritland already extends beyond our planetary system. There the soul expands into still wider spaces, into the starry firmament itself. From the descriptions that were given from the inner standpoint of the soul, it will be quite clear to you that the experiences of the soul in the fourth region of Spiritland could not be undergone in any realm where the spatial relationship to the Earth is still the same as that of the planetary system. There is something so utterly foreign in what is conveyed by the fourth region of Spiritland that it can never correspond with what can be experienced even within the outermost planetary sphere, the Saturn sphere.

Therefore the soul passes into the starry firmament, that is to say into distances more and more remote both from the Earth and also from the Sun. These distant realms are described in the account of the three highest regions of Spiritland traversed by the soul before it begins to draw together again and to pass, in the reverse order, through all the preceding conditions. On this journey the soul acquires the forces by means of which it can build up a new life on Earth.

In general it can be said that when the soul has passed through the Sun region it has finished with every element of 'personality'. What is experienced beyond the Sun region, beyond the region of Soul-Life in the true sense, is spiritual; it transcends everything that is personal. What the soul then experiences as 'Thou art that' — and especially in our time as the Buddha-impulse in the Mars region — is something that seems strange here on Earth, though it is not so on Mars; it is the impulse denoted by the word 'Nirvana'. This means liberation from everything that is significant on the Earth, for the soul begins to

realise the great cosmic significance of universal space. In living through all this the soul emancipates itself entirely from the element of personality. In the Mars region, the lowest region of Spiritland, where the soul acquires understanding of the 'Thou art that', or, as we should put it today, receives the Buddha-impulse, it frees itself from everything that is earthly. After the soul has become inwardly free of this — and the Christ Impulse is needed here — it also liberates itself spiritually by recognising that all ties of blood are forged on Earth and therefore belong by nature to the Earth. But the soul then passes on to new conditions.

In the Jupiter region, conditions which force the soul into some particular creed are dissolved. We have heard that the soul can pass through the Venus region with companionship only if it had adopted a creed; without religion in some form it would be lonely and isolated. We have also heard that the soul can pass through the Sun region only when it has learnt to understand the creeds of all religions on the Earth. In the Jupiter region,

however, the soul must liberate itself entirely from the particular creed to which it belonged during life on Earth. This was not an essentially personal attachment but something into which it was born and was shared in company with other souls. Thus the soul can pass through the Venus region only if it has acquired religious ideas in earthly life; it can pass through the Sun region only if it has developed some measure of understanding of all such beliefs. The soul can pass through the Jupiter region only if it is able to liberate itself from the particular confession to which it belonged on Earth; merely to understand the others is not enough. For during the passage through the Jupiter region it will be decided whether in the next life the soul will have to be connected with the same creed as before, or whether it has experienced everything that can be offered by one particular creed. In the Venus sphere the soul garners the fruits of a particular faith; in the Sun sphere the fruits of an understanding of all forms of religious life; but when it reaches the Jupiter region the soul must be able to lay the foundation for a new relationship to religion during the next life on

Earth.

These are three stages experienced by the soul between death and the new birth: first it experiences inwardly the fruits of the faith to which it belonged in the last life; then the fruits of having developed the capacity to appreciate the value of all other religious beliefs; and then it must free itself so completely from the beliefs held in the last life that it can wholeheartedly adopt a different religion. This cannot be achieved by attaching equal value to all creeds; and we know that on its return journey through these regions the soul comes once again into the Jupiter region and there prepares the traits enabling it to live in the fullest sense in a different religion in the next life. In this way the forces which the soul needs in order to shape a new life are gradually impressed into it.

If you now read what is said in the book *Theosophy* about the third region of the Spiritland, the 'airy' or 'atmospheric' region, you will find again what has been said here in connection with the Saturn region. In this region, companionship

and the avoidance of terrible loneliness is possible only for souls already able to exercise a certain degree of genuine self-knowledge, of completely unbiased self-knowledge. Only by being able to put self-knowledge into practice can the soul find entrance to the regions beyond Saturn, therefore even beyond our solar system and leading into that cosmic life from which souls must bring the qualities that ensure progress on the Earth. If souls were never able to live in companionship in realms beyond the Saturn region progress on Earth would not be possible. Think, for example, of the individuals sitting here today. If the souls incarnated in the world at the present time had never passed beyond the Saturn region between death and rebirth, culture on Earth would still be at the stage reached, for example, in the epoch of Ancient India. The Ancient Indian culture was able to progress to that of ancient Persia only because in the intervening periods souls had passed beyond the Saturn region; and again, the progress from Ancient Persian culture to Egypto-Chaldean culture was made possible by impulses for progress brought into the Earth from the realms

beyond the Saturn region. What human beings have contributed to the progress of culture on Earth has been gathered by their souls from realms beyond the Saturn region.

The external progress of mankind originates in the new impulses brought from beyond the Saturn region; in this way the various culture-epochs progress and new impulses take effect. But as well as this there is the stream of inner experiences which is to be distinguished from the progress of external culture and has its 'centre of gravity' in the Mystery of Golgotha. When we know that the stream of experiences in man's inner life of soul on Earth has its centre of gravity in the Mystery of Golgotha, while on the other hand this Mystery of Golgotha is connected with the Sun region. a question arises; it is a question that might well occupy our minds for a very long time but we will at least consider it today. It is good that on the basis of what can already be found in lectures and lecture-courses, we should be able to form our own thoughts about such questions — thoughts which can then be rectified by reports of

investigations given here.

On the one hand we have the fact that Christ is the Sun Spirit who united Himself with the life of the Earth through the Mystery of Golgotha. You will find the most detailed account of this in the lecture-courses entitled *The Gospel of St. John — in its Relation to the Other Three Gospels, particularly to the Gospel of St. Luke*, given in Kassel, and *From Jesus to Christ*. And now we have heard of the other fact, namely that all external progress on Earth from one culture-epoch to the next is dependent upon influences from beyond the Saturn region. A question arises here: Progress on Earth from one culture-epoch to another is dependent upon influences connected with a world beyond the Saturn sphere — a world altogether different from the one where progress is brought about by the stream of spirituality that flows through the evolution of humanity, that approached humanity in ancient times, has its centre of gravity in the Mystery of Golgotha and thereafter took its course in the way often described. How do these two facts harmonise? The

truth is that they harmonise completely.

You need only picture to yourself that our Earth evolution as it is today was preceded by the earlier incarnation of the Earth, namely Old Moon. Now think of Old Moon as we have often described it, followed by the present Earth. Midway in the process of evolution between Old Moon and Earth something like a condition of cosmic sleep took place. During the transition from Old Moon to Earth, everything that had existed on Old Moon passed into a kind of germinal state from which, at a later stage, everything in existence on Earth came forth. But all the planetary spheres also came forth from that cosmic sleep. During the epoch of Old Moon, therefore, the planetary spheres were not in the state in which they exist today. Old Moon passes into the cosmic sleep and out of this condition the planetary spheres develop into what they now are. Everything that evolved in the Cosmos between the era of Old Moon and that of the Earth is contained within the range of the Saturn sphere. The Christ Impulse, however, does not belong to what evolved in the Cosmos during

the period of transition from Old Moon to Earth, but it already belonged to the Old Sun and remained in the Sun sphere when Old Moon eventually separated from it. The Christ Impulse continued to evolve onwards towards the Earth but remained united with the Sun sphere after the Saturn sphere, the Jupiter sphere and so forth, had separated from it. And so, in addition to what the human soul was, before the Mystery of Golgotha, it now has within it something that is more than all that is contained in the planetary spheres, something that is founded in the depths of the Cosmos, that does indeed come over from Sun to Earth but belongs to far deeper regions of the spiritual world than do the planetary spheres. For these planetary spheres are a product of what took place when Old Moon evolved to become Earth. What streams to us from the Christ Impulse, however, comes from Old Sun which preceded Old Moon.

From this we realise that external culture on Earth is connected with the Cosmos, whereas the inner life of soul is connected in a much deeper sense

with the Sun. Thus in all these connections — in their spiritual aspect too — there is something of which the following can be said: When we look out into the stellar spheres there is revealed to us, as it were outspread in space, a world that is embodied in culture on Earth because souls of men have entered into these stellar spheres between death and rebirth; but when we gaze at the Sun we behold something that has become what it is today because behind it there is an infinitely long period of evolution. In an age when it was not yet possible to speak of a connection between culture on Earth and the stellar worlds as can be done today, even then the Sun was already united with the Christ Impulse. Thus everything brought from the stellar worlds for the promotion of culture on the Earth is to be regarded as a kind of Earth-body which needed to be — and actually was — ensouled by what came to the Earth from the Sun, namely by the Christ Impulse. The Earth was ensouled when the Mystery of Golgotha took place; it was then that culture on Earth received its ‘soul’.

The death on Golgotha was only seemingly a death; in reality it was the birth of the Earth-Soul. And everything that can be brought to the Earth from cosmic expanses, also from beyond the Saturn sphere, is related to the Earth-Sphere as the Earth-Body is related to the Earth-Soul.

These reflections can show us that the presentation given in the book *Theosophy* — in rather different words and from a different point of view — contains what has been described as the cosmic aspect in the lectures given this Winter. You need only be reminded that in the one case the account is given from the point of view of the soul, and in the other from that of the great cosmic conditions, and you will find that the two descriptions are in complete harmony.

The conclusion which I should like to be able to draw from these lectures is that you realise how vast is the range of Spiritual Science and that its method must be to gather from every possible side whatever can throw light on the nature of the spiritual world. Even when additions are made to what had been said years ago, there need be no

contradiction, for what is said is not the outcome of any philosophical argument or reflective thinking, but of occult investigation. Yellow today will still be yellow ten years hence, even though the essential quality of yellow as a colour is grasped for the first time ten years later. What was said years ago still holds good, although light is shed upon it from the new points of view which it has been possible to contribute during last Winter.