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## A READER'S JOURNAL

### Earthly Knowledge and Heavenly Wisdom 9 Lectures in Dornach in February, 1923, GA#221

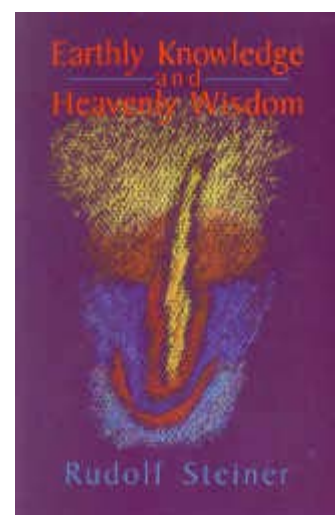
by

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To understand the cycles of human life, it is helpful to compare human life to the insect's life, but one must always keep in mind that human life cycles are much longer. Whereas insects repeat the same life cycle over and over, humans evolve over long periods of time, so that the cycle of egg, caterpillar,

chrysalis, and butterfly in humankind corresponds to cultural epochs. (A list of cultural epochs and dates can be found [in this table](#).) Around 750 B.C. we entered the cultural epoch of the sentient soul in which we were directly connected to our senses and what constituted thinking for humans was a kind of instinctive clairvoyance or picture-consciousness. During that Greco-Roman epoch, the processes of intellectual or conceptual consciousness developed until about 1413 A. D. when humans entered the intellectual soul epoch with fully developed intellectual capabilities and a free self-awareness. The scholastic thinkers of thirteenth through fifteenth centuries helped enormously to bring this about. Since then we have entered the consciousness soul age where we are learning how to deal with our freedom and consciousness. As insects go through various stages of life during the course of one year, humans over thousands of years have gone through the stages of sentient soul, intellectual soul, and have now reached about the midpoint of the consciousness soul age. In each age we build upon and continue to use the abilities of the previous ages; as we wend our way through this consciousness soul age, we have full use of our learnings from the sentient soul and intellectual soul ages. Our primary focus will be on human consciousness as we progress through this age, and learning about how we got here over the stepping stones of the previous ages is one of the most important things we have to learn.

Steiner helps us understand where we are in an evolutionary sense. Remember Louis Reed's haunting lyrics of "September Song"? "It's a long, long while from May to December, but the days grow short when we reach September." It can be considered to be *September* in human evolution on Earth.

**[page 3] As members of the human race, we have to find this inner sense of direction in the awareness that we belong to this or that century, which, in turn, has a special place in the total evolution of our planet, just as the month of September has a special place in the course of the year. In other words, we have to become aware of how our soul life will enter into our particular historical epoch.**

**This is something we still have to work on by entering more and more deeply into the development of the consciousness soul. We have to be conscious that we live in this or that epoch and are not fully human if we leave our life to chance, or karma(1), which has placed us into our earthly existence at birth. We are fully human, in the true sense of the word, only if we take into account what the historical evolution of humanity demands of our soul life in the epoch in which we live. Animals live in accordance with the course of the year. Human beings, on the other hand, have to learn to live in accordance with a historical epoch.**

When we study the epochs of human history, we must be aware of changes in human beings as dramatic

as the egg, caterpillar, chrysalis, and butterfly stages of certain insects. Otherwise we will err as a butterfly-historian who might speculate about how high butterflies flew when they were caterpillars! Yet, that is, in effect, what historians do who are ignorant of the tremendous changes that human processes, such as thinking and consciousness, have undergone in historical times.

**[page 4] What is usually called history these days cannot help us develop such an awareness for any given epoch. A mere account of how the Persian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Greek, or Roman culture developed does not tell us anything about how to integrate ourselves harmoniously into the historical development of our planet — the way animals are integrated into the course of the year.**

How do historians show their ignorance of the stages of human development? Take the way that they treat ancient myths, for one thing.

**[page 5, 6] People in ancient times saw something true to reality where people now see only strange and fantastic myths. In ancient times, people knew that when they looked at an animal in the physical, sensory world, it had a clearly defined outline. However, they were not interested in such definite outlines; rather, they wanted to understand the life that moved everywhere in a flowing stream. They felt this was not possible in sharply defined pictures or concepts but only in liquid, changing, metamorphosing images. This is how things were presented to them in the Mysteries.**

The Temple of Apollo carried two sayings over its entrance: "Nothing in Excess" and "Know Yourself". Early humans attempted to know themselves by looking inside themselves where they found images of the three lower kingdoms of mineral, plant, and animal, but these pictures were insufficient to what they experienced as a human being, and they developed a conviction.

**[page 7] This conviction is the realization of truly enlightened people that here on earth, where minerals, plants, and animals fulfill their intended purpose and reveal their true being in the pictures people have of them, human beings do not reveal their true being.**

These ancient humans were like butterflies trying to know their real selves while they are still crawling around the ground in the caterpillar stage of their existence. The butterfly does not exist to crawl upon the ground as a caterpillar for its entire existence, any more than human beings exist to live in physical bodies and remain forever on Earth in the caterpillar stage of human evolution.

**[page 7] The philosophy of life fundamental to all ancient civilizations was that human beings do not belong to the earth in the same way as the creatures of the other kingdoms of nature. The real home of our true essence is not on earth but elsewhere, in the supersensible world. This conviction was not unfounded; people arrived at it through a crisis in their soul lives after they had learned everything about nonhuman life on earth that was appropriate for their times. In fact, this inner crisis could be resolved only because people in ancient times were still able to look at pre-earthly life and also at post-earthly life, at life after death.**

To continue our analogy, a butterfly who could see its pre-butterfly life as a caterpillar or a caterpillar who could see its post-caterpillar life as a butterfly could know its true identity. Now we come to an amazing revelation by Steiner: that during the ancient picture-consciousness phase of our evolution, intellectual life was only possible after death. Since that time, humans have moved to having an intellectual life on Earth.

**[page 9] It is indeed true that even though in earlier times people were challenged to know themselves, the answer they found was that self-knowledge is impossible during life on earth because the true human essence does not fully unfold in this life. They had to realize that they were not truly human beings until they entered the supersensible**

## **world after death.**

Since the true human essence did not fully unfold for them in this life, writers of ancient times, such as Homer, needed assistance to write of human essence and deeds. In beginning his epic work, *The Iliad*, Homer called upon the gods to reveal this essence to him, "Speak to me, O Muse, of the wrath of Achilles," and he recorded what they said to him. The Muse's words came from the voice of the intellect streaming in from the supersensible world to Homer's mind.

**[page 10] According to the point of view prevailing in ancient Greece, individual persons did not represent the full unfolding of the human essence, but they made visible, so to speak, the work of the stream from the supersensible. People then saw the streaming in of the supra-earthly into the earthly realm in a person's whole physiognomy, way of acting, and overall figure, and they revered it.**

Since the Mystery of Golgotha we can say along with St. Paul, "Not I, but Christ who lives in me." When we do this, we begin to feel "something livening up and bursting forth within us."

**[page 13] We come to know something during our earthly life that arises from our humanness.**

**When we feel this rising light and life and the love rising up within us, and identify them as Christ living and working in us, then we become inwardly strengthened to understand in our free soul the life after death as the fully human one. Thus, the Mystery of Golgotha and the Christ-Impulse are intimately connected with our attainment of a consciousness of freedom, a consciousness that can also fill our thinking with inner life and inner warmth, thus keeping it from becoming abstract and dead. This shows clearly the full significance and importance of Christ within us. We need to see this in connection with the demand made on all people at all times, even today: "Know yourself. Fructify your inner being to become fully human."**

People in ancient times were unable to experience full humanness until they had passed through the portal of death. We living humans today are able to experience full humanness and it behooves us to do so or we will become like a butterfly sans wings who is doomed to crawl about the Earth as a caterpillar because it repudiated the very essence of its evolutionary growth, its future as a butterfly.

**[page 14] In those ancient times, human beings had the task of being candidates for becoming fully human while here on earth. We now have the task of becoming fully human already here on earth so that we can reach higher stages of development after death. If people in ancient times did not live their lives on earth properly, they were in danger of not attaining full humanity. We modern people face a different problem. If we do not achieve full humanity here on earth, we, in fact, repudiate it and condemn ourselves to descending further into the subhuman realm after death. If people in ancient times did not become candidates for full humanity, they simply had left something undone. However, if we do not strive to become fully human on earth, we destroy something for all of humanity, because we then repudiate humanness; people in ancient times merely missed it.**

It is a salient fact of the evolution of humanity and consciousness in historical times that the meanings of words change over time, but the words do not (or only cosmetically so). It is both an advantage and disadvantage that English is a relatively new language. On the one hand, classics are translated into English using the most recent definitions of the words of the ancient languages. On the other hand, those new definitions are shaped by our current evolution of consciousness which will skew the original meanings as they are translated into English. In any case, one should be clear that people have not always perceived, thought, or felt the way we do now. Imagine a world in which the ancient myths represented a daily reality and you can get a sense of how far we have progressed as human beings.

**[page 16] As I have often emphasized, people nowadays are convince that human being have always thought, felt, and perceived the same way we do now. Any differences corresponded to the childlike level of development in earlier times; of course, our thinking has now reached the level of maturity. To arrive at real insight into the human being we must be able to understand how people thought in former times. Then we will not feel so proud of what fills our souls. When we realize how completely the ideas and thoughts of educated people have changed in the course of just a few decades, we will get an idea of the radical change that has taken place in human soul life over long periods of time.**

Not many people today remember the early antiseptic used by mothers on skinned knees of their children called, "Tincture of Iodine." It was a dark purple liquid which was liberally dabbed over broken skin in a violet-colored wash to prevent any infection from starting there. The word "tincture" has an ancient meaning based on the then prevalent clairvoyant or picture-vision of human beings.

**[page 21] The ancients gave the name "tincture" to what was revealed when the clairvoyant felt the whole world bathed in a violet light and himself living in a violet cloud in this light, and felt at one with himself. Clairvoyants felt this tincture as their own, as connected to their organism. They felt it as their very own astrum. (RJM: "constellation")**

To live in the pure tincture of their astrum required rejecting anything which came to them from the outside world. Any disturbing thing was felt to have a spiritual influence in it which the ancients called turba(2). The astrum was their heavenly or starry constellations.

**[page 22] You see, here we can get a glimpse of the soul life of a very ancient time, a soul life that existed still in the . . . middle of the nineteenth century though it was already in decline and fading away. But this soul life had once been an inner participation in the divine-spiritual world through dream-like, clairvoyant pictures that made people feel more as heavenly beings than earthly ones.**

But we humans have changed from the ancients and when we awaken from sleep now we feel a sharp demarcation between sleeping and waking. Nothing from the sleep state continues to live in us as it did with the ancients. Since 1413 A. D. we have moved on to pure intellectual thinking when we are awake and we sleep in a state of "nothingness." (Page 25) We sleep, in effect, in a world of the future which we cannot perceive, the world in which the Earth will be transformed into the phases of Jupiter, Venus, and Vulcan that Steiner describes in his [Outline of Occult Science](#). (Page 26) Here is his summary of modern humanity:

**[page 27] First, when we are awake, we live in thoughts that are purely thoughts and nothing else. These thoughts no longer contain pictures in the old sense (which, in any case, people now regard as myths). Second, when we are asleep, we live in nothingness, and in that way we free ourselves from the world and become conscious of our freedom. The images in our thoughts can no longer compel us because they are mere pictures.**

Where do most people's thoughts come from today? From their study of nature or historical documents or from the concepts fed them by teachers in school. They take these things and mirror them and call them ideas. This creates a passive way of thinking which has replaced creative thinking. But there is a still a way of infusing our thought with inner reality. It requires "enough will to push our night being into our waking life." Steiner devoted his book, [The Philosophy of Freedom](#) to enlightening people how to accomplish this.

**[page 29] At the time, I could not express it in the same words I do now, but it really is**

**true that when we are asleep, we free our I-being(3), and then we can insert it into our pure thinking. We become aware of our I-being in pure thinking when we live actively in our thoughts.**

Since Bacon's time, science has been taught passively. Steiner was well aware of the dangers of teaching or learning anthroposophy (his spiritual science) in a passive manner: those who learned it passively would be unable to stand up for it.

**[page 30] However, as soon as people decide to create in themselves the thoughts anthroposophical research give to them, they will become able to defend the truth of these thoughts with their whole personality for, in the process they will have experienced the first stage of truth.**

My first contact with the works of Rudolf Steiner came from my study Owen Barfield's works on the evolution of consciousness. As I learned from Steiner in Lecture 3, it was my first step to being a true human being.

**[page 33] As we have discussed before, we must understand the evolution of humanity in order to be imbued with the consciousness we need to be human beings in the true sense of the word.**

In the ancient days, humans could only find life in death, but nowadays we can find life in life. Steiner illuminates this paradox for us here:

**[page 34] In our recent talks we have seen the reason for this. In those ancient times, human beings had no other way to gain self-knowledge than to think of what would happen to them immediately after death. Back then, people were free thinking beings like us only after death. Only after death did people in ancient times consider themselves independent beings, autonomous individualities. The ancient sages told their students to look beyond death if they wanted to know what a true human being is. They had to experience a reflection of death in the Mysteries to become convinced of their eternal life and immortal being. Essentially, then, to seek the Mysteries was to seek death in order to find life.**

**Things have changed; people are different nowadays. What people in ancient times experienced after death, namely, becoming thinking and free beings in their own right, we now have to achieve in the time between birth and death. But how can we do this? As we gain more and more self-knowledge, we first of all must get to know our thoughts.**

One of the things we must know about our thoughts is that they are like the corpses or dead bodies of the living spiritualness which lived in us in our previous spiritual life before we were born. Some of that aliveness remained in us as children, but soon disappeared at the behest of the adults around us for whom such thoughts and visions as we had during our pre-five years no longer existed and had been long forgotten(4).

**[page 34] However, our thoughts, particularly those developed since the first third of the fifteenth century, since the time of Nicholas of Cusa, are actually dead thoughts; they are corpses. What lived in them was alive in our pre-earthly existence. Before we descended to earth as soul-spiritual beings, we lived a spiritual life. With the beginning of our earthly life, this spiritual life died, and we now experience this dead spiritual life in us as our thinking.**

The nothingness of our sleep holds our will and our job is to use our will to harness our dead thoughts and bring them to life. In Steiner's words (page 36) we "have to bring our dead thoughts to life through inner, creative will."

**[page 35] The first thing we must realize is that while we can arrive at true self-knowledge in our age — that is, we can know ourselves as soul-spiritual beings — the object of our self-knowledge is dead; it is a spiritual corpse. Something coming from the will, which is actually in nothingness during our sleep and yet anchored in the astral body and the I, must flow into this dead element. The I must stream into the dead thoughts and bring them to life.**

Steiner exhorts us to wake up and describes what waking up constitutes:

**[page 37] We develop the right attitude only when we feel ourselves awakening in the process of becoming anthroposophists. We are actually waking up when we realize that the concepts and ideas the world has given us are dead, mere corpses of thoughts and ideas, but that anthroposophy will awaken them for us.**

In my review of Steiner's book [Riddles of the Soul](#), I wrote:

**It is as if we have been living in a large mansion since 1413 A. D. when materialistic science began to direct our focus solely to our sensory inputs and away from the windows. In successive centuries since then, science has progressively boarded up more and more of the windows until the great majority of us have forgotten that the windows ever existed and either find puzzling or make fun of old texts inked by those writers who could still see through those windows into the spiritual world.**

This is the state of most people in the modern world — they live in a boarded-up house and are not aware of it. Steiner wrote about this in the first part of [Riddles of the Soul](#) and mentions it in Lecture 3 in this book:

**[page 37, 38] When you read the first chapter of *Riddles of the Soul*, regardless of how imperfectly it may be written, you will see my intention in writing it. I wanted to help people realize that if they remain stuck at the level of our present civilization, the world will be boarded up for them, so to speak. With the natural sciences we can progress only so far, then we come to where the world is as though boarded up. That chapter was my attempt to clear away the boards. If you have the feeling that you are pulling away the boards that have enclosed the world for centuries now, when you can regard the words in my book as tools for this pulling away, then you really approach the soul-spiritual. Most people have only an unconscious feeling that chapters such as this are written with pen and ink. Indeed, they are not written with a pen, but with soul tools intended to tear away those boards, that is, to clear away the limits of natural science through inner soul work. When you read such a chapter, you must work too and be active in your soul.**

Steiner's words, rightly understood, are to be used as crowbars by us, Good Readers, to pry away the boards of materiality with which natural science has covered the windows of our reality, up until now. With my own background in natural science (physics) I would often include tables and diagrams to illustrate various points in Steiner's reviews. I am chastened by what Steiner writes in this next passage, and, picking up earlier hints by him, for some time now I have avoided any tables or diagrams in my reviews which might re-cover the windows of the world with the boards which Steiner strives to tear away with his words and living thoughts.

**[page 39] Sometimes people get strange ideas from reading anthroposophical books. I can understand these ideas, and usually do not refute them because they are of a certain value for the individual having them. For example, concerning my book [An Outline of Occult Science](#), some people have had the idea to illustrate it so that it could be presented in pictures, and they thought they would be doing the book a favor with this. In fact, people have even shown me samples of such pictures. I have nothing against**



**that; if the sample pictures are good, we can admire them, and it is certainly nice to paint such pictures. But what is the longing that gave rise to this idea? It is the longing to take away the most important thing that can be developed through reading [An Outline of Occult Science](#), and instead to present people with pictures that once again board up the world for them.**

All I can say now is if pictures are useful to you for understanding Steiner's words, build the pictures for yourself and then discard them as the next person will need to build their own pictures if they require them for understanding. I will make an exception for the colored diagrams which Steiner drew on his blackboard whenever I find one drawn during the lecture I am reviewing. Two of those can be found below.

**[page 40] The more unique and individual pictures each reader is able to create in his or her mind, the better. However, if somebody else draws these pictures for the readers, he boards up the world for them, so to speak. Of course, I do not want to deliver a lecture against painting what is presented in imaginations in my [An Outline of Occult Science](#), but I do want to point out that everybody needs to have the experience of taking it in actively.**

Near the end of the marvelous book by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, [The Little Prince](#), we are given an image of the stars in the sky overhead laughing. Most readers are affected deeply by that image and few know why it is moving. Perhaps they would understand if they knew how carefully natural science has boarded up the living reality of the stars soon after the time of the scholastics of the twelfth through fourteenth centuries.

**[page 42] The scholastics spoke of the inhabitants of the stars who belong to hierarchies above ours in the evolution of beings. People at that time looked out into the universe, to the planets of our planetary system and to the other stars, and were aware that more than etheric-material light was streaming down. They knew that when they looked up to the stars, the spiritual beings embodied there were looking down into their souls.**

Steiner says (Page 43) that "People in those times felt themselves to be citizens of the earth and at the same time felt themselves to be citizens of the universe." Where do we see people portrayed with that feeling of being a citizen of the universe today? Only in science fiction dramas such as Star Trek. The feeling never leaves us as human beings, but if we board up the reality, it returns to us as myth. It is insightful to notice that we have boarded up ancient myths while, at the same time, we have created new myths such as Star Trek to reveal the same truths that infused the boarded up myths. One can even imagine St. Exupéry hearing the next words of Rudolf Steiner in 1924 and using them as inspiration for his story about the Little Prince who lived on one of the smallest heavenly bodies in the universe, an asteroid(5).

**[page 44] Imagine what it must feel like to live on one of the smallest of the heavenly bodies in a universe devoid of soul and spirit!**

The Little Prince represents each of us who must squeeze an "I" out of our own being because the forces we once received flowing into us from the universe no longer arrive. It is as if we have become hermits on an isolated desert isle where no mail, phone, or other signals reach us. We live on a lonely speck of dust alone and desolate. Everything we can investigate with our senses tells us about the mineral kingdom, the plant kingdom, and the animal kingdom, but nothing about the human kingdom — nothing about our soul and spirit.

**[page 46] Out of the frame of mind accompanying the realization that human beings are hermits on the earth, living on a speck of dust in the universe, had to come the impulse to develop true humanness in free inner development, In fact, human being had to confront the big question: "is there really nothing in the environment our senses can see,**

**hear, and feel and our intellect can understand that goes beyond what our senses tell us?**

”

We have become Baconian hermits living in Plato's Cave staring at the shadows on the wall and wondering what is really there that those shadows are giving us hints about. Those shadows are the abstract laws with which Bacon and his followers have shaped their explanations of how the natural world around us works, but they tell us nothing about soul and spirit. It took the natural scientist Goethe to envision the Earth as a spiritual being who fashions us into the clothing of God. Here are the words spoken by the Earth Spirit in Goethe's *Faust* which Steiner quotes:

**[page 47, 48]**

**In the tides of life, in action's storm,  
I surge and ebb,  
As cradle and grave,  
as unending sea,  
as constant change,  
as life's incandescence,  
I work at the whirling loom of time  
and fashion the living garment of God.**

If Goethe sounds like a scientist working on religion, it should not be a surprise to you because there was an earlier time when there was no distinction between religious and scientific knowledge.

**[page 59] In ancient times it would have been unthinkable to see religion and scientific knowledge as two different things. When people in those days arrived at a scientific insight, it immediately also gave them a religious feeling, showing them the way to the gods. In fact, they could not help being religious in the true sense of the word once they had gained knowledge. Nowadays people can learn the whole spectrum of current knowledge, and yet it will not make them religious. I would like to know whether anyone has become religious these days through having become a botanist, zoologist, or chemist!**

**People who want to be religious look for religion in addition to knowledge. That is why we have separate institutions for the cultivation of religious life besides those for learning and knowledge. In fact, many people think that knowledge diverts us from the path of religion and that, therefore, we must look for other ways to lead us back to religion. Nevertheless, in our lectures we have had to stress again and again the importance of modern knowledge. We have had to point out that recent insights and findings are indeed essential for modern humanity and its further development.**

In olden times, people needed as a spiritual infusion from their muses what we today have as a circadian human ability, namely our intellectual world view. The freedom we experience today while living, the ancients could only experience after death.

**[page 60] In other words, what people in ancient times experienced only after death in looking back on their earthly life, namely intellectualism and a consciousness of freedom, modern people have crammed already into their life between birth and death. They have become intellectual beings endowed with a consciousness of freedom while still on earth.**

Those of you, Good Readers, who have read many of my Steiner reviews know that often his works have inspired me to write a poem which I often include in my review of his book or lectures. My poems are like the hymns to pure thoughts which Steiner suggests are more important than any analysis of his words and thoughts.

**[page 61] For several centuries now, people have been receiving in their earthly life what they received only after death in ancient times, namely, intellectual understanding of the**



**world and a consciousness of freedom. Yet, they have hardly noticed this; their world of feelings, the elemental part of their world, has hardly been touched. In fact, we could say that all this is more likely to have a bitter taste for people. After all, they do not consider pure thoughts the way I have tried to do in [The Philosophy of Freedom](#), that is, they do not respond by wanting to sing hymns to them rather than analyze them.**

Steiner points out that Novalis felt that solving a differential equation was equivalent to him to the act of praying. (Page 62) But he also notes that most graduate students today are "glad when they have their exams behind them and do have to go through any more." Like people taking a trip who focus ever on the destination, these student are apt to miss the joy of the journey itself in their eagerness for it to be over. We yearn for earthly knowledge, but want to have it already and get on with our lives. Is not the seeking process itself intended to be joyful?

**[page 62] The joy of having passed through the stages of the Mysteries is hardly to be found in modern exam candidates. At least it is extremely rare nowadays that students talk with the full seriousness of the ancient Mysteries about the profoundly divine deed a professor has done in giving them a dissertation topic and enabling them to go through the water of holiness while they work on their topic. Yet that would be the normal, self-evident thing to do.**

We are in a constant battle between our physical body (which seeks to die and return to the Earth from which it came) and our etheric body (which strives to keep the physical body alive and healthy). When we get ill and go to a medical doctor, all we can expect for the doctor to provide assistance for our etheric body in its goal of returning us to health. The etheric body always works within the guidelines provided by our own destiny which doctors are only able to assist and not overcome. Rightly understood, modern medicine can only act as assistant, a midwife, if you will, to our recovery. If that recovery is not pregnant within our destiny or karma, like a unborn child in its mother's womb, not even the mightiest efforts of modern medicine with all its diagnostic tools, such as blood tests, Cat Scans, PET Scans, or MRI's, can deliver the baby. To become aware of this heavenly wisdom is to become fully human beings.

**[page 68] That is the awareness with which we must permeate ourselves. That is how we can come to know the cosmic significance of the human being. We will understand our cosmic significance that leads us to study first the physical body and then the body of formative forces or etheric body.**

**I want to mention here only one example. When we study our physical body in the right way, that is, by illuminating this body with anthroposophy, we will learn that it is subject to its own forces. When our body subjects itself to its own forces, it continuously tends to become ill. Indeed, our lower part, our physical body, always has a tendency to become ill. And when we then study the etheric body, we find there the totality of the forces that constantly work to make the sick human being well again. The pendulum swings between physical body and etheric body aiming to keep the balance between the pathological and the therapeutical. In other words, our etheric body is the cosmic therapist, and our physical body the cosmic pathogenic agent.**

**We can say the same about other areas of human knowledge. We have to ask ourselves what we have to do when we are confronted with an illness. Well, we have to manage somehow, through some combination of remedies, to call upon the etheric body for healing. Basically, this is what all of medicine is doing: it somehow calls upon the patient's etheric body for healing. We are on the right path toward healing a patient who can be cured when we appeal to their etheric body in the right way, that is, when we seek the healing forces that can flow into the patient from their etheric body in accordance with the individual's destiny.**

Part of knowing the wisdom of the body is to understand that the breathing process is a destructive process, especially an excess of oxygen. We see people taking oxygen as a way of extending their lives,

but are they aware that this excess oxygen must be complemented by carbon dioxide formation in the blood at all times if our life is to be extended?

**[page 74] Our life is lengthened to the extent that the intake of oxygen is compensated for by carbon dioxide formation in the blood.**

The key to understanding healing in the human body is to distinguish between the *anabolic processes* which happen during the assimilation of nutrition with the subsequent storage of energy and the *catabolic processes* during which complex organic compounds break up into simpler ones. Everyone has heard the old wives tale which goes, "Feed a fever, starve a cold." Steiner reveals the truth behind this advice and show us how it originates in the anabolic and catabolic forces which lead to fevers and colds.

**[page 81] For example, you know that when the inflammatory forces are strong, we also often have a fever. Basically, this is caused by overly strong, excessive anabolic processes in the blood. Indeed, the forces we often develop during a fever would almost be sufficient to supply energy for another person if they could be conducted there.**

**On the other hand, when the catabolic forces predominate, we have cold symptoms, which are not as easy to diagnose as a fever. Of course, sometimes the two conditions alternate, and so, in practice, we often have to deal with an intermingling of what we really need to keep separate to fully understand the matter.**

There is much more information on the healing processes of the human body in its fourth parts: physical form, etheric, astral, and I-Body, which will reward your study in Lecture 6, but we will move on to the remaining three lectures on "Moral Impulses and their Physical Manifestations."

Nietzsche is best known for his atheism, but Steiner shows us how Nietzsche led philosophy into an absurdity. What led Nietzsche into his notorious position as an atheist was his honesty, rightly understood. Here's how Steiner identifies what he calls two elements which run as "red threads" through Nietzsche's life:

**[page 91] The first of these factors is that, beginning with the turning point in his second year at the university until the end of his life, Nietzsche basically had an atheistic outlook, which remained unchanged though all the transformations of his philosophy. The second factor is that in regard to the moral, intellectual, and practical impulses of his time, he asserted that *one* virtue was the most important, namely, honesty — honesty with oneself, with others, and with the world as a whole.**

After Nietzsche took up the scientific positivism of his time which believed that the "whole world is built up exclusively from what is directly perceptible to the senses", he was determined no one with such an attitude could continue to believe in God. To Nietzsche to be honest was to be atheist.

**[page 92, 93] It seemed to him dishonest to look at the world from the prevailing point of view at that time and, at the same time to assume the existence of deity. . . . If we adhere to this knowledge of nature, we must reject God.**

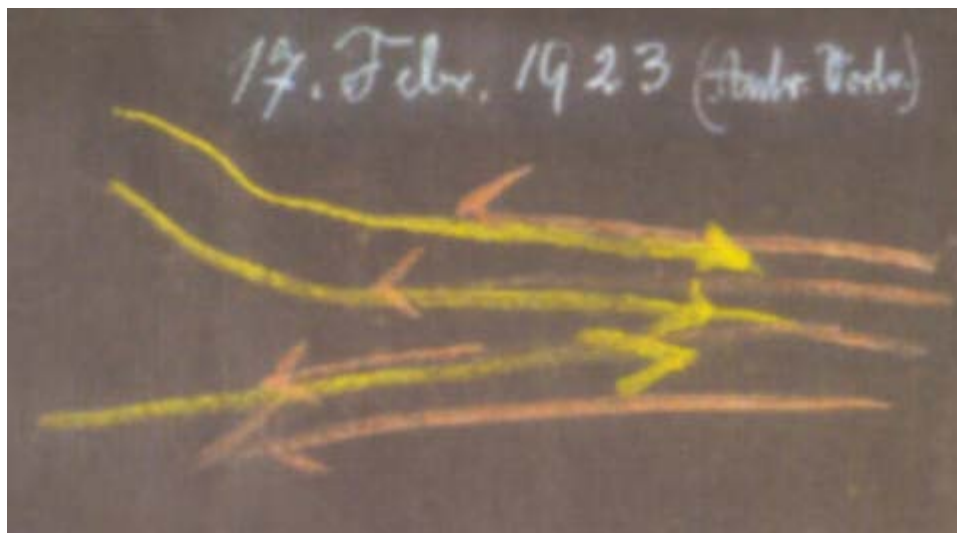
**[page 103] Nietzsche was faced with the necessity of entering the supersensible world with his moral problems, but he was unable to do so. That was his inner tragedy, and that is also what makes him a representative of the late nineteenth century. As a representative soul of that age, he indicated that human beings have to enter into the supersensible world if they want to remain honest and not declare moral ideals mere lies. Nietzsche became insane because he was faced with the need to enter the supersensible world but could not do so. . . . Still we can see one thing clearly from Nietzsche's life: Modern people can be honest with themselves and others only if they enter the supersensible world. . . . If morality, in a certain sense, belongs to the "superman," then it demands that we look for this "superman" not in the sensory world but in the supersensible one.**

Steiner next undertakes to answer the question of "whether the moral impulses we have remain abstract or can actually intervene in our physical organization." He make it clear that no mechanical device can have any moral impulses. This includes modern day computers which are all mechanical devices by Steiner's definition as they utilize only physical components.

**[page 106] As I said yesterday, we can be sure that no moral impulse intervenes in the mechanism of a machine. There is no direct connection between the moral world order and machines. Consequently, when the human organism is presented as a kind of machine, as happens more and more often in the modern scientific outlook, the same then applies to us, and moral impulses are only an illusion. At best, we can hope that some being, made known to us through revelation, will intervene in the moral world order, reward the good, and punish the evil people. But we cannot see a connection between moral impulses and physical processes inherent in the order of the world.**

Anyone who ever had a dog knows that when one arrives home, the dog wags its tail joyfully. Just the sight of the energetically waving tail is enough to instill a feeling of joy in the master of the dog. What the dog sees through its head and smells through its nose flows in a wave to its extremity or tail and sets it into wagging. We learn what a dog is feeling by looking at its tail.

**[page 107] When we now look at the overall organization of animals and see that the opposite pole to the head organism is the tail end, then in terms of the animals' physical, etheric, and astral organization, we can say that their astral mobility**



**flows from the back to the front. The streams of their astral body are continuously flowing from the back to the front and meet the sensory impressions received through the sense organs in the head. Thus, the two streams merge. I can draw you a rough sketch(6) of this; here the astral streams, flowing from the back to the front (red arrows), are met by the sensory impressions flowing from the head toward the tail end (yellow arrows). These two currents merge and work together throughout the animals' organism.**

Steiner says if you want to know the attitude of the dog, you should not look so much at its face but at its tail. But human beings are not animals and our astral and etheric currents do not flow from our head to/from our tail bone. Instead we are erect beings so that our head is lifted out of the astral current which flows from back to front. (Page 109) This has a dramatic effect on our physiognomy or facial and bodily expressions.

**[page 111] The shape of animal heads develops out of the rest of their organization. However, our head in a sense lifts itself with a certain amount of independence out of our organization. Now, the rest of our organization pushes its way into our head in our changing gestures and facial expressions. For example, if you are inwardly agitated because you are frightened, then what is in your metabolism and blood circulation is**

**expressed through the forces of your organism in your changing expressions and the sudden paling of your face. Other emotions affect us similarly. In other words, what lives in the rest of our organism pours soul-spiritually, that is, astrally, into our head. What lives astrally in the rest of our organism becomes manifest in our complexion and, above all, in our changing expressions, in our physiognomy, in the physiognomy and mobility of our head.**

Here is another diagram drawn by Steiner on a black piece of paper during this lecture. When he talks about "an ugly physiognomy" one can replace those words with the common phrase "a nasty look." We all know intuitively that a nasty look is a sign of an evil disposition or immoral intent in a person.

[page 113] I would like to explain this with a diagram (see drawing below). Here we have a human being; there is the astral body (red) that causes the facial expressions visible on the outside, and here is another part of that same astral body (yellow). In the astral body up here (see drawing, top part), our physiognomy is visible on the outside, but down here in the other part (see drawing, bottom part), we have a physiognomy manifesting entirely on the inside. The latter part of the astral body faces toward the inside. We are usually not aware of this, but it is nevertheless true. Children continuously turn this physiognomy of the lower part of the astral body toward their inside; by the time they become adults, the expressions or features become more or less permanently turned to the inside.

Now let me tell you what is behind all this. When we have an impulse to do what is rightly called a good or moral deed, our inner physiognomy is different from what it would be if we had an impulse to do something evil. We have, in a sense, an ugly physiognomy on the inside when we carry out a selfish deed. After all, all moral deeds are basically unselfish, and all immoral ones egotistic. However, in everyday life this moral difference is masked by the fact that people can be very immoral, that is, full of selfish motives, but still follow what they were taught since childhood, or in doing things because they are worried about what others will say.



Villains are generally portrayed as having nasty looks (an ugly physiognomy) in melodramas, but in real life — well, if only it were so simple to recognize villainous or immoral persons. They can have angelic looks or expressions on their faces which hide their inner nasty looks. But they cannot escape the stunting created by their villainy in their next life. To lead an immoral life is to lead a wasted life as far one's spiritual evolution is concerned.

[page 118] In other words, by being moral or immoral we actively work on the future of the earth. Immoral people present the forces surrounding the earth with what drizzles

**down onto the earth etherically and reunites with it, or what lives in the orbit around the earth. These surrounding forces are important for all earth activity because the physical of the earth develops eventually out of the etheric. On the other hand, moral people have taken into their head the forces that develop especially through moral impulses, and they therefore give to the cosmos what they have achieved on earth.**

It should be clear why it is that if we use only our sensory apparatus as natural science does, we will not be able to discern how moral and immoral impulses work. Moral impulses flow into the cosmos and immoral impulses scatter themselves upon the Earth. (Page 119)

**[page 119] Thus, even a moral philosopher with the inner force of Nietzsche is at loose ends with his moral principles; he can only solidify them in the way I described yesterday. However, that would still not be a true solidity. In spite of all his explanations in *Beyond Good and Evil*, he had to trace everything to the physical body. That is why he failed. Thus, to understand the effectiveness of the moral we have to go beyond the merely physical order of the world and enter the supersensible realm. We have to realize that while morality radiates into the physical in an abstract way, we can understand and assess its activity only in the realm of the supersensible.**

Goethe was one scientist of the natural world who had concepts which were not dead abstract things, but were full of life. He could look at a plant and seeing it transforming from seed into its fruiting stage — he could see how its terminal leaves at some point morphed into flowers. But most scientists today like their concepts fixed, with sharp contours, and easily explained in a few words. While recognizing the value of Goethe's fluid concepts, Steiner acknowledges that our dead concepts have resulted in an awareness of freedom and an advanced technology.

**[page 123, 124] Nevertheless, living in rigid concepts that ignore everything living has given us the opportunity to attain an inner awareness of freedom, as I have often explained.**

**Two developments have come about a result of our concepts having become dead: first the awareness of freedom, and second, the possibility to apply the rigid concepts, which have been developed out of what is dead and can be used only for what is dead, in our magnificent, triumphant technology, which is nothing more than the putting into practice of a rigid system of ideas.**

Along with this technological progress, we have lost our ability to connect to the living spirit around us, up until now. Steiner says, "we must find this living element on our own" from now on. (Page 124) He describes how humans used to be before we lost this ability.

**[page 124] In very ancient times, people saw life in every cloud formation, every flash of lightning, every roll of thunder, in every living plant, and so on. In a sense, they breathed in life and thus understood it, and without any effort they were in the midst of life. They only had to take in life from the outside. In contrast, in our evolutionary stage our concepts can grasp only what is dead, and the outer environment can no longer give us what is alive. Therefore, we must bring forth this living element out of the innermost core of our being.**

During the early cultural epochs of ancient Persia and Egypt people knew that they had descended from a pre-earthly life and that they were like a vessel on Earth which was filled with the gifts of the gods. They felt like light-filled vessels. They considered themselves as the tenth hierarchy of the spiritual beings, the ones descended to Earth.

**[page 125] The divine element then was manifold. To the ancient consciousness, the lowest gods in the divine hierarchy that extended all the way down to the earth were the human beings themselves.**



By the time of the Greco-Roman cultural epoch, humans came to see themselves as representatives of the gods, not as vessels.

**[page 127] This basic feeling is expressed in Greek art, where the gods are represented as idealized human beings in accordance with that fundamental feeling. In a sense, then, the ancient Greeks kept their relationship to the divine in the purity of their heart and feelings.**

By the year 1413 A. D., people lost this view of themselves and what replaced it was a natural science view of humans as being formed from the lower animals. It was as though a Frankensteinian ethos had taken over humankind. Humans could be now built from parts of other humans as machines are, as Dr. Frankenstein built his monster. This ethos is yet with us in the twenty-first century and the new Dr. Frankensteins are using computers and software in their attempts to build replacements for human beings. The implications of such attempts are clear: the human is simply a machine which evolved out of simpler components and earlier forms of lower animal life. As such we are no longer part of the tenth hierarchy of spiritual beings — we have the feeling now that we can only look up and worship a God, but no longer have the essence of divine spirituality within us. This feeling of being separated from the divine accompanies our natural sciences.

**[page 128] The natural sciences of modern times are based on this fundamental feeling, but we have not yet been able to understand how these sciences are related to ourselves. It is the task of anthroposophy to help us find once again this relationship to ourselves and to the divine.**

In their artworks Greeks tried to represent God as a human being upon Earth and the God sent down a divine human shortly thereafter as if in response to the question posed by Greek art.

**[page 129, 130] From human historical development we get the feeling that with their human representations of the gods the ancient Greeks were asking the cosmos whether God could become human. And the cosmos answered that God could become human by letting the Mystery of Golgotha take place.**

The Mystery of Golgotha changed the way humans thought of the divine. The divine Father principle had never before been thought of in human form, and the appearance of Christ Jesus upon Earth changed all that.

**[page 129] Christ, the Son of God, was conceived of as divine and human at the same time. Basically, what the ancient Greeks longed for or realized in their art was fulfilled for all of humanity in the Mystery of Golgotha in its entirety. We must . . . concentrate on the essentials, namely, the fact that a divine being has entered human beings here on earth.**

Steiner exhorts us to "advance beyond dead and abstract concepts to a spirituality that will fill us with ideas." (Page 130) Nietzsche could not do this and remained with his cold ideas — perhaps if he had lived to absorb the ideas of Rudolf Steiner, he would have found some warming of his glacial ideas.

**[page 131] Clairvoyance in true spirituality, however, can bring both soul warmth and soul light into intellectuality; as a result we can achieve the purity in our concepts I have described in [The Philosophy of Freedom](#). This purity in our concepts makes us not into inwardly dried-up but rather inwardly enthusiastic human beings. We become able to feel the sun warmth of the cosmos through the cold regions of intellectualism as we leave behind the earthly warmth of the sensory world. We become able to receive the cosmic light through carrying our living soul impulses into the darkness that grows within us as we leave behind the shining earthly objects and enter the world of intellectual concepts**



— in other words, we become human beings who have overcome the earthly darkness.

Anthroposophy can be a jolt to some people who have bought into cold, dead, and abstract concepts, but they mostly avoid the jolts by discounting Steiner's spiritual science off-handedly or upon cursory inspection. (Page 134) Those who are willing and are seeking for spiritual knowledge will certainly find it in Steiner's works. He simply lays out the facts as he knows them by direct perception. He does not attack scientists who show disdain for the spiritual world, he only points out where their error lies and how each one of them might uncover their error and correct it. Invariably Steiner expresses admiration for scientists and engineers who have brought us what he calls "magnificent technology." He exhorts anthroposophists to avoid discussing anthroposophy with its opponents. These opponents do not wish to know the truth and explaining the truth to them will only make them more angry at those they hear expressing it. (Page 136)

**[page 136, 137] Of course, this cannot stop us from standing up for the truth. But it can keep us from holding on to the naive belief that we will accomplish anything through discussions. The only thing that will help us make headway is positive work. We will make headway if we keep standing up for the truth as forcefully as we can, so that as many predestined souls as possible — there are many more in our time than one usually thinks — find their way to us and find there the spiritual nourishment they need if something constructive is to be done for the future evolution of humanity, if our future is to be an upward development rather than a regression.**

Steiner has shared in these nine lectures ample "earthly knowledge" of how the human being works in body, soul, and spirit, and he has given us "heavenly wisdom" in his description of how the evolution of humanity progressed from ancient Persian times up to our modern age. In the eighty plus years since Steiner gave these lectures in 1924, our technology has progressed to the point where Artificial Intelligence claims to be able to duplicate human thinking. The 2001 movie *A. I.* gives us a cold, dark, but accurate look at the ultimate end to such materialistic thinking and concepts. But some help has come from an unlikely source: the world of physics. That world was once the bastion of materialistic thinking with its billiard balls of atoms bouncing off each other in the post-Newtonian centuries. What has changed is that the materialistic approach has completely failed to account for the realities of the quantum mechanical world we currently live in. What was once just a particle, the simple electron, is now considered to have an infinite extent in the universe and to be enfolded into an implicate reality with every other electron and particle in the universe. This nascent view of reality can restore the vision of the living world within which we humans are enfolded and bring life back into every cloud formation, every bolt of lightning, every clap of thunder, into every living plant, animal, and human being. The future is here now, and if physicists can see it, it will not be long before they are able to communicate the new spiritual realities which are just now beginning to appear in their equations and speculations.

----- *Footnotes* -----

**Footnote 1.** Karma, in effect, says in the words of the song by ABBA, "Take a Chance on Me." But karma only sets the table of chance and it is up to us to act on the chances it provides us.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

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**Footnote 2.** Note that *turba* is the root of "disturb" and "turbulence".

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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**Footnote 3.** The "I-being" is variously translated a "Ego body", "I am", or "I" and refers to our spiritual

self which has appeared in human beings only during the Earth phase of evolution.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.** The poet William Wordsworth wrote about the glory which surrounds children which is lost as we grow older. See this [Footnote](#) to my Childhood of Humanity Essay.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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**Footnote 5.** See [cover photo](#) of the Little Prince on his small asteroid.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

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**Footnote 6.** This diagram is the *actual sketch* drawn by Rudolf Steiner on February 17, 1923 upon a black sheet of paper using colored chalk. It appears on page 84 of [Blackboard Drawings 1919- 1924](#).

[Return to text directly before Footnote 6.](#)

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