

Site Map: [MAIN](#) / [A Reader's Journal, Vol. 2](#) [Webpage](#) [Printer Ready](#)

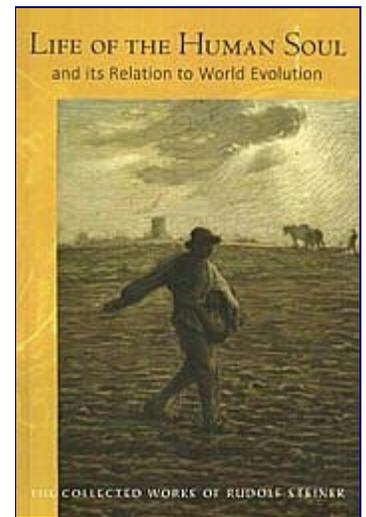


A READER'S JOURNAL

**Life of the Human Soul
and its Relation to World Evolution,
GA#212
Nine Lectures in Dornach, April 29 to June
17, 1922
by
Rudolf Steiner**

Translation and Introduction by Matthew
Barton

ARJ2 Chapter: Spiritual Science
Published by Rudolf Steiner Press/UK in 2016
A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2017



Steiner begins these lectures with a great unanswered question, an unconscious question, which everyone should hold onto and allow an answer to flow to them from the world and especially from these lectures.

[page 3] How, as human being, do I relate or connect with the broad scope of world evolution in general?

His usage of the word "how" creates a presupposition in the reader's mind that there is a connection between each person and world evolution. From the title itself, a reader can expect to be told the connection between the human soul and world evolution. The soul is clearly that connection. A human being has a soul and via that soul is connected with world evolution.

Soulless scientists would have us believe that we are a tiny speck on planet Earth which is itself a tiny speck in the Milky Way galaxy which can be considered a tiny speck in the Universe. Plus they claim that when our body dies, all of our being disappears forever, turned into dust upon a planet which will someday itself disappear. From that perspective it is impossible to even consider the effect of a human being on world evolution, is it not?

For us to have an effect on world evolution, something of what we experienced and lived through must survive our earthly existence. How else can that happen except through our soul and spirit? We look to Rudolf Steiner as someone to help us discover the truth of our post-earthly existence.

The key to unlocking the truth is our soul life which has a bright side from which things enter us (thoughts and ideas) and a dark side from which things emerge from us (will). In between are the things we experience from the outer world (sensory data) and things we feel inside of ourselves (emotions). These inner feelings cause us to look deeper, look below the surface phenomena of life.

[page 4, 5] Our inmost need of soul initially contradicts, therefore, what the soul first discovers through ordinary, mundane forms of self-observation. But if we allow ourselves to dwell deeply and feelingly in this contradictoriness — which is connected with our destined inner experience of human nature *per se* — then we can look fully

upon this surging, weaving life of soul and find that it bears two distinctive polarities within it: in one direction it develops thinking, and in the other, will. Between thinking and the will we find sensibility, feeling; and we become aware how the thoughts and pictures that we can say we draw from the outer world are accompanied by feelings and emotions, which give these thoughts and ideas the inner soul warmth that the soul needs. We become aware also, on the other hand, that the will impulses flowing from within us are connected for their part with a feeling and emotional quality, and that certain feelings and emotions cause us to form a resolve of will of some kind or other. Or that in other words we accompany with our feelings what arises from such resolves of will, so that we are either pleased and satisfied with what we will, or not. At one pole of soul life, therefore, we find thinking, and at the other, will life; and in the middle between these, connecting with both thought life and will life, we find our life of sensibility, feeling and emotion.

We are not aware of our will because it operates out of our awareness, that is, the will lapses from our consciousness when it is in action. If we look to find it in action, it disappears like a *will o'the wisp* on a dark night. Our ideas are bright and clear as they happen, whereas actions of our will are obscure to our consciousness. The essence of an idea appears in our consciousness followed by the action to activate the idea. The action of will appears in us unconsciously: its results happen before we know it. We can have a thought to raise our arm and not raise it, but if our head itches, our arm raises on its own to scratch it.

As we mentioned earlier, sense perceptions are things which enter us from the outer world. Modern psychology uses the *bank metaphor* for understanding sense perceptions. The idea is that something happens to us causing sensory data to be stored in our memory, allowing it to be retrieved later as if it had been placed in a bank vault for safe-keeping⁽¹⁾. Steiner recalls a child's game to illustrate the silliness of the bank metaphor for sense perceptions.

[page 23, 24] This kind of psychology always reminds me of a charming little children's game that I often experienced as an infant, in which a little mouse (the adult's hands) runs up the child's arm to his head, accompanied by the words, 'The little mouse runs through his house, where will he rest? There is his nest!' In other words, an imaginary mouse takes refuge in a little nest which is located in the child's head somewhere. But our psychology has no greater insights, really. It sees thoughts as being stimulated by sense perceptions, which make their way into this little soul nest somewhere, this little box in the head, from where they re-emerge when they are recalled. This is a very banal idea, but one which modern psychology frequently resorts to.

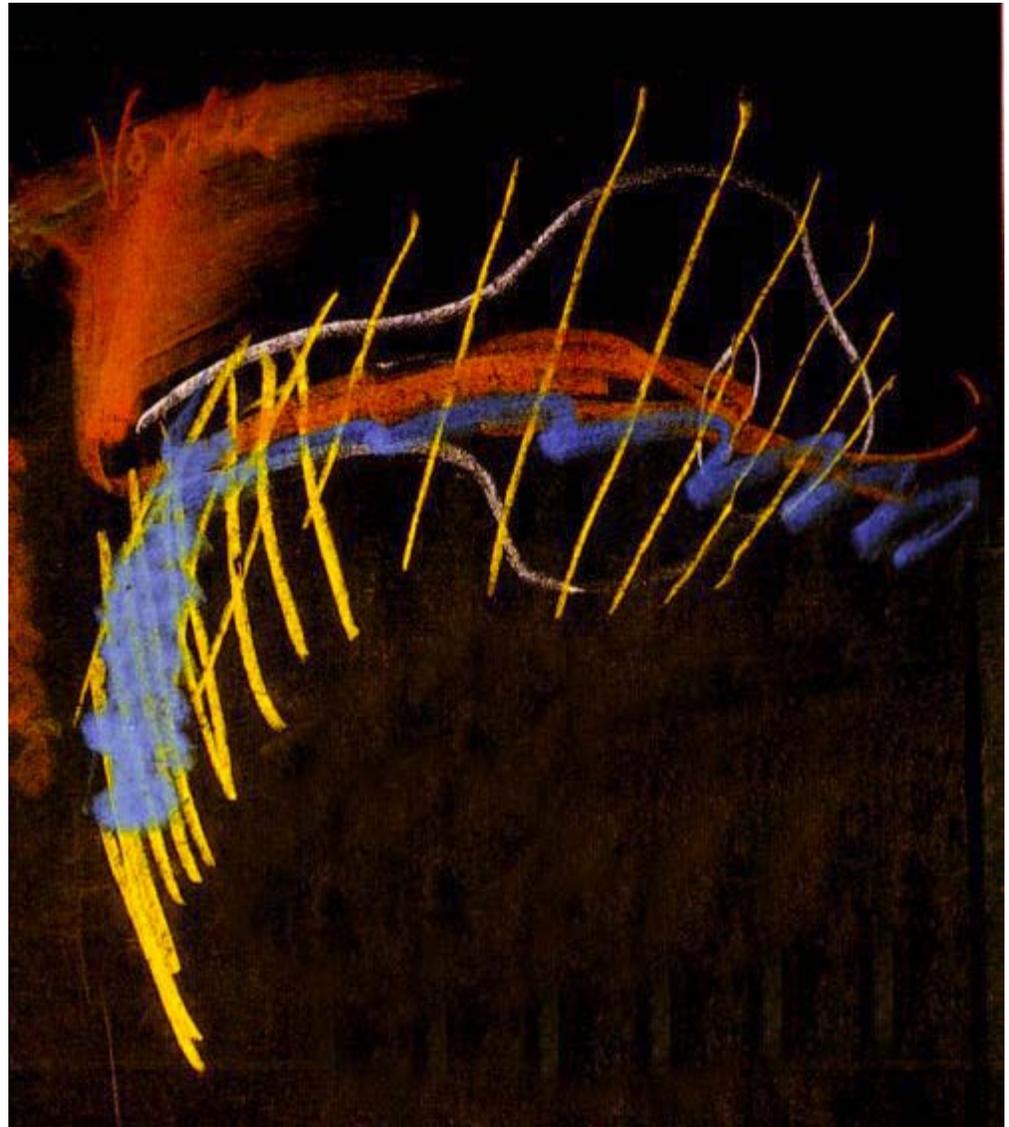
But there is a deep reality to sensory perception by which we come to create over time the very things we expect or suppose is going to happen. Instead of a bank vault from which we take out what we put into it earlier, consider the metaphor of stocks. We put money into a stock of a company we believe in, one we suppose will earn more money in coming years and the stock's value has increased when we when we sell the stock. A similar process happens in our soul, a very real process, which Steiner drew in colored chalk on a blackboard. Read what he says and follow his words in the color sketch he made. At the top left of the red area is the idea or example (*vorbild*) of what we suppose will happen.

[page 24, 25] When I form an idea in response to a sense perception, then withdraw from perceiving it, an idea now exists, and vanishes after a while. Since it is only a picture, an image, it has actually disappeared entirely. It has gone. But our senses do something else: they accomplish a process that we do not perceive; they vitalize the real process in us for our picturing capacity. When I have a sense perception, I first form the picture through it [red], but then a second process occurs [blue] through which something red is caused, not a mere picture. The picture vanishes and I no longer possess it. When I recall, remember, then just like the sense perception previously, this idea now works back up and I perceive the reality stimulated in me, of which I was unaware, when I first had the

sense perception.

The remarkable thing for me is that Steiner is describing a process I intuited over 35 years ago which I called EAT-O-TWIST, which is an easy-to-say acronym for Everything Always Turns — Out — The Way It's Supposed To [\(2\)](#). The *red area* of the diagram shows the supposing and the *blue area* is the forming of the underlying reality in the soul. There is a reality created in our soul by our supposing which eventually leads to the appearance in the real world of the things we supposed. The reality may take years or decades to arrive; rest assured it will arrive, following the pattern we earlier created in our soul.

[page 25, 26] But this reality is soul nature itself. If you have a physical person before you, and you observe him now, and then again eight or ten years later, nothing physically remains of what he was ten years previously. You cut your nails, and scales fall from your skin — the physical body is continually being shed and vanishing into dust. And after a period of somewhere between seven and ten years, what is at present deepest within your interior has emerged on your external periphery and is shed as nails, scurf or scales from the skin. Rest assured that what today is somewhere within you will gradually migrate outwards and be discarded. This physical human body continually melts away. And what remains? The only thing that remains of the human being is the parallel process [drawing, blue] that develops inwardly as the reality on which your picture or idea is founded.



When Steiner avers these soul processes are reality, what does he mean other than our soul processes, which run parallel to our sensory perceptions and are not consciously experienced, are the stuff which *endures* when all our physical processes have disintegrated. He sketches another diagram for us to consider.

[page 26, 27] If we now try from one angle — please note that we are now considering one

pole, that of thought — to form a picture ourselves of the nature of human development in relation to the soul, we can only do so in this way [drawing]. First, when we are born, we have some kind of body [white]. This is filled by the processes that run parallel to sensory perception [yellow] .



All this [white] is slowly discarded, shed. You eat, you assimilate all kinds of things through the air you inhale. This infuses your memory processes and keeps recreating your body. But the metabolic system that impregnates your soul is the aspect consigned to the earth after you die. Soul nature as such is woven from what the soul elaborates from processes that you initially feel only to be ideas, that you experience as ideas. So you can certainly say that you live in thoughts and continually create yourself through them. But what I perceive as thoughts in my ordinary awareness are only pictures of what I am doing, a kind of accompanying phenomenon.

On pages 28 and 29 Steiner details how soul content can be recalled to experience, but spiritual content must be revitalized to experience. Soul content might be likened to a *Sleeping Beauty*, who can be awakened, and spirit content to a *Frankenstein*, a corpse which must be brought to life.

[page 28] . . . soul content . . . remains in you and can be called forth again, in many respects unchanged or also altered. But this is not true of spiritual content, which not only fades and grows pale but is repeatedly fraught with doubt so that one needs to reacquire certainty about it.

Spiritual content must be reactivated, much like a light bulb in a room which needs to be switched on when one enters the room.

[page 29] Someone who acquires supersensible knowledge simply cannot expect these insights to remain like remnant ghosts within him as is thought to be the case with instinctive, revenant-like clairvoyant ideas. These worlds one enters have to be continually conquered anew. But although reality will not allow itself to be stored away in our ordinary consciousness, the effect of it is preserved nevertheless.

But spiritual content is more than light coming on when we enter a room, in addition we become like St. Sebastian who was martyred by being shot with arrows. We do not feel pleasure as we might from reawakened soul content.

[page 29] . . . the produce garnered from spiritual perception does not behave like that: it causes pain instead. You see, what is preserved, recast, decanted into the physical world,

causes pain, hurts. That is the other aspect. Not only do we enter a dark room with our supersensible perceptions and must make light there again, but we also enter a room where arrows shoot at us from all sides, hurting and wounding us; and we have to armor ourselves against the residue, the embodied remains that we encounter there from supersensible worlds.

"The map is *not* the territory," Alfred Korzybski famously spoke in 1933, shortly after Steiner's death . Over time our knowledge of the world morphs into maps, fixed ideas which no longer represent the territory. These fixed ideas of the past can cause us pain, especially if we ignore Korzybski's admonition. College students acquire knowledge and happily pass exams by spewing their knowledge out on test papers.

[page 30] They are happy to do so. Their own insights will only cause them pain, if ever, later in life, when they see that there are better things than the knowledge they acquired, which has grown to be like fixed ideas.

Pain results from old ideas petrified inside of us. The future can bring joy and delight, if we strive to bring our knowledge alive.

[page 30] In ordinary everyday life the soul has succumbed so far to materiality that it appears in pale thoughts only, which we must first pour back into the warmth of feeling to rescue it from being pale, cold thought, which also causes no pain. This is composed only of pictures, which are not alive. But the supersensible knowledge that we acquire is alive, is living soul content.

And only this living content of soul can give us a real conception of what we are. You see, our memory pictures are a weak reflection of what we actually are. If we break inwards through this tapestry of memories, we reach what I have just described to you: a satisfying, delightful, light-filled experience of the world, as well as a painful experience of it, in which our soul partakes. Our soul is thus incorporated into a knowledge which itself contains soul life. The past pours itself into the pain. And what we feel to be joyful, delightful is what we come to see will pass through death with us — is the future.

We do not experience drama today the way the ancient Greeks experienced it, to them it was a great catharsis, a healing experience essential for their lives. The soul condition of these ancient people was different from ours: it absolutely required these dramas, these enacted tragedies to prevent soul sickness, to remove guilt, and to alleviate a pathology which would otherwise overwhelm them.

[page 31] When a Greek attended a tragedy he felt shaken, deeply struck, and this worked right down into his physical corporeality. It was essential to him to feel his spine tingle in response to the events on stage. And in tragedy he found something like a remedy, for there lived in the Greeks the idea that life is imbued with sinfulness, guilt, and thus illness, and that public performances offered a remedy that repeatedly raised life again from this guilt and pathology into its truer, appropriate nature. Thus Greek tragedy was a medicine for the sickness that kept recurring in society, rather than a privileged and somewhat marginal place of amusement.

We have states of being in which we are conscious to various degrees: waking is the sharpest state and in it we have thoughts; dreaming brings images and feelings during our passage between waking and sleep; and sleeping is a state of unconsciousness. Thinking is complete consciousness, feeling is intermediate consciousness, and will is complete unconsciousness. Will is like an unconscious dream.

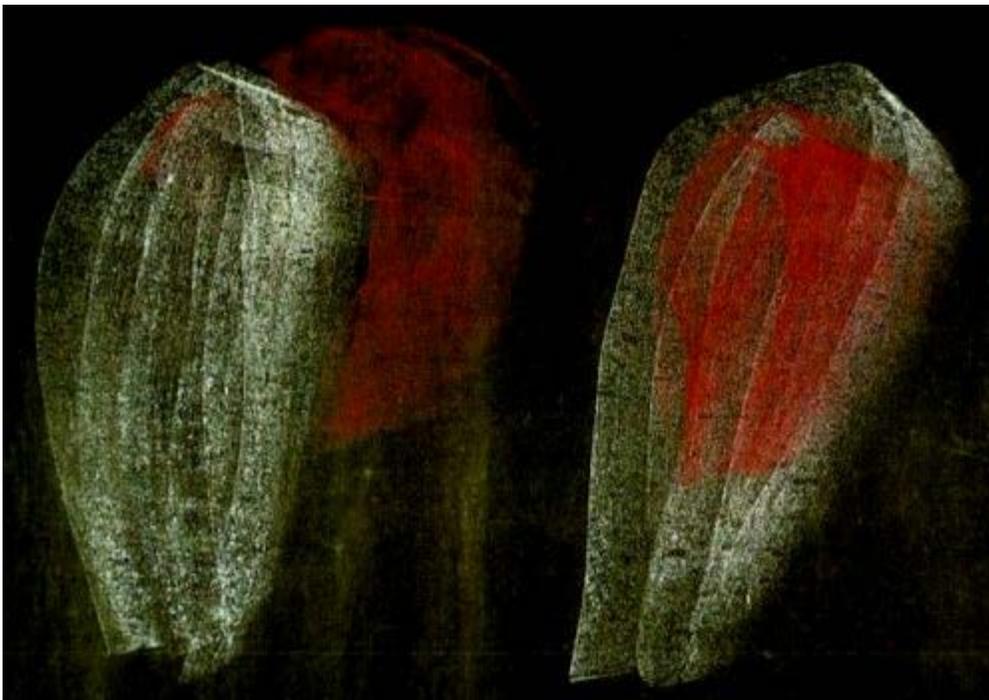
During dreaming, in those times before awakening and going to sleep, dream images float around us, going in and out of our soul. If some sharp sound occurs in the room during this dream-rich state, a full-fledged dream will be created on the spot, which will end with perhaps a gunshot actually caused by a door slam that actually wakened us. Carl Jung reports such a dream triggered by a book falling from a

bookcase in his bedroom.

Our will is active while we are fully awake, but its action seems to us as if in a dreamless sleep, completely unconscious to us, except by a brief intention to raise our hand, perhaps.

[page 35] The nature of the will is: what actually occurs in us when we have an impulse of will remains as hidden from us as anything we sleep through. The only clarity in will occurrences is the thought, the intention we have to act. And then again we see in our mind the movement we have carried out or whatever occurs outwardly through our will. But what happens in, say, an arm or a leg as we lift it, as we take a step, remains as unconscious for us as what occurs between falling asleep and waking up again. Even when we're awake, therefore, we also at the same time experience these three states of consciousness of waking, sleeping and dreaming.

In this diagram, Steiner draws our astral body (red) moving in and out of our etheric body (white) while we are asleep. This shows the process of dreaming which occurs when the astral body (*weft*) intersects with and is woven into the etheric body (*warp*), allowing its content (a dream) to become a fully woven memory in the etheric body that we call a dream⁽³⁾.



[page 36] Let me draw on the board, schematically, what I have just described [drawing, left]. Here's a schematic representation of the human being [white] and now let us draw what we can picture as the schema for the weaving activity of dream [red], which approaches us roughly like this. The red shading I drew here is a tissue or weft that the soul experiences as continually escaping

and then approaching again.

At the moment of awakening, we do not have such a weft in our soul experience but instead we now have something that we experience as within us. Let me now draw how things are in our waking state [drawing, right]. This weft or tissue that was outside us before is now within us: we encompass it in our body, and this makes it no longer a vague and fleeting apparition but something we inwardly master.

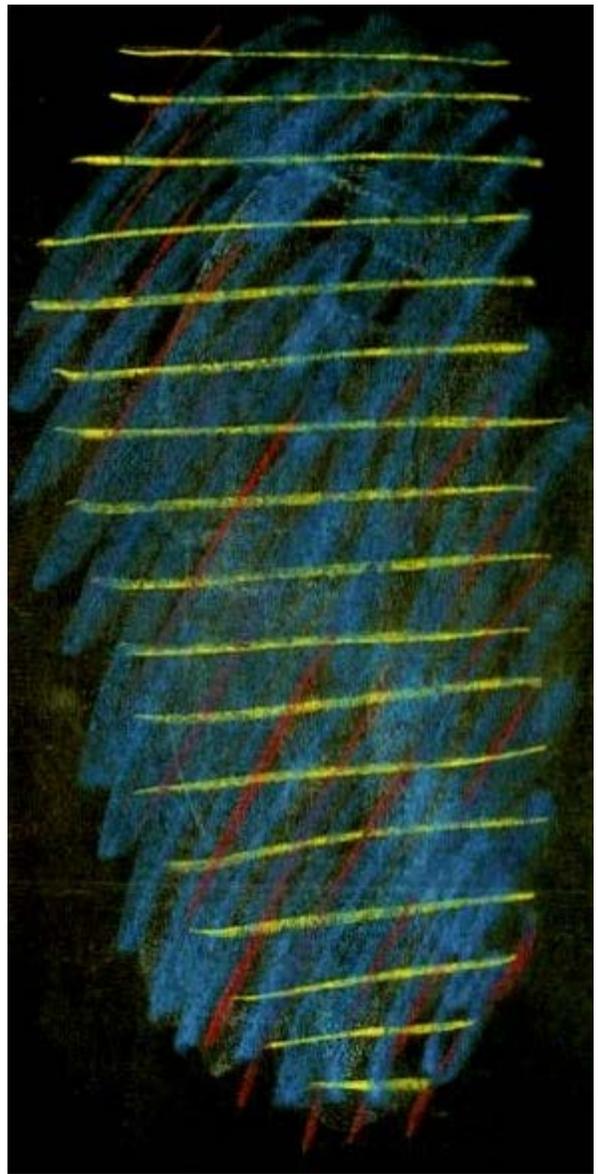
This relationship between what weaves and vanishes in dream and what lives within us as thought when we are fully awake and ourselves master the pictures and thoughts in our soul can become tangible to us — so that the soul really grasps this — as something that was outside us and has now entered us. In

describing this we are actually characterizing nothing other than the entry into inner life of what first wove and faded in dream, as ordinarily apprehended, which we can call the astral body.

In this next diagram, Steiner shows us the how our solid (white), fluid (blue), and gaseous (red) organism is filled by heat (yellow), the warmth ether. These four make up our human body which we summarize when we say: physical body, etheric body, astral body, and Ego Body or I.

[page 39] Now everything that constitutes our solid, fluid or gaseous organism is in turn permeated by heat or warmth [drawing p. 38, yellow]. The whole organism has its own warmth: warmth ether. We can say that the astral moves upon the waves of the air in us, and our actual I moves upon what plays through the organism as warmth.

Now you have the physical body as such: the fluid body that is also physical but distinguishes itself from the solid parts of the physical body (the fluid physical body that has an inward affinity with the etheric body); then the gaseous organism in us, which has an inner affinity with the astral body; and then warmth processes, which in other words embody the warmth ether in us, which has an inward affinity with our human I. In the physical realm, therefore, we find a picture of the whole human being everywhere.



In these lectures, Steiner explains in detail how we receive our soul and spirit from a previous lifetime from the cosmos and how it accumulates in us before it is released into the cosmos when our body dies away. In this lecture he describes the influx of soul and spirit into the physical body which carries our genetic structure. Through this process, humans form as a combination of physical inheritance from our parents and cosmic inheritance from our previous lifetime.

[page 40] The moment we approach the fluid organism, it no longer has any capacity at all simply to move like the motion of the seas waves; the play of its motion, rather, is a reflection of what occurs in our etheric body. And in turn what occurs in the finer states of bodily respiration is a reflection of what occurs astrally in us. Now if we consider this, we must say the following: the cerebrospinal fluid has certain movements that reflect the etheric body. But we acquire this etheric body as we descend into the physical world from worlds of spirit. In worlds of spirit we do not yet have it. In encompassing our physical body we also possess our etheric body. We draw the ether from the cosmos towards us, as it were. And only once we have done this can we unite with the physical we are endowed with through genetic inheritance. Thus what lives inwardly in our ether body is something we already bring with us as we encompass and take hold of our

physical body.

Our body consists of almost 90 percent fluid and gaseous components. The remaining is solid constituents which are concentrated in our bony structures and dispersed throughout our body as metal salts of calcium, potassium, and sodium mostly. Our Ego Body or I lives in the warmth ether which fills our body, the astral body in the gaseous components, and the etheric body in the fluid components. These dispersed salts in our brain play a key role in providing a "salt mirror" by which our soul experiences, which cannot enter the salt, are reflected back to us to form our awareness. (Page 44)]

[page 45] You do not at first experience those soul experiences that enter your I, your gaseous organism, your fluid organism. It is only because soul life occurring in warmth, air, and fluid is reflected back by the salt in the same way that light is by a mirror that you can experience soul nature. By this means you have a mirror reflection that lives within as thoughts.

Enough salts and your thoughts are clear, too much and you become pedantic, too little and your thoughts are muddy, undefined, tending to fantasy or mysticism. Clearly, as Steiner says, "The nature and quality of our soul life is, certainly, connected with material processes within us." (Page 45)

[page 47] I say all this to show you that spiritual science, as intended here, does not attend to vague qualities of soul merely, but traces everywhere how the soul — which does really command the body, and is its architect and builder — works into corporeality.

Understanding how salts reflect from bone structures, we can see how our soul does not just spread out through the top of our spinal column and radiate into space, but instead is reflected by the salt-dome of our skull and forms our soul faculties. (Page 48) I can imagine a man who goes into Antoine's Restaurant in New Orleans and who, upon receiving a menu, proceeds to eat it and leaves complaining about the taste of the food. Materialists, strange as it seems, make a similar mistake when they refuse to see the physical (menu) in spiritual terms and miss the taste of the feast set before them by the spiritual world as it is embedded in the physical.

[page 48, 49] You see, what is usually described as soul by those who do not wish to see the physical in spiritual terms has the same reality as if you were to place a tasty meal down here, and then a mirror here, and instead of eating the meal would try to eat its reflection. You won't get full like that. And likewise you won't grasp the soul without considering it as creatively active in all you do, rather than seeing it as image alone. In spiritual science we cannot despise or discount matter, but have to comprehend the material world spiritually, and then it becomes pervaded by spirit. Otherwise we live in abstractions, in intellectualism, which lead us away and not towards true knowledge.

Steiner sketched the diagram at right of how he sees a person, saying, "Let us assume that this is the human heart [red] and above this everything we value so highly in terms of our perception of thought life on the physical plane [white]." Our objective thoughts are largely indifferent to our moods at the time. But from below [red] comes "All our feelings, instincts, drives, passions. Everything of this kind rises up and rages, one might say. This surges up. Here we have something in us that is fully subjective; yet all that surges upwards of this kind contains the organism's whole simmering and seething. What has simmered in the intestines and stomach, and anywhere else in us, rages up with these drives and



instincts, rises to meet us." (Page 53) This imbues our thoughts with soul quality.

[page 54] Soul quality only arises when something flows forth from within us that permeates these thoughts with a feeling or instinctual quality. If Smith is a hero, for example, and has the thought of a lion, then feelings pulse up in him from below of a kind that banishes his fear of the lion. If Jones is a coward who runs a mile if he even thinks of a lion, then that is the subjective element. But the thought of the lion itself is universal, and as such has no soul element but is only spiritual. By virtue of the instincts that rise up from within to meet us, the thought becomes imbued with soul quality. And this also makes the thought of the lion soulful, whether it inveigles Smith into thinking of the weapon with which he will attack the lion or defend himself, or whether it makes Jones think of the best way to escape as fast as possible. In ordinary life, this is what endows things with soul quality. And we can say, in a sense, that the soul always shines into the spirit.

Now we encounter our heart as a great sense organ, one that fills our entire blood system as a great etheric sense organ.

[page 54] Instead of what lives in instincts and drives, a sum of thoughts [white arrows] now rise up to meet the thoughts above. But these thoughts are mighty pictures, and do not in the least express any more what otherwise rises from our organism. Instead they express what we were before birth.

We learn to know ourselves, to perceive ourselves, in the world of spirit before we were born here on earth, or before we are conceived. This comes towards us.

With the supersensible sight of Imagination and Inspiration, we can see ourselves as we were in the world of spirit before our birth on Earth. Along with this knowledge we also encounter elemental being, angels, archangels and so forth. (Page 55) And now the Page 55 diagram (above) comes to life for us.

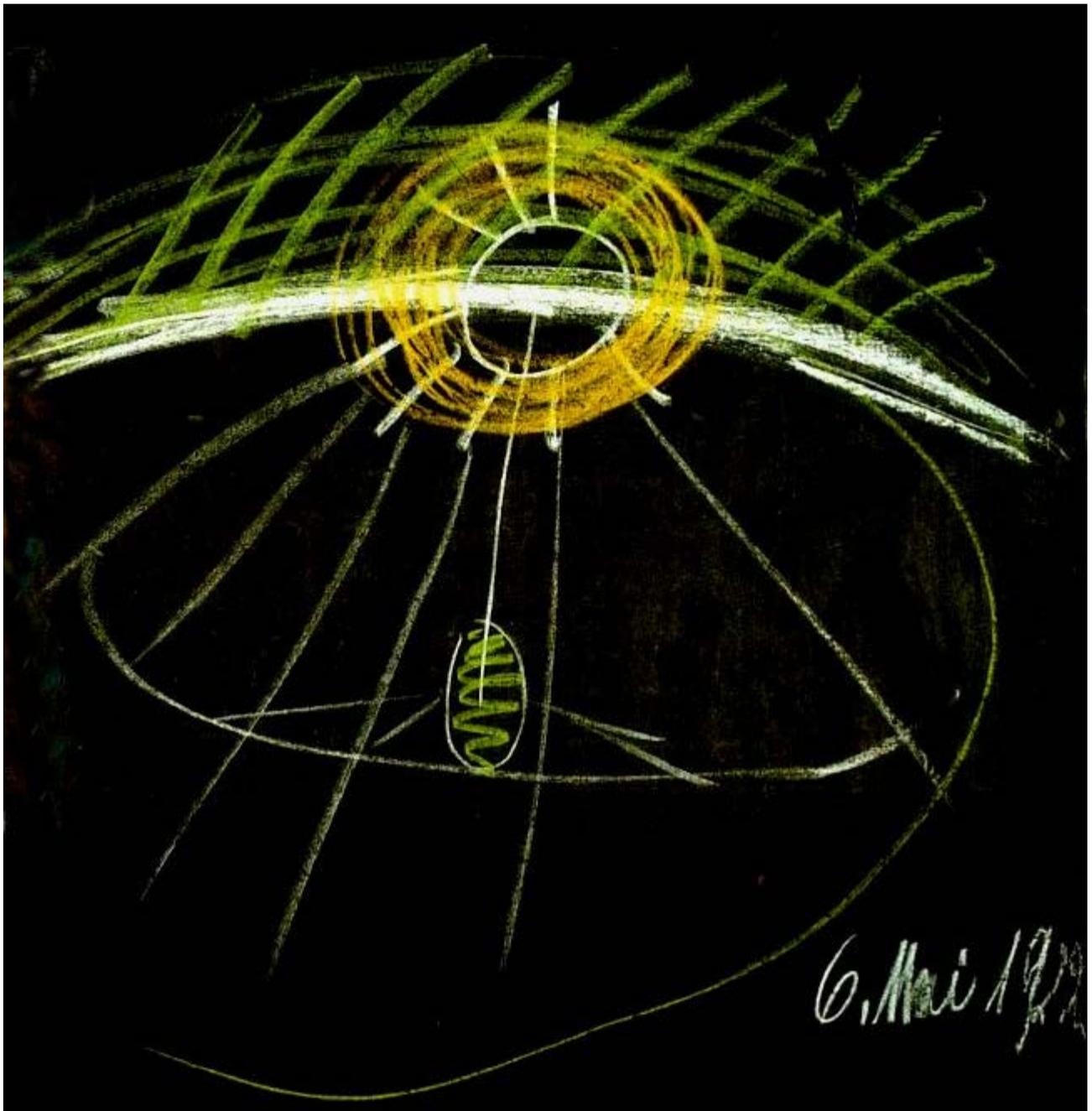
[page 55, 56] But this gives us very important insight into soul experience. We gradually see that this soul experience has entirely poured itself out in our head; it entirely inhabits the head and has formed the head as its reflection [see drawing, blue]. This now offers itself to the outer world so that these pictures we receive and retain in memory can paint themselves there. But here below this life exists without — as I suggested yesterday —

uniting so strongly with the physical; here it is more detached. And so, when the heart becomes the eye for this downward gaze, we can gaze down into ourselves to this aspect, into the flaring, bubbling, burning emotions, desires, passions and drives on the one hand, and on the other, though, to what does not want to unite with it, and is our eternal being living alongside it.

With our head we can see only a reflection of our outside world; to grasp our inner world we must look with our heart into ourselves. When we do this, we enter a reality where soul merges with spirit.

[page 56] The head is really only an organ of reflection for our physical surroundings. We grasp only the outer world there. We grasp ourselves when we look deeper into ourselves through the heart. Ordinary life, though, only throws up waves of emotions. But if we learn to perceive more here through higher knowledge, we find our eternal being opening up. And now the soul learns to be united with the spirit that we ourselves are. What we glimpse through our heart as it becomes a sense organ is we ourselves, our own intrinsic being. The external world we observe as spiritual environment is not us. What we glimpse within through our heart, which becomes sense organ, is our own being. The path that otherwise leads us only into soul nature, its outer aspect of drives and desires, this same path leads us into the eternal soul that indwells us and is permeated by spirit, and is just as spiritual as our spiritual environment. So now we enter the realm where the soul is one with the spirit.

In
the
early
days
of



television, there was a shampoo named "Halo" which had a memorable ditty, "Halo everybody Halo! Halo is the shampoo which glorifies your hair. So Halo everybody Halo." This mundane song spoke of a time when people could perceive the spiritual reality of the soul expanding into spirit and becoming visible in the etheric as a halo surrounding their head. People of early times could perceive these directly, and artists would portray haloes around the heads of spiritual people, people influenced by the higher Sun as portrayed by the halo of orange surrounding the Sun in the Page 63 diagram. The Sun has a halo which glorifies the head of deeply spiritual people, something humans of today cannot commonly view, lacking the supersensible sight of the ancients.

Without the Moon, there would be no reproduction. Steiner gives an imagination of what would happen if only the Sun nature held sway.

[page 61] If we were only subject to the influence of sun nature, we could still be human beings on earth, but we would be unable to bring forth another human being, to reproduce. If only sunlight existed the earth would, we can say, embody a permanent condition — no creature would die and none would emerge. There would be no heredity

or reproduction.

Ten Lunar months are necessary for the gestation of a human being. Most people think of nine months but that is the Solar calendar. When a woman gives birth full-term, the Moon will be in the same place in the heavens as it was ten Lunar months before during conception. "There is a tie which binds us to our home" and that is the Moon(4).

[page 61] Moon nature is always at work when a new human being enters the world. Here sun nature does not, in a sense, only reach the surface but penetrates into the interior of a person and shuts him off from a certain sphere. This is one aspect we need to remember. There is the mighty sun power, as we can call it, and cast out from this a certain portion of our outward world evolution, into which moon nature enters.

The part of the Sun which Moon nature replaces provides our ability to reproduce and is returned to the Sun as a kind of halo, a higher Sun, if you will.

[page 62] What is withdrawn from the sun on the one hand, enabling earthly reproduction and heredity to occur through moon nature, is in turn given back. And this giving back means that the sun is not merely the physical entity that external science describes, but it has a spiritual nature, a kind of higher sun that belongs to it [Page 63 diagram, orange]. This higher sun also belongs to the sun, but it acts upon human beings like the moon does, the latter being a kind of lower sun. And in our era people know nothing sensible about the way in which the moon is integrated into earth's evolution; and they know still less about this higher sun, and that just as the moon exerts a mighty influence on our physical nature so this higher sun very greatly affects the human soul.

Steiner now leads us to understand the origin of the halo surrounding the heads of spiritual people in various medieval paintings. Understanding this, we can no longer attribute the halo and auras around saints' heads as being some kind of representational fantasy on the part of the artists, but rather it must be understood as a perceptual reality that the artists created a permanent record of which enables us moderns to be able to see haloes and comprehend their spiritual meaning. They have shared their spiritual sight with us, we who no longer possess their spiritual sight. This explains how modern thinkers, by the process of retrodiction, deride the tales and images of earlier generations of people, calling them myth, fantasy, and superstition.

[page 63] Just as we are physically more than just our outward, delimited physical body in terms of the fact that we can bring forth a new human being from ourselves, thus going beyond ourselves in physical terms, so we are also more than ourselves in a spiritual direction. At a time of instinctive clairvoyance people knew this, and this was why saints were depicted with a halo. Just as we go beyond our own being in the physical world because we can reproduce, through the higher sun we can go beyond our ordinary soul powers, bound up with the body: we can extend further into the spirit and therefore, in the view of older times, bear a halo. When later artists depict a halo, it always looks like a cap plonked on the figure's head because they have no inkling as to how this is really connected with the human being. The halo is not a hood but something a person has through the higher sun — an expansion of his soul into spirit, to the point where this expansion becomes visible in the etheric.

We are *ensouled* human beings, something at which modern-day academics scoff for the reasons mentioned above. But what is *psychology* but a construction of the *psyche*, and how can a construction of the *psyche matter* in a world which believes that everything consists of *matter*? Can we not come to see how the parade of matter distracts us from the parade of life?

[page 68] The ideas conveyed to a modern person's soul are ones he simply absorbs blindly on the seemingly sacrosanct authority of science. But we must be clear what it

means to accept things in this way as science describes them. We actually do not know, when accepting such things on authority, what in fact occurs in science labs and so forth. Thus a blind belief in authority holds sway in relation to ideas conveyed to people about the external world.

If we blindly accept the ideas of natural scientists, we are allowing them to place blinders on us as cart-drivers did on their horses in cities of previous centuries. Horses pulling carts in the countryside did not need blinders, only those in the city. The horses were spooked by what they saw in the shadows of cities with narrow streets and tall buildings. Scientists, spooked by the possibility of the spiritual world existing, brainwash us with the potent dogma of science education which acts as blinders, protecting us from what spooks them.

The ancient people these scientists ridicule possessed an old form of clairvoyance by which they saw things that really mattered, namely, things of the spirit.

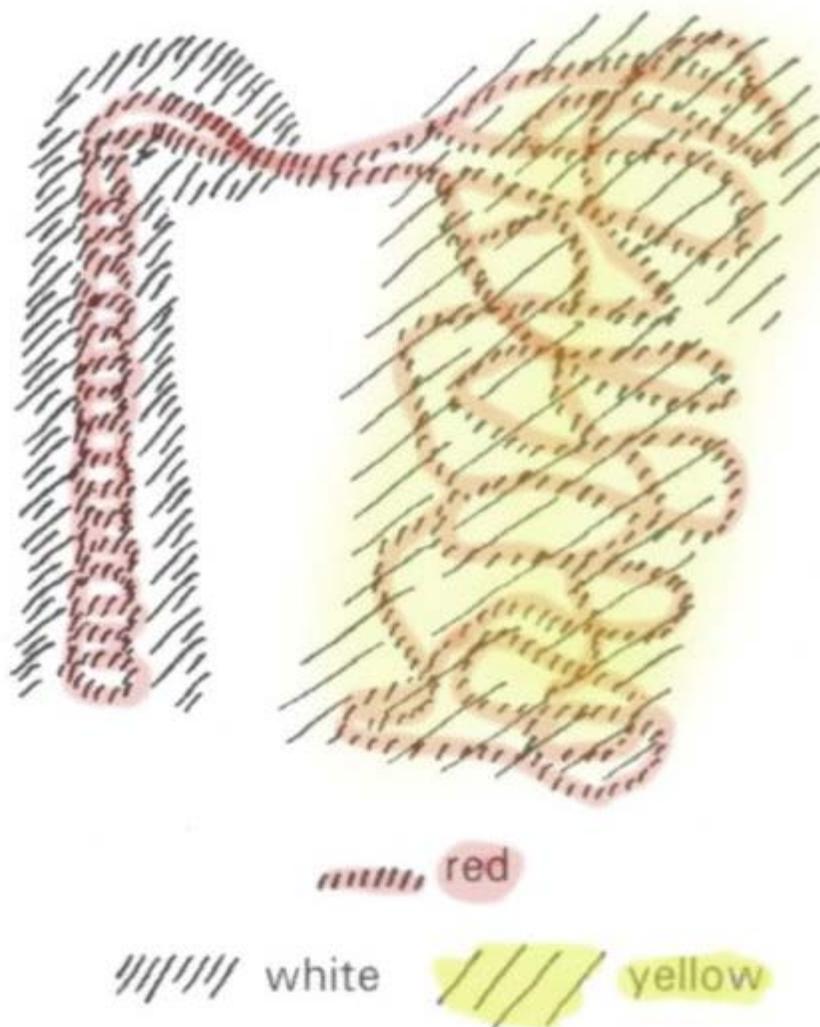
[page 69] This clairvoyance was instinctive and dreamlike, and yet well suited to penetrating deeper into the real nature of things than today's scientific ideas. Through these ancient ideas and pictures which people today regard as merely symbolic or allegorical, or as the products of fantasy, it was indeed possible to enter reality. It mattered little whether a particular picture or legend exactly corresponded to an objective fact. By dwelling in reality with a picture, one was living vividly within a realm of spirit, whereas today, of course, the important thing is whether an idea one forms precisely corresponds with something outside us, for only through such concordance or agreement can people orientate themselves.

These ancients were alive in their soul in a way that few people are aware of today. We have soul experiences, but call them anomalies, coincidences, superstitions, and so on, up until now. Natural scientists have a powerful conceptual tool named after its creator, *Occam's Razor*, by which superfluous hypotheses are shaved away, once they are seen to be unnecessary accouterments to a given theory. Phlogiston, e. g., was excised out of existence by Occam's Razor when oxygen was discovered to be an actual element, not *negative phlogiston*, as scientists previously hypothesized for what happened during what we now call oxidation (burning, rusting, etc). Similarly, anthroposophy strives ever to excise, to shave away the unnecessary baggage that natural science adds when describing the phenomena of the world around us.

[page 69] When we stand on an anthroposophic foundation with real understanding we must in a sense go along with this faithful reflection of the world, in which we are no longer actually within external nature but only create a reflection or image of it. You may know that we embrace the scientific method entirely inasmuch as we reject every type of hypothesis about natural phenomena, and instead, in our phenomenalism, as we must call it, remain within phenomena themselves — that is, within external natural phenomena that must explain themselves, to cite Goethe. In other words we do not add to these phenomena hypotheses about atoms and their bombardments, explosions and so forth, as is still current today due to the sluggishness of old habits of thinking. On anthroposophic foundations we have to keep faith to the strictest degree with the outward phenomena of nature, and reject an approach that projects ideas onto these phenomena.

What's the matter with the Universe as a machine, you ask? Let me respond with a question: "Where is the soul in the Universe if it is a mere machine?" We humans are part of the Universe and if it has no

soul, neither do we. We can only live in the paradigm of *Universe as Machine* if we treat anything that falls outside of our limited 9-dots abstract-logical construction as imaginary, foolish, and trivial. Yes, that kind of paradigm can lead us to treat certain humans as *trivial*, discarding them before birth, or in sickness, or in old age. Look around and you'll see this happening in the world today. What can we say to the perpetrators of this soul-less Universe, but this: *Thanks for Nothing!* To Rudolf Steiner we can say, *Thanks for everything!*



Steiner drew a diagram on page 73 of our previous soul-filled world for us. (Drawing Colored by Bobby Matherne.)

[page 73, 74] If this is the human being [See drawing, white] and this is our environment [yellow], then in former times we should picture things like this. The human being looked out into his surroundings, and also experienced within him what was given him by his instinctive, dreamlike clairvoyance [red]. He united this with what he saw in his surroundings, and this is why he saw them as imbued with spirit [red in yellow]. In all creatures he saw elemental or also higher beings by virtue of the inner state with which he met them.

. . . Now people no longer bring forth something from within them and infuse their surroundings with it, but they only trace there what can be constructed as technology: they trace there the laws of these surroundings themselves. But no moral impulse can be derived from this — only natural laws can be formulated by this means. As I have drawn this here [See drawing], people in ancient times were still one with the world and therefore could perceive moral impulses in everything they saw, in stones, animals, plants; and this is because all these things contained divine, spiritual beings. There is nothing left of this in our natural laws, which only offer what can be incorporated into machines or mechanisms.

What is shown as red in yellow in the diagram is, rightly understood, the process of *informing*. It is the very process G. K. Chesterton clearly described in his [Father Brown](#) mysteries. One fills one's soul with data one receives from another person and is then able to discern what they are doing, even if they are out of one's sight. Another way of saying it is that one fills the other person with one's own soul processes exactly as described by Steiner. This informing process can be done only with living things that contain divine spiritual beings, and thus, cannot be done with constructed machines such as computers or robots

no matter how high a level of artificial intelligence they are purported to have. Artificial intelligence can thus be described as soul-less intelligence.

Exactly how are we moderns different from the ancient peoples? We have only to go back to the Hebrew people in the Bible to be informed of the difference.

[page 75] The diverse pre-Christian peoples consorted with 'their' divine beings — the Hebrew people, for instance, with their Yahweh or Jehovah. In so far as they were initiates, they not only communicated in thoughts but in reality. It is correct to speak of real communication with these divine beings in the ancient mysteries. Yes, initiates consorted with these divine beings; but when they were not within the mysteries and when their students were not, they all saw their surroundings once again. However they saw this outer world in a way that involved placing into it from within them what their instinctive clairvoyance endowed them with. But the initiates themselves, particularly, and their students, knew that their external environment in a way resisted what their vision informed it with; and they knew too that a time would come when it would no longer just offer resistance but when human perception would see there only what it can perceive without such 'informing' from within.

This concept is as deep as it is complex to understand, but it involves clearly the process of *informing* we discussed earlier. As moderns we have become so enamored of the physical world that we have mostly forgotten the very real process of *informing*, up until now.

[page 75] The ancient initiates acknowledged a truth that modern people do not have the courage to because their knowledge is too superficial, insufficiently profound. They said that if they did not inform the world they saw around them with what the gods had given them — which they had been endowed with at the beginning of world evolution — then the world would be empty of the gods. In other words, they acknowledged an external world that does not originate with the gods with whom they consorted in the mysteries.

Our *modern* knowledge is so superficial that we project upon the ancient peoples our *own* superficialities and accuse them of fabricating fantasy stories of gods and spiritual beings such as angeloi that we now label as myths. These very gods, for their part, hate nothing more than the mechanical works of human beings. They were busy enough with the works of Ahriman in forming the mechanical Earth, but now humans are aiding and abetting Ahriman and making things tougher for these gods. The key is that all the ahrimanic works on Earth will disappear when the Earth itself does, and thus they have no permanence, no spiritual reality, no moral forces.

[paged 77] It is the view of these gods that what they had to put up with from Ahriman when he formed the earth in this mechanical way is now being copied by humankind. Human beings add to his works. The gods consider that they already have enough to do to destroy the works of Ahriman, but in addition to this they must now deal with these steam engines, these electrical machines and all such things. They too will have to be destroyed.

How could this human obsession with ahrimanic works be counterbalanced? The ancients saw its necessity but something else had come into being which was foretold by seers as the coming of a great spiritual being to Earth. At that time, no god had ever experienced birth and death on Earth, and that would come in what Steiner calls the "Mystery of Golgotha" — a great cosmic event which would change the destiny of the Earth and its residents forever.

[page 79, 80] These initiates would have faced this terrible prospect. And it was clear to them that their old gods sought this destruction because, inevitably, they sought the destruction of the ahrimanic element and, as things stood at first, they could not save

humankind.

But in these ancient mysteries this was in turn balanced by another prophetic vision, of the future Mystery of Golgotha. After this event had occurred, people increasingly became able to grasp it in some way or other. But prophetically the old initiates learned of this event from the gods with whom they consorted. The gods knew all; and all-encompassing wisdom could be gained from them. But there was one thing that could never be learned from them — matters relating to human birth and death. The gods knew nothing, especially, of death as such.

This was the problem; what was the solution? The answer was known in mystery schools going back to 9,000 years ago when the original Zarathustra told of the great Sun Being who would come to Earth, whose coming would be signaled by a great star. In later millennia, this Sun Being was called the Christ, which the Mystery of Golgotha embodies in the body of Jesus.[\(5\)](#)

[page 80] Yet in these ancient mysteries it was known that one from the ranks of the gods was to be sent down to earth, the one who was later called Christ, and would come to know death upon earth. The Mystery of Golgotha lies in this: that one of the gods who formerly did not know death, nor therefore birth or all the conditions of heredity, came to know death. By virtue of this, he connected with earthly evolution and could thus offer a counterbalance to what would inevitably have occurred through our evolution towards freedom — our ever-increasing affinity with the pulverizing earth. We ourselves can create this counter-pole if, on the one hand, we really do dedicate ourselves to modern knowledge, modern scientific insights, but on the other turn towards Christ, one of the gods, who came to know death, and thus also birth.

We humans, as soul-beings, are connected with the evolution of the Earth, and if we strive to remain soul-beings after the pulverization of the Earth, we will continue to be connected with the evolution of the entire cosmos.

Lecture 6 begins with an important unanswered question for me which I will hold and wait for an answer to come to me.

[page 87] We have often described here the child's early stages of development. Many years ago[\(6\)](#), I drew attention to the fact that up to the second dentition a child is primarily an imitative being. He strongly, and in a sense instinctively, experiences within him everything that occurs around him in the same way that at a later stage of life he experiences, subliminally, what happens around him only through his sense organs.

In its early life, a child assimilates everything around it by a direct soul-to-soul communication; it learns to think and feel the way those around it do. It is therefore urgent that parents and caregivers monitor their thoughts and feelings when around a child under the age of seven.

[page 87] This is why it is so important that at this age we do nothing in the child's proximity that the child cannot absorb and assimilate — and this includes the very way we think and feel.

Before seven, the child thinks, feels, and does as we do; after that age, they can begin to do what we tell them to do, they look up to parents as an authority and will follow their instructions.

[page 88] Language itself is learned through imitation, but only from second dentition (seven) does the child assign decisive importance to what can be expressed in language, and what the adult can therefore tell the child.

After puberty, the child begins forming internally and making its own decisions. After twenty-one, the young adult begins an independent life for the first time. Each of the stages, birth, seven, fourteen, and

twenty-one represent the birth of one of the four components of a human being. At birth, our physical body begins its life separated from the mother's body for the first time. At seven, the etheric body is born as it separates from the physical body. At puberty the astral body is born and the possibility of reproduction arrives. At twenty-one, the Ego body or I takes over control of the human being. This is how the period immediately following birth proceeds, but what about the period before birth when the human being achieves physical embodiment?

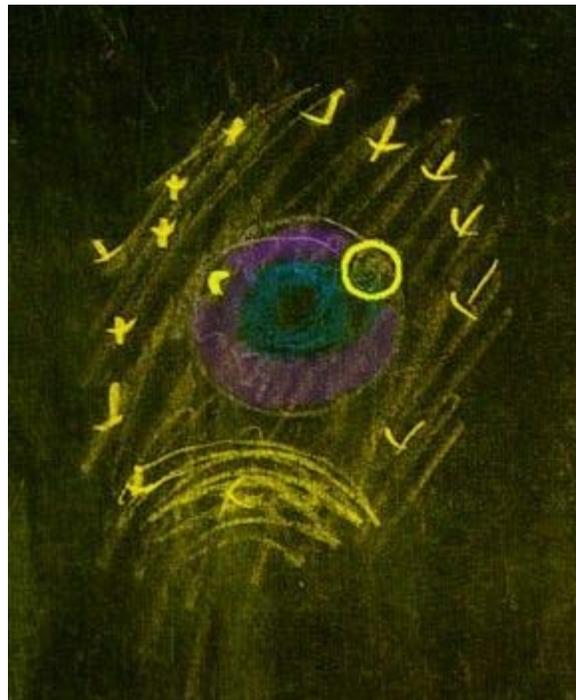
[page 88] If we observe the human being long before he develops an inclination to descend to physical embodiment, we find him to be a spirit-soul in an environment of spirit and soul. All of us were in this condition before we descended to unite with the physical body prepared in our mother's womb. We unite with this physical body to pass through our earthly existence between birth and death. For a long period prior to this, as I said, we were beings of spirit and soul in a world of spirit and soul.

In this lecture, Steiner describes in detail what happens during our soul-spiritual being's descent into a physical body in our mother's womb. Everything is pervaded by the etheric world and as we approach our physical body we gather etheric forces to us, as a child might gather Lego blocks together before creating a toy building with them.

[page 89, 90] Before we gain the inclination and impetus to unite with the physical world through the embryo, we draw towards us forces of the etheric world, forming and developing our ether body by doing so.

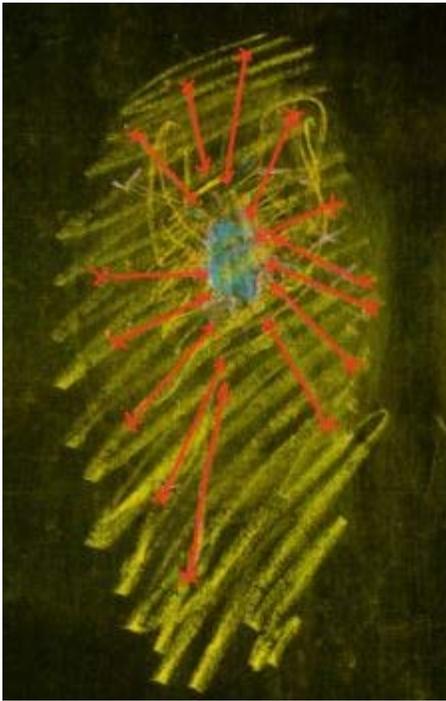
In order to absorb these ideas more precisely, let us draw them schematically on the board. This form here depicts the spirit and soul approaching from the world of spirit [drawing, p. 90, violet; the drawing is gradually completed as Steiner gives the following account]. Of course this is completely schematic. Only what we first draw towards us in this way becomes our etheric body. In other words, we can

say that we cloak ourselves with our etheric body [orange shading] as we descend from the world of spirit. . . . This etheric body developing in us is a kind of world in itself, though it is more accurate to say a 'world in itself as image'. For instance, the periphery of this etheric body reveals something starlike [yellow stars] while its lower portion displays something that appears more or less like an image of the earth. Indeed, it even contains a kind of image or reflection of sun and moon qualities.



Our soul-spirit filled the physical universe as it began concentrating and collecting etheric forces, creating in itself a miniature cosmos from the arrangement of stars, Sun, Moon, and planets it encountered. From this we can understand the basis for how these forces collected before our birth continue to influence us for the rest of our life(7).

[page 90] It is extraordinarily significant that, as we draw etheric forces towards us during our descent into



the earthly world, we take with us a kind of image of the cosmos. If we could isolate the human etheric body at the moment when we unite with the physical body, we would find a sphere with stars, the zodiac, sun and moon — far lovelier than anything ever constructed in a mechanical model.

As the child grows through its second set of teeth and approaches puberty, the stars in the etheric body begin to ray inward to concentrate in the area where the heart is located (Page 91 Diagram, at left). When we say "I feel this in my heart", we are acknowledging this area where the original etheric body (Page 90 Diagram, above) was concentrated.

[page 91] All this occurs slowly and gradually during this whole period from the change of teeth to puberty. By puberty these rays have grown together here and merge in a kind of distinct form, an etheric figure [red].

The peripheral stars, we can say, first ray inwards and later this ceases and they grow completely pale. Naturally something always remains, but it fades and grows pale. These rays likewise become pale. But what has gathered and concentrated in the center here grows especially vivid. During the period when puberty begins, the physical heart hangs as it were in what has become concentrated in this center. So this is the place in the human organism where the physical heart and its blood vessels can be found.

Just as our baby teeth disappeared to be replaced by permanent teeth, so also our baby etheric heart acquired through heredity gradually dissolves to be replaced by a permanent etheric which mirrors the cosmic sphere we collected as we came into our earthly existence in this lifetime.

[page 92] What gathers and concentrates from puberty onwards does indeed become our etheric heart. Until then, as I said, we also have an etheric heart, but we acquired this through heredity, as a legacy of the forces contained in the embryo. Once we have our etheric body, and bear this with us towards the physical organism, then a kind of etheric heart, a provisional one, is drawn together through the powers of the physical body. But this childhood ether heart — and the expression I will use now is not very pleasant, but it is still a very accurate term here — gradually rots. And as it rots and becomes redundant it is continuously replaced by the etheric heart which, gathering and concentrating the whole cosmic sphere, is truly a picture of the cosmos — an etheric form we bring with us as we step through conception and birth into earthly existence.

Our astral body arrives in us carrying our experiences between our previous death and this new birth, and it slips into our various organs, mostly those above our diaphragm.

[page 93, 94] This more intimate knowledge of the human organs can only be comprehended if we understand the nature of the human astral body that we bring with us at birth. We have to recognize that every single organ bears a certain astral element as legacy or inheritance, just as the etheric heart is initially also inherited, but that gradually this inherited astral element is entirely pervaded by the astral body we ourselves bring with us, which slowly and surely immerses itself in our physical and etheric organs. In a way the heart is an exception; within it both the etheric and the astral processes are concentrated, and this is why the heart is such an especially important organ for the human being.

Certainly if the human heart were merely the mechanical pump that most medical scientists claim it is, there would be no abundance of love songs about its pulsating and coursing through our veins, would there?

What Steiner reveals in Lecture 6 is worth studying in detail because in it he reveals how what we do in our lives aligns with what happens in the cosmos, how what happens in our etheric heart and astral configurations in our various organs are essential to the course of our entire lifetime.

[page 97, 98] This is a very important phenomenon indeed, for if you consider all this you find a convergence between what we do in the world and the cosmos. In so far as the etheric world is concerned, you have a concentrated cosmos in the heart; but at the same time also, in relation to the astral world, you have a concentration of what we do, our actions. Here the cosmos and its occurrences unite with human karma.

The cosmos fills our heart and becomes our moral compass in all the decisions we make throughout life.

[page 98] Only in the region of the heart is there such an intimate correspondence of the astral body and the etheric body with the whole human organism. Here the whole world of which we bring an image in our etheric body into this life at birth is contained as essence, and everything we do and absorb permeates this whole world. Through these convergences and correspondences, an opportunity arises during the whole of a human life for human activity continually to connect and engage with this essence of images and reflections of the cosmos.

A popular John Denver song had this line in it, "All my bags are packed, I'm ready to go", and those words came to mind when I read Steiner describe how we pass through the portal of death in the next passage. "You can't take it with you" is a common phrase, but it only refers to physical objects and material wealth, does it not? I majored in physics because I wanted to learn how the world worked, but nowhere in my courses did any professor teach me that *physics is the science of transient things!* That essential truth awaited my study of Rudolf Steiner's works(8).

[page 98] When we pass through the portal of death, this etheric-astral configuration in which the heart floats, as we can say, contains everything that we take with us in our further life of spirit and soul after we have laid aside the physical body and this etheric weft. And — because this contains the substance of the whole cosmos, which in the heart's ether body was merely contracted — as we now grow spiritually ever larger we can pass our whole karma over to the cosmos. What originated in the cosmos and became etheric configuration, what contracted in the heart and became essence, seeks its way into the cosmos again. We spread ourselves out in the whole cosmos, and are absorbed into the soul world, undergoing what I described in my *Theosophy* as the passage through the soul world and then spirit land. When we study the growth and development of the human organization, we can in fact say that in the region of the heart the cosmos and the earth unite, and do so by virtue of the cosmic quality being integrated into the etheric, readying itself there to assimilate our actions, everything we do. Having passed through the portal of death we go out into the cosmos with what formed through an inner permeation of the etheric with human activity, and return again to a new cosmic existence.

Where are you headed in life? Do you despair that your life is nearing an end? Or do you recognize that we live in a material world which is imbued with a spiritual reality and that it is our spiritual reality of etheric, astral, and I which we carry in our bags when we leave this one lifetime to spend time in the spiritual world preparing for our next lifetime?

Do you enjoy traveling and exploring foreign countries? Try exploring your heart. To many people it is an

unknown country.

[page 100] Of all the things that occur within us, people today know precious little. The heart is in this respect an unknown country. People know about what happens here in the physical world, and regard this as natural law; and they know about moral actions, regarding this as moral law. And yet everything of a moral nature that occurs within us, and everything of a physical nature on the other hand, unites in the human heart. These two realms that run along separate, parallel tracks in the modern view, morality and natural law, in fact can be found to unite in the human heart if we learn to understand what occurs there.

What we do in this lifetime not only affects others around us, but affects deeply what we ourselves become when we arrive here in a succeeding lifetime. We have a chance to learn how karma works in this amazing and complicated series of lectures, i.e., how the soul-spiritual forces are re-concentrated in a new physical body before we are born, carrying into us all the learnings from our previous lifetime. Our karma is a lesson plan we have for this upcoming lifetime, albeit it an unconscious one, but one which will unravel and reveal itself if we but learn to pay attention as our life proceeds. Then when we pack our bags and we leave on an infinite-warp-speed trip into the spiritual world, our soul-spiritual karmic-filled bags are stored in a cosmic baggage compartment to await our "I" upon its return into a new physical body on Earth. It is this exciting arrival back on Earth that we celebrate each year on our birthday, and for everyone it is a Happy Birthday.

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

Footnote 1.

In my review of Steiner's with [Discussions with Teachers](#), I point out how this simplistic concept of psychology seeps into education and produces a limited view of teacher-pupil interactions.

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

~~~~~

**Footnote 2.**

For more information, see [Matherne's Rule #10](#). Note especially the [EAT-O-TWIST Machine](#) I created on November 29, 1983. Note that this reality-creation process is most commonly used by people for things they do not want to happen, up until now. For example, *fearing* is a powerful form of supposing. Likely you've heard someone say, "The thing I feared most is now upon me."

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

~~~~~

Footnote 3.

Per Wikipedia: "In weaving, the *weft* is the term for the thread or yarn which is drawn through, inserted over-and-under, the lengthwise *warp* yarns that are held in tension on a frame or loom to create cloth."

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

~~~~~

**Footnote 4.**

The quote is from the rear side of Squeezers playing cards which captured my attention as an unanswered question as a preteen. [Click Here](#) to view the card.

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

~~~~~  
Footnote 5.

There were two Jesus children, and the genealogy and list of ancestors of each child is listed in the Matthew and Luke Gospels. If a genealogy is different, it must be a different child. That should be clear but the true meaning is obfuscated by the various religious confessions that insist we believe, as illogical as it may be, in a single Jesus birth. How the two Jesus children end up with one of them receiving the Christ Spirit, dying on the Cross, and releasing Christ into the Earth is embodied in the Mystery of Golgotha.

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

**Footnote 6.**

See [The Education of the Child in the Light of Anthroposophy.](#)

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

Footnote 7.

This provides the basis for astrology, whose popularity in daily horoscopes is a trivial outgrowth of this deep truth about our relationship to the stars and planets when we are born.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 7.](#)
~~~~~

**Footnote 8.**

In Lecture 8, page 125, he asks, "What after all is the value of this whole chemistry, this whole field of physics beyond the end of earthly existence?"

[Return to text directly before Footnote 8.](#)  
~~~~~  
~~~~~

**To Obtain your own Copy of this Reviewed Book, Click on SteinerBooks Logo below:**



