

RUDOLF STEINER

Esoteric Lessons for the First Class  
of the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum

Volume I

Lessons One through Nine

between February 15 and April 22, 1924 in Dornach  
for members of the Free School for Spiritual Science  
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Translated by Frank Thomas Smith

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## Introduction

During the re-founding of the Anthroposophical Society at Christmas 1923, Rudolf Steiner also reconstituted the “Esoteric School” which had originally functioned in Germany from 1904 until 1914, when the outset of the First World War made it's continuance impossible.

However, the original school was only for a relatively few selected individuals, whereas the new school was incorporated into the *Free School for Spiritual Science* at the Goetheanum in Dornach, Switzerland.

Rudolf Steiner was only able to give nineteen lessons – plus seven “recapitulation” lessons – for the First Class before his illness and death in March, 1925. His intention had been to develop three classes. After his death, the Anthroposophical Society's Executive Council was faced with the dilemma of what to do about the Esoteric School – to try to continue it without Rudolf Steiner, or not. He had not designated a successor. And what to do with the stenographic records of the Class lectures.

Rudolf Steiner had always insisted that the lectures were not to be published. In fact the members of the School were only permitted to copy the mantra — and not the text of the lectures — for their own personal contemplation. The dilemma was further complicated by the dispute between Marie Steiner – Rudolf Steiner's legal heir – and the rest of the Executive council, which claimed all of Steiner's lectures for the Society. (The dispute was eventually settled by the Swiss courts in favor of Mrs Steiner.)

The Anthroposophical Society was permitted to hand out manuscripts of the lectures to its so-called designated “readers”, who read each lecture to the members of the school in their particular area or country. This system is still practiced.

Marie Steiner wrote:

“How can we preserve the treasure with which we have been entrusted? Not by hiding it away, thereby simply giving our enemies the opportunity to do with it what they will, but by trusting in the good spiritual powers and thereby giving new generations the possibility of receiving a stimulus in their souls that will kindle the spiritual light slumbering there, a light that will awaken in their souls what the powers of destiny have sown in them.”

Marie Steiner, letter of January 4, 1948

The lectures were published in German in manuscript book form in 1977 by the Rudolf Steiner Estate (Nachlassverwaltung – Marie Steiner's legal successor) in a limited edition and sold only upon written request to anthroposophists.

However, pirated editions containing errors and falsifications occurred to the extent that the Rudolf Steiner Estate decided in 1992 to make the printed volumes in German generally available. As far as I know, the lectures in English translation are made freely available for the first time here by SouthernCrossReview.org.

Frank Thomas Smith – Translator and Editor

## Lesson One

Dornach, February 15, 1924

My dear friends,

With this lesson I would like to restore to the Free School for Spiritual Science as an esoteric institution the task which it has been in danger of being deprived of during the past years. In this introductory lecture I will not go further into explaining that situation, but I wanted to stress the importance of this moment by indicating the seriousness with which our movement – which is daily being endangered and undermined – must be imbued, especially in this School. This is no unnecessary observation, for such seriousness has not been apparent everywhere.

A kind of preparatory introduction will be given today, my dear friends. And I would like to emphasize that in this School spiritual life is to be revealed in its true meaning, so that you will be able to consider this School as an institution which can provide for the revealed spiritual needs of our times. This spiritual life can be deepened in all its aspects. But a center must exist from out of which this deepening derives, and the Center can be seen by those who wish to be members of the School to be the Goetheanum in Dornach.

Therefore I wish to begin the School today, with those members for whom it has so far been possible to issue the membership card, to begin in a way that will make you conscious of the fact that every word spoken within this School is based on the full responsibility towards the spirit revealed to our times – that same spirit which has been revealed to humanity throughout the centuries and millennia, but revealed in each epoch in a special way. And this spirit will only give to humanity what it is able to receive.

We must be clear from the very beginning that it is not animosity towards what the sense-world has accomplished for humanity when in a School for Spiritual Science we attend to the revelations of the spirit. We must also clearly recognize that the sense-world has provided necessary, practical revelations to humanity and this fact should not cause us to undervalue those contributions in any way.

But it is nevertheless important that the spiritual revelations are received with all earnestness. For this – I must say it at the outset – much prejudice and obstinacy, which is deeply ingrained in the School's members, will have to go. It will be necessary to investigate how one finds the path to his own obstinacy, which hinders understanding what the School should be. For many still don't think correctly about the School. This must be gradually corrected. For it is only possible for those to be in the School who take it in all earnestness.

The matter itself demands this. And on the other hand, we must follow a difficult path in face of the opposition and undermining forces which are increasing day by day. The members of the School are by no means sufficiently attentive to this. All this, my dear friends, must be kept in mind.

The first and foremost thing to be observed in this School must of course be what it is possible for the spirit to give us. It will however be demanded of the members of the School that they accompany us on the difficult path strewn with obstacles and attempts at undermining it.

I have gone into these things in our weekly periodical, *What is Happening in the Anthroposophical Society*, and have also explicitly differentiated there between the General Anthroposophical Society and this School. And it is necessary that this difference be felt in all its explicitness by the members of the School, so that eventually only those persons are members who really want to be representatives of anthroposophy in all aspects of life. I say this now in order to emphasize the seriousness of the matter.

First of all, I would like to present to your hearts and to your souls what should stand over our

School as a kind of engraving. That we really identify with what emerges from the life of the spirit onto our soul's ear and our soul's understanding. We shall begin with the words:

Where on earthly ground, color on color  
Life is manifest in creation;  
Where from earthly matter, form on form,  
The lifeless is given shape;  
Where sentient Beings, strong in will  
Warm themselves in joy of existence;  
Where you, O man, your bodily being  
derive from earth and air and light.

There your true being enters  
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;  
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse  
No longer, who you are and were and will be.  
For your own being the day grows dimly  
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;  
And you turn with angst of soul  
Toward the light that from darkness streams.

I will repeat it:  
Where on earthly ground, color on color  
Life is manifest in creation;  
Where from earthly matter, form on form,  
The lifeless is given shape;  
Where sentient Beings, strong in will  
Warm themselves in joy of existence;  
Where you, O man, your bodily being  
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There your true being enters into  
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;  
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse  
No longer, who you are and were and will be.  
For your own being the day grows dimly  
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;  
And you turn with angst of soul  
Toward the light that from darkness streams.

These words tell us that the world is beautiful and glorious and sublime and the endless glow of revelation in all that lives in leaf and blossom flows to our eyes with color on color from the visible universe; it is meant to remind us how the divine is manifested in what is lifeless in earthly matter, in the thousands upon thousands of crystalline and non-crystalline forms at our feet, in the water and air, in clouds and stars; it makes clearer to us that the animal life that frolics in the world and delights in its own existence and the warmth of its existence – that all that is divine-spiritual revelation. And it reminds us that we owe our own bodies to all those shapes, to all that is greening and growing, color on color. And it should also make us conscious of that fact that although all that is beautiful and glorious and grand and divine to the senses, it is futile to ask it what we ourselves are as human beings.

Nature, although it glows to us as grand and powerful in tone and strength and warmth, can never give us information about ourselves, although it does give us a huge amount of information about many divine aspects of the world. So we must evermore repeat to ourselves: what we feel as our innermost self is not woven from what we perceive as the beauty and grandeur and greatness and power of nature. And the question arises: Why does the reality of being all around us, of which we are also a part, remain dim and silent?

And what we might feel to be a kind of privation, we must experience as a blessing, so that we can say in all seriousness and sternness: We must first make ourselves truly human, warm in soul and strong of spirit, so that we, as spirit in humanity, may find the spirit in the world.

For this it is necessary that we prepare ourselves, without levity, to come to the frontier of the sense-world, where the spirit's revelation can rise in us. We must say to ourselves: If we arrive at this frontier unprepared and the full light of the spirit comes upon us at once, then, because we have not yet developed the strength of spirit and the warmth of soul necessary for receiving the spirit, it would shatter us and cast us back to our nothingness.

Therefore at the frontier between the sense-world and the spirit-world stands that messenger of the gods, that messenger of the spirit, about whom we will hear more and more during the next lessons, whom we will want to know always better and better. That messenger of the spirit stands there and warningly speaks, telling us how we should be and what we must set aside so that we may approach the revelations of the spiritual world in the right way.

And when we have grasped, my dear friends, that the beauty, the greatness and the sublimity of nature is, at first, spiritual darkness for human knowledge, from which the light must be born which tells us what we are and were and will be; then we must know that the first thing to come from the darkness that must be grasped is that Spirit-Messenger who sends us the appropriate warning. Therefore let this Spirit-Messenger's words resound in our souls, and let the Spirit-Messenger's description shine out before our soul's eye.

And from out the darkness you appear,  
(the human being is addressed)  
Your likeness manifesting you,  
Yet also a parable of you,  
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether  
Heard by your heart, giving strength

To you the Spirit-Messenger, who alone  
Can light for you the way;  
Before him the fields of sense widen,  
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.

And before his dark spirit-fields,  
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,  
Resounds his ur-potent creative words:  
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.

It must be clear to us that we must take seriously all that comes as warning from the Spirit-Messenger before daring to fathom what is found not on this side of the yawning abyss, that is, in the area of the senses, but on the other side spreading out as spirituality. This is veiled at first in darkness for human understanding, and can only be revealed by the countenance of the Spirit-Messenger, who appears at first to be similar to the human being, but transformed into one of gigantic stature. Then, although he is so similar to man, his form is shadowy, as though he were a mere parable of man. He warns that without the appropriate seriousness, no one should seek what

lies beyond the yawning abyss. The earnest messenger entreats us to be earnest as well. And then, when we hear that voice and have grasped it with due seriousness, we should be aware of how at first softly, most softly, and in abstractions, it wishes to give us indications and orientation from the spiritual world about the abyss which yawns before us and from which the Messenger holds us back lest we take a careless step. The voice resounds:

From the expanse of beings in space  
Who experience existence in light,  
From the stages of the course of time,  
Which finds expression in creating,  
From the depths of heart-felt feeling  
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:

They resound in the speech of the soul,  
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,  
From divine curative powers,  
In the cosmic formative forces  
The undulating existential words:  
O man, know thyself!

I will read it again:

From the expanse of beings in space,  
Who experience being in light,  
From the stages of the course of time,  
Which find expression in creating,  
From the depths of heart-felt feeling  
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:

They resound in the speech of the soul,  
They gleam in the spirit-thoughts,  
From divine curative powers  
In the cosmic formative forces  
The undulating existential words:  
O man, know thyself!

These words can make it clear to us how the secrets of existence must be fathomed from all that acts and works in the depths of space and which from the depths of space manifest how real knowledge must be fathomed from what is revealed in the march of time as creative action, and how all that is revealed of the world in the human heart must be revealed by the soul's honest seeking. For all this can only constitute a basis for what one needs for fathoming one's self, in which the world has planted the sum of its secrets. Thus they can be discovered through human self-knowledge. Everything man needs in sickness and in health on his journey between birth and death, and what he will also have to use on that other existential journey between death and a new birth.

But all those who consider themselves members of this School should clearly realize that everything that is not acquired in this way is not real knowledge, but only pseudo-knowledge, that what usually passes for science, what man learns before he has acquired an awareness of the Guardian of the Threshold's warnings regarding spiritual knowledge, is all pseudo-knowledge. It doesn't have to stay pseudo-knowledge though. We do not scorn this pseudo-knowledge. But we

must realize that it will only emerge from the stage of pseudo-knowledge once it has been transformed by all man can know about that purification and metamorphosis of his being, which he achieves when he understands what the Spirit-Messenger warns at the yawning abyss of knowledge – what the shining spirit warningly calls out from the darkness on behalf of the best spiritual inhabitants of the spiritual world.

Whoever does not acquire the awareness that between the sojourn in the fields of sense – which we must live during our earthly existence between birth and death – and the spiritual fields, a yawning abyss exists, cannot achieve true knowledge. For only by means of this awareness can true knowledge be acquired. He doesn't have to become clairvoyant, although knowledge from the spiritual world comes by true clairvoyance. But he must acquire an awareness of what exists as a warning at the yawning abyss of the secrets of space, the secrets of time, the secrets of the human heart itself. For whether we go out into space, the abyss is there; or if we wander in the turning points of time, the abyss is there; if we enter into the heart itself, the abyss is there.

And these three abysses, they are not three abysses, they are only one abyss. For if we wander out into space so far that we come to where the expanses of space merge, we find the spirit; if we wander in the turning points of time to where they originate at the beginning of their cycles, if we wander into the depths of the human heart, so deep that we can only fathom ourselves: these three ways lead to only one goal, to one last stop, not to three different stops. They all lead to the same divine-spirituality that bubbles from the spring that fructifies and feeds all being, but also teaches man to recognize the ground of existence in knowledge.

In such earnest awareness we shall stand in thought where the earnest Spirit-Messenger speaks and listen to what he relates about the obstacles relative to our times, which we must sweep away in order to come to true spiritual knowledge.

Obstacles to spiritual knowledge, my dear friends, have existed in all times. In all times the people have had to overcome this and that, put aside this and that according to the warnings of the earnest Guardian of the Threshold to the spiritual world. But there are obstacles peculiar to each age. What proceeds from human civilization is to a large extent not helpful, but rather hindrance for access to the spiritual world. And man must find the particular obstacles that emerge from each earthly civilization, and are implanted in his nature by that very civilization, and which he must put aside before he can cross the yawning abyss.

Therefore let us now hear the earnest watchful Messenger of the gods speak about this:

Yet you must beware of the abyss;  
Otherwise its beasts will devour  
You, if you pass by me in haste.  
Your cosmic age has placed them there  
In you as enemies of knowledge.

Behold the first beast, the crooked back,  
The bony head, the scrawny body,  
His skin is all a dullish blue;  
Your fear of creative spiritual being  
Begot the monster in your will;  
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.

Behold the second beast, it bares  
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,  
Yellow with gray spots is its body;  
Your hate of spiritual revelation  
Begot this weakling in your feeling;



Your flame for knowledge must subdue him.

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,  
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,  
Dirty-red its form appears to you;  
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light  
Begot this ghost within your thinking;  
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.

Only when you've defeated the three  
Will wings sprout upon your soul  
To fly the abyss over,  
Which separates you from the knowledge fields  
To which your heart desires  
to consecrate itself in healing.

I will read it again:  
The Guardian speaks:  
Yet you must beware of the abyss;  
Otherwise its beasts will devour  
You, if you pass by me in haste.  
Your cosmic age has placed them there  
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Behold the first beast, the crooked back,  
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Its skin is all a dullish blue;  
Your fear of creative spiritual being  
Begot the monster in your will;  
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Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,  
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Begot this ghost within your thinking;  
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.

Only when you've defeated the three  
Will wings sprout upon your soul  
To fly the abyss over,  
Which separates you from the knowledge fields  
To which your heart desires

to consecrate itself in healing.

These, my dear friends, are the three greatest enemies of knowledge for contemporary humanity. The human being of today is afraid of the spirit's creativity. Fear sits deep in his soul. And he would like to conjure it away. So he dresses his fear in all kinds of pseudo-logical arguments by which he tries to refute spiritual revelations.

You will hear, my dear friends, from this or that side arguments against spiritual knowledge. It is sometimes dressed in clever, sometimes in sly, sometimes in foolish logical rules. Never, however, are the logical rules the reason why spiritual knowledge is refuted. Rather is it the spirit of fear that lives and works deep into humanity's inner life which, when it rises to the head, translates into logical reasons. *It is fear!*

But it is not sufficient to say: I am not afraid. Everyone can of course say that. We must first comprehend the nature and the seat of this fear. We must tell ourselves that we were born and educated according to the present time, in which the Ahrimanic side has installed spirits of fear, and that we are tainted by these spirits. And conjuring them away doesn't mean that they really go. We must find the ways and the means – and this School will provide guidance – to bravery and knowledge against those spirits of fear which reside as monsters in our will. For it is not what often leads people to knowledge nowadays – or what they say does – that can provide true knowledge, but rather only courage, the inner courage of soul which provides the strength and the capacity to follow the path that leads to true, real, light-filled spiritual knowledge.

And the second beast, which creeps into the human soul from the spirit of the times to become an enemy of knowledge, this beast lurks everywhere we go – in most of the literary works of the day, in most of the art galleries, in most sculpture and art in general and music. It wreaks its havoc in the schools and in society. In order to avoid having to confess its fear of the spirit, it resorts to mocking spiritual knowledge.

This mockery is not always openly expressed, because people are not conscious of what is within them. But I would say that only a thin wall, the thickness of a spiderweb, separates what is in people's consciousness and what is in their hearts wanting to mock true spiritual knowledge. And when the mockery is open, it is only when the more or less conscious impertinence of modern man is able to suppress the fear. But basically everyone today is vaccinated against the spirit's revelations. And the mockery is manifested in the most unusual ways.

The third beast is lazy thinking, the kind of thinking that would make the whole world a movie, because then no one is required to think – everything is reeled out and all one has to do is follow what is reeled out. Even science would like to follow the world's phenomena with passive thinking. Man is too lazy and comfortable to activate his thinking. Humanity's thinking nowadays can be compared to someone who wants to pick something up from the floor and stands there with his hands in his pockets and thinks he can pick the thing up that way. But he cannot. And existence cannot be comprehended by thinking with its hands in its pockets. We must move our arms and hands if we want to grasp something from the floor. We must activate our thinking if we want to grasp the spirit.

The Guardian of the Threshold characterizes the first beast, which lurks as fear in your will, as a beast with a crooked back and a bony face and scrawny body. This beast, with its dull blue skin, is verily what rises from the abyss and stands alongside the Guardian of the Threshold for today's humanity. And the Guardian of the Threshold makes it quite clear to the humanity of today that this beast is actually in you! It rises from out of the yawning abyss which lies in front of the knowledge fields, and reflects what lurks in your will as an enemy of knowledge.

And the second beast, which is connected to the desire to mock the spiritual world, is characterized by the Guardian of the Threshold in a similar way. It emerges alongside the other monster, but its whole attitude is one of weakness and sleepiness. With this sleepy posture and gray-greenish body, it bares its teeth in a warped face. And this baring of teeth is meant to indicate laughter, but lies,

because to mock is to lie. So it grins at us as the reflection of the beast that lives in our own feeling and, as the enemy of knowledge, hinders our search for knowledge.

And the Guardian of the Threshold characterizes the third beast, which will not approach the world in spirit, as emerging from the abyss with cloven muzzle, dull glassy eyes, slouching posture and dirty-red form. Such is the doubt which speaks through the cloven muzzle and doubt in the power of spirit-light which expresses itself in the dirty-red form. This is the third of the knowledge enemies that lurks in us. They make us earthbound.

If we approach spirit-knowledge accompanied by them, ignoring the Guardian of the Threshold's warning, we encounter the yawning abyss. One cannot pass over it earthbound, nor with fear nor mockery, nor with doubt. One can pass over it by grasping in thought the spirituality of being, by experiencing in feeling the soul of being, by strengthening the activity of being in the will. Then the spirit, the soul and the activity of being give us wings of release from the weight of earth. Then we can cross over the abyss.

The steps of prejudice are threefold and will cast us into the abyss if we fail to acquire courage, fire and creative knowledge. If, however, we do acquire creative knowledge in thinking and we want to activate thinking, if we do not wish to approach the spirit in dreamy lassitude, but receive the spirit with inner heartfelt fire, and when we have the courage to really grasp the spirit as spirit, not merely letting it approach us as a materialistic picture, then will the wings grow which will carry us over the abyss, where every human heart that is honest with itself today desires to go.

That is what I wish to bring before your souls, my dear friends, by means of this first introductory lesson, with which this School for Spiritual Science begins.

In closing, let us review once more the beginning, middle and end of the experiences with the Guardian of the Threshold.

Where on earthly ground, color on color  
Life is manifest in creation;  
Where from earthly matter, form on form,  
The lifeless is given shape;  
Where sentient Beings, strong in will  
Warm themselves in joy of existence;  
Where you, O man, your bodily being  
derive from earth and air and light.

There your true being enters  
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;  
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse  
No longer who you are and were and will be.  
For your own being the day grows dim  
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;  
And you turn with angst of soul  
Toward the light that from darkness streams.

And from out the darkness you appear,  
Your likeness manifesting you,  
Yet also a parable of you,  
Earnest spirit-words in cosmic ether  
Heard by your heart, giving strength –

To you the Spirit-Messenger, who alone  
Can light for you the way;

Before him the fields of sense widen,  
Behind him yawn the abyss-depths.

And before his dark spirit-fields,  
Hard by the yawning abyss of being,  
Resound his ur-potent creative words:  
Behold, I am the only gate to knowledge.

The Guardian speaks:  
From the expanse of beings in space  
Who experience being in light,  
From the steps of time's tread,  
Who find expression in creating,  
From the depths of heart-felt feeling  
Where in the Self the world is fathomed:

In the speech of the soul resounds,  
In the illumining of spirit-thoughts gleams,  
From divine curative powers  
In the cosmic formative forces  
Undulating existential words:  
O man, know thyself!

The Guardian continues:

Yet you must beware of the abyss;  
Otherwise its beasts will devour  
You, if you pass by me in haste.  
Your cosmic age has placed them there  
In you as enemies of knowledge.

Behold the first beast, the crooked back,  
The bony head, the scrawny body,  
Of dullish blue is all his skin;  
Your fear of creative spiritual being  
Begot the monster in your will;  
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.

Behold the second beast, it bares  
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,  
Yellow with gray spots is its body;  
Your hate of spiritual revelation  
Begot this weakling in your feeling;  
Your flame for knowledge must subdue him.

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,  
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,  
Dirty-red its form appears to you;  
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light  
Begot this ghost within your thinking;

Your creative knowledge must make it yield.

Only when you've defeated the three  
Will wings grow upon your soul  
To fly the abyss over,  
Which separates you from the knowledge fields  
To which your heart desires  
to consecrate itself in healing.

As to what we will experience when we have passed the Guardian of the Threshold, what is necessary in feeling, willing, thinking to experience in order to pass by the Guardian's light, and enter into the darkness from out of which that light shines in which we recognize the light of our own humanity, and thus arrive at "O man, know thyself!"--which calls out, which manifests from the spirit that enlightens the darkness. About all that, my dear friends, next Friday during the next lesson of the First Class.

## Lesson Two

Dornach, February 22, 1924

My dear friends,

We will relate what is said today to the previous lesson, partly to preserve the thread, and partly because there are members present who were not here last time. We shall therefore start with a short recapitulation of the last lesson.

We proceeded in thought to the place where the human being – who with normal consciousness can grasp the sense-world, which is the world that surrounds him – can feel himself related to the super-sensible, related to a being which corresponds to his own being. And we want to first develop this sensation before proceeding to the mysteries of the spiritual life, which we will do shortly.

The first sensation should make us aware of how the human being, in his normal condition, lives surrounded by the world of the senses, which however he is not able to identify with his own being. We shall therefore develop this theme. And although the words “Know thyself!” have been enunciated throughout the ages, encouraging man to perform his noblest deeds, still he can find no answers, no satisfaction if, under the influence of “Know thyself”, he only sees what the senses provide – the exterior world. Now, however, he is directed towards something else, something beyond the exterior world.

If with this sensation, which one can have when one gazes out to the depths of cosmic space with the question of his own being in mind, when in thought we approach super-sensible being, which is one with the inner human being, then the corresponding sensation will be given through the words I provided to you the last time:

Where on earth-foundations, color upon color,  
Life creative manifests itself;  
Where from earthly substance, form on form,  
The lifeless world is fashioned;  
Where the sentient beings, powerful in will,  
Delight in the warm glow of their existence;  
Where you yourself, O Man, derive  
Your bodily existence from earth and air and light:

There you do enter, for your own true-being,  
Cold, night-enveloped darkness.  
In vain you ask of the dumb expanse  
What you are, what you were, or will become.  
For your own being, this light of day grows dim  
To the soul's night, the darkness of the spirit.  
Then do you turn your anxious seeking soul  
Unto that light that shines out of the darkness.

We can now observe and feel in our souls the beauty, the greatness and the sublimity of the external world, but we also realize that we can never find our own being in this world. For the person who seeks the spirit, it is necessary to repeatedly feel this sensation in his soul. Because by deeply experiencing the sensation that by looking out into the external world we gain no answer to the question of who we are, feeling this sensation again and again gives the soul the impulse and the strength that can carry us into the spiritual world. Yet just as by having this

sensation we will be carried up into the spiritual world, we must also bear in mind that the person of normal consciousness in normal life is unprepared to encounter that world, which in reality is the world of his own being.

Therefore on the border between the sense-world and the spiritual world that guardian stands who earnestly warns people against crossing over into the spiritual world unprepared. And it is the case, my dear friends, that we must always keep in mind the fact that the Guardian stands before the [entrance to] the spiritual world for the well-being of unprepared human beings. And we must therefore be quite clear about the necessity for a certain attitude of soul in order to achieve real knowledge and insight.

If such insight were provided to everyone walking down the street it would be terrible for them because they wouldn't be prepared. They would be receiving it without the preparatory attitude of soul. Therefore we must deeply feel the second sensation which over and over again tells us how we must approach the Guardian:

And from the darkness there appears,  
In your own likeness manifesting you,  
Yet forming you into a deeper parable,  
Mightily working, in the cosmic ether,  
The solemn spirit-word your heart can hear.

The Spirit-Messenger to you: he who alone  
Can lighten up your path.  
Before him lie the far-spread fields of sense-existence,  
Behind him yawn the depths of the abyss.

And here, before the darkness of the spirit-fields,  
Hard by the yawning chasm of existence,  
Rings forth the ancient power of his creator-word:  
Behold, I am the only gate of knowledge.

Then the Guardian himself speaks while we are still on this side, in the sense-fields. He points to the other side where for us is unmitigated darkness while we are on this side, but which is to become light-filled, which must become light to us through spirit-knowledge, from out of which he speaks who alone is bright. He speaks, indicating the apparent darkness, this maya-darkness:

From the wide expanse of beings in space  
Who experience existence in light;  
From the tread of time's onward course  
Which finds in creating its very activity;  
From the depths of the feeling heart  
Where in the Self the world is founded:

There resounds in the soul's utterance,  
There shines from the spirit's thoughts  
Which from divine healing forces  
In the cosmic-creative powers  
Weave the mighty existential words:  
O Man, know thyself!

Whoever can feel deeply enough the words which resound from the Guardian's mouth, if he looks back upon himself, will realize that this looking back, the perception in looking back, constitutes the first stage of self-knowledge. Self-knowledge which is preparatory for the true self-knowledge which reveals spiritual cosmic knowledge of the being which is one with our own humanity. And then the knowledge arises which one can obtain on this side of the threshold of spiritual existence, knowledge which reveals the contamination in our own thinking, feeling and willing in terrible but true images; as three beasts arising from the yawning abyss between the sense-world and the spirit-world.

What we should feel at the abyss of being between the maya, the illusion, and the real world, should appear before our souls as the fourth sensation.

Yet you must beware of the abyss;  
Otherwise its beasts will devour  
You, if you pass by me in haste.  
Your cosmic age has placed them there  
In you as enemies of knowledge.

Behold the first beast, the crooked back  
The bony head, the scrawny body,  
His skin is all a dullish blue;  
Your fear of creative spiritual being  
Begot the monster in your will;  
Knowledge bravery alone will overcome it.

We must be quite clear, my dear friends, that bravery in acquiring knowledge is not present at first in the soul, but cowardice for acquiring knowledge is what dominates. Especially in our time that cowardice is what holds back most people from even approaching an insight into the spiritual world.

Behold the second beast, it bares  
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,  
Yellow with gray spots is its body;  
Your hate of spiritual revelation  
Begot this weakling in your feeling;  
Your burning thirst for knowledge must subdue him.

That is the second thing that we have within us – which plants doubt in our soul, every kind of uncertainty about the spiritual world. It is inherent in feeling, because feeling is weak and cannot rise to enthusiasm. True knowledge must outgrow superficial enthusiasm which trails all kinds of cheap external life. Inner enthusiasm, inner fire which becomes a burning thirst for knowledge; that is what overcomes the second beast.

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,  
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,  
Dirty-red its form appears to you;  
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light  
Begot this ghost within your thinking;  
Your creative knowledge must make it yield.

We must find the courage and the fire to bring activity to our thinking. When we create with ordinary consciousness we create arbitrarily, we create what is not real. When, however, we



correctly prepare ourselves for creative thinking, the spiritual world streams into our creative thinking. And then, due to knowledge-bravery, to a burning thirst for knowledge and to creative knowledge, we are truly standing in the spiritual world.

Only when you have overcome all three  
Will wings sprout from your soul  
To fly the abyss over,  
Which separates you from the knowledge fields  
To which your heart desires  
to consecrate itself in healing.

Such sensations can lead to feeling what we must activate in ourselves in order to enter the spiritual world as genuine, living human beings. In ordinary life it is often the most banal things which cause us to realize that life is serious and not a mere game. But what leads to knowledge does not impress us as much as exterior life does. It is all too easily made a game. And one is convinced that the game is in earnest. But one harms one's self and others greatly by playing at spiritual striving, by not being completely earnest about it.

This earnestness should not be expressed as sentimentality. Humor may be called for with respect to some aspects of life. But the humor must then be serious. When we compare earnestness with mere game-playing, it is not sentimentality, false piety or the rolling of eyes as opposed to games. Rather is it the possibility of really concentrating on spiritual striving and consistently and wholeheartedly living in it.

In order to sense the importance of what I am saying, my dear friends, it would be really good for spiritual striving if all the friends who are sitting here – especially those who have been in the Anthroposophical Society for a long time – to ask themselves the following question: How often have I resolved to undertake some task related to anthroposophical life, and how often have I completely forgotten about it after a short time? Perhaps I would have done it if I had thought about it, but I did not think about it any more. It was extinguished, just as a dream is extinguished.

It is neither meaningless nor unimportant to ask yourselves such a question. And perhaps it would not be unimportant if a large number of our friends were to undertake something in this direction now.

The Christmas Conference [1923] was to be the beginning of true esotericism pouring into the entire anthroposophical worldview stream, supported by the Anthroposophical Society. How often – one can ask – have I forgotten what I found to be quite beautiful during the Christmas Conference and in my thoughts and feelings continued as though the Anthroposophical Society were the same as it was before the Christmas Conference. And if someone says: that is not the case with me, it could be quite important for that person to ask himself: Am I fooling myself to think it is not the case with me? In respect to all anthroposophical activity have I realized that a new phase of the Anthroposophical Society has begun? To ask this question is very significant, for then the correct earnestness enters the soul.

And you see, this is connected to the life-blood of the Anthroposophical Society and therefore to the life-blood of every member who has requested acceptance in the Class; and it is good if it relates to something which exerts a strong influence in life. Therefore it would be good if all those who wish to belong to the Class ask themselves: Isn't there something I can do – now that the Anthroposophical Society has been re-founded – do differently than previously. Couldn't I introduce something new into my life as an anthroposophist? Couldn't I change the way I acted previously by introducing something new?

That would be enormously important, if taken seriously, for every individual who belongs to the Class. For thereby it would be possible for the Class to continue without being burdened

by such heavy baggage. For everyone who keeps to the old humdrum routine burdens the progress of the Class. It is perhaps not noticeable, but true nevertheless. In esoteric life there is no possibility of introducing what is so prevalent in life: interpreting lies as truth. If one tries to do this in esoteric life it is not the interpretation which matters, but the truth. In esoteric life only the truth works, nothing else. You may color something because of vanity, but what has been colored makes no impression on the the spiritual world. The unvarnished truth is what is effective in the spiritual world.

From all this you can judge how different spiritual realities are – which under the surface of life work today as always – from what everyday life shows, patched up as it is with so many lies. Very little of what passes today between people is true. To continually remind ourselves of this belongs to the beginning of work within the Class. For only with this notion can we find the strength to cooperate here in the Class with what will be unfolded in our souls from lesson to lesson in order that we may find the path to the spiritual world.

For we will only be able to recognize what must be cultivated in our thinking, feeling and willing in order for the three beasts to be defeated: thinking, the thought - phantom; feeling - mockery; willing - the bony crookedness of spirit. For these three beasts are the enemies of knowledge. We see them in the mirror, but as realities from the yawning abyss of being.

And deeply rooted with our humanity is everything which hinders us from real knowledge, firstly in our thinking. Normal human thinking is reflected in the thought-phantom of the first beast, the form of which was described thus:

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,  
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,  
Dirty-red its form appears to you;

It is the image of ordinary human thinking which thinks about things of the outside world and doesn't realize that such thinking is a corpse. Where did the being live whose corpse this ordinary thinking is?

Yes, my dear friends, nowadays – in accordance with contemporary civilization – when thinking from waking in the morning till retiring at night according to the guidance given us in school and in life itself, our thinking is a corpse. It is dead. When did it live, and where?

It lived before we were born; it lived when our souls were in pre-earthly existence. Just as you imagine, dear friends, that the human being lives on the physical earth animated by his soul within and he goes around in this physical body until his death, when the animating soul is invisible to external observation and the corpse is visible – the dead form of the human figure. You must imagine this related to thinking. A living, organic, growing, moving being possessed it before the human being entered into earthly existence. Then it becomes a corpse buried in our own heads, in our brains. And just as if a corpse in the tomb were to declare: I am the man! so declares our thinking when it lies buried in the brain as a corpse and thinks about the external things of the world. It is a corpse. It is perhaps depressing to realize that it is a corpse, but it is true, and esoteric knowledge must hold to the truth.

That is the meaning of the Guardian of the Threshold's words. After he has described the warning of the three beasts, he continues. And the words which resound in our hearts are these:

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life

Lived its life in fields of spirit.

I repeat it:

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.

Thinking, with which we achieve so much here in the sense-world, for the gods of the cosmos is the corpse of our soul's being. By entering into an earthly existence we have died in thinking during this time on earth. The death of thinking had gradually been preparing itself since the year 333 A.D. The middle of the fourth post-Atlantean period. Before that life had poured into thinking, which was the heritage of pre-earthly existence. The Greeks felt that vitality, as did the Orientals, in that they thought of thinking as being the work of the spirit, of the gods. They knew, in that they thought, that in every thought the god lived. That has been lost. Thinking has become dead. And we must heed the message of the times that reaches us through the Guardian:

Yet you must beware of the abyss;  
otherwise your beasts will consume you  
If you hastily pass me by;  
Your cosmic age has put them in  
You, as enemies of knowledge.

This cosmic age began in the year 333 after Christianity began, after the first third of the fourth century had passed. And now thinking, devoid of the force of life, is clearly present in everything. And the dead thinking of the nineteenth century forced dead materialism to the surface of human civilization. It is different with feeling. The greatest enemy of humanity, Ahriman, has not yet been able to kill feeling in the same way he killed thinking. Feeling also lives in human beings in the present cosmic age. But man has to a great extent driven this feeling down from full consciousness into the halfway unconscious. Feeling arises in the soul. Who has it in his power, as he has thinking in his power? To whom is it clear what lives in feeling as it is clear to him what lives in thinking?

Take one of the saddest – to the spirit saddest – occurrences of our times, my dear friends. When people think clearly they are citizens of the world, for they well know that thinking makes you human, even when it is dead in the present age.

But people are separated by their feeling into nations, and especially today they let this unconscious feeling dominate in the worst possible way. Because people feel themselves as only belonging to a certain group, all kinds of conflicts arise.

Nevertheless, world karma places us in a certain human group, and it is our feeling that acts as an instrument of world karma when we are placed in this tribe, in that class, in that nation. It is not through thinking that we are so placed. Thinking, if it is not colored by feeling and willing, is the same thinking everywhere. Feeling, however, is graduated according to the different regions of the world. Feeling lies halfway in the unconscious, alive yes, but in the unconscious. Therefore the ahrimanic spirit, unable to exert influence on the living part, uses the opportunity to agitate in the unconscious. And he concentrates this agitation on the confusion between truth and error. All our prejudices based on feeling are colored by ahrimanic influences and impulses.

If we want to enter the spiritual world this feeling must rise up before our souls. We must be able to include feeling in the development of knowledge. Through constant review of our own being, we must be able to know what kind of persons we are as feeling human beings. This is not easy. With thinking it is relatively easy to achieve clarity about ourselves. We don't always do it, but it is still easier to admit: you are not exactly a genius, or you lack clear thinking about this or that. At the most, it is either vanity or opportunism which prevents us from achieving clarity about our thinking.

But with feeling we never really get to the point of observing ourselves in our souls. We are always convinced that the direction of our feeling is the correct one. We must delve most intimately into our souls if we wish to know ourselves as feeling human beings. Only by facing ourselves directly with complete conscientiousness do we lift ourselves up, do we lift ourselves up over the obstacles which the second beast places before us on the path to the spiritual world.

Otherwise, if we do not occasionally practice this self-knowledge as feeling human beings, then we will always develop a mocking countenance with respect to the spiritual world. Because we are not conscious of our ailing feeling capacity, we are also unconscious of being mockers of the spiritual world. We disguise the mockery in all possible forms, but we are still mocking the spiritual world. And it is just those, of whom I spoke previously, who lack earnestness, who are the scoffers. They are sometimes embarrassed to express the mockery even to themselves, but they are still mocking the spiritual world. For how can one lack seriousness regarding the spiritual world, playing games about it, without mocking it. To such as they the Guardian speaks:

The second beast's mocking countenance  
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,  
Which hollows out its own soul  
And creates an empty life  
Instead of fullness of spirit  
With light from the force of the sun  
Before earthly existence.

The first beast is the reflection of our will. The will does not only dream, it does not lie only half in the unconscious; it lies completely in the unconscious.

I have often described to you, my dear friends, how the will lies deep in the unconscious. And deep in the unconscious is where man seeks the paths of his karma, at least for ordinary consciousness. Every step that a person takes in life related to karma is measured. But he knows nothing about it. It is all unconscious. Previous earth-lives work forcefully into his karma. Karma leads us to our life's crises, to our decisions, to our doubts. Here we meet the individual's aberrations, the person who lives only for himself, and seeks only his own way. In thinking: one seeks the path which all men seek. In feeling: one seeks the path which his group seeks. In feeling we recognize if someone is from the north, from the west or the south, from eastern, southern or central Europe. One must concentrate on the will's unconscious impulses in order to see another human being as a single individual, rather than merely a human being in general or a member of a group. This is an act of will – but also deep in the unconscious. The first beast shows the aberrations of the will.

The Guardian reminds us:  
The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time

Cosmic being from the gods.

In our will's activities work the spiritual powers which want to strip our bodies from us during our earthly existence and therewith take a portion of our souls with it, in order to build an earth which does not continue to develop [in the future] as Jupiter, Venus, Vulcan. Rather the earth is to be sundered from divine intentions and stolen at some point in the future. Together with the earth stolen from the gods, the human being would be united with certain powers which work in his will...the same will through which he seeks his karma.

The first beast is surely capable of revealing in a mirror-image what is working in the will: bony head, dried-out body with dull blue skin, the crooked back. It is the Ahrimanic spirit, which acts in the will when karma is being sought and which can only be overcome by the courage of knowledge. So the Guardian of the Threshold speaks about this beast as I have just described.

I will read it again:

The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

In these words from the Guardian of the Threshold's mouth resound further the warning to the human being seeking knowledge and insight.  
Let these words live most intensively in our souls, my dear friends, and let us listen often to the Guardian's words:

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.

Once again, you must grasp the concordance in these verses  
[The first stanza of this mantra is written on the blackboard:]

*The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.*

At first we feel what each stanza contains.  
The second stanza refers to feeling:  
[The second stanza is written on the blackboard.]

*The second beast's mocking countenance  
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,  
“counter-force”, no longer “part”, but “force”!  
Which hollows out its own soul  
And creates an empty life  
Instead of fullness of spirit  
With light from the force of the sun  
Before earthly existence.*

Now we feel first: “denies”, and now “hollows out” and feel the nuance that enters into the verses by “denies”, becoming “hollows out”.

The Guardian's words directed to willing:

The first beast's bony spirit:

The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

[This stanza is written on the blackboard:]

*The first beast's bony spirit:*

*The will's evil creative power;*

Now no longer “image” or “force”, but “power”. You must feel the escalation.

*Which would estrange your own body*

and now you have here the escalation: first the intellectual: “denies”; then instigation in inner life: “hollows out”: then what completely eliminates inner life: “estrange”.

*From the soul's inherent strength*

*And devote it to the counter-forces,*

*Which would steal in future time*

*Cosmic being from the gods.*

Note that in all three stanzas the word “evil” echoes. [The word is underlined.] And if you observe and feel the critical points in the escalations and in the difference between thinking, feeling and willing [the words are underlined], and if you correctly sense how all three are united by the always recurring word “evil”, then, my dear friends, each stanza will become a mantram for you, according to its inner meaning. And they can become a guide on the three stages to the spiritual world – that of the third beast, of the second beast and of the first beast. And if you never omit these three concordances and never fail to unite the three by the one decisive word towards an inner soul-organism, then they will become your guide, my dear friends, on the path past the Guardian of the Threshold and into the spiritual world.

We will get to know him better in the following lessons.

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force

which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.

The second beast's mocking countenance  
Is the **evil** counter-force of feeling,  
Which hollows out its own soul  
And creates an empty life  
Instead of fullness of spirit  
With light from the force of the sun  
Before earthly existence.

The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's **evil** creative power,  
Which would estrangle your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

### Lesson Three

Domach, February 29, 1924

Let us begin, my dear friends, with the words the Guardian speaks – words we already know – when pointing in the direction of the spiritual world, which characterize what the human being can feel on the threshold of the spiritual world as he strides past the Guardian.

From the wide expanse of beings in space  
Who experience existence in light,  
From the tread of time's onward course  
Which finds in creating its very activity;  
From the depths of the feeling heart  
Where in the Self the world is founded:

There resounds in the soul's utterance,  
There shines from the spirit's thoughts,  
Which from divine healing forces  
in the cosmic-creative forces  
Weave the mighty existential words:  
O Man, know thyself!

It's about the path one should follow in thought, the path which one will actually take when seeking access to the spiritual world. And we should not say that when someone experiences in thought – if he honestly and earnestly lives in his thoughts – what the person in process of initiation realizes in reality by entering the spiritual world, that the former does not actually participate in what is revealed to the human soul when entering the spiritual world, because it is only a reflected ideation.

One should not say: Let's leave gaining entrance into the spiritual world to those who are striving

to be initiated and stand with their souls in the spiritual world as people stand in physical existence with their senses. Rather should one say: When even in thought one approaches the description of the path that leads to the spiritual world, and provided the thinking is not superficial, he will experience and feel fully what it means to leave the world of the senses behind, a world only the intellect can grasp, and enter the spiritual world.

That is what I will speak to you about today, my dear friends, and not merely for those who already seek the transformation which will lead them into the spiritual world, but also for those who, at first, only experience the transformation in their thoughts. And that includes all of you, else you wouldn't be sitting here.

Therefore the following must be said: When man makes his observations in the world of senses – life consists of such observations – when man uses the things that he encounters in the sense world to unfold his will, when he proceeds from observation to action, and when he lets the combination of such observations and actions have an effect on his feelings, he stands to a certain extent on firm ground, for this process has been implanted in him as a physical being on earth between birth and death. Wherever he doesn't have this firm ground, he looks for it. When he is expected to believe something, he looks everywhere for the facts behind it. He asks: What experience proves this or that? He doesn't like to accept something in ordinary life which is not proven by this or that outward experience. He stands on firm ground because he says to himself: What is true is what is seen, what is real is what is held in the hand. The world, the world order itself, provides a certain security in human life. And because of this security, man differentiates – insofar as it is necessary for ordinary life between birth and death – he differentiates between truth and illusion, truth and semblance, truth and dream. When verification cannot be found, he calls it semblance. And only by differentiating between true and false, reality and semblance, is life secure.

Just imagine, my dear friends, that you were to go through life between birth and death in a way that you could never really know whether something that confronts you is truth or illusion. You could not determine whether a person who stands before you and speaks to you is a real person or the semblance of one. You could not differentiate between something happening to you being real or merely a dream. Just imagine what insecurity, what terrible insecurity that would cause in your life.

But exactly as you would feel if life were to withdraw the possibility of knowing whether you were dreaming or confronting reality, is also the way the adept feels standing at the threshold of the spiritual world. That is the very first important experience he has when he realizes that on the other side of the threshold is the spiritual world.

As we have already seen, only darkness streams at first from this spiritual world. Yet although here or there brilliant flashes of light emanate from the darkness – in which the Guardian of the Threshold's words are heard, as we learned last time – with all the knowledge of the senses and reason you may have gleaned in the physical world, you would never be able to know whether a real spiritual being, a real spiritual fact stands before you or a shape in a dream.

That is the first experience of the spiritual world, that semblance and reality are mixed up and to differentiate between semblance and reality is problematic at first. That is something which should be borne in mind especially by those who have experienced impressions from the spiritual world not through normal spiritual training, but due to elementary forces, which can be the result of any number of things, such as shattering events, illness and the like. He shouldn't deceive himself by saying: well, now you have the spiritual world, because it could well be that whatever it is that seems to suddenly shine from out of the spiritual world is merely an illusion. Therefore the first thing one must learn in order to enter the spiritual world is the ability to distinguish between truth and error, between reality and illusion – independent of what is experienced in the physical world. One must acquire completely new capacities for distinguishing between reality and illusion.



In our times, when people no longer pay much attention to how the spiritual world illuminates life, in which they only pay attention to what is palpable, to what can only be seen by physical eyes; in our times, when people are completely attuned to the overt security which life between birth and death provides; in these times it is especially difficult to acquire this capacity to distinguish between truth and error, reality and semblance in respect to the spiritual world. It is in this area where the most earnestness is required.

And where does this come from? You see, when you confront the outer world as a physical person, you think about this outer world. And at the same time you have impressions from the physical world, which in a certain sense slip under your thoughts, supporting them. You don't have to do very much in order to live in reality. Reality accepts you as a physical reality.

It is quite different in the spiritual world. You must first grow into the spiritual world. For the spiritual world you must acquire the correct feeling of your own true reality. Then you will gradually be able to differentiate between truth and error, between reality and semblance of reality.

When you sit down on a chair – at the moment you don't fall on the floor, but are able to sit safely on the chair, you know that in the physical world the chair is a real chair and not merely an imagined chair. The chair itself provides proof of its reality.

That is not the case in the spiritual world. For why is it so in the physical world? Because in the physical world your thinking, your feeling, your willing are held together by the physical body. You are a threefold human being: a thinking, feeling and a willing human being. But they are all unified within each other by the physical body.

At the moment when the human being enters the spiritual world, he immediately becomes a triple being. His thinking goes its own way, his feeling goes its own way, his willing goes its own way. So you can think in the spiritual world, have thoughts which have nothing to do with your willing; but these thoughts are illusions. You can have feelings which have nothing to do with your willing; but these feelings contribute to your undoing, not to your advancement.

That is the essential thing, that when a person approaches the threshold of the spiritual world it seems to him that his thinking flies out into distant space and that his feeling goes beyond his memory.

Consider for a moment what I just said. You see, memory is really something which comes very close to the threshold of the spiritual world. Let's say you experienced something ten years ago. It returns in memory. The experience is there again. You are justifiably satisfied, as far as the physical world is concerned, if you have a vivid memory of it. For someone who has entered the spiritual world, however, it is as though he pushes through the memory, as though he goes farther than the memory reaches. In any case he goes farther back than his memory of physical earthly life can reach. He goes back beyond birth.

And when one enters the spiritual world, he immediately senses that his feeling does not stay with him. Thinking at least goes out into the presently existing universe. It disperses, as it were, in cosmic space. Feeling goes out of the universe and if one wants to follow feeling one must ask: Where are you now? When you have become 50 years old, then you have gone back in time farther than 50 years; you have gone back 70 years, 100 years, 150 years. Feeling leads you completely out of the time in which you have lived since childhood.

And willing, if you take it seriously, leads you ever farther back in time, back to your previous earth lives. That is something which happens immediately, dear friends, when you really come to the threshold of the spiritual world. The physical body ceases holding you together. One no longer feels within the confines of the skin; one feels split into parts.

You feel as though your thoughts, which were previously confined by feelings, are streaming out into cosmic space and becoming cosmic thoughts. Your feelings seem to go back in time in the spiritual world between your last death and your present earth life. And with your volition you feel yourself in your previous earth life.

It is just this splitting of the human being – I described it in my book *How to Attain Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* – which causes difficulties upon entering the spiritual world, because your thoughts expand. They had previously been held together and now stream out into cosmos space. At the same time they become almost imperceptible. So one must achieve the ability to perceive the thoughts which have thus expanded.

Feeling is no longer permeated by thoughts, for the thoughts have gone, so to speak. So your feeling can only turn prayerfully, with reverence and devotion, to the beings with whom you pass your life between death and a new birth on earth. This is possible if one has cultivated such reverence for the spiritual world in life.

But the moment one's volition, which wants to proceed to previous earth-lives, takes over, the person meets a great difficulty in that he feels an enormous attraction for the contents of his lower nature. And here works most strongly what I previously said about the difficulty in being able to differentiate between semblance and reality. For the person acquires a strong preference for semblance. I'll describe it as follows.

When a person begins to meditate, when he or she is really dedicated to the meditation, he would like to continue in tranquility. He does not want it to deprive him of life's comforts. Well, this desire not to be deprived of life's comforts is a strong producer of illusions and semblances. Because when you dedicate yourself completely to meditation, necessarily from the depths of your soul the question arises about your capacity for evil. One cannot do otherwise than to feel through meditation, through that penetration into the depths, everything you are capable of perpetrating. But the urge to deny this is so strong that one submits to the illusion that one is essentially a very good person.

The real experience of meditation does not indicate such a result. It shows how one can be full of all kinds of vanity and overestimation of one's self and underestimation of others. Also one judges people not only because they have something important to say, but because one wishes to bask in the good opinion of others. But that is the least of things. He who really meditates honestly will see what drives live in his soul and what he is therefore capable of. Man's lower nature appears strongly before the soul's inner vision. And this honesty must exist in mediation. When it is there we can see what the will's disposition really is, which is reflected in the words we have already heard:

Behold the first beast, the crooked back  
The bony head, the scrawny body,  
His skin is all a dullish blue;  
Your fear of creative spiritual being  
Begot the monster in your will;

Because the human being tends to succumb to illusion, he suppresses the impression that necessarily arises in meditation, and he feels the urge to mock the spiritual world. Only by honestly facing these opposing forces can he stand in the spiritual world in the right way. Then the sight of the second beast appears on the threshold:

Behold the second beast, it bares  
Its teeth in a warped face, scornfully it lies,  
Yellow with gray spots is its body;  
Your hate of spiritual revelation  
Begot this weakling in your feeling;

And then when we are helpless to follow the thoughts we had in our heads during earth life and are now cosmic thoughts, because of this inability to bestride our cosmic thoughts, that the third

beast appears:

Behold the third beast, with cloven muzzle,  
Its eye is glassy, posture slouching,  
Dirty-red its form appears to you;  
Your doubts in the power of spiritual light  
Begot this ghost within your thinking;

The less we succumb to illusions about this trinity, which reflects our own being, the more we find in us the true human who can receive the light from the spiritual world and who is in a position to really solve the riddle, insofar as it is possible on earth to do so, which is conceded to us with the words: "O man, know thyself!". For through this self-knowledge streams forth the true knowledge of the world which can lead us in the right way through life. Therefore this threefold splitting in which one's thinking goes its way, feeling goes its way and willing goes its way, which otherwise are united by exterior forces, may be expressed by the words the Guardian of the Threshold says to the adept. We heard them the last time:

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.

The second beast's mocking countenance  
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,  
Which hollows out its own soul  
And creates an empty life  
Instead of fullness of spirit  
With light from the force of the sun  
Before earthly existence.

The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

These are the words spoken by the Guardian as a warning so that we know how we should *not* enter the spiritual world. Upon entering the spiritual world we must have become accustomed to a different way of judging, a different way of feeling and a different way of willing from what prevails in the physical world. And for that it is really necessary that we grasp this threefold element within us, that we firmly direct our gaze within in order to be alert to what our thinking really is, what our feeling really is, what our willing really is and what they must become for us to be able to step across the threshold into the spiritual world, if only in our thoughts. For the fact is that the gods place will-power before the bliss of knowledge and they require it.

Therefore, directly after the Guardian has spoken these discouraging, perhaps frightening words,

he continues with the other words which tell us what we *should* do. At this point the first lessons of this class also become practical in that they instruct us what should enter into our thinking, feeling and willing forces in order to enter the spiritual world in the right way.

And the verse should also be threefold which should flow into us in a way that we can live with it. For in living with it we are setting out on the path to the spiritual world. In the same way that we eat and drink, that we see and hear, must something be evoked in us by what the Guardian of the Threshold, standing before the spiritual world, says with earnest visage.

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:

Cosmic semblances confront you,

Selfhood as such hides from you;

Plunge beneath the semblances:

Etheric essence flows in you;

Selfhood as such should revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

Let us examine the verse. When the human being lives in the sense-world between birth and death, he feels to be within his physical body. He knows that his legs carry him through the world. He knows that blood circulation gives him life. He knows that his breathing awakens life. He commits himself to this breathing, blood circulation and the movement of the members that carry him through the world. In doing so, he is a physical being on the earth. Just as he commits himself to these things physically, he must also commit with his soul to the leading powers of the spiritual world if he wants to participate in it, knowledgeably enter into it.

Just as I must say that for physical health your blood must circulate in the correct way, your breathing must be in order, I must also advise the person who wishes to stand correctly in the spiritual world, that his soul must follow, be sustained and led by his own spiritual guides:

[The first verse, beginning with the last words, is written on the blackboard:]

*Guiding beings of your spirit*

But, my dear friends, you are committed to your blood by the force of nature, as you are to the movement of your limbs, also your breathing. But you cannot be committed in this way to your spirit's guiding beings in the spiritual world. Inner activity is required. You don't reach them as you achieve breathing by movement of the lungs; you reach them, however, by learning to revere them.

[Over "*Guiding beings of your spirit*" "revere" is written:]

*revere*

*Guiding beings of your spirit*

Revere with what is deepest in you, with your selfhood.

[ "*Selfhood*" is written in front of "revere". ]

*selfhood*

*revere*

*Guiding beings of your spirit.*

Selfhood as such should revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

[When spoken, the missing words are added, then written on the blackboard:]

*Selfhood as such should revere  
Guiding beings of your spirit.*

Thus you have the manner in which you must stand within the spiritual world, given in the words spoken by the Guardian of the Threshold.

And how do you stand within? Not as though you were standing with your legs on solid ground; not through the warmth of your blood in physical life; not by drawing breath. You stand there by virtue of feeling yourself in the half-spiritual etheric essence flowing through you:

*Etheric essence flows in you*

The feeling is as though one were a small cloud around which a spiritual wind blows, that one is carried by this wind in which selfhood, one's own I, reveres the spiritual guides which approach with the wind from all sides. We are invited to submerge into it. But what is it initially? As long as we remain in our meditation in what I have just described, it is mere semblance. We must submerge in this semblance fully conscious that the wind and the reverence for the spiritual guides is only semblance.

[The fourth line from the bottom is written on the blackboard.]

*Plunge beneath the semblances*

Why should we do all this? Well, in earthly life initially we have only a vague sense of our I – “Selfhood”; we define it with the word “I”, but in reality it is an undefined, dim, hidden feeling.

[The fifth line from the bottom is written.]

*Selfhood as such hides from you*

We don't know much about it. And what we do know is not cosmic-being, it is cosmic-semblance.

[The sixth line from the bottom is written.]

*Cosmic semblance confronts you*

When we follow the Guardian of the Threshold's indications...

[The seventh line from the bottom is written.]

*See in yourself the weaving thoughts*

it all becomes the weaving of our own thoughts.

Now we have the first mantric verse which can give us the strength in our thinking to accept the challenge to our selfhood which can initially be expressed in the words:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:  
Cosmic semblances confront you,

Selfhood as such hides from you;  
Plunge within the semblances:  
Ethereic essence flows in you;  
Selfhood as such should revere  
Guiding beings of your spirit.

This is the invitation to us when observing our thoughts in retrospection. If you close yourself off from the outside world and observe how your thoughts fluctuate and then you follow the invitation in these seven lines, you have complied with the Guardian of the Threshold's first demand.

Now you are to approach what the Guardian says to your feelings:

To hear within the flow of feeling:  
when semblance and being within you blend,  
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;  
So plunge into what's seemingly being:  
In you the cosmic-psychic forces;  
Your selfhood then should well consider  
Your own soul's living powers.

Just as through the first mantric verse we enter thinking, we enter the inner world of thinking through the second.

[The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

*To hear within the flow of feeling*

Put aside thinking and try to observe your own feelings. In thinking everything is semblance. But when we descend into feeling semblance and being blend, intermix. That is immediately apparent.

*when semblance and being within you blend*

Only our I, selfhood, does not wish to enter real existence. It is used to outside semblance and appearance. It tends towards semblance, still retaining this from the world of the senses:

*Your selfhood tends towards the semblance  
So plunge into what's seemingly being*

in what results from feeling. It is seemingly being, a mixture of semblance and being. "So plunge into what's seemingly being": when we will feel the mood which lies in these four lines, we will realize that it has become serious as we plunge into the semblance:

*In you the cosmic-psychic forces*

First of all, selfhood had to "revere" by sinking into thought; now selfhood should "consider". The thoughts are to be brought down into feeling. We then encounter something which assures us of true being:

*Your selfhood then should well consider  
Your own soul's living powers*

No longer “semblance”, but “living powers”. Whereas our self, our I tends towards semblance, the gods give us the rock of being in the depths of feeling. In order to convert the verse into a mantram, it would be good to revisit such correspondences.

### Revere

consider well - in the third verse we will see how it increases.

Semblance - your experience.

Here [first verse] is only semblance; and here [second verse]

semblance and being - within you blend.

guiding spirits [in the first verse] your own

living powers [in the second verse], the beings who guide us through the etheric; the living powers who guide us back to pre-earthly existence — where feeling goes.

If you wish to make it into a true mantra however, you must take something else into consideration. Read the first verse:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:

Cosmic semblances confront you,

Selfhood as such hides from you;

Plunge within the semblances:

Etheric essence flows in you;

Selfhood as such should revere

Guiding beings of your spirit.

Clearly this is a trochaic rhythm, which I beg you to observe. If you stress this strongly and this weakly [the iambic rhythm symbols breve and macron are placed above the beginning of each line and then spoken with the appropriate stress], it corresponds to the correct etheric movement in the soul where reverence for the higher beings requires such a tone. Thus you will be led into the spiritual world.

It is otherwise in the second verse:

To hear within the flow of feeling:

when semblance and being within you blend,

Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;

So plunge into what's seemingly being:

In you the cosmic-psychic forces;

Your selfhood then should well consider

Your own soul's living powers.

The way in which the soul feels these words, either trochaic or iambic – here [in the first verse] there is a distinctly trochaic beat, and here [in the second verse] a distinctly iambic beat – gives the soul the corresponding verve.

It is not a question of merely acquiring intellectual information, even when the soul is making its way to the spiritual world only in thought. Rather is it important that the soul enters with the right breathing and rhythm of cosmic being. If you use an iambic rhythm in striving to enter cosmic thought, you have misunderstood the Guardian of the Threshold. If you use a trochaic verse and not an iambic one for entrance into the world of cosmic feeling, again you have misunderstood

the Guardian of the Threshold.

The third element we must plunge into is willing. And the Guardian of the Threshold also gives us a verse for this. Now that we have contemplated the first two, the last one will be easy to understand.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:  
Which rises out of semblance-being  
With creative self it rises up;*

it surges up from the will to what gives the self substance, content...

*Turn your life in full to this  
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;  
Your inner self should truly grasp  
Cosmic creative power in the spirit-I.*

Feel again the escalation:

revere: one is far away, one looks up, one reverts from without;

consider well: one draws closer in thought, one enters;

grasp: the highest escalation, one enters and grasps it.

Guiding beings

living powers and now:

cosmic creative power: now at the beginning of the line, corresponding to the reality of the direct power of the will.

You will feel that all three are mantric verses if you pay attention to the trochaic element here [the first verse], the iambic here [the second verse]. Here however [the third verse] we have two stressed syllables.

[on the line beginnings on blackboard the the spondaic symbols – – are placed and spoken with the corresponding emphasis:

*Let strive in you with thrust of will:  
Which rises out of semblance-being  
With creative self it rises up;  
Turn your life in full to this  
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;  
Your inner self should truly grasp  
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.*

Here you have a spondee rhythm.

This is what must be observed. You must release yourself from the mere intellectual content and attend to the trochee, iambus and spondee rhythms. At the moment we are able to move on from the intellectual meaning to commitment to the rhythm, from that moment it is possible to leave the physical world and really enter the spiritual one. For the spiritual cannot be grasped only using the words whose meanings apply to the physical world; but only if we use the opportunity to carry the rhythms of these words out to the living cosmos.

Therefore self-observation is exercised on the soul in a threefold sequence of thinking, feeling and willing. The soul will then express itself correctly if it experiences this as it does eating and drinking by the body, as it experiences blood circulation and breathing, if it experiences the rhythm in these words:



See in yourself the weaving thoughts:  
Cosmic semblances confront you,  
Selfhood as such hides from you;  
Plunge beneath the semblances:  
Etheric essence flows in you;  
Selfhood as such should revere  
Guiding beings of your spirit.

To hear within the flow of feeling:  
when semblance and being within you blend,  
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;  
So plunge into what's seemingly being:  
In you the cosmic-psycho forces;  
Your selfhood then should well consider  
Your own soul's living powers.

Let strive in you with thrust of will:  
Which rises out of semblance-being  
With creative self it rises up;  
Turn your life in full to this  
Filled it is with cosmic-spirit-force;  
Your inner self should truly grasp  
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.

In words you have at first the blood; with the corresponding rhythms you have the circulating blood. Seek the sense of these rhythms, let them act in your soul and you will come near to the Guardian's first warning – which I told you at the beginning of these lessons, my dear friends:

Where on earthly ground, color on color  
Life is manifest in creation;  
Where from earthly matter, form on form,  
The lifeless is given shape;  
Where sentient Beings, strong in will  
Warm themselves in joy of existence;  
Where you, O man, your bodily being  
derive from earth and air and light.

There your true being enters  
Deep, night-enveloped, cold darkness;  
You ask in the dark sweeping expanse  
No longer, who you are and were and will be.  
For your own being the day grows dimly  
To the soul's night, to spirit-darkness;  
And you turn with angst of soul  
Toward the light that from darkness streams.

And if we wish to find the light that emerges from the darkness, we will find it if we seek it by this threefold path, filling ourselves with this lifeblood for the soul that wishes to tread the path to true knowledge of the spirit and of God.



## Lesson Four

Dornach, March 7, 1924

My dear friends,

In the previous lessons we were concerned with meeting the Guardian of the Threshold. And we must understand this meeting well, to the extent that its earnestness can really occupy our minds. For here we enter an area which is essentially different from other areas of spiritual life, what is *called* spiritual life by today's civilization, that is. The encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold is the first thing one experiences when a relationship with the spiritual world truly and earnestly takes place. A relationship with the spiritual world cannot take place without this understanding of the meeting with the Guardian of the Threshold, because the spiritual world is on the other side of this threshold. So when communications are received from the spiritual world, they should be understood as merely in preparation for a relationship with the spiritual world.

As an example of what we will receive today, my dear friends, I would like to tell you a story taken from ancient esoteric tradition.

Once upon a time a student was accepted into the mysteries. He completed the preliminary stages. And when he had achieved a certain stage of maturity – not that he became what most people nowadays consider clairvoyant, but he entered into a relationship with the spiritual world, the relationship where, as far as feeling is concerned, one correctly receives communications from the spiritual world – the teacher said to him:

Behold, when I talk to you the words I speak are not human words; what I have to say is merely clothed in human words. What I have to say to you are the gods' thoughts, and these gods' thoughts are imparted to you by human words. But it must be clear to you that I am thus appealing to everything in your soul. You must meet the words which I direct to you on behalf of the gods with all your thinking, all your feeling, all your willing. You must receive these words with all your soul's enthusiasm, all its inner warmth, all its inner fire. You must receive them with total alertness, to the limit of your mind's capacity.

But there is one soul-force in you to which I am not appealing. Your memory. And I will be satisfied if you do not hold in your memory what I am now saying to you. I will be satisfied if tomorrow you forget what I have said today. Because what you usually call your memory, and what others call your memory, is only meant for earthly things, and not for godly things. So when you appear before me again tomorrow, and when I again speak to you, appealing to your thinking, feeling, willing, and to all your enthusiasm, all your warmth, all your inner fire, to your mind's alertness, then these soul forces will be renewed for what is to be received. Everything should be new and freshly vital the next day, and the day after, and every day.

I said that I do not appeal to your memory, to your capacity for remembering. That does not mean that tomorrow you should remember nothing of what is said to you today. But you should not preserve it in your memory alone. You should wait and see what your memory makes of it. What should lead you to me tomorrow in a new attitude, however, should be your feelings, the innermost feelings of your soul; they should preserve what is said to you today. For you see, memory, that capacity for remembrance, is for learning. What the esoteric has to say, however, is not merely for learning, but for life, and every time it approaches you it should be relived without the help of memory's concepts. [Although there is no indication in the original, this appears to be the end of the story. Trans.]

It is in fact true that whenever we are dealing with esoteric truths we should not think: Oh, I know that already. For the essence of the esoteric does not lie in knowledge, but in direct experience. And inwardly, in deeper levels of our souls than where memory has its roots, is where we should grasp

and retain the esoteric.

If you reflect on this, my dear friends, it will be of great help in understanding true esoteric life as we continue. For what must be taken seriously is that in the moment that we accept the esoteric, our very understanding of it brings about a different relationship of thinking, feeling and willing in us than our everyday consciousness is accustomed to.

For everyday consciousness, thinking, feeling and willing are bound together. A trivial example may be used to demonstrate how closely bound together thinking, feeling and willing are in normal consciousness. Let's say you know someone, anyone, with whom you had an intimate or a more distant relationship. The things you experienced with him or her have been retained in your memory and permeate your feelings. When you are together with her these things lead you to certain actions in your behavior towards her. You go on in life with such thoughts and feelings. One day someone reminds you of this person, says something about her and your memory is stimulated. If you had loved her, your love is recalled; if you hated her, your hate is recalled. If you had wanted to undertake something together with her, this is also recalled. You cannot separate what you feel and will towards this person with what you think about her. [In German, the gender of this person is not specified; it is immaterial. Trans.]

With this kind of attitude it is not possible to understand esoteric truths correctly. Such truths can only be understood correctly when, for example, the following happens. You know someone with whom you have a certain relationship. Certain aspects of this person are most antipathetic to you. When you are reminded of this person, you can think of her without the antipathy arising. You can simply think about her.

It is quite difficult, my dear friends, to just think about your enemy without letting the animosity towards him arise. One can practice this with a correct grasp of art. You could ask yourself: Am I able to exclusively *think* about certain despicable characters in Shakespeare's works? If I were to meet such characters in real life, I would feel great antipathy towards them. When artistically presented, however, I can regard them objectively, perhaps just *because* they are such excellent villains. This is possible in the artistic area, for people do not always feel the urge to jump across the footlights and throttle these Shakespearean villains. It is possible to separate thinking from feeling in the artistic area.

But in order to be a true esotericist one must also be able to do so in real life. At the moment when something derived from the esoteric is said, it must be possible to separate thinking from feeling in this way in order for it to be absorbed by the soul. For they do not separate on their own. At first when we think esoteric things, they are so strongly present within the thoughts, and they are so distant from personal feelings, that we do not understand them if we do not use pure thinking to do so. So if we do not wish to listen to the esoteric like bumps on a log and let everything pass over us with indifference, we must develop feelings and will-impulses apart from those engendered through thinking. Such feelings should be developed in order that the esoteric not remain a cold, icy field, which merely pours through our understanding, when it should immerse us in the brightest enthusiasm. But this enthusiasm, this world of feeling, must come from somewhere else if it does not come from thinking.

For you see, if we want to make our feelings warm in the right way, we must be clear about the fact that when one speaks correctly from out of the esoteric, he is speaking from the godly sphere and therefore our feelings do not encounter thoughts, but realities.

That is why when I gave the first lesson I said that it is the School that speaks here, that is, the true spirit which goes through the School, and that it is necessary to realize that the School has not been born of some personal intention, but that it has been willed and instated by the spiritual world. If we see it in this way, the School's existence will give us the enthusiasm we need.

And then we will understand something else. Yes, my dear friends, in ordinary life and in ordinary science, we are spoken to in words. And when we understand the words, the thoughts they are meant to express come to us because they are contained in the words. The esotericist must also use

words, for he must speak. But he uses words only as a means to show how the spirit flows toward us in streams and seeks to pour itself into human hearts.

Therefore it is necessary that in an Esoteric School a sense is gradually developed to hear beyond the words. And when this sense has been developed it will be possible to acquire – in respect to the esoteric – what has been called in esoteric streams of all times with an attitude of holiness: *silence* – the silence which preserves holiness. And this holiness-preserving silence is connected with something else, without which the esoteric can not further humanity. It is connected with innermost humility. And without this innermost humility it is not possible to approach the esoteric. Why? Well, when we are exhorted to hear beyond the words, it is an appeal to the innermost essence of our souls, not to our memory. Then our capacity comes into play, to what extent we are capable of hearing beyond the words. And it is good for our souls to hear much. But we should not jump to the conclusion that what dawns in our souls as a result is necessarily valid and should be relayed to the world. We will need much time, even when we hear beyond the words, before we come to terms with ourselves. We should develop the idea that the esoteric must first live and weave wordlessly in the soul before it can be considered to be mature enough.

Therefore in the esoteric we must go back from what words mean in ordinary life to the deeper understanding in the soul. And that is what I did in the last lesson, my dear friends, when I provided mantric verses for you, in which scanning is used. The first verse had a trochaic rhythm, the second an iambic rhythm and the third a spondaic rhythm. We should feel as though we were descending from the mountain into the valley with the trochaic rhythm, and we should understand how this rhythm, which pertains to thinking, can be grasped only when we feel this descent within the soul. That is why this verse is trochaic, beginning with a stressed syllable and descending to an unstressed one. It was meant to instill in us a kind of psychic blood circulation in spiritual space. We don't just stand still when such mantras penetrate our souls, or voice certain thoughts, but we move together with the spiritual movement of the cosmos, in that human thoughts weave into human souls. So we learned the first verse, which is related to thinking:

See in yourself the weaving thoughts:  
Cosmic semblances confront you,  
Selfhood as such hides from you;  
Plunge beneath the semblances:  
Ethereic essence flows in you;  
Selfhood as such should revere  
Guiding beings of your spirit.

Yes, the gods have raised us to themselves by giving us thoughts. And we descend from the peaks upon which the gods have placed us down into the valleys, where we encompass and grasp earthly things with these thoughts.

It is different with feeling. We act correctly if, standing below in the valley, we wish to ascend with our feelings on a spiritual ladder to the gods. Feeling puts us in the opposite wave movement: from below to above. Therefore the mantric verse has an iambic rhythm. It begins with an unstressed syllable and rises to a stressed one. We should feel that:

Do hear within the flow of feeling:  
When semblance and being within you blend,  
Your selfhood tends towards the semblance;  
So plunge into what's seemingly being:  
In you the cosmic-psyhic forces live;  
Your selfhood then should well consider  
Your soul's own vital powers.

And it's again different when we come to the will. To do so, we must be aware that our humanity is split within us. Then we must move close to the gods in feeling and, halfway there, through feeling's strength give birth to the will-impulse. That is only possible if we meditate in the spondaic, beginning with two stressed syllables:

Let strive in you with thrust of will:  
What rises out of semblance-being  
With creative self it rises up;  
Turn life in full to this  
Filled with cosmic-spirit-force;  
Your inner self should truly grasp  
Creative cosmic power in the spirit-I.

As I said last time, it is not a question of understanding the meaning of words, but that we also grasp what lies in the words' movements and that our souls enter into that movement. In that way we no longer depend only on ourselves, but we grow into the universe.

Words whose meanings alone are grasped leave us unto ourselves. When the esoteric is concerned, however, it is a matter of growing together with the world, that we more and more come out of ourselves. For only so, by coming out of ourselves, are we able to withstand the separation of thinking, feeling and willing. Within ourselves, our corporeal "I" holds thinking, feeling and willing together for everyday consciousness. Outside, they must be held together by the gods. For this, however, we must enter the divine being. And we must grow together with the world. We must learn to develop a sense through which we can say to ourselves in all honesty and earnestness: Here I have my hand; I contemplate it. Over there stands a tree; I contemplate it. I contemplate my hand: it is I. I contemplate the tree: it is I. I contemplate the cloud: it is I. I contemplate the rainbow: it is I. I contemplate the thunder: it is I. I contemplate the lightning: it is I. I feel myself one with the world.

Abstractly, meaning dishonestly, this is easy to achieve. Concretely, meaning honestly, one must overcome many inner aspects. If, however, one does not shy away from overcoming these things, the desired goal will be achieved. For the question the esotericist must ask himself is: I contemplate my hand; it belongs to me. What would my life – which began a few decades ago – have become if I didn't have the hand? It is necessary for all I have become. But the tree: it is as it stands before us today – its conception originally from the Ancient Moon – grown out of the whole earth organism. What was present in the Ancient Moon organism could not have existed had the conception of the tree not been developed. But at that time the conception of my thinking also arose. If the tree didn't exist, I would not be thinking today. My hand is only necessary for my present earthly existence. The tree is necessary in order that I can be a thinking being. Why should the hand be worth more to me than the tree? Why should I reckon the hand more to my physicality than the tree? Little by little I am able to realize that what I call the outer world is much more my inner world than what I considered to be the interior of my physicality in this incarnation. To feel this deeply and sincerely must be learned.

So today we will consider three verses, mantric verses, through which this *feeling-one* with the whole so-called "outer being" can gradually penetrate deeply into the soul.

What is our attitude initially towards outer being? We look down at the earth. We feel dependent on this earth; it gives us what we need to live. We look into space. The sun rises in the morning; it goes down in the evening; its light streams across the earth; it comes from afar, it goes afar. We look up at night: the heavenly sky speaks mysteriously to us. In this threefold gaze our relationship to the world is determined. I look downward, I look out afar, I look upward. But let us do this with intensive consciousness, let us do it as indicated in the following mantric verses:

Feel how the earth's depths  
Press its forces in your being,  
In the members of your body.  
You lose yourself in them,  
If you entrust powerless  
Your will to their striving.  
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.

[These lines are written on the blackboard.]

*Feel how the earth's depths  
Press its forces in your being,  
In the members of your body.  
You lose yourself in them,  
- in the forces -  
If you entrust powerless  
Your will to their striving.  
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.*

You see, my dear friends, we do not consciously relate what binds us to the earth with our own humanity. We look down at the earth, knowing that crystals are formed in it, knowing that it moves through space, that it exerts a force of gravity, that it attracts the stone that falls to earth, knowing that it attracts even us. We think about all this. What we don't think about are the urges, instincts, cravings and passions that live in us, what we ascribe to lower human nature, and which also belong to the earth. When we look down and ask what the earth causes in us, we should remember: something exists in us, created by the earth, which would drag us down below the human level, which would darken our I, which would push us into the subhuman region. We must be aware that we are so bound to the earth that, despite all its beauty and majesty that spreads over its surface, for us humans the downward force is at the same time a sub-humanizing force. By honestly recognizing this we develop into true human beings.

Then we will be able to not only look downward in our development, but also to look afar in the distance at our own height and to see what surrounds the earth on all sides and describes our humanity within a circle. Thus something begins physically, which to a certain extent lifts us above the downward pulling earthly forces. Through the downward pulling earthly forces man can become evil; but not so easily through the breath, which also belongs to what encircles the earth. And even less through the light which the sun lets encircle the earth. We consider breath and light as things that have no spiritual importance. But gods live in breath and light. And we must be aware that godly forces are especially active in light and, because they pass through us humans, act differently than the deep earthly forces.

This brings the second mantric verse to our consciousness:

*Feel how from cosmic distance  
Godly forces let their spirit-light  
Shine into your psychic being.  
Find yourself in them loving,  
And they creating, wisdom weaving  
You as self in their circles  
Strong for spiritual works of good.*

We are not always aware that we can love what flows over our earth as light, be it sunlight or starlight. But we are aware that we can love the sunlight, love it as warmly as a friend, then we also learn how gods in garments of light circle round the earth. Then the opinion that sunlight is merely what illuminates the earth changes for good; sunlight becomes the garment of the gods. And the gods wander over the earth in shining garments. And what we experience from the light becomes wisdom. The gods bring their wisdom to our hearts, into our souls. And now, because of this differentiation in feelings, we have ascended higher.

First we developed the appropriate feelings in respect to the deep earthly forces. We sensed correctly the part of our humanity that belongs to the deep earthly forces. Then we raised ourselves to that higher part of our humanity which belongs to the godly beings in shining garments moving over the earth, who do not wish to leave man in the earthly sphere but, even while he is walks on the earth, raise him to their spheres, so that when he passes through the gates of death, he can continue to walk in them. For the gods do not want to leave us alone on earth, but want to bring us into their spheres. They want to make us into beings who live among them. The deep earth forces want to separate us from the godly forces.

Therefore, a previous mantra addressed to you:

The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

We must, however, also feel this when we are in the world and feel ourselves to be one with the world.

But we have not yet reached our full humanity in consciousness if we cannot look upward. We must gaze into the depths, we must gaze into the distance, we must gaze into the heights. From everyday consciousness which mixes the depth, the distant and the height, we must differentiate depth-consciousness, distant-consciousness, height-consciousness.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Feel how in heaven's heights  
Selfhood can selflessly exist*

We can feel that we are gazing up into the heights with full consciousness. Think, my dear friends, about standing outside in a field looking up at a star-bedecked sky. It becomes clearer when we have the opportunity to choose; it can also happen in daylight, but it is clearer at night. We feel at one with the world; we feel: that is you. But the point on earth we stand on, which we consider to be so important that it only encompasses our individual self, dissolves when we gaze up into space. It expands to the hemisphere. If we do this in the right way, then narrow selfhood ends and becomes selfless, for it is infinitely expanded in the heights of space:

Feel how in heaven's heights  
Selfhood can selflessly exist,  
[writing continues.]  
*If spirit-filled force of thought  
Follows striving in the heights*



Who really feels how the gods in shining garments move around the earth with the steaming sunlight and with every breath breathes in and breathes out of the human soul, and who gazes skywards feeling selfless in his selfhood, is soon able to also develop the distance of space within. The following lines are pertinent:

Feel how in heaven's heights  
Selfhood can selflessly exist,  
If spirit-filled force of thought  
Follows striving in the heights  
[writing continues.]  
*And with courage hears the words  
Gracefully intoning from above  
Into man's genuine being.*

The heights are speaking. And just as we can grow in love together with the gods who move around the earth in shining garments, we can also grow together with the words resounding from the heights, if we develop the capacity to strive together with the forces of thinking in the heavenly heights.

But, my dear friends, you will only be able to correctly achieve these inner feelings, which convert your consciousness to a depth, spatial and heights-consciousness, if you make the corresponding verses [about the third, second and first beasts] so deep and visible for your souls as contrasted with these verses [the three verses on the blackboard] — you come before the Guardian of the Threshold. Living thought-images should be active in your minds. The Guardian of the Threshold shows you the third beast of which we spoke in the previous lesson. What this beast characterizes resounds within you:

The third beast's glassy eye,  
Is the evil counterpart  
Of thinking, that denies itself  
In you and chooses death,  
Forsaking the spirit-force  
which before it's earthly life  
Lived its life in fields of spirit.

It is what draws us downward. We escape from it by saying with inner courage:

Feel how the earth's depths  
Press its forces in your being,  
In the members of your body.  
You lose yourself in them,  
If you entrust powerless  
Your will to their striving  
Darkly eclipsed will be your I.

At first glance there seems to be little difference between looking at the beast and what liberates you from it. Both mantras sound similar in that they both characterize the drawing under, except that one specifically describes the beast, while the other indicates watchfulness.

But let us go on to the second beast and take what rescues us from it; place both mantric verses alongside each other: the mood is completely different. In one the gruesome description of the

second beast, in the other an appeal to the gods who approach us in shining garments. And we hear these two mantric verses alongside each other, how different their styles are:

The second beast's mocking countenance  
Is the evil counter-force of feeling,  
Which hollows out its own soul  
And creates an empty life  
Instead of fullness of spirit  
With light from the force of the sun  
Before your earthly existence.

Feel how from cosmic distance  
Godly forces let their spirit-light  
Shine into your psychic being.  
Find yourself in them loving,  
And they creating, wisdom weaving  
You as self within their circles  
Strong for spiritual works of good.

Because we begin by describing the third beast, we must place ourselves, as in this mantric verse [Feel how the earth's depths...], next to the third beast. At first we can not free ourselves, we are only prompted to be aware of where the beast wants to lead us. When we turn to the second beast, and the helping mantric verse [Feel how from cosmic distance...], the verse is already able to lead us far away from the beast whose ghastliness is characterized by its mocking face. And when we approach the first beast, which wants to hinder us from hallowing our humanity by gazing up to the heavenly heights, and how we can escape in our innermost being from this beast, if we turn to the mantric verse which leads us upwards to the heavenly heights:

The first beast's bony spirit:  
The will's evil creative power,  
Which would estrange your own body  
From the soul's inherent strength  
And devote it to the counter-forces,  
Which would steal in future time  
Cosmic being from the gods.

And yet: As though we wished to burn up all that this verse says and lift ourselves up in flame, the other verse exists – comforter and grace-giving as opposed to what the first beast is, by means of our own courageous soul-force:

Feel how in heaven's heights  
Selfhood can selflessly exist,  
If spirit-filled force of thought  
Follows striving in the heights  
And with courage hears the words  
Gracefully intoning from above  
Into man's genuine being.

You see, the last time we saw that we practice an inner rhythm when we integrate our own being into the shining light-being of the world, so today we must recognize how the esoteric things

which we are learning have an inner connection, so that we must always go back to the previous elements – not only in respect to the meaning of the words, which remain earthly, but to the inner disposition. And this disposition, this mood, comes both from the whole and from the details.

Take for example the first verse: “Feel how the earth's depths”. Here we are directed to the earth's depths. And the other verse directs us to “ The third beast's glassy eye”. They belong together.

In the second verse “Feel how from cosmic distance”: We feel how the gods approach in shining garments. Here we are raised up – if we can really feel it – and away from what mocks the divine in the world. “The second beast's mocking countenance” is truly wiped away by radiant sunshine, if we wish to grasp “radiant sunshine” spiritually.

And the third verse, which begins: “The first beast's bony spirit” ossifies us. We become warm if we are freed from the ossification by gazing at the heavenly heights. So we can also say: When you see the third beast's glassy eye, stand firm and feel what the earth's depths want from you. When you see the second beast's mocking face, lovingly receive the sunlight. When you feel ossified by the first beast's bony spirit, warm yourself as a human being by raising your heart warmly to heaven's heights. Thus we shall gradually feel our way into spiritual life, and this spiritual life will grow ever more closely related to our soul.

\*

My dear friends, it is necessary to add something, because the School must be taken seriously, and what I said that Wednesday about its conditions must be taken seriously. So I have been obliged to withdraw the membership card from a person who, by neglecting to do what is necessary here on duty, could have caused a great misfortune. I mention this here because I wish to show that the intentions indicated during the Christmas Meeting must be taken seriously. And I request that in the future this should not be understood as a mere manner of speaking, if the fact that this Esoteric School is desired in all earnestness by the spiritual world is deemed valid, and in the moment when someone does not want to be a representative of the anthroposophical movement in the right way, the School must reserve the right to withdraw his membership card. I wish to indicate in all earnestness that the membership card had to be withdrawn from a person – at least for a period of time, until that person shows by his attitude that the opposite is the case. We will grow into the School in the right way if we reject all the flippant views about the anthroposophical movement which have brought so much mischief into the movement. We must grow into the esoteric in full earnestness. And I must say here again that what was meant in the Christmas Meeting has not been understood by everyone. But the School's leadership will be alert and will take the School seriously. Let us bear this in mind as part of today's lesson.

## Lesson Five

Dornach, March 14, 1924

My dear friends,

We have seen the changes which take place in a person who encounters the Guardian of the Threshold. And whether he or she is able to approach and come to an understanding of the spiritual world in any form, depends upon understanding the essence of this Guardian. In particular we have seen how what constitutes man's inner self – thinking, feeling, willing – undergoes a substantial transformation in the Guardian of the Threshold's domain. Especially in the last lesson here, it became clear to us how in a certain respect thinking, feeling and willing go different ways upon entering the spiritual world, how they enter into different relationships than those which usually prevail for earthly consciousness.

We have seen how through his will man is greatly influenced by earthly conditions. At the moment when the person approaches the spiritual world, in a certain sense thinking, feeling and willing become separated. The will, now living much more independently than previously in the soul, shows itself to be much more related to the forces which attract man to the earth. Feeling shows itself to be related to the forces which hold man in the periphery of the earth through which the light penetrates when it shines upon the earth in the morning, and which disappears from sight on the opposite side in the evening. Thinking, however, is the force which relates upwards to the heavenly. So that in the moment that man stands before the Guardian of the Threshold, this Guardian draws his attention to how he belongs to the whole world: through his will the earth, through his feeling the periphery, through his thinking the higher powers.

But that, my dear friends, is exactly what must be made clear – that upon entering the spiritual world a growing together with the universe occurs. For normal consciousness we stand here in the world while outside of us are the forces which are active in the plant, mineral, animal kingdoms, to which we have access through our senses, but which at first indicate no relationship to human beings. So here we stand, apart, looking inwards at our thinking, feeling and willing, aware that our thinking, feeling and willing are somewhat separated, apart from external nature. And we feel a deep chasm between our human nature and the expansive nature around us.

But this chasm must be bridged. For this chasm, only the exterior aspects of which are perceived by normal consciousness, is the threshold itself. And our being able to perceive the threshold depends on our ceasing to simply accept this unconsciousness, when we look within ourselves, concerning an external nature which we perceive as being foreign to humanity. For this chasm needs to be understood as being not only extremely important for human life, but also for the entire universe.

Well, you see, at the moment when one enters the esoteric, a bridge over this must be built. We must, in a sense, merge with nature. We must stop saying to ourselves: Out there is nature, which has nothing to do with morality. We don't ask the minerals about morality, although it is of prime interest to us, nor do we ask the plants, or the animals – and in this materialistic age we have even ceased asking humans, because only human physicality is taken into consideration.

And also when looking into the inner human we see what for normal consciousness is passive thinking, with which we can indeed visualize the world pictorially, but which is nevertheless powerless. Our thoughts are at first things we own which allow us to recognize the objects in the world. As thoughts they have no power. Our feeling is our inner life. To a certain extent we are separated through it from the world. Our will does communicate external objects to us, but in so doing the external objects take on something foreign to their nature.

Something truly great happens to a person when he becomes aware of the abyss which exists between himself and nature: something great. Something which has been expressed since ancient

times with these words, words which must be understood anew in every age: Nature must appear as divine, and the human must be a magical being. What does it mean, that nature must be able to appear as divine?

Nature must be able to appear as divine. The way it appears to the senses, and how reason understands it, it is certainly not divine. One would like to say: divinity is hidden within nature. It only appears to lack divinity. At most in dreams do we see a relationship between nature and the inner life of man. We can become aware of how an irregularity in our breathing process in one direction or the other can cause happy dreams or fearful and anxiety-filled ones. We can be aware of how the purely natural overheating of a room can give a kind of moral content to certain dreams. Dreams pull nature into the psyche.

However, we also know that in dreams our consciousness is submerged, and dreams are not what can directly describe the spiritual to us. Rather than the sleeping consciousness, we must see how the awakened consciousness presents nature.

Now in nature, my dear friends, we have a relationship of the human physical body with what is solid, with what is characteristic of the earthly element. We have a relationship of the human etheric body with what is characteristic of water. However, this relationship of the human physical body with the earthly, and the relationship of the human etheric body with the liquid element lie deep beneath what people experience.

What is closer to man is his breathing process, which is dependent upon the air. So it is from the breathing process upwards where the region begins where man can feel himself – when he is approaching the spiritual – related to nature.

The breathing process contains the air element, in which we exist.

*air* [is written on the blackboard]

Above the element of air we have the quality of warmth.

*warmth* [is written on the blackboard above “air”]

And above the element of warmth we have the essence of light: warmth-ether, light-ether.

*Light* [is written above “warmth”]

When we go even higher we come to a region – which we will speak about later – which does not lie so close to humans.

That man lives and moves in the element of air is obvious from a completely exterior point of view. One needs only to look at dreams to see how dependent they are on irregularities, abnormalities in the breathing process. When the breathing process takes place while awake, we don't notice it, because in general we pay little attention to normal life processes.

That the element of warmth is extremely essential to man is obvious to even superficial observation. If we dab our skin with an object that is colder than our body, a cold knitting needle for example, we feel the cold places that have been touched as separate even though they are very close to each other. We are very sensitive to the cold. If we touch our skin with an object that is warmer than our body, we don't feel the difference so clearly. We can hold two cold knitting needles very close to each other and feel the coldness of both. If we hold two warmed needles, the close contacts flow together at one point, and we must hold them quite far apart in order to sense them as separate. In fact we are far more sensitive to cold than to warmth. Why? We endure warmth much better than cold because we are creatures of warmth, because warmth is our own nature and we live and act in it. Cold is foreign to us and we are very sensitive to it.

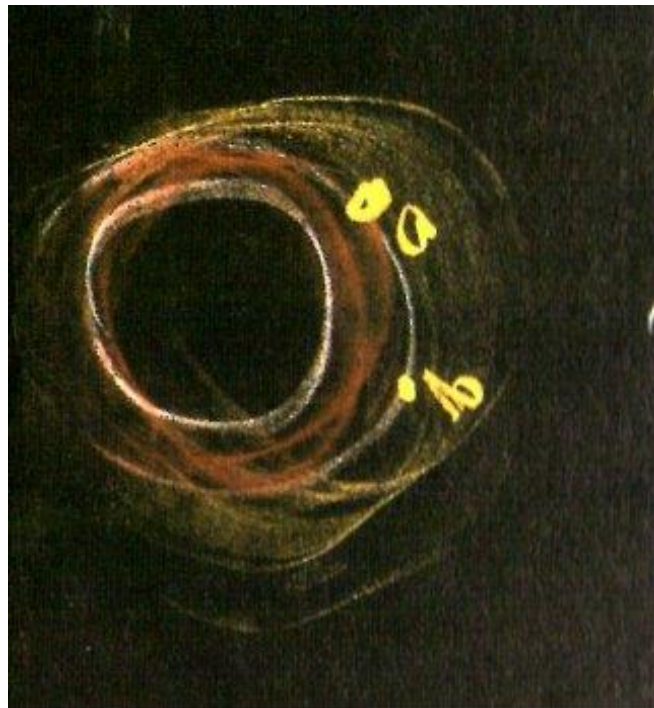
It is more difficult for normal consciousness to understand light. Today we want to approach these things esoterically. So it may be sufficient that I have indicated what air and warmth means to

normal consciousness. But with this consciousness man feels air as something external, natural. He also feels warmth as something that touches him from without, and he also feels that light comes to him from outside himself.

In the moment when a person takes the leap in his life which brings him near to the Guardian of the Threshold, he becomes aware of how intimately he is related to what otherwise seems alien to him. I have often pointed out how in every moment of our lives, also for normal consciousness, we can become aware of our relationship to the universe through our relation to the air. The air is outside, the same air which is inside me a moment later, then it is again outside, the same air which was within me. But we are not aware of the fact that, in the sense that we are beings of air, that what we hold within us we let out again, then take what was external into us again, so that we become one with the whole life and being of the element of air in which we exist as earthly beings. Whereas we always carry our muscles and bones within us, so we are only conscious of their origination and passing away during the embryonic and dying stages.

At the moment we enter the spiritual region this is no longer the case. We then feel how with every exhalation we fly out on the wings of the exhaled air into the expanse of being into which the exhaled air disperses. And how by inhaling we take into us the spiritual beings who live in the circulating air. The spiritual world flows into us when inhaling; our own being flows out into the environment upon exhaling.

This is not only so in respect to the air, but to an even greater degree in respect to warmth. As we are one with the air environment which encircles the earth, so are we also one with the warmth which encircles and penetrates the earth. [Two white circles are drawn: air, then a red one: warmth]



When we approach the spiritual world we truly experience the spirit entering us when inhaling, our own being streaming out into the expanse of space when exhaling, that is, we experience a spiritual interweaving of inhaling and exhaling. And we feel more intensively how with the increase of warmth – in that we are ourselves within the element of warmth – we become more human, and with the lessening of warmth we become less human. Thus warmth ceases to be a merely natural element, for we feel and recognize the spiritual nature of warmth – and we feel it to be closely

related to our being human. We feel that the increase of warmth means that the spirits which are active in the element of warmth say: We give you your humanity through the element of warmth; we take it away through the element of cold.

So we come to the light, in which we live and act. But we don't notice it because with normal consciousness we have no idea of the fact that the inner movements of light are contained in our own thinking, that every thought is captured light – both for the physically sighted and for the physically unsighted. Light is objective. Not only the physically sighted receive it, the physically unsighted also receive it...when they think. Because the thoughts which we hold within us, which we capture, is light present within us.

We can say then, that when we approach the Guardian of the Threshold he admonishes us in the following way:

When you think, O man, your being is not in you, it is in the light. When you feel, your being is not in you, it is in the warmth. When you will, your being is not in you, it is in the air. Keep not within yourself, O man. Think not that your thinking is in your head. Think that your willing is none other than the moving, living, active air element working within.

One must be very conscious of the fact that in the Guardian of the Threshold's presence one is divided into the universal elements, that one can no longer simply hold one's self together in the usual chaotic, dim way of normal consciousness. And that is the grand experience that initiate knowledge gives to the human being, that he ceases to seriously think that he is enclosed within his skin – something which is no more than a mere indication that he exists. For spiritual consciousness what is concentrated within the skin is an illusion; for man is as great as the universe. His thoughts are as wide as the light, his feelings are as wide as the warmth, his will is as wide as the air.

If a being of sufficiently developed consciousness were to descend to the earth from another planet, he would speak to people in quite a different way than how people of the earth address each other. He would say: The light which envelops the earth is differentiated. [The cloak of light is drawn around the warmth and air: yellow.] Many individually differentiated beings are in the light. One must imagine that in this earth-light, in the light that surrounds the earth, that weaves and waves around it, in this space many beings are present, as many as there are human beings on the earth. They all accommodate themselves within the earth's world of light. And for this visitor from space all human thoughts are in this cloak of light. And all feelings are in the cloak of warmth, and all willing is in the atmosphere, in the cloak of air.

Then this being would say: I have qualitatively differentiated out a being. It is indicated by body a; another, also within the cloak, is designated as b, and so on [within the yellow, two spots, a and b, are drawn]. The real human beings are all together in the light, warmth and air surrounding the earth.

For the person who really stands before the Guardian of the Threshold this is not speculation, but experience. And this is what constitutes spiritual progress, that man integrates with the surrounding world. It is of little use to speak of these things theoretically. It is not particularly profound mystically to say that you are one with the world by merely thinking that you are, if you do not begin to experience the fact that when you are thinking you are living in the entire earth's light, are becoming one with the earth's light, and how by doing so, by becoming one with the light of the earth, you go out of yourself – go out, so to speak, through all the pores of your skin into a divine-spiritual being – you become one with the essence of the earth itself and with the other elements of the earth's being. This is something which must be understood in all seriousness by anyone who strives toward relationship with the spiritual world.

You see, light must, in a sense, have a moral effect. And we must be aware of how we are related to the light and how the light is related to us in the esoteric experience of the world. But then, at the moment when one steps over the threshold, it becomes clear that the light is real and must wage a hard battle with the forces of darkness. Light and darkness become real. And then something occurs to the person which makes him say to himself: If in my thinking I merge completely with the light,

I will lose myself in the light. For in the moment when I merge with the light in my thinking, light-beings grasp hold of me and say: You, human, we will not let you out of the light again, we will hold you back in the light. This expresses the light-beings' will. They want to draw man to them through his thinking, make him one with the light, rend him from all the earthly forces and integrate him into the light. The light-beings who are around us are those who at every moment of existence wish to rend human beings from the earth and integrate them with the sunlight which flows over the earth. They live in the periphery of the earth and say: You, human being, should not remain with your soul in your body; with the sun's first light of dawn you yourself should shine down on the earth, you should set with the sun's afterglow, and encircle the earth as light!

These light-beings will be found enticing us ever and again. At the moment of crossing the threshold one becomes aware of these light-beings who want to pull human beings away from the earth and try to convince him that it is not worthy of him to stay chained to the earth by its gravity. They wish to absorb him in the sun's radiance.

Yes, for ordinary consciousness the sun is shining above and we humans stand below and let the sun shine on us; for the more developed consciousness the sun in heaven is the great tempter who wants to unite us with its light and pull us away from the earth – who whispers in our ear: O man, you don't need to stay on the earth, you can exist in the rays of the sun, then you can illuminate the earth and bring it happiness, so you no longer have to be illuminated and made happy on the earth from without.

This is what we encounter when we meet the Guardian of the Threshold: nature, which was previously quietly outside us and made no claim on our normal consciousness, now has the force to speak to us morally. Nature appears in the sun as a tempter. What before was quietly shining sunlight now speaks enticingly, temptingly. And we first realize that there is something spiritual living and moving in this sunlight when the enticing, the tempting beings appear in the light of the sun who want to pull us away from the earth. For these beings are in continuous battle with what constitutes the interior of the earth – darkness.

And if we fall into extremes – which is quite possible because the experiences in meeting the Guardian of the Threshold are most earnest and profound and gripping for the human soul – when we realize how enticing the sunlight is, caused by the light-beings, that is when we want to escape from them, if we remember that we are supposed to be human beings. We may not forget this. If we do, although we continue to live physically on the earth, we are to a certain extent psychically crippled. But when we become aware of how enticing the sunlight is, we turn to the opposite side and seek relief in darkness, against which the light is continually fighting. And by swinging from light to darkness we fall into the opposite extreme. So this self, which wanted to surge out into the bright shining sunlight, is now threatened in darkness by loneliness, by being separated from all other beings. But we human beings can only live in the area of equilibrium between light and darkness.

Such is the great experience before the Guardian of the Threshold: that we face the enticement of light and the dehumanizing force of darkness. Light and darkness become moral forces which have moral power over us. And we humans must realize that it is dangerous to look at the pure light and the pure darkness. And we are reassured when, there at the threshold, we see how the middle gods, the good gods of normal progress dim the light to a luminous yellow, to a luminous red, and when we know that we can no longer be lost to the earth, when we are aware not of the light which enticingly dazzles us, but of the color in spirit, which is subdued light.

And it is equally dangerous to yield to pure darkness. And we will be inwardly liberated if we do not stand before the pure darkness in spirit-land, but when we stand before the illuminated darkness as violet and blue. Yellow and red say to us in spirit-land: Light's enticements will not be able to wrest you away from the earth. Violet and blue say to us: The darkness will not be able to bury you, as soul, in the earth; you will be able to hold yourself above the effects of the earth's gravity.

Those are the experiences where the natural and the moral grow together in one, where light and



darkness become realities. And without light and darkness becoming realities, we will not be aware of the true nature of thinking. Therefore we should listen to the words the Guardian of the Threshold speaks when we meet him with our thinking, which has become independent and separated in our soul:

The light does battle with the forces dark  
In that realm where your thinking  
Would enter into the spirit-being.  
You find, striving towards the light,  
Your self by spirit taken from you;  
You can, when darkness entices you,  
In matter lose your self.

This means becoming aware of the duality in which one is placed and between which one must find equilibrium, harmony, in thinking.  
[The lines are written on the blackboard:]

*The light does battle with the forces dark  
In that realm where your thinking  
Would enter into the spirit-being.  
You find, striving towards the light,  
Your self by spirit taken from you;  
You can, when darkness entices you,  
In matter lose your self.*

The impulses which can derive from such words must be forcefully received by thinking and one must learn to feel when dealing even with normal exterior light, and exterior darkness, how this light can only be tolerated when it is dimmed to color. Then we must do our best to understand, with spiritual visioning, how thinking is placed in the middle of this battle between light and darkness: How, when it comes into contact with light, it is absorbed in a certain sense, interwoven with the light; and when it comes into contact with darkness it is extinguished. If we want to enter into matter, into dark matter, our thinking is extinguished. By understanding this, one gradually enters the spiritual realm.

And, my dear friends, in order to experience this, one must have courage, inner courage. To deny that one needs courage is to be ignorant of the true situation. We may think that courage is needed to let a finger be cut off, but none is needed to allow the severed thinking to stream into the vortex in which it will be seized when it finds itself in the middle of the battle between light and darkness. And it is always there. Knowledge means that we are aware of this.

In every waking moment, with his thinking, man is in danger because there are certain spiritual beings on neighboring heavenly bodies who know that in every century, in every age, it is possible, as far as humanity is concerned, for light to win over darkness or darkness to win over light.

Yes, my dear friends, for people with normal consciousness life seems as little dangerous as it does for a sleepwalker who has not yet been woken up: he doesn't fall down. For someone who observes life, however, a battles ensues, and he cannot say with certainty whether in a hundred years light or darkness will have won, and whether the human race will even have an existence worthy of humanity. And he will know why such a catastrophe has not happened to human evolution until now.

I could use another comparison. When you watch a tightrope walker on his rope you know that he could fall at any moment to the left or to the right. That you could be on such a tightrope psychically – that anyone can plummet psychically to the right or the left – there is no awareness of

that in ordinary life, because one does not see the abyss on the left or right. Nevertheless, it is there. That is the benefit the Guardian of the Threshold bestows on man – that he does not let the abyss be seen until his own warnings alert him to it. That has been the secret of the Mysteries of all times, that the abyss is shown to the adept and he therewith is able to acquire the strength necessary for knowledge of the real world.

As it is with light in regard to thinking, so it is with warmth in regard to feeling. When approaching to Guardian of the Threshold, one is aware of entering a battle between warm and cold: how warmth is always enticing our feeling, for it wishes to suck it in to itself. Just as the light-beings, the Luciferic light-beings would in a certain sense fly away with us from the earth towards the light, so would the Luciferic warmth-beings suck our feeling into the general universal warmth. All human feeling should be lost to humanity and soaked up into the general universal warmth.

And this is enticing because what the initiate-science adept is aware of when he approaches the threshold with his feeling: the warmth-beings appear, who want to give the human being an over-abundance of his own element, of the element in which he lives: warmth. They want all his feelings to be soaked up by warmth. When the human being is aware of this however: when he approaches the threshold, the warmth-beings are there, he gets warm, warm, warm, he becomes warmth, he flows over into the warmth. It is a feeling of pleasure, and a great enticement. It flows through him continuously. One must know all this. For without knowing that this enticement exists within the desire for warmth, it impossible to obtain an unobstructed vision of spirit-land.

And the enemies of these Luciferic warmth-beings are the Ahrimanic coldness-beings. These beings attract those who are still aware of how dangerous it is to bask in the pleasure of warmth. They would like to dip into the healthy cold. That is the opposite extreme: the cold can harden them there. And then, when the cold affects man in this way, infinite pain ensues, which is also physical pain. The physical and the mental, matter and spirit, become one. The human being experiences the cold capturing his whole being, as though tearing him apart in great pain. That the human being is continually engaged in this battle between warmth and cold is what one must understand as the Guardian of the Threshold's admonition in respect to feeling.

[The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

The warmth does battle with the cold  
In that realm where your feeling  
Would like to live spiritually.  
You find, loving the warmth,  
Your Self in spirit-pleasure dispersed;  
You can, when coldness hardens you,  
Enwrap the Self in suffering.

With his volition man enters a world which seems quite near to us – which in fact it is. It is the world of air, the world which sustains our breathing. One does not suspect how closely related human will is to the air which we breathe, for our will depends upon our breathing. And in the air, dear friends, life and death exists. It contains the vivifying oxygen; it contains the deadly nitrogen. The chemist says with his terrible, untrue abstraction: Air consists of oxygen and nitrogen. Yes, as long as we remain in normal consciousness one says: oxygen and nitrogen. Once we arrive at the Guardian of the Threshold, however, it becomes clear that oxygen is the external manifestation of many spiritual beings – the ones who give humanity life. Nitrogen is the external manifestation of the spiritual beings who give humanity death – also the death which, in every instant of our waking life in which we think and in which we develop our soul-life, is partially putting us to death, is unmaking us.

In the air there is a battle in which the Luciferic oxygen-spirits do battle with the Ahrimanic nitrogen-spirits. As long as one has not arrived at the Threshold, air consists of the chemists'

abstraction: oxygen and nitrogen. When we arrive at the Threshold, it consists of Ahriman and Lucifer, and the oxygen is the outer mask for Lucifer, and nitrogen the outer mask for Ahriman. And a battle rages in the air. This battle is hidden from the every-day, illusory consciousness. But one enters it when the Threshold is reached.

Once again: if one wishes to realize what exists in oxygen-spirits, what exists in the life-element when one wishes to unite his will with spiritual creativity, when one is stimulated to inner courageous activity, the danger exists that one's actions are all absorbed by spiritual acts and one ceases to be even human because what one needs as strength of will is taken over by the Luciferic spiritual world.

And if you turn to the opposite side, then the nitrogen forces, the Ahrimanic ones that act as death in the element of air will tempt you. This is not the death which we see in the physical world, but one with which one is not personally related. If you become related to death you begin to consider it as something you wish to unite with, and then are never released from. Whereas in the element of life the spirits want to hold us in order for their deeds to absorb the deeds of men, on the other side – that of the Ahrimanic nitrogen-spirits – we are thrown aside into the nothingness of life. We then want to act in death, act in nothingness. We are cramped instead of being active; the self is cramped.

Man is placed between these two opposing elements of which he must be aware with respect to his will.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

A battle rages between life and death  
In that realm where your will  
Would like to act in spirit-creation.  
You find, grasping life,  
Your Self in spirit-forces ending;  
You can, if death-forces bind you,  
Confine the Self in nothingness.

If, dear friends, we say: I would rather do without such knowledge! Why should I do that to myself, approaching the Guardian of the Threshold, if what is otherwise benevolently hidden from humanity is revealed to me? Can it be beneficial for humanity to be aware of such terrible truths? It is obvious that this objection is due to the human desire for comfort, especially when the question: What should I do with such truths? is asked. If I ask that, it is about something I'd rather not know. But, my dear friends, the task of contemporary times is that man penetrate in reality, that he does not cowardly shrink back from reality, that he penetrates into reality in order to unite with what is directly related to his being. We could of course stick our heads in the sand during this short earth-life and know nothing about these realities; that we can no longer do however, for we are now entering a new age when man can only thrive after death if he becomes aware of what he will experience after death.

And how will it be after death? When a person passes through the gates of death and his consciousness has still not been erased, he looks back and when this looking back has become conscious, spiritual beings whisper into the process causing a soft undertone to be present. One looks back the few days after death during which the etheric body is dissolving in the cosmic ether, one looks back and sees the pictures of the earth-life just experienced – and certain spirits whisper:

A battle rages between life and death  
In that realm where your will  
Would like to act in spirit-creation.  
You find, grasping life,

Your Self in spirit-forces ending;  
You can, if death-forces bind you,  
Confine the Self in nothingness.

Now we know the reality: if we do not find the middle way, but wander off either to the right or the left instead, then one of those things can happen.

And also, when one has gone through the sleeping time after death, which does not last long, he enters in consciousness into a time when he experiences his past earthly life backwards, an experience which lasts a third of that of his past earthly lifetime, as we have described in the general anthroposophical lectures. But the admonishing spirits keep appearing during milestones along this journey. And they say to us:

The warmth does battle with the cold  
In that realm where your feeling  
Would like to live spiritually.  
You find, loving the warmth,  
Your Self in spirit-pleasure dispersed;  
You can, if coldness hardens you  
Enwrap your Self in suffering.

Bearing this in mind, I have often counseled those who have asked me how they should act in respect to the dead who have been close to them to direct thoughts towards them in the sense, for example: "My love goes out to you, so that it might warm your coldness, lessen your warmth," for during the whole time of reverse experience of the past life warmth and cold play the role described above. But we are also warned that they play that role continually. These things are realities.

And when we then cross over from the life of reverse experience into the experience of being in the free spirit-land, preparing ourselves for the next earth-life, the spirits warning us at the milestones again appear. They call out to us unceasingly:

The light does battle with the forces of darkness  
In that realm where your thinking  
Would like to engage in spiritual being.  
You find, striving towards the light,

– The striving is real; you could go right or to the left

Your Self taken away by spirit;  
You can, when darkness entices you,  
In matter lose the Self.

My dear friends, when man still had an instinctive clairvoyance and passed through the gates of death, it was through this instinctive clairvoyance that he could understand the words spoken to him during the three stations of life after death. But in the age which man had to pass through in order to achieve freedom, it became ever more difficult for him to understand what was being called out to him. And now we live in an age when, if human beings are not made aware of the meaning of these words during their life on earth, they will not understand the words called out to them in spirit-language.

But that is what can happen to man if he confronts a future in which he passes through a world where these words are called out to him and he does not understand them and must therefore live through the torments of not understanding. And what do these torments mean? They mean the ever

increasing prevalence of anxiety in the soul of losing the connection with the creative spiritual powers and finally not being able to join those spiritual powers to whom we owe our existence, and instead find ourselves with alien powers where the human origin can be lost.

To enter esoteric life, my dear friends, does not imply a mere learning process, nor a mere theory; rather it means to accept a most serious aspect of life. And whoever immerses in esoteric life does not listen to a mere teaching or a theory, but immerses himself in aspects of real life. The life which our senses are aware of is only the outer manifestation; behind it at all times is the spiritual world. We do not enter it if we close our ears to what lies in these words. If we enter deeply, meditatively into such words, then our thinking, our feeling and our willing will be able to understand and to grasp the spirit in which we must penetrate as human beings.

## Lesson Six

Dornach, March 21, 1924

My dear friends,

During these meetings we are considering the truths which can be learned from the Guardian of the Threshold. And the Guardian's continuous admonition is that man be aware that he advances spiritually when he becomes conscious of his true relation to the world.

To become conscious of his true relation to the world, he first gets to know the world by observing the kingdoms of nature which are external to his own being – the animal kingdom, the vegetable kingdom and the mineral kingdom. These relations offer him the opportunity to admire them and to use them to carry out his own will impulses, etc. Man considers them to be his external world, and with normal consciousness he is hardly aware of how he has evolved out of this world, how a deep relationship to that world exists within him.

However, one cannot feel this relationship by merely letting one's gaze wander over this exterior world. One must advance to a self-knowledge of belonging to this world. And when one wishes to gain this self-knowledge, my dear friends, then one may not simply continue to see things as first glances provide; rather must one return to what is revealed between them.

Since the modern phase of human evolution began, we seldom see what is revealed between the things. We see the three kingdoms of nature in the outside world. But as you know, my dear friends, behind the kingdoms of nature we have what is called the world of the elements.

We can say: our feet stand on the ground of the solid earth.

[written on the blackboard] *Earth*

And what the solid earth consists of is also present in the animals, plants and minerals and also in our physical human bodies. And when we lift our gaze from the ground beneath our feet to what is to a certain extent at our own height, what is present is not only air, for the air is always penetrated by the watery element. Although it is true that man's life on earth has developed in such a way that he only senses this watery element in fine solution in the air which surrounds him, and in order to use it in his own organism it must be condensed, it is nevertheless true that he also lives in this watery element.

[over "earth" is written] *Water*

And man also lives in the air element through which he breathes.

[over "Water" is written] *Air*

At the moment when we observe these elements we cannot speak of them as we speak of the other beings of the nature-kingdoms, which we see before us in sharply defined contours. But in the solid as such, in the earthly, we can only say that we live in it. We are too closely related to the earthly to specifically differentiate it. We do not specifically differentiate what is a part of ourselves. We do differentiate a table or a chair which exist outside of ourselves. We do not consider what is inside us as having clear boundaries. We do not see our lungs or heart within us as having clear boundaries. Only when they are made into objects, in anatomy, do we see them so. But just as we are related to our own bodies, we are also, to a larger extent, related to the elements. We live in earth, we live in water, we live in air, we live in warmth. They belong to us. They are too close to us to be understood as very sharply contoured in the world.

Let us now lay out this elemental world before us, a world which is around us and at the same time within us, so that we must consider it as the content of the world and of ourselves. So we have what

we designate as Earth, what we designate as Water, what we designate as Air and what we designate as Warmth.

[over “Air” is written:]        *Warmth*

When we go further up out of the thicker substances into the etheric from warmth, which is already etheric, we come to the light.

[over “Warmth” is written:]   *Light*

and up to what we have always described with a dry, abstract expression: chemical ether and its effects. Because the ordering, the formation of the world is effected by it, we shall call that great chemicality of the cosmos “cosmic-formation”.

[over “Light” is written]        *Cosmic-formation*

And then we will call what is highest in the etheric: Life-Ether, Cosmic Life.

[over “cosmic formation” is written]    *Cosmic Life*

Well, my dear friends, you have already seen from the previous lesson that the human being, according to the manner in which he lives on the earth, is not equally related to all of these elements in the same measure. In fact the human being only lives in a completely intimate relationship with the element of warmth. [A red cross is drawn on the blackboard next to the word “Warmth”.] For spiritual progress it is necessary to be fully conscious of such things.

Just think how much you directly feel warmth and cold to be part of you. The difference between warm and cold affects you strongly. Even air circulation affects you less. Whether the air is good or bad you notice indirectly according to its effect on your organism. The effect of light is the same. Nevertheless man is very closely related to air and light. [Yellow crosses are drawn next to the words “air” and “light”.] He is extraordinarily close to them.

But man is relatively distant from the watery elements – among the denser ones – even though he is related to them. Nevertheless the watery element is very closely connected to human life. [A blue cross is drawn next to the word “water”.] Imagine, my dear friends, a very vivid nightmare and consider how your perspiration, that is, the secretion of the watery element, is affected by it. Notice how the watery element plays a significant role in sleep. The human being lives in the watery element. The liquid elements dissolved in his environment are of great importance for him, but none more directly than warmth. Whether it is warm or cold, man feels it as being part of himself. When it is warm, he is warm; when it is cold, he is cold. When we walk into fog, for example, the fog's moisture has an important but an indirect influence on us, something which normal consciousness isn't very aware of.

I'll put it this way: We walk into fog – and our own watery element merges in a certain sense with the outer world's watery element. And with this easy transition from our own watery element to the outer world's watery element we feel our connection to the whole cosmos – contrary to the transition from our watery element to dry outer air. Dry air lets us feel more human. Watery air lets us feel our dependence on the cosmos. But nowadays we have no training in such things. In a lecture cycle in The Hague, which has been printed, I went into detail concerning man's dependence on the elements. The elements exist, and it pertains to esoteric life to be aware of this dependence in practice.

Man's relation to the earthly elements lies even deeper in the subconscious. [A blue cross is drawn next to the word “Earth”.]

What does man know about his relation to the earthly element? He knows that salt is salty, that sugar is sweet. They belong to the earthly element. But about the processes of metamorphosis that

salt and sugar undergo in his organism, how he acts together with the cosmos in dissolving the sugar or the salt within his organism, how certain cosmic forces work into the organism when the sugar's sweetness courses through his body, or the saltiness of salt courses through his body, he is mostly unaware, save for the slight reflex of the saltiness or the sweetness on his taste-buds. These are profoundly meaningful processes. The universe has opened its doors, so to speak, to certain forces when the human being dissolves sugar on his tongue and transfers it to his organism.

It is also the case that whereas these denser elements have an indirect influence on the human being, the etheric finer elements, Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life also have an indirect influence on the human being, a hidden influence. [Blue crosses are drawn next to "Cosmic Formation" and "Cosmic Life".]

The most evident influence on man comes from the middle element, Warmth. The influence of Light and Air are also strong – evident also to ordinary consciousness. But the influence of Water and Earth on one hand, and on the other hand of Cosmic Life and Cosmic Chemical Formation lie in the unconscious. Therefore, man should be aware during his earthly life that he lives closely with these middle elements [Air, Warmth, Light], whereas his consciousness has been withdrawn from his relation to Water and Earth and to Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life.

In the days when the old instinctive consciousness prevailed, there was also a nuance of clairvoyance, and when the students in the Mysteries reached a certain stage in their development they were cautioned: Trust the Fire, trust the Air, also trust the Light; but beware of the underworld – Water, Earth; beware of the overworld – Cosmic Formation and Cosmic Life. For due to the fact that they lie so deeply in the unconscious, Lucifer's temptations appear in Cosmic Life and Cosmic Formation, and Ahriman's temptations appear in Earth and Water.

Cosmic life    X

Cosmic formation    X    Lucifer

Light    X

Warmth    X

Air        X

Water     X

Earth     X    Ahriman

In the Mysteries esoteric instruction always indicated that man should find the right relation to these elements, feel his relationship with the elements in the correct way. When one advances to Imaginative life, he feels exactly this relationship to the elements. With normal consciousness: We look around, recognize the animals, plants and minerals as existing outside of us. When, however, we recognize the elements in their relationship with us, then we may not look around at the world, but we must feel, experience what is in us and the world at the same time.

Then, when we have advanced to Imaginative life, we are able to feel our relationship with the world.

If we develop this feeling in the right way, we will make a profound admission. This admission to ourselves is progressive, true self-knowledge. We realize that one is only human when he is released from the world to which he is inwardly connected, from the earthly world where he stands alone, as it were, where the plants, animals and minerals exist outside of us, are foreign to us. But if, through Imaginative knowledge, one becomes aware of his relationship with the earth, then he will no longer feel himself in his humanity, he will feel himself in his animality; he feels the inner



relationship of man to the extended animal domain.

And when he feels himself as one with the water element on earth he becomes aware enough to say: In reality you are related to the vegetable kingdom. There is something in you that is as sleepy and as dreamy as the plants.

And if one becomes aware of his relationship with the air, he feels the mineral element within him. He feels something filling him through the whole skin.

As soon as we enter the elemental world with Imagination, we feel related to the animals, plants, stones. And we feel differently toward the kingdoms of nature when we feel that we belong to them as well. We feel the inner relationship to these kingdoms in the following way.

We look out at the animal kingdom. We observe the indolent animals which slowly take one step after the other. We observe the rapid ones, and the flying birds. We observe the inherent movement in the animals which fill the world with movement from out of their own being. And then we say to ourselves: All that which comes from the innermost being of the animals is revealed to be the same as our own will. And we feel the relationship of our own will with the animal world.

But there is something else. One feels fear of one's self. This is what is considered positive – that whoever enters into esoteric life feels this fear of himself. Not so that he gets stuck in it, but so that he may transform it into a higher psychic force.

It is like this: when we become aware that our human form exists because we stand alone and the kingdoms of nature are beyond us, where we can look at them, then we feel that the earth, in its true elemental nature, does not make us human, it makes us animal. We are animals. As far as the earth is concerned, we are animals. And because the earth-element is always present, the danger exists that we sink into animal nature. And when we don't merely understand this theoretically, as is mostly the case nowadays, but also feel it, we become fearful that at any moment we may fall into animality. But it is just this fear which encourages us to always wish to raise ourselves over this animality, to step out of the elemental life into the life which surrounds us with an external, perhaps strange world, but which also introduces us to true humanity. To feelingly recognize our relation to the world is what leads us to true esoteric knowledge.

And when we feel our relationship with the world's water, with the water elements, then we realize: as far as water is concerned, we should not be human, but vegetables. And our feelings, which have a dream-like nature, as I have often explained, our feelings have a continuous tendency to be vegetable-like. Just try to think seriously about your innermost feelings and you will feel the vegetative nature of the life of feeling. And then you will have the feeling that you are not only in danger of descending to animality, but also of living on with a lamed consciousness, like a vegetable – sleeping, dreaming. But this feeling of lameness, which lies deep in the [sub]conscious, must be transformed into the feeling of awakening to humanity. Fear of animality must be transformed into the courage to raise yourself to humanity. The feeling of vegetable lameness must be transformed into an awakening call to inner strength, to develop into a fully awake person in the world.

And when we become aware of how we live in the air-element, then we can see how in reality all thinking – this is unknown to people – is nothing other than a refined breathing. Thinking is refined breathing. The thoughts in which we live are absolutely a refined breathing process. On one side, the breathing-in stream, holding the breath, and breathing out act, in a more coarse way, into our blood circulation; on the other side, but more refined, into the vibration of the brain organs. And the breath circulating there is known as thinking in the physical world; sublimated breathing is thinking.

The individual who has advanced to Imagination no longer believes in this abstract thinking existing as a kind of tenuous substance in the brain. He feels the inhalation, the expanding of the breath in the brain; he feels how the breath spreads out. When the breath expands in this way, then ceases, the closed concepts arise, closed ideas. If it encloses something else, in waves, the ideas of self-movement arise. It is merely a refined breathing process which weaves and waves within us which we designate as thinking.

When one feels: I inhale, I draw the breath up to the brain, I let it strike my ear, and one feels: what

I hear as tone, as sound, as clang, lives in me as thought. I let the breath strike my eye: it lives in me as what I see as color. It is the inner language of breathing which acts as representations in thinking. When breathing, completely refined, strikes the sense organs it creates my mental pictures [representations]. But when one becomes aware of this, becoming a thinker and a breather, so to speak, then one feels that this refined-to-thinking breathing process is like an organized mineral, like an organized stone, which fills him.

You know that oxygen is transformed into carbon dioxide in man. This reception of carbon dioxide in the finer branches of breathing in the human head is tantamount to the capture of the carbon dioxide. It is a mineralization process. And the more we are able to internalize this capture of carbon dioxide by oxygen, the more we are conscious of the mineralization process. We take the carbon into ourselves. And carbon is the Philosopher's Stone; thus within man carbon is the Philosopher's Stone.

Read how the old instinctive clairvoyants described the Philosopher's Stone. You will find them saying: The Philosopher's Stone can be found everywhere, only people don't recognize it. It can be produced everywhere. It can be found in its own place – in the earth. They describe in detail how carbon is produced, by burning wood. The Philosopher's Stone can be produced anywhere, it is carbon. It is in the coal mines...[gaps here in the shorthand, possibly the result of rapid speaking...] a mineralization process. One feels mineralized within...by the combustion process [?...]just as we feel ourselves to be plant-like by the watery processes and identify with the animals by living on earth. [The meaning of this passage is unclear.]

This is the exhortation the Guardian gives to man: He must be aware of his relationship to the kingdoms of nature. Therefore we have these exhortations in the form of spoken meditations. And if man lets them work with deep feeling on his sensibility he will be aware of his relationship with the earth-element, which is related to his will; with the water-element which is related to his feeling; with the air-element which, in the way I have described it, is related to his thinking.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*You climb down to the earth element  
With forces of your will unfolding*

This is an unconscious process. Every time we will something, we climb down into the earth-element. But normal consciousness knows nothing of this. At the moment when the downward climb becomes conscious, man transforms himself from a human to an animal nature, he seems like some kind of animal – at least in the etheric form which he then observes. I don't mean that he will exactly become an elephant or a bull, but something like that for the element of will, yes, he gives the impression of being bull-like, elephant-like, eagle-like, and so on.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,  
Your animality will be shown  
To you by your own force of thought*

But such exhortations by the Guardian of the Threshold, my dear friends, are not to be taken as concepts or theories. They are meant to be experienced by the whole human being. If we look at where the will is heading, we become aware of our animality and we fear our own self which, however, must be transformed into psychic courage. Then one advances further. Then one can enter the spiritual world.

[The writing continues:]

*The fear you feel of self  
Transform in courage of soul you must.*

Here we have the first descent, climbing downward to the kingdom where the Ahrimanic forces work so strongly. Our correct comportment is indicated by the exhortation just given by the Guardian of the Threshold:

You climb down to the earth-element  
With forces of your will unfolding;  
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,  
Your animality will be shown  
To you by your own forceful thought;  
The fear you feel of self  
Transform in courage of soul you must.

As a rule what helps us most toward spiritual advancement is the overcoming of something that drags us down. When we overcome something which drags us down, like this fear of our own animality, and transform it by our own inner act into psychic courage, then it becomes an impulse toward a higher humanity. It's something we need to advance spiritually. We learn about the next descent, into the water-element, through the words of the following exhortation by the Guardian of the Threshold:

You live with the water-element  
Through feeling's dream alone;  
Pervading wakening water-being  
Results in the soul becoming  
Essentially plant-like dull  
Your selfhood's lameness must  
Lead you to self-awakening.

The transformation to the opposite of this sleep-filled dreaminess, if we really descend consciously, becomes a wakening in ourselves.  
[The second verse is written:]

*You live with the water-element  
Through feeling's weaving dream alone;  
Pervading wakening water-being,  
Results in the soul becoming  
Essentially plant-like dull  
Your selfhood's lameness must  
Lead you to self-awakening.*

And when the human being feels his relationship with the air-element, then even with normal consciousness he feels the relationship more strongly. He descends less deeply into the subconscious. Nevertheless, a trace of Ahrimanic temptation remains in this descent. When we live in our remembrances, in our memories, we are mostly in an inner breathing activity. If we refine normal breathing to thinking of what is in our environment, then very little danger is present. If memories arise, however, with breathing coming from within, danger is still present, although it is the easiest to observe. And it is in this descent from thinking to perception where we mostly are concerned with our memory's mental pictures. It is about this that the Guardian of the Threshold admonishes:

[Written on the blackboard:]

*You perceive in the waves of air  
Only memory's mental pictures;*

*Take in willingly the essence of air*

We can do this, my dear friends, using the same inner force we use when combining one thought with another in the performance of normal activities. We are used to moving a chair from one place to another, when we make the effort. But we are not used to moving a thought from one place to another. We prefer to think according to the guidebook as events present themselves. We would like the book to show us the sequence of thoughts; that the newspaper indicate the sequence of thoughts to us, and we are satisfied when they do. It is as if we expected that everything we do through the exertion of our will be set in motion by an objective power from without: as if your arm is to be raised so you can grasp a chair - as if a spirit stood there and placed your legs one after the other so you can walk. As far as thinking is concerned, it is as though we expected our legs to be moved for us so we can walk.

[Writing continues:]

*Your own soul will threaten you  
As coldly hardened stone  
(this mineralizing process)*

Whoever does not know “Imagination” does not realize how hard ordinary thinking is. Ordinary thinking is stone hard. One really feels thinking with angles and edges when one finally gains admittance to the spiritual world. Such thinking actually hurts when it appears in its particular abstract forms. Whoever knows spiritual life is able to feel empathy for what is thought as a result of human feelings and impulses. He can feel it himself when fits of hate and anger are expressed in thoughts; but he feels inwardly wounded as if by sharp angles and edges when the abstract thoughts of contemporary civilization enter his being. He will not be aware of the suffering which is caused by today's thinking if he does not know this sentence: “Your own soul will threaten you as coldly hardened stone.” But when one consciously descends to the kingdom of memories, the kingdom of airy breezes, where breath is grasped by thinking, then what I described happens. But this inner death of thinking, this death by freezing, must inspire us to the contrary – to create spiritual vitality in thought from inner strength.

[Writing continues:]

*But your selfhood's death by cold  
Must give way to spirit-fire.*

Those are the three exhortations concerning the nether world, the world of the lower elements, which the Guardian of the Threshold directs to those who come to the threshold by showing them how man must be aware of his kinship with the three kingdoms of nature if he wishes to be knowledgeable. How he must be aware of his animality and the animals in his environment by virtue of his kinship with the earth-element. How he must be aware of his own plant nature and therewith the plant life of his environment by virtue of his kinship with the water-element. How he must be aware of his own mineral kingdom, his own mineral nature, his own stone nature, by virtue of his kinship with the air-element, and therewith the nature of the mineral kingdom of his environment.

Fear, lameness and death must develop as negative characteristics, but must metamorphose into the positive characteristics of courage, wakefulness and vitalizing fire.

That is also what the Guardian of the Threshold calls out to the person striding by: first the inner feeling of fear of falling into animality; then the inner feeling of helplessness in plant-like lameness; then the desire to oppose the coldness of stone by engendering vitalizing fire in the soul.

Thus the Guardian of the Threshold's threefold exhortation is:

You climb down to the earth-element

With forces of your will unfolding;  
As thinker you bestride the earthly realm,  
Your animality will be shown  
To you by your own forceful thought  
The fear you feel of self  
Transform in courage of soul you must.

You live with the water-element  
Through feeling's weaving dream alone;  
Pervading wakening water-being,  
Results in the soul becoming  
Essentially plant-like dull  
Your selfhood's lameness must  
Lead you to self-awakening.

You perceive in the waves of air  
Only memory's mental pictures;  
Take in willingly the essence of air,  
Your own soul will threaten you  
As coldly hardened stone  
But your selfhood's death by cold  
Must give way to spirit-fire.

Here [in the lower part of the above list marked with blue crosses] we enter Ahriman's kingdom and are warned by the Guardian of the Threshold as to how we can save ourselves from Ahriman's temptations; and here [the upper part of the list] where we are in earthly life and wish to enter in the esoteric, in Light, World Formation and World Life. We absorb the light. Normally we do not know that the light unites with breathing when it penetrates the eye – warmth is between them – the breathing of air combines with the light [middle part of the list]: the representation [mental picture] of the perception arises. We live in light in that we form thoughts, just as toward the lower kingdoms we live in the air, in breathing. We hold thoughts back from the light. We don't realize that thoughts can only live in us if they are illumined by the light, if breathing is illumined by the light. For those who have advanced to Imagination, thinking is a hushed breath illumined by ingested light, made vibrant by it.

Here are the gentle waves of breath. [Waving lines are drawn on the blackboard.] They are illumined by light. [Yellow marks.] For in spiritual science everything which works through the senses is designated as light. Not only what works through the eyes, also what works through sound, is light, also what is sensed as touch, is light. All perception through the senses is light. But when we become aware that thinking, this having thoughts, is refined breathing waving, weaving upon the light – it is as when one sees the surface of the sea upon whose waves the sun's light shines. Also, as though one were inside and could feel the surging of the waves and the light shining on them. It is all perception when one experiences it from within.

Now Lucifer's temptation appears, for this is all wonderfully beautiful, something which causes enormous delight and complacency. A terrible wantonness overcomes man. He becomes easy prey for Lucifer's temptations and enticements to pull him away from the earth into the beauty of the cosmos, where Lucifer reigns. He wants to tear man away from the earth-element and raise him up to the kingdom of angels so that after each sleep he no longer wants to return down to the physical body. Here is where the Luciferic temptation appears, whereas in the realm of the denser elements the Ahrimanic temptation appears.

What is important here is that we heed the Guardian of the Threshold's warning and not enter this realm without having determined not to forget the earth's needs. Then the bond with the earth, upon which we have still to stride, will remain unbroken. Therefore the Guardian of the Threshold says:

From Force of Shining Light  
Your thoughts only you sustain within;  
When Shining Light in you does think  
Will then an untrue spirit-being  
As selfhood mania arise in you.  
Reflecting on the earth's needs  
Sustains you as a human being.

[The first part of the mantra is written:]

*From Force of Shining Light  
Your thoughts only you sustain within;  
When shining light in you itself does think*

Thus man is totally related to the shining light through Imagination, and his thoughts are no longer abstractions, but as light playing upon the waves of breath.

*Will then an untrue spirit-being  
As selfhood mania be born in you.  
Reflecting on the earth's needs  
Sustains you as a human being.*

If we advance further to the etheric element, the Luciferic temptation becomes more intense. There not only our thoughts, which are relatively easy to control, come into consideration, but also the element of feeling. For it is in his feelings that man holds on to the substantial – the Cosmic Formation, which works and weaves in the chemical ether. If he now advances to Imagination, really integrates with this cosmic chemistry, it is quite different from the comfortable, bourgeois earthly chemical laboratory, where the chemist stands at a bench and everything is outside and beyond him. Man must be within matter, be himself within the mixing and the separating. Then he will become a cosmic chemist and be integrated in his chemical processes.

With this integration in Cosmic Formation he feels the Luciferic temptation in the form of helplessness. First man is transported in a certain sense to inner voluptuousness so he can be spirit [an angel]. He is unwilling to return if he does not bear in mind the earth's needs. Now he is made helpless, not strong enough in his humanity to re-enter it. He must beware of this helplessness of soul in that he only enters this [spiritual] world once he has achieved a love for all that is worthy on earth, for the earthly values.

The Guardian of the Threshold speaks:

Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain  
Your feelings held fast within;  
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt  
Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,  
And stifles in you the essence of selfhood.  
But love of earthly values  
Will rescue your human soul.

[The second verse is written:]

*Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain  
Your feelings held fast within;  
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt*

*Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,*

(which comes from Lucifer)

*And stifles in you the essence of selfhood;  
But love of earthly values  
Will rescue your human soul.*

Man can only reach his cosmic goal if he becomes an angel at the right time. During the Jupiter evolution today's humanity will rise to angel rank. Lucifer's temptation consists of wanting to raise man to a stunted immature angel too early, during the Earth period. In that way the human soul would be lost and a stunted angel soul would take its place. We should listen to the Guardian of the Threshold's exhortation:

*But love of earthly values  
Will rescue your human soul.*

The most intense temptation comes when we ascend to the last element, to general Cosmic Life. What is still present there is will which, however, is present as in sleep, as I have often explained. If it is awakened through Imaginative knowledge, we become aware – unlike in our limited earthly life which is enclosed in our skin – we become aware of sharing in Cosmic Life: and in that instant we are dead. Because to consciously live in Cosmic Life means to experience death as an individual being. Universal life kills us if it holds us. Like the insect that flies into the flame greedy for the fire, for the light. In the instant that it flies into the flame it dies, thus does man as an individual die in General Cosmic Life if he consciously enters it with his spirit.

We shouldn't even dare to think of entering into this element without having first developed a god-given, spirit-given will for the earth, that is, without being fully conscious that on earth we are carrying out the intentions of the spiritual beings. If we completely fill ourselves with inner dedicated glowing love toward this god-given will, then we shall not succumb to the temptation of becoming a degenerate angel instead of remaining a human being. Thus, the Guardian of the Threshold's exhortation is:

Of Cosmic Life you only sustain  
Your will within held fast;  
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full  
Destructive greed for spirit then  
Will kill awareness of self in you;  
But spirit-given will for earth  
Allows the God in man to reign.

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*Of Cosmic Life you only sustain  
Your will within held fast;  
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full  
Destructive greed for spirit then  
Will kill awareness of self in you;  
But spirit-given will for earth  
Allows the God in man to reign.*

And here we have the Guardian of the Threshold's threefold exhortation referring to the upper, etheric region in the above list.

From Force of Shining Light  
Your thoughts only you sustain within;  
When Shining Light itself in you does think  
Will then an untrue spirit-being  
As selfhood mania arise in you.  
Reflecting on the earth's needs  
Sustains you as a human being.

Of Cosmic Forming you only sustain  
Your feelings held fast within;  
When Cosmic Forming itself in you is felt  
Experience of spirit helplessness ensues,  
And stifles in you the essence of selfhood.  
But love of earthly values  
Will rescue your human soul.

Of Cosmic Life you only sustain  
Your will held fast within;  
If Cosmic Life takes hold in full  
Destructive greed for spirit then  
Will kill awareness of self in you;  
But spirit-given will for earth  
Allows the God in man to reign.

You are being introduced to the practice of knowledge in these lessons, my dear friends. You should not understand the things being given to you in this way as theoretical matters. Rather will you experience the heart of the matter if you understand the fundamental condition: that what you are being told here are the instructions from the Guardian of the Threshold himself, directly arising from what can be learned through contact with the Guardian of the Threshold. For it is not my intention to give theories during these Class Lessons, my dear friends. The intention is to let the spiritual world itself speak. Therefore in the first lessons I mentioned how the School should be seen as having been founded by the spiritual world itself.

That has been the nature of all Mystery Schools, that in them men spoke as representatives of the spiritual powers of the world. It must also remain the nature of the Mystery Schools. Therefore I have so strongly insisted on the earnestness required of all members of this class, without which no one can be a real member of this School of spiritual life. That is the earnest exhortation I wish to direct to you once again, my dear friends. Consider this School as being constituted directly through the will of the spiritual world, and which we are trying to correctly interpret according to the conditions of our times in which we have entered after the darkness was over and a light has come again, a light which, however, has only manifested itself on earth poorly because human beings have retained the old darkness. Yet the light is there. And only those who realize that the light is there will understand the nature and intentions of this spiritual school.



## Lesson Seven

Dornach, April 11, 1924

My dear friends,

Quite a large number of new members of this School are present, and I am therefore obliged to again say a few words about its principles. First of all, this School represents the impulse of the anthroposophical movement which was renewed here during the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum. Previously there were several esoteric circles. All these esoteric circles must be gradually absorbed into this School, because with the Christmas Conference a new spirit was introduced into the anthroposophical movement insofar as it streams through the Anthroposophical Society.

I have repeatedly spoken about what the difference is between the anthroposophical movement before the Christmas Conference and the one we now have since Christmas. Previously the Anthroposophical Society was a kind of administrative body for anthroposophical teaching and content. Within the Anthroposophical Society, Anthroposophy was, so to speak, cultivated. Since Christmas anthroposophy is not only cultivated, it is also carried out; meaning that everything which passes through the Anthroposophical Society as activity, as thought, is anthroposophy itself. The renewal which has taken place must be clearly grasped, my dear friends, and above all it must be grasped with deep earnestness. For a distinction exists between the Anthroposophical Society in general and this Esoteric School within the Anthroposophical Society. The Anthroposophical Society will, as a matter of course and according to the principle of openness, not be able to demand anything more from the members than that they honestly recognize what anthroposophy is and that they are in a certain sense listeners to what anthroposophy says; and that they receive from it what their hearts, their souls can make of it.

It is different as far as the School is concerned. Those who become members of this School declare that they want to be true representatives of the anthroposophical movement. In this Esoteric School, which will gradually be expanded to include three classes, the same freedom must of course apply as it does to every member of the Anthroposophical Society; but freedom must also apply for the Executive Council at the Goetheanum which is responsible for this School. In this case it means that only those who are recognized by the School as true members can be recipients of what the School teaches.

Therefore whatever a member of the School does should have the effect of reflecting on anthroposophy in the world; and it must belong to the competence of the Executive Council to remove a member if it considers that he cannot be a representative of the anthroposophical movement. The relationship must be mutual.

Therefore more and more a serious, in a certain sense strict spirit will have to be utilized in the management of the School. Otherwise the anthroposophical movement cannot advance if we do not feel that the School is like building a rock to support anthroposophy. It is going to be very difficult and the members of this School must know that they must adapt to those difficulties. They are not merely anthroposophists, they are members of an Esoteric School.

And it must be an inner obligation to consider the Executive Committee, as it is presently constituted, as an esoteric entity. This is not generally understood. So something must be done to bring it to the members' attention. It is saying much that an Executive Committee has been esoterically formed.

Furthermore, all those who consider themselves to be legitimate members of this School see the School as not having been founded by men, but in fact by the will of the world's presently reigning spiritual powers; something which has been instituted from the spiritual world and which intends to act accordingly; which feels responsible to the spiritual world alone. Therefore, anything which indicates that a member is not taking the School seriously must lead to the cancellation of that person's membership.

It is a fact that negligence has entered into the Anthroposophical Society to a marked degree in recent years. That it ceases is one of the tasks for the members of this School. We want to feel responsible even for the words we speak. Above all we should feel responsible that every word we speak is tested to the extent that we know it is true. For untruthfulness, even when derived from what is called good intentions, is destructive in an occult movement. There must be no illusions about this; it must be completely clear. It is not a question of good intentions, which are often taken very lightly, but of objective truth. Among the first duties of an esoteric student is that he does not merely feel obliged to say what he thinks is true, but that he feels obliged to determine that what he says is really objectively true. For only when we serve the divine-spiritual powers – whose forces stream through this School – in the sense of objective truth, will we be able to steer through all the difficulties which will assail anthroposophy.

What I will now say is within the circle of the School, and what is said within the circle of the School remains within the circle of the School. We may not forget that many people are saying something like the following. Certain influential persons are saying: Those who represent the principles of the Roman Church will do everything in their power to make the individual states of the former German Empire independent and out of them – I am only reporting – with the exception of the predominance of Prussia, to reestablish the Holy Roman Empire, which of course, when it is established by such prominence, will spread its power over the neighboring regions. Then – they say – we will need to completely destroy from the roots up the most dangerous, the worst movements. And, they add, if the reestablishment of the Holy Roman Empire is not successful, and it will be successful, but if not, we will find other means to completely destroy from the roots up the most resisting, the most dangerous movements of the present, and they are the anthroposophical movement and the movement for Religious Renewal [Christian Community].

I quote almost verbatim. And you can see that the difficulties are not less, but every week greater, that what I say is well founded. I wish today to speak from the heart to those who consider their membership in this School with heartfelt seriousness. Only by such earnestness as members of the School can we construct the necessary foundation for navigating through the future difficulties.

You can see from this that anthroposophy – the movement for religious renewal is only a branch of it – is taken more seriously by the opposition than by many of the members. Because when one can learn that the Holy Roman Empire, which fell in 1806, is to be reinstated in order to eliminate such a movement, that means that it is taken very seriously indeed. What is important is whether a movement is founded from the spirit and not, my dear friends, how many members it has, but which force is instilled in it directly from the spiritual world. The opponents see that it contains a strong inner force; therefore they choose sharp, strong rather than weak means [to combat it].

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The considerations of these Class lessons, my dear friends, have been primarily concerned with what can be told about the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold, the encounter which is the first experience towards the attainment of real and true supersensible knowledge. Today I would like to add something to what has already been considered.

It is not possible to claim that the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold has been successful until one has experienced what it means to be outside the physical body with the human I and the astral body. Because when the human being is enclosed within the physical body, the only things he can perceive in his surroundings are those which he perceives with the instruments of his physical body. And through the instruments of the physical body only the sensible world can be perceived – which is a reflection of a spiritual world, one which does not, however, reveal to the senses what it is a reflection of.

Generally speaking, it is not difficult for a person to leave the physical body. He does so every time he falls asleep. He is then outside the physical body. But when he is asleep outside the physical body his consciousness is suppressed to the point of being unconscious. Only illusory – or perhaps even not illusory – dreams rise up from this unconsciousness. But through the attainment of higher knowledge leaving the physical body takes place in fully conscious deliberateness, so that when outside the physical body the person perceives his surroundings exactly as he perceives the physical

world with his senses when within the physical body. He perceives the spiritual world while outside the physical body.

But the human being is at first unconsciously asleep. Under normal circumstances he is not aware of what he could see when outside the physical body. And the reason for this is that he is protected from approaching the spiritual world unprepared.

If he is sufficiently prepared, what happens then? When he is at the abyss between the sensory world and the spiritual world, the Guardian of the Threshold extracts his true human essence – assuming he is prepared as described in the previous lessons – which can then fly over the abyss with the means indicated in the mantric verses. And then from beyond the threshold he can behold his own sensory physical being.

That is the first powerful impression of true knowledge, my dear friends, when the Guardian of the Threshold can say to the human being: See, that is how you are over there, as you appear in the physical world; here with me you are as your inner being really is.

And now meaningful words sound out again from the Guardian of the Threshold – that the person is called upon, now that he is on the other side of the abyss, how differently he sees himself on the other, physical side. He sees himself differently. He sees himself as a tripartite being. He sees himself as a tripartite being which expresses itself psychically in thinking, feeling and willing. In reality they are three humans: the thinking one, the feeling one, the willing one, which exist in every person and are only held together in one by the physical body in the physical world. And what the person sees there resounds from the lips of the Guardian of the Threshold in the following way:

O see the Three

They are the One,

When you in earthly life  
the human form do bear.

Or also “human imprint”; one must translate the words from the occult language.

O see the Three

They are the One,

When you in earthly life  
the human imprint bear.

Experience the head's cosmic form

Feel the heart's cosmic pulse

Think the limbs' cosmic force

They are the Three

The three, which as the One

In earthly being live.

[The mantra is written on the blackboard:]

*O see the Three*

*They are the One,*

*When you in earthly life  
the human imprint bear.*

*Experience the head's cosmic form*

*Feel the heart's cosmic pulse*

*Think the limbs' cosmic force*

*They are the Three*

*The three, which as the One*

*In earthly being live.*

The Guardian of the Threshold is indicating here how the Three – which separate from each other once the person leaves the physical body – how the Three look in relation to the physical body. The vision is directed to the physical body, to the head, heart and limbs, and the Guardian of the Threshold says: If you observe the human head in its true cosmic significance, it is a mirror image of the heavenly universe. You must look into the distance, where the universe seems to reach its boundary. (In reality it is bounded by the spirit, not as it naively appears physically to be.) In looking up you must recall that your round head is a true image of the heavenly universe. And we add here, being conscious of the mantric words:

“Experience the head's cosmic form”

The sign is added here [in front of the above line]:

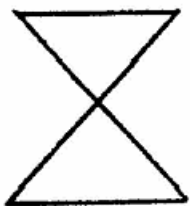


which encourages us to pause at this line of the mantric verse in order to envision the upward direction to the cosmic vastness, and of course that direction is always upward from anywhere on the earth.

“Feel the heart's cosmic pulse”

Through this cosmic-heavenly place the cosmic rhythm resounds as cosmic music. When we hear the human heart beating it seems as if this human heart were only beating as a result of the human organism's interior processes. In reality what beats in the heart is the counterpoint of the cosmic rhythm which has circulated not only for thousands but for millions of years. Therefore pause again – the Guardian of the Threshold says – at the words “Feel the heart's cosmic pulse”, and feel what works in the heart upward as well as downward.

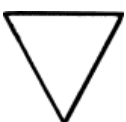
[The corresponding sign is drawn:]



The triangle pointing downward combines with the one pointing upward.

“Think the limbs' cosmic force”

This cosmic force is the one concentrated from below by gravity and other earthly forces. In our thinking – which as earthly thinking is only capable of understanding the earthly – we must look downward to grasp what streams out from the earth to work in man. Now we pause again at “Think the limbs' cosmic force” in the triangle pointing downward:



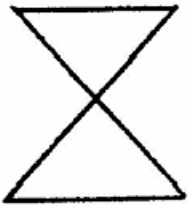
And we will feel the Guardian's words as they should affect to human heart, the human soul today if one activates this mantric verse in the appropriate way.

O see the Three  
They are the One,  
When you in earthly life  
the human imprint bear.

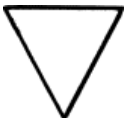
Experience the head's cosmic form.  
The verse is spoken while making the sign before the head:



Feel the heart's cosmic pulse  
One speaks the verse while making the sign before the breast:



Think the limbs' cosmic force  
One speaks the verse while making the sign pointing downward:



They are the Three  
The Three, which as the One  
In earthly being lives.

And you should then try, after letting these mantric verses work on the soul, to make the senses subdued, close the eyes, hear nothing with the ears, perceive nothing and have darkness around you for a while, so that you are living totally in the atmosphere through which these words pass. And in this way you will transport yourself to the sphere in initiation which in all reality can be realized during the encounter with the Guardian of the Threshold. This is one of the ways by which one can take the first step beyond the threshold.

But we must let the Guardian's next words work upon us with great earnestness. These words indicate that once we have crossed the threshold everything is different from the sensory world. In the sensory world we think that the site of thinking and mental images is the human head. And so it is, for the sensory world. But this thinking in the head is always mixed a little bit with willing, something which is also perceptible for normal consciousness. Because when we move from one thought to another we must use the will just as we use it when moving an arm or a leg, or when willing in general. But it is a fine, delicate willing which transfers one thought to another. When we are in the sensory world the whole extent of thinking and a small amount of willing are bound together in the head. As soon as we cross over the Threshold and encounter the Guardian it is the reverse: a small amount of thinking and much widespread willing is bound to the head. And in this

willing, which otherwise sleeps in man, we sense the spirit which forms the head from out of the cosmos, the heavens, as it's spherically-shaped mirror image in all its details. Therefore, once we have crossed beyond the threshold, the Guardian calls out the following words: [The new mantra is written on the blackboard.]

*The head's spirit,  
You can will it*

And now we see that willing is something quite different from what it previously was. Previously the senses were the transmitters of sense-impressions, and one was not aware that the will goes through the the eyes, through the ears, that the will goes through the sense of warmth, and through every other sense as well. Now we see that everything the eye experiences as multiple colors, what the ear hears as multiple sounds, what man perceives as warmth and cold, as rough and smooth, smells and tastes etc., is all will in the spiritual world. [writing continues:]

*And willing provides you with  
The senses' multiple heaven-weaving*

If on seeing the head from the other side of the threshold one recognizes how will goes through the head and how the senses represent will, then he will realize how the heart contains the soul and how one can feel the soul within the heart just as he can will the head's spirit when observing the head. And now we know that when thinking is not considered as a function of the head, but as a function of the heart, of the soul, we realize that thinking does not belong to an individual, but to the world; then one experiences cosmic-life, the music of the spheres. [The second verse is written on the blackboard.]

*The heart's soul,  
You can feel it;  
And feeling provides you with  
Thinking's germinal-waking cosmic-life.*

You live in the radiance.

—not in the unsubstantial radiance, but the radiance where the essence of the world appears.

The head's spirit,  
You're able to will it;  
And willing provides you with  
The senses' manifold heavenly weave.

summing up in the line: *You weave in wisdom.*

Summing up what pertains to the heart's soul and feeling in the line:

*You live in the radiance.*

Just as you recognize the senses as will, you also recognize thinking as feeling in respect to cosmic being, when you consider the Three, which only in the sensory world are One.

And thirdly the Guardian of the Threshold adds:

[The third verse is written on the blackboard.]

*The limbs' strength,  
You're able to think it.*

Now we have a complete reversal. Whereas normally we consider thinking to be concentrated in the head, here [in the first verse] it is the will, as I previously explained, that is concentrated in the

head. Feeling stays in the heart, where it is also felt to be in the sensory world; for the inner force of the heart goes over to the spiritual world.

The limbs' strength,  
You're able to think it.

Now thinking is brought directly into connection with the limbs, the opposite of the sensory world.

[Writing continues.]

*And thinking gives you  
Human striving's goal oriented will;  
thus willing becomes thinking,  
You strive in virtue.*

Thus we have the complete reversal in the spiritual world as revealed to us by the Guardian of the Threshold. Whereas we normally differentiate willing, feeling, thinking from below upward in man, on the other side [of the threshold] we differentiate man as a Three: will above in the head, feeling in the middle, thinking below at the limbs.

We realize then how willing, concentrated in the head, is the weaving cosmic wisdom in which we live; how feeling is the cosmic shining in which all the spirit-beings glow; and how thinking, observed in the limbs, is human striving, which can be lived as human virtue. And the Three appear before spiritual vision thus:

The head's **spirit**  
The heart's **soul**  
The limbs' **force**

The mantric verse is built thus. And we must be aware of this inner congruence, and also aware that if we let this mantric verse work on us the following will penetrate our being:

Heavenly weaving

Cosmic living

Human striving

[These three lines are underlined in yellow.]

These then are the Guardian of the Threshold's words which accompany our spiritual vision of the Three, which derive from the One, when we cross over into the world beyond the threshold:

The head's spirit,  
You're able to will it;  
And willing provides you with  
The senses' manifold heavenly weave.  
You weave in wisdom.

The heart's soul,  
You can feel it;  
And feeling provides you with  
Thinking's germinal-waking cosmic-life.  
You live in the radiance.

The limbs' strength,  
You're able to think it.  
And thinking gives you  
Human striving's goal oriented will;  
You strive in virtue.

These are the sensations which must flow through the soul if real knowledge is to be obtained; these are the admonitions which the Guardian of the Threshold lets resound at the moment when he also tells us:

Come in  
The gate is open;  
You will become  
A real human being.

[Written on the blackboard:]

*Come in  
The gate is open;  
You will become  
A real human being.*

Those are the words which for thousands and thousands of years have resounded at all the gates to the spiritual world, admonishing and yet encouraging:

Come in  
The gate is open  
You will become  
A real human being.

Just imagine, my sisters and brothers, that you say to yourselves for the first time: I want to take the Guardian of the Threshold's words seriously; I recognize that I was not yet a human being; I recognize that I will become one through insight into the spiritual world.

Imagine, my dear sisters and brothers, you say the second time: Oh, I didn't take the words seriously enough the first time; I must admit that I need not one, but two of the stages from where I am now in order to become a true human being.

And imagine you say the third time: I recognize that I need three of the stages from the point where I now stand, at which I am not a true human, in order to become a true human being.

The first admonition, which you give to yourself, is earnest. The second admonition is more earnest. But the third admonition must bear the most earnest impression of all. And if you can awaken this threefold admonition of earnestness from the depths of your souls, then you will have an inkling of what it means to become a true human being through knowledge. And then you will return to the first admonition – as we will also do now – as a transforming verse in our souls.

O see the three  
They are the one,  
When you in earthly life  
the human imprint bear.

Experience the head's cosmic form  
Feel the heart's cosmic pulse  
Think the limbs' cosmic force

They are the Three  
The Three, which as the One  
In earthly being live.

Thus, my sisters and brothers, has it resounded in the hearts of all who have striven for knowledge ever since there have been human beings on the earth.



There has been a pause in the striving since the dawn of the fifth post-Atlantean cultural epoch. According to the will of the divine-spiritual entities who guide humanity, the pause has come to an end. Now it is up to you to make human hearts open again in a worthy way to what the wise guides of humanity raise up to the vision of what works in the world as spirit, what as spirit works in the world in humanity, as the crown of existence.



## Lesson Eight

Dornach, April 18, 1924

My dear friends,

A large number of anthroposophical friends have appeared at the Class today who have not been here before, so I am obliged to say a few introductory words about the School's arrangements. It is to be remembered in all earnestness that with the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum a new element has entered into the anthroposophical movement. Especially the members of our Free School for Spiritual Science must be aware of this new element. I have often indicated this, but I know that many anthroposophical friends are here for the first time who have never heard it, so I must emphasize it once again.

It is true that before the Christmas Conference it was always emphasized that the anthroposophical movement and the Anthroposophical Society must be held strictly separate.

The anthroposophical movement represented the inflow of spiritual wisdom and life impulses into human civilization today which can and should be obtained for our present time directly from the spiritual world. This anthroposophical movement exists not because people like it to exist but because the spiritual powers which guide and lead the world and affect human history consider it right that spiritual light, which can come through anthroposophy, flow today into human civilization in the appropriate manner.

The Anthroposophical Society was founded in order to act as an administrative society for the body of anthroposophical wisdom and life. And it had to be continually emphasized that anthroposophy as such is beyond and above any societal organization and the Anthroposophical Society is the exoteric administrator.

That has changed since the Christmas Conference at the Goetheanum. Since the Christmas Conference the opposite is the case. And only because the opposite is the case was I able to declare myself willing, together with the Executive Committee (Vorstand) which was formed during the Christmas Conference and with whom the appropriate work to be done can be carried out, to take over the presidency of the Anthroposophical Society which was founded at Christmas. I can explain what this means in one sentence: Until then, anthroposophy was administered by the Anthroposophical Society; now whatever happens through the Anthroposophical Society must itself be anthroposophy. Since Christmas the Anthroposophical Society must occupy itself with anthroposophy. Every single act must have an esoteric character. The investment of the Vorstand was thus an esoteric measure, a measure which must be thought of as coming directly from the spiritual world. Only when our anthroposophical friends are conscious of this can the Anthroposophical Society thus founded thrive. So the anthroposophical movement and the Anthroposophical Society have now become identical.

Thus the Vorstand at Dornach is an initiative-Vorstand, as was emphasized during the Christmas Conference. Of course there must be an administration. But that is not what it considers to be its principle task, but rather to make anthroposophy flow through the Anthroposophical Society and to do everything possible to achieve this objective.

The position of the Vorstand at Dornach within the Anthroposophical Society is therewith given. And it must be clear that from now on every relationship within the Anthroposophical Society will not be based on some bureaucratic measure or other, but it will be based on the strictly human. Therefore at the Christmas Conference statutes that contain paragraphs which detail what members must believe or agree to were *not* presented; rather do the statutes describe what the Vorstand intends. And that is how the Anthroposophical Society is constituted. It is founded upon human relationships.

It is a minor thing, but I must emphasize it: every member is issued a membership card, which is signed by me, so that even if it's an abstract thing, the personal relationship is at least present. It has been suggested that I have a rubber stamp made with my signature. I'm not going to do that – despite it not being exactly comfortable to sign twelve thousand membership cards, little by little.

But I will not have the stamp made, first of all because, although very abstract, a relationship is at least established to each and every member when, if only for minutes the eye rests on the name of the person who carries the membership card. Obviously all the other relationships will be even more human, but by this means a concrete beginning is made within our society.

I must also stress that it must be clear to the members – I stress it because it has already been sinned against – that when the name “General Anthroposophical Society” is used, the agreement of the Vorstand at the Goetheanum is first obtained. In the same sense, when something comes from the Goetheanum and is then used as something esoteric, the use is based upon an understanding with the Vorstand at the Goetheanum. This means that nothing by way of formulations and teaching which appears in the name of the General Anthroposophical Society will be recognized by us here as valid unless an understanding with the Vorstand at the Goetheanum has taken place. In the future no abstract relationship will be possible, only concrete ones. Anything said to come from the Goetheanum must really come from the Goetheanum. Therefore the use of the title “General Anthroposophical Society” for example lectures to be given somewhere or for the use of formulations and so forth which come from here and an active member who wishes to distribute should write to the Secretary of the Anthroposophical Society at the Goetheanum, that is to Mrs Wegman, in order to obtain the Vorstand's agreement. It is important that in future the Vorstand at the Goetheanum be understood as the center of the anthroposophical movement.

Furthermore, the relation of this School to the Anthroposophical Society must be clearly understood by the membership. One who becomes a member of the Anthroposophical Society feels the inner heartfelt need to learn and live what circulates in the world as anthroposophical knowledge and living impulse. One assumes no responsibilities other than those which come to the heart and soul from anthroposophy itself. Once one has been a member of the General Anthroposophical society for a certain time – presently the minimum is two years – can he apply for membership in the Free School for Spiritual Science.

In this Free School for Spiritual Science one assumes truly earnest responsibilities for the Society, for anthroposophy, that is, that as a member one wishes to be a true representative of anthroposophy to the world. That is necessary today. The leadership of the Free School for Spiritual Science cannot agree to work together with someone as a member under other conditions.

Do not say, my friends, that this is a limitation of freedom. Freedom demands that everyone involved be free. And just as one can be a member of the School and be free in this relationship, the leadership of the School must also be free to determine with whom it wishes to work and with whom not. Therefore if the leadership for any reason is of the opinion that a member cannot be a true representative of anthroposophy to the world, it must be possible for the leadership of the School to either not approve that person's application or, in the case where he is already a member, to say that his membership must be revoked. This must be strictly observed in this future, so that in fact a free cooperation exists between the School's leadership and the members.

Step by step we will try to make arrangements so that those who cannot take part in the continuing work of the School in Dornach can partake in some manner. We can only take the fifth step after the fourth, not the seventh step after the first; we must take one step after the other and there has been much to do here since the Christmas Conference. But it will all be arranged to the extent possible. We will have a newsletter through which those who reside elsewhere can participate in the School's activities. We were able to make a beginning with a newsletter that Dr Wegman sent to the physicians who were thus able to participate in the work of the School. Things will develop as much as possible, and I ask that you be patient in this respect.

Something else to be mentioned is that the School must be understood not as having been established by a human impulse, but from the spiritual world. A decision made from the spiritual world has been obtained with the means which are possible. So that this School is to be understood as an institution of the spiritual world for the present time – as has been the case with the Mysteries in all times. Therefore we may say today: This School must develop into a true Mystery School for our times. Thus it will be the soul of the anthroposophical movement.

This makes clear how serious membership in this School should be understood to be. It is obvious

that all the previous esoteric work achieved here will flow into the School's work. For this School is the esoteric foundation and source of all esoteric activity within the anthroposophical movement. Therefore if anyone wishes to initiate any kind of esoteric work in the world without a connection to the Vorstand at the Goetheanum, they must either reach an understanding with the Vorstand or they cannot include things which originate in the Goetheanum in their teaching or impulse. Whoever wants to do esoteric work under conditions other than those just mentioned cannot be a member of this School. They must then do the esoteric work outside the confines of this School and unrecognized by it, but must clearly understand that it cannot include anything which originated in this School. Relations with the School must be clearly understood. So the members must understand that [the leadership of] the School must be able to consider that each member is a true representative of anthroposophy in the world, and that every member represents anthroposophy exoterically (sic) as a member of the School should.

Before I was President of the Anthroposophical Society an attempt was made to organize the Goetheanum in the way other universities are organized. But doesn't work under certain circumstances. Here esoteric studies will take place which are not found in other universities. And there is no intention to compete with other universities in the world, but to begin with questions about any field of life posed by honestly seeking people, which cannot be answered outside the esoteric.

Therefore in the future, especially for members of the School, nonsense which keeps being repeated must cease, because with the Christmas Conference something real has happened and for the Goetheanum to fulfill its mission all the members of the School must frankly and freely declare: I am a representative of the anthroposophy which comes given from the Goetheanum. Whoever will not do this, who thinks that one should be silent about anthroposophy, prepare people slowly, whoever wants to play politics and thinks that he can advance that way by first denying us and then people will come to us – they generally don't – would be well advised to give up membership in the School right away. I can promise you that in the future membership in the School will be taken very seriously indeed. For those members of the School whose work is really about anthroposophy and not something else, this will be accepted readily and gladly. Those who continually claim that you can't confront people with anthroposophy immediately, that you must somehow talk them into it gradually, may choose to exercise their opinion outside the School.

These are the conditions which must be adhered to, and I had to mention them today because so many anthroposophical friends are present who had not yet participated in the School. And this is the reason why you have had to wait so long for the lesson to begin, and listen to this introduction. So we can consider the lesson today to be a kind of preparation. I will hold a second lesson, date to be announced, in which no new friends may participate. So I ask those who wish to attend in the future to have patience, because if every time a lesson is held here new people come, we would never get anywhere. Of course one can still become a member, but only members who have attended today will be admitted to the next lesson. It will be a continuation of today's lesson.

## Lesson Eight – Part two

I wish to begin today's lesson – without you taking notes, only listening at first – by speaking the mantric formula which points to what has resounded throughout the ages, first from the Mysteries, but previously *for* the Mysteries from the script written in the stars, in the whole cosmos, and which resounds in the human soul, in the human heart, as the great challenge to humanity to strive for a true knowledge of self. This challenge; “O man, know thyself!” rings forth from the whole cosmos. We look up at the stars, which reveal an especially clear writing in the zodiac, which through their composition in certain forms reveal the grand cosmic script. For one who understands the script the cosmic words will sound forth: “O man, know thyself!”

When we look up at what the planets reveal by their movements, first the sun and moon, but also the planets which belong to the sun and moon, then just as the movements of the stars reveal the powerful, forceful cosmic word, so do these planetary movements reveal the heart and feeling content.

And through what we experience from the elements which surround us on the earth and in which we partake through our skin, through our senses, through everything in us, that enters into us and acts in our bodies – earth, water, fire, air – though them the will element pours into these words.

We can therefore let this cosmic word, which rings out to humanity, act on our souls through the mantric words:

O man, know thyself!  
So resounds the cosmic-word.  
You hear it strong in soul,  
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks so vastly cosmic?  
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?

Does it work through distant radiant space  
To your senses' sense of being?  
Does it ring through waves of time  
To your life's stream of becoming?

Is it you yourself who  
in feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign  
In space's psychic emptiness,  
Because thinking's force you lose  
In the destroying stream of time.

My dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, there exists no knowledge which is not closely tied to the spiritual world. Everything we call knowledge which is neither investigated in the spiritual world nor imparted by those who are able to investigate in the spiritual world, is not real knowledge. We must be clear about the fact that when we look around in the world, in the kingdoms of nature, see the colors and the radiance manifested, see what lives above in the shining stars, in the warming sun, what springs up from the depths of the earth – it is all sublime, grand, beautiful, full of wisdom. And we would be very mistaken to ignore this beauty, sublimity, this wisdom. If one wishes to become an esotericist, if he strives for real knowledge, then he must have a sense for the world around him – an open, free sense. For during the time between birth and

death, during his earthly existence, he is obliged to absorb his strength from the forces of the earth, and to return the results of his work to the forces of the earth.

But although it is true that man must really participate in all the colors on colors, sounds on sounds, warmth on warmth, stars on stars, clouds on clouds and all the creatures of the kingdoms of nature which surround him, it is also true that if when he looks out at all the grand, powerful, sublime, wise, beautiful things his senses convey, he still does not discover what he himself is. Rather is it just then, when he has a correct sense of the sublimity, beauty and grandeur of his surroundings in his life on earth, will he realize: In this light-filled kingdom of earth the inmost source of my being is not present. It is elsewhere. Full recognition of this causes us to seek the state of consciousness which moves us on to what we call the threshold to the spiritual world. This threshold, which lies immediately before an abyss, we must approach and remember that in all that surrounds us in earthly existence the primal source of humanity is not found.

Then we must know: at this threshold stands a spiritual figure called the Guardian of the Threshold. This Guardian takes care – beneficially to man – that one does not cross the threshold unprepared, without having experienced deeply in the soul those feelings I have spoken about. But then, when he really is prepared with inner earnestness for spiritual knowledge – whether by means of clairvoyant consciousness or through healthy human understanding of what he has been told, for both ways are possible; either way, only then is it possible for the Guardian of the Threshold to reach out with a helping hand and allow him to look over the abyss. There, beyond the threshold where the human being's inmost being originated, utter darkness lies at first.

My dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, we seek light in order to see in the light the origin of our own being. At first darkness reigns. This light which we seek must radiate out from the darkness. And it only radiates out from the darkness when we become aware of how the three fundamental impulses of our soul-life, thinking, feeling and willing, here in this earth-life are held together by our physical bodies. Thinking, feeling and willing are conjoined in physical existence.



If I schematically draw how they are conjoined, it looks like this [draws on blackboard]. Feeling (green) extends into thinking (yellow); into feeling willing (red) extends. So in earthly existence the three are conjoined in man.

One must learn to feel that the Three separate from each other. And if more and more he uses the meditations suggested to him here by the School as the content of his soul life, he will note the following [drawing again]: thinking (yellow) is freed, detaching itself from feeling, feeling [green] is on its own as is willing [red]. For one learns to perceive without the physical body.

The physical body had held thinking, feeling and willing together, had pressed them into each other. [Around the first drawing an oval is drawn.] Here [in the second drawing on the right] the physical body is not present.

Through the meditations which he receives here at the School, one gradually comes to feel himself outside his body; and he comes to regard the world as self, and what self was, as world. We stand here on the earth in our earthly existence: we feel like human beings; we say, as we become inwardly aware: this is my heart, these are my lungs, this is my liver, this is my stomach. What we call our organs, what we call the physical human organization, we consider to be our own. And we point up: that is the sun, that is the moon, those are the stars, the clouds, that is a tree, a stream. We identify these things as being outside us. We are within our organs. We are outside of those things we indicated as: that is the sun, that is the moon, those are the stars, and so on.

When we have prepared our souls enough so that they can perceive without the body, that is, outside the body in the spiritual universe, then the reverse consciousness comes about. Now we speak of the sun as we speak of our heart here in earthly existence: that is my heart. We speak of the moon: that is the creator of my form. We speak of the clouds more or less as we speak on earth of our hair. We call our own organism what people on the earth see as components of the universe. And we point out: look there, a human heart, human lungs, a human liver – that is objective, that is world. Just as when we are in our physical bodies we look out from here to the sun and moon and to the world, when from the universe we look at the sun and the moon and clouds and rivers and mountains and they are within us. And when we look at man he is our outer world. The difficulty is only in the spacial relationships. And the difficulty will be overcome.

As soon as we leave our physical bodies with our thinking, we perceive this thinking as one with all that is manifested in the stars. Here on earth we call our brain our own, as the instrument of our thinking. But now we begin to feel the stars, especially the stars of the zodiac, as our brain when we are out in the universe and look down at man external to us.

And we perceive the circling planets as our own feeling. Our feeling follows then the course of the sun, of the moon, and of the other planets. Between what we experience as thinking in the fixed stars and feeling, is the sun in ourselves [the sun sign is inserted between the yellow and green of the second drawing]; and the moon lies between feeling and willing – which we also feel within us. [The moon sign is inserted between green and red.] And by simply meditating on this figure, it has the force to bring us closer and closer to spiritual vision. It must be realized that what I am saying here can really be experienced: leaving the physical body, expanding throughout the cosmos, feeling the elements of the cosmos – sun and moon, stars and so on – as one's own organs, observation of humanity as our exterior world.

What must be perfectly clear however that our thinking, our feeling and our willing which on earth is a unity held together by the physical body, now becomes threefold. And we learn to feel this threefold nature above all when we observe thinking.

Dear friends, dear sisters and brothers, this thinking which man uses on earth between birth and death is a corpse. It does not live. Whatever he may think with his brain about the beautiful, sublime, grand earth in his surroundings: these thoughts do not live. They lived in pre-earthly existence. They lived, these thoughts, when we had not yet descended to the physical world, but still lived above in the soul-spiritual world as soul-spiritual beings. There the thoughts which we have on earth were alive, but our physical body is the grave in which the moribund thought-world is buried when we descend to the earth. And here we carry the corpses of thought within us. And we think about our sense-perceptible surroundings on earth not with living thoughts but with the corpses of thought. But before we descended to this physical world a living thinking existed within us.

My dear friends, we only need to immerse ourselves with these truths again and again with inner strength and we come to the conscious conclusion that it really is so. One comes to know the human being in this way. One comes to know him and sees him so: This is the human head. [The outline of a head is sketched.] This human head is the bearer and support for earthly corpse-thinking. From it spring forth – but dead – the thoughts which spread over what is perceived by the



eyes, by the ears, by the sense of warmth, by the other senses. We observe the thinking that corresponds to life on earth.

But gradually we learn to see through this thinking. Within the spiritual cell of the human head is the lingering sound of the true, living thinking in which we lived before descending to the physical world. When one looks at man, one sees at first his dead thinking [sketch: red part of the head]. But behind this dead thinking in the head's spiritual cell is the living thinking [yellow part of the head]. And this living thinking has brought with it the force necessary to form our brain. The brain is not thinking's creator, but the product of pre-earthly living thinking.

So when we look at the human being with the correct awareness, dead earthly thinking is manifested on the surface of the head; if we look within to the spiritual cell behind, we see the living thinking, which is like a will, such as the will we are otherwise aware of in the human motor system, which is really sleeping in us. For we don't know how thought descends to our muscles and so on – when it intends to will this or that. Then we observe what lives in us as will: we see it as thinking in the spiritual cell behind the sense oriented thinking. But then this will, which we become aware of as thinking, is creative for our thinking organ. For this thinking is no longer human thinking, it is cosmic thinking.

If we can understand the human being so that we look through the earthly thinking to the thinking which made the brain the basis for thinking on earth, then sensory thinking flows out into the cosmic void, and eternal thinking arises as will.

We become conscious of all this when we let the following mantric words act in us:

See behind thinking's sensory light,  
How in the darkening spirit-cell  
Willing arises from the body's depths;  
Let flow through your soul's force  
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;  
And the will, it arises  
As cosmic-thought-creating.

This imagination must gradually stand before you, my dear friends, this imagination of dead thinking directed toward the sensory world streaming out from the head. Behind it lurks – at first in darkness – the true thinking which glows through sensory thinking and which builds the brain as man descends from the spiritual to the physical world. It is, however, like will. And one sees then how from out of man the will arises [white lines from below to above], spreading in the head, to become cosmic thinking because what lives in the will as thinking is already cosmic thinking.

We should therefore try to better understand and bring closer the mantric thoughts which we can imbue in the soul in the following way:

[The first verse is written on the blackboard:]

*See behind thinking's sensory light,  
How in the darkening spirit-cell*

–that is, one must look behind thinking–  
[“behind” is underlined]

*Willing arises from the body's depths;*

–one must become strong in the soul to let normal sensory thinking flow away–

*Let flow through your soul's force  
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;  
And the will, it arises*

*As cosmic-thought-creating.*

These seven lines contain the secret of human thinking's connection to the universe. We must not pretend to understand these things with the intellect, but must let them live in feeling as meditation. And these words have force. They are constructed harmoniously. "Thinking", "willing", "cosmic void", "will" and "cosmic thought creating" [these words are underlined] are arranged here in inner organization of thoughts so they can work on the imaginative consciousness. Just as we can look at the human head and it becomes a means for us to look into cosmic-thought-creating, we can also look at the human heart as the physical imaginative representative of the human soul. As thinking is the abstract representative of the human spirit, we can look upon the human heart as the representative of feeling. And we can look into feeling, as it applies to human earthly existence, but now no longer behind, but into it. [In the drawing a yellow oval.] For just as we perceive cosmic-thought-creating in the spiritual cell behind thinking, we can also perceive feeling, whose representative the heart is, streaming through something which from the cosmos goes in and out of man: we perceive cosmic life, cosmic life which becomes human soul-life. As here [in the first verse] must be: "behind thinking's sensory light", now it must be: "in feeling's" in the second mantra, which must be harmonically interwoven with the first.

See in feeling's psychic weaving  
How in the twilight of dreams  
Life streams in from cosmic distance;  
Let in sleep through the tranquil heart  
Human feelings gust away:  
Cosmic spirit life becomes  
Man's true force of being.

[This second strophe is written on the blackboard:]

*See in feeling's psychic wafting  
How in the twilight of dreams*

Feeling is only a wakeful dreaming. Feelings are not as conscious as thinking is for man. They are as conscious as the pictures in dreams. Thus feeling is a waking dream. Therefore:

See in feeling's psychic wafting  
How in the twilight of dreams  
Life

Here [in the first verse] "willing" arises from the body's depths; whereas here "Life" streams in from cosmic distance.

*streams in from cosmic distance;*

[In the drawing 4 horizontal arrows are added.]

As here [in the first verse] thinking is to flow into the cosmic void through strength of soul, now we let the dreams of feeling gust away, but in their place we perceive in the psychic weaving of feeling what streams in as cosmic life. When feelings' dreams completely dissolve in sleep, when individual human feeling stops, then cosmic life weaves into man.

Life streams in from cosmic distance

[Writing continues:]

*Let in sleep through the tranquil heart*

Here [in the first verse] we need strength of soul; Here [in the second verse] we need complete tranquility, for the dreams of feeling dissolve in sleep, and the divine cosmic life streams into the human soul.

Let in sleep through the tranquil heart

[Writing continues, and the words “gust away”, “cosmic spirit life” and “Man's true force of being” are underlined.]

*Human feelings gust away;  
Cosmic spirit life becomes  
Man's true force of being.*

In these seven lines the whole secret of human feeling is contained, if it can become independent when the unity [of thinking feeling, willing] becomes threefold.

In this way we can also observe the human limbs, in which the will is revealed [Drawing: white arrow pointing downward]; here we cannot say: “See behind”, See into”. Here we must say “See above”, for thinking streams down to the will from the head, although man with normal consciousness cannot see it. But the thoughts stream from the head into the limbs in order for the will to be able to act in the limbs.

When we observe the will acting in the limbs, when we see in every arm movement, in every leg movement how the will streams in, then we also realize how in this will there is a secret thinking, a thinking which directly grasps earthly existence. Actually it is our being in earlier earthly lives, which grasps earthly existence through the limbs in order that in grasping it we can live our present life on earth. Thinking descends into the limbs. When we see how thinking descends, we are seeing thinking in the will [drawing: red descending from the head through the arm].

Then, because we are seeing with the soul, we see how thinking lives in the arms, in the hands, in the legs, in the feet, in the toes, a process otherwise hidden from us, then we must see how this thinking is light. Thinking as light streams through arms and hands, through legs and toes. And the will, which otherwise is sleeping in the limbs, transforms itself and thinking appears as a magical being of will that transplants the human being from earlier lives – after becoming spirit – into the present-earth life:

See above the will's work in the body,  
How in sleeping fields of work  
Thinking descends from the head's forces;  
Let through the soul's view to light  
Human will transform itself;  
And thinking - it appears  
as magical being of will.

It conjures, that is, it acts magically on the invisible thinking in the will of the limbs. He understands the human being who knows that the thought which is not seen in the will – because we are sleeping in the will – acts magically in the limbs as will. And only by seeing as magical the thoughts which pass through the arms and hands, through legs and toes is true magic understood.

[The third strophe is written on the blackboard with the words “thinking”, “transform” and

“magical being of will” underlined.]

*See above the will's work in the body,  
How in sleeping fields of work  
Thinking descends from the head's forces;  
Let through psychic vision to light  
Human will itself transform;  
And thinking - it appears  
as magical being of will.*

Therein is contained the secret of human will, which creates magically from out of the universe into man. Let us then, my dear friends, my dear sisters and brothers, consider this a foundation for building later on at a time to be announced, a foundation for again and again in meditation letting the mantric words flow through the soul.

See behind thinking's sensory light,  
How in the darkening spirit-cell  
Willing arises from the body's depths;  
Let flow through your soul's force  
Dead thinking into the cosmic void;  
And the will, it arises  
As cosmic-thought-creating.

See in feeling's psychic weaving  
How in the twilight of dreams  
Life streams in from cosmic distance;  
Let in sleep through the tranquil heart  
Human feelings gust away:  
Cosmic spirit life becomes  
Man's true force of being.

See above the will's work in the body,  
How in sleeping fields of work  
Thinking descends from the head's forces;  
Let through the soul's view to light  
Human will transform itself;  
And thinking - it appears  
as magical being of will.

## Lesson Nine

Dornach, April 22, 1924

My dear friends,

First – without taking notes – let us be reminded of the admonition which directs human beings to the ancient holy words of knowledge:

O man, know thyself!  
So resounds the cosmic-word.  
You hear it strong in soul,  
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks so vastly cosmic?  
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?

Does it work through distant radiant space  
Into your senses' sense of being?  
Does it ring through waves of time  
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who  
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign  
In space's psychic vacancy,  
Because you lose the force of thought  
In time's destructive flow.

We can, my dear friends, look up to the distant stars and let our vision rest upon what radiates down to us from the universe in the forms the constellations possess. When we immerse ourselves in the sublimity of what the vast universe offers, we will gain enhanced inner strength. And especially for the strength to hold the soul separate from the body, we need to inwardly direct our gaze toward the heavenly bodies. By “inwardly” is meant the following: We have seen the stars so often and have stored the vision in our hearts and minds so that we no longer need to even look up at the heavenly bodies in order to make the powerful image of the star-embedded heaven's vault effective in our inner consciousness. If this picture arises from our own inner being, if the soul empowers itself to create it, then it will be able, through this empowered force, to liberate itself from its corporeality.

And we can also observe all that radiates down and streams through us from the planets which circle the earth, and in their circling directly affect the earth's wind and weather. And when we again create a picture in our hearts of all this, the sensation of being integrated in the movement of the circling constitutes the second experience.

And then when we are conscious of all that binds us to the earth, that we are heavy bodies among other heavy bodies. In other words what lives in us as a feeling of being bound to the earth becomes a facet of our soul, and it is the third aspect.

And from these three inner experiences: what we have gained in luminous, radiant, living thought derived from the stars; and then when we merge with the path of our earth in the universe, merge with what the planets say to us meaningfully from space by their movements – so that having felt ourselves to be at rest in respect to the stars, now we feel ourselves to be set in movement through the cosmos itself. And thirdly, if we then feel ourselves bound to the earth by the force of the earth

itself, then we will gradually and harmoniously be more and more able to make a beginning at entering into the spiritual world. And today everyone can make this beginning.

This leads to the question: Why is it then that so few do so? The answer to this must be: most people don't want to experience things so intimately in order to enter into the spiritual world. They disdain experiencing so intimately. They prefer titillating experiences such as the spiritual world approaching them with all the characteristics of the sensory world.

It would be easy to convince people about the spiritual world if for example a table from the spiritual world were to approach them. But there are no tables in the spiritual world, there are only spiritual beings in the spiritual world, and they must be perceived with what is spiritual in man. But spiritual is what we can read in the stars, what we can feel in the movements of the planets, what we can experience in the forces which hold us to the earth and make us people of the earth. Therefore whoever desires to understand in the right way must do so inwardly. With common sense we can understand all of anthroposophy, but to understand inwardly means to transfer more and more what is understood to inner life. Whoever wishes to do this must decide to undertake a really intimate exercise of these three sensations – or experiences, it doesn't matter what we call them.

And now, my dear sisters and brothers, what is flowing to you from the spiritual world through this School wishes to speak to you about how by means of an intimate exercise you can become more aware of the connection of humanity with the world than you are accustomed to through normal consciousness.

Firstly, we humans should in later life be more like we were to a great extent when we were children. As children we are almost all sensory organs: eyes, ears. The child experiences everything that happens in its environment as though its whole body were a sense organ. That's why he imitates everything, because everything continues to vibrate within him; and in the same way in which it vibrates within him, it seeks to emerge by means of the will.

The child retains this characteristic only as long as we protect it from doing with its senses what we as adults do with them. The child develops this inner sensory capacity only as long as we carry it, protecting it so that it is not yet exposed to the forces of the earth. And it is really wonderful how the growing child's sensory-being is protected from the effects of the earth forces as long as this sensory-being is especially vital and alive.

At the moment when the child stands on its feet and begins to move about is when its movements become susceptible to the earth's forces and it must find its own equilibrium, at that moment the intimate sensory-being ends. The human being of course does not remember back to this first stage of infancy, and therefore does not know what it means to feel his whole being as a sensory-organ. But we must, if we want to experience the human in us more and more, be able to feel and experience our whole human being as such a sensory organ.

You grasp something, my dear sisters and brothers. It presses on you. You perceive the pressure. Or you perceive the texture of the surface you are touching. But in reality you are continually touching in that you place your whole body from top to bottom on the earth and feel the earth under the soles of your feet. Only you are so used to it that you don't notice. When you begin to notice it, then you will first feel yourselves as human beings standing amidst the earth's forces. Therefore the admonition at the threshold to the spiritual world.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, touch and sense in your body's being*

*How earth forces support your existence.*

[Certain essential words are underlined later, as described in the text. Trans.]

Therewith we let the first stage of this inner experience work in us.

Now we can feel ourselves as the ones touching, sensing. We can experience this touching, feel inwardly as the person doing the vibrant touching. When we advance enough to feel this touching itself, we are then not perceiving earth forces, but we begin to feel the vibrating water forces in us, the fluid forces which as blood and other liquids course through our bodies. And in these forces we

feel how all the fluids which course through our bodies are connected to the ether in the universe.  
[writing on the blackboard:]

*O man, experience in the whole round of your touch  
How water-beings are the framers of your being.*

If we only had earth forces to touch in our whole being, we would be constituted as something continually crumbling away. The water forces in us shape the form of the human body from the cosmic ether. Only the earth has influence over what is solid in us. But the whole wide world of ether has influence over the liquids in us .

But then during the third stage we can immerse ourselves in what lives and weaves in the fluidity. We can feel it dimly, inwardly. When we feel our breathing, for example, we will realize how we are continually nurtured by the essence of breathing and of the air. We would be helpless children if we weren't continually nurtured by the forces of breathing flowing through us.

[writing on the blackboard:]

*O man, feel in the whole weaving of your life  
How the powers of the air nurture your existence.*

And now if we have advanced to the third stage of inner experience, we can come to the fourth, if we feel inner warmth, and are attentive to our own fulfilling warmth which is in breath, which lives in everything air-forming within us. For only through what is air-forming in us is our warmth created.

But what lives in us as warmth can be reached with thoughts. And here we have a most important secret of human nature.

My dear sisters and brothers, you cannot reach with thought, but only with the sense of touch, how earth forces act on you and support you. You cannot reach with thought, but only with inner experience, how the water forces are your formative builders. You cannot reach with thought, but only with inner feeling, how the airy powers in you are your nurturers. You can be thankful for this nurturing, you can love these nurturers, but you cannot directly reach them with thought. But what man can reach by thought, by meditating on his warmth, is to experience himself as a being of warmth.

The physician comes with a thermometer; he measures warmth from without. Just as warmth can differ on different places of the body, it is also different in the individual inner organs. You can direct your thoughts down to the individual organs and will find that the whole inner warmth-organism is differentiated. One can reach his own warmth organism with thought.

But then, having done that, you have a specific feeling. This feeling, my dear sisters and brothers, will now be revealed to your souls. Imagine that you have achieved it, that in thought you have descended into your organism, reached the differentiating warmth – the warmth of the lungs, the warmth of the liver, the warmth of the heart, which are all God-spirit created entities within you. You achieve this with thought. Now for the first time you know what thought is. Before you didn't know what thought is. You know now that thought, by descending into what was before only warmth, turns the warmth into flame, into fire. For in ordinary life thought appears to you in its imperceptible inwardness as abstract thought. When you sink it down into your own body, the thought appears to you as luminous, radiantly penetrating into the lungs, into the heart, into the liver. Just as the light which goes out from your brow stretches downward, so does thought illumine the inner organs, differentiating itself into various nuances of color.

One cannot merely say: I think through to the differentiations of my warmth; one must say: I enlighten myself by thinking through to the differentiations of my warmth.

[writing on the blackboard:]

*O man, think in the full flow of your feeling*

*How the fire-powers are your helpers in being.*

Everything in these eight lines can be summarized by letting what has been intimately worked through be summed up in your souls with the words:

[On the blackboard each element is placed after the corresponding mantra- phrase.]

*O man, see yourself in the kingdom of elements.*

Elements:

*Earth*

*Water*

*Air*

*Fire*

Thus do you measure yourselves, radiate, strengthen yourselves in respect to the body. But note how this strengthening, this measuring of the mere physical extends to the moral:

Here we have the support of man, the physical support. [In the first mantra sentence “support” is underlined.]

Here we have the formative forces. [In the second mantra sentence “formers” is underlined.] Still somewhat physical, but permeated with the etheric.

Here we have nurturer. [In the third mantra sentence “nurture” is underlined.] It already has a certain morality. Then as we ascend from water to air we feel that the beings who are in the air are permeated with morality.

And in the fire we have not only nurturer, but also helpers, [“helpers” in the fourth mantra sentence in underlined], comrades, beings similar to us.

Just as we feel through to our bodies, we can also feel through to our souls. For this we must not concentrate on the elements, rather must we concentrate on what pulls the planets that circle the earth and pulls the air and sea currents along with it. We feel our physicality in our spirituality when we measure the body as has been explained; but we directly experience our soul-life.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, let act in the depths of your soul  
The cosmic powers that guide the planets.*

It can also be summarized in the sentence:

*O man, through the cosmic circling renew yourself.*

We realize and experience the spiritual in us when we elevate the spirit to the stars, which reach us in their groupings and formations and become like a celestial script to us. If we preserve what is thus written in the starry heavens we will become aware of our own spirituality, that spirituality which doesn't speak about man personally, but about the entire universe.

[written on the blackboard:]

*O man, retain in your spirit's creativity  
The constellations' cosmological words.*

Summarizing:

*O man, recreate yourself through celestial wisdom.*

Not by vague generalities, not by vague sensations are we able to gradually extract our souls from our physical bodies and pass over to the universe, but rather by grasping the elements in the



specified way, by the movement of the planets, by the meaning in the stars. We unite with the universe when we do this.

And we will note that once the first part of the exercise is accomplished we feel a life in us, the life of the universe.

[Alongside the first eight lines of the mantra is written:]

### *Life*

Once we have finished the second part of the exercise we feel love towards the whole world.

[Alongside the tenth and eleventh lines is written:]

### *Love*

Once we have finished the third part we feel a sense of piety in us.

[Alongside the thirteenth and fourteenth lines is written:]

### *Piety*

And it really is an ascension from life through love to piety, to a truly religious cosmic sense which can be undergone through such mantric words.

But if it is really undergone, if we really end up being pious through such an exercise, then the world ceases to be physical for us. Then we say to ourselves with total certainty: the physical in the world is only semblance, maya; the world is everywhere through and through spirit. As humans we belong to this spirit. And if we feel ourselves as spirit in the spirit-world, then we are beyond the threshold to the spiritual world.

Then, however, once we are beyond the threshold to the spiritual world, we sense how here, on this side, our body holds thinking, feeling and willing together through its own bodily force; how at the moment we are body-free in our experiencing, thinking, feeling and willing are no longer one, but threefold. Then it is as though by binding ourselves to the earth-powers in water, air, fire, earth, that by sending our will to the earth we become one with the earth through our will.

Furthermore, because we feel love in our souls for the movements of the planets, that is, for the spiritual beings who live therein, it is so that we experience the Powers circling cosmic space as feeling. And if we can say: the sun moves in the feeling of cosmic space, Mercury moves in the feeling of cosmic space, Mars moves in the feeling of cosmic space, then we have grasped feeling in its cosmic being separated from thinking and separated from willing.

And if we are able to grasp thinking in such a way that thoughts are freed from physical existence, it is as though our thinking were to fly out to the [resting] stars and rest there themselves.

[Translator's Note: in German the stars themselves can be referred to as "resting" stars, in contrast to the "wandering" or "moving" stars: the planets. In this lecture there is much play on words between the two concepts, which is necessarily lost in translation.]

And we say to ourselves when we have arrived on the other side of the threshold: my thinking rests in the resting stars; my feeling moves in the wandering stars [planets]; my willing unites with the earth forces. So thinking, feeling, willing are separated in the cosmos.

And they must be again joined together. Here on the earth man does not need to bind thinking, feeling and willing together, because they already are so due to the physical body being a unity. Thinking, feeling and willing would be constantly falling apart if they were not held together by the physical man, without his intention or awareness. Now though, on the other side of the threshold, they are divided so that thinking rests above with the stars, feeling circles with the planets, and willing unites with the forces of the earth. And with strong inner determination, with our own

forces, we must bring them back together as a unity.

In doing this we must experience thinking, feeling and willing in such a way that we can communicate to thinking, which has gone to the stars, something of feeling and willing; to feeling, which is circling with the planets, communicate something of thinking and willing; to willing, which is bound to the earth, something of thinking and feeling. This something we indeed can do using such a mantric formula.

We must look up to the stars and with devotion say to ourselves: there is where your thinking lies. But I will bring the starry sky into movement; just as feeling likewise does for the planets, in spirit I will slowly move the starry sky. I feel myself attracted to the starry sky; I want to go up there and be at one with that star-filled heavens. Thus have I incorporated feeling and willing into thinking, which is bound to the stars.

Then I look up to the planets and feel: In these planets [Ger. wandering stars] my own feeling wanders. But I will attempt to fix the moment as the stars [Ger. fixed stars] are fixed in place. And through my rhythmic system – to which heart and lungs belong – I will become as one with the entire planetary system. Then I have assigned thinking and willing to feeling.

And when I become aware of how, through this mantric formula, I am bound to the earth as a human being, then I should add feeling and thinking to this being bound to the earth. In thought I should set the earth in motion so that like a planet I accompany it on its rounds without perceiving its weight: bound to it as if I were guiding the earth through cosmic space. Feeling is combined with willing. I add thinking to the mixture when I accompany the earth's movement in thought, but can bring it again to a standstill, thus making the earth itself a [fixed] star by my own meditating force of thought.

When I carry out such a meditation again and again, I gradually come to feel myself as a human being outside my body in the cosmos. For this, my dear sisters and brothers, this mantric formula can work on the soul with special force.

[written on the blackboard:]

*Bring to thinking life  
What as pure contemplation  
(that is: as meditation, as contemplation)  
in the soul light-filled  
radiate:  
Feeling and willing  
And you are spirit  
Among pure spirits.*

Secondly:  
*Bring to force of feeling  
What as noble love  
Through the soul warmly  
weave:  
Thinking and willing,  
And you are soul  
In the realm of spirits.*

Thirdly:  
*Bring to the Powers of will  
What as spiritual impulse  
For the soul actively  
live:  
Thinking and feeling,*

*And you shall see yourself  
As body from spiritual heights.*

Only seen thus does the human body appear in its true form.

What is gleaned from the spiritual world, what the initiate experiences in the spiritual world, if it is expressed in words, they are mantric words, and he who experiences them will be led into the spiritual world. Therefore if you let the words work on your soul, they are a true guide to the spiritual world:

Bring to thinking life  
What as pure contemplation  
On the soul light-filled  
radiate:  
Feeling and willing,  
And you are spirit  
Among pure spirits.

Bring to force of feeling  
What as noble love  
Through the soul warmly  
weave:  
Thinking and willing  
And you are soul  
In the realm of spirits.

Bring to the Powers of will  
What as spiritual impulse  
For the soul actively  
live:  
Thinking and feeling,  
And you shall see yourself  
As body from spiritual heights.

Then, my dear sisters and brothers, when what lies in these mantric words is clearer and clearer to you, then when you come again and again to these lessons it will be with greater understanding, that is, with ever greater cosmic experience that you will hear these words:

O man, know thyself!  
So resounds the cosmic-word.  
You hear it strong in soul,  
You feel it vast in spirit.

Who speaks so vastly cosmic?  
Who speaks so deeply heartfelt?

Does it work through distant radiant space  
Into your senses' sense of being?  
Does it ring through waves of time  
Into your life's evolving stream?

Is it you yourself who  
In feeling space, in experiencing time

Create the Word, feeling foreign  
In space's psychic vacancy,  
Because you lose the force of thought  
In time's destructive flow.

The lessons will be continued in Volume Two, once they are translated.