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The Influence of the Dead on the Life of Man on Earth

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FROM YESTERDAY'S lecture you will have seen *HOW THE SPIRITUAL WORLD, in which we are between death and a new birth, AND THE PHYSICAL WORLD INTERPENETRATE. NOT ONLY SO; THE SPIRITUAL WORLD AND THE PHYSICAL INTERPENETRATE EVEN IN OUR SO-CALLED PHYSICAL LIFE BETWEEN BIRTH AND DEATH. WE OURSELVES GIVE THE DIRECTIONS, as it were, FOR THE WAY WE ARE BORN WITH SUCH AND SUCH CHARACTERISTICS. FOR WE ARE CONNECTED BETWEEN DEATH AND A NEW BIRTH WITH WHAT IS TAKING PLACE HERE IN THE PHYSICAL WORLD, AND, AMONG OTHER THINGS, WITH THE STREAM OF INHERITANCE WHICH EVENTUALLY LEADS TO OUR OWN BIRTH.*

We may now consider in a more inward way the whole line of evolution which we studied yesterday more externally. We will try to bring before our souls the connection of man with the spiritual world from a certain special aspect. Between birth and death we are living here in the physical world, and the physical world is known to us through our sense perceptions. It is a trite saying and we need scarcely repeat it: If we did not have our sense organs, we could know nothing of our connection with this physical world. All that gives us this connection through the sense organs with the physical world, falls away from us when we pass through the gate of death. Hence we may even say: It is our specific task between birth and death to make acquaintance with the physical world. We are incorporated in this physical body in order to make ourselves acquainted through it with the physical world.

Now we are not only members of the physical world, but equally of the spiritual worlds. The next spiritual world, as it were adjoining this physical, is the world which we have grown accustomed to call the ethereal or elemental. Whether or not the expression is really fitting is a matter of less consequence. To begin with, this elemental world is an unknown world for the human being as he now lives in the physical. It is, in fact, the first of the supersensible worlds but it is no less fraught with significance for man than this physical world of the senses. For as soon as our sense is awakened for the elemental world — which happens when we are able to perceive imaginatively — we realise that this world is peopled by many beings, no less abundantly than is the physical. Man himself, inasmuch as he has an etheric body, belongs to the elemental world. As an ether-being, man too is a citizen of the elemental world; only the conditions in the elemental world are somewhat different from the conditions in the physical.

To begin with, I must say something on this one point: the power of perception for the elemental world cannot begin in man till he is able entirely to free himself from that which makes him earthly man. In general it is not even difficult for him to do this. True, it is more difficult for the man of today than for the man of primeval times. We have all heard of the primeval atavistic clairvoyance. For the most part it consisted in this very fact: man was able to free himself from that which makes him earthly man. As earthly men, as you all know, we are formed of solid matter only to a very small extent. To a large extent we consist of liquid;

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and the moment we can emancipate ourselves from what is solid in us, the moment we feel ourselves only in our liquid part, Imaginative experiences can emerge. It is only our existence in the solid element which prevents our knowing by Imaginative perception all that surrounds us as the elemental world. Imaginative perception will surely return to mankind even as it has been lost. Only the old Imaginative clairvoyance which is lost was in a way unconscious and dream-like, while that which will gradually arise in our Fifth post-Atlantean epoch will be a fully conscious Imaginative seership. By a perfectly normal and natural process of evolution it will enter into human nature.

Let us now return to what I said before. Our relation to the elemental world is different from our relation to the ordinary, physical world. To begin with, I will give one example to confirm this. In the physical world — apparently at any rate — we determine our relationships with other beings by our own free human choice. We form our friendships for ourselves, likewise our other relations to the beings that surround us. In the elemental world, in which we are through our etheric body, this is no longer the case in the same direct way. Through our whole life in the elemental world we are in a more or less close relationship to certain other elemental beings. As an independent elemental being — for such we are by virtue of our etheric body — we are related to a number of other elemental beings, who accompany us throughout our life, and we may compare this relationship to the relation of the Sun to the encircling planets. Our own etheric body is a kind of Sun elemental being, and is actually accompanied by a number of elemental beings belonging to it, like the planets to the Sun. These elemental beings, together with it, constitute a kind of sevenfold entity, as do the planets and the Sun according to the older conception.

During our whole physical life between birth and death, there is a constant interplay between these our elemental satellites and ourselves. Not only does our feeling, our condition, depend on the way in which our elemental or etheric body is related to its 'planets'; our relation to the outer world, to certain outer beings, and notably to other human beings, is regulated by the mutual relations between these 'planets' and our own etheric body. In future time there will be a kind of medicine which will reckon especially with what I have now said; there will be a medical, physiological conception which will ascertain how the one or the other satellite is related to the etheric body; and according to this, it will be possible to diagnose the sick or healthy condition of the patient. For what is called illness today is in truth only the outer physical picture of what is there in reality. *IN REALITY THERE IS SOME KIND OF IRREGULARITY IN WHAT I HAVE HERE COMPARED TO A PLANETARY SYSTEM, AND THE ILLNESS IS BUT AN IMAGE OF THIS IRREGULARITY.*

Of course, one might say forthwith: 'Well, let the people who know this establish a new pathology. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta*, now let occultism show its art!' Well, it will do so the moment its legs are freed! A man cannot dance whose legs are tied, and by the fettering of the legs in this case I mean the presence of modern materialism which has simply confiscated the science of medicine. This state of affairs cannot be improved by one individual or another doing this or that it can only be improved by the common will of a larger number of people, strong enough to bring about a system of medical practice which will make the penetration of medicine with spiritual principles a practical possibility.

One thing it is important to perceive. St. Paul did not speak in vain words of untold importance which have, however, never been rightly understood. For people keep on imagining that they are Christian while in reality they are not. St. Paul said that sin came into the world through the law, i.e. sin is there *through* the law. In a wider sense, that which mars the order of things is there through the law. Even today these truths can only be hinted at. For as a rule, if anything is not in order, our materialistic age will always cry aloud for a law — quite unaware that whatever is not in order comes from the very laws that are made. But, as I said, such a thing can only be hinted at. A very great deal will yet be necessary towards an understanding of these things. I said, people only imagine that they are Christians. For such a passage as this one by St. Paul, though it is read by countless people, is very little understood.

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Through the fact that we are etheric beings, we belong to an elemental world, and there is a certain system which stands in a near relation to ourselves. This system consists of the elemental beings or ether-beings who accompany us. Their forces are ordered or arranged in a certain way; and when we pass through the gate of death, it is they, by their forces, who draw our etheric body out of our physical body, and place it — that is to say, place the human being himself to begin with — into the elemental world. The elemental world, as I have indicated, is clearly to be perceived by Imaginative cognition. In it are a multitude of beings whom we may call nature-spirits, but not only these. In it are also all those human beings who have just passed physically through the gate of death. They are only there, however, for a short time, as you know, for a few days. Then what we call the etheric body is given over to the elemental world; a second corpse is laid aside. But we must not imagine that this, the second body which we lay aside, is at all rapidly disintegrated in that world. That is not so. True, in a certain sense, it does become dissolved in the elemental world. It dissolves, it becomes ever more tenuous. But it does not become imperceptible to those beings who by their very nature can perceive Imaginatively.

The elemental or etheric body is always perceptible, for instance, to the human being himself, who has passed through the gate of death. True, he has laid aside this elemental body and he now lives on through the time between death and a new birth. But he remains constantly related to the elemental body which he has laid aside. It is not as with the physical body, to which man loses his relationship when he has cast it off. With the elemental body the opposite is the case; man preserves his relationship to it. Moreover, this relationship of man to his elemental or etheric body can work right down into the physical world.

When a human being here in the physical world has made his soul receptive, when he has acquired the elemental or Imaginative power of perception, then, too, he can consciously converse in his life of thought with the dead. Only, of course, these thoughts are far more refined and delicate than those of ordinary life. Thus he is consciously connected with the dead. Now the connection of which man thus becomes conscious is always there in the subconscious, whenever there was a relation during earthly life between the one who has remained behind in the physical, and the one who has risen into the spiritual world. Let us assume that we lost a beloved friend through death. One who has attained Imaginative perception will be aware of it but, whether we know it or not, the dead human being works upon us. He works — if I may so describe it — as though he were pouring his will into the etheric body which he has laid aside, as into a mirror, and the mirror, in its turn, were sending on the rays to us. *Via* the elemental or etheric body, the dead react upon the living. This, as it were, is the mediate influence of the dead upon the living.

To describe where this mediate influence comes to expression, I may say, *IT IS EXPRESSED IN OUR ORDINARY CONCEPTIONS AND IDEAS WHICH WE CARRY WITH US THROUGH THE WORLD*. As a rule, the human being — especially in our materialistic age — is aware only of the conceptions and ideas which portray to him the outer physical reality. But among the conceptions which we thus carry through the world, some are perpetually living which are so fine and delicate that they are not directly perceptible; we simply do not pay attention to them. If we were wont to observe our soul's life more intimately, we should soon recognise their presence. But we constantly let this finer, more delicate life of the soul be overwhelmed and drowned by the coarser ideas which flow into us from the surrounding physical world. If it were not so, we should soon perceive that finer, more intimate thoughts are constantly there in us. These are due to those who were connected with us and have passed before us through the gate of death; and who, especially in the first period after their passage through the gate of death, are able to communicate their deeds to us.

Through the fact that as ether-beings we belong to the elemental world, we thus bear the being of the dead with us in our own conceptions, in our own life of ideas, for a certain length of time. If we would speak of 'Monism' on any basis of reality, we should chiefly speak of the Monism which I have just described — the Monism that is formed by the working together of

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the living and the dead. In truth, those who have passed through the gate of death are by no means far away from us; they are far nearer to us than we believe.

Now man develops more and more as he lives through the time between death and a new birth, and so he becomes able to work upon the world down here not only indirectly but directly. From a certain time onward we can perceive this influence upon us of the departed; their rays of force begin to penetrate into our soul's life. But this immediate influence cannot work its way directly into our thoughts, into our conceptual life. It works its way rather into our habits, into our whole way of life and conduct; into all this there streams an influence working downward from spiritual worlds, coming to us from those who have passed before us through the gate of death.

We must however realise that this working together of the dead and the living depends on many different conditions. The dead man is in an environment wherein there are beings of his own kind, that is, beings of soul, and all the beings who belong to the higher Hierarchies, down to man himself. And inasmuch as the etheric body which he has laid aside is his mediator, he can also have perceptions of the human beings down here, who are, as it were, veiled from him through the physical body. With the help of his etheric body, he can penetrate the veil. He who has passed through the gate of death is of course subject to the conditions under which man must live in the world of soul and Spirit; he must submit to them. I need only mention one main point, and you will understand what I mean in this connection. We know that throughout the world in which we live Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces are working in the most manifold ways. If these Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces did not entice us, all that comes to expression in man as wrong and evil actions would not be there in the world. The Luciferic and Ahrimanic forces must work upon man, and must give him the opportunity to follow and obey them. Once this fact is brought home to us strongly enough, we shall recognise that man, after all, is a very different being from what we often make him out to be with our hostile criticisms. If we had the faculty, already in the physical world, always to see how the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic work in man, we should judge our fellow men quite differently.

I do not say that we should generally be less critical; for when we divert our adverse judgement from man — though we should no longer be fighting against man himself — we must still be fighting Lucifer and Ahriman. But against man as man, we should be infinitely more tolerant. Now he who lives in the soul life in the time between death and a new birth, practises this tolerance both in relation to the beings who are with him in the spiritual world and in relation to those who are still incarnated as men here in the physical life. It is part of the very character of man, when he has passed through the gate of death, that he acquires this tolerance. He always sees through the fact that Lucifer and Ahriman are playing such and such a part in a human being. He does not say, 'That is a bad man, following evil desires', but he sees through the fact that Lucifer is playing such and such a part in him. He does not say, 'That is an envious fellow' but he says, 'Ahriman is playing such and such a part in him'.

He who lives above, between death and birth, judges in this way, it belongs to his very being to do so, just as it belongs to our being to have good eyesight (if we are sound and healthy). Moreover, since this belongs to his very being, it hurts the dead man infinitely when, maintaining his connection with us in the physical life (the connection which was begun during his own life on Earth), he comes up against an altogether different spirit in ourselves. Assume, for instance, that out of our personal antipathy we meet with peculiar hate another human being, who was also connected with the dead man. This hate will signify infinite pain for the dead who tries to approach us — as he must do, since he is still connected with us. This hatred must first be overcome by him; it is like a sword, a jagged sword, a spear that is shivered constantly against him.

And so the way in which the dead man tries to work into us — his own experience as he does so — depends very, very much on the attunement of our soul. Into our ordinary thoughts and ideas borrowed from the surrounding world, into our feelings and sentiments,

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into our temperament and habits, these influences of the dead are working as I have now described. And there is a constant mutual interaction between what goes on in the realm of those who have passed through the gate of death, and our own souls.

If you bear all this in mind, you will say to yourself: Complicated workings are contained in that which we bear within us as our soul; and much is necessary fully to perceive all the mysterious forces that pulsate in the human soul. The soul has very little in its own consciousness of all that is pulsating in it. But the mood and attunement of the soul, and its ability or inability in one direction or another, depend on all these things. For on a large scale all this is determined once more through our karma. The fact that we are brought together here with this man or that, and that they in turn work down upon us in the way I have described, is, of course, connected with our karma in the widest sense.

In bringing all this before us, we must realise, of course, that our age has a real longing for what Spiritual Science brings to men; and the real longings are frequently satisfied today by quite erroneous methods. Thus there are many people today who have decidedly got beyond the prejudice which people had in the middle of the 19th century, and even in the last third of the 19th century — the prejudice that all things of the soul can still be explained from physical and physiological effects. Frequently, however, half- or quarter-truths have far worse effects than complete errors. Thus it is a half- or quarter-truth which underlies what is so frequently described today as analytical psychology or psychoanalysis. People are truly seeking but they are groping in the dark; they divine that many things are hidden in the foundations of the soul, but they cannot resolve to take the real steps into the spiritual world, so as to find what is hidden there, in the depths of the soul.

What do the psychoanalysts say? They say: Observe a human being as he meets us just in ordinary life. His feeling and condition as a whole depends very largely, not only on what is there in his consciousness, but on a variety of factors which lie in the unconscious, beneath the threshold of consciousness. There comes a man, feeling in a depressed mood; an irregularity in his whole nervous apparatus is apparent. In such a case — the psychoanalyst opines — we must look and see what he may have experienced perhaps many years ago; experiences which he may not altogether have assimilated, but which he pressed down into the subconscious.

The psychoanalyst divines quite well that that which has been removed from consciousness has not therefore been removed from reality; it is still there, down in the subconscious. But his idea is this: If we can only entice it forth into the consciousness by a kind of catechising process, then we shall perceive what is consuming and gnawing at him down below. (I cannot, of course, explain psychoanalysis here in all its ramifications; I will only show you a few features of it.)

Starting from this point, the psychoanalyst looks for many things in the foundations of the soul. Years ago, the human being had perhaps this or that ideal of life, this or that hope or plan. He did not carry it out; he was not able to do so. It is no longer in his consciousness, for he is living in his present life. But it is not eliminated from the reality of his soul; there it goes on gnawing away and consuming him. And his whole mood and condition depends on what is there beneath in his subconsciousness. Perhaps he had an unhappy love affair — that is what the psychoanalysts generally find, for they are on the lookout for it. It is an isolated province in his subconsciousness; he has fought against it, but it goes on working. Notably it will go on working — so believe the psychoanalysts — if feelings of love were there, while the beloved being was removed; that is to say, if the love remained unsatisfied.

In addition to these disappointed spring time hopes of life — in addition to what I have just indicated — the psychoanalyst seeks in the depths of the soul for what we might call the 'animal morass' at the very basis of human life — the 'animal morass' or slime of life working constantly upward to the surface — connected, as they conceive it, with all that man possesses as an animal being, playing upward into his soul's life. Some psychoanalysts will go still further: if we get further and further down, we find at length what plays upward into the soul out of racial and national connections and the like, playing into the soul's life in more

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or less unconscious ways. And at last, at the very bottom, there is something demonic — the most undefined of all — lying even beneath the 'animal morass', at the very ground of life. Such people, who are among the special followers of the modern psychoanalysts, will sometimes gently hint that in these demonic depths beneath are to be found the impulses that lead people to such subjects as Gnosis, Theosophy and Anthroposophy. Although it is hinted at in a rather veiled way, still the hint is there. Read one of the last numbers of the periodical *Wissen und Leben* — I think it is called — and you will find such hints at one place and another, albeit they are rather hidden between the lines.

I said half- or quarter-truths often have a far worse effect than complete mistakes. *ANALYTICAL PSYCHOLOGY* in its search for the sub-conscious foundations of the soul *CONTAINS HALF AND QUARTER-TRUTHS*. Compare it with what we have pointed out today. *THE REALITIES THAT LIVE IN THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE SOUL WORK IN TOWARDS US FROM THE REALM OF THE DEAD*. Here we are led to quite a different way of thinking; we shall not seek for the 'animal morass' of the soul; we shall not try to interpret this or that mood of the soul from the aspect of disappointed love affairs. *ON THE CONTRARY, WE SHALL OFTEN HAVE TO SEEK THE UNDERLYING CAUSE OF AN UNHAPPY MOOD OF SOUL IN THIS OR THAT DEPARTED ONE, FOR WHOM WE ARE MAKING DIFFICULTIES THROUGH OUR OWN CONDUCT* — which difficulties find expression in dissatisfactions of one kind or another, surging up into our consciousness.

In short, we shall do well to bring home to ourselves with true reverence this actual connection with the spiritual world. It is the connection of our world, not with an abstract, vaguely pantheistic spiritual world, but with the real spiritual world wherein those who have passed through the gate of death are living as real beings. They are with us even now, as they were with us in life. But what they do with us now touches our soul far more nearly than what they did in life, when we were always separated from them by our body and theirs, which stood between us like a barrier.

Then comes a later time, when man has become utterly free from the astral body — when he has laid aside the astral. Not long after this, man is able to work down from the spiritual world into the physical in a more inward way. In former times, the outer life was frequently arranged instinctively according to these truths. Customs that arose in outer life might often be referred, it is true, to ordinary outer reasons, but an inner reason underlay the outer, though it was often only known by instinct. I said: the dead, soon after passing through the gate of death, are in direct connection with the human beings whom they have left behind, especially with those to whom they are lovingly united, and **the connection is such that they work upon our habits**. For this reason, in the times when such things were still felt instinctively, care was taken that a son should remain as far as possible in the whole circle with which his parents were connected. Learning the same business, spending his life in the same profession, he should remain where access was easier for them. All in all, this conservative way of holding on to the same stream of life was an instinctive expression of the desire to make it easier for those who had passed through the gate of death to work in upon those whom they had left behind. For if the latter were in similar circumstances to those in which the dead themselves had lived, it made it easier for the dead to find the way to them. In time to come historians will well observe such intimate impulses and underlying reasons in the historic evolution of mankind.

Now, as we know, when man has been still longer dead, he will have completely laid aside the astral body. But this only happens after decades, for we experience things much slower in the spiritual world than in the physical. One year of the spiritual world corresponds to 30 years of the physical. Man has a way of hastening here in the physical world whereas in the spiritual world, so to speak, he always has to revolve in far larger circles. So, as one spiritual year is equal to 30 earthly years, in one year of the spiritual he experiences approximately the same piece of the world as in 30 years of the physical. He thereby experiences it more intensively, more inwardly.

All in all, what man lives through on Earth is multiply connected with the great universe, the macrocosm. Therefore, what is experienced in the microcosm, in man himself, always

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finds expression even in the numerical relations to the macrocosm. I will only draw your attention to one point: Reckon up the number of days in an average human life; you get the same number of years — purely as a number — which the Sun requires to process through the complete Platonic year, the cosmic year. Man's life is numbered by as many days as the Sun requires years to advance through the whole cosmic circle in its precession from one sign of the zodiac to another. The Sun requires about 25,900 and a few more years to process through all the signs of the zodiac. Man lives for about as many days — though, of course, it is not always equal — in his individual life between birth and death.

Another interesting connection is this one: man has as many breaths in one day as the number of days he lives, or as the number of years it takes for the Sun to process through the whole zodiac. You see, therefore, in the very deepest sense the world is ordered according to measure and number. One should imagine that this delicate incorporation of man into the universe — this correspondence of the harmonies — would lead the crude materialists of our time beyond their limited outlook which sees nothing more in the whole universe than a great mechanism. Truly it is a strange mechanism which contains all its individual beings organically within itself, in wondrously harmonious numerical relation to the whole.

It is indeed a strange thing. When we consider the world spiritually, we can actually say: In the evolution which takes its course between death and a new birth, man advances more slowly in order that he may do things more thoroughly. Not only so; he advances as many times more slowly in the spiritual world as Saturn courses around the sun more slowly than the Earth. Saturn runs its course around the Sun as many times more slowly than the Earth, as man in the spiritual world moves more slowly than he moves on the physical Earth. For this reason, and not because they knew less than the astronomers of today, the ancients reckoned Saturn as the outermost planet of the solar system. Even astronomically speaking, they were right, for the other planets which are now included — Uranus and Neptune — joined the system at a later time; moreover, they circle around in quite a different order, even in a different rotation than the planets belonging to the solar system proper.

Now at least one such spirit-year — that is, 30 earthly years — must have elapsed before the soul (assuming, needless to say, that a normal age of 70 or 80 was attained) can enter not merely into the habits, but into the whole thought and outlook, into the spiritual life of those whom they have left behind or who join on of their own free will. Nevertheless, in this way too the dead work into our life on a very large scale. It is so indeed. In the whole spirit, in the whole way of thought in which we live, we bear within us the impulses of men who died long ago and who work into us. Altogether, the connection of the future with the past is brought about precisely in this way, through this actual connection of the dead with the living.

The mediate manifestation of the dead, through the etheric body which they have laid aside, works upon our Imaginative cognition. That influence which enters, as above described, into our habits, works upon our Inspirational cognition. And the influence to which I now refer, which can only work when man has passed through a whole spirit-year, works — if we are conscious of it — into our Intuitive cognition. But in any event these influences are working all the time; nor can we truly understand the sense of evolution unless we bear these things in mind.

Forgive my inserting at this point a personal remark — you know I am not fond of doing so, and I do so seldom. Anyone who looks at what I wrote when I first began my work, decades ago, will see that at that time I disregarded what I had to bring forward as my own opinion. I did not write *my* opinion about Goethe, but tried to express the thoughts that came forth from Goethe. I did not write my own *Theory of Knowledge*, but a *Theory of Knowledge implicit in Goethe's Conception of the World*. In this way it is possible quite consciously to connect oneself with men long dead and work out of their spirit. Indeed this is what gives one, as it were, a true, legitimate certificate to influence the living. It is a bad certificate which people of our time are so very keen upon: namely, that every individual, scarcely has he

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conceived an opinion, should wish to communicate it forthwith to as many followers as possible.

He who is aware of the conditions of existence, the fundamental laws that work from the spiritual world, knows that in truth **a man cannot rightly work into the depths of the souls of his fellowmen until he is dead** — strange as it may sound. **Even then he cannot, till he has passed through a spirit-year, that is to say, 30 earthly years.** Infinitely much would be achieved if once this selflessness gained ground a little in the world, so that those who lived later would **connect their own work with the dead, and consciously try to maintain the continuity in evolution.** Whether it be a pure elective affinity, or some other relationship brought about by karma, **to attach ourselves to those who are trying so hard to send the pure rays of their influence out of the spiritual world is of infinite significance,** and it is so most of all if we do it consciously.

I have tried to call forth in you a feeling for the way in which *THE SO-CALLED DEAD AND THE SO-CALLED LIVING WORK TOGETHER.* Now we must realise that the conditions are very different in the spiritual world and here. You will find a great deal about the conditions of experience in the spiritual world in the lectures *Life Between Death and a New Birth* which I gave a few years ago in Vienna. But of course one can only select a few points especially important from one aspect or another. Now here it must be said that there is in the spiritual world something very similar, and again dissimilar, to our physical experience.

Before we enter the physical world in the full sense, we undergo the embryo period of existence. There the conditions of life are very different from what they become the moment we enter fully into the physical world as breathers of the outer air. Now in a certain sense and style, the time we go through after death in the first spirit year, which is so often called the period of Kamaloca, is very like the embryo period of existence. Just as the human being calls to his aid, as it were, another human being by whom he lets himself be borne into the physical world through the 10 lunar months, so likewise, through all the wishes and cravings which hold him to the physical and which he slowly casts aside, he lets himself be borne into the spiritual world. Moreover, his consciousness in this first year of the spirit still to some extent resembles his consciousness in the physical world, although the faculties which are only to be acquired in the physical world can only be transmitted mediately through the etheric body. But *AFTER THIS FIRST SPIRIT-YEAR A FAR HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS ENSUES* than anything which we can have here in the physical body.

If you remember many things that were said in the above-mentioned lectures, you will see how very different is this consciousness in the spiritual world. You need only remember **how much our consciousness depends on what can enter into us.** When we go about as ordinary men in the physical world, the phenomena of the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms of nature, and of the physical human kingdom, come into us along with other experiences of soul — experiences of civilisation and the like. But after death, what becomes of the major part of that which enters our soul life through the faculties we possess here in the physical world? The mineral world as such — this we no longer perceive at all, as you are well aware; and of the plant world we only see the all-pervading life. You can read in my *Theosophy* how these things are, as we ascend within the spiritual world.

Experience in the spiritual world is in fact quite different in kind. Indeed, for these things, there are no words which you can understand. Our language after all is created for the physical; hence it is always difficult to describe these things correctly, and one can easily be misunderstood. Above all, we can only express ourselves by comparisons. Consider the following: here in the physical world you stand as it were, in a single point of the whole world structure, and look out with your eyes in all directions of the surrounding sphere. In the spiritual world it is not so; there you look in from the circumference as it were, towards the interior of a hollow sphere. But this is only a comparison; in reality it is not a hollow sphere, for time plays a greater part in it than space. Nevertheless, it is from the circumference that you observe all things. Hence the conditions of ideation are quite different; even *within* your thinking the conditions are quite different.

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I will describe it somewhat crudely: suppose a man had passed through the gate of death 60, 70 or 80 years ago, or even earlier. He feels distinctly a certain inner experience. When you feel hunger in the physical life, you do not say 'the hunger is here' or 'the hunger is there' but 'the hunger is *in* you'. Or again, take the case when you feel pain in this or that part of your body. So it is when you look inward from the whole surrounding sphere; you feel that at a certain place there is something. You know there is something that wishes to have something to do with you, and now you must begin making great efforts *to get rid of it*. Think what this means: to get rid of that which has manifested itself. And only when you have got rid of it, only then does there emerge the true being that is trying to reveal itself. Thus we may say: as spiritual beings we have an idea within us, but the idea tells us nothing whatever as yet; we must first get rid of it. Then, when we have got rid of it, then do we find within us — strange as it may sound, it is so — an angel or archangel who is revealing himself to us. His presence is first announced to us in the idea; yet we ourselves must first achieve the actual presence. Perception in the spiritual world is thus bound up with real labour, with a strong exertion of our forces. And only the souls who have remained here in the physical body can to some extent manifest themselves upward to the dead without their undergoing this exertion. This is what happens when you concentrate your thoughts on the dead man, or bring something before him by reading to him or the like. In all that I have been saying, I only wished to make it clear to you how altogether different are the conditions of life and experience in the spiritual world. This being so, you will no longer find it surprising that one year of spirit time represents 30 years of physical time. For in the spirit we are in the circumference and look in towards the centre; it is very important to remember this.

I made it my chief task today to describe to some extent how the souls who have passed through the gate of death work down into the world in which the others have remained behind, with whom they were connected while in the physical body. Thus you have seen once more, from another aspect, how **the world is an interconnected whole**. Truly it is only for outer physical perception that the dead are dead. **In reality, the moment they pass through the gate of death they have a new way of access to our souls.** That is the difference. They now work into us from within, whereas they formerly worked into us from without. For us, these things should more and more become no mere external theories; they should live their way into our consciousness, till they are no longer a merely theoretic 'world conception', but world perception, or even world feeling. Then will Spiritual Science bear the fruits which it is meant to bear, and which it truly can.

One more remark in conclusion. Think what it means that at a certain period between death and a new birth man must have the inner Feeling that he carries the Hierarchies *within* him as his own inner experience. It is really so. This might well lead the human being to the most appalling arrogance, which would live as a dim feeling in his soul when he is reborn. In ancient times there was a natural limit to such arrogance, in this way: human beings passing through the gate of death and entering into the spiritual world were somehow aware that it was not they themselves who were beholding, but that the highest beings of the Hierarchies were living in them and communicating the vision to them. But man has lost this connection in the spiritual world, just as in the physical world he has lost the old atavistic clairvoyance. Instead there must now come into us what St. Paul expressed in the words 'Not I, but Christ in me', which words are endowed with real spiritual feeling when we say '*OUT OF GOD WE ARE BORN; INTO CHRIST WE DIE*'.

If we learn this in all its depths, through the feeling which can come to us in Spiritual Science, that **Christ is for the Earth**, then we shall rightly place ourselves into the vision from the surrounding sphere. Then, having lived through the gate of death with the right feeling: 'Into Christ we die', and gazing in from the surrounding sphere, among all the beings whom we behold — beings of the Hierarchies, elemental beings, beings such as the human souls, incarnate or discarnate — among all these, *WE SHALL ALSO FIND OUR OWN EGO-BEING; and we SHALL BEHOLD FROM OUTSIDE THE RELATION OF THIS OUR OWN EGO TO ALL THE OTHER BEINGS. TO BE ABLE TO HAVE THIS FEELING AFTER WE HAVE PASSED THROUGH THE GATE OF DEATH IS OF INFINITE IMPORTANCE. ONLY IF WE CAN HAVE THIS FEELING TOWARDS OUR OWN*

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EGO, ONLY THEN CAN WE FIND OUR TRUE WAY AGAIN INTO PHYSICAL INCARNATION. And there is no other way of having this feeling; we can only owe it to the right passage through the gate of death — the passing through the gate of death with the inner feeling: 'we have died into Christ'. This union with Christ gives us the possibility to behold, as it were with the eye of the soul of Christ Himself, our relation within the spiritual world, to behold ourselves as Ego being among the other beings.

This, my dear friends, is what I would always like to attain. When, as a result of such studies as we have made today, we take with us once more a new piece of knowledge, the knowledge should also be transformed into inner feeling. Even if all the ideas developed in this lecture should have passed by us like a dream; if the one fundamental feeling remains, which I have sought to gather up in these concluding words, then we shall carry with us into our further life the real fruits of such a line of thought. For I have tried to show how the death in Christ can place us rightly into the spiritual world — so rightly, so abundantly, that we can carry it with us through the physical world in our next earthly incarnation

We remain together in such feelings, recognising that they have power to unite us more intensely. So there will by and by arise in the world the true, invisible community of those who are devoted to Anthroposophy, holding together through such inner feelings born out of the clear ideas of Spiritual Science. The world has need of this indivisible community of souls, able to carry into it the inner force of such communion as I have just described. In this sense we will be together spiritually for the future, though for a time we may not be together physically. So indeed it should always be among us; our communion in the spirit should sustain our coming together in the physical.