

EDUCATION, TEACHING, AND PRACTICAL LIFE

STEINER

Rudolf Steiner

At the end of the First World War, all the structures, values, and self-confidence that created what seemed the greatness of the nineteenth century disappeared. In its place stood only ruins, the shards of civilization. Responding to this, Emil Molt, director of the Waldorf-Astoria Company and a student of Rudolf Steiner, decided to found a school to educate human beings capable of creating a new culture. Rudolf Steiner agreed to act as a consultant. Thus the Waldorf School movement, with now over 900 schools worldwide, was born. "The goal of this education was that the teachers, through living inner work guided by the insights of Rudolf Steiner, would develop in the children such power of thought, depth of feeling, and strength of will that they would emerge from their school years as full members of the human community, able to meet and transform the world."

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by

Rudolf Steiner



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## INTRODUCTION

During the early years of the twentieth century, Albert Schweitzer was introduced to Rudolf Steiner at a conference in Strasbourg, France. Since they were the only two German speakers at an otherwise French-speaking event, Schweitzer arranged for Steiner to be seated next to him during the conference meal. Their conversation stretched well into the remainder of the day as they ranged over a wealth of philosophical and ethical issues. In his account of this meeting, Schweitzer recalls how at one point, standing in a corridor of the conference hall, the two of them got into a lively discussion concerning the spiritual decline of culture as a crucial yet widely ignored problem. “We learned that we were both preoccupied with the same question,” Schweitzer later wrote from his home in Lambarene, Gabon. “Each of us discovered from the other that we had set ourselves the same life task, to strive for the awakening of that true culture which would be enlivened and penetrated by the ideal of humanity, and to guide and hold men to the goal of becoming truly intelligent, thinking beings.”<sup>1</sup>

The two men never met again, but both remained aware of the other’s attempts to bring social and cultural healing to humanity—Schweitzer through his celebrated hospital deep in the jungles of Africa, Steiner through his less famous but perhaps more far-reaching contributions to homeopathic medicine, organic farming, new artistic forms, and several initiatives for cultural renewal including Waldorf education.

Already with the opening of the first Waldorf school in the aftermath of World War I, Steiner began to campaign for a worldwide association of Waldorf schools to bring a new cultural impulse into education. With this task in mind, he set off in February and March of 1921 on his first lecture tour beyond the German-speaking world since the end of the war. His travels included two open lectures in Holland—one in Utrecht, the other in Amsterdam—during which he

described the essentials of Waldorf education for the general public. In the next year he toured widely from England to Austria, including another visit to Holland with lectures in Rotterdam and the Hague.

During these two years Steiner was also working on other impulses for social and cultural renewal. His lectures to priests resulted in the formation of the Christian Community, his work with medical doctors led to the opening of a new clinic in Arlesheim, Switzerland, and his twelve-city tour of Germany brought to the general public their first experience of the new art of eurhythm. Other ventures, such as the creation of an economic enterprise based on his threefold plan for social reform, were less successful, but overall these years represent the height of his activity as a bringer of cultural renewal.

The lectures presented in this book include some of Steiner's lesser-known educational presentations, which appear here for the first time in English translation. In tone they are friendly and warm, salted with wonderful anecdotes. As introductory lectures to the underlying tenets of Waldorf education, they serve to inspire and stir the will lives of his audiences. In fact various individuals have documented how they were kindled by the contents of these lectures to take up the challenge of Waldorf education. For example, the lecture of November 4, 1922, given in the Hague on the subject of religious and ethical education, inspired quite a few Dutch educators to become Waldorf teachers. Among them was Jan van Weterum, a math teacher who helped co-found the first Dutch Waldorf school.

The other lectures Steiner gave during this tour were also well received, even though they were not all well attended. In Rotterdam, for instance, the organizing committee failed to advertise the event adequately, with the result that only a handful of listeners attended. Steiner treated the mishap with characteristic humor, remarking that he had lectured before large audiences of several hundred out of which only one person had "heard" what he was trying to say.

Steiner undertook this lecture tour of the Netherlands at a time when as yet no Waldorf school existed in that country. Within two years of his lecture in the Hague, the first Dutch Waldorf school was founded there in September 1923. The Rotterdam Waldorf School, however, was founded only after World War II, and the school in Utrecht not until

the 1970s. It should be mentioned, though, that the Rotterdam lecture was attended by leading figures in the shipbuilding industry who, after Steiner's visit, became important contributing members to the Waldorf school movement as well as to the Anthroposophical Society.

By contrast, the Stuttgart lecture printed in this series was given at the time when the Waldorf school, already three years in existence, was supported by an active and vibrant anthroposophical life in that city.<sup>2</sup>

Darmstadt today is known for courses in modern music; influential composers in of the late twentieth century, such as Karlheinz Stockhausen, Luciano Berio, and Olivier Messiaen, studied or worked in Darmstadt. In Steiner's time, the city center was noted for its organic *Jugendstil* architecture. The Darmstadt lecture included in this book arose from a discussion with students at the university who had asked Steiner to tell them about his new ideas on education.

During the 1920s Prague enjoyed a relatively strong anthroposophical life. Steiner delivered his seminal course on *Occult Physiology* there (with Franz Kafka in attendance), but offered only one educational lecture in that city. All that remains of this engagement is an article Steiner wrote for the media about the content of his talk.

In this collection of lectures one can hear Steiner describe with a joyfilled and open tone the healing effects that Waldorf education can bring to a time of spiritual crisis. In language accessible yet profound, he paints pictures of human development that can inspire readers to strive for new levels of excellence in the spirit that both he and Schweitzer embodied in their life tasks. Like Schweitzer, Steiner was deeply committed to the renewal of social and cultural life. In Schweitzer's words, "What we have in common is that each wishes to see true culture replace unculture."<sup>3</sup>

Douglas Gerwin  
David Mitchell  
October 2007

**Endnotes**

1. Albert Schweitzer, "My Meeting with Rudolf Steiner," reprinted in *Journal for Anthroposophy* (Number 75, Fall 2005), p. 28.
2. The background of the Dutch lectures was shared by Christof Wiechert in an e-mail to David Mitchell on September 24, 2007.
3. Albert Schweitzer, "Letter to Bruno Walter," 8 November 1960, reprinted in *Journal for Anthroposophy* (Number 75, Fall 2005), p. 30.

## I

## Education, Teaching, and Practical Life Questions

From the Point of View of  
Anthroposophical Spiritual Science

Utrecht, February 24, 1921

The question I allowed myself to explore last Monday<sup>1</sup> was the question of the way in which an anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science allows us to find a method, a scientific pathway, to penetrate the spiritual, supersensible, environment. I called attention to the fact that we can only penetrate that environment if/when human beings bring up in their souls capacities and forces actually slumbering in *every* soul, and when ordinary knowledge rises to true contemplation, a contemplation that, for instance, comes to the point of developing full consciousness of what it means to have a soul-spirit life, independent of any physicality. We know, after all, precisely through modern science—and when it comes to daily life, this science of the psyche, psychology, is completely right—that the soul's (psyche's) *ordinary* life is linked to the instrument of the body. And only the methods of spiritual-science can disconnect the spiritual-soul life from the body; and, in so doing, reach all the way to the essential in the human being which resides in the spiritual world before uniting—through birth—with one physical body that later crosses the gate of death, sets aside the human body and re-enters consciously into the spiritual world.

I also showed last Monday that those who get acquainted with their own supersensible being, are in a position to perceive—behind all the things ordinary reason can explore—a supersensible environment, a surrounding world of spiritual beings. What is thus recognized as the soul-spirit part of the person, what we recognize as the spirit in the world we inhabit, is what really enables us to acquire a true knowledge of the human being.

Over the last three or four centuries, we have acquired a thorough and perfect natural science. Only we have not been able to gain from this natural science any knowledge of the human being. According to the theory of evolution, we start out from the lowest form of life, and we ascend to the human being, considering it to some extent the final link of the animal series. In the process we learn what the human being has in common with others organisms, but we do not learn where the human being, properly speaking, stands in the world. We only experience the latter through anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. What thus asserts itself in this science ultimately appears also in the feelings and impulses developed into the social life of modern humanity.

Just think how many people have to some extent evolved into a new class of men—through modern technology, through the entire form of science—people who, under the influence of some socialist theories, actually believe that what lives in humanity as morality, as science, as religion, as art, does not arise from a primordial spiritual origin but is only the result of economic, material processes. The theory to which modern social-democracy adheres, and which has attempted so destructively to become a reality in Eastern Europe, fundamentally sees in forces external to humanity the forces that rule human history. Whatever human beings produce in art, morality, law, religion, and so forth, appears to them like a kind of fog. People call it a *superstructure*, produced by purely economic-material factors. By situating the human being in the practical world, the truly human is extinguished. If we were to characterize what modern education and modern social consciousness have brought about, all we can say is this: What was human in the human being has been extinguished.

What spiritual science can restore to humanity is the knowledge and the dignity of the human being, and the connection between the human being as a supersensible being and the supersensible universal being of the cosmos.

And there at last we stand in the face of real truth. Only now do we stand on a foundation that leads to really practical life. Today, I would like to connect this truth with a look at education and matters pertaining to schools. From the beginning—as originated in the Free School for Spiritual Science in Dornach—this anthroposophically-

oriented spiritual science was never intended to be alien to the world, remote from the world, but rather to thoroughly conform to reality, to be practical and so, from the beginning, it had to situate itself in the social distress and decadence of the modern time, it had to intervene practically in life. And one of the first practical initiatives took place in education with the Independent Waldorf School founded by Emil Molt in Stuttgart,<sup>2</sup> for which I personally provide pedagogical and didactic guidance. In this Independent Waldorf School, impulses of an anthropology truly cognizant of the human being are elaborated pedagogically and didactically, flowing from an anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science.

For a long time now, people have been saying that one should educate and teach in such a way as to not stuff this or that into the child's soul, but rather develop out of the human soul what already resides in the human being. This is little more than an abstract principle. It is not a matter of having a rational principle to bring things up out of the human soul, but rather of truly being able to observe in the child the developing human soul. And this means first developing a sense for it. We can only develop such a sense if we are aware that the actual human individuality, the soul-spiritual being, descends from a spiritual world in which it has lived for a long time; aware that day by day, week by week, year by year, in all the developing aspects of the child's body and soul, something supersensible is alive; that from a supersensible world, something is transmitted to us as educators and as teachers, something which we must decipher. If we can see the child's physiognomic features becoming clearer, day by day, if we can, day by day, decipher a soul-spiritual reality sent to us from the spiritual world gradually being unveiled in these physiognomic characteristics, then it is a matter first and foremost of founding the pedagogical-didactic art on a feeling of deep reverence for the human being descending toward us from the spiritual world.

Anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science makes it possible to really observe the child in its becoming, year by year. Let me begin with an explanation of the main stages of human development.

It is often said that nature, the world, makes no leaps. Now, this is the kind of thing people constantly repeat without looking at its actual

meaning. After all, does not nature take a leap when it develops the green leaf? And later, is there not something leap-like in the development of the sepals and the colorful flower petals and then again of the stamina? And it is the same with human life: anyone objectively observing this evolving human life in the child, out of the suggestions and impulses provided by anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science, will find first of all—not on some mystical basis, but based on faithful observation—a leap in the child's development around the seventh year, when the child's second teeth start developing. Here we notice how our current psychological science has actually become extraordinarily cliché-ridden. True; except for diehard materialists, people make a distinction between body and soul. But everyone speaks in extraordinarily abstract terms about their relationship. People can not get used to making faithful and objective observations in this field as they have learned to do in natural science. For instance, in natural science they learn that if during an experiment, warmth appears that the experimenter had not introduced, this warmth must have been present in that body in some other form. One says that the latent warmth has been liberated. We must permeate ourselves with this frame of mind provided by natural science and apply it also to anthropology; which then must be spiritualized compared to natural science. We must thus carefully observe: What actually changes in the human being when it crosses the biographical threshold of the change of teeth?

Now, if we really apply the necessary objectivity to our observation, we can see that the child only really begins to form distinctly contoured features when he comes to the seventh year; whereas before that, he did not have such features. We can see for the first time the possibility for him to think true thoughts—no matter how childish they may be. We can see that something emerges from the child's soul that was previously concealed in the human organism. If we have a trained spiritual eye for these things, we can see that the child's soul life completely changes with the change of teeth; something is rising to the surface of the soul from the deepest recesses. Before that, *where* was this thing, which now emerges in the form of sharply delineated thinking, a clear life of representations? It was there all along, as a force of growth in the human being, permeating the entire organism. It was

alive as the soul-spirit in growth, and it reached its conclusion when, from the inside, new teeth were pushed out and displaced the earlier teeth. When this growth spurt ends, what remains in place is the result of a process for which such intensive forces are no longer needed. We can see that what is present later in the child as (true) thinking was once an inner organic force of growth and that this organic force of growth has metamorphosed into a soul force.

With this kind of observation, we build a science of the soul that consists in more than empty phrases, that rests fundamentally on the same methods as natural science—albeit translated into the spiritual. Just as natural science rests on the faithful observation of the physical realm, faithful observation is needed in order to understand the human being, but now it is an observation of the soul-spirit. If we learn to study the human being in this manner, observation actually turns into artistic contemplation. Actually, many people nowadays are making similar statements to what I just said: of course, they say, one should stick to sober logic; one should use reason to work at abstract formulations of natural laws. This is a natural enough human impulse. It may well appear as if human beings can catch everything in the wide meshes of conceptual logic and penetrate behind the appearances. But what if nature does not operate in this way? What if nature works artistically? We then need to use our cognitive capacities to follow it on its *artistic* path. Anyone looking at nature and the world will perceive that the natural laws we establish through the use of logic have the same relationship with full, intensive reality as what I do when I use charcoal strokes to make a drawing related to, yet not identical with, a full-color image.

Anthroposophically-oriented natural science finds its materials throughout the entire physical-spiritual reality. In so doing, it transforms pure logical knowledge into an artistic form. In so doing, we enable the teacher, the educator, to become a pedagogical/didactic artist, who acquires a refined perception of the child's every expression. And it really is the case that every child has his own repertory of life expressions. These cannot be regimented by an abstract pedagogical science, but we can conceive them if we receive—from the whole of humanity—anthroposophically-oriented indications, with which to acquire an intuitive contemplation of the soul-spirit in humanity, which then is at work in

the physical body. For what was roughly active as thinking power before the change of teeth can be observed later, working in a subtler manner as the child's soul-spirit. As teachers, as educators, we must follow this day by day in an artistic frame of mind, and this will enable us to be for the child what a true teacher, a true educator, *should* be.

I would like to characterize in a few strokes the first stage from birth to the change of teeth and the second stage from the change of teeth to sexual maturity. In the first stage, from the first to the seventh year, the human being is essentially an imitative being. But we must give this understanding its full weight. When the human being enters the world, it is released completely into its environment. For whatever the child will manifest later in the form of will and artistic impulses, this is also being formed when the child imitates everything in its environment. Language too is learned at first in a manner based on copying, imitation. Between birth and the seventh year the child is an imitator through and through. We must take this into account and draw all the consequences of these things. When I deal with these matters in the general public, people occasionally come up and ask for advice about one or another thing. A father once came to me with a complaint about his five-year-old. What had the five-year-old done? I asked. Sadly, the father said the boy had stolen. I said, We must first learn what the theft was actually about. He explained to me that the child had not stolen out of ill will. He had taken money from his mother's drawer and bought some sweets, and then shared these sweets with other children on the street. So it was not a case of blind egoism. What was it? Day after day, the child had observed his mother taking money out of the drawer. The five-year-old is an imitator. The boy did not steal, he had simply copied what his mother was doing every day, for he considered spontaneously that everything his mother did was right. This is just one example of the many subtle things one needs to know when attempting to delineate an art of education that really corresponds to the essence of the human being.

But we also know that children are playing that when they copy. Fundamentally, the playful instinct is not completely original, but an imitation of the things the child sees in his environment. If we are sufficiently objective, we become aware of the fact that play is completely

rooted in imitation. Yet, each child plays differently. Educators of children younger than seven must form judgments carefully—and such judgments require some artistic sense, for each child is different. The educator must cultivate an artistic eye for the ways children play. Each child has his own way to play. And however the child plays in the fourth, fifth or sixth year, all this then sinks as a force into the deeper layers of the soul. The child becomes older, we do not notice at first how one or another typical way of playing reappears in the child's later character traits. The child develops other forces, other capacities; the unique quality of his play, as it were, slips into the hidden recesses of the soul. But it reappears later, and actually reappears in unique ways, between the ages of twenty-five to thirty, at the time of life when the person needs to find his/her way in the in the world of external experience, eternal destinies. One person approaches it nimbly, another awkwardly. One person tackles the world in such a way as to gain some satisfaction from dealings with the world; another person doesn't manage to find any point at which to engage his own activity and has a difficult destiny.

We need to acquaint ourselves with the life of the whole person; we must see how, in hidden ways, the sense of play reappears in the twenties in the form of the sense of life. This way, we will gain an artistically shaped idea of how to guide and channel the playful instinct so as to give the person the wherewithal for a later stage in life.

Contemporary pedagogy suffers greatly under abstract principles. I would like to propose an alternative, an anthroposophically-oriented pedagogy (which) aims at giving an artistic sense, at working from a young age in such a way that whatever is being trained will be of support for one's entire life. For if we want to teach and educate human beings, we must learn about the whole of life. Nineteenth century natural science, wonderful in many ways, just has not provided for this. Just think of the social value of really giving the child such an endowment.

Once the child has gone through the change of teeth, the second epoch of life begins. This is the time for actual schooling to begin, a time that we must study with particular care if we want to develop pedagogy from the point of view of a true knowledge of man. Whereas the child until the seventh year was basically an imitator, now between the seventh

year and sexual maturity, from age seven to thirteen–sixteen (the age varies), there develops something which discerning minds recognize as the natural impulse to follow an authority, the authority of a teacher or educator. It is heartbreaking to hear it said on all sides nowadays that a kind of democratic spirit ought to reign in the schools, that children should be practicing a kind of self-management. This sort of thing, and it comes from various political directions, rests on premises that actually contradict the needs of human nature. Those who have mastered a true anthropology know how important it is for the rest of one's life to have been able at a young age to look up to authentic authority, when one could have confidence that something was true which this human authority had declared to be true, when one experienced as beautiful something which these human authorities found beautiful, when one found good something which had been modeled as good by this human authority. Just as one imitates until the seventh year, one will believe as true until puberty that which comes from a *true* authority. This is the time when we must experience the imponderable effects of things that come to us through another person's soul, another's individuality.

We have founded the Independent Waldorf School in Stuttgart. Many people say they would like to visit the school to get to know the method of this school. But imagine an etching of the *Sistine Madonna*;<sup>3</sup> let someone chop off a part of it, to “make in this way a deeper observation” of the *Sistine Madonna*. Spending two or three weeks observing what happens in a Waldorf school would be a similar thing. One might not see anything in particular. For what happens in the Waldorf school is the product of anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. Those who teach there have gained their artistic pedagogy and didactics from the impulses of anthroposophical spiritual science. In order to know the Waldorf school, one must first understand anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. But not as one can learn it from the outside, where it is presented to people as a confounded, nebulous mysticism, some kind of sectarianism. No, one must learn to know from the inside how it finds in the whole of humanity what the human being really is as physical and supersensible being in the world and in time.

Actually, through these things, one comes to understand—one might say supersensibly—how it is possible to work from such an au-

thoritative individuality. Let me give an example: With children between the seventh and fourteenth years, but more specifically until the tenth year, it is preferable to speak to children in images. Let us take an image, any image, whereby we want to give the child an idea of the immortality of the soul. I can make up this image. But I can also point the child to the butterfly's cocoon, how the butterfly comes out of the cocoon. And I might tell the child: the human body is like the cocoon. When the human being dies, the immortal soul emerges from the "cocoon" and goes over to the spiritual world. Such an image has much to recommend it. But it would only give the child a true feeling for the immortality of the soul under very particular conditions. For if I, the teacher, think: I am smart, the child is foolish and it must become smart, and I make up such an image to make an idea comprehensible to the child, a little might be gained, but it is absolutely certain the child will not really get a feeling for of immortality. For only those things that we ourselves believe, in which we ourselves stand, will have an effect upon the child. Anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science allows one to say: I personally believe in this image; for me, this emergence of the butterfly from the cocoon is not something I have made up, but what nature itself presents in a more simple way for the same fact which is represented at a higher level by the emergence of the immortal soul from the body. If I myself believe in this image, if I stand within the content/meaning of this image, then my belief will awaken the child's belief, representation and perception. These things are completely amazing.

What happens on the outside is not as important as what takes place between the teacher's feelings and the pupil's feeling. Whether I enter the school filled with noble ideas or ignoble ideas, or whether I *really* believe that what I say is squarely what is at work, there is a significant difference. There will be a different quality to my voice, which does not penetrate the soul if I enter the classroom with ignoble thoughts, and especially if my thoughts do not match the things I say. So much for the relation between student and teacher in the second stage of life from the seventh to the fifteenth year. Much more could be said on the subject, but I want to present only a few elements so that you can become better acquainted with the spirit-animating pedagogy and didactics flowing from anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science.

We have also made a beginning at the Waldorf school to really bring up from the children themselves what they need to learn. For when we enroll the children in the primary school, we are faced with remarkable puzzles. We are supposed to teach the child reading and writing. But compared with what lives in the human being, writing and printed matter long ago became quite abstract, something that has assumed a symbolic nature and lost all inner connection with the full, original elementary life of the soul. Our cultural history gives us partial knowledge about these things. If we go back in various cultures, we find pictographic writing, where what was fixed in writing preserved something of the pictorial nature of what it meant. In ancient cultures, writing was not quite the abstraction of mere sign, as is the case now. In actuality when we teach reading and writing in the conventional way, we bring to the child something completely unrelated to its nature. Rather, pedagogy and didactics that spring from the full knowledge of the human being will not teach reading and writing in the usual manner, but will start from the child's artistic nature. So we do not start with reading at all, or even with writing, but rather with a kind of painting drawing, a drawing painting. We lead the children in such a way that they are not simply learning to form letters out of their heads, but instead to produce—on paper or on any other kind of surface—colorful lines drawing on the entire being; these lines and forms flow naturally from the human organism. Then, we gradually transform what was brought out of the artistic over into the forms of the letters, through writing, and from writing we move on to reading. This is our ideal. It is perhaps difficult to put into practice at the beginning, but it is the ideal of a true didactic method derived from a full knowledge of the human being. Similarly, the full knowledge of the human being is at the base of all education and teaching in a Waldorf school.

(Another starting point is the child's musical-rhythmic capacities, because these are part of human nature. We know that children who receive true musical stimulation around the seventh year experience from this musical introduction a peculiar strengthening of the will.)

Now, one reason we attempt to bring things in pictorial form is so as to avoid introducing the child too early to an intellectualized life. We also observe that between the ninth and eleventh years, the child

goes through a veritable turning point, a growth-node. Depending on the way educators and teachers perceive it, it influences the person's destiny in positive or negative ways. Until that point, the child is not very distinct from his environment (and one must pay attention to describing a flower differently before the ninth year and later). Before that point, the child identifies with everything around him; then he learns to differentiate himself; then only does the first concept of "I" appear: Previously, the child had only a *feeling* of being an "I." We must observe how the child behaves, how it starts to formulate questions differently from that point onward. With each child's individuality, we must approach in a particular way this important turning point, for it is distinctive for the rest of life.

For instance, we must know quite clearly that subjects like physics should be brought to the children from the eleventh or twelfth year since they are completely external from the human being, and objectivity is required for comprehension of its laws. On the other hand, from the beginning of primary school, we teach common foreign languages to our children in a practical way: We can see how by teaching foreign languages without translations, by simply allowing the child to feel at home in the spirit of another language, the entire making of the child's soul expands. In this spirit, an artistic method and pedagogy are shaped. I could go on for an entire week in great detail about the shaping of pedagogy as an art. But you can see that what originates from anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science flows practically into education.

And how does that work with each individual teacher? What happens is that teachers truly receive from this spiritual science something different than they can receive from the current scientific education. And here we touch upon one of the most important social questions of the present time.

The social question is said to be the fundamental question of our time, but people mostly understand it as an economic question; it is really not understood in its depth. This depth only appears to our soul if we pay attention to a word that is constantly repeated in the large masses of the proletariat: *ideology*. When today's proletarians of the Marxist persuasion speak of an ideology, what do they have in mind? What they mean is that mental pictures about morality, law, art, religion

are not really concrete; they are mere abstractions, ideas devoid of reality. All things in this domain are unreal, an *ideology*. The only realities are external, material production processes.

This is a massive shift in human evolution regarding worldviews and the organization of the soul. Think for a moment where ancient oriental wisdom stands on this. When I spoke here last time, I said that we should not look back to it for guidance, although much in it can serve as orientation. In the Ancient East, they spoke of *Maina*. What was meant by *maina*? They were speaking about all the things that the human being can know in the physical (sensory) world. For the Oriental, reality was what lived inwardly, what was arising in the way of morality, religion, art, science. This was true reality: What the ears heard, what the eyes saw, what was sensed in other ways, all that was *maina*. Nowadays, we can find in the Orient only a decadent form of this point of view. Following the Marxist lead our popular masses have come full circle. One might say that human evolution has taken a complete reversal. Only the external, the physical, is real, and what is formed inside as morality, religion, art, science, all of that is *maina*. If we were to translate the word *maina*, we would translate it as *ideology*, and if we wanted to translate into the worldview of the Ancient Orient what the modern proletarian understands as ideology, one would have to translate it as *maina*, the word now being used to convey the opposite of its original implications.

I am presenting this because I want to show with it what an extraordinary turn has taken place in human evolution, since the Occident has actually developed to its last consequences a worldview that runs completely contrary to that which still lives in the Orient, albeit in a decadent form. If we are able to observe human conflicts at such a depth, we can understand the conflict between the Orient and the Occident. Of course, things play out differently at different points in history. Still, no matter how materialistic the striving of the contemporary Orient may be, it is to some extent the striving that was already present in Ancient Buddhism, and which has become decadent. Our Western culture has completely turned away from that. We have actually come to the point where large masses of human beings no longer feel fulfilled by that spiritual reality in them, but feel instead that all the things that fill their inner beings are merely *maina*, ideology.

And this is what an anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science restores to humanity: not just ideas which could be considered ideology, not just unrealities/fantasies, but rather the fact that the human being is again filled with the awareness that the spirit lives in my thinking. The spirit enters me, not a dead, ideological spirit, but a living spirit lives in me. To lead human beings back to an immediate experience of the living spirit, this is what anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science strives to accomplish. This is what is incorporated in anthroposophical pedagogy and didactic. This is what must live in the relation between teachers and their pupils.

This is also what stands right at the center of approaches to the *social question*. The human beings who speak about ideology today have gone through our schools. Yet we need a humanity that develops social impulses from the deepest inwardness. This humanity can only come from schools different than the present ones. We can see in the present social chaos what has come out of the schools we so admire. We need an education that corresponds to a real, comprehensive knowledge of humanity. This will include what makes the question of education a universal social question, or else we will be blind to the great social challenges of the present time.

But we must feel what teachers, what educators need, in order to practice such an education, in order to allow the knowledge of humanity to translate into pedagogical-didactic art. We must feel that this is only possible if teachers and educator are not expected to be accountable to any other norm than the one living in their own inner being. Educators must be responsible to the spirit experienced in themselves. This is only possible in a threefold articulation of the social organism, in a free spiritual life. As long as spiritual life depends on one side on the life of the state and on the other hand on economic life, the teachers will be dependent either on the state or on the economy. If you study the connections, you will easily discover how the web of restrictions is constituted.

In truth, we can only create nowadays a substitute for an independent school. In Württemberg before the socialist government imposed the new school laws,<sup>4</sup> it was possible to create the Waldorf school as an independent school, in which the prescriptions of pedagogical art were the only rules.

If freedom is to reign, each teacher must participate directly in the administration of the school; the most important branch of spiritual life will then be self-administering. We cannot think of a spiritual life in which such free schools are generalized in any other way. From the teacher in the lowest grade to the professor at the highest level, everything is dealt with in committees that are not subject to one or another governmental or economic authority, that do not take orders from either side. Administration must be such that every teacher or educator's class schedule will leave time to participate in administrative duties. Administrators will not be people who have retired or who are no longer involved in actual teaching and educational tasks; instead those now involved in teaching and educating will also be administrators. It goes without saying that the ability to do the job will determine authority. The mere attempt at such self-management will reveal that because we need those who really can do the job; their authority will be accepted unquestionably. When the spiritual life rules itself, there will be no need for authority to impose itself from above. Provided we allow such a free spiritual life to be established, we shall see that when people need experts, they will find them.

I could only sketch out these matters, but you will have seen why a free spiritual life is a prerequisite for any real pedagogical art. We can see the necessity to structure the free spiritual life from the totality of the social organism.

Whatever Marx or Proudhon<sup>5</sup> or other national-economists wanted to establish in theory, the way they were establishing it does not apply to matters of life experience, of life praxis. What I said in my book *Kernpunkte der Sozialfrage* and in other writings on the threefold social organism is the product of several decades of life-observation in all directions; it was spoken and written out of life praxis. This is one reason it is impossible to explain it through flimsy concepts. I know very well what logical objections can be made to it. But what is derived from reality is often like reality itself. And just as reality cannot be comprehended by fast and ready concepts, so too it is impossible to force such concepts to match reality. Those who can feel inwardly what it means to be plunged in the midst of education, of teaching, as demanded by a true knowledge of the human being and of the child are the people

who find in their feelings, in their entire experience, the full proof that the spiritual life must be administered freely. And objections cannot simply be dismissed, they must be countered by reality itself.

Some people will come and say: If the free spiritual life must rest on free recognition, some people will not send the children to school, and surely that is not the way to build a free spiritual life. But this is not the way to approach things if our thinking is true to reality. Any reality-based thinker feels first and foremost the full necessity to liberate spiritual life. He says: The spiritual life must be liberated; if many people will not want to send their children to school, then we must find ways to get around this. But this cannot be an objection to the liberation of spiritual life; one must instead create something and then consider how to remedy the consequences. We will need to learn to think in this way on many issues that affect the reality of life.

You can sense that precisely in regard to the spiritual life—and at bottom, public spiritual life is most importantly connected with education, with teaching—there must be a complete shift. Those who are used to working in the present spiritual life will not agree to these things. I am quite aware of the fact that, when the possibility of switching to self-management came up in the past, some teachers of higher learning institutions said: “I would prefer to depend on the Ministry than to be subordinated to my colleagues; no way! I’d rather deal with the minister out there than with my colleagues of the faculty right here.”

It is possible that the necessary impulses will not be available. But just as in other life matters, the consumer, not the producer, plays an ever more important role. So too as regards education and teaching: the most important part of spiritual life should consider the consumers of this education. These are primarily people who have children. We have experienced the strong positive impressions made upon parents attending the school’s closing ceremony by all the things that the children had experienced in the Waldorf school during the year. We have had the experience that, through watching their children at home, parents become aware that a truly new social spirit is arising, which will be of enormous importance for the next generation. It goes without saying that this can only be the case if the Waldorf school does not remain a small unregistered school in Stuttgart, but if the spirit that reigns there becomes the spirit animating the widest circles.

But parents are not the only ones interested in what takes place in schools and educational institutions. Ultimately, every human being taking human evolution seriously has an interest in it. Everybody must have a stake in what becomes of the next generation. Those who think like that and who have a sense of the need for spiritual renewal, as was described in the last Utrecht lecture, will become interested parties in the new educational approach to be brought about through the schools, from the lowest to the highest levels.

In the Dornach Independent University we are attempting to create a learning institution in the highest sense of the word. Things are still difficult. We can provide renewal, support for individual specializations; we can give things like our Fall courses, or the coming Easter course.<sup>6</sup> We can show that, for instance, medicine and all other practical sciences can receive from anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science something which the present and the near future demands.

However, all we can provide is a spirit, and people do not value this very strongly yet. People still value more highly the evidence we cannot provide yet. We must fight so that what is seen as a necessity in human evolution for the near future can also become official. This can only happen if in the widest international circles a mood arises for something I would like to call a *World School Association*.<sup>7</sup> Such an Association need not limit itself to the creation of schools and high schools, but it must contain all the impulses that drive the kind of enterprise attempted in Dornach. Such a World School Association would include all those with an interest in forces of ascension being restored to human evolution as against the frightful forces of decadence now active in humanity. Such a World School Association would grow out of the present impulses; it would not attempt to shape the world using the old diplomatic or other methods. Such a World School Association would attempt to create an alliance out of the deepest human forces, the holiest human impulses. Such an alliance would become significant to the extent that it could really bring about a renewal of the life that has revealed its fragility in the terrible second decade of the twentieth century (1910–1920).

The human beings that will be educated there will have the right social impulses and they will be the ones that can also apply the right force to other areas of social life, in the realms of an autonomous legal

and political life and an autonomous economic life. Similarly the free spiritual life can be built only upon solid qualifications and expertise, not upon what comes to the fore in majority opinion. Just so, the economic life can be formed in a healthy manner only if humanity is free of any “majority-minded” thinking, if it is distinct from all other areas in which people judge simply on the basis of their humanity, not out of expertise. In the economic life, we need associations in which people from the realm of consumption, of production and of business will join together. I have written that the particular size of such an association will be determined by its very nature. Such associations can truly deliver in the economic life something I would like to call a “collective judgment” (consensus), just as it is true that by contrast, everything in the spiritual life must come from human individuality. From birth, we bring our dispositions into the world. Every time a human being is born, a message from the spiritual world is delivered to the physical world. We must grasp this message, we must look at the human individuality; the teacher must consider the human individuality in the child, the entire social organism must look at the free spiritual life in which the teacher is standing, in such a way that he can develop his individuality to the full.

Things that would be profitable to humanity in spiritual life would work negatively in economic life. We better have no illusion in this matter. No matter how much we must strive for a comprehensive harmonious judgment through our individuality, we cannot do so in economic life. This is the realm where we are in a unique position to form judgments with others, to form a judgment within associations. When one has worked at something, one knows some things very well, but whatever one knows is in all circumstances (at best?) one-sided. A judgment can only be made insofar as we do not just interact with others theoretically, but insofar as we are obligated to deliver a particular good, to satisfy particular needs, to conclude and perform contracts. When concrete interests are facing off in contracts, then concrete, technical judgments will result.

Furthermore, the fundamental element in economic life is reached through what works in the associations: true pricing. You can read more about this in my books *Kernpunkte der sozialen Frage* and the *Threefold*

*Social Organism*, as well as in periodicals. There is a Dutch publication about the threefold organism, <sup>8</sup> in which you can read how in social life a collective will or consensus must be sought. Now that we have a world economy instead of separate national economies, it has become necessary for the articulation of the economic life by free economic points of view to follow, for economic life to be expressed in associations that are only concerned with economic matters, but in such a way that technical qualifications and expertise should have a decisive role, rather than the law of majority. Those who have experience will occupy the right place. This will happen spontaneously within associations, for things will be decided by contractual activity, not by abstract decision. Thus, if a particular item is produced too abundantly in one territory, we must direct those workers to other activities; otherwise, the items will become too cheap and those produced in insufficient quantity become too expensive. Prices can be set rightly<sup>9</sup> only if, through associations, the appropriate number of people work at a particular area. For this to happen, an intense interest in the general economic life of humanity is required. It will be a matter of not just developing external phraseology, but developing true human brotherhood, and this fraternity becoming manifest in economic relations.

I can merely sketch things out today. For more details read the literature on threefold organization. I can indicate here only how the anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science will also tackle practical life.

So, we have in the social organism on one hand the free spiritual life directed at the human individuality, and on the other hand the economic realm, in which associations work together for a unified world economy, without any consideration for political boundaries (which nowadays define contradictory economic interests). All this may be an uncomfortable thought for us now. But this is what is needed to end the present chaotic conditions.

Between these two the truly political life will arise, where majority decisions have their justification, where everything, including human labor, will be dealt with and for which every adult will be considered competent. Not every adult is competent in the free spiritual life; there, majority decisions could only create problems, as they would do also in

the economic realm. In the realm of the “rights sphere,” every human being is competent, where one person is equal to any other. This is the legitimate legal and political sector of the state in a threefold social organism. This is the one in the direction of which we have already now the clearest indications, but which can also be demanded by the needs in other sectors of society.

The social organism is a free spiritual life based on the full, free expression of human individuality; a legal and governmental life that is truly democratic, where each person stands equal to the others and where majorities decide, for only in this branch of the social organism are decisions made for which every adult is competent; an economic life, built from associations, where decisions are based on expertise and technical know-how, where human contracts—not law—is the rule.

Some people will say that this switch would destroy the unity of the social organism. For instance someone raised the objection that the social organism is a unity and must remain one, or else everything would fall apart. At the time, all I could come up with in answer to this objection was the example of a farm family. If we are going to claim that the state must take economic initiative and administer schools, we could equally claim that in a farm family, which is a unity consisting of a man, a woman, a servant girl and a cow, all would have to give milk, not just the cow. Rather, unity in our case would consist in each member doing the right thing in its own place. The unity consists precisely in the fact that the three parts exist. We cannot use a half-baked understanding to attack a proposal which from an accurate observation of that which in the current social life is begging for transformation.

Freedom, equality, brotherhood—these are the three great ideals resounding to us out of the eighteenth century. Which human heart would not be deeply affected by the subject of these three ideals? However, there have always been people, in fact very intelligent people, throughout the nineteenth century who wanted to see a contradiction between freedom and equality. How could one be free if all human beings must develop their capacities to the same level? And this does not seem to fit with brotherhood either. Much has been said that was very clever and very cogent on the contradictions of these three ideals. And yet, we feel them and we feel their justification. What are we dealing with here?

Human beings have formed these three ideals from the deepest, most intense foundations of the soul, and these ideals are as justified as anything in history ever was justified. Yet people have remained under the hypnotic power of the unified state. It is true that in the unified state, these three ideals do contradict each other, and yet, they must become reality. Their realization will mean the advent of the threefold social organism. Consider that here we are dealing with something that could start tomorrow, something formed out of praxis, that, unlike most social ideals, is not utopian in the least, but is completely practical. One will then understand that the *unified state itself* today is producing the necessity to divide itself in three parts; one will also understand the historical and human significance of these three ideals that have been resounding over humanity since the eighteenth century, moving the hearts, illuminating the minds. Then one will tell oneself: The threefold social organism reinforces these three ideals, making it possible for them to come to life at last.

In conclusion allow me to summarize what I have said today about the practical implementation of anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science. The threefold social organism must come to humanity: the autonomous spiritual life, the autonomous economic life, and in the middle the governmental-legal-political realm, also autonomous. Then in the true sense will we be able to realize for humanity: freedom in the spiritual life, equality in the life of the state, and brotherhood in the economic life organized on an associative basis.

### Endnotes

1. Public lecture February 21, 1921, not printed, transcript from stenographic notes by Hedda Hummel. Original publication in GA 297a, 13–38.
2. Emil Molt (1876–1936), director of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart, originally had organized evening classes for his employees. This led to the idea of creating a school for the workers' children. He invited Rudolf Steiner to help establish and lead the school, which opened in September 1919.
3. *Sistine Madonna* by Raphael (Raffaello Santi, 1483–1520). At the time of this lecture it was held in the Dresden Gemäldegalerie.

4. These laws gave the government increased roles in education.
5. Karl Marx (1818–1883), philosopher, economist and revolutionary. He is best known for his analysis of human history in terms of class struggles. His intensive studies of history led to his formulation of historical materialism, the basic thesis of which is that individual beliefs and actions are the product of the material conditions determined by production processes. From 1864 to 1876, he led the International Working Men's Association. His main work: *Capital: a Critique of Political Economy*, was originally published in Hamburg in 1867.

Pierre Joseph Proudhon (1809–1865), French economist and social philosopher. One of the first systematic anarchist thinkers, he questioned political institutions of his time and the socialist movement. He envisaged the state being replaced by voluntary organizations of interest groups and cooperative associations. He is famous for his call "Property is theft!" in his pamphlet *What Is Property?* which attracted Marx's attention. He participated in the 1848 revolution but ultimately felt that political reform without a parallel reform of the economic systems along "mutualist" lines was doomed to restore oppression.
6. The courses mentioned were: in the Autumn of 1920, a series on boundaries of scientific knowledge (GA 322) and a medical course on physiology based on spiritual science (GA 314); and in the Spring of 1921, a series on the effects of anthropology in various scientific fields (GA 76) and another medical course (GA 313).
7. The first mention of a World School Association came in an opening speech for the first Waldorf school (August 20, 1919). "The Waldorf school must be a veritable cultural deed, in order to bring about a renewal of our contemporary spiritual life. The possibility of the Waldorf school must be used in order for its reforming, revolutionizing effects on all educational institutions" (GA 293 Dornach 1992, 13). At that point, Rudolf Steiner expected that the revolutionary Kulturarbeit would pick up his program as the blueprint for educational reform (see GA 300/301). However in the political context of the time, the idea turned out to be infeasible. At a teachers' conference at the Stuttgart Waldorf School in July 1920, the idea reappeared in a new form. Steiner expressed the hope that a world school association, to be founded, would collect funds necessary for the foundation and operation of schools. During a Questions and Answers session on the threefold organism (October 1920), he called out, "What we need is a world school association in all civilized countries, to gather as quickly as possible the necessary funds. This would procure the necessary foundation for a free spiritual life" (GA 337b). On October 16, 1920 (see GA 217a), he reiterated his call, emphasizing the seriousness of his call for an international organization, emphasizing that it should not be seen as an

association of already existing initiatives, but as an initiative body, aimed at propagating the idea of a free intellectual and spiritual life, and assuming the creation and financing of schools and other educational institutions throughout the world. However no concrete steps were taken toward the idea, much to Steiner's distress, as expressed at the Members' Meeting of the Anthroposophical Society of September 4, 1921: "I had to experience what I consider the inner opposition that has strongly interfered with the realization of my intentions, ... when I had indicated in the strongest terms the necessity for the foundation of a World School Association, and repeated these calls during my lecture series in Holland." His disappointment at the failure of this initiative among the members of the anthroposophic society seems to have been a major source of frustration at the end of his life. It was to remain a divisive issue until his death and even afterwards, when it became one point of contention between Ita Wegman and Marie Steiner and their respective followers, and a source of tension between German and Dutch anthroposophists. The Wegmanist push for a world association was felt to threaten a diversion of limited funding resources away from the building of the Goetheanum and led to accusations that Ita Wegman was trying to use the idea to create an independent power base [trans. extended note].

8. Reference to *Drieledige Indebelling van et sociale Organisme*, 1920 and 1921. It was first published by Johanna Maria Tak van Poortvliet (1871–1936) and later by Pieter de Haan (1891–1968). The periodical was intended to propagate quickly the idea of the threefold social organism and support the work of the movement founded in 1919 "Bond vor drieledige indeeling van et sociale Organisme." When it became clear that the movement was not being met with the massive support that had been expected, the journal was replaced by the monthly *Anthroposophie. Maandblad voor sociale, pädagogische en geesteswetenschappelijke Vraagstukken*, aimed at preparing the ground for a fundamental social reform movement.
9. The question of the pricing came up repeatedly in Steiner's talks between 1919 and 1922. His thoughts on the question were organized in his essay of the threefold social organism, democracy and socialism (GA 24, 216 ff), originally published in the first issue of the Swiss journal *Soziale Zukunft* and his book *Kernpunkte der Sozialfrage* (1919) (GA 23, chapter 3). See also his comments in the course on national economy (GA 340).

## II

## Questions and Answers at a Pedagogical Evening in Utrecht

Utrecht, February 24, 1921

*Question:* How can one distinguish on a scientific basis between human and animal blood? The ego is expressed in the human blood; is it not so in animal blood?

*Rudolf Steiner:* The materialistic form of thinking which has been building up since the fifteenth century, and has grown especially in the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries, has allowed the gradual dying out of the sense that the outer expression [of a thing] is not determining for its inner architecture nor for the entire context in which it stands. I would need to draw here on some things that I can't explain in detail today; which you will find in the spiritual-scientific literature, but I can say a few things to this question.

We must distinguish in the human being, first the external physical body that we see with our eyes and which ordinary science studies through anatomy and physiology. Then we distinguish the etheric life-body of which we become aware when we observe something like the appearance of thinking at the change of teeth; there we can observe the life of the etheric body. We should not confuse it with the hypothetical “vital force” of old; it has nothing to do with that. This is the result of immediate observation, whereby we learn to recognize which part in the soul controls this etheric body, what we can call the soul-organism, and the actual ego.

These four parts each have their physical expression. For instance the etheric body influences particularly the glandular system, the ego, blood and the circulatory system. Now, we may ask a question like the one asked here, but we must first become familiar with something I will

clarity with the following comparison. Imagine that someone tells you: A knife is just a knife; it is used to cut meat. We cannot say that. It is equally unjustified to say that the human being has red, warm blood, and animals have red, warm blood, in both cases the expression of the ego. Let's assume someone finds a razor and uses it to cut meat, for it is, after all, a knife. The question is not a thing's outward appearance, but how it exists in a wider context. In the animal, red warm blood is the expression of the soul organism, in human beings the same red blood is the expression of the ego, just as the razor is a knife used to shave yourself and the knife on the table is a meat-cutting knife. We should not ask: What is blood as such? It can mean one thing in one context, another thing in a different context.

*Question:* Is it possible to start Waldorf schools in other countries?

*Steiner:* Whether one can found such schools in other countries depends on the laws of the countries in question. Before the new democratic republican school legislation came about in our own country, it was possible to start the Waldorf school. Developments in recent times are such that now we must renounce one freedom after another.<sup>1</sup> And were Leninism to win the day in Central Europe, people would learn what the death of human freedom means. Whether such schools can be founded all depends on what is allowed by law, on concrete local laws. One can of course attempt to stretch the boundary as far as possible. For instance I was recently approached about recruiting teachers for beginning a school in another place<sup>2</sup> and I said we must naturally try and see. I recruited two very competent teachers for the first class, although they were not certified, we shall see whether we can gain acceptance for such teaching personnel. The Waldorf school does not disqualify a teacher who do not hold a certificate. When asked recently whether it was all right to hire a certain person despite the lack of an exam, my answer was that it did not matter, he would take the exam in due time.

Is this not really an issue of working on a large scale for the liberation of the spirit—in this case through the schools? We need something for this, a kind of world organization. It should be possible for the question about founding new Waldorf schools to be unnecessary, for

there must arise, through the force of conviction, a sufficiently large number of people to create this possibility everywhere. What happens now with education is exactly what has taken place in other areas. Many people do not agree with allopathic medicine, therefore they turn to those doctors who want to work outside of allopathic medicine, on a completely objective basis, not as a kind of quackery. I have even met a minister in a central European state who championed the monopoly of allopathic medicine in his country's parliament, yet later came asking for help with a personal problem, willing to use an alternative approach. We should not think of building small unchartered schools, but should bring about everywhere the possibility of building independent schools of the kind I have described. Unless we gather our courage, those who control those things will not allow the foundation of small unregulated schools or the appointment of teachers for the latter. There should exist a large movement, to which every person with a concern for the tasks of our time should belong; the power of such a world movement could bring about the conditions necessary for the creation of such schools everywhere.

But before everything else, in the case of such a World School Association, something must intervene to do away with a certain kind of idealism evident in saying: "Ah, spiritual matters, anthroposophy... it is so exalted, material concerns should not touch it; it would disunite anthroposophists if material matters were of concern." This kind of lofty idealism smothers the spiritual under all kinds of phrases and holds it up to the heavens, into some kind of "cloud-cuckoo-land,"<sup>3</sup> all the while clutching the wallet. This kind of idealism will not allow for the foundation of a world movement in education and similar initiatives.<sup>4</sup> We may need to bring up an idealism that is not good for the wallet in order to do something for the ideals of humanity. Spiritual science must think and work its way down to practical life; it cannot have its head in the clouds, but must reach down to the wallet. There are angles and corners there, for these are parts of practical life.

*Question:* Are there contradictions between anthroposophical spiritual science and evangelical (Protestant) Christianity?

*Steiner:* We need not make up such contradictions. One should distinguish two kinds of things. The mystery of Golgotha is a fact: the fact that a spiritual entity descended from super earthly realms to unite with the man Jesus of Nazareth. Every age has understood this spiritual fact in a different way, which gives its meaning to earthly evolution. We can best understand this fact if we first learn to understand spiritual facts in general. It would be thinking very poorly of Christianity to believe that as a result of one or another discovery, whether in the physical or the spiritual realm, Christianity would be shaken. When the official representatives of Christianity, or rather of traditional confessions, behave in such hostile fashion toward anthroposophy, this only speaks against those official representatives; they actually do not have in mind true Christianity, but rather the rule of their own church. True Christianity has already understood anthroposophical spiritual science—through supersensible knowledge. On this question, read my *Christianity as a Mystical Fact*<sup>5</sup> and other writings.

*Question:* In the threefold structuring of the social organism, does the spiritual life have any kind of supremacy over the other two sectors?

*Steiner:* In my book *Die Kernpunkte der Sozialen Frage*, I describe how capital is used in the threefold social organism. It circulates, somewhat like blood in the human organism, and remains with those who are best suited to administer it in the sense of the collectivity. But for this to happen, the spiritual life must constantly be working with the other sectors. This is the unique thing about such a natural organization of the social organism as well as of the human organism. The human organism, as I have established over thirty years of research, is naturally threefold. First, there is the nerve-sensory organism located primarily in the head; second the rhythmical system located primarily in the chest, as breathing and blood circulation; and third, the metabolic system connected with the limbs. But these three parts work together, so that in some ways the head has leadership, but in other respects the other parts do. One cannot say that one or the other is sovereign, but a harmonious totality arises in the social organism, precisely through the organization of the three parts according to their essences.

*Question:* Should children from age seven to thirteen believe what the teacher says or are they taught in freedom?

*Steiner:* Human nature itself encourages what I have described in my talk as a certain self-evident authority. This call for a self-evident authority in turn rests upon a particular development of the entire human life. Certainly no one can have a greater concern for the social reign of freedom than I do, who wrote the *Philosophy of Freedom* in 1892, which was meant to provide the foundation for a free social human life. Still, if the human being is to relate freely to life, then between the ages of seven and fifteen a feeling of authority should have developed. Unless we learn to know other human beings through this self-evident authority, the later form of freedom will lead to suppression, not true freedom. Just as human beings cannot learn the true meaning of fraternity unless they are educated in a certain way, guided rightly through childhood's imitative stage, in the same way the feeling of authority is necessary for humans to become truly free. All that is said nowadays (about running school communities in republican fashion) is only the result of partisan considerations. It would actually destroy human nature. I say this based on a thorough knowledge of human beings. The call for a healthy authoritative reaching between the seventh and the fifteenth year must be expressed. The only criterion is realism. The decisive factor cannot be current catch phrases, precisely those who stand on the soil of liberty will need to call for an *authoritative* [not *authoritarian*] education.

### Endnotes

1. In the twenty-first century we have a system in which we must pass “regulations” which are set in place like moats before one reaches the castle of the law.
2. Presumably the Neuwachtschule in Cologne, founded in April 1921, along the same lines as the Stuttgart school.
3. “Cloud-cuckoo-land” is a reference to *The Birds*, a satire of Plato and his philosophical entourage, written by the Greek playwright Aristophanes.
4. Steiner is alluding to conflicts within the anthroposophical society in respect to the World School Association. Some members of the Vorstand feared that fundraising for such large scale effort would be competing with the financial needs of re-building the Goetheanum.
5. *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (GA 8), original publication 1902.



## III

## Teaching, Government, and Education

Questions from the Point of View  
of Anthroposophical Spiritual Science

Amsterdam, February 28, 1921

In my first lecture in Amsterdam, on February 19th, I attempted to analyze how anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science finds its place in the current human civilization.<sup>1</sup> In the Free School for Spiritual Science at the Goetheanum in Dornach this spiritual science already has an external institution for its cultivation, centered around artistic work.

The goal is to add to the important cognitive results of natural science—which it fully acknowledges—the supersensible cognitive knowledge acquired through the use of exact spiritual scientific methods. And in my previous lecture, I called your attention to the fact that at the present time, many souls are yearning for a knowledge that is as grounded as the knowledge prevailing in the natural sciences, but extending to the parts of the world connected with the eternal in the human soul.

I pointed out that this supersensible knowledge could only be obtained to the extent that people develop specific capacities situated in the soul. Wide circles of educated people refuse to have anything to do with these capacities. The catastrophe of our time, which is visible to everybody, rests precisely on the willful neglect of these capacities.

If we want to get anywhere with what is understood as spiritual science, we must proceed first from something that I call “intellectual modesty.” This intellectual modesty will seem paradoxical in a time when we take such pride in intellectualism. But anyone who wishes to penetrate into the supersensible worlds—to which the human soul belongs in its true essence—needs this departure point of intellectual moderation. I will assume that many of those here today did not attend my first lecture and so I will repeat the comparison I used then in this connection.

If we hand a five-year-old a volume of Shakespeare, she will play with the book, perhaps tear it up or scribble into it, but in any case will not do with the Shakespeare volume that for which it was designed. But give this same child another ten or fifteen years, and the capacities that previously were dormant in the child's soul will have developed through education, through schooling, and the child will now read Shakespeare. After fifteen years, (s)he has reached a higher level of humanity; after fifteen years, she has become a different being.

If one wishes to penetrate the supersensible world, one must be able to tell oneself: "Perhaps I, an adult, am in the same relation to nature with her secrets and deep lawfulness as the five-year-old child is in relation to Shakespeare, and perhaps forces are dormant in my inner soul which must first be brought to the surface." If as an adult one seriously approaches the forces and capacities dormant in the soul with this intellectual modesty, then one may develop in oneself higher kinds of cognition than those of daily life and ordinary science.

First we must cultivate the human power that is commonly known as the power of memory. Through memory, we bring context to our life. Through memory, images of things we experienced at a very early age are conjured up before our soul. This power of memory makes lasting that which would otherwise pass us by as fleeting representations. If only we could give ourselves to the outer world, if only we could surrender ourselves to representations of these fleeting circumstances and experiences, our entire soul life would be different. If as adults we develop further the enduring representations present in the memory, we can come to a completely different cognitive capacity. And this can be developed through methods I have described in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, in my *Occult Science*<sup>2</sup> and other writings. It can be developed through the use of specific meditation and concentration exercises, settling earnestly upon specific, easily surveyed representations that are not simple reminiscences, nor ones that rest upon any kind of autosuggestion; they must be easily visible.

We should focus on such representations with the entire architecture/texture of our soul. The true spiritual investigator's studies to know the supersensible worlds are as demanding as the studies conducted in the clinic, the physicist's or chemist's lab, or the observatory, and they

take just as long. This meditation, this concentration with the entire force of the soul upon particular representations, performed consistently and with patience, must be continued for years. Deep-seated forces of cognition, of which the person has no inkling otherwise, must be brought to the surface of the soul. Once these higher forces emerge, we can perceive what surrounds us through them, we can perceive that the physical-sensory worlds surrounds us. First we develop an awareness of our own experience, not as an imprecise stream, running almost from the time of our birth, in which fragments of memories float, but rather as a unified, accessible, life-panorama, an overview of what we have experienced in our life since birth. Knowing this, one will realize what it means to live in one's soul out-of-the-body. Materialism usually claims—and at first it certainly seems rightly so—that all ordinary representations, all ordinary memories, all ordinary feelings and acts of will are tied to the physical body. But in ordinary life, this feeling, this willing is interrupted. Every day, sleep interrupts the ordinary soul-life connected with the body. It is just that people do not feel deeply enough the important riddle connected with falling sleep, sleeping and reawakening. The “individuality” must be present when we sleep, otherwise it would have to resurrect every time we wake up. But by doing the exercises that I have briefly alluded to here, one learns to know in which form the “individuality” is present in sleep.

If one comes to the point of representing things in one's soul using neither external eyes nor any other senses, nor ordinary brain-bound reasoning, but only the purely soul-spiritual (organs)—and one can do that when one cultivates the power of memory in the fashion I have described—there comes a point when one knows that between going to sleep and awakening, the human being is present, as a soul-spiritual essence out of the body, and only the desire to return to one's body is brought to bear. And this desire clouds the consciousness.

Any time we develop our power of memory as I have described, we are able to comport ourselves as the sleeper—i.e., not perceive with one's senses, not to combine sensations in one's reasoning—and yet entirely consciously. One then knows the soul-spiritual reality independently from the body. Thereby one can also succeed in knowing this soul-spirit before birth or conception and after death in its true essence and in connection with other supersensible experiences.

And if, in addition, we cultivate a second soul-force equally present in ordinary life—namely the force of love—if the force of life is transformed into a cognitive force, human beings learn to know also in their immediacy the images otherwise experienced as a supersensible panorama. By cultivating the capacity for love, supersensible cognition can become to some extent perfect. And what we attain in this way is not just peace of soul, not just something that satisfies our theoretical needs, but also practical results in essential matters. This is why everything that came out of Dornach from the very beginning was intended to be implemented in practical life. And we have already had some successes, precisely for practical life.

I would like to call your attention to a highly practical area of life that must interest all humans. I would like to show how anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science can fertilize the art of education and teaching.

What does one attain through this spiritual science, the methods of which I have only sketched? One attains, first and foremost, a true knowledge of the human being. Unless we can look at supersensible reality, it is impossible to truly know the human being. For the human being is not just the external physical organization about which the natural scientific world has given us such grand, powerful disclosures, for which we are most grateful. But the human being is also a soul and a spirit; the human being harbors an eternal core of being that goes through birth and death. This core has consciousness after death because then it no longer desires the body, as it did when we were lying in bed asleep, and that desire extinguishes consciousness.

When this ordinary physical body is set aside at death, the human being gains a consciousness all the more lucid, for consciousness is no longer suppressed by any desires of the body. In all these ways (and in other ways that I will not describe here but which you can find in my books), the human being acquires a true knowledge of the human being. And only a real knowledge of the human being can give rise to a true art of education and teaching.

We have attempted to deal with this realm of practical life in the Waldorf school founded by Emil Molt in Stuttgart, which I lead, and the pedagogy of which is entirely derived from anthroposophy-

cal spiritual science. First of all, the soul disposition of the teaching staff is such that each new morning, during each session, something is brought to the class that makes of education and teaching a kind of religious service/mission. Is there not something quite special in the teachings from anthroposophical spiritual science that the human being—revealed as such a marvelous puzzle in the growing child—arose from the spiritual worlds through conception and birth? If one really knows this, one faces the growing child, the evolving person with the sense of a mission assigned to the teacher by the spiritual worlds. We then see that the eternal being that has descended from the spiritual worlds develops day after day, week after week, year after year, so that the child's initially inchoate physiognomic traits, its flailing movements are elaborated to ever greater precision. We see the soul-spirit at work in the development of each human being.

I will refrain from a superficial criticism of all that was contributed by pedagogical geniuses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Unquestionably many a beautiful pedagogical principle has been formulated. It is right, for instance, to emphasize that “one should not stuff things into the child; everything we bring to the children should be grown out of their dispositions and capacities.” This is true indeed, a remarkable principle—but abstract and theoretical. And by far the largest part of our life praxis is given us in abstractions, in theoretical programs. For it takes a real knowledge of human nature, reaching into all the depths of humanity, to apply the principle of “bringing everything out of the individuality.” Despite its great triumphs, the science now existing in modern civilization does not and cannot know human beings in this way.

To show how the spiritual science I have in mind attains true knowledge of the human being, I would like to present a few very concrete examples. “Nature makes no leaps” is a cheap slogan thoughtlessly repeated. In reality, nature is *constantly* making leaps. Just think of a plant: It develops green leaves, then there is a “leap” to the calyx, then another “leap” to the colorful petals, then the stamens, and so forth. And this is true of all life including human beings. If we look without prejudice, using the impulses provided by anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science, we can clearly distinguish different epochs of human life. The

first epoch goes from birth to the change of teeth around the seventh year; when children start in primary school. If we but have the necessary insight and objectivity of observation, if we get used to observing life at a higher level, in the manner in which the natural sciences usually observe life at the lower levels, we can sharply distinguish between the first and the second phase of human life. The first phase ends with the change of teeth; the second phase ends with puberty. The first phase shows us the child as an imitative being. Even in play, the child is always imitating. Sure, many people believe that in play, an imaginative being is developing. Actually, this is the case, and if you study playfulness in its deepest essence, you will notice imitative moments everywhere in the child's play. In connection with this playfulness, it is vitally important to know the human being as a totality, knowledge crucial for an education that really affects existence and for a pedagogical art.

For you see, each child plays differently: If we observe objectively, without prejudice, we can clearly distinguish the way one child plays and the way another child plays. The differences may be very small. If one wants to be a pedagogue, one needs to be a psychologist in order to observe these fine distinctions. If we can do that, different kinds of play must be correlated to different stages of human life. When it comes to the observation of the human being, external science tends to relate things by proximity. But this does not take us very far. What we can observe in the child's play does not remain visible in the very next life stage (from the stage of the second dentition to puberty). For then, the child is busy with other things. Even though children go on playing, their playfulness is not as clearly marked in the later stage. The "playful passions" take a backseat in the recesses of the soul and only return to light in the second half of the twenties, when human beings must find their place in practical life. One person will tackle the tasks of destiny with great deftness, another will become an escapist dreamer, and between the two there is an infinity of nuances. If we know how the four-, five-, six-year-old played, we can explain the way in which the adult approaches practical life in these (later) years.

It is thus of utmost importance for pedagogues to direct the child's play; to observe what it is that wants to emerge in the child and to redirect traits that should not emerge, for they would make the child inept in

later life. For if we guide the children's play rightly in the earlier years, we give them something to carry into the praxis of life as they develop in their twenties. A person's entire life is of one piece; what is implanted in the child's soul will reappear later in life, through many metamorphoses: Only through a knowledge of the human being as a totality, the knowledge practiced by anthroposophically-oriented spiritual science, can we really understand connections between things that are as far apart as early childhood and the third decade of life, the playful instincts in childhood and the practical life in adulthood. Only such a spiritual science can look that deeply into life. This will give you *some* sense of the sphere of human knowledge from which an anthroposophical spiritual science approaches the creation of the art of teaching.

The child is an imitative being approximately up to the seventh year. I use the number seven not out of any mystical inclination but because the change of teeth is important in the totality of life development. Children learn their particular gestures, their language through imitation; even their form of mind develops in this fashion. The relationship between children and their environment depends not only on external factors but on many hidden imponderable elements. Teachers or educators living in the child's proximity must be fully aware that the child adapts to what the adults do, not just outwardly, not just in what they say, but also what they feel, what they think. A materialistic approach does not believe that it makes a *difference* for the children's growth whether in their presence we entertain noble or ignoble ideas, because life context is considered in its material physical entities, not in how things are related in imponderable ways. We can see this when we truly observe life in its inner structures.

Here is an example: One day a father came to me (I have many such examples) complaining bitterly that his child had stolen. He was greatly distressed by it. I said: Let's see whether this five-year-old *really* stole. I asked for the situation to be described. What had actually happened? The boy had taken some money from the drawer in which his mother kept the coins which she used for small daily purchases. He had taken the money and bought a few sweets, not out of selfishness but to share the sweets among his friends. I told the father the child had not stolen; he had considered that what his mother does is always right,

and that, simply, he should also be allowed to do it, for at that age he is completely an imitative being. We must be fully aware of this: The way to influence children is not through warnings or prohibitions, but simply through the things we do in ordinary circumstances.

And we shall only form a healthy judgment about the child's soul configuration if we know: This situation will change substantially after the change of teeth. At that point, instead of simple imitation, there appears the soul's stance towards its surroundings as to a self-evident authority. And during the entire school year we are dealing with this child's desire for the *self-evident authority* of the teacher or educator and anything else in the child's environment. We need only remember the significance for the entire life of having been able, between the seventh and the fifteenth year, to look up with the greatest respect to those who had educating authority in the environment. They are the people, whose relation to us was such that what we held to be true or false proceeded from the manner in which these educators saw truth and falsehood, what for these adults was the criterion of truth and falsehood. When we attempt to distinguish between truth and falsehood at this childish age, we are dealing with a human, reality, not with an abstraction.

If I tell you that in 1892 I wrote a small piece in which I most emphatically set out individual human freedom as a fundamental social principle,<sup>3</sup> you will know that I do not represent this need for self-evident authority out of any predilection for conservative or reactionary ideas. But unless between the seventh and fourteenth years one knows a self-evident authority nearby, and out of this authority learns to form the criterion for true and false; good and evil, and later comes to an autonomous criterion of rational, or otherwise inner, autonomous judgment, no one can be truly free, no one can freely find the correct social relation with fellow human beings.

At this second stage, the soul of the child is still so constituted that it is completely interconnected with the environment. Only toward the end of this stage of life, somewhere in the twelfth or thirteenth year, do we see the child clearly distinguishing himself from his environment, out of the knowledge that "my ego is in me, nature is outside of me." Of course, ego-consciousness is present from earliest childhood, but still in nature of a feeling. If we want to educate rightly, we should know that

an inordinately important point of the child's development is between the ninth and the tenth—eleventh year. It is the point when the child becomes engrossed in himself and inwardly learns to separate himself in all things from nature and from the outer world in general. Before this point, because the children are still at one with the inner life, they see their environment in often symbolic images and think of their environment in symbolic terms. Afterwards, another stage begins.

It is of utmost importance that the educator assess rightly this stage of life, the precise timing of which can vary from child to child. For to the very extent that the teacher and educator behaves in the right fashion between the ninth and tenth years, leading the child across this Rubicon in a fatherly, friendly, loving manner, this makes an impact on a human life of lasting importance for the rest of existence until physical death. Whether people can have brightness of life at decisive moments, whether they go disconsolately through life in soul-bleakness, all this depends to a great extent—although not completely—on the way educators and teachers treat them between the ninth and the eleventh years. Sometimes it is simply a matter of finding the right word at the right moment, say, when a boy or a girl comes to us in the hall and asks us a question, or of having the right facial expression when one answers. The art of education cannot be learned or taught abstractly—just as little as painting or sculpture or any other art can—but it rests on infinite details arising from soul tactfulness. It is this tactfulness, this delicacy of soul precisely that can be gained from anthroposophical spiritual science.

Now this also tells us that one must discern what to bring the children before and after this important turning point. We should note first of all that something in our present, advanced, civilization has become very external, abstract, and symbolic. If you look back to ancient civilizations and take any pictographic writing, you will see that some essence of the meaning was still captured in the words. This essence was converted into an image to which the human being felt connected, with which the person lived in feelings and sensibility. Nowadays, all this has been reduced to mere signs. Now, we should not bring reading and writing to the child as something alien, because before the ninth year, he wants to be at one with his environment. We should not teach out of abstraction, as is often the case nowadays. At the Waldorf school, all

teaching starts out in the artistic mode, insofar as we first draw forms in color for the child, forms gathered from human experience. Then we allow the children to make these forms themselves; we have the children paint them, and they walk them on the floor. And as we guide them further in this painting-moving fashion, we develop, out of this drawing, the forms of the letters, *writing* proper. We start out from art; we bring writing out of the artistic, and then in the same manner, reading. In this fashion, we match what really resides in the child.

It is not a matter of the pedagogue saying abstractly, “We just need to bring out what lies in the child.” We must know how to start out in practice so that we really meet human nature. Anthroposophical spiritual science is never just theory, but should always be true praxis. This is what will allow the teacher to develop the art of education.

What I said about authority can also connect us with something else that may seem paradoxical. Much is made in our current materialistic age of the so-called “object lesson.” Those who understand the child’s true nature will find it terrifying to see the abstract calculating machines and all the stuff which the children often have to negotiate. It is expected nowadays that children will understand and should know everything right away. One attempts to so organize the teaching that nothing should reach beyond the understanding of the eight- or nine-year-old. On the surface, this seems remarkably scientific. Believe me, dear listeners, even an anthroposophically-trained person can see the reasoning behind such a rule, just as well as those who defend these rules as self-evident. But what is self-evident is that for children between the ages of seven and fourteen, memory and the sense of authority should be trained in a healthy fashion as I described above.

Those who demand “concreteness and only concreteness”<sup>4</sup> at all times, and concreteness “adapted to the child’s understanding,” do not know what it could mean for the entire rest of the child’s life if, between the eighth–ninth year up to the fifteenth year, the child accepts something based on the teacher’s authority, that because it is said by an authoritative individual, the child holds it for true. It still lies over the horizon, but the child absorbs it. One may not bring it up again until the age of thirty-five or forty. Something which one only had memorized can now be understood with the ripened force. This consciousness of

maturity, this capacity to draw something up from one's own being, freshens and invigorates the soul force in a way which is not appreciated in ordinary life, whereas it depletes the soul if between the ages of eight to twelve everything was cut down to the size of the child. This needs to be said, because out of a materialistic intelligence, human beings are no longer able to see what is natural, right, essential in this domain.

And from the deep layers of human nature, from those aspects that want to be formed, to develop week by week, year by year—this is where the Waldorf school curriculum finds its materials. This curriculum is entirely the product of a knowledge of human nature. It is not an abstract curriculum, but something that underlies the pedagogy of this school, just as knowing how to paint or how to sculpt is the foundation for those who want to be active as painters or sculptors.

I have described to you from the domain of education and teaching how anthroposophical spiritual science affects life praxis. But consider how spiritual life must be constituted if such an educational and teaching praxis is to really come into its own! We are used to seeing this intellectual/spiritual life as merely an appendage of the state, or perhaps an appendage of economic life. We are used to allowing the state to prescribe the most important part of the spiritual life, which is precisely education and schooling. What anthroposophical spiritual science must bring into effect for modern civilization, out of a truly penetrating understanding of educational and teaching methods—derived from a true knowledge of man—is that the spiritual life, education and teaching should be allowed to administer itself freely. To speak quite concretely: Teachers and educators should not just teach and educate, they also must take in hand the entire administration of schooling and education, freely and independently from the state and from economic life. From the earliest grades to the highest learning institutions, each teacher and educator should spend as much time teaching as will still leave time free to also be an administrator. And only those people should be the administrators of the schools who are still actively involved in teaching and education, the actual teachers and educators in every field, not people who have become state functionaries and have left teaching behind. The only intervention that should be allowed in education is what comes from knowledge and art and religious worldview. People do not want to accept

that what was necessary, perhaps even very good, at one historical stage is not necessarily valid at another time in history. With the centralized government in our modern age, it was a good, self-evident, move for schools to be removed from the control of the churches. At that point, it benefited humanity. But we have come to a point where this can no longer be the case. Whatever the state could do to benefit schooling has been exhausted and the free spiritual life truly originating in spiritual wellsprings demands the administrative autonomy of education.

Here the “school question,” the “education question,” touches directly on the social question, in every essential respect. When it comes to the “social question,” many people think that the most important consideration is that of external arrangements, that one needs merely to consider these external arrangements to understand the social question, that one should work on these externals to deal with the social question. If one really understands life, this is impossible to think. I have become acquainted with the thinking of the proletarians, not only in my own youth, but for many years as a teacher of various subjects at a Workers’ School.<sup>5</sup> I have seen what really lives in the widest strata of the proletariat, which has actually developed into class only as a result of modern technology.

Not in external circumstances, not even in the “question of bread,” does the real social question arise. There is a soul disposition connected with this problem, the kind of spiritual life that has developed in the ruling class over the last three or four centuries and passed down to the proletarian masses as a kind of religion. I saw this worldview grow out of the materialist foundations among people who deserve to be taken seriously; among profound souls belonging to the *bourgeoisie*, belonging to the ruling classes, and this is what I experienced. These soulful individuals told themselves: “Let us take seriously the scientific worldview. Let us see how the world evolved from some kind of nebulous state to its present condition and how various forms of life gradually co-evolved all the way up to the human being. And there will come a time when the earth will either freeze up or die of heat—either way one imagines it—then the earth will become one great cemetery. What then will have become of all the things that human beings see as the noblest in human nature, what arises within them as moral ideals, religion impulses, art, science?”

I have known individuals who considered these questions seriously, unlike the greater part of modern humanity, which thoughtlessly juxtaposes these two worlds, the world of external natural necessity and the world of the genuine human-values, moral ideals, religious convictions, science, artistic creation. And these serious souls tell themselves: “Of course human beings are aware of what streams out of the soul. But it is an illusion, it is like fog rising from physical conditions. And at some point there will be a great cemetery and what we call great ideals will be swallowed up, gone entirely.” I have learned to know the pessimism and the tragic mood of these deep-thinking persons. But I have also experienced how this worldview has penetrated into the proletarian soul and how there one word came up to meet it with tremendous effectiveness, a very eloquent word: “ideology.” If we understand that it lives in the proletarians’ soul, we shall know much about the background of the present civilization and the social question. What these proletarian souls know as spiritual life, as morality, law, science, art and religion, they think of as a superstructure separate and above the production process, the material world, which for them is the only real concrete reality. This is the inheritance of the tragic worldview that I described, and which has laid waste to the proletarians’ souls.

It is possible nowadays to pass for an idealist when one seeks the “proletarian question” in what is expressed by the restrictive word “ideology.” But these idealists will be right and those who believe that they have sold the large masses of humanity on human wisdom and life routine, they will see that history tramples them on its way.<sup>6</sup> This “ideology” signifies that the souls of these human masses remain a desolate desert, that they have no connection with the living spirit—just as little as do the ruling classes that transmitted this science to the proletariat.

And here I offer you the essence of the mission and tasks of the Dornach Goetheanum for this stage of civilization. Many people see that culturally-enlightened science must be brought to the wide masses now. People are creating libraries, universities, and everything conceivable to “bring to the people” the science being taught in our high schools and universities. The Goethanum cannot be a part of that. What the Goethanum wants to offer is what was presented in the course we organized in the autumn of 1920, and which we repeated on a smaller scale

at Easter in 1924. It was a matter of fertilizing the individual traditional sciences with the inspiration of spiritual science. Thirty teachers came to this autumn course from all fields of science, and also from industry, business and the arts. The lectures showed how all branches of science, art and life could be stimulated by spiritual science. It is a question of the renewal of science. It is a matter of bringing the spirit into the sciences, so that we will have not just a head-culture, but one that comes out of the whole human being.

Thus the purpose of the Goetheanum in Dornach is to bring a new spirit into the universities: only then can they become truly “popular.” People want to bring to the masses the spirit of academia. Can they not see from looking at modern civilization what this spirit lacks for those who have it? This spirit itself must be renewed. Rather than education being taken “out of the schools” into the people, first a culture/education rooted in the spirit must be brought to the schools. This is the way in which Dornach must distinguish itself from everything else being done in this direction nowadays. At this point people imagine that they are free-spirited, yet they hand themselves over to the frightful authoritarianism of currently extrant science. I say this not to disparage modern scientific thinking but as the result of several decades of serious work with various branches of this very thinking. We need to work in the present for the liberation of intellectual/spiritual life, and thereby the liberation of education, just as in the past the government found it necessary to take over schooling and education from religious domination.

I know what the arguments are against this idea of creating the free spiritual life as the first step of the threefold social organism. But when people express their fear that everyone may then decide to not send their children to these schools, they are looking at things from the wrong end. The question is not whether people will voluntarily send their children to school, but rather that a free education and schooling life is (free schools are) a necessity for humankind, and that we must see to it that children go to these schools anyway. It cannot be an objection against the free spiritual life, but it must an occasion to ponder how *despite* a free spiritual life, the children of neglectful or conscience-less parents will be brought to this school. This is the first part of the impulse for

the threefold structure of the social organism proposed by the anthroposophical worldview as the progressive movement toward a possible solution of the social question: the free spiritual life, administered by spiritually active persons.

There are all kinds of reasons to defend the necessity of freedom of spiritual life, as well as to attack it, or to cancel it. They are not relevant. For anthroposophy always comes out of life praxis and life observation. Those who know what a true spiritual science will mean for humanity also know how necessary the liberation of spiritual life is. We speak of *ideology*, because spiritual life consists in abstractions, because one does not have any concept of the facts (1) that the representation living in the soul is not the same as a copy of something or other because one no longer knows what the old religions procured to humanity, (2) that the living spirit lives in each individual, and (3) that the human beings with their eternal part belong to the living spirit rather than insubstantial abstract images living in their soul. The living spiritual world, filling us inwardly, is not an ideology. The rise of ideology is what has brought about the catastrophes of our age. But a school and educational institution aiming to restore the living spirit to humanity must be free. This free educational system appears to me in the most eminent sense a necessity of modern humanity—insofar as we are serious about human salvation and human progress.

Therefore—and I say this with no intention to agitate/create a stir—I consider it absolutely indispensable that there should arise on an international, broad-based foundation, a World School Association, in order to remove the forces of decadence present in our modern civilization and resurrect forces of renewal. This World School Association should be aware that it has to create a free spiritual life. It is not enough for people to think that our Stuttgart Waldorf school deserves observation for only a few hours or a few weeks. To observe something that proceeds from an entire spiritual life is tantamount to cutting out a piece of the *Sistine Madonna* in order to get an impression of the whole picture. Auditioning at the Waldorf school will not allow us to experience the spirit of the Waldorf school, insofar as one needs to know anthroposophy, anthroposophical spiritual science living in each teacher, in each lesson, in the children, and living also in the reports.

Let me briefly characterize how in the Waldorf school gradually, little by little, the teachers learn to know each child's individuality despite the fact that we have large classes. We do not give grades that say "very good," "not good enough"—that is all nonsense. This is not the way to evaluate the children or their work. We give each child a real description of his/her character, presenting them with a mirror of the entire year, and a verse chosen from the depth of the soul. It is our experience that pupils attach enormous importance to these reports. Thus we have experienced the quality of the anthroposophical spirit that moves in the Waldorf school.

But it is not the goal simply to create as quickly as possible many schools based on the model of the Waldorf school. What we really want is that on an international scale this level of insight should grow in very large circles. We must fight the traditionalists who want to build schools on only a state-foundation. One must strive to ensure that the free spiritual life will create its own fully legitimate free schools. We are not interested in the government graciously allowing us to have small unchartered schools; we will not hold out our hand for that. Rather, what is necessary is an agreement to have a popular alliance of the type that one would have in a world school association. This would bring people together over the entire globe for a great, a gigantic, task.

This is as much as I wanted to say about the first part of the threefold social organism. I can only touch lightly upon the other parts, since they are part of life praxis in other realms. Over a period of five centuries, the unified State has been created in what is now the civilized world. On one hand it has absorbed all spiritual life, through education and schooling; it has also to a great extent, if not entirely, absorbed economic life. And Social democracy aspires to use the entire state, the state framework, to institute what ultimately would be a militarized economy, destroying all economic freedom and individuality, as we can see in Trotskyism, in Leninism, precisely what happened there and so frightfully gripped Eastern Europe, all the way to Asia. What we need is to learn that today some things are necessary to humanity.

The economic life has its own particular requirements just as the spiritual life does. Anyone who has, as I did, spent thirty years (half of my life) in Austria, which was already a "laboratory" for the workings

of socially destructive forces<sup>7</sup>—which is why Austria became the first victim of the world cataclysm—anyone living in that Austria with his eyes open could already have seen in the 1870s how things were coming to a precipitous end. Here is an example of the way (in Austria as a whole) the downfall was brought about. In the 1870s, people wanted to have a democratic parliament. How did they go about it? They established kinds of “*Kurien*”: the Curia of great landowners, the Curia of merchants, the Curia of trading and industrial cities, the Curia of landholdings. All kinds of purely economic interests were pulled into the Parliament. These representatives of blatant economic interests were expected to make political decisions. In this manner neither legitimate State interests nor economic interests were given their proper value.

I could give hundreds of reasons to show you that just as on one hand spiritual life must be separated from the actual state life, on the other hand the economic life must similarly be separated too. Just as the spiritual life must be built upon the completely free human being and the administration of free human beings, so too the economic life must be established around the associative principle.

What do I mean by associative principle? We already have a trend toward the establishment of consumers’ association (cooperatives). The consumers join forces. And we have a movement in which producers from the most varied circles join forces. But all we have had until now is a substitute cobbled together from consumers and producers. Only when production is organized—not according to the barometer of profit, but according to needs (demand)—only when we allow those people who are real experts, knowledgeable in the various economic branches, to guide the relationships between producers and consumers, only when we take seriously that, in the spiritual life, we work out of the totality/whole, but in economic life, where one is connected with people in other branches, this can never be the case—once we take this seriously, the associative principle will be incorporated in economic life.

Association is not organization. Having spent a part of my life in Germany, I have noticed that the word “organization” has something terrifying about it. It is in Germany that I learned what it means to want to organize every possible thing, and the results of organizing everything out of a centralized place are terrifying. But association is

not the same as organization. In association, individuals retain their particular effectiveness, they associate so that out of their cooperation a collective judgment (a consensus) can arise. For details, you can read my *Kern der Sozialen Frage* and *Threefold Social Organism*, a collection of articles that appeared in the Stuttgart periodical *Die Dreigliederung*, published by the Bund für Dreigliederung des sozialen Organismus.

In these articles I describe how associations can be created out of truly practical economic life, and that these associations will lead to true and sustainable pricing of goods. Nowadays, all this is merely accidental; but pricing can be the product of the associative cooperation of consumers and producers. For the question of pricing is the pivot of all economic life. If we cannot understand that prices must be set through living cooperation in associations and not by statistics or such, then we will not be able to know what it is all about. We need not bureaucratize bureaucracy; it cannot be worse than it is today. But insofar as the same people who are involved practically in economic life also are its leaders, the whole thing is greatly simplified. We shall ensure that all persons, no matter what they produce, receive enough to support themselves and their families, to acquire the things they need in order produce a comparable product. In other words, if I were to make a pair of boots, I must receive as much as I need in order to be able to produce another pair of boots. However, this cannot be decided on any kind of utopian basis, but will result from the working of associations as I described in my book *Kernpunkte*. This is the essential thing in this impulse of the threefold organization, that it should not be utopian, but should be born entirely out of life praxis and out of the demands of the time. Expertise and competency must direct spiritual life; expertise and competency must lead the economic life within associations, which then join forces in a great world economic association independent of state boundaries.

In the spiritual life and in the economic life, decisions made by majority are monstrous; rather, in these domains, everything must derive from competency. Majority decisions, true democracy, are only effective in those affairs where every person is competent. Between a free spiritual life and an economic life established according to the associative principle, there is a wide range of political and legal affairs to be decided. In parliamentary life every adult is equal to every other

adult and all will decide those questions which naturally remain free from economic life and spiritual life.

Experts have made the remarkable objections that, while they understand that in the threefold social organism there must be a free spiritual life and associative economic life, then there would be nothing left for political life. This is symptomatic, for the modern life of the state has so strongly, powerfully absorbed the economic and spiritual life. Even in people's minds/ideas, the modern state has so thoroughly interconnected the economic life and the intellectual/spiritual life that it has become ineffective; it has failed to develop the most important aspects. Experts now within the political life have no concept of what the particular duties of the political state life ought to be.

What I have presented today is merely a sketch. I pursue these topics in greater detail in the books I have mentioned. But they are fundamentally connected with the most urgent historical necessity.

Shining out of the eighteenth century are three great human ideas: freedom, equality, brotherhood. How could we fail to sense what potential lies in these great human impulses! And yet, some very smart people in the nineteenth century have shown that, in the unified state, freedom, equality and brotherhood cannot coexist. So on one hand our hearts beat faster when we hear mention of these three human ideas, but on the other hand, the clever statesman—and I am not being sarcastic—demonstrates that these three ideals are incompatible. Why is this? What is happening? In the eighteenth century, people felt the irresistible human ideas and impulses of freedom, equality, and brotherhood. But they were hypnotized by the thought that the unified state must do everything. For the threefold social organism, in which freedom, equality and brotherhood will at last become realities, we must go beyond that. In a free spiritual life, which I hope can be brought to the light of day by a World School Association,<sup>8</sup> true human freedom will reign. In the life of the state, standing between spiritual life and economic life, everything will be built upon equality. Only those things will be its purview in which truly all human beings can stand with each other as equals. In the economic life, consumers and producers will cooperate/come together/unite, find the equilibrium that can reach its zenith in a truly human pricing system.

We have the potential to incarnate the three great human ideals of human evolution when we free ourselves from the hypnotic suggestion of the unified state, when we aim for freedom in the spiritual life, equality in the political and legal life—the second branch of the threefold social organism—and brotherhood in an economic life organized based on the principle of associations which arise out of the reality of production and consumption. Freedom in spiritual life, equality in the life of the state, fraternity in economic life: at last we will find the true meaning of these great social ideals of humanity.

### Endnotes

1. Transcription of stenographic notes by Hedda Hummel.
2. Public lecture, stenographic notes originally published in *Die Menschen-schule* N. 12/1959 (no GA publication).
3. *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, 1904–1905 (GA 10), and *Occult Science*, 1910 (GA 13).
4. *The Philosophy of Freedom* appeared in the Fall of 1893, with a printing date of 1894. See GA 4 and GA 4a, documents relating to the *Philosophy of Freedom*.
5. *Anschaulichkeit* could also be translated as *graphic quality*.
6. Between January 1899 and December 1904, Rudolf Steiner taught several nights a week, with great success, at the Berlin Workers' School, a night school founded by Wilhelm Liebknecht, and between 1902 and 1904 at a similar school in Spandau. See chapter XXVIII of the *Autobiography* (GA 28); supporting documentation in *Beiträge zur Rudolf Steiner Gesamtausgabe*, 1111/1993. Also, vivid memoirs by two former students were published in 1979 (Johanna Mücke and Alwin Alfred Rudolph, *Memories of Rudolf Steiner and His Work at the Berlin Workers' School, 1899–1904*, transl. 2004, by Mado Spiegler, available from the Rudolf Steiner Library).
7. Steiner is presumably referring to the fact that the “bourgeois” (or as he also called it “philistine”) project of popularizing sentimental yet materialistic intellectual and scientific ideals is ultimately doomed to fail. This was a view Steiner shared with his anarchist and socialist friends and collaborators.
8. See the young Rudolf Steiner's article on this subject in the Vienna newspaper *Deutsche Wochenschrift* in the collected essays on culture and history 1887–1901 (GA 31).
9. See the relevant note to the Utrecht Lecture (GA 297a, 38).

## IV

### Educational Conversation

Darmstadt, July 28, 1922

*Question:* In the modern age we have resurrected the principle of observation in teaching. It now seems that when children leave school, they are helpless in the face of life. As a result of nothing but observation, they remain struck with the image.

*Rudolf Steiner:* This question, the question of concreteness/pictorial quality, specifically the exclusive focus on pictorial quality in teaching, is a very important pedagogical question for the present time. Now, in order to treat it thoroughly, this question should not be treated in isolation but rather in the context of a comprehensive pedagogical thinking. Here I would first like to state that teaching at the Waldorf school is built upon our knowledge of the human being's development. The Waldorf school is definitely not the school of one particular world-view. But rather, we must put to use in the praxis of the Waldorf school whatever inspiration /support the anthroposophical soul-disposition can provide towards pedagogical deftness, method, and management of things. Indeed, the Waldorf school is intended to come into its own when integrated into practical life. For example, in a practical connection, there is the very important observation that in the child until the six-seventh year we are dealing with an imitative being. Until that time, children are imitators. This is so much the case during the kindergarten age that little can be learned in the conventional sense, but the teacher needs to rely on the child's imitative capacity. People come and ask me all kinds of questions. A father came to me one day, quite distressed: "What shall we do? Our boy, who always was such a good boy, has stolen." "How old is the boy?" I asked. "Five years old." Then, I answered, "We need to investigate whether he really *stole*." Investigation revealed that the boy had not stolen at all, despite the fact that he had actually

taken money out of a drawer. Rather, he had observed how every day his mother would give deliverymen some money out of her drawer, and he thought to himself, "My mother does it, so it must be right." And he simply took the money out of the drawer. He bought sweets, not to eat by himself, but to share with his friends. What he did was simply imitation, as fitted his age. It is very important for children of that age that the adults are careful to not do anything that children would not be allowed to copy.

Then comes the age that starts with the change of teeth and ends at puberty, the age during which children go to primary school. This age demands simply—and this is something that various parties insist should not be obvious—that the child refer to an authority and learn to act accordingly. It is of the utmost importance for later stages of life, specifically in educating capacities for difficult developmental times to come and for all conceivable things in the course of a lifetime, that at this age, from the seventh to fourteenth year, children accept things based on authority. This relationship with the self-evident authority of a teacher and educator is irreplaceable. We can easily find confirmations of the things people cannot have later in life if they were unlucky enough to not have near them a self-evident authority.

This is where this question of the *object lesson* for this age comes in. The current object lesson has grown out of materialism and has been pushed to the extreme. People just have to see everything with their own eyes. They do not believe in anything unless it is right before them; and so they believe that everything must be presented to children in this manner. The problems parents evoke are not the only ones; others arise from the teacher's side. Take the Teachers' Guides with instructions for the object lesson. The banalities and trivialities they dish out are downright monstrous. There is always a reflexive urge to reduce everything to the lowest possible level. These are the object lessons in which the teacher is never supposed to bring the child anything more than what the child already knows. This is the worst possible teaching. That teaching is the best that not only provides for the child's present age, but also for the entire human lifetime. If the course of life does not make it possible to have, at the age of forty or fifty, something left from the time of sitting on school benches, then the teaching was bad.

One's retrospective view should contain living forces. After all, to grow means that our limbs become bigger, but other things are transformed too, everything in us is growing. If we bring the child static concepts, representations and observations that do not grow, that remain as they are, if emphasis is put to their staying the same, then we are sinning against the principle of growth. We must bring to the child things that become part of the living growth process. We cannot do that with the platitudes of the object lesson, but only when we truly encounter the child, Then imponderable elements come into consideration.

I often use an example like the following: Let us assume we want to teach the child the concept of immortality. It can be symbolized by natural processes, for instance with the image of the butterfly and the cocoon. I can say: The immortal soul within the person is like the butterfly in the cocoon; it develops into a spiritual world, just like the butterfly develops out of the cocoon. This is one image, but I can present it to the children in two different ways. The first way would be for me to think: I am the teacher; I am extraordinarily smart; the child is young and frightfully stupid. I will therefore present this concept to the child *as a symbol*. I am way beyond these things, but the child needs to understand in this way the concept of immortality of the soul. So I will explain in an intellectual manner. This practically guarantees that the child will not learn anything, not because what was brought was false as such, but because that is not the right way to teach children anything. If I fully familiarize myself with anthroposophical spiritual science, it will not be just an image that makes me feel smarter than the child, but it will be a truth. Nature itself offers us at one level the butterfly that evolves out of the cocoon, and at a higher level the passage through the gate of death. If I bring the child something that is truly alive in me, the child will get something from it.

We cannot state flatly that we must do things in such or such a way, for it boils down to imponderable elements, a certain soul disposition that I have as the teacher and that is the most important thing. One also needs to consider other difficulties resulting from remaining mired in banal object lessons, which become ever more impersonal: At the very age when teachers should be playing the important role of moral authority, they take themselves out of the picture. Certain things should

absolutely be taught to children from a place of authority. It is impossible to transmit everything by way of an object lesson, for instance moral concepts. One cannot proceed from object lessons, nor can one proceed from rules/laws; they can only be transmitted by way of a self-evident moral authority. And it is one of the most significant experiences for later in life to have accepted something when one was eight, nine or twelve years old because a respected individual considered it right. This relationship to the respected individual is one of the imponderables of education. And when we turn thirty, a particular experience brings back from the deep recesses of human consciousness something one had learned long ago; I can comprehend now what I had simply accepted twenty-five years ago. This is tremendously important. It is actually the experience of something growing towards me which I had accepted in childhood. As a result, all theoretical discussions about more or less “observation” are futile. Things must come from the objects themselves.

Similarly discussions about thinking are also not very important or appropriate. The important thing is that teachers should be assigned to the right place, that human beings assembled in a school organization should be brought together in the right way. This should be our true goal. Curricula and anything else that can be reduced to paragraphs are useless in real life—and education is real life. For if you put together in a room three, or six, or twelve people independently of their predecessors, social origin, or prior education, they will be able to design on paper an ideally beautiful curriculum. Whenever we think up a curriculum this way, paragraph-by-paragraph, it can turn out inordinately beautiful and grand; it can contain the most wonderful things. Yet this is not the issue. The issue is that within the school, which has a certain number of teachers, life should be really alive; each of these teachers has particular capacities, and this is the concrete reality with which one must work. What good is it for a teacher to look and decide: such and such is my “teaching goal”? That is a pure abstraction. The real issue is what the teacher can be for the children *as an individual with a particular stance in the world.*

The “school-problem” in our time is primarily a “teacher-problem” and all questions about details, for instance, the question about the object lesson should be treated from this point of view. To put it bluntly,

can one teach children through object lessons? I must say I feel a sense of silent dread when I see the tortures (children are subjected to) with calculators in a classroom, or when I see material being made into object lessons, material which really should be approached quite differently. If one simply keeps doing nothing but object lessons, one ends up with awkward children, and I say this based on observation. It has nothing to do with phenomenology or phenomenalism; if we truly want to teach phenomenalism we first need to know how to think. Schools are about pedagogical methods, not about scientific method. But we need to know how close the relationship is between sound thinking and not just the brain and the person's head, but also the whole person. How a person learned to think has a lot to do with that person's manual skills. For we really do think with our entire body. Nowadays people believe that we think with the nervous system, when in fact we think with the entire organism. And the reverse is also true. If one is able to give a child, in a natural way, quick and ready thinking and to some extent presence of mind, one is supporting (working for) physical agility, and if one drives this thought-nimbleness into the body, the children's physical agility is in turn strengthened.

What we are doing now in the Waldorf school is much more important than simply the lesson. For example, children receive handwork lessons whereby they get to feel the artistic form on the outside to help them form themselves on the inside? This in turn leads to an understanding of geometrical forms in later studies. This way of familiarizing oneself with things, not just through simple thought-directed object lessons, but through the teaching of symbiosis with the entire world and considering the whole person, this is where we must focus our work. I merely wanted to call your attention to the fact that these things must be considered as parts of the totality of pedagogical thinking and that nowadays there is much too much discussion of details.

We must stick with what was said earlier and repeatedly emphasize: the Waldorf school does not want to teach a worldview as such. The fact that anthroposophical understanding of the soul constitution lies at its foundation is only real to the extent that it can be translated and applied into pedagogical praxis. So, regarding plans for the Waldorf school, it is a matter of developing what can be attained in purely pedagogical fashion

out of the anthroposophical movement. The Waldorf school cannot be and does not want to be the school of a worldview in any direction. This is why until now the Waldorf school never intended to provide the children religious education. Ultimately what worldview one or another anthroposophist believes should play no role, but anthroposophy can only play a role if translated into pedagogical praxis. This is the reason why, when the school was founded, the religious instruction of Catholic children was handed over to Catholic priests and the instruction of Protestant children to a protestant minister. It turned out that, simply as a reflection of the times, there were a great many children from dissimilar backgrounds who had grown up without any religion at all. Religious instruction will now be available for them, but it is not, as such, part of the school curriculum, but is on a level with the Catholic and Protestant instruction as “free religious instruction.” It means that children who otherwise would have had no religious instruction at all can grow with a religious life. It is a free religious class, which can be taught by anyone who understands what it is about and feels a calling to do it, just as others give Catholic or Protestant instruction. But it must be absolutely clear that the curriculum or agenda of the Waldorf school is in no way a philosophical dogma or doctrine. It cannot turn into an anthroposophical training ground; anthroposophy applies only to the teacher’s striving and deepening.

This should close the question concerning this matter; further questions are redundant. At first it was an issue of finding a relevant approach to some practical issues. We have practical views about the way to teach a seven-, eight-, nine-year-old. We felt we had to solve these problems on a strictly practical basis. The Waldorf school of course cannot be an institution for hermits or sectarians; it must be an institution that wants to be in the midst of life, that educates competent human beings for the present and future, for a completely practical life. It thus becomes a matter of organizing teaching in such a way that the Waldorf school is not some kind of institution for eccentrics. I have worked things out in such a way that, from the beginning of school to the end of the third year, the teacher has absolute freedom, but by the end of the third grade, the children must have come far enough to attend any other school. From the ninth to the twelfth year, teachers again have complete free-

dom, but by the end of this period, the child must be ready to transfer to any other school, and similarly with final graduation. We add one class every year; we will have to study what happens after that.

As you see, the issue is not to impose a partisan view or philosophy, and so forth, but purely and simply to translate anthroposophy into a working pedagogy. The ideal would be for children to not know at all that there is such a thing as anthroposophy—because anthroposophy is meant for adults. We have no children’s catechism and we are in no position to even wish to have one. The lessons should be completely objective and thoroughly a part of life. These things cannot be attained ideally. No matter how much teachers strive to remain objective, it still is a fact that one child lives in one circle of parents and the next child with different parents; and then there are anthroposophical fanatics and their children, and just as children bring everything else to school, these children bring all kinds of inappropriate anthroposophical arrogance, for that does exist. We must be absolutely firm about a Waldorf school never being allowed to be in any way a school for the teaching of a particular worldview. This is not in anyway what the Waldorf school is about. We want to help children grow into what they need to be to become competent human beings in the immediate present, in the life in which we have been placed, within the state and everything else that it involves. We want them to stand in the midst of it all as competent beings. It goes without saying that the Waldorf school should not bring threefolding-ideas into the elementary school curriculum. Waldorf pedagogy does not allow for that. Partisanship cannot be introduced into the Waldorf school coming from the anthroposophical side.

*Question:* Is not the method adopted by the (Catholic) priest contradictory to the rest of the teaching? Isn’t there some kind of discrepancy?

*Steiner:* Nothing can be perfect in life. It would be very nice if we could have not just a Catholic priest or a Protestant minister, but also a clergyman teaching with our methods. As I said already, our school wants to implement only a pedagogical practice, not a philosophy. The rest can go hand in hand with it. It goes without saying that the “free religious classes”—since there have been requests for such a class to be taught

strictly by anthroposophists—should use our methods. It would of course please us if the Catholic and Protestant classes also were taught in this way, but so far we have not been able to make it happen.

*Question:* How is the content of classes for anthroposophists' children determined?

*Steiner:* The materials are chosen in such a way as to take into account the children's age. This is always the psychological foundation. It is the case that materials are always most effectively brought to the children if one hits precisely the developmental age at which they should be given, the time when the children's inner beings resonate most with a subject. In practice, it means that in the seventh–eighth year, something can be achieved with objective gospel or Bible stories, but nothing could be gained at all from catechism. Children could not take up the latter at all. On the other hand, children at that age are open to everything religious that can develop ethical and religious concepts out of a certain presentation of natural processes. First and foremost, we can lead children to religious feeling through the use of natural images.

It is then possible to lead children to Christian sensibility proper after the eighth year or even later, in the ninth year. That is the point when they can first understand what, for instance, lies behind the figure of Christ Jesus. Only then do children begin to grow into the concepts they need in order to understand the Gospels' meaning. It is good if the child has first a foundation of awe and reverence and is introduced later to the meaning of the Gospels and then gradually into the deeper mysteries of Christianity. I should emphasize that this free religious teaching is, in the truest sense, Christian and that children from various confessions participating in the classes are introduced to the real meaning of Christianity. It is of course the case that being a teacher at the Waldorf school means having come to a (Christian) conviction, albeit from an anthroposophical point of view. While a teacher comes to Christianity from this side, and one might put words differently, the children are introduced to a real Christianity. Just as we give full freedom to the Protestant and Catholic teaching, we give full freedom to the teaching of religion from an anthroposophical point of view. I never intended to

do anything to get children to attend this free religious teaching. They came in large numbers, but we do not want to hamper or cloud the school's reputation or confuse its purpose by making it possible for the school to be described as a school of a particular philosophy. This is not what we want to be. Therefore we are careful about the free religious classes and offer them only because they were requested.



## V

## Anthroposophy and the Riddles of the Soul

Stuttgart, January 17, 1922

Human beings confront the riddles of existence only once they have developed a certain level of consciousness about life, when they feel the urge to formulate representations, sentiments, feelings about their relationship with the world. But once we get there, these riddles truly represent what one might call a vital question, for they are not just the expression of theoretical longings, purely external cultural questions. Indeed, they affect a person's entire stance in the world, the manner in which that person finds his way in life, the level of inner security and steadiness with which he goes through life. Everything depends on the solution to these riddles.

Furthermore, there are substantial differences among the various kinds of existential riddles. When human beings face nature, they need to form representations and feelings about their relationship with nature. To make a comparison: When people attain consciousness in the fashion I have described, unless they can familiarize themselves with particular phenomena presenting them with mysteries of nature, their existence feels like a night of the spirit; they feel adrift in a dark world with no way to orient themselves. At the same time, this relationship with the cosmic secrets of natural existence remains, to some extent, external; it concerns their external relationship with existence.

We feel very differently about these riddles when they are the riddles of our own soul. We live in these riddles; they constitute what may be the immediate source of the soul's health or illness, and can become the source of physical health or illness. For the soul life is extremely complex; no matter how simple it may at first appear. Science has accepted without question that what inhabits our consciousness throughout our waking days, from morning to night, is only *one* part of

our soul life. A major part of our soul life lies dormant in unconscious (or, I might also say, subconscious) layers; it rises from the depths in the form of vague sensations, ill-defined moods and other soul-contents, forming what is an incomplete impression in our soul. The perceived happiness or unhappiness of our life is related to what is thus sunk in the obscure underground of our soul life. And those who attempt, through the anthroposophical path, to fathom the life of the soul will soon learn that everything which thus dimly emerges from the depths of the soul is connected with the physical body. We realize the extent to which, silently at first, then more and more strongly, our entire state of health, what makes us competent or ill-fitted for life, can depend on these subconscious soul moods.

I do not intend to speak to you today in the way people frequently speak about this unconscious state of soul in, which everything that glimmers obscurely in the consciousness gets stuffed into the large vessel of this unconscious and people form more or less vague notions about the way this unconscious or this subconscious works. I have been speaking for many years about matters of anthroposophical research and will not start out from the most elementary aspects of this research, but rather will examine how in their primordial sense, these matters of the soul life are connected with happiness or unhappiness. In this respect, I would like to consider today many things that affect the human soul, flooded as it is by all kinds of initially unknown forces, with appeasing or disquieting effects, causing us happiness or suffering.

Even a superficial consideration of our soul life shows us two clearly distinguishable poles: on one side, the life of representations, with everything that plays out clearly, luminously, in our consciousness; on the other side, our will life that to some extent rises up from the soul's dark and obscure underlayers.

As I have told you often, in the ordinary course of human life we distinguish two conditions of consciousness: the waking state and the sleeping state, of which only one is an articulate conscious state. In the sleeping state, the conscious life of representations stops, the entire soul life sinks into more or less opaque darkness. But if we are completely objective about our waking soul life, we are bound to say that we are only really awake when we are thinking in representations. When awake,

to the extent that our consciousness is full of clear representations and luminous thoughts, we are more or less in charge. Our will impulses, our actions, are also accompanied by thoughts. But even when dealing with the simplest bodily movements, we are completely in the dark about the manner in which conscious thinking is connected with what actually takes place within a will impulse, an activity. I know very little, I am really groping in the dark about what actually happens inside my limb when I as much as raise my arm, or when the thought aimed at raising my arm wants to realize itself, shoots in, as it were, and willfully sets the arm in motion!

What takes place in my physical organism is just as remote from wakeful daytime consciousness as what takes place in the human soul between falling asleep and waking. We really must state quite unambiguously: When it comes to the human soul life, the sleeping state is ever pervasive; even in our physical waking state, we experience the impact of sleep. And only in our representations, only in the experience of clear, light-filled thoughts, are we ever fully awake. Between these two states, the fully wakeful state of representations and the life of the will sunk in shadows, there lies, partraking of both, the life of feelings and moods. Our feelings permeate our representations. Out of our feelings, we bring particular sympathies and antipathies to the life of representations, and thereby connect or separate our representations. Our feeling life flows back and forth between our representations and our will life. Whatever flows into our will impulses is accompanied by emotional judgments, for instance, when we perceive some activities as dutiful and others as lapses in our duty, to the extent that we experience a certain feeling of satisfaction about our “dutiful” activities and a sense of dissatisfaction about deeds that are unsuccessful or in some other way misguided.

But actual soul riddles do not arise for the dull/insensitive person who surrenders at one moment to representations and at another to feelings and the will. These riddles appear to a person as he becomes increasingly conscious. Yet even then, the riddles never fully rise to the conscious level but belong to a domain of more or less subconscious experiences. We are never entirely clear just how deeply our day-to-day happiness or sadness is affected by our moods, the composition of our soul-life. We still need to investigate and clearly express what lives dimly

in our consciousness. And please remember the following as you listen to the explanations that follow: I will put into clearly defined terms things that are never that clearcut in our consciousness, yet are present in the soul, things we sense, things we feel, without being able to bring them up to consciousness, things that contribute to our good or ill health. Soul-riddles are never purely theoretical, which is precisely why they are truly existential.

When we surrender to our representations—again I am spelling out what we really feel, something that is never completely conscious—we experience something like the vanity of our existence. The life of representations is a life in images. During our waking hours, this life is filled with impressions and perceptions received from the outer world. Experiences in nature create the content of our representations, they live within us; these we draw upon as our memories. Yet we are always aware of the fact that *we are active*, to the extent that we process these representations. When we separate and connect them, we are inwardly active, but the activity is never completely present in our mind. What is present is to some extent a mirroring of the external world, and we know that, for our representations, we are dependent on the outer world, that what we have is merely an image of this outer world. Insofar as we live in representations, we live in images; in our representation-life, we do not experience any full-fledged content. No matter how paradoxical it may seem, this feeling is expressed subconsciously. And no matter how dim its presence in our consciousness, it lives in the subconscious and expresses itself in fearful, anxious feelings about our representations.

Paradoxical as it may seem, this subterranean stream of the human soul life is real. Most people do not know anything about it, yet most people—all people, actually—are constantly under its influence. And this stream is a fearful, anxious one. It feels as if we could lose ourselves in the world, as if we were standing on the edge of a precipice, because our world of representations is a world of mere images. And the vague longing then arises in the soul: Where, in this barren world of images, shall I find existence?

It is possible to compare this unconscious feeling in the subterranean stream of the soul with the feeling we experience in the physical realm when we run out of air, when we experience air-deprivation and

conscious feelings of anxiety or panic. Actually, the life of representations is always accompanied by perceptions akin to those experienced consciously as a result of this physical condition. And thus, one way to look at the riddles of the soul is to picture, rising from the abysses of the soul, something germinating or slumbering in the soul rather than engaging in theoretical considerations.

On the other hand, when we surrender to the will element, we experience the opposite condition. There is another subconscious stream in the soul. Here people feel exposed to their desires, their emotions, their instincts; they experience that something nature-like plays into the human soul, something that does not lead to clear thinking. It is to some extent plunged in a reality, a concrete reality, that we cannot permeate with light, something that creates darkness in ourselves. And when we direct our observation to the subterranean streams of the soul, we must again admit: Attempting to characterize what lives in the soul's depths always means dealing in contradictions—we must admit that what lives there is felt unconsciously. One can characterize it by saying: In our consciousness, we experience anger in the same way we feel the inability to breathe out, for instance when the circulation of the blood is disturbed so that the air we breathe is not properly transformed in the body, leading to a kind of asphyxia. Something like an angry mood always results from such absorption in the will element of the human soul.

These are forces deep in the human unconscious whose surges constitute the really puzzling element in human soul life. If we merely take the pictorial quality of representations, or the will in its compelling force, as they present themselves to the consciousness, we merely experience these riddles of the soul as imprecise, vague moods, yet gain no clarity about the soul's riddles. At bottom we do not know what this unclear working is in us, what has such a deep influence over our feeling of happiness or unhappiness in life.

We must always repeat: The riddles of the soul differ from the riddles of nature in that they are experienced inwardly; they flood over from the deep subterranean streams of the soul and must first be articulated. This is why no scientist can get much of a handle on the soul's riddles: There is nothing wrong with science in its right place, as I have often reiter-

ared. The whole of modern scientific thinking shows us how helpless science—which in other domains has celebrated such triumphs—can be when it encounters the existential riddles connected with the soul life. I have two examples that to my mind are deeply significant of the problem there, and of what is necessary in order to penetrate scientifically into the realm of soul riddles.

Almost half a century ago, speaking in Leipzig at the forty-fifth congress of natural science physiologist Emil DuBois-Reymond<sup>1</sup> said something that bears repeating; although it created a big stir at the time, it is forgotten today and has vanished from discussion. His talk dealt with “the limits of our knowledge of nature,” and he rightly mentioned on one hand that the material world is in its very essence one boundary of our knowledge of nature. He said, “The human mind cannot penetrate where matter intervenes. Although the external observation of sense phenomena discloses the *existence* of matter, it must tell us *what* matter really *is*.” This is one boundary. The other boundary is that of human consciousness. According to DuBois-Reymond, even the most perfect cognition still will not allow us to gain any knowledge of how even the simplest representation comes about. Even if we knew how atoms of carbon, hydrogen, nitrogen, and oxygen move about in the human brain, clear insights about these movements would never allow us to establish how even the simplest sensations (“I see red” or “I smell the fragrance of a rose”) occur, in other words, how the primary elements of the soul life materialize.

And of course he was absolutely right on this point. There is a second boundary for external natural science, but here DuBois-Reymond’s conviction is precisely the one which anthroposophic research intends to counter. He felt that the boundaries of our knowledge of nature are those of the scientific method in its entirety. Therefore he said: If we want to penetrate this domain of the soul-spiritual, we must use ways other than those of science, for where supernaturalism begins, i.e., when we enter the realm of the soul-spirit, there science must stop. This is precisely what anthroposophic research wants to establish for the world: that science need not exhaust itself in external-natural existence, but rather, can develop the means to penetrate into the spirit-soul.

The other example is that of an outstanding individual, Franz Bren-

rano, who wanted to found a psychology according to the methods of modern natural science. That was his ideal. I have explained in detail the state of affairs underpinning Brentano's research in part three of my book *Riddles of the Soul* and will repeat here only the main points. In the early 1870s, Brentano attempted to write a science of the soul, *Psychology*. The first volume appeared in the spring of 1874, the second volume was promised for the autumn, but was never published. The work was supposed to have four volumes in all, but, aside from the first volume, only isolated essays appeared, and they remain fragmentary.<sup>2</sup> The entire work remains incomplete. I have analyzed why this must be so in my book. Brentano wanted to investigate the life of the soul, holding closely to the model of the natural sciences, and he made a remarkable confession: Natural scientific research allows one to find one's way into the details of the soul life; we can show how representations link up with each other, how they diverge, how particular feelings are connected with particular representations, how will impulses relate to representations, how memory works, and so forth. But if we had to stop there, if we could study only the details, if in the interest of scientific method we had to sacrifice the knowledge of the most important questions of human existence, where would that leave us? Brentano found justified the longing we find in Ancient Greece, in Plato and Aristotle's wish for the detailed investigation of the human soul leading to the great questions of birth and immortality. Brentano found it sad if, in the effort to investigate the soul life scientifically, one were to renounce knowing anything about the fate after death of the better part of the human being, when the physical body is surrendered to the earth.

And we can see from Brentano's achievement in the first volume of his *Psychology* that his entire scientific program was to take questions which the public at large was happy to leave to the scholars, and paved a wide road to the great questions of human immortality and the divine-spiritual meaning of the world as it is reflected in the soul. Brentano however never found a suitable method to do so based on his scientific frame of mind, and since he was an honorable researcher by nature, he stopped writing.

This scientist's destiny shows tragically that what is often recognized today as the only valid scientific approach must be paralyzed when it

touches the great riddles of the human soul. And it is this—let me say it again—which anthropology wants to defend to the world: The path Brentano was unable to find coming out of natural science, this path can be found! And it can be found, if one does not get stuck with the ordinary capacities of the soul, as observed in external life, and as ordinary science uses them.

I have often said that there are in each human soul *dormant* (or to use the scientific expression, *latent*) cognitive capacities, which must first be drawn out, just as other capacities are drawn out of the child through education. Those who have developed their ordinary cognitive capacities must school themselves in fervent inner soul exercises in order to form those soul capacities that will allow them to shed light and clarity upon the two areas of mysterious human soul-experience—the experience of representations and the experience of will impulses—so as to bring some transparency to the human soul process, to make understandable what is actually taking place in human representation and in human will. For unless one understands these elementary riddles of the soul, one cannot find the way, either to the more challenging questions of immortal human existence or to the divine-spiritual content of the world in which the human soul originates.

I have often explained that the human being needs to do inner exercises, purely soul-spiritual exercises, in order to awaken into existence otherwise dormant cognitive capacities that can really help further cognition. I have indicated that it is possible to strengthen the life of representations. As we can strengthen a muscle by working it continuously, similarly we can strengthen the life of representations if we give it clear direction, by moving to the center of consciousness easily graspable representations and, in this fashion, devoting ourselves consistently to a work of mental picturing, which we are not in the habit of performing. This inner work is described in detail in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, and in part two of my *Ocult Science*<sup>3</sup> there is specific information about the way such meditation and concentration exercises completely change a person's life of representations. Essentially, without any outlandish undertaking, but simply through the further development of a person's ordinary thinking and representations, it is possible to produce a stronger, more vigorous life of representations.

And by producing this more vigorous life of representations, by raising ourselves through meditation and concentration above things that in our ordinary mental picturing are merely insubstantial images, we arrive at something that I call *imaginative representation*.

This imaginative representation is alive in ordinary thinking with a vividness that one normally associates only with external physical sensations. Gradually, one comes to a point where the representations are no longer merely abstract, merely imaginary. Rather, through purely inner investigation, conducted as earnestly as any scientific research, one discovers that the soul which otherwise would get filled only with the data of external impressions, is filled by *forces* that to some extent “shoot” into the soul. When developed/trained through meditation and concentration, mental pictures/representations lose their fleeting quality and are, instead, shot through with forces that I would like to call *formative forces*, forces that constitute an inner spiritual plastic element. And after a certain time, one discovers that, through this development of the forces of representation, the human body’s own imaging force coalesces, and after a certain point, one discovers that the thought life is nothing more than “diluted” forces of human growth. Our life of representations in ordinary consciousness is a diluted form of what forms us in the physical body from birth to death.

Consider the newborn child. We know that in this infant—starting with the brain—plastic, formative forces are at work, shaping the body. We follow the child’s growth, we note how it radiates from the activity of the brain, and we follow it up to a certain point in human life, the change of teeth, around the seventh year. We perceive this life of forces, at first undefined, pulsating in the human being, sculpturally active. On the other hand, by developing our representations through meditation, through concentration, we are unconsciously led to the same element of plasticity that has been working within us since early childhood. And this is an important discovery of our inner life, that we can in this way strengthen the life of representations, make it so intense that one feels as if *enclosed* within the human formative forces, the formative metabolic forces of human growth. No matter how odd it may sound for current research, it is really possible, through a strengthening of the soul, to grow into something that then enfolds us, to develop formative forces that

sculpturally mold our physical body. Through the life of representations we grow into reality; we enter a formative element.

And in this fashion, one learns what lies behind the simple thought process, how a spiritual being with which one is now united works from birth to death in the human organism. The life of representations becomes fully real. No longer a simple life-in-images, representations become a life-of-forces (*Kraftleben*), standing at the center of existence. And only when we know this can consciousness overcome the undercurrents of fearfulness, of anguish in the human soul, so that anthroposophy effectively points not at a theoretical solution of the soul's riddles, but rather to a completely practical inner solution, to be experienced vitally.

Anthroposophical investigations make it possible for something to enter human consciousness and to be understood, something that lives in the human being, something so “diluted” that it appears to be little more than our ordinary life of representations, although it is truly the sphere in which our existence is growing inwardly. And to the extent that human beings lose gravity/grounding (*Schwerkewicht*), as it were, and run into an undercurrent of fear in the soul life, they can invigorate their representations by having recourse to the findings of spiritual scientific anthroposophy regarding representations and thus. Anthroposophy does not solve the soul's riddles by providing theory; instead, it gives the person answers accessible to healthy human understanding, which then—as if providing the necessary center of gravity—become available for consciousness, for the soul's life, so that anthroposophy can flow into the soul's mood, the soul's constitution, resolving the riddles.

One recognizes, on one hand, that the human being is a formed/constructed being; that the human being appears as the representative form of a totality; that individual organs are formed out of the spirit and that we—in order to be free, to not be compelled to act by this inner force—can give ourselves over to free mirror-images, develop our merely pictorial representations into something plastic and formed. In *Philosophy of Freedom*,<sup>4</sup> published in the early 1890s, I developed this question and showed that human beings are free to the extent that they can live in *pure thoughts—fully conscious yet disconnected from any external reality*; that in these pure thoughts, moral impulses can be

shaped; that one needs to do something personally in order for the mirror images to change; mirror images do not determine us in a causal manner. Humans would never be free, if they were determined by a reality in their ordinary consciousness. In our habitual consciousness, representations are mere images that cannot determine us, any more than reflected images can determine us. Human beings are free. In order to be free, they must raise their life out of the growth force, the growth body, the image-formative body, which they traverse. But the price of human freedom is an undercurrent of fear in the soul life. Therefore human beings must learn to experience the feeling of freedom, in their ordinary consciousness, yet also be able to establish as a polarity to this experience of freedom what anthroposophy can offer to fortify the life of representation.

By continuing along this path, we come from this very diluted, merely pictorial representation-life to concrete reality, living and forming the human being. This is not the physical body, the physical organs; it is a supersensible body of forces, *fully there*. We grasp/take a hold of something that lies outside of the physical body, and simply by examining the soul's riddles we enter a realm that has supersensible reality, independent of the human physical body. One advances to something that was prepared, through birth or conception, as a physical body dependent on simple hereditary relationships, and modeled after external natural facts. We learn how traits inherited from parents and grandparents are bound with the whole body's being formed in the mother's organism, bound with something that comes from the spiritual world, something that is returning from a former life. One arrives at one aspect of the question of immortality. One looks at something immortal, something eternal in human nature because, coming from the spiritual world, it penetrates the human body through conception or birth and because it continues to work throughout the earthly life as an inner plastic/formative force, with which we must unite in order to strengthen our thought life.

Thus, anthroposophy provides the perspective that Brentano was seeking. Brentano too began with an investigation of thinking, but he limited himself to registering what is present in ordinary consciousness. Only the strengthening of thought life through meditation and con-

centration directs this thought life to the plastic/formative inner force and leads to the path that starts with the understanding of simple daily thinking and ends with the soul-spiritual element in the human being, that lived in the soul-spiritual world before birth, before conception, and attached itself to the forces of inheritance, with the physical forces of the human body. There is no other solution to the soul's riddles than finding this path from the simplest phenomena of day-to-day life to the bigger mysteries of existence.

I have described what the human being can attain in regard to this thought life. There [in the thought life], something can be attained that to some extent drives the human being to spatial exteriorization, something that penetrates and forms the space-bound physicality of the human being, something that expresses itself in form, that descends from the spiritual world and flows into the external form of the human being (which includes the inner organs). But this is only one side of human life; the soul partakes also of the other side. Whereas we can creatively form our thought life through meditation and concentration, we cannot similarly form the will life in such a way that one could actually call it strengthened, although we *can* make it more generous, more self-sacrificing, more spiritualized.

We can, to some extent, separate the will life from of the daily grind. I have outlined many individual exercises and they need to be practiced for years—spiritual science is no easier than stargazing or clinical observation. But let me clarify a few essentials. This detachment can take place if, in thinking, we separate the will element from its ordinary course, where it cleaves to physical facts. The ordinary path of the will element holds fast to physical facts, and one can detach them, for instance by thinking of events in reverse chronological order. For instance, plays are usually performed from Act I to Act V; let us imagine a play going from the end to the beginning. Likewise, one might, in the evening, relive one's usual daily routine in reverse order, dividing it in the smallest possible parts, from evening to morning, just as one can imagine ascending a staircase by visualizing oneself descending backwards, from the top to the bottom step.

We are used to dealing with our thoughts in the same way we deal with external facts, which gives thinking a passive role compared to the

will that unfolds in it. When we exercise “backward-representation” and actually pull thinking away from the course of external facts, making it self-referential, then thinking becomes inwardly active, suffused with inner initiative. Through serious and vigorous exercises in self-observation, we strengthen this capacity by observing what we are doing as *Willensmensch*, as if we were standing next to ourselves and observing ourselves step by step, as the will is deployed. Or when we start an activity, we can do an exercise that specifically consists in planning the action and then performing it *precisely*, with determination, so that we live entirely in the will element. I only want to mention some basics about these exercises that separate the will not only from external facts, but also from its connections with the will itself; these exercises make the will autonomous, spiritualize it. We then truly reach a development of the will, so that in the soul life now developing the will, we experience ourselves “out of the body.” It is a remarkable experience; only thusly can we understand the nature of the will. In ordinary life, the will is tied to the physical body. We see it at work whenever we move our limbs. It takes our thought life for us to observe the processes of the will, its workings. Having detached it from physicality, we experience it as such, feel totally at one with it. It is then suffused by an enhancement of the force that is otherwise tied to our physical organism, the force of love. And this devoted element in the soul develops into a transparent, luminous clarity, love, that we recognize, although somewhat obscurely, as an emotional will-life.

I know how little appreciation we have in the present time for love as a cognitive force. Indeed, it is not one in ordinary life. But when love is so developed that the will is no longer rooted in instincts, desires and emotions, but rather in the pure soul, independent of physicality, only then will love be known in its essence, and it will then become clear how completely different from the thinking element it is. We have seen the thinking element as a formative, constructive element, something that allows organs to come out of organs, ultimately resulting in human reproduction. The *thought* element unfolds as a plastic process, working into human physicality out of the soul. The *will* element unfolds out of the body so that—when we know it apart from the body, we can observe how it works upon the body—only now, the body is no longer

being sculpted. Instead, what had been molded is now taken apart, dissolved, turned to dust, floats away. The will element—and try not to misunderstand me—is that which constantly burns up the form element of the human being, turns it to flame, spiritually speaking. This is a metaphor, but it stands for something important.

Human life, pouring out of the soul into the body, can only be truly understood if we grasp it, on one hand, as a plastic/formative element, and on the other hand as the *dissolution* of this very plastic element, so-to-say as that which allows the plastic element to fuse with what has been reduced to dust, liquefied. And insofar as human will always has that dissolving, pulverizing, liquefying quality, we now see that this willful element is that which shows us the other side of human life, the gate of death.

As the formative quality of thinking enables us to know the spiritually malleable element in the human soul, which enters the physical body through birth or conception, we also learn how the will element dissolves the human body. But in this dissolution—let me repeat, I am speaking metaphorically—pure spirituality arises from the flame. We encounter the soul's departure from life. We learn to understand death as the “liquefaction” of the will element. We learn what it is that takes place at death, by understanding what takes place in the human being's daily acts of volition. Daily acts of will produce in the physical body a kind of combustive process, but out of this combustion, our inner soul life proceeds. What we feel inwardly as being our soul life could not exist if we were always pure body, if we were not malleable. The solid, formed element must be dismantled, dissolved, and from the dissolution of the solid form, from the ongoing destruction of the body, the soul element comes to life. We understand about the exit of the human soul from the physical body at death, which is merely the instantaneous summarizing of the continuous unfolding of will into the spirituality of the soul. Just as I, at this moment, experience my will as a kind of combustion process, a dissolving process in my own body, I can also learn that the destruction of the body at death is really nothing more than the last ripple of the will hidden in the body, as the spirit returns to the spiritual world.

This, then, takes us from anthroposophy to the soul's riddles. Anthroposophy does not mean to be a theory; certainly, it wants to impart knowledge, but not theoretical knowledge, for it wants to be food for the soul. And in this way, it can display to our eyes the individual soul's daily experiences; and from these individual experiences, it can proceed to the answers to the great questions of the soul life.

Allow me to mention one item in particular, which will suggest the basis on which anthroposophy will guide us to the answers to the riddle of humanity, as I give some details about human memory. If we succeed in strengthening our life of representations as described above, and if we learn that the maleable element is constantly undermined by the will element, we shall see inner soul processes in transparent clarity. We shall be able to see how human beings stand in relation to the outer world, how from this outer world they receive impressions that are transformed into representations (and into thoughts about these impressions) and how these representations are brought up over time from the subsoil of the soul in the form of memories, or else how spontaneous, "free-rising" memory-representations come to the surface. Anyone looking objectively at human soul life will—from the emergence of memory representations—become aware of important soul riddles; indeed, people have said very curious things about the nature of memory. People have imagined, and still imagine now, that through sensations, we form impressions, which are taken up by the senses and stored through the nervous system, whereupon the person transforms them through representation. These representations then sink into particular recesses of the soul life and come back to the surface when we call them. No one who is objective at all can claim to have any clear idea of the way these representations are supposedly wandering through unknown basements of the soul, only to reappear spontaneously; either when they happen to be needed or when they are triggered by something, which in turn appears as a new perception, a new impression from the outer world.

This is where anthroposophy proceeds to genuine, truthful observation of the human soul life. To the extent that it is aware of both the invigorated life of representations and the spiritualized will-life, it goes to the heart of the entire process leading from the perception of

external objects, through the making of representation, the formation of memories and the emergence of remembered representations. Insofar as anthroposophical research through this organization of the life of representations and of the will-life forges ahead to the cognitive forces I have described, the soul processes and physical processes as well as the manner in which they interact are so transformed that—if you allow the comparison—something quite dark and opaque is illuminated and suddenly becomes transparent. Through this strengthened life of representations and spiritualized will-life, the entire soul process becomes transparent.

So, what are we looking at? We see that external impressions upon the senses range very far; that the entire process is prolonged and that what I described as a formative, plastic element in the strengthened thought-life ordinarily operates as simply the prolongation of the perceptual process. I perceive outwardly, yet what works in me is not just the abstract thoughts of my ordinary consciousness, but also things that only spiritual science can fathom. And this is an ongoing process: the sculptural/plastic quality of the representations works its way into the depths of the soul and body. And once this has occurred, after thinking has done its formative work in the soul's subsoil and physical under-layers, the human being goes on. There, the will—a decisive will—is active, but it is a spiritualized will. This will develops in the human in the outer brain, by dissolving for ordinary consciousness in the formative parts of the brain, that which was built up by impressions, so that, to put it roughly, we have spread over the underground an external brain-surface, in which the formative forces continue their work.

Let us assume that I choose to recall something, and I initiate this decision through a particular series of representations. This unfolding of the will is connected in turn with a destructive process, during which no external impressions are penetrating; and the destructive quality of the developing will ensures that such external impressions will not penetrate. In the case of voluntary recollection, this destruction allows things lying in the underground to rise as formative forces in the human being. If representations come up spontaneously, it is the opposite. In this case, one or another impression is present and turns into a thought. The thought has a plastic effect. It becomes imprinted on the brain.

These formative forces are similar to the plasticity that once helped form what can live in the underground in a particular form. This lives in the formative cells now shaped by the thought.

In this manner, the soul life becomes transparent. One learns to see its interactions with the life-body in the cooperation between the spirit, physicality and the soul. One learns to recognize it in its inner plastic construction, in its continuous extinction, as it is burnt, consumed by the will-element. Once we have learned to understand each individual moment of life, we learn to grasp in these streams of life the nature of the great life-questions. We learn to recognize out of thinking, what came into physical earthly life at birth, and to recognize out of the will, what at death returns to the spiritual world. Thus anthroposophical research findings appear as something, which, out of the details of life, leads to the comprehensive understanding of the riddles of human existence.

In this manner, whenever we recognize, already in ordinary memory, the plastic nature of thinking, similar to the formative processes in the physical body, we also experience that what is not yet in the body, but unites with the body at conception and birth, has a “sculpting” effect in life. We recognize the human life element in this plasticity, for we learn to know the only plastic element, which already appears in the forming of the memory.

Anthroposophy wants to consider the soul riddles in a living fashion! Indeed, the most important thing we need to understand about anthroposophic research is its complete commitment to the scientific conscientiousness to which we have been drawn by the tremendous progress made in the natural sciences. Yet together with this conscientiousness, we make the effort to reach beyond what mere external observation, mere external experiments, can offer, so that our effort should progress beyond the capacities whose presence in the human soul make human beings such a riddle to themselves, and we have an intention to further train these capacities towards the theoretical (and especially the practical) solution of these riddles.

We need not fear that those who are about to find a so-called solution of the soul’s riddles will one day propose perfect knowledge, as a done deed, which could then lead to the soul’s decadence in laziness, neglect of its own life. At every moment, the soul brings up these riddles,

which I have described as the living, experienced riddles of the soul. And at every moment we need anew the results of spiritual research, working to balance out what so puzzlingly rises from the dark depths of the soul. What I called the fearful, angry subterranean streams of human soul life is nothing other than the human soul's inner demand not to treat anything as if it were self-evident, but rather to constantly take things up as experiences. For the human soul is always a riddle for itself, and it constantly needs solutions. What anthroposophical research wishes to offer is precisely such *ongoing* solutions to the riddles, tying in with the reality of existence, so that one can say: Just as the human being as physical being constantly needs to absorb nourishment and cannot simply be fed once and for all, because food connects it with the life process, so too is what anthroposophy offers us as the solution of the soul's riddles. Its intensive inner reality escapes us unless we keep it constantly in our field of vision, constantly progressing. We are dealing with a reality, not with a theory to be learned and memorized once and for all. Just as with the reality of physical nourishment, we are dealing with something that must be part of the *ongoing stream of life*.

It is when they busy themselves with the results of anthroposophy regarding the soul's riddles that human beings become aware of the following (truth): to learn—it may sound strange, yet it is a truth that anyone working with anthroposophy can experience—that ultimately, we cannot learn anthroposophy; we can allow its results to touch us; we can read books, listen to lectures; but unless we constantly experience what we have received in this manner, unless we participate in the ongoing process—just as we constantly connect the substances of the external world with the physical bodily processes through eating and metabolism—so too, what anthroposophy has to offer loses its significance for the human soul unless it is constantly introduced into this soul process, just as the physical substance will lose its meaning for the physical body if it is not continuously reintroduced into the physicality. And just as the absence of physical nourishment results in hunger and thirst, so too, out of the depths of the soul, fearful and angry beings arise, expressing what needs to be influenced by a real knowledge of the spiritual significance of the life of representation and the will-life. And if human beings in their consciousness can manage to treat the

results of anthroposophical research as food for the soul, they will find the balance their soul needs, something to be experienced as the eternal, living solution to the eternal living soul's riddles.

One thing must be reiterated: Although it is possible to embark on the path of autonomous anthroposophical research, anthroposophy is not taught in order to make everybody capable of testing what anthroposophy is offering. Even when one does not do this (thorough testing), healthy human reasoning allows one to decide whether the findings of anthroposophy are reasonable or unreasonable. A person can follow the claims of anthroposophical research, simply using healthy reasoning. But people have something beyond this capacity. Unless they are knowledgeable in physiology or biology, people (laymen) will not be able to test the chemical composition of their food; but they can test what for human beings are foods for truth, merely in the process of enjoying them, of setting them in contact with the forces of the life process. Thus they can unite their souls with the findings of anthroposophy, its indications of the way it solves the soul's riddles, and they will find in them much satisfaction. And what ultimately are the soul's riddles for you all gathered here? Soul's riddles understood in their living quality are nothing more than the expression of a spiritual hunger and a spiritual thirst. And the solution of the riddles is nothing more than the acceptance of truly spiritual contents, truly spiritual beings that unite with the human spirit and the human soul life. And so, I might say, the solution of the soul's riddles lies in spiritual saturation constantly to be found. The more alive the process is for me, the more I can see that anthroposophy is meant to intervene in practical life at each moment, as it attempts to take root in daily life and reach to the great riddles of existence, leading human beings to the divine spiritual sources of existence, leading them to their immortal part, all the more for being clear that anthroposophy cannot be theory, but something that can be fully experienced.

From this point of view, anthroposophy intends to affect the most varied domains of practical life. This is the point of view from which it endeavored to give form to the Waldorf school founded by Emil Molt, which I have described here repeatedly as something that is being done in the practical social realm.

As you can see, anthroposophy aims toward solving the soul's riddles by turning to the whole living person, body, soul and spirit. Thereby it overcomes the partial quality of this knowledge and soul life that was necessarily bound to arise with the recognized results of modern science (which anthroposophy recognizes as the triumph it is).

But one should pay attention to something—and it would have been noticed easily, were anthroposophy not so misunderstood—which was contributed, for instance, last summer in Stuttgart, at the anthroposophical congress, where Dr. von Heydebrand lectured on the bias of experimental psychology,<sup>5</sup> not because of any systematic opposition to this experimental psychology (it can be given due respect in its own domain if one is able to study from a soul-spiritual point of view, through anthroposophy, what it investigates from an external point of view). For anthroposophy allows us to understand the spiritual and soul forces that work into the physical body of humanity. In this way, we can infuse life into all research, pedagogy can be brought to life—as I have shown in earlier lectures—and social life too can be invigorated.

Here again, I would like to point out a beautiful example from Emil Levinas' lecture<sup>6</sup> at the same congress, in which he applied strictly the methods copied from the natural sciences, to present the limitations of economics. Here the first step was taken towards a real healing of social life, proceeding from the soul-spirit. What does it come down to ultimately?

Anthroposophy allows us to understand the formative role of thinking. As soul-spirit, it works formatively in the human body; it also has a formative effect when we can introduce it in the right way as a social ideal in human social life; and will, when we get into its heart, also works in the right fashion in social life. As we know, human physicality is loosened by the will, and subjected to a kind of purification, an energizing by fire. In the same way, the will-element properly understood and applied to social life will recognize, at the right moment, that an institution has outlived itself and needs to disappear; to allow its fruit to live in a new form. Just as the soul-spirit arises out of the destruction of physicality, similarly the higher forms of social life can arise, insofar as particular external institutions that have outlived themselves disappear, and that this disappearance works together with a formative

construction. Whatever can be penetrated in a correct anthroposophical understanding of the soul's riddles can flow into social life, and help resolve the problems of the social riddles.

As a result, and in conclusion, human beings come to the point where they understand themselves; they fill themselves with inner force, with the true force of the real "I," living in human feelings, in human sensibility. Between the mental pictures and the life of the will, there always lives human feeling life, intangible, incomprehensible, yet just as available to experience. And in this feeling life, going through repeated earthly lives, the eternal "I" is revealed to those who can look at life in the fashion I have described today in respect to the riddles of the soul. One then is able to embrace in the same gaze a fully developed formative life of representations, and a spiritualized will-life, which dissolves/destroys.

One thus comes to understand, from observing human life, what it was that entered human beings through birth or conception, so that it can refer to former lives, all the way back to the primeval condition, where external cosmic life was completely united with the inner human life and there were no repeated earthly lives, but instead a continuously progressing, life of soul-spirit nature, required to produce progress. One learns to look at repeated lives, to the spiritual life lying between them; one learns to look at the future, up to a condition where human beings will again be so connected with the spirit that repeated earth lives will become meaningless—insofar as human being will raise themselves to a spiritualized existence, ascending in an experience that takes them from death (non-living) to their spirit-nature.

The solution of the *soul's* riddles leads to the true solution of the *world's* riddles; one ascends to the human soul, to the cosmos. In the process, one obtains fully living knowing, living cognition, which is spiritual food. Thereby the wisdom offered by anthroposophy will become true inner content of the soul in the very element where our life vacillates. To the extent that we seek the spiritual nourishment of anthroposophy, we can find life security, steadfastness, a sense of direction. Anthroposophy will restore to us that which gives us secret joy, yet in which we could lose ourselves, having transformed it into inner steadiness, made it the inner center of gravity of our human balance.

And at the difficult points of life, when we are about to sink in unhappiness, we will be able to procure for ourselves a mood of soul carried by the full awareness of the spirit's filling the human being. We can become fully conscious that the thought life is not futile, that it can find reality in the plastic soul-forces and cosmic forces, and that the will is that which always returns to the spirit these plastic formations of the soul-force. This gives us pause in the difficult passages of life, sets life on solid ground, leads in the right way to the end of life.

And so, we are reminded of the statement of the wise Ancient Greek, who, out of primordial intuitive knowledge spoke the weighty words: "When the human soul, liberated from life, rises into the free ether, it is an immortal spirit liberated from death."<sup>7</sup>

Through true science, we can solve the riddle of life. We can become certain of this, whenever we apply true spiritual observation to the solution of the riddles presented by daily life. We can see in the ordinary events of life the cognitive reflected splendor of immortality. And those who can judge rightly the development of individual thoughts, individual feelings and individual will, see the immortal reality contained in the latter and then see, through it, a greater/wider immortality, a true understanding of the eternal in human nature, rooted in the eternal ground of cosmic being and human evolution.

### Endnotes

1. Emil DuBois-Reymond (1818–1896), physician and physiologist, professor in Berlin and from 1867 Secretary of the Berlin Academy of the Sciences. Steiner's references are taken from DuBois-Reymond's lecture at the 1872 Congress of the German Scientists and Doctors *Über die Grenzen des Naturerkennens*, Leipzig, 1872, p. 15, ff. 18, 24 and 39. DuBois-Reymond's original focus was comparative anatomy. He later became the founder of animal electricity, inventing and improving methods and apparatus for the study of electrical phenomena. His idea of "electric molecules" led to the study of blood electrolytes. He is known for his formula *Ignominium* ("We shall never know"). Originally an acknowledgment of the fact that there appeared to be something in the phenomena of living beings which cannot be explained by ordinary mechanical, physical or chemical laws, no matter how refined and powerful the observations and experiments, it came to be interpreted as a statement of radical skepticism.

2. Franz Brentano (1838–1917), nephew of Clemens Brentano. Catholic theologian and Professor of Philosophy and Psychology in Würzburg. Author of *Psychologie vom empirischen Standpunkt*, Leipzig, 1874. (A “Volume 2,” consisting of a collection of the essays and drafts mentioned by Steiner, was edited by Oskar Kraus in 1925.) In 1873, Brentano left the Catholic Church in protest against the dogma of papal infallibility. Steiner wrote his obituary, and it was published in *Riddles of the Soul*, GA 21, his book on German and Austrian intellectual life. Steiner had also written articles on Brentano’s work in the *Magazin für Literatur* (see GA 30, and his lecture of 1911, *Anthroposophy, Psychosophy and Pneumatosophy*, GA 115).
  3. *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* (about Initiation), 1910, GA 13.
  4. *The Philosophy of Freedom*, 1894, GA 4.
  5. Open Congress: *Kulturansblicke der Anthroposophischen Bewegung* (*Cultural Outlook of the Anthroposophical Movement*), Stuttgart, August 28–Sept 7, 1921. Mornings were devoted to specialized papers on a variety of subjects; afternoons were devoted to a “Positive Critique of the Times,” and each day concluded with a lecture by Rudolf Steiner (see GA 8). Approximately 1000 persons attended.
- Dr. Caroline von Heydebrand’s paper *Gegen Experimentalspsychologie und pädagogik* (*Against Experimental Psychology and Pedagogy*) was one of the expert morning lectures. Published by *Die Kommende* in 1921, translation available from the Rudolf Steiner Library.
6. Emil Leinhas, *Der Bankrott der Nationalökonomie* (*Bankruptcy of the National Economy*), Stuttgart, *Die Kommende*, 1921.
  7. Steiner gives a slightly different version of this passage in *Christianity as Mystical Fact* (1902), where he credits Empedocles as the author, although the verse is nowhere to be found in the latter’s *Fragments*. Vincenz Knauer’s *Hauptprobleme der Philosophie*, Wien/Leipzig, 1892, 97, on which Steiner often drew, attributes this passage to Heraclites without more specific attribution.



## VI

## The Supersensible in Man and the World

Rotterdam, November 1, 1922

First, let me apologize for not being able to give tonight's lecture in the language of your land. I beg you to kindly accept it in the language with which I am familiar.

Anyone with an open mind, anyone who experiences present life with consciousness, with clear understanding and a warm heart, *must* recognize that in our times there are harsh obstacles on the path that challenges human beings. The times have become difficult indeed. However, it would be a mistake to look for the causes of the present difficulties only in the outer world. Insofar as this outer world is made up of the individual actions of individual people, whatever comes to meet us from that outer world is ultimately rooted deep in the human soul. However, one sees that human beings can hold onto strength, confidence, ability and especially the larger perspective on life if they are unable to create for themselves—from the soul-spiritual layers of their being—a concept of life that will in itself be a source of such inner strength.

People will not always see this clearly because they do not remember that even the physical forces of the human being, which we apply to the outer world, intimately depend on all that streams and trickles through the human being by way of the soul life. Therefore anyone who thinks it important that in the wide span of our current civilization there should come a renewal of joy in human hearts, anyone with such hopes will find it necessary to search the human heart, to ask how forces for work, forces for life-vision, forces in general can grow in the human heart from the inner depths, making it possible to walk in a fitting manner on the path of life.

And if we want to look straight at what is actually for many individuals an unconscious conflict, this conflict is evident in the contradictory

ways our head and heart perceive the knowledge and the impressions we have gained over several centuries of the traditional scientific worldview. This scientific worldview has celebrated triumph after triumph; it has transformed all of modern life. Everything coming at us from the outside world today, especially if we live in cities, is, after all, the product of contemporary scientific thinking as it has evolved.

But there is another scientific thinking, namely the moral and religious conception of the world arising out of the needs of the human heart, of the entire human being. Even a cursory look at the development of humanity forces us to reflect that, the further back we go in human evolution, the more we find that in ancient and ever more ancient times human beings derived everything they knew from a moral, a religious worldview. When they looked out at nature, they thought they saw behind all natural phenomena the guiding and governing hand of spiritual beings. And when they directed their gaze upward, they believed they saw the movement of the stars and the forms of the constellations led and guided by divine beings. And when they looked into their own souls, this divine spiritual guidance and direction continued, and they assumed that the divine guides were actually at work within them whenever they raised their arm, or took any action in ordinary life.

Ancient humanity actually did not have anything like the comprehensive view of nature available to us today in all its greatness. We can see this in a myriad of powerful, vivid examples. For instance, think of the close connection that the Ancients used to make between illness, death and what they called sin. They believed that human beings could only sicken for moral reasons. One believed that death was inflicted upon the human race as the punishment for sin. Wherever they looked they saw, not natural phenomena as we now understand them, but the activity and influence of divine powers, whose responsibility in the human race was morality, and to whom the heart, the soul would turn if one wanted to feel enclosed in a spiritual-eternal core of being, in the “lap of the divine.”

There was no separate view of nature alongside this moral religious worldview. In the present time, humanity has in its moral and religious philosophies the mere shreds, the remnants of this unified moral-religious worldview, without a separate philosophy of nature.

Nowadays, we are looking at a magnificently developed philosophy of nature, incorporating the human being: for in the nineteenth century we learned to ponder the fact that human beings arise out of natural lower strata, that they have gradually evolved from lower animal forms. In the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, we have learned to think that whatever we carry in our anatomy, our vitality, is the natural consequence of heredity. The human being is part of the natural order. We look at natural laws everywhere, but can no longer imagine their being connected with any kind of morality.

The way in which plants grow, the role of electricity and magnetism in natural processes, the evolution of animals, the physical development of the human being—all these, to which natural science has brought so much clarity, are initially exclusive of any moral thoughts. And while the human being can derive from nature some inner joy, some deep comfort, and some measure of *aesthetic* devotion, there can be no sense of submission to the cosmic order, and, in particular, no sense of submission/devotion to nature as science presents it to our eyes.

And thus, modern human beings have come to see nature as the only being, the only true reality. Yet in their heart of hearts, the yearning for a moral world order struggles to appear, as does the inner compulsion to be linked with something like a supersensible reality, facing sensible nature, the urge to experience religious feeling towards powers that cannot speak to humanity out of natural laws. And modern humanity is ever more confused, trying to preserve old traditions out of a moralistic, religious worldview yet ever more aware of the contradictions of modern science. Thus contemporary humanity stands divided, looking to a world completely woven by nature's laws, originating in natural laws, yet also a world, which, according to their hypotheses, is doomed to disappear according to those same laws of nature.

And upon this rests what we think makes us truly human: upon this rests the moral sentiment, and upon this, religious devotion. There we stand, with frightening existential puzzles: Can I grant reality to that which I produce out of my sense of morality, considering that nature does not attribute it any reality? Am I capable of turning my religious sense toward something which I can struggle for in truth and honesty, since I cannot turn this sense toward something recognized as a law of

nature? And thus it appears increasingly as if a person's moral ideals, a person's religious feelings are turning into abstractions hanging in "soulful" air, as if they are doomed to be buried and forgotten along with the merely natural universe, when the earth comes to a burning end.

Thus contemporary humans are deeply conflicted, and the contradiction is not always obvious. Rather, something else is present in consciousness. It is the sense that they cannot find their way in the world, that they lack strength and joy to work in the world. And often, so as to have at least some moral and religious stability, they reach back to all kinds of old philosophies, old mysticism or, as they are called today, cults. Since they cannot find in their immediate surroundings any knowledge of the supersensible realm in the human being and the world, they "warm up" these old philosophies. And yet, it is possible to find this supersensible reality in mankind and the world. How to find it will be the subject of tonight's talk.

Between what is purely moral and religious and what is natural and material, people have always experienced something in the middle, which one encounters in the person's own self while the person is alive. In the olden days it was seen when one looked at the world from a religious point of view; nowadays one sees it differently. Still and all, even today, it is possible to situate what belongs to humanity into the natural order.

I choose three phenomena in human nature, which as it were, go back and forth, oscillating between what is perceived as supersensible reality, and what is merely natural. Yet you will see these are precisely the things whose transformations, whose metamorphoses lead us up to a contemplation of supersensible cognition and worldviews.

The first thing that appears to us in the human being, which he experiences as a very small child, are his struggles with the environment. Purely out of his own being, which has not yet been given its place in the world, he wins his own position: upright walking, standing.

The second thing, to which human beings make their own way, is the learning of speech. Only out of speech—as anyone knows who observes children objectively—comes the third thing, the capacity for thinking. Unlike animals looking down upon the ground, mankind looks freely into space up to the stars. To be able to transport one's

own inner being to other human beings in speech, to receive the world into one's soul in the form of thoughts—ancient philosophy perceived all these as supersensible endowments granted to the sensible realm of humankind from the supersensible realm. The linkage between supersensible mankind and supersensible cosmos was perceived insofar as one considered these three characteristics of human nature. An older philosophy, which referred to the moral and the religious quality of the cosmic order, saw them as gifts of divine-spiritual powers working in human beings, that the latter, out of their very architecture, should develop upright walking and stargazing and learn to speak and think. In the antiquity of human evolution, human beings never doubted that when thoughts appeared in their inner space, angelic beings were living in these thoughts. Not until the Middle Ages did people begin to discuss whether their thoughts were purely their own creations, or whether their thoughts were the effects of divine-spiritual powers expressing themselves in (the human) life-organization.

Thus in ancient times, people saw these capacities as something that entered the human being from the supersensible world to reside and live in the human being. People saw these three gifts as something that came into mankind from supersensible worlds and that truly existed and lived. Therefore whenever one wanted to guide the human being—that stands upon the earth, lives on the earth and on earth must do his work—to the moral and religious world-order, one did so in conjunction with these three gifts which were brought to mankind in childhood.

In the East, where there was a mighty striving for the knowledge of the divine-spiritual, humans wanted at first to cultivate what lay in the power of orientation, what lies in the forces which drove the child to become an upright being looking out into world spaces. Consider the postures that the oriental sage (who knew that as an adult one needs a different approach to what, in the child, becomes an orientation to walking and to space) prescribed to his disciples, to enable the working of the divine-spiritual in one's own body. When the child learns to walk from the creeping position, the divine spiritual comes in. When the disciple of the oriental sage puts his legs one above the other [in a lotus position] and settles his body upon the crossed legs, he is choosing another position. And when he then becomes fully conscious of this

position, the spiritual world can work into him, just as it works into the child, spurring the child on to walk upright. Further, when the human being, instead of learning to speak in the way that is usual in the sensible world, turns this speech inward, then this gift from God is turned into a clairvoyant (*hellseherisch*) and “clear-feeling” (*hellführend*) force, thus connecting the person’s own supersensible with the supersensible in the world.

A certain discipline of breathing was connected with the recitative-chanting of particular verses called *mantras*, that were not spoken to communicate with other human beings but were directed *inward*, vibrating through the human organism, so that everything that we otherwise turn outward in speech was now directed inward, so that the entire human organism was partaking of the force, the power of this mantric word. The Eastern master’s disciple directed into his own body what the child, as a gift of the supersensible realm arising in him (lit. *becoming* in him), had poured out into speech to converse with other human beings, this the disciple poured into speech to converse with his own body. In him, the words did not just vibrate outward; with every breath, they vibrated down into the lungs, into the blood, and from the blood to the brain. And just as the person who hears my speech can feel in the words the beat of my soul, the feeling evoked by the words, so too the Eastern sage, out of the vibrations in his body, could experience the supersensible in the world from the supersensible experience of mantric words.

And while the child develops the third step of thinking out of speaking, this Eastern sage also developed the third step, perceiving the supersensible (world) through the mantric word, and through the mantra developing a thought that was not just the chanter’s personal thought. For just as our soul vibrates out to other human beings in ordinary speech, so too the world was vibrating into the person in the experienced inner world. And what spoke was not another person, not human thoughts; what spoke was Cosmic Thought, the Spirit, the supersensible in the world, pouring into the human organism as a supersensible reality.

In such a way, ancient humanity attempted to establish the relationship between the supersensible in the person and the supersensible in

the universe. All our religious and moral philosophy, all that has been handed down to us originates in such a linkage between the supersensible in ourselves and the supersensible in the world, established by human beings in the past.

At a particular point in time, humanity stepped out of this symbiosis with the divine-spiritual in the world. The teachers who sought their way into the supersensible part of the world became fewer and fewer, and the human beings who felt a need for such teachers and who wanted to hear what the teachers had to say and derive from it food for the soul, they too became scarcer. For a while, humans went through a time during which all that needed to develop in them (including what needed to develop in the soul-spiritual realm) needed to be tightly bonded with the body, the flesh. Ancient humans were embedded inside a moral world order; it was not in them, but streamed through/watered the entire world; they felt completely sheltered in a divine world, which completely absorbed nature; such humans could never have discovered freedom, the freedom that becomes conscious of the ego as a solid inner support. They could not have discovered freedom that does not derive human activity from the divine-spiritual working in the human being, the freedom that seeks in the person itself the impetus, the will for all earthly deeds. Humanity had to come, and did come to this ego consciousness, to this experience of freedom.

But now we stand at an important turning point in human evolution. We have lost the old connection with the divine. And it cannot be found again, even by those who try in every possible way to warm up the old ways, looking to Gnosticism or Eastern occultism for what they miss in the scientific views of the present. Incidentally, the contemplation of anthroposophy is often accused of being an attempt to reconnect with the old Gnosticism or Orientalism. But this is not the case. This philosophy starts from the thought that we can find the road to the supersensible using the same, precise, form of thought as in natural science, strengthened and sharpened in the right way.

Actually, even what I characterized earlier as the trinity of special qualities in human nature (which antiquity treated as gifts from the moral-divine world order), is treated as a purely physical endowment by our contemporaries, influenced by the power and authority of the

scientific worldview. And so it is easy to understand, and completely justified, that one should derive the different organization of the human limbs from the particular structure resulting from the human way of life, which in turn evolved from the animal way of life, thus explaining the upright posture out of strictly natural relationships. One seeks to understand speech out of natural physical structure and out of the connection between the child's natural organization and older people. And one tries to explain the cultivation of thinking as something that is connected with human morphology.

And why should we not do that? Has not science shown that human thoughts are quite dependent on human organs? All it takes is for this or that part of the brain to be paralyzed and a certain portion of intellectual activity ceases. We see how even the use of poisonous substances acting on the human body can harm human intellectual activity. The habit of seeing everything scientifically has placed this trinity—orientation in the cosmos, speech acquisition and thinking acquisition—in a physically natural way within a natural physical world order. And from there, other things yet were referred to such a world order.

Now we may believe that what humans first become on this earth through birth, or shall we say conception, originates in a purely natural order, for we can see it expressed outwardly. Looking forward, looking at birth, we see in birth and heredity all that pulsates and streams through the human being. But if one looks in the other direction, in the direction of death, then one sees clearly, if one is the least bit open-minded, that nature does not reabsorb what we are as human beings, but extinguishes it, like the flame of a candle. So it appears as if the modern human being were given to itself through embryonic life and heredity. But it must also appear as if there is continuation at the end of life, as if nature were unable to take up this human essence, but could only destroy it. The greatest riddle, therefore, which in olden times when there still existed a religious and moral philosophy, was the riddle of birth; for a later humanity and for us is the riddle of death. The riddle of being born has become the riddle of immortality.

At a time when humans were able to look at the divine-religious world in a moral and religious context, a time when they could connect the supersensible in the individual with the supersensible of the world,

the question was: How did humankind descend from spiritual worlds in which he lived formerly? A natural event, embryonic life and birth, was seen as the outer expression of this descent from divine-spiritual worlds into physical earthly existence. *Birth* was the greatest riddle. What do humans have to perform here on earth? This was the question. Today we look to the other side, to the side of death, raising the greatest riddle, which is that of the true essence of the innermost human seed.

We can consider the contemporary riddle from yet another side. Yes, one can believe that human moral instincts arise out of natural instincts, which in blood, in flesh, in the nervous system, in the entire human organization, are brought to a certain pitch of perfection, and one can derive religious feelings from the presence of such moral impulses. One can thus to some extent derive all morality and religious feelings from the material natural order.

Not that we need to speak of moral or immoral deeds being rewarded. This leads us too much into an egoistic realm. However, if we see the material natural order as all-encompassing, one might say that all our moral deeds disappear without a trace in the world. This leaves us with the following question: Science tells us that even the smallest discharge of electrical power has a particular effect in the cosmos; then does not what comes from us morally have any consequences in the cosmos?

We can also look at this from another perspective. If need be, we can think of moral impulses as more highly evolved compulsions and instincts. But a purely physical/material worldview does not allow us to understand the meaning of moral impulses for the future.

One part of humanity faces these questions in full consciousness. Anyone facing them consciously must acknowledge what is being described here as anthroposophical spiritual science. A large portion of humanity faces these questions in a somewhat unconscious, emotional [sentimental] way. Human beings can no longer follow whatever they received as the message from old religious traditions, for they feel instinctively that that this information came out of ancient knowledge—it emerged from mysteries which could mesmerize people! All religious credos originated in old insights about the connection between the supersensible in humankind and the supersensible in the cosmos, as I

characterized it earlier. But we can no longer tread these old paths. In the meantime humanity has had to evolve, failing which it would have been unable to follow the road, and survive the intermediary stage in which the feeling of ego-consciousness, the experience of freedom originated. The human being could not live entirely in the physical human body if it had not been thoroughly restructured in this intermediary stage.

Nowadays, a person might attempt to seek the link between the supersensible in his nature and the supersensible in the world. Many do it and, if I am allowed to say so, to the detriment of true knowledge. This could be, say, a Buddhist endeavoring, through particular body postures, the chanting of mantras and similar formulas, to seek cosmic thoughts revealed in the inner logos and thereby reach the supersensible realm. Yet as a contemporary human being, whose physical body is constituted in a completely different way than in ancient humanity, the result in the absence of guidance from the supersensible realm would be disorder in the physical body. The former human body, which could be penetrated through the bodily disciplines I described, did not yet have the density, the inner consistency out of which a strong earth-ego consciousness, a strong experience of earthly freedom arises. The human organism has become more solid. If one were to acknowledge today the more rigorous physiology proposed by anthroposophical spiritual science, one would know that in modern humanity the dense constituents, namely the salts, are more intensely formed than was the case in the bodies of ancient men, who could perform such exercises to reach higher knowledge. Today's humanity must therefore use different methods to establish a linkage between its own supersensible being and the supersensible being of the world. The man of today must seek the moral, the religious in the world order differently than in former times.

The spiritual science of which I speak here seeks therefore to penetrate the supersensible realm from two sides: first from the side of thought, and secondly from the side of will. From the side of thought, the person does not experience as copies of the outer world the thoughts that have been of such outstanding service in modern scientific observation and experimentation. Instead one learns to live with these thoughts in the stillness of the inner soul. Thereby, modern humans can create a spiritual scientific method just as ancient humanity created one with

their mantras. Mantras were a more material thing, whereas modern man has something more spiritual in the mere formation of thoughts.

I have described at length in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*, in part two of *Occult Science*, and elsewhere the long road one must walk in order to build in this manner a real spiritual science and acquire knowledge of the supersensible realms. I would like to indicate here briefly some essential points on how one can become a spiritual researcher today, completely in keeping with the organization of today's human body.

Not everybody needs to become a spiritual scientist, but some people aspire to do so. Up to a certain point, everybody can at least become an experimenter in spiritual science, by taking up the exercises I have described in my books and lectures. But whoever wants to become a spiritual scientist nowadays must no longer do it through the physical chanting of mantras, but use instead the purely supersensible practice of thought.

Now, we have learned to think precise thoughts. If I look at the starry sky in scientific astronomy, I am dealing with precise thinking in physics and chemistry. We are striving for the same in biological research, the exploration of living beings, and we feel especially satisfied if we know how to investigate the material world in the same manner in which we train our thoughts to solve mathematical problems. This has even led to the saying that there is only as much exact natural science as there is mathematics in the sciences.<sup>1</sup> For this reason one speaks of exact sciences. Everything must be surveyed in observation and experiment, in the same way we survey the matter when solving a mathematical problem. This is what "exact science" means.

Anthroposophical spiritual science speaks in the same way about "exact clairvoyance." As the contemporary scientist investigates the world exactly, the person who becomes an anthroposophical researcher does the same, only in a different field. One discovers gradually that there are forces hidden in the soul which remain unused in ordinary life and ordinary science. One discovers, little by little, that the soul, spirit and physical-sensory are really not yet separated in the very young child, and that the child to some extent pours into speech, into thinking, into upright walking, forces that previously existed in supersensible

form. Everything which pours into the blood during the first stage of life, everything which vibrates in the organs, all this pours itself out to the extent that the human being is oriented outward; it pours out into speech, and especially into thought.

But we can turn back the flow. The oriental sage's disciple attempted to attain through chanting, meditation, or inner speaking what one might call the connection between the supersensible in man and the supersensible in the world. Modern humanity must turn thinking itself inward. We must be able to tell ourselves in complete earnestness: We have come a long way with the observation of external nature; we are looking at the exact thoughts of the star constellations and the planetary paths; we are looking at the exact thoughts of electricity, magnetism, warmth, sound and light; we look into the world—exact thoughts recreate this world within us. As spiritual scientists we must be able to put ourselves in a situation when we look away from all the thoughts that lead us *outward* to the stars, electricity, magnetic and warmth phenomena. Like the old sage turning his mantras inwardly and thus allowing the logos to reveal itself to him, we must be able to turn the power of thinking inwardly. We must learn to soar inwardly in our thinking with the same energy we apply outwardly through our senses. The senses are bodily structures that help us, so that we need not use up our own strength, the strength of soul. Thus our meditative thinking will become so strong that our thoughts, even while developed in the inner soul being, become as vivid as sensations.

Just think how alive, how intense everything is when you hear sounds, when you see colors, when sensations of warmth and cold pervade your body. Think how dry and abstract thoughts are, which you retain from your experience of the outer world. Meditation consists in so strengthening, so intensifying the thoughts that dawn within us when we hand ourselves to the impassive observation of our thoughts, that they become as bright and clear as sensations. In this way, we achieve a new level of thinking. Ordinary day-by-day thinking is such that one feels passive, these thoughts are actually devoid of strength, mere images, copies of the outer world. It is possible, through meditation, to learn to live in the world of thoughts as one lives in one's forces of growth, as one lives in hunger and thirst, as one lives in an inner sense of physical

ease—this is the fruit of meditation. One only needs to learn one thing in order to experience the thought world in this manner: One must learn to weave lovingly in thoughts.

Being a spiritual scientist means having to practice this science with the same devotion as the physicist practicing year-round in his lab. The astronomer practices all year at his observatory. It is really no easier to be a spiritual scientist than to be an astronomer or a physicist. Everybody can verify the spiritual scientist's claims. All it takes is a little attention, as I described in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment*. But just as little as it is necessary to become an astronomer in order to apply the fruits of astronomy in one's worldview, just as little does one need to become a spiritual scientist in order for spiritual science to become an element of our civilization, of our cultural life. Quite the contrary, the kind of interpersonal connections which it can bring about, and which actually must arise in the not too distant future—in order to stop the decadence—the kind of social cooperation, of community between human beings that will become necessary and possible, and which is already needed now, these will be substantially stimulated if one restores confidence to human social life. Those deserve our trust who, from the depth of their souls, speak about spiritual supersensible worlds because as spiritual scientists they arise to them.

Wherever souls can live in intimate closeness, so that the intimacy of the supersensible world can be shared in the supersensible being of humanity, in such a social order, forces will be revived that can uniquely fortify our social life. Therefore it is entirely unfounded and only egotistical to say: I do not value the results of anthroposophical science research about the supersensible, for I cannot see these things myself. We all are so constituted that we each have a predisposition for truth, not for untruth. Not everybody can do research about the supersensible world, just as not everybody can paint a picture. As everybody can admire an image that was painted artfully, so anyone can acknowledge the truth of spiritual science as described here, provided he is fully human, with a predisposition for truth, not out of blind faith but out of an inner experience of the truth of spiritual science. This spiritual science can only be obtained insofar as through meditation, through (thoughtful) concentration in the thinking life itself, one can progress

from abstract thinking to a concrete pictorial thinking, to a thinking that is inwardly alive. In this thinking, cosmic thoughts are resurrected. In this thinking, the person will feel he is on the first step of the path to the supersensible world.

Ancient humanity proceeded from something more material, from speech directed inwardly. Modern humanity must start from something more spiritual, from thought directed inwardly, find a connection with the supersensible in the world, and regain the ability to speak of this supersensible realm in the world. If one thus enters the supersensible world by way of inwardly experienced thinking and the supersensible in one's own being partakes of the supersensible in the universe, what one finds will not remain empty words. In precisely the same way the material world surrounds us with the multitude of plant forms, animal forms and the light streaming down from the stars, just so to some extent the material world will fade before spiritual contemplation is revealed in pictorial thinking and a spiritual world dawns for us. We now do not just experience the sun's physical radiance, we see a world of spiritual beings, whose physical image is the physical sun. We draw the physical appearance of the sun into the spiritual being of the sun. And through the physical appearance of the moon, we penetrate to the spiritual moon beings. We learn to see that spiritual moon-beings lead the human soul out of spiritual-soul worlds, through birth, into earthly life, where the mother and the father receive them into the body. We learn to know how, in the spiritual sun beings, lie the forces that later lead the human being through death, and we learn to see the path of the human soul out of supersensible worlds.

This knowledge is still amplified if instead of training the will by adopting body postures as the ancient Orientals used to do, one develops the will in the same way one has developed thinking into a precise clairvoyance. It was a training of the will, when human beings suppressed their orientation to the outside world, crossed their legs and sat on them in order to receive from the supersensible world, through the human being, perceptions from different streams in the world. Modern humans cannot do this. Their organism is different, they must work directly with the will. Whatever the ancient easterner might have developed in a more physical fashion through body postures (also by turning the

body to the east, the west, the south), all this has become an imposture for modern people. Modern humans must take their will immediately in hand. And you will find in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* and *Ocult Science* a whole series of exercises for self-control, self-education, especially cultivation of the will. Here are a few.

A person who is used to following the course of external events from earliest to latest may change his/her manner of thinking: for instance in the evening, to visualize the last thing he experienced in the day, then what was experienced earlier in the day, and so forth until morning. By visualizing the course of nature in reverse sequence, the person can think beyond the natural flow of events, the person thinks at cross-stream. This strengthens the activity of will in thinking. This is particularly the case if one pays attention to very small details. Say you imagine climbing stair; instead of picturing yourself climbing the staircase, visualize yourself standing on the last step, going backward; break loose from the actual experience and present the ascent as a descent. This also strengthens the will activity in thinking. I can also fortify this will by undertaking my self-education by telling myself: I have such and such a habit; I will alter it; three years from now I must in one particular respect have acquired a completely different habit. There are hundreds of such exercises; immediate will exercises, aimed directly at transforming the will, so that it is loosened from the restrictions of mere physicality.

In so doing, modern man performs an exercise similar to the one practiced in the Eastern sage's postures. We cannot return to these old exercises for reasons I have explained. But in this way, modern humans can achieve an immediate relationship between their own supersensible being and the supersensible being of the world.

This can be clarified with a metaphor. Take the human eye: what makes it a seeing organ? Imagine the cataract: it is a hardening of the lens or the cornea, which shows that if matter be comes dominant in the eye, the eye can no longer be used to see. In order to serve vision, the eye must be absolutely transparent in particular parts of its organ. It must to some extent be "selfless" to serve the human being. Just so our body, when we fortify it through exercises, becomes a spiritual sense organ. Our body at particular moments of cognition, not in ordinary life, is no longer penetrated by compulsions, instincts, desires.

It becomes purified, as the eye does, in order to become transparent. And just as one sees the world of color through the transparent eye, so with a wish- and desire-free body, the body is not always transparent but it can be *made transparent for particular times*. It gets trained for transparency to the spiritual world, the supersensible world to which one belongs as supersensible essence.

Thus we learn to know what is truly supersensible in man. To see through what happens with a person who made his body transparent and lives in the purely supersensible world, means having solved the riddle of death. In that contemplation, we have life out of the body—we know how one lives after relinquishing the physical body and crossing the gate of death. One knows what it means to live in the world without the body. In this fashion one learns to know one's own supersensible being. And insofar as we learn to know it, as we see it crossing the gate of death while alive, we learn that it can be taken up in a supersensible world, just as, at conception it was released into earthly life by the supersensible world. And by learning to know our own human supersensible, by learning how in life the soul can cross the gates of death, we also learn that the soul can be received by a supersensible universe, just as it was originally released into earthly life by the supersensible world. We can learn to see now the supersensible realm of the world. In living thought achieved through meditation, we learn to see behind the sun the spiritual sun-world, behind the moon the spiritual moon-world, these spiritual beings that lead man into earthly existence and that lead him out of earthly existence. And then we know that after death our living soul is received by the living being of the world, the living being of the Universe, the supersensible universe. Just as our body is received by the material world and called to death, so too our human soul is called to life in the eternal realm by those beings which one sees through in the supersensible realm of the world.

We can then see the path followed by human civilizations as one that gives us strength to incorporate morality and religion into the natural world order, by cultivating the will, a cultivation which can be effected in very precise exercises, just like mathematics, through thought exercises that lead to an exact clairvoyance.

This is what we need today. This path of human evolution has been indicated to us in grandiose fashion in the way in which true spiritual cognition places the mystery of Golgotha in human evolution.

Allow me to say a few words on this subject in conclusion. What was the situation immediately after the Golgotha event for those people who witnessed what was said to have happened on Golgotha? They saw what Jesus of Nazareth had experienced and they felt that in Jesus of Nazareth the divine spiritual Christ-Being had been incarnated as a human being. He had lived in human nature as a man. This is what they felt, that this divine-spiritual Christ-Being had descended to earth in order to bring to them something they sorely needed on earth.

What made it possible for the first Christians to accept so unconditionally the wisdom of the Golgotha mystery? What made it possible was the fact that there still existed remnants of the old conceptions, in people who told themselves: Through birth, the human being descends into earthly existence from supersensible worlds. In olden times, mankind still knew, out of instinctive contemplation and out of what initiates and teachers had told them, that there was a spirit-guide in the spiritual worlds, who had led them down to physical life on earth. But because they knew that they, as spirits, had descended to earth, they knew they would also cross the gates of death. And death had nothing puzzling, it held no fear for ancient men, just as for animals there are no mysteries of death and no fear of death. Please do not misunderstand this comparison; it is not meant to disparage human beings.

Human fear of death came in the course of time. Death only became a riddle when humans no longer perceived the riddle of birth, when they no longer looked up to the spiritual worlds from which they had descended, when in human evolution there appeared a tendency to see everything connected with the birth process as a merely natural fact. Only then did human beings experience the riddle, the dread, of death.

Theoretical knowledge could not heal this, but only the fact that the mystery of Golgotha unfolded on earth. And drawing on the remnants of old wisdom, men knew that the Christ that had appeared on earth in the form of Jesus of Nazareth was the same being who guided

human souls from spiritual worlds down to this earth. And the first Christians knew that the Christ descended to earth to give humans on earth what they needed to be released from the riddle of death. Here we see the connection established by Paul between the riddle of death and the Golgotha event. For Paul explained that as human souls they can only *think beyond death* when they can look up to the Resurrected, the Christ who vanquished death.

Drawing on ancient wisdom, the first Christians were still able to understand Christ as the one who descended to earth, although it was more a feeling than a clear thought. Modern spiritual science teaches the human being again how to contemplate the supersensible worlds through exact/precise clairvoyance. This anthroposophical spiritual science, by leading human beings to contemplate, as it were, out of the body—when this body has become transparent, and the person experiences him/herself in the world in which he/she must live after stepping through the gates of death—then the student of spiritual science will be able to point not only to the man Jesus of Nazareth, but to the divine-spiritual Christ, descended from supersensible worlds and infusing with his forces the supersensible in the human being. Out of this influx of force, out of the forces Christ unfolds in the human being, according to Paul's words, "Not I, but the Christ in me," the human being on earth can feel the opportunity to go through death as a living soul, with the Christ, so as not to enter blind the spiritual worlds in which mankind is received by sun-beings, but with their sight restored through the light that Christ brought to earth.

Thus an anthroposophic spiritual science can give buoyancy to the religious-Christian life. Anthroposophic spiritual science quite specifically will have a deepening effect on Christian religiosity. The last centuries have given us the magnificence of natural science, which we see slowly evolving, however in such a manner that we cannot see any moral world order in this evolving. [In fact nature reveals herself all the more authentically when we try to moralize less. — ed.] And since we cannot really feel for natural law the kind of devotion one would direct to a divinity, having learned the methods of mathematics and science, we can apply devotion to thinking and heighten thought to a pictorial quality, to clairvoyance. And insofar as we apply this precise method

to our will, to educate ourselves, we do our most beautiful deeds in the work of self-education. In this way we connect, not with some magical focus-pocus, but with an inward, idealistic magic whereby morality is reunited with nature and religion.

What, ultimately, is the aim of the anthroposophy of which I keep speaking? It wants to fill the deep chasm that exists—at least for modern man, for all men in this world—between a natural amoral world order and a religious moral order, so that in the future, human beings will regain a strong supersensibility in all the things which nature, materiality gives them through the body, a supersensibility into which can stream cosmic morality, not simply human morality, and not simply a natural order, but a divine order.

And when the cosmic-moral impulses become the person's individual impulses, with the penetration of divine consciousness by a spiritually strengthened gaze, human beings will find their way into the future and solve the important questions and riddles that people already begin to intuit today. Merely by looking around the world, with heightened impartiality and dispassionate open-mindedness, the longing, the hope living in the human heart can play an enlivening role in the evolution of humanity.

#### Endnote

1. Steiner's approximate quote from *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft*, Vorrede VIII, in Kant's *Complete Works*, Hartenstein edition, Leipzig 1867, vol IV, p. 360.



## VII

## Religion and Moral Education in the Light of Spiritual Science

The Hague, November 4, 1922

Anthroposophical spiritual science, about which I spoke here last Tuesday and last night<sup>1</sup> has not only cognitive goals, not only the goal of leading human beings to a moral and religious deepening, but it also aims at practical results. And the wish was expressed for me to devote tonight's lecture to one such practical goal, the goal of education.

To the extent that this spiritual science is primarily concerned with attaining a real knowledge of the human being in its fullness—the human essence in regard to body, soul and spirit—it can also transmit knowledge of the human being in practical life, and at all ages of life. And for the art of education, knowledge of the human being as it applies to the child is, of course, necessary.

When all is said and done, the question of education is essentially a “teacher question.” A teacher question, since what is at stake is whether the teacher, the educator can solve the human riddle in practice, in the child. Perhaps it is in regard to this riddle that one becomes most aware of the meaning of the old saying which has been a kind of motto about knowing the human being: The solution of the cosmic riddle resides in the human being.

Many people feel anxious that if ever one were to solve the cosmic riddle, there would not be anything left for human knowledge to do. If, however, one believes that the solution of the countless secrets hidden in the universe is to be found in the human being, since the latter is to some extent the ultimate goal of world evolution, human beings themselves, if one really wants to know them, will demand endless efforts, immeasurable labors, in order for any true insight to be obtained. And if one is ready to think that there is, hidden in the human beings,

something eternal, then one is led to feel toward the child the reverence that one needs to have in order to approach this child in the right way as a teacher and educator.

Concerning the knowledge of the human being, I will try to set aside my recent discussions about the knowledge of the human spirit and the cosmic spirit. I will try to present spiritual science in the most general terms, so those members of the audience who did not attend the last few days' sessions can follow my explanations. Here is what it is basically about: Those whose life-conceptions are heightened by true knowledge—not abstract knowledge—of the human soul and human spirit will easily discern general developmental stages in human life: the totality of a human lifetime is divided into life-stages.<sup>2</sup> People do not always give these life-stages the attention and the deep insightfulness they deserve, but anyone wanting to relate with children at a deeply human level, as teacher and educator, must have a thorough, grounded knowledge of these life-stages.

One such life-stage culminates around the seventh year, when the child's second teeth come in. Developmental sociologists observing the human being consider these second teeth only as the earmark of an important evolution in the child's body, soul and spirit. Those who have a realistic and professional understanding of the art of education see that the change of teeth also signals a corresponding rearrangement of the soul's characteristics and spiritual capacities. We need merely recall that in the human organism a metabolic conversion process takes place throughout life, such that over a period of eight or nine years, there is a turnover in the composition of our tissues, and by the end of that period all the substances originally contained in our body have been replaced. If we consider this, we must realize that whatever happens at the age of seven with the change of teeth represents a mighty development of forces and, although not repeated in the organism, yet is not a momentary, isolated event. In fact, if we have any concrete view of the development of the human organism, we know that over the first seven years things are being prepared in the most intimate metabolic processes, which are coming to a closure with the appearance of the second teeth.

In regard to the soul, we see that after the change of teeth, memory and the process of representation now work quite differently. Formerly,

memory worked to a great extent unconsciously, as if rising from the depths of the child's physical body, and it now becomes more mental. These things can only be suggested, for they are hardly accessible to a cursory observation.

But the most important thing for the educator is that in the early years up to the change of teeth, the child is a completely imitative being, completely open to the world. The way the child relates to the outer world in the first seven years—and I am not saying this to be paradoxical but to elaborate something quite real—for more or less seven years the child is almost completely a sense organ, perceiving its environment not just with her eyes, with her ears, but through her entire organism, yielding to the world as only the sense organs do. Just as the images of outer objects and processes are prepared in the sense organs, and then reproduced in the inner soul, so too the child wants to copy inwardly all that her senses on the outside. The child wishes to give himself altogether to the external world, to imitate inwardly everything that is presented on the outside. The child as a totality is a sense organ. And if one were able to look into the child's organism with the clairvoyant sensing I described in the last few days, we would see that the sense of taste, for instance, which in the adult is limited to the tongue and palate, goes far deeper into the child's organism. One does not overexaggerate when one says that the nursing child tastes her mother's milk with her entire body. These are the kinds of intimate and intricate details of human physical life that one must observe if one really wishes for the delicate knowledge required by an art of education.

And if one thinks of the child as an imitator through and through, one can understand how the child learns to speak. We can follow the child's tendency to imitate inwardly, sound by sound, gesture by gesture, and the child's attempts to adapt his own inner being to what he senses from the outside. One can look at all the details of the child and see everywhere that the child is entirely a sense organ, entirely an imitator, entirely devoted to taking in the outer world through the senses.

In this manner, one can understand things about the young child which one should evaluate quite differently than things coming from an older child or an adult. Let me give you an example. A father came to me one day: "What shall I do with this boy? He has stolen money from

his mother.” I asked the father how old the child was. The child was not yet six years old. I told the father that if he could really understand the child, he could not speak of theft. The child—as I confirmed from talking further with the father—had watched every day his mother taking money out of the drawer. As the young child imitates, so this child took money out of the drawer, as he had seen it being done by his mother. The entire deed was in this imitation, for this young child attached no value at all to the money. He bought sweets and distributed them among the other children. There are hundreds of similar examples.

After the change of teeth, the child’s soul life changes. Not only do we see the child beginning to follow his sense impressions, to adapt himself somehow to them and to change himself according to what he sees on the outside, but he also begins to listen, to pick up on representations conveyed verbally. But the child still needs for the surrounding world to be conveyed by human personalities. Therefore we can say: Until the change of teeth, the child is an imitating being; after the change of teeth, and more or less all the way to puberty, not only does he imitate, but he starts to prick up his ears to take in the mental pictures expressed verbally by persons in his environment. Teachers and educators must see to it that what they tell the children is a guiding line. After the change of teeth, children go from a life of imitation to a stage where their natural sense of lawfulness wishes to follow the example of an unquestionable (self-evident) authority.<sup>3</sup>

This unquestioned sense of authority will guide all instruction and all education during this second stage of life, from the change of teeth to puberty. At this age, the child takes as true what a beloved “authority” individual considers true. The child perceives with sympathy what is beautiful, what is good, or else he obeys, relying upon the authority of the beloved educator. And if we want to bring to the child between seven and fourteen–fifteen something that will bear fruit for the rest of his life, then everything we bring to the child must be clothed in this authoritative element.

Dear listeners, it may seem contradictory that someone who wrote the *Philosophy of Freedom* relies strongly on the authority principle. But anyone who loves freedom above all else, anyone who sees in freedom the self-evident law of social life, must point out what emerges from a

true understanding of the human being, namely that from ages seven to fourteen, the child thrives in emulating an individual he perceives as an unquestioned authority. (By the way, none of this should be treated as absolute.) One might say: In the first seven years, the child is an imitative being; in the second seven years, from change of teeth to puberty, the child is a being who obeys his human environment, who naturally and unquestioningly subject to a guiding authority.

If we follow the development of the human being in body, soul and spirit, as anthroposophy does, we know the profound importance for later life, perhaps even for a person's old age, of having been able to feel at that stage of life this particular respect, even if only for a brief period of time, to remember the feeling of being eight or nine years old, often overhearing how people in the family spoke about one particular highly-respected family member, and to have gained from those conversations a real sense of awed reverence. And then the day came when one actually got to meet that person. On that day, everything was colored by awe as one waited for the door to open and to see that person for the first time. We know how such an encounter can affect the child at a time when the soul is completely open to that sense of authority in the outer world, just as in earlier years the entire being lived in sensation. We know then what a good deed is done to the child during that stage, if one allows him to really experience this awed reverence toward a self-evident, unquestioned authority.

These are the things one must consider if one wants to apply knowledge of the human being to one's task as educator and teacher. For then, one will take into consideration the fact that human beings are not just spatial organisms in which one body-part is related to some other body-part, but that they are also organisms living in time. We cannot know the human being unless we are attuned to the human being as time-body. Take any part of the right hand: it is related to every other part of the human spatial organism through an inner organization. Yet if you consider what the human being is in early childhood, then in later childhood, in adolescence, in adulthood, in middle age and in old age—these too are all inwardly interconnected. Educators or teachers are not doing their job if they only consider the child's present life, the eight- or nine-year-old child. Only if we acknowledge that

whatever we do in the seven- or eight-year-old ripples on through the time-body, which is a unity of the child, the middle-aged man, and the elderly person—and that whatever is sparked in the child's soul goes on working, yet changes, metamorphoses. Only if we can imagine the ways in which these things are transformed, can we be educators in the truest sense of the word.

Let me give an example. Enormous value is attached to the child, with his budding power of understanding, understanding everything he is taught. This runs against the principle of self-evident authority. If we are only going to teach children what they can understand with their sensitive understanding, we are not taking into consideration the following: It is very important for the young child to have accepted as true, as beautiful, as good something which a respected authority described as being true, beautiful and good *even though he did not fully understand it at the time*. Much later, this thing arises from the depths of the fifty-three-year-old or even older person's soul. In the meantime, one has matured. One now understands it more fully; now one can retrieve it in the light of mature life-experience.

Such a thing—to understand at an older age, out of maturity, something one had accepted at an early age out of love for the “authoritative” person, to have such a reminiscence in later life, and to now understand it—this means kindling new vital forces, a tremendous principle in the soul, although one of which people are often not aware.

I can clarify what I have in mind in yet another way with my principle that one should educate so that the thing being taught affects the whole life. As you know, there are people who can step into any human situation and affect everybody simply by their mere presence. They need not work hard giving speeches, but their words are warmed and animated by something that works like a blessing on other people. As a rule, these will be people of an advanced age, whose mere presence has a quality of blessing in a very special way.

To study people, not just in the present moment but for the entirety of their lifetimes, is difficult. Physiology and anthropology are much easier since they are studies of the present moment or short time spans. If we look at purely human life, we know that, as a rule, such a blessing effect in old age is connected with the fact that as children these

people had the chance to revere, to look up to another person. I would also like to establish as a paradigm that unless one learned to fold one's hands in prayer as a child, one cannot truly use one's hands to bless in old age. The child's folded hands hold the soul-seed for the old person's blessing hands. Human beings are not just spatial organisms; they are time-bodies and everything in the course of life is connected, just as in the spatial organism the individual body parts are interrelated.

If we can fully understand this, we will also avoid teaching the children concepts they cannot alter in later life. It is very tempting for the teacher or educator to approach the child with utmost certainty, to hand out sharply defined concepts and representations. Yet this would be equivalent to preventing the child's hands from growing and changing by encasing them in clamps, whereas these hands need to grow, to change. Just as the child's physical organism must grow, so too, what the teacher, the educator has secretly planted in the soul must contain forces for growth.<sup>4</sup> We only offer this to the child if we form artistically the education, the teaching during the school age.

As an illustration, I can indicate how this artistic principle has been incorporated in the teaching at the Waldorf school. For instance, when teaching reading, we do not introduce the letters of the alphabet without any intermediary.<sup>5</sup> After all, letters are actually quite abstract to human nature. Just think how in former times a pictorial writing arose; a pictographic writing that was born by copying the image of perceived objects. The image was at first quite close to the reality being perceived, so at that point, letters had an immediacy with the human being. As civilization evolved, the letters of the alphabet became more detached and abstract from the human being. In school we need not study history all the way back in time, so that we can actually revive the old pictograms. But it is good for teachers to allow their imagination free play; to allow children to paint first, to have them paint forms that reproduce what the child experiences, what lives in the child.

So, in the Waldorf school, we do not start by learning to read or with the usual writing lessons; we start instead from a painting, a drawing experience. We develop the forms of the letters out of this drawing quality and more generally out of an artistic quality. We allow the children to fiddle with colors—even if it is a little more difficult,

even a bit messy at first. So we start with the artistic activity, out of it develop writing, and then only, reading. In this manner, an artistic quality imbues the entire teaching.

This can extend to the learning of arithmetic, if teachers are available—teachers who have become experts through intense soul work, so that the guiding lines of true anthroposophical spiritual science have been absorbed in their disposition, in their knowledge, in their feelings, in their willing. Whenever spiritual science is taken up as something living, teachers can transform all teaching into an artistic activity. If, furthermore, the people who teach that age become really artistic in their interactions with the children, they no longer affect the children through what they *know* as much as through what they *are* (the quality of their person-ness). They work through their individuality. The children then receive in their soul-disposition something that contains forces for growth, just as the bodily organism contains forces for growth. It will become possible for the thirty- or forty-year-old to recall concepts they learned in school, and it will not be a matter of remembering hard and fast concepts that one memorized, for the concepts will in fact have grown too, they will have developed. This is the way we as teachers must operate; this is the way we as educators must approach the children.

Thus, we work as “authorities,” but simultaneously we work for the child’s freedom, in the truest sense of the word. For we must see clearly, at every instant, that we are only truly educators if we can also guide on the path of life those human beings who will some day be more competent than we are. It could happen that teachers land in a school, a class, where there are two genius children, and we must be able to educate these children in such a way that we do not hinder the development of their particular genius. Whenever we educate in the sense and out of the mood I have just described, bringing what the children need in an artistic way, out of our individuality—just as earlier, children needed to imitate what the senses perceived, they now imitate what we are as individuals. We will then present the smallest possible obstacle to forces we do not have in ourselves (which could easily happen), just as a mother would not be an obstacle to a child’s genius if she is not herself a genius. We become caretakers of the qualities of childhood and will not be tempted to force upon the child something that belongs really

only to us. For the worst principle of education is to attempt to make children into copies of ourselves. This temptation is countered when we acquire a knowledge of the human being in a spiritual sense and if at every age we see the child as a riddle to be solved.

I regret that we cannot yet have a kindergarten,<sup>6</sup> which would allow younger children to be educated according to these principles—this is [currently] impossible for financial reasons. Those who teach at the Stuttgart Waldorf School feel that what is revealed as soul-spiritual reality in the human physical organism—in the gaze, in the physiognomy, in speech, in every other bodily expression—the body is not neglected in this education—has come down from divine spiritual heights and united in this being at conception or birth with what was given by father and mother out of the stream of heredity. Whenever we approach a child saying: “This child has descended to me from spiritual heights; here is a riddle for me to solve, day by day, hour by hour,” whenever we thus approach the child, we will have in our soul-disposition the loving devotion to the child’s development necessary to guide this child through all the ponderables on the path of life. Education and teaching are often matters of imponderable factors, the things that cannot be grasped in simple representations. Despite what a system-bound scientific education would have us believe, teaching is truly more than whatever happens between educator and child.

I would like to illustrate what I am saying with another example. Let us assume a teacher must teach a child about the immortality of the human soul in a form that is child-appropriate and simple. For a child between second dentition and puberty, this should be done preferably in images—not abstract concepts yet—and it must be presented by a self-evident authority.

There are two possible ways to present these images to the child. One can say: “I, the teacher, am frightfully intelligent. The child is still terribly foolish. I need to teach it about the immortality of the soul. I shall use an image. I will tell the child: Look at the butterfly chrysalis; a butterfly will emerge from it, as a visible being. Just as the butterfly emerges visibly from the butterfly chrysalis, so too at death the soul detaches itself from the physical body and flies into the spiritual world.”

I am obviously not saying this is a philosophical proof. It most certainly *is not* that. I could give the child a concrete illustration, and I can do it in the way I just described, saying I know everything for I am smart and the child is stupid. This, then, is what I communicate to the child: This is a stupid comparison but you should believe it.

Now, my dear listeners, we will not get anywhere by approaching the child in this manner. The child may well remember what was said, but the aim should be to uplift the soul, filling the soul with a content full of life and strength instead. Rather, consider—forgive me if this sounds paradoxical to you—that the child, in the subconscious layers of his soul, is perhaps much smarter than I am. Perhaps I am the stupid one and the child the smarter one. In some respects this is correct, for who knows how the still unformed inner organs, the brain, will be formed by the child's still unconscious soul, the dreaming soul, just as an exceptionally important wisdom was actively forming the child's body in the earliest years? If we appreciate these things, unless we are pedants lacking appreciation for these things, we will say: All the wisdom we acquire in life, no matter how beautiful the machines we manufacture, has not come as far as the child's *unconscious* wisdom.

A teacher standing on anthroposophical ground will take seriously the butterfly's emergence from the chrysalis and will think to herself: I am not the one making the comparison; nature itself makes the comparison. The eternal soul's release from the body at a higher level was prefigured by the divine in nature in the butterfly's crawling out of the cocoon. If I penetrate with my own feeling the image I present to the child, I give the child what is right; I give it vital strength, a life-force. Unless we ourselves believe in a thing with all our might, it will never have the right effect upon the child. These are the imponderable factors operating between teacher and child, the unspoken (realm) that only exists in the exchange of feeling, the supersensible element in teaching. If that is lacking, then only the crudest elements will be at work, not the imponderables; and human beings will not be given the right thing on the path of life.

An artistic element, I might call it a mood of piety toward the human essence, belongs in education, in teaching. This is particularly the case if we direct our gaze at the religious and moral education we want to

bestow on the child. And here anthroposophical spiritual science shows us that, especially when it comes to the religious and moral element, there is something in the human time-body that is of great significance for his whole life span on earth. If one can recognize the young child's mood as that of an essentially imitative being imitating the outer world, and if we can put ourselves in this mood, the only way to characterize it is this—the young child is completely open to the outer world; he gets lost in the outer world. Just as the eye loses itself in the outer world of color, the outer world of light, so too the child loses himself in the outer world. The inner world dawns in the child only gradually. Specific mental representations emerge little by little out of dreams, which still completely live and weave in the outer world.

Now, dear listeners, do you know what it means to revere this mood in the child? It is in truth the pious mood, the religious mood lying in the middle of the sense/physical world. No matter how wild a child may be, when it comes to his relationship with the sense world, his devotion to the world of the senses, the child longs to identify completely with the things he sees in his surroundings. This childlike mood is a religious one, albeit not yet religion proper. But this mood, so present in the small child before the change of teeth, gradually begins to fade away; it disappears altogether with the shift from imitation to devotion and a trust in authority. Yet, for the insightful teacher, this mood reappears in a remarkable way: The insightful teacher and educator faces perhaps his greatest task at the transition between the ninth and tenth year. Teachers will notice then that most of the children in their care come to them and need them quite specially. They come with questions—not always expressly formulated, often unspoken, merely living in feelings. What matters now is much less that one give the children a particular answer; we may answer in one or another way; the content does not matter all that much. What greatly matters is that the teacher is able to meet the child with the right feeling at the right moment, to release in the child the right kind of trust, and these moments always occur around the ninth and tenth years.

I can characterize this moment in a variety of ways. Before this point the child does not fully distinguish himself from his surroundings; he does not yet experience himself as an ego, even though he has long

been referring to himself as “I.” At this point in life, the child learns to feel distinct from his environment. We now can no longer expect to act upon the children purely through fairy tales, or through all kinds of pedagogical stories in which we animate the outer physical world. So let us begin with the observation that the child distinguishes himself from the outer world as an “I.”

But something else plays an essential role, something which is connected deeply with moral development. The following happens: At the beginning of the stage during which the child completely trusts authority, he accepts this authoritative individual as is. Between the ninth and tenth year, something happens—it does not have to be conscious, it may happen deep in the realm of feeling, we might say in the subconscious realm, but it is unquestionably there—the developing child finds himself, so to say, looking through the authoritative person to what it is that that person represents. The authoritative person says: This is true, this is good, this is beautiful. And now, the child would like to sense the source for this in the authority, that which gives this person knowledge of the true, the good, the beautiful; and where the will resides for the true, the good, and the beautiful. This is due to the fact that something which during the change of teeth, and still afterwards, was resting—I like to say—in the underground of the soul, something still inside the young child—if I may use this unusual term—a physical, “sensually-pious” [*sinnlich-frommes*] devotion to the outer world. This something now seems to emerge from the depths of the human entity. Something that in the nursing child and up to the change of teeth was physical, a physical element that constitutes the core of all later religious feeling toward the world, now rises to the surface between the ninth and tenth year as a psychological need.

To know this, to count on the fact that just as one lovingly nurtures the seed in order for it to become a plant, so in the same way something—a physical seed—that at one time was being prepared in the child now stands before us, demanding to be nurtured psychologically, knowing this makes for a special relationship to the child. And, in this way, one plants the seed of religion in the child.

By the same token, educators will note that among adolescents, around their seventeenth or eighteenth year, something that had taken

the form of a soul disposition, a religious feeling, in the elementary school child now appears in the spirit, the intellect, and pours into the will, so that young adults at this age can structure their religious ideals.

You see, if one wants to educate in a meaningful, truthful, and realistic way, it is of the utmost importance to penetrate these fundamental issues. Nature, after all, has taken care of the human physical organism, or else we would never be sure—especially when dealing with modern, futuristic painters—whether people might not have a sudden impulse to strick the car in the wrong place. These kinds of thing would happen if nature had not provided for the organization of the human body. In the same way, educators must take care of the time-body. We should not attempt to cultivate the child's religious sense before the moment I just described; at best we should simply prepare for it. We must hold the time-body of the child with a sure hand. We must tell ourselves: Whatever we gave the child earlier in the way of religious feelings and concepts, it has remained external, taken on authority. But between the ninth and the tenth year, something awakens in the child. If we guide these feelings that wish to spring almost of themselves from the soul in a religious sense, then we make of the child a religious true person. There is so little psychology of time nowadays, hence the false or inappropriate religious perceptions and feelings we find in contemporary society, including the belief that one can develop all manner of things at each and every age, thus ignoring what precisely must be drawn out of the child's soul specifically between the ninth and the tenth year.

If we arrange all instruction in such a way that, by the twelfth year, the child has learned enough science—in complete agreement with the current prescriptions of elementary school education—to survey many physical facts, many botanical concepts, and so forth, not yet in a scientific sense but in a child's sense, then around the twelfth year, we can observe and attend to the conflict that arises when one looks up, on one hand, to divine world guidance (to which the child could be directed between the ninth and tenth year) and, on the other, to the consequences of learning about the natural phenomena revealed to us in external ways—unrelated to the unfolding of moral or divine-spiritual forces. After all, these natural phenomena appear to us without giving

the impression that moral principles brought them about, and without our perceiving in them the immanent presence of the divine.

It is precisely this that has created for modern humanity the conflict that leads our sensibility to the religious wellsprings of existence on one hand and to natural science on the other. Real knowledge of the human being allows us to note that we can quietly touch upon these conflicts with the maturing child around the twelfth year, but also that we are in the position—because religious feelings are still so strong, so fresh, so lively, so youthful, as they can only be in the twelve-year-old—to guide the child in the right manner so that later in life he will not need to see nature emptied of the divine, but will be able instead to find the harmony between nature and the divine-spiritual Cosmic Being.

In the end it means allowing the conflict to come out into the open, always considering the right development of the human timetable, because this conflict is most effectively bridged by the very forces already resident in the human soul. To those who are able to observe contemporary social life with empathy, with a true psychology, such an art of education offers the realization that many human beings never get past the conflict I just mentioned because they were not, at the right age, led to experience the conflict and to be taken beyond it. The main thing is that teacher and educator should know human life as a whole, so that they can recognize the right thing at the right time as they encounter it, in each child, each young person, and find their bearings at the right time.

Religious experience also resides in the human being. It cannot be stuffed into the soul. Rather, we must draw it out of the soul. Just as we cannot eat with our nose but must use our mouth, so too we must know that we cannot teach religion at just any old time, but only at the appropriate age. True spiritual knowledge is the primary way we learn to bring the right thing to the child at the right age. For the child can take in whatever matches his capacities.

And if we look at the child's development and know for truth that between the change of teeth and puberty everything is determined by the personal relationship between teacher and child, and that there must be something fully artistic in this personal interrelationship, then the child's relationship to the self-evident authority develops out of

imponderable elements, involving pleasure and displeasure, sympathy and antipathy.

Teachers speak to children in stories, in parables, in hundreds of possible ways, about what is morally good, what they find morally bad. If a teacher is able to develop an artistic education, then the artistic element between educator and child results in the child's learning to consider the Good with sympathy, Evil with antipathy, so that out of pleasure and displeasure, moral feeling and ethical sensibility develop in the child between the ages of seven and fourteen.

It is false to give children commands during these years. Either we enslave them or else we make them mean, obstinate, rebellious without reason. They do not understand why they should obey commands. But what a self-evident authority finds to be right or not-right, good or evil, this the children learn to follow with sympathy or antipathy. And this sympathy and antipathy become self-evident content of the soul.

Whatever develops through schooling at that age, whatever moral feeling was established between the seventh and fourteenth years, takes the form of will impulses in the seventeenth—eighteenth year, provided there has been present in the child's life an individual whose own enthusiasm for moral ideals, for beautiful human ideals, served as a guiding light. Just as the seed is not yet the plant and yet must be there for the plant to appear, so the moral will can become the ripe, healthy fruit of morality in the human being at the age of sixteen or seventeen if moral feeling develops between the seventh and fourteenth years out of emulation of a self-evident authority.

What is the surest way to develop this moral feeling? To guide the entire instruction, the entire education, that the child learns *one* feeling above all. Perhaps the young child's education can already ensure it long before the change of teeth, if we guide the child to experience a sense of gratitude toward all that he receives from life. People nowadays underestimate the feeling of gratitude. This feeling of gratitude links a person with the world, allows a person to know himself or herself as a part of the world. If the child is guided to develop a feeling of gratitude toward even the smallest things, the child does not isolate himself in egoism; rather the child becomes altruistic and connected with his surroundings. Then, also, with school-age children, teaching

can be organized so that, little by little, the child learns to perceive that he owes his physical existence, his soul existence, his mental existence to the spiritual powers of the world, the physical, the soul, the spiritual powers of the world. This gratitude expands to a sense of thankfulness toward the whole world from whose womb he was born. Thus a sense of gratitude to parents and educators, to all his surroundings, can guide the child to an expansive feeling of thankfulness to the divine rulers of the world.

This gratitude must always precede knowledge, which can only be acquired. Any knowledge, no matter how logically justified, which does not open to a feeling of gratitude toward the world, serves only to hamper the person's development, to cripple soul and spirit.

Spiritual science—as I have presented here over the past few days—shows that all knowledge, no matter how exalted, even the most exact, can lead to feelings, first and foremost feelings of gratitude. And if one has implanted gratitude in the child, one will see that one has prepared the soil for ethical education. For if we cultivate this gratitude, and if this feeling of thankfulness is compatible with all knowledge, then the child's feeling easily turns into a flooding of universal love through his entire being, love for all other humans and ultimately for all creatures. The best way to cultivate love is out of a sense of gratitude.

In particular, it will become possible to let authority gradually become an authority completely permeated with love. The teacher's entire behavior must be so directed that this authority, which at first was, so to say, neutral toward love, which inspired self-evident following, unquestioning obedience, now in the child of nine or ten inspires *free obedience*. The child's soul now follows the self-evident authority in a love which it has awakened unto itself, a love that it already understands.

If one has thus developed in the soul the right kind of gratitude and love, it will be possible later to guide the child or young person's moral feeling so that he or she can recognize in moral life that upon which human dignity is founded in the highest measure: I can now see what raises me above the mere sense-world, above the merely physical world, what transports me to truly spiritual existence.

I have attempted to describe the spiritual world out of supersensible knowledge. The spiritual researcher can acquire knowledge of this spiritual world. But if we can perceive morality with the necessary strength,

with the necessary purity, we shall find that in our inner moral life, even in our ordinary life, we stand within a spiritual life. We achieve this if we bring to the child a particular knowledge of the human being. And actually we should never graduate any child from school—the general school of life—without some knowledge of the human being. We should release children from school only when to some extent they are imbued with a sense of the saying: “Know thyself.”

Naturally the mandate to “know thyself” can be brought to an ever higher level with all manner of knowledge and wisdom. But every elementary school should release the child with some measure of acquired self-knowledge. Up to a certain point, human beings need to know themselves as body, soul, and spirit. This knowledge—following as it does from real spiritual knowledge—posits a true connection between the human being and goodness.

Why is it that what is acknowledged today as modern science does not come to recognize this connection? Because it does not fully comprehend the human being. But just as a person would not be fully human if one organ were not irrigated by blood (the organ would atrophy without blood circulation), so one learns when one really sees the full human being in body, soul, and spirit, that the Good is what first makes the human being fully human, and Evil is something that arises from a human being who has remained incomplete.

A child who is thoroughly familiar with gratitude, with love, will also learn to understand that human beings are complete only when they see themselves as execrants of the divine world order, of the good in the world, the good in earthly existence. If moral education is rooted in gratitude and egotism is overcome—not through mystical moralistic or sentimental harangues—if healthy gratitude leads to unsentimental love, it will be possible to convince the young world-loving person that the *not-good person* who fails to be the bearer of the Good is crippled in body, soul, and spirit just as a person is crippled who is missing a leg. In our imagination, in etheric spiritual knowledge, we learn to recognize the Good as the fully human person.

Whenever we take a cursory look at a drawing of the nervous system or the circulatory system, we can see what looks like the shadow of a full human being. So too, for imaginative knowledge, imagining the Good is like catching a glimpse of the exemplar of a whole human being.

But here moral education unites with religious education. For only now does it make sense to think of God as the wellspring of the Good and of the human being as made in God's image. Religious and moral education lead to the person's feeling that we are only truly human when we are moral human beings, that those who do not choose to live morally are not complete human beings. Only if we learn to educate human beings so that they truly and honestly feel robbed of their humanity when they do not act ethically, will they have received the right religious and moral education.

Let no one say that talk is easy and that this must remain purely an ideal, for nothing in this world can ever be perfect. Anyone speaking out of spiritual science knows full well that the outer world cannot be perfect. But one conviction can permeate us when we teach and educate: this conviction can fill us with ever-fresh enthusiasm and will be accompanied by the sense that the child's soul can understand us in a sensitive way, and we shall find our way to the child's will. This conviction is rooted in a true knowledge of the human being: Only the morally good person is a true and complete human being, and religious impulses permeate the morally good human being.

Thus all education can culminate in religious and moral education. But we must also know that human beings carry in themselves a time-body and that a spiritually-informed knowledge of the human being involves learning to observe this time-body at every hour, every week, every year of our teaching, and lovingly understanding it in all its details.

And so also the fruitfulness of these religious and moral impulses in education become evident in the education of the physical body, guided from the spiritual side of the soul in, for instance, the application of eurhythm in a school. I mention this only because it has been shown that the children find themselves as spontaneously in the art of eurhythm as, at an earlier age, they found their way into the speaking of sounds. I also want to emphasize to you that anyone who wants to see religious and moral feelings cultivated in the way I have explained today should not neglect physical education. Quite the contrary, those who behold the child's life with reverence and spirit-filled activity cannot neglect physical education, for they know that the soul and spirit express themselves in the body, right down to the individual blood vessels, and

that to neglect them means to some extent to push the spirit back, out of the sense-world in which it wants to reveal itself.

This is what is attempted at the Stuttgart Waldorf School. To a certain degree already, in respect to what I have described to you as one aspect of education, it has proven practically effective. However we must always say one thing regarding this realm and other realms of life—it is not difficult to see it for social life as a whole, which has hit so many blind-alleys, and especially for education—social conditions can only be improved in the desirable fashion if we give human beings their proper place in social life. Merely changing external institutions will not suffice. If one considers all this, one really sees the importance of a true, realistic art of education, and such a realistic art of education is what Waldorf school pedagogy, Waldorf school didactics want to present to the world as a wholesome example.

Waldorf education has already found many followers, and those who are enthusiastic about a realistic art of education resting on actual scientific foundations would naturally like for it to find many more. For it is built on an archetypal truth. We must consider the educational institution as a part of the social interactions of human beings. For this social cohabitation is not just of same-age people, it is a community of old and young. After all, one part of social life is the shared life of teachers and children. Children will be educated in the right fashion when the teacher can already see in the child the whole person, and in some sense prophetically, clairvoyantly, can see ahead to what will become of every educational deed on which the fortune and destiny of an entire life depends. For all life, including education, that plays itself out between human beings must rest on the principle that everything that takes place between human beings can happen rightly only if one fully human being can devote himself or herself to another fully human being, in true love.

This must become manifest in the entire realm of education. In the future therefore, the art of education will be placed on a secure, realistic foundation, when the teacher can apply his/her best human side to the best human side of the child, when, in the relationship between teacher and child, there develops in the most beautiful sense the free relationship of human being to human being, but also one given by world necessity.

### Endnotes

1. Two public lectures *Die Erkenntnis des geistigen Wesens des Menschen* (October 31, 1922) and *Die Erkenntnis des geistigen Wesens der Welt* (November 3, 1922). Both lectures published in GA 80; originally published in *Das Goetheanum*, #35–39 and 40–48, 1941.
2. For explanations on this point see *Die Erziehung des Kindes vom Gesichtspunkte der Geisteswissenschaft* (1907, in-Lucifer-Gnosis, GA 34); also the lectures in GA 301 (*Die Erneuerung der pädagogisch-didaktischen Kunst durch Geisteswissenschaft*); GA 303 (*Die gesunde Entwicklung des Menschenwesens*); GA 304 (*Erziehungs- und Unterrichtsmethoden auf anthroposophischen Grundlagen*); and GA 308 (*Die Methodik des Lehrens und die Lebensbedingungen des Erziehens*).
3. Steiner uses the word *selbsterwähnlich*, which is translated in various fashions here: self-evident, unquestioned, unquestionable. I also use the expression “authoritative person.” The idea is to emphasize the quality of the authority Steiner has in mind here: this authority “goes without saying” for the child; however, it is unquestionable and unquestioned only to the extent that, and for as long as, the teacher has “moral authority.” If the teacher’s integrity is doubtful, that authority becomes “authoritarian” instead of being “authoritative” and no longer deserves obedience.
4. *Hinneingehimmisen*: Steiner’s coinage in this sense.
5. For detailed descriptions of the teaching of writing and reading, see lectures of August 21, 1919, GA 294 (*Erziehungskunde, Methodisch-didaktisches*); April 18, 1923, GA 306 (*Die pädagogische Praxis vom Gesichtspunkte geisteswissenschaftlicher Menschenkenntnis*); August 1, 1923, GA 307 (*Gegenwärtiges Geistesleben und Erziehung*); April 15, 1924, GA 308 (*Die Methodik des Lehrens und die Lebensbedingungen des Erziehens*); and August 30, 1924, GA 304a (*Anthroposophische Menschenkunde und Pädagogik*).
6. Elizabeth von Grunelius (1895–1989) was originally hired by the “Uhrlehrerkollegium” of the Waldorf school in order to set up a kindergarten. The attempt to have the kindergarten in one room of the school had to be given up since the fast-growing school needed the space. Only after Steiner’s death in 1925 was a small barrack erected at Herbert Hahn’s initiative on a corner of the sport-grounds, thus making it possible to open the first kindergarten.
7. Steiner refers here, as he does elsewhere, to that age bracket as *volksschulpflichtiges Alter*: the years of compulsory public education. This refers to a time when public education in European countries and North America was compulsory from ages seven to thirteen.

## VIII

## Education and Teaching as the Basis of a True Knowledge of the Human Being

Prague, April 4, 1924<sup>1</sup>

I would like to speak of a way of educating and teaching that aims at educating the whole person according to body, soul and spirit in a balanced way. Such an education can only be carried out if the educator is aware how in evolution the physical is formed out of the soul and spirit. For one can only participate in the education of a human being if one understands the laws of the human being.

Anthroposophy leads to such a knowing of the human being. It does not take a one-sided view of the physical body as happens in the scientific view of the world. It arises from spiritual vision and thus considers at each age of life the manner in which the spirit is active in the body and how the soul lives in the body.

From this point of view, there are clearly differentiated stages in the growing human being. A first stage runs from birth to the change of teeth around the seventh year. The appearance of the second teeth is not simply a localized process in the human organism. When the first teeth fall and the second teeth appear, something is taking place in the entire organism. Until that point, the soul and spirit are still very much a unity, actively involved in the formation of the body.

As a result, the entire human being is like a comprehending sense organ. What later becomes concentrated in the particular senses is still, at this point, active in the entire human being. The human being is like a sense organ, completely focused on everything being done in its surroundings. It is most decidedly an imitative being. The will works like a reflection of all happenings in the environment.

Thus, it is only possible to educate children at that age if the educator behaves in such a way that the child can copy everything one does. This must be understood in the widest possible sense. Imponderable factors are at work between the educator and the child. The child gets impressions, not just of what it perceives with his outer senses, but also what he senses in people's behavior: their disposition, their character, their good or bad will. Therefore, the educator active near the child must focus on purity of life, down to his very thoughts and feelings, so that the child can legitimately become like the educator.

But one should also be conscious that one's conduct affects the body, not just the soul. Whatever the child takes in and reflexively allows to stream into his willing goes on reverberating in his bodily organization. For example, an irascible educator's effect on the child will be to make the child's bodily organization brittle, more sensitive to morbid influences later in life. How one educates in this direction will appear later in the health of the grown man.

If the anthroposophical art of education is concerned with the soul-spiritual element in education, it is not due to a desire to develop that side alone, but because we know that the physical body can only develop rightly if the spiritual element in the body is developing in the right way.

With the change of teeth, a complete metamorphosis is taking place. What was previously deep in the bodily organization and active there becomes autonomous soul being and the physical body is left more on its own. Therefore, from the age when children first go to school, one must deal with their soul in such a way that one meets forces that previously were creative forces of the body. Education and meaningful instruction are possible only if the teacher keeps this in sight. The child at that age does not have an abstract understanding of things; he wishes to experience images in the same way he had worked previously on his own body out of images. This takes place only if educators and teachers relate artistically to the child through the senses. They cannot count on the child understanding intellectually what is being taught. They should work in such a way that images which unfold in an artistic fashion are allowed to resonate in the child's soul. The educator should be a self-evident authority for the child. If children take up the true,

the good and the beautiful, it is not out of intellectual understanding, but because the beloved educator presents to the child the images of these qualities.

Everything in education must be brought with a pictorial quality. All instruction must be artistically formed. We cannot begin with reading and we cannot begin with the writing of letters, whose present form is foreign to the human being's inner nature. One must begin with a kind of painterly drawing. The child must paint forms that are similar in their process to the signs in the pictographic writing of earlier humanity. Images must be the first thing that the child experiences from the world's objects and processes. From the image, one can then transition to the forming of letters, in the same way as hieroglyphic writing evolved into abstract symbolic-writing.

Only after the child has passed in this way from painterly symbols to writing, should one move on to reading. For in reading, only one part of the human being is active: understanding, which is linked to the head organization. In the painterly drawing and writing, more of the human organization is involved. Thus one educates the whole person, not just the head-system.

All education should be carried with this approach until the second radical juncture, the beginning of puberty. There again, the entire human being goes through metamorphosis, not just a localized part of the human organism. While previously, everything needs to be offered in pictorial form, in which one depends on the child's love for the image, at this point the child's relationship to the environment develops with more abstract conceptualization. Only from this point onward can we count upon free rational understanding in the growing human being.

This educational approach takes into account the entirety of a human life, not just childhood. It is something else altogether to engage the child in images so that later he can understand what lies behind them than to teach a so-called "object-lesson," which is no observation at all, because it lacks the artistic element and develops prematurely the head system alone. The groundwork laid in childhood has its effects in later life. A child who has been exposed to images at the appropriate age grows into a person who in old age remains fresh and actively involved in life. A child who has been brought too early to abstract

understanding, which many people mistakenly think is appropriate in childhood, becomes prematurely old, susceptible to illness and morbid life-circumstances.

**Endnote**

1. Original source Rudolf Steiner Notebook Archiv-Nr. 336, 200–201. The author's review published here was apparently written for a press representative to facilitate his reviewing of the lecture. Steiner added the following note: "This is only a sketch of what I will have to say; it is not an abstract/summary, since spiritual scientists work from the spirit, not from memory and it would be a mistake to write one's lecture ahead of time. I trust you will excuse me."