

Transforming the Soul, Vol. 1

(R.S. Press, 2005)

GA 58

(Also titled, Metamorphoses of the Soul: Paths of Experience Vol. 1)

(lectures in Berlin & Munich, Oct. and Dec. 1909)

(EDITED for ASA Council Study, April/May 2018)

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The Mission of Anger

Munich, 5th December 1909

(Transforming the Soul, p.33 – 44)

...Now what is it that originates in earlier lives, works on from life to life, and maintains itself through all its sojourns on earth? It is the Ego, the 'I', designated by the name which a person can bestow on no-one but himself. The human Ego goes from life to life, and in so doing fulfils its evolution.

But how is this evolution brought about? By the Ego working on the three lower members of the human being. We have first the astral body, the vehicle of pleasure and pain, of joy and sorrow, of instinct, desire and passion. Let us look at a person on a low level, whose Ego has done little, as yet, to cleanse his astral body and so is still its slave. In a person who stands higher we find that his Ego has worked upon his astral body in such a way that his lower instincts, desires and passions have been transmuted into moral ideals, ethical judgments. From this contrast we can gain a first impression of how the Ego works upon the astral body.

In every human being it is possible to distinguish the part of the astral body on which the Ego has not yet worked from the part which the Ego has consciously transformed. The transmuted part is called Spirit-Self, or Manas. The Ego may grow stronger and stronger and will then transmute the etheric body or life-body. Life-spirit is the name we give to the transformed etheric body. Finally, when the Ego acquires such strength that it is able to extend its transforming power into the physical body, we call the transmuted part Atma, or the real Spirit-man.

So far we have been speaking of conscious work by the Ego. In the far-distant past, long before the Ego was capable of this conscious work, it worked unconsciously — or rather sub-consciously — on the three bodies or sheaths of man. The astral body was the first to be worked on in this way, and its transmuted part we call the Sentient Soul, the first of man's soul-members. So it was that the Ego, working from the inner being of man, created the

Sentient Soul at a time when man lacked the requisite degree of consciousness for transmuting his instincts, desires and so forth. In the etheric body the Ego created unconsciously the Mind-Soul or Intellectual Soul. Again, working unconsciously on the physical body, the Ego created the inner soul-organ that we call the Consciousness Soul. For Spiritual Science, the human soul is not a vague, nebulous something, but an essential part of man's being, consisting of three distinct soul-members — Sentient Soul, Mind-Soul, Consciousness Soul — within which the Ego is actively engaged.

Let us try to form an idea of these three soul-members. The spiritual investigator knows them by direct observation, but we can approach them also by means of rational thinking. For example, suppose we have a rose before us. We perceive it, and as long as we perceive it we are receiving an impression from outside. We call this a perception of the rose. If we turn our eyes away, an inner image of the rose remains with us. We must carefully distinguish these two moments: the moment when we are looking at the rose and the moment when we are able to retain an image of it as an inner possession, although we are no longer perceiving it.

This point must be emphasised because of the incredible notions brought forward in this connection by 19th century philosophy. We need think only of Schopenhauer, [20] whose philosophy begins with the words: The world is my idea. Hence we must be clear as to the difference between percepts and concepts, or mental images. Every sane man knows the difference between the concept of white-hot steel, which cannot burn him, and white-hot steel itself, which can. Perceptions bring us into communication with the external world; concepts are a possession of the soul. The boundary between inner experience and the outer world can be precisely drawn. Directly we begin to experience something inwardly, we owe it to the Sentient Soul — as distinct from the sentient body, which brings us our percepts and enables us to perceive, for example, the rose and its colour. Thus our concepts are formed in the Sentient Soul, and the Sentient Soul is the bearer also of our sympathies and antipathies, of the feelings that things arouse in us. When we call the rose beautiful, this inward experience is a property of the Sentient Soul.

Anyone who is unwilling to distinguish percepts from concepts should remember the white-hot steel that burns and the concept of it, which does not. Once, when I had said this, someone objected that a man might be able to suggest to himself the thought of lemonade so vividly that he would experience its taste on his tongue. I replied: Certainly this might be possible, but whether the imaginary lemonade would quench his thirst is another question. The boundary between external reality and inner experience can indeed always be determined. Directly inner experience begins, the Sentient Soul, as distinct from the sentient body, comes into play.

A higher principle is brought into being by the work of the Ego on the etheric body: we call it the Mind-Soul, or Intellectual Soul. We shall have more to say about it in the lecture on the Mission of Truth; today we are concerned especially with the Sentient Soul. Through the Intellectual Soul man is enabled to do more than carry about with him the experiences aroused in him by his perceptions of the outer world. He takes these experiences a stage further. Instead of merely keeping his perceptions alive as images in the Sentient Soul, he reflects on them and devotes himself to them; they form themselves into thoughts and judgments, into the whole

content of his mind. This continued cultivation of impressions received from the outer world is the work of what we call the Intellectual Soul or Mind-soul.

A third principle is brought into being when the Ego has created in the physical body the organs whereby it is enabled to go out from itself and to connect its judgments, ideas and feelings with the external world. This principle we call the Consciousness Soul, because the Ego is then able to transform its inner experiences into conscious knowledge of the outer world. When we give form to the feelings we experience, so that they enlighten us concerning the outer world, our thoughts, judgments and feelings become knowledge of the outer world. Through the Consciousness Soul we explore the secrets of the outer world as human beings endowed with knowledge and cognition.

So does the Ego work continually in the Sentient Soul, in the Intellectual or Mind-Soul, and in the Consciousness Soul, releasing the forces inwardly bound up there and enabling man to advance in his evolution by enriching his capacities. The Ego is the actor, the active being through whose agency man himself takes control of his evolution and progresses from life to life, remedying the defects of former lives and widening the faculties of his soul. Such is human evolution from life to life; it consists first of all in the Ego's work on the soul in its threefold aspect.

We must, however, recognise clearly that in its work the Ego has the character of a "two-edged sword". Yes, this human Ego is, on the one hand, the element in man's being through which alone he can be truly man. If we lacked this central point, we should be merged passively with the outer world. Our concepts and ideas have to be taken hold of in this centre; more and more of them must be experienced; and our inner life must be increasingly enriched by impressions from the outer world. Man is truly man to the degree in which his Ego becomes richer and more comprehensive. Hence the Ego must seek to enrich itself in the course of succeeding lives; it must become a centre whereby man is not simply part of the outer world but acts as a stimulating force upon it. The richer the fund of his impulses, the more he has absorbed and the more he radiates from the centre of his individual self, the nearer he approaches to being truly man.

That is one aspect of the Ego; and we are in duty bound to endeavour to make the Ego as rich and as many-sided as we can. But the reverse side of this progress is manifest in what we call selfishness or egoism. If these words were taken as catchwords and it were said that human beings must become selfless, that of course would be bad, as any use of catchwords always is. It is indeed man's task to enrich himself inwardly, but this does not imply a selfish hardening of the Ego and a shutting off of itself with its riches from the world. In that event a man would indeed become richer and richer, but he would lose his connection with the world. His enrichment would signify that the world had no more to give him, nor he the world. In the course of time he would perish, for while striving to enrich his Ego he would keep it all for himself and would become isolated from the world. This caricature of development would impoverish a man's Ego to an increasing extent, for selfishness lays a man inwardly waste. So is it that the Ego, as it works in the three members of the soul, acts as a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it must work to become always richer, a powerful centre from which much can stream forth; but on the other hand it must bring everything it absorbs back into harmony with the outer world. To the same degree that it develops its own resources, it must go out from

itself and relate itself to the whole of existence. It must become simultaneously an independent being and a selfless one. Only when the Ego works in these two apparently contradictory directions — when on one side it enriches itself increasingly and on the other side becomes selfless — can human evolution go forward so as to be satisfying for man and health-giving for the whole of existence. The Ego has to work on each of three soul-members in such a way that both sides of human development are kept in balance.

Now the work of the Ego in the soul leads to its own gradual awakening. Development occurs in all forms of life, and we find that the three members of the human soul are today at very different stages of evolution. The Sentient Soul, the bearer of our emotions and impulses and of all the feelings that are aroused by direct stimuli from the outer world, is the most strongly developed of the three. But at certain lower stages of evolution the content of the Sentient Soul is experienced in a dull, dim way, for the Ego is not yet fully awake. When a man works inwardly on himself and his soul-life progresses, the Ego becomes more and more clearly conscious of itself. But as far as the Sentient Soul is awake, the Ego is hardly more than a brooding presence within it. The Ego gains in clarity when man advances to a richer life in the Intellectual Soul, and achieves full clarity in the Consciousness Soul. Man then comes to be aware of himself as an individual who stands apart from his environment and is active in gaining objective knowledge of it. This is possible only when the Ego is awake in the Consciousness Soul.

Thus we have the Ego only dimly awake in the Sentient Soul. It is swept along by waves of pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow, and can scarcely be perceived as an entity. In the Intellectual Soul, when clearly defined ideas and judgments are developed, the Ego first gains clarity, and achieves full clarity in the Consciousness Soul.

Hence we can say: Man has a duty to educate himself through his Ego and so to further his own inner progress. But at the time of its awakening the Ego is still given over to the waves of emotion that surge through the Sentient Soul. Is there anything in the Sentient Soul which can contribute to the education of the Ego at a time when the Ego is still incapable of educating itself?

We shall see how in the Intellectual Soul there is something which enables the Ego to take its own education in hand. In the Sentient Soul this is not yet possible; the Ego must be guided by something which arises independently within the Sentient Soul. We will single out this one element in the Sentient Soul and consider its two-sided mission for educating the Ego. This element is one to which the strongest objection may perhaps be taken — the emotion we call anger. Anger arises in the Sentient Soul when the Ego is still dormant there. Or can it be said that we stand in a self-conscious relation to anyone if their behaviour causes us to flare up in anger?

Let us picture the difference between two persons: two teachers, let us say. One of them has achieved the clarity which makes for enlightened inner judgments. He sees what his pupil is doing wrong but is not perturbed by it, because his Intellectual Soul is mature. With his Consciousness Soul, also, he is calmly aware of the child's error, and if necessary he can prescribe an appropriate penalty, not impelled by any emotional reaction but in accordance with ethical and pedagogical judgment. It will be otherwise with a teacher whose Ego has not

reached the stage that would enable him to remain calm and discerning. Not knowing what to do, he flares up in anger at the child's misdemeanour.

Is such anger always inappropriate to the event that calls it forth? No, not always. And this is something we must keep in mind. Before we are capable of judging an event in the light of the Intellectual Soul or the Consciousness Soul, the wisdom of evolution has provided for us to be overcome by emotion because of that event. Something in our Sentient Soul is activated by an event in the outer world. We are not yet capable of making the right response as an act of judgment, but we can react from the emotional centre of the Sentient Soul. Of all things that the Sentient Soul experiences, let us therefore consider anger.

It points to what will come about in the future. To begin with, anger expresses a judgment of some event in the outer world; then, having learnt unconsciously through anger to react to something wrong, we advance gradually to enlightened judgments in our higher souls. So in certain respects anger is an educator. It arises in us as an inner experience before we are mature enough to form an enlightened judgment of right and wrong. This is how we should look on the anger which can flare up in a young man, before he is capable of a considered judgment, at the sight of injustice or folly which violates his ideals; and then we can properly speak of a righteous anger. No-one does better at acquiring an inner capacity for sound judgment than a man who has started from a state of soul in which he could be moved to righteous anger by anything ignoble, immoral or crazy. That is how anger has the mission of raising the Ego to higher levels. On the other hand, since man is to become a free being, everything human can degenerate. Anger can degenerate into rage and serve to gratify the worst kind of egoism. This must be so, if man is to advance towards freedom. But we must not fail to realise that the very thing which can lapse into evil may, when it manifests in its true significance, have the mission of furthering the progress of man. It is because man can change good into evil, that good qualities, when they are developed in the right way, can become a possession of the Ego. So is anger to be understood as the harbinger of that which can raise man to calm self-possession.

But although anger is on the one hand an educator of the Ego, it also serves strangely enough, to engender selflessness. What is the Ego's response when anger overcomes it at the sight of injustice or folly? Something within us speaks out against the spectacle confronting us. Our anger illustrates the fact that we are up against something in the outer world. The Ego then makes its presence felt and seeks to safeguard itself against this outer event. The whole content of the Ego is involved. If the sight of injustice or folly were not to kindle a noble anger in us, the events in the outer world would carry us along with them as an easy-going spectator; we would not feel the sting of the Ego and we would have no concern for its development. Anger enriches the Ego and summons it to confront the outer world, yet at the same time it induces selflessness. For if anger is such that it can be called noble and does not lapse into blind rage, its effect is to damp down Ego-feeling and to produce something like powerlessness in the soul. If the soul is suffused with anger, its own activity becomes increasingly suppressed.

This experience of anger is wonderfully well brought out in the vernacular use of such giffen, to poison oneself, as a phrase meaning "to get angry". This is an example of how popular imagination arrives at a truth which may often elude the learned.

Anger which eats into the soul is a poison; it damps down the Ego's self-awareness and so promotes selflessness. Thus we see how anger serves to teach both independence and

selflessness; that is its dual mission as an educator of humanity, before the Ego is ripe to undertake its own education. If we were not enabled by anger to take an independent stand, in cases where the outer world offends our inner feeling, we would not be selfless, but dependent and Ego-less in the worst sense.

For the spiritual scientist, anger is also the harbinger of something quite different. Life shows us that a person who is unable to flare up with anger at injustice or folly will never develop true kindness and love. Equally, a person who educates himself through noble anger will have a heart abounding in love, and through love he will do good. Love and kindness are the obverse of noble anger. Anger that is overcome and purified will be transformed into the love that is its counterpart. A loving hand is seldom one that has never been clenched in response to injustice or folly. Anger and love are complementary.

A superficial Theosophy might say: Yes, a man must overcome his passions; he must cleanse and purify them. But overcoming something does not mean shirking or shunning it. It is a strange sort of sacrifice that is made by someone who proposes to cast off his passionate self by evading it. We cannot sacrifice something unless we have first possessed it. Anger can be overcome only by someone who has experienced it first within himself. Instead of trying to evade such emotions, we must transmute them in ourselves. By transmuting anger, we rise from the Sentient Soul, where noble anger can flame out, to the Intellectual Soul and the Consciousness Soul, where love and the power to give blessing are born.

Transmuted anger is love in action. That is what we learn from reality. Anger in moderation has the mission of leading human beings to love; we can call it the teacher of love. And not in vain do we call the undefined power that flows from the wisdom of the world and shows itself in the righting of wrongs the "wrath of God", in contrast to God's love. But we know that these two things belong together; without the other, neither can exist. In life they require and determine each other...

The Mission of Truth *Berlin, 22nd October, 1909**

(There is a note about the dates of the lectures in End Notes of Transforming the Soul. Basically, lectures were given multiple times, in different cities, and the most complete versions were included in this published series. So, although lectures listed were not given chronologically, similar lectures were given in the sequence here presented.)

(Transforming the Soul, p.50 – 67)

We were able to close our lecture on the Mission of Anger (illustrated in Prometheus Bound) with the saying of Heraclitus: “Never will you find the boundaries of the soul, by whatever paths you search for them; so all-embracing is the soul's being.” We came to know this depth in the working and interplay of the powers of the soul; and the truth of the saying came home to us especially when we turned our attention to the most deeply inward part of man's being. Man is most spiritual in his Ego, and that was our starting-point.

The Ego complements those other elements of man's being which he has in common with minerals, plants and animals. He has his physical body in common with minerals, plants and animals; his etheric body in common with animals and plants; his astral body in common with animals. Through his Ego he first becomes man in the true sense and is able to progress from stage to stage. It is the Ego that works upon the other members of his being; it cleanses and purifies the instincts, inclinations, desires and passions of the astral body, and will lead the etheric and physical bodies on to ever-higher stages. But if we look at the Ego, we find that this high member of man's being is imprisoned, as it were, between two extremes.

Through his Ego, man is intended to become increasingly a being who has a firm centre in himself. His thoughts, feelings and will-impulses should spring from this centre. The more he has a firm and well-endowed centre in himself, the more will he have to give to the world; the stronger and richer will be his activities and everything that goes out from him. If he is unable to find this central point in himself, he will be in danger of losing himself through a misconceived activity of his Ego. He would lose himself in the world and go ineffectually through life. Or he may lapse into the other extreme. Just as he may lose himself if he fails to strengthen and enrich his Ego, so, if he thinks of nothing but developing his Ego, he may fall into the other extreme of selfish isolation from all human community. Here, on this other side, we find egoism, with its hardening and secluding influence, which can divert the Ego from its proper path. The Ego is confined within these two extremes.

In considering the human soul, we called three of its members the Sentient Soul, the Intellectual Soul and the Consciousness Soul. We also came to recognise — surprisingly, perhaps, for many people — that anger acts as a kind of educator of the Sentient Soul. A one-sided view of the lecture on the mission of anger could give scope for many objections. But if we go into the underlying significance of this view of anger, we shall find in it an answer to many important riddles of life.

In what sense is anger an educator of the soul — especially the Sentient Soul — and a forerunner of love? Is it not true that anger tends to make a man lose control of himself and

engage in wild, immoral and loveless behaviour? If we are thinking only of wild, unjustified outbursts of anger, we shall get a false idea of what the mission of anger is. It is not through unjustified outbreaks of anger that anger educates the soul, but through its inward action on the soul.

Let us again imagine two teachers faced with children who have done something wrong. One teacher will burst into anger and hastily impose a penalty. The other teacher, though unable to break out into anger, is also incapable of acting rightly, with perfect tranquility, out of his Ego, in the sense described yesterday. How will the behaviour of two such teachers differ? An outburst of anger by one of them involves more than the penalty imposed on the child. Anger agitates the soul and works upon it in such a way as to destroy selfishness. Anger acts like a poison on selfishness, and we find that in time it gradually transforms the powers of the soul and makes it capable of love. On the other hand, if a teacher has not yet attained inner tranquility and yet inflicts a coldly calculated penalty, he will — since anger will not work in him as a counteracting poison — become increasingly a cold egoist.

Anger works inwardly and can be regarded as a regulator for unjustified outbursts of selfishness. Anger must be there or it could not be fought against. In overcoming anger the soul continually improves itself. If a man insists on getting something done that he considers right and loses his temper over it, his anger will dampen the egoistic forces in his soul; it reduces their effective power. Just because anger is overcome and a man frees himself from it and rises above it, his selflessness will be enhanced and the selflessness of his Ego continually strengthened. The scene of this interplay between anger and the Ego is the Sentient Soul. A different interplay between the soul and other experiences takes its course in the Intellectual Soul.

Although the soul has attributes which it must overcome in order to rise above them, it must also develop inwardly certain forces which it should love and cherish, however spontaneously they may arise. They are forces to which the soul may initially yield, so that, when it finally asserts itself, it is not weakened, but strengthened, by the experience. If a man were incapable of anger when called upon to assert himself in action, he would be the weaker for it.

It is just when a man lovingly immerses himself in his own soul that his soul is strengthened and an ascent to higher stages of the Ego comes within reach. The outstanding element that the soul may love within itself, leading not to egoism but to selflessness, is truth. Truth educates the Intellectual Soul. While anger is an attribute of the soul that must be overcome if a man is to rise to higher stages, truth should be loved and valued from the start. An inward cultivation of truth is essential for the progress of the soul.

How is it that devotion to truth leads man upwards from stage to stage? The opposites of truth are falsehood and error. We shall see how man progresses in so far as he overcomes falsehood and error and pursues truth as his great ideal.

A higher truth must be the aim of man's endeavour, while he treats anger as an enemy to be increasingly abolished. He must love truth and feel himself most intimately united with it. Nevertheless, eminent poets and thinkers have rightly claimed that full possession of truth is beyond human reach. Lessing, [21] for example, says that pure truth is not for men, but only a

perpetual striving towards it. He speaks of truth as a distant goddess whom men may approach but never reach. When the nature of truth stirs the soul to strive for it, the soul can be impelled to rise from stage to stage. Since there is this everlasting search for truth, and since truth is so manifold in meaning, all we can reasonably say is that man must set out to grasp truth and to kindle in himself a genuine sense of truth. Hence we cannot speak of a single, all-embracing truth.

In this lecture we will consider the idea of truth in its right sense, and it will become clear that by cultivating a sense of truth in his inner life man will be imbued with a progressive power that leads him to selflessness.

Man strives towards truth; but when people try to form views concerning one thing or another, we find that in the most varied realms of life conflicting opinions are advanced. When we see what different people take for truth, we might think that the striving for truth leads inevitably to the most contradictory views and standpoints. However, if we look impartially at the facts, we shall find guidelines which show how it is that men who are all seeking truth, arrive at such a diversity of opinions.

Let us take an example. The American multimillionaire, Harriman, [22] who died recently, was a rarity among millionaires in concerning himself with thoughts of general human interest. His aphorisms, found after his death, include a remarkable statement. He wrote: No man in this world is indispensable. When one goes, another is there to take his place. When I lay down my work, another will come and take it up. The railways will continue running, dividends will be paid; and so, strictly speaking, it is with all men.

This millionaire, accordingly, rose to the point of declaring as a generally valid truth — no man is indispensable!

Let us compare this statement with a remark by a man who worked for many years in Berlin and gained great distinction through his lecture courses on the lives of Michelangelo, Raphael and Goethe — I mean the art-historian Herman Grimm. [23] When Treitschke [24] died, Herman Grimm wrote of him roughly as follows: Now Treitschke is gone, and people only now realise what he accomplished. No-one can take his place and continue his work in the same way. A feeling prevails that in the circle where he taught, everything is changed. Note that Herman Grimm did not add the words, so it is with all men.

Here we have two men, the American millionaire and Herman Grimm, who arrive at exactly opposite truths. How does this come about? If we carefully compare the two statements, we shall find a clue. Bear in mind that Harriman says pointedly: When I lay down my work, someone else will continue it. He does not get away from himself. The other thinker, Herman Grimm, leaves himself entirely out of account. He does not speak about himself, or ask what sort of opinions or truths others might gain from him. He merges himself in his subject. Anyone with a feeling for the matter will have no doubt as to which of the two spoke truth. We need only ask — who carried on Goethe's work when he laid it down? We can feel that Harriman's reflections suffer from the fact that he fails to get away from himself. Up to a point we may conclude that it is prejudicial to truth if someone in search of truth cannot get away from himself. Truth is best served when the seeker leaves himself out of the reckoning. Would it be true to say, then, that truth is already something that gives us a view (Ansicht) of things?

A view, in the sense of an opinion, is a thought which reflects the outer world. When we form a thought or reach a decision about something, does it follow that we have a true picture of it?

Suppose you take a photograph of a remarkable tree. Does the photograph give a true picture of the tree? It shows the tree from one side only, not the whole reality of the tree. No-one could form a true image of the tree from this one photograph. How could anyone who has not seen the tree be brought nearer to the truth of it? If the tree were photographed from four sides, he could collate the photographs and arrive finally at a true picture of the tree, not dependent on a particular standpoint.

Now let us apply this example to human beings. A man who leaves himself out of account when forming a view of something is doing much the same as the photographer who goes all round the tree. He eliminates himself by conscious action. When we form an opinion or take a certain view, we must realise that all such opinions depend on our personal standpoint, our habits of mind and our individuality. If we then try to eliminate these influences from our search for truth, we shall be acting as the photographer did in our example. The first condition for acquiring a genuine sense of truth is that we should get away from ourselves and see clearly how much depends on our personal point of view. If the American multimillionaire had got away from himself he would have known that there was a difference between him and other men.

An example from everyday life has shown us, that if a man fails to realise how much his personal standpoint or point of departure influences his views, he will arrive at narrow opinions, not at the truth. This is apparent also on a wider scale. Anyone who looks at the true spiritual evolution of mankind, and compares all the various “truths” that have arisen in the course of time, will find — if he looks deeply enough — that when people pronounce a “truth” they ought first of all to get away from their individual outlooks. It will then become clear that the most varied opinions concerning truth are advanced because men have not recognised to what extent their views are restricted by their personal standpoints.

A less familiar example may lead to a deeper understanding of this matter. If we want to learn more about beauty, we turn to aesthetics, which deals with the forms of beauty. Beauty is something we encounter in the outer world. How can we learn the truth about it? Here again we must free ourselves from the restrictions imposed by our personal characteristics.

Take for example the 19th century German thinker, Solger. [25] He wished to investigate the nature of beauty in accordance with his idea of truth. He could not deny that we meet with beauty in the external world; but he was a man with a one-sided theosophical outlook, and this was reflected in his theory of aesthetics. His interest in a beautiful picture was confined to the shining through it of the only kind of spirituality he recognised. For him, an object was beautiful only in so far as the spiritual was manifest through it. Solger was a one-sided theosophist; he sought to explain sense-perceptible phenomena in terms of the super-sensible; but he forgot that sense-perceptible reality has a justified existence on its own account. Unable to escape from his preconceptions, he sought to attain to the spiritual by way of a misconceived theosophy.

Another writer on aesthetics, Robert Zimmermann, [26] came to an exactly opposite conclusion. As against Solger's misconceived theosophical aesthetics, Zimmermann based his aesthetics on a misconceived anti-theosophical outlook. His sole concern was with symmetry and anti-symmetry, harmony and discord. He had no interest in going beyond the beautiful to that which manifests through it. So his aesthetics were as one-sided as Solger's. Every striving for truth can be vitiated if the seeker fails to recognise that he must first endeavour to get away from himself. This can be achieved only gradually; but the primary, inexorable demand is, that if we are to advance towards truth we must leave ourselves out of account and quite forget ourselves. Truth has a unique characteristic: a man can strive for it while remaining entirely within himself and yet — while living in his Ego — he can acquire something which, fundamentally speaking, has nothing to do with the egoistic ego.

Whenever a man tries in life to get his own way in some matter, this is an expression of his egoism. Whenever he wants to force on others something he thinks right and loses his temper over it, that is an expression of his self-seeking. This self-seeking must be subdued before he can attain to truth. Truth is something we experience in our most inward being — and yet it liberates us increasingly from ourselves. Of course, it is essential that nothing save the love of truth should enter into our striving for it. If passions, instincts and desires, from which the Sentient Soul must be cleansed before the Intellectual Soul can strive for truth, come into it, they will prevent a man from getting away from himself and will keep his Ego tied to a fixed viewpoint. In the search for truth, the only passion that must not be discarded is love.

Truth is a lofty goal. This is shown by the fact that truth, in the sense intended here, is recognised today in one limited realm only. It is only in the realm of mathematics that humanity in general has reached the goal of truth, for here men have curbed their passions and desires and kept them out of the way. Why are all men agreed that three times three makes nine and not ten? Because no emotion comes into it, Men would agree on the highest truths if they had gone as far with them as they have with mathematics. The truths of mathematics are grasped in the inmost soul, and because they are grasped in this way, we possess them. We would still possess them if a hundred or a thousand people were to contradict us; we would still know that three times three makes nine because we have grasped this fact inwardly. If the hundred or thousand people who take a different view were to get away from themselves, they would come to the same truth.

What, then, is the way to mutual understanding and unity for mankind? We understand one another in the field of reckoning and counting because here we have met the conditions required. Peace, concord and harmony will prevail among men to the extent that they find truth. That is the essential thing: that we should seek for truth as something to be found only in our own deepest being; and should know that truth ever and again draws men together, because from the innermost depth of every human soul its light shines forth.

So is truth the leader of mankind towards unity and mutual understanding, and also the precursor of justice and love. Truth is a precursor we must cherish, while the other precursor, anger, that we came to know yesterday, must be overcome if we are to be led by it away from selfishness. That is the mission of truth: to become the object of increasing love and care and devotion on our part. Inasmuch as we devote ourselves inwardly to truth, our true self gains in strength and will enable us to cast off self-interest. Anger weakens us; truth strengthens us.

Truth is a stern goddess; she demands to be at the centre of a unique love in our souls. If man fails to get away from himself and his desires and prefers something else to her, she takes immediate revenge. The English poet Coleridge has rightly indicated how a man should stand towards truth. If, he says, a man loves Christianity more than truth, he will soon find that he loves his own Christian sect more than Christianity, and then he will find that he loves himself more than his sect.

Very much is implicit in these words. Above all, they signify that to strive against truth leads to humanly degrading egoism. Love of truth is the only love that sets the Ego free. And directly man gives priority to anything else, he falls inevitably into self-seeking. Herein lies the great and most serious importance of truth for the education of the human soul. Truth conforms to no man, and only by devotion to truth can truth be found. Directly man prefers himself and his own opinions to the truth, he becomes anti-social and alienates himself from the human community. Look at people who make no attempt to love truth for its own sake but parade their own opinions as the truth: they care for nothing but the content of their own souls and are the most intolerant. Those who love truth in terms of their own views and opinions will not suffer anyone to reach truth along a quite different path. They put every obstacle in the way of anyone with different abilities, who comes to opinions unlike their own. Hence the conflicts that so often arise in life. An honest striving for truth leads to human understanding, but the love of truth for the sake of one's own personality leads to intolerance and the destruction of other people's freedom.

Truth is experienced in the Intellectual Soul. It can be sought for and attained through personal effort only by beings capable of thought. Inasmuch as truth is acquired by thinking, we must realise very clearly that there are two kinds of truth. First we have the truth that comes from observing the world of Nature around us and investigating it bit by bit in order to discover its truths, laws and wisdom. When we contemplate the whole range of our experience of the world in this way, we come to the kind of truth that can be called the truth derived from "reflective" thinking — we first observe the world and then think about our findings.

We saw yesterday that the entire realm of Nature is permeated with wisdom, and that wisdom lives in all natural things. In a plant there lives the idea of the plant, and this we can arrive at by reflective thought. Similarly, we can discern the wisdom that lives in the plant. By thus looking out on the world we can infer that the world is born of wisdom, and that through the activity of our thinking we can rediscover the element that enters into the creation of the world. That is the kind of truth to be gained by reflective thought.

There are also other truths. These cannot be gained by reflective thought, but only by going beyond everything that can be learnt from the outer world. In ordinary life we can see at once that when a man constructs a tool or some other instrument, he has to formulate laws that are not part of the outer world. For example, no-one could learn from the outer world how to construct a clock, for the laws of Nature are not so arranged as to provide for the appearance of clocks as a natural product. That is a second kind of truth: we come to it by thinking out something not given to us by observation or experience of the outer world. Hence there are these two kinds of truth, and they must be kept strictly apart, one derived from reflective thought and the other from "creative" thought.

How can a truth of this second kind be verified? The inventor of a clock can easily prove that he had thought it out correctly. He has to show that the clock does what he expects. Anything we think out in advance must prove itself in practice: it must yield results that can be recognised in the external world. The truths of Spiritual Science or Anthroposophy are of this kind. They cannot be found by observing external experience.

For example, no findings in the realm of outer Nature can establish the truth we have often dwelt on in connection with the immortal kernel of man's being: the truth that the human Ego appears again and again on earth in successive incarnations. Anyone who wishes to acquire this truth must raise himself above ordinary experience. He must grasp in his soul a truth that has then to be made real in outer life. A truth of this kind cannot be proved in the same way as truths of the first kind, gained by what we have called reflective thought. It can be proven only by showing how it applies to life and is reflected there. If we look at life with the knowledge that the soul repeatedly returns and ever and again goes through a series of events and experiences between birth and death, we shall find how much satisfaction, how much strength and fruitfulness, these thoughts can bring. Or again, if we ask how the soul of a child can be helped to develop and grow stronger, if we presuppose that an eternally existent soul is here working its way into a new life, then this truth will shine in on us and give proof of its fruitfulness in daily experience. Any other proofs are false. The only way in which a truth of this kind can be confirmed is by giving proof of its validity in daily life. Hence there is a vast difference between these two kinds of truth. Those of the second kind are grasped in the spirit and then verified by observing their influence on outer life.

What then is the educational effect of these two kinds of truth on the human soul? It makes a great difference whether a man devotes himself to truths that come from reflective thought or to those that come from creative thought. If we steep ourselves in the wisdom of Nature and create in ourselves a true reflection of it, we can rightly say that we have in ourselves something of the creative activity from which the life of Nature springs. But here a distinction must be made. The wisdom of Nature is directly creative and gives rise to the reality of Nature in all its fullness, but the truth we derive from thinking about Nature is only a passive image; in our thinking it has lost its power. We may indeed acquire a wide, open-minded picture of natural truth, but the creative, productive element is absent from it. Hence the immediate effect of this picture of truth on the development of the human Ego is desolating. The creative power of the Ego is crippled and devitalised; the Self loses strength and can no longer stand up to the world, if it is concerned only with reflective thoughts. Nothing else does so much to isolate the Ego, to make it withdraw into itself and look with hostility on the world. A man can become a cold egoist if he is intent only on investigating the outer world. Why does he want this knowledge? Does he mean to place it at the service of the Gods?

If a man desires only this kind of truth, he wants it for himself, and he will be on the way to becoming a cold egoist and misogynist in later life. He will become a recluse or will sever himself from mankind in some other way, for he wants to possess the content of the world as his own truth. All forms of seclusion and hostility towards humanity can be found on this path. The soul becomes increasingly dried up and loses its sense of human fellowship. It becomes ever more impoverished, although the truth should enrich it. Whether a man turns into a recluse or a one-sided eccentric makes no difference; in both cases a hardening process will

overtake his soul. Hence we see that the more a man confines himself to this kind of reflective thought, the less fruitful his soul will be. Let us try to understand why this is so.

Consider the realms of nature and suppose that we have before us an array of plants. They have been formed by the living wisdom which calls forth their inherent productive power. Now an artist comes along. His soul receives the picture that Nature sets before him. He does not merely think about it; he opens himself to Nature's productive power and lets it work upon him. He creates a work of art which does not embody merely an act of thinking; it is imbued with productive power. Then comes someone who tries to get behind the picture and to extract a thought from it. He ponders over it. In this way its reality is filtered and impoverished. Now try to carry this process further. Once the soul has extracted a thought from the picture, it has finished with it. Nothing more can be done except to formulate thoughts about the thought — an absurd procedure which soon dries up.

It is quite different with creative thinking. Here a man is himself productive. His thoughts take form as realities in outer life; here he is working after the example of Nature herself. That is how it is with a man who goes beyond mere observation and reflective thinking and allows something not to be gained from observation to arise in his soul. All spiritual-scientific truths require a productive disposition in the soul. In the case of these truths all mere reflective thinking is bad and leads to deception. But the truths attainable by creative thought are limited, for man is weak in the face of the creative wisdom of the world. There is no end to the things from which we can derive truths by reflective thought; but creative thought, although the field open to it is restricted, brings about a heightening of productive power; the soul is refreshed and its scope extended. Indeed, the soul becomes more and more inwardly divine, in so far as it reflects in itself an essential element of the divine creative activity in the world.

So we have these two distinct kinds of truth, one reached by creative thought, the other by reflective thought. This latter kind, derived from the investigation of existent things or current experience, will always lead to abstractions; under its influence the soul is deprived of nourishment and tends to dry up. The truth that is not gained from immediate experience is creative; its strength helps man to find a place in the world where he can co-operate in shaping the future.

The past can be approached only by reflective thought, while creative thought opens a way into the future. Man thus becomes a responsible creator of the future. He extends the power of his Ego into the future, in so far as he comes to possess not merely the truths derived from the past by reflective thinking, but also those that are gained by creative thinking and point towards the future.

Herein lies the liberating influence of creative thinking. Anyone who is active in the striving for truth will soon find how he is impoverished by mere reflective thinking. He will come to understand how the devotee of reflective thinking fills his mind with phantom ideas and bloodless abstractions. Such a man may feel like an outcast, condemned to a mere savouring of truth and may come to doubt whether his spirit can play any part in shaping the world. On the other hand, a man who experiences a truth gained by creative thinking will find that it nourishes and warms his soul and gives it new strength for every stage in life. It fills him with joy when he is able to grasp truths of this kind and discovers that in bringing them to bear on the

phenomena of life he can say to himself: Now I not only understand what is going on there, but I can explain it in the light of having known something of it previously.

With the aid of spiritual-scientific truths we can now approach man himself. He cannot be understood merely by reflective thinking, but now we can comprehend him better and better, while our feeling of unity with the world and our interest in it are continually enhanced. We experience joy and satisfaction at every confirmation of spiritual-scientific truths that we encounter. This is what makes these truths so satisfying: we have first to grasp them before we can find them corroborated in actual life, and all the while they enrich us inwardly. We are drawn gradually into unity with the phenomena we experience. We get away more and more from ourselves, whereas reflective thinking leads to subtle forms of egoism. In order to find confirmation of truths gained by creative thinking we have to go out from ourselves and look for their application in all realms of life. It is these truths that liberate us from ourselves and imbue us in the highest degree with a sense of truth and a feeling for it.

Feelings of this kind have been alive in every genuine seeker after truth. They were deeply present in the soul of Goethe when he declared: "Only that which is fruitful is true" — a magnificent, luminous saying of far — reaching import. But Goethe was also well aware that men must be closely united with truth if they are to understand one another. Nothing does more to estrange men from one another than a lack of concern for truth and the search for truth. Goethe also said: "A false doctrine cannot be refuted, for it rests on a conviction that the false is true." [27] Obviously there are falsities that can be logically disproved, but that is not what Goethe means. He is convinced that a false viewpoint cannot be refuted by logical conclusions, and that the fruitful application of truth in practical life should be our sole guide-line in our search for truth...

The Mission of Reverence

Berlin, 28th October, 1909

(Transforming the Soul, p.80 – 96)

You all know the words with which Goethe concluded his life's masterpiece, Faust:

All things transient
Are but a parable;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds fulfilment;
The indescribable
Here becomes deed;
The eternal-feminine
Draws us on high.

It goes without saying that in this context the “eternal-feminine” has nothing to do with man and woman. Goethe is making use of an ancient turn of speech. In all forms of mysticism — and Goethe gives these closing lines to a Chorus mysticus — we find an urge in the soul, at first quite indefinite, towards something which the soul has not yet come to know and to unite itself with, but must strive towards. This goal, at first only dimly surmised by the aspiring soul, is called by Goethe, in accord with the mystics of diverse times, the eternal-feminine, and the whole sense of the second part of Faust confirms this way of taking the concluding lines.

This Chorus mysticus, with its succinct words, can be set against the Unio mystical the name given by true mystical thinkers to union with the eternal-feminine, far off spiritually but within human reach.

When the soul has risen to this height and feels itself to be at one with the eternal-feminine, then we can speak of mystical union, and this is the highest summit that we shall be considering today.

In the last two lectures, on the mission of anger and the mission of truth, we saw that the soul is involved in a process of evolution. On the one hand, we indicated certain attributes which the soul must strive to overcome, whereby anger, for example, can become an educator of the soul; and we saw on the other, how truth can educate the soul in its own special way.

The end and goal of this process of development cannot always be foreseen by the soul. We can place some object before us and say that it has developed from an earlier form to its present stage. We cannot say this of the human soul, for the soul is progressing through a continuing evolution in which it is itself the active agent. The soul must feel that, having developed to a certain point, it has to go further. And as a self-conscious soul it must say to

itself: How is it that I am able to think not only about my development in the past but also about my development in the future?

Now we have often explained how the soul, with all its inner life, is composed of three members. We cannot go over this in detail again today, but it will be better to mention, it, so that this lecture can be studied on its own account. We call these three members of the soul the Sentient Soul, the Intellectual Soul and the Consciousness Soul. The Sentient Soul can live without being much permeated by thinking. Its primary role is to receive impressions from the outer world and to pass them on inwardly. It is also the vehicle of such feelings of pleasure and pain, joy and grief, as come from these outer impressions. All human emotions, all desires, instincts and passions arise from within the Sentient Soul. Man has progressed from this stage to higher levels; he has permeated the Sentient Soul with his thinking and with feelings induced by thinking. In the Intellectual Soul, accordingly, we do not find indefinite feelings arising from the depths, but feelings gradually penetrated by the inner-light of thought. At the same time it is from the Intellectual Soul that we find emerging by degrees the human Ego, that central point of the soul which can lead to the real Self and makes it possible for us to purify, cleanse and refine the qualities of our soul from within, so that we can become the master, leader and guide of our volitions, feelings and thoughts.

This Ego, as we have seen already, has two aspects. One possibility of development for it is through the endeavours that man must make to strengthen this inner centre more and more, so that an increasingly powerful influence can radiate out from it into his environment and into all the life around him. To enhance the value of the soul for the surrounding world and at the same time to strengthen its independence — that is one aspect of Ego development.

The reverse side of this is egoism. A self that is too weak will lose itself in the flood of the world. But if a man likes to keep his pleasures and desires, his thinking and his brooding, all within himself, his Ego will be hardened and given over to self-seeking and egoism.

Now we have briefly described the content of the Intellectual Soul. We have seen how wild impulses, of which anger is an example, can educate the soul if they are overcome and conquered. We have seen also that the Intellectual Soul is positively educated by truth, when truth is understood as something that a man possesses inwardly and takes account of at all times; when it leads us out of ourselves and enlarges the Ego, while at the same time it strengthens the Ego and makes it more selfless.

Thus we have become acquainted with the means of self-education that are provided for the Sentient Soul and the Intellectual Soul. Now we have to ask: Is there a similar means provided for the Consciousness Soul, the highest member of the human soul? We can also ask: What is there in the Consciousness Soul which develops of its own accord, corresponding to the instincts and desires in the Sentient Soul? Is there something that belongs by nature to the Consciousness Soul, such that man could acquire very little of it if he were not already endowed with it?

There is something which reaches out from the Intellectual Soul to the Consciousness Soul — the strength and sagacity of thinking. The Consciousness Soul can come to expression only because man is a thinking being, for its task is to acquire knowledge of the world and of itself, and for this it requires the highest instrument of knowledge—thinking.

We learn about the external world through perceptions; they stimulate us to gain knowledge of our surroundings. To this end, we need only devote our attention to the outer world and not stand blankly in front of it, for then the outer world itself draws us on to satisfy our thirst for knowledge by observing it. With regard to gaining knowledge of the super-sensible world, we are in a quite different situation. First of all, the super-sensible world is not there in front of us. If a man wishes to gain a knowledge of it, so that this knowledge will permeate his Consciousness Soul, the impulse to do so must come from within and must penetrate his thinking through and through. This impulse can come only from the other powers of his soul, feeling and willing. Unless his thinking is stimulated by both these powers, it will never be impelled to approach the super-sensible world. This does not mean that the super-sensible is merely a feeling, but that feeling and willing must act as inner guides towards its unknown realm. What qualities, then, must feeling and willing acquire towards its unknown realm.

What qualities, then, must feeling and willing acquire in order to do this?

First of all, someone might object to the use of a feeling as a guide to knowledge. But a simple consideration will show that in fact this is what feeling does. Anyone who takes knowledge seriously, will admit that in acquiring knowledge we must proceed logically. We use logic as an instrument for testing the knowledge we acquire. How, then, if logic is this instrument, can logic itself be proved? One might say: Logic can prove itself. Yes, but before we begin proving logic by logic, it must be at least possible to grasp logic with our feeling. Logical thought cannot be proved primarily by logical thought, but only by feeling. Indeed, everything that constitutes logic is first proved through feeling, by the infallible feeling for truth that dwells in the human soul. From this classical example we can see how feeling is the foundation of logic and of thinking. Feeling must give the impulse for the verification of thought. What must feeling become if it is to provide an impulse not only for thinking in general, but for thinking about worlds with which we are at first unacquainted and cannot survey?

Feeling of this kind must be a force which strives from within towards an object yet unknown. When the human soul seeks to encompass with feeling some other thing, we call this feeling love. Love can of course be felt for something known, and there are many things in the world for us to love. But as love is a feeling, and a feeling is the foundation of thinking in the widest sense, we must be clear that the unknown super-sensible can be grasped by feeling before thinking comes in. Unprejudiced observation, accordingly, shows that it must be possible for human beings to come to love the unknown super-sensible before they are able to conceive it in terms of thought. This love is indeed indispensable before the super-sensible can be penetrated by the light of thought.

At this stage, also, the will can be permeated by a force which goes out towards the super-sensible unknown. This quality of the will, which enables a man to wish to carry out his aims and intentions with regard to the unknown, is devotion. So can the will inspire devotion towards the unknown, while feeling becomes love of the unknown; and when these two emotions are united they together give rise to reverence in the true sense of the word. Then this devotion becomes the impulse that will lead us into the unknown, so that the unknown can be taken hold of by our thinking. Thus it is that reverence becomes the educator of the Consciousness Soul. For in ordinary life, also, we can say that when a man endeavours to grasp with his thinking some external reality not yet known to him, he will be approaching it with love

and devotion. Never will the Consciousness Soul gain a knowledge of external objects unless love and devotion inspire its quest; otherwise the objects will not be truly observed. This also applies quite specially to all endeavours to gain knowledge of the super-sensible world.

In all cases, however, the soul must allow itself to be educated by the Ego, the source of self-consciousness. We have seen how the Ego gains increasing independence and strength by overcoming certain soul qualities, such as anger, and by cultivating others, such as the sense of truth. After that, the self-education of the Ego comes to an end; its education through reverence begins. Anger is to be overcome and discarded; a sense of truth is to permeate the Ego; reverence is to flow from the Ego towards the object of which knowledge is sought. Thus, having raised itself out of the Sentient Soul and the Intellectual Soul by overcoming anger and other passions and by cultivating a sense of truth, the Ego is drawn gradually into the Consciousness Soul by the influence of reverence. If this reverence becomes stronger and stronger, one can speak of it as a powerful impulse towards the realm described by Goethe:

All things transient
Are but a parable;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds fulfilment;
The indescribable
Here becomes deed;
The eternal-feminine
Draws us on high.

The soul is drawn by the strength of its reverence towards the eternal, with which it longs to unite itself. But the Ego has two sides. It is impelled by necessity to enhance continually its own strength and activity. At the same time it has the task of not allowing itself to fall under the hardening influence of egoism. If the Ego seeks to go further and gain knowledge of the unknown and the super-sensible, and takes reverence as its guide, it is exposed to the immediate danger of losing itself. This is most likely to happen, above all, to a human being if his will is always submissive to the world. If this attitude gains increasingly the upper hand, the result may be that the Ego goes out of itself and loses itself in the other being or thing to which it has submitted. This condition can be likened to fainting by the soul, as distinct from bodily fainting. In bodily fainting the Ego sinks into undefined darkness; in fainting by the soul, the Ego loses itself spiritually while the bodily faculties and perceptions of the outer world are not impaired. This can happen if the Ego is not strong enough to extend itself fully into the will and to guide it.

This self-surrender by the Ego can be the final result of a systematic mortification of the will. A man who pursues this course becomes incapable of willing or acting on his own account; he has surrendered his will to the object of his submissive devotion and has lost his own self. When this condition prevails, it produces an enduring impotence of the soul. Only when a

devotional feeling is warmed through by the Ego, so that man can immerse himself in it without losing his Ego, can it be salutary for the human soul.

How, then, can reverence always carry the Ego with it? The Ego cannot allow itself to be led in any direction, as a human Self, unless it maintains in its thinking a knowledge of itself. Nothing else can protect the Ego from losing itself when devotion leads it out into the world. The soul can be led out of itself towards something external by the force of will, but when the soul leaves behind the boundary of the external, it must make sure of being illuminated by the light of thought.

Thinking itself cannot lead the soul out; this comes about through devotion, but thinking must then immediately exert itself to permeate with the life of thought the object of the soul's devotion. In other words, there must be a resolve to think about this object. Directly the devotional impulse loses the will to think, there is a danger of losing oneself. If anyone makes it a matter of principle not to think about the object of his devotion, this can lead in extreme cases to a lasting debility of the soul.

Is love, the other element in reverence, exposed to a similar fate? Something that radiates from the human Self towards the unknown must be poured into love, so that never for a moment does the Ego fail to sustain itself. The Ego must have the will to enter into everything which forms the object of its devotion, and it must maintain itself in face of the external, the unknown, the super-sensible. What becomes of love if the Ego fails to maintain itself at the moment of encountering the unknown, if it is unwilling to bring the light of thinking and of rational judgment to bear on the unknown? Love of that kind becomes more sentimental enthusiasm (*Schwärmerei*). But the Ego can begin to find its way from the Intellectual Soul, where it lives, to the external unknown, and then it can never extinguish itself altogether. Unlike the will, the Ego cannot completely mortify itself. When the soul seeks to embrace the external world with feeling, the Ego is always present in the feeling, but if it is not supported by thinking and willing, it rushes forth without restraint, unconscious of itself. And if this love for the unknown is not accompanied by resolute thinking, the soul can fall into a sentimental extreme, somewhat like sleep-walking, just as the state reached by the soul when submissive devotion leads to loss of the Self is somewhat like a bodily fainting-fit. When a sentimental enthusiast goes forth to encounter the unknown, he leaves behind the strength of the Ego and takes with him only secondary forces. Since the strength of the Ego is absent from his consciousness, he tries to grasp the unknown as one does in the realm of dreams. Under these conditions the soul falls into what may be called an enduring state of dreaming or somnambulism.

Again, if the soul is unable to relate itself properly to the world and to other people, if it rushes out into life and shrinks from using the light of thought to illuminate its situation, then the Ego, having fallen into a somnambulist condition, is bound to go astray and to wander through the world like a will-o-the-wisp.

If the soul succumbs to mental laziness and shuns the light of thought when it meets the unknown, then, and only then, will it harbour superstitions in one or other form. The sentimental soul, with its fond dreams, wandering through life as though asleep, and the indolent soul, unwilling to be fully conscious of itself — these are the souls most inclined to believe everything blindly. Their tendency is to avoid the effort of thinking for themselves and to allow truth and knowledge to be prescribed for them.

If we are to get to know an external object, we have to bring our own productive thinking to bear on it, and it is the same with the super-sensible, whatever form this may take. Never, in seeking to gain a knowledge of the super-sensible, must we exclude thinking. Directly we rely on merely observing the super-sensible, we are exposed to all possible deceptions and errors. All such errors and superstitions, all the wrong or untruthful ways of entering the super-sensible worlds, can be attributed in the last instance to a refusal to allow consciousness to be illuminated by the light of creative thought. No one can be deceived by information said to come from the spiritual world if he has the will to keep his thinking always active and independent. Nothing else will suffice, and this is something that every spiritual researcher will confirm. The stronger the will is to creative thinking, the greater is the possibility of gaining true, clear and certain knowledge of the spiritual world.

Thus we see the need for a means of education which will lead the Ego into the Consciousness Soul and will guide the Consciousness Soul in the face of the unknown, both the physical unknown and the unknown super-sensible. Reverence, consisting of devotion and love, provides the means we seek. When the latter are imbued with the right kind of self-feeling, they become steps which lead to ever-greater heights.

True devotion, in whatever form it is experienced by the soul, whether through prayer or otherwise, can never lead anyone astray. The best way of learning to know something is to approach it first of all with love and devotion. A healthy education will consider especially how strength can be given to the development of the soul through the devotional impulse. To a child the world is largely unknown: if we are to guide him towards knowledge and sound judgment of it, the best way is to awaken in him a feeling of reverence towards it; and we can be sure that by so doing we shall lead him to fullness of experience in any walk of life.

It is very important for the human soul if it can look back to a childhood in which devotion, leading on to reverence, was often felt. Frequent opportunities to look up to revered persons, and to gaze with heartfelt devotion at things that are still beyond its understanding, provide a good impulse for higher development in later life. A person will always gratefully remember those occasions, when as a child in the family circle, he heard of some outstanding personality of whom everyone spoke with devotion and reverence. A feeling of holy awe, which gives reverence a specially intimate character, will then permeate the soul. Or someone may relate how with trembling hand, later on, he rang the bell and shyly made his way into the room of the revered personality whom he was meeting for the first time, after having heard him spoken of with so much respectful admiration. Simply to have come into his presence and exchanged a few words can confirm a devotion which will be particularly helpful when we are trying to unravel the great riddles of existence and are seeking for the goal which we long to make our own. Here reverence is a force which draws us upward, and by so doing fortifies and invigorates the soul. How can this be? Let us consider the outward expression of reverence in human gestures — what forms does it take? We bend our knees, fold our hands, and incline our heads towards the object of our reverence. These are the organs whereby the Ego, and above all the higher faculties of the soul, can express themselves most intensively.

In physical life a man stands upright by firmly extending his legs; his Ego radiates out through his hands in acts of blessing; and by moving his head he can observe the earth or the heavens. But from studying human nature, we learn also that our legs are stretched out at their

best in strong, conscious action if they have first learnt to bend the knee where reverence is really strong, conscious action if they have first learnt to bend the knee where reverence is really due. For this genuflection opens the door to a force which seeks to find its way into our organism. Knees which have not learnt to bend in reverence give out only what they have always had; they spread out their own nullity, to which they have added nothing. But legs which have learnt to genuflect receive, when they are extended, a new force, and then it is this, not their own nullity, which they spread around them. Hands which would fain bless and comfort, although they have never been folded in reverence and devotion, cannot bestow much love and blessing from their own nullity. But hands which have learnt to fold themselves in reverence have received a new force and are powerfully penetrated by the Ego. For the path taken by this force leads first through the heart, where it kindles love; and the reverence of the folded hands, having passed through the heart and flowed into the hands, turns into blessing.

The head may turn its eyes and strain its ears to survey the world in all directions, but it presents nothing but its own emptiness. If, however, the head has been bent in reverence, it gains a new force; it will bring to meet the outer world the feelings it has acquired through reverence.

Anyone who studies the gestures of people, and knows what they signify, will see how reverence is expressed in external physiognomy; he will see how this reverence enhances the strength of the Ego and so makes it possible for the Ego to penetrate into the unknown. Moreover, this self-education through reverence has the effect of raising to the surface our obscure instincts and emotions, our sympathies and antipathies, which otherwise make their way into the soul unconsciously or subconsciously, unchallenged by the light of judgment. Precisely these feelings are cleansed and purified through self-education by reverence and through the penetration by the Ego of the higher members of the soul. The obscure forces of sympathy and antipathy, always prone to error, are permeated by the light of the soul and transformed into judgment, aesthetic taste and rightly guided moral feeling. A soul educated by reverence will convert its dark cravings and aversions into a feeling for the beautiful and a feeling for the good. A soul that has cleansed its obscure instincts and will-impulses through devotion will gradually build up from them what we call moral ideals. Reverence is something that we plant in the soul as a seed; and the seed will bear fruit.

Human life offers yet another example. We see everywhere that the course of a man's life goes through ascending and declining stages. Childhood and youth are stages of ascent; then comes a pause, and finally, in the later years, a decline. Now the remarkable thing is, that the qualities acquired in childhood and youth reappear in a different form during the years of decline. If much reverence, rightly guided, has been part of the experience of childhood, it acts as a seed which comes to fruition in old age as strength for active living. A childhood and youth during which devotion and love were not fostered under the right guidance will lead to a weak and powerless old age. Reverence must take hold of every soul that is to make progress in its development.

How is it, then, with the corresponding quality in the object of our reverence? If we look with love on another being, then the reciprocated love of the latter will reveal what can perhaps arise. If a man is lovingly devoted to his God, he can be sure that God inclines to him also in love. Reverence is the feeling he develops for whatever he calls his God out there in the

universe. Since the reaction to reverence cannot itself be called reverence, we may not speak of a divine reverence towards man. What, then, precisely is the opposite of reverence in this context? What is it that flows out to meet reverence when reverence seeks the divine? It is might, the Almighty power of the Divine. Reverence that we learn to feel in youth returns to us as strength for living in old age, and if we turn in reverence to the divine, our reverence flows back to us as an experience of the Almighty. That is what we feel, whether we look up to the starry heavens in their endless glory and our reverence goes out to all that lies around us, beyond our compass, or whether we look up to our invisible God, in whatever form, who pervades and animates the cosmos.

We look up towards the Almighty and we come to feel with certainty that we cannot advance towards union with that which is above us unless we first approach it from below with reverence. We draw nearer to the Almighty when we immerse ourselves in reverence. Thus we can speak of an Almighty in this sense, while a true feeling for the meaning of words prevents us from speaking of an All-loving. Power can be increased or enhanced in proportion to the number of beings over which it extends. It is different with love. If a child is loved by its mother, this does not prevent her from loving equally her second, third or fourth child. It is false for anyone to say: I must divide up my love because it is to cover two objects. It is false to speak either of an "all-knowledge" or of an indefinite "all-love". Love has no degree and cannot be limited by figures.

Love and devotion together make up reverence. We can have a devoted attitude to this or that unknown if we have the right feeling for it. Devotion can be enhanced, but it does not have to be divided up or multiplied when it is felt for a number of beings. Since this is true also of love, the Ego has no need to lose or disperse itself if it turns with love and devotion towards the unknown. Love and devotion are thus the right guides to the unknown, and the best educators of, the soul in its advance from the Intellectual Soul to the Consciousness Soul.

Whereas the overcoming of anger educates the Sentient Soul, and the striving for truth educates the Intellectual Soul, reverence educates the Consciousness Soul, bringing more and more knowledge within its reach. But this reverence must be led and guided from a standpoint which never shuts out the light of thought. When love flows forth from us, it ensures by its own worth that our Self can go with it, and this applies also to devotion. We could indeed lose our Self, but we need not. That is the point, and it must be kept especially in mind if an impulse of reverence enters into the education of the young. A blind, unconscious reverence is never right. The cultivation of reverence must go together with the cultivation of a healthy Ego-feeling.

Whereas the mystics of all ages, together with Goethe, have spoken of the unknown, undefined element to which the soul is drawn, as the eternal-feminine, we may without misunderstanding, speak of the element which must always animate reverence as the eternal-masculine. For just as the eternal-feminine is present in both man and woman, so is this eternal-masculine, this healthy Ego-feeling, present in all reverence by man or woman. And when Goethe's Chorus mysticus comes before us, we may, having come to know the mission of reverence which leads us towards the unknown, add the element which must permeate all reverence — the Eternal-masculine.

Thus we are now able to reach a right understanding of the experience of the human soul when it strives to unite itself with the unknown and attains to the Unio mystica, wherein all reverence is consummated.

But this mystical union will harm the soul if the Ego is lost while seeking to unite itself with the unknown in any form. If the Ego has lost itself, it will bring to the unknown nothing of value. Self-sacrifice in the Unio mystica requires that one must have become something, must have something to sacrifice. If a weak Ego, with no strength in itself, is united with what lies above us, the union has no value. The Unio mystica has value only when a strong Ego ascends to the regions of which the Chorus mysticus speaks. When Goethe speaks of the regions to which the higher reverence can lead us, in order to gain there the highest knowledge, and when his Chorus mysticus tells us in beautiful words:

All things transient
Are but a parable;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds fulfilment;
The indescribable
Here becomes deed;
The eternal-feminine
Draws us on high —

Then, if we rightly understand the Unio mystica, we can reply: Yes —

All things transient
Are but a parable;
Earth's insufficiency
Here finds fulfilment;
The indescribable
Here becomes deed;
The eternal-masculine
Draws us on high.