

OCCULT SIGNS AND SYMBOLS

**Four Lectures by
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Lecture I

The Creative Cosmic Tone.

Flooding Colour and the Formative Forces of the Akasha.

These four lectures to be given here in Stuttgart will strike a somewhat more intimate note since it can be assumed that the audience is, for the most part, composed of members who have been acquainted with the fundamental ideas of occult teaching for some time. Hence, they may well wish to learn of more intimate details out of the realm of spiritual science. What will be taken up in these lectures are the occult symbols and signs in relation to the astral and spiritual worlds, and a series of them will be set forth in their deeper meaning. I bid you note that much in the first two lectures will sound unusual and will only be fully explained later in the third and fourth lectures. This, of course, lies in the nature of the material because lectures on spiritual science cannot be like lectures in other areas, which are built up mathematically out of simple elements. Much that at first will appear vague will later become clear and understandable.

Symbols and signs, not only in the profane world, but also in the theosophical world, often give the impression of something arbitrary that only “signifies” something. This is not correct. You know, for example, that the various planets of the universe are indicated by signs. You know that a familiar sign in theosophical allegories is the so-called pentagram. Furthermore, you know that in various religions light is mentioned in the sense of wisdom, of spiritual clarity. If you should now ask about the meaning of such things, then you could hear or read that it means this or that — a triangle, for instance, would mean the higher trinity and the like. Frequently also in theosophical writings and lectures, myths and legends are interpreted; they are said to “mean something”. To reach behind the sense, behind the meaning, to recognize the reality of such symbols shall be the task of these lectures. Just how this is meant we can make clear with an example.

Let us consider the pentagram. You know that much abstruse thinking has been spent on it; this is not the concern of occultism. In order to understand what the occultist says about the pentagram, we must at first call to mind the seven fundamental parts of the human being, and it

is, above all, the etheric body that is especially relevant in this consideration. You know that the etheric body belongs to the sphere of the occult; it is not to be seen with physical eyes. To perceive it, clairvoyant methods are necessary. Then it will become evident that the essentiality of the etheric body does not consist in its appearing as a fine nebulous formation. It is characteristic of it that it is indeed, the architect, the creator of the physical body. Just as ice forms out of water, so does the physical body fashion itself out of the etheric body, which, like the ocean, is flooded through by many currents flowing in all directions. Among them are five main currents. When you stand with feet apart and arms outstretched, you can accurately follow the direction of these five currents. They form a pentagram.

Everybody has these five currents hidden in him. The healthy etheric body appears so that these currents are, as it were, his bony framework. You must not suppose however, that everything pertaining to the etheric body is only within, because when a person moves, for instance, the currents actually go through the air. This pentagram is as mobile as a man's physical bony framework. Thus, when the occultist speaks of the pentagram as the figure of man, it is not a matter of something that has been thought out, but rather he is speaking of it as the anatomist does of the skeleton. This figure is really present in the etheric body. It is a fact.

From these brief considerations we see how matters stand with regard to the real meaning of a symbol. All signs and symbols that we meet in occultism direct us to such realities, and what is most important is the fact that in due course one receives indications in the use of such figures. They then are the means toward reaching cognition or clairvoyance. No one who ponders the pentagram deeply will be unsuccessful if only he does so with patience. He must immerse himself in the pentagram, as it were; then he will find the currents in the etheric body.

There is no sense in thinking out contrived, arbitrary meanings for these signs. One must place them before one's inner eye; then they lead to occult realities. This is the case not only with what can be found in the confines of theosophy, but also with the symbols and signs contained in the most varied religious documents because these documents are based on occultism. Whenever a prophet or a founder of a religion speaks of light and would thereby point to wisdom, this he does not do because he considers it an ingenious picture. The occultist bases his thinking on facts. Hence, it is not important to him to be ingenious, but truthful! As an occultist one must give up lawless thinking; one must not draw arbitrary conclusions and pass judgments. Step by step, with the help of spiritual facts, correct thinking must be developed. This image of the light, therefore, has a deep significance or, rather, it is a spiritual scientific fact. In order to recognize this, let us turn again to the human being.

The astral body is the third member of man. It is the bearer of joy and sorrow and a man's inner soul experiences depend upon it. The plant has no astral body and thus does not experience joy and sorrow as do man and animal. If, today, the natural scientist, probing into nature, speaks of the plant's sensitivity, then what he says rests on a complete misunderstanding of what the nature of sensitivity is. We come to a correct representation of this astral body only when we follow up the development that it has passed through in the course of time. We know that a man's physical body is the oldest and most complicated member of his being; his etheric body is somewhat younger; his astral body younger still; the youngest of all is his ego. The physical body has a long development behind it that has come about during the course of four planetary

embodiments. At the beginning of this development our earth itself was in an earlier embodiment called the Saturn condition. At that time man did not yet exist in his present form; only the first germ for the physical body existed on Saturn. He lacked all his other bodies — etheric body, astral body, and so forth. It was not until the second embodiment of the earth, on the Sun, that the etheric body was added. At that time the human etheric body bore most decidedly the form of the pentagram. Later, however, this was somewhat modified because, in the third embodiment of our planet, on the Moon, the astral united itself with it. Then the Moon transformed itself into earth, and to the three bodies of man already formed, the ego was added.

Where, then, were these bodies before they embodied themselves in the human being? Where, for example, was what an etheric body had drawn into the physical body on the Sun? Where was this during the Saturn period? It was in the surroundings of Saturn as the air is in the surrounds of the earth at present. The same was the case with the astral body during the Sun period; it only entered into man's being during the Moon period. Everything that moved in later had been in the environment earlier. You can picture the old Sun thus, not of rocks, plants and animals as is the case of the earth today, but of beings who were men who had advanced only to the human-plant stage. There also existed a kind of mineral. These were the two kingdoms of nature present on the Sun. You must not mix up the old Sun with the present one. The old Sun was encompassed by its mighty astral sheath, which was luminous. There was, as it were, an airy sheath surrounding the Sun, but an airy sheath that was at the same time astral and luminous.

Today, man has a physical body, an etheric body, an astral body, and an ego. When the ego works upon the astral body, ennobling it intellectually, morally, and spiritually, then the astral body becomes the spirit self or manas. That has as of now hardly begun, but when in the future it will have been completed, when man will have transformed his whole astral body, then will his astral body become physically luminous. Just as the seed holds the whole plant within it, so does your astral body hold within it the seed of light. This will stream out into the world of space, its development and continuing formation effected by man as he ever more purifies and ennoble his astral body. Our earth will transform itself into other planets. Today it is dark. Were one to observe it from space, then one would see that it appears bright only through the reflected light of the sun. Someday, however, it will be luminous, luminous through the fact that human beings will then have transformed their whole astral bodies. The totality of astral bodies will stream out as light into world space, as it was also at the time of the old Sun. It had higher beings at their human stage, and these beings had luminous astral bodies. The Bible, quite correctly, calls these beings, Spirits of Light or Elohim.

What does a man work into his astral body? What we call goodness and common sense. If you observe a savage who is still on the level of a cannibal, blindly following his passions, you must say of him that he stands lower than the animals because the animal still has no understanding, no consciousness of his deeds. Man, however, even the lowest, already has an ego. The more highly educated person can be distinguished from the savage through the fact that he has already worked on his astral body. Certain passions he has so understood that he says to himself, "This one I may follow, this other I may not follow." Certain urges and passions he fashions to more refined configurations, which he calls his ideal. He forms moral concepts. All these are transformations of his astral body. The savage cannot do arithmetic or make judgments. This property man has acquired through work on his astral body from incarnation to incarnation.

What develops as man gradually ennobles his present imperfect form to become that being of light of whom we spoke is called the assimilation of wisdom. The more wisdom the astral body contains, the more luminous it will be. The Elohim, those beings who dwelt on the Sun, were wholly permeated with wisdom. Just as our souls relate to our bodies, so wisdom relates itself to light that streams out into cosmic space. You see, the relation between light and wisdom is not an image that has been contrived. It is based on fact. It is a truth. Thus is it to be explained that religious documents speak of light as a symbol of wisdom.

For the student who would develop his capacity for higher seeing, for clairvoyance, it is of great importance to do exercises such as the following. At first, he should picture space as dark, shutting out all light either by the darkness of night or by closing his eyes. Then he should try gradually to penetrate with his own inner forces to a visualization of light. If he does this exercise in the proper way, a visualization can be built up of a fully lighted space. Through inner forces light can be engendered, not physical light, but a precursor of what later will become visible, not to the physical eye, but to finer organs of perception. This inner light in which creative wisdom appears is also called the astral light. When the student engenders light through meditation, the light will truly become for him garments of spiritual beings who are actually present, like the Elohim. These beings of light, such as the human being will one day also become, are even now always present. This is the way all those persons have proceeded who know of the spiritual world out of their own experiences.

Through certain other methods that we shall also discuss in the course of time, the human being can reach a level from which, through his own inner power, as it were, space appears as still something else. When he practices certain exercises, then will space not only be flooded by wisdom's light, but will also sound forth. In the ancient Pythagorean philosophy, as you know, there is mention of the harmony of the spheres. By sphere we are to conceive cosmic space, space in which the stars are hovering. This is usually considered to be a contrived image, but this is again no poetic comparison, rather it is a reality. When one has practiced sufficiently in accordance with instructions, then he learns to hear a real music that wells through cosmic space. When space thus begins to resound spiritually, then it may be said that the person is in devachan. These tones are of a spiritual essence; they do not live in the air, but in a far higher, finer stuff, the Akasha. The space around us is continuously filled with such music, and there are certain basic tones. You can get an idea of this if you follow me into the following consideration, which I am sure will appear to mathematical astronomers as sheer madness. Earlier we mentioned that our earth developed gradually. At first, it was Saturn, then it became Sun, then Moon, and the earth. In time it will become Jupiter, Venus and Vulcan (see [Note 1](#)). Now, you may ask, "But today there is still a Saturn in the heavens; in what relation does the first embodiment of the Earth stand to Saturn?" Our present Saturn received its name in ancient times when the wise ones would still give meaningful names to things. It was given its name out of its very nature. Today, this is no longer done. Uranus, for example does not have such a justified name since it was discovered later.

What we see in the heavens as Saturn today stands in relation to our earth as a child to an old man. One day Saturn will become an earth. Just as unlikely as it is that the old man developed himself from the boy who stands next to him, so unlikely is it that the earth has developed itself from the Saturn that stands in the heavens today. It is the same with the other heavenly bodies.

The sun is such a body as the earth once was; it has, however, advanced. Just as the boy stands near the old man, so the various planets stand in the heavens. They are at various steps of evolution, which our earth, now in its fourth embodiment, has partly undergone already, and will partly undergo in the future. The planets, however, stand in a certain relationship to each other, and the occultist expresses this relationship differently from the way the astronomer does today.

You know that the earth revolves around the sun, that Mercury and Venus, as sisters of the earth, also revolve, and you also know that the sun itself moves. Now occult astronomy has carried on exact investigations of this relationship. It has investigated not only the movement of the earth and the other planets, but also the movement of the sun itself. Here one comes to a definite point in cosmic space that is a kind of spiritual center around which the sun, and with it our earth and all the planets, turn. The different bodies, however, do not move equally fast. It is just this relationship to the speed of their movements to one another that occult astronomy has determined. It proceeded from the fact that when we view Mars, Venus, and so forth, these heavenly bodies move at a certain speed, but the whole starry heaven is seemingly resting motionless. In the sense of true occult research, this repose is only apparent. In reality, this starry heaven moves a definite distance in one hundred years, and this distance through which the firmament progresses is designated as the basic number. If you assume this movement and compare the planetary movements with it, we find that:

- Saturn's movement is two and one-half times that of Jupiter's;
- Jupiter's is five times that of Mars;
- Mars' twice that of the Moon.
- Saturn's movement however, is 1,200 times that of the whole celestial dome.

Now, when a physical, musical harmony arises, it rests on the fact that different strings move at different speeds. In accordance with the speed with which the single strings move, a higher or lower tone sounds, and the blending of these different tones produces the harmony. Just as you, here in the physical world, receive musical impressions from the strings' vibrations, so does the one who has penetrated to the level of clairvoyance in devachan hear the movements of the heavenly bodies. Through the relationship of the different speeds of the planets, the fundamental tones of the harmony of the spheres arise that sound through the cosmos. The School of Pythagoras was thus justified in speaking of a celestial harmony. With spiritual ears one can hear it. When you spread a fine powder as evenly as possible on a thin brass plate and then stroke the edge with a fiddler's bow, the powder moves into a definite line pattern. All kinds of figures will form depending upon the pitch of the tone. The tone effects a distribution of the material. These are called Chladny figures. When the spiritual tone of the celestial harmony sounded forth into the universe, it organized the planets into their relationships. What you see spread out in cosmic space was arranged by this creating tone of the Godhead. Through the fact that this tone sounded into world space, matter formed itself into a solar system, into a planetary system. You can see that the expression, "celestial harmony", is thus more than an ingenious comparison. It is a reality.

Now to another consideration. Everyone who has occupied himself for some time with anthroposophy knows that our earth in its present embodiment has undergone several stages of development. In the far-distant past it was in a fiery-fluid condition. What today is stone and metal flowed at that time as today iron flows in an iron works. The objection that at that time

there could not have been any living being does not stand up, because the human body was suited to the conditions of that time. The earth transformed itself out of this fiery-fluid condition into what we call the Atlantean epoch. Our forebears then lived on a continent that today forms the floor of the Atlantic Ocean.

Naturally, these ancestors were quite differently constituted from the man of today. In certain respects they were clairvoyant, an echo of higher stages of clairvoyance. The Atlantean man would not have been able to see an outer object spatially limited. In the early days of the Atlantean evolution, seeing was quite different. When one person approached another, it was not the outline of his form that was perceived. Rather, there arose within him a coloured image that had nothing to do with the outer, but reflected an inner soul condition. He might, for instance, have seen the feeling of revenge in the other and fled from it. In an up-surging red picture, the feeling of revenge expressed itself. The outer seeing of objects was developed quite gradually. What man saw earlier was a kind of astral colour, and the transformation occurred in that man spread this colour over the objects, so to speak. Naturally, this other kind of perception was bound up with the fact that man at that time looked quite different from man today. In the later Atlantean period man, for example, had a receding physical forehead, while the etheric body stood out like a mighty globe. Then physical and etheric bodies drew together and when both joined together behind the forehead, between the eyes, man had come to an important moment in his evolution. Today, man's etheric head just fits the physical one. This is still not so with the horse, but as the human head changed, other members also transformed themselves. Gradually man's present bodily form emerged. Think vividly back into the end of the Atlantean epoch. Man still had a kind of clairvoyance; the air was saturated with water vapour. In this dense watery air, sun and stars could not be perceived; a rainbow could never have come into being; thick, heavy mist masses covered the earth. Hence it is that the myth speaks of Niflheim, of a mist-home. Then the waters that were so much spread out in the air, condensed. They covered Atlantis. The Flood signifies the mighty condensation of the mist masses into water. When the water separated itself from the air, our present kind of perception came about. Man was only then able to see himself when he saw other objects around him.

The physical body shows many regularities that have a deeper meaning. One of these is the following. If one were to make a chest the height, width, and length of which were in relation of three to five to thirty, the length corresponding to a body length, then the height and width would also correspond to the body's proportions. In other words, herewith the proportions of a normally organized human body are given. [Here, length = depth. – e.Ed] When man emerged from the Flood of Atlantis, the proportions of his physical body corresponded to these measures. This is expressed in the Bible in a beautiful way in the following words:

“And God commanded Noah to build a chest three hundred ells long, fifty ells wide, and thirty ells high.” (I Moses, 6-15). [Meaning, the first book of Moses, *Genesis*. e.Ed] In these measurements of Noah's Ark we have stated exactly the measurements for the harmony of the human body. When we came to explain the reasons therefore, we shall be able to look more deeply into the meaning of these biblical words.

[List of Planetary Incarnations:

- > Saturn
- > Sun
- > Moon
- + earth (current)
- - Jupiter
- - Venus
- - Vulcan

-Ed]

Lecture II

The Symbolic Meaning of Noah's Ark and the Gothic Churches.

The Symbolism of Certain Animal Forms and Their Relation to the Elements: Snake, Fish, Butterfly, Bee.

Yesterday, we stopped with the indication about Noah's Ark, stating that in the proportions of its height, breadth and length were expressed the proportions of the human body. [Here, again, length = depth. – e.Ed] Now, in order to understand the meaning of this Ark mentioned in the Bible (I Moses 6, 15), [Meaning, the first book of Moses, *Genesis*. e.Ed] we must deepen our knowledge of various things. We must at first make clear to ourselves what it means that a vessel through which man should be rescued has definite dimensions. It will then be necessary to occupy ourselves with that time of man's development in which the actual happenings to which the Noah story refers took place.

When people who understand something of occultism produced some object in the outer world, a quite definite purpose for the soul was always connected with it. Recall the Gothic churches, those characteristic buildings that arose in the beginning of the Middle Ages and spread from Western to Middle Europe. These churches have a definite architectural style, which expresses itself in the arch that consists of two parts joining in a point above. This architectural feature permeates the whole as atmosphere — that peculiar arching consisting of two parts tapering up to a point, the whole reaching upward, the columns with a definite form, etc. It would be quite wrong to assert that such a Gothic cathedral simply came to be out of outer needs, out of a certain longing perhaps, to create a House of God that should express or mean this or that. Something much deeper underlay this. Those who indicated the first ideas for these Gothic buildings were adepts in occultism. They were, to a certain degree, initiates. It was their purpose to see that whoever entered such a House of God was to receive quite definite soul impressions. When one sees these peculiar archings, when one views the inner space in which the columns rise as trees rise in a grove, such a House of God works upon the soul quite differently than does

a house, for instance, that is carried by old columns, that has an ordinary Roman or Renaissance cupola. Of course, man does not become conscious of the fact that such forms produce quite definite effects; they occur in the unconscious. He cannot be rationally clear about what is happening in his soul. Many people believe that the materialism of our modern time arises because so many materialistic writings are read. The occultist, however, knows that this is only one of the lesser influences. What the eye sees is of far greater importance, for it has an influence on soul processes that more or less run their course in the unconscious. This is of eminently practical importance, and when spiritual science will one day really take hold of the soul, then will the practical effect become noticeable in public life. I have often called attention to the fact that it was something different from what it is today when one in the Middle Ages walked through the streets. Right and left there were house façades that were built up out of what the soul felt and thought. Every key, every lock, carried the imprint of him who had made it. Try to realize how the individual craftsman felt joy in each piece, how he worked his own soul into it. In every object there was a piece of soul, and when a person moved among such things, soul forces streamed over to him. Now compare this with a city today. Here is a shoe store, a hardware store, a butcher shop, then a tavern, etc. All this is alien to the inner soul processes; it is related only to the outer man. Thus, it generates those soul forces that tend towards materialism. These influences work much more strongly than do the dogmas of materialism. Add to these our horrible art of advertising. Old and young wander through a sea of such abominable products that wake the most evil forces of the soul. So likewise do our modern comic journals. This is not meant to be a fanatical agitation against these things, but only indications about facts. All this pours a stream of forces into the human soul, determining the epoch that leads the person in a certain direction. The spiritual scientist knows how much depends upon the world of forms in which a man lives.

Toward the middle of the Middle Ages there arose along the Rhine that remarkable religious movement called Christian Mysticism. It is linked up with such leading spirits as Master Eckhart, Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroeck, and others. This was a tremendous deepening and intensification of the human feeling life because these preachers did not stand alone but had a faithful audience at that time. The name parson (Pfaff — a derogatory expression for “parson”), in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries did not have the meaning it has today, but was something to be esteemed. Plato used to be called “the great parson”. Because there emanated such a deepening from these great souls, the Rhine was named at that time, “Europe's Great Parson Street”. Do you know where these soul forces were bred that were searching for an inner union with the godly forces of being? They were brought forth in the Gothic cathedrals with their pointed arches, pillars and columns. This had educated these souls. What the human being sees, what is poured into his environment, becomes a force in him. In accordance with it, he forms himself.

Let us put this before our souls schematically against the background of human development. At a given time an architectural style is created, born out of the great ideas of initiates. Human souls take up the force of these forms. Centuries go by. What the soul has absorbed through its contemplation of building forms appears in the mood of his soul. Ardent souls will then come into existence, souls who look up to the heights. Even when the course was not always quite as I have described it, still like effects showed themselves often in human development.

Now let us follow these people some millennia further. Those who absorbed the forces of the forms of these buildings into their souls show the expression of their inner soul configurations in their countenances. The entire human shape forms itself through such impressions. What was built thousands of years ago, appears to us in human countenances thousands of years later. Thus, one recognizes why such arts were practiced. Initiates look out into the far future and see how human beings are meant to become. Hence it is that at a definite time, they form external building styles, outer art forms, on a large scale. So it is that the germ of future human epochs is laid.

When you rightly keep all this in mind, you will understand what occurred at the end of the Atlantean epoch. Air did not exist as it does today; the distribution of air and water was quite different from what it is today. Masses of mist surrounded Atlantis. When you picture to yourself how mist rises, how clouds form, and rain falls, then you have in miniature what happened over enormous expanses of Atlantis during millennia. With the change in the outer living conditions of man, he, too, changed. Formerly then, a country covered with thick mist masses had people living in it who had a kind of clairvoyance. Gradually the rain storms came; gradually the people accustomed themselves to an entirely new way of life, to a new perception, a new awareness. The human bodies had to change. You would be amazed if you were to see pictures of the first Atlantean people. How different they were from people today! Do not believe, however, that this change occurred by itself. Through long periods of time the human souls had to work on these human bodies and bring about effects such as were described by the simple example given of the effects of architectural forms on the feeling life of the soul that later appeared in their countenances.

How was it when the Atlantean epoch passed over into the post-Atlantean epoch? At first, the human soul underwent change and, in accordance with this, the body shaped itself. Let us go into this more deeply! Let us picture an old Atlantean. He still had clairvoyant consciousness and was thus connected with the environment in which he lived, with the mist-filled atmosphere. Because of this atmosphere, things did not show themselves to him with firmly marked contours. Actually, they were rather colour pictures that emerged for him; his perceptions were floods of surging interweaving colours. Into this, outlines gradually appeared. Objects revealed themselves like lanterns in the mist, encircled by rainbow colours, and his spiritual capacities developed accordingly. Had this condition continued, it would have been impossible for man to acquire his present body. Objects had to take on their present contours, the air became free of water. This process went on for thousands of years. Only gradually did things take on distinctness. The human soul had to receive other impressions, new impressions, and form its body correspondingly, for in accordance with what you think and feel is your body formed. What kind of form had the soul to experience when it escaped from the Atlantean watery landscape into the new airy landscape? For the present body to shape itself, the human being had to be surrounded by a form of definite length, breadth, and depth. As a matter of fact, this form was given to him so that the body could form itself thereby. Just as the mood of the mystics modeled itself out of the shape of the cathedral, and as the initiate would be able to indicate which countenances had shaped themselves accordingly, so did the human beings gradually transform themselves since, as a matter of fact, they lived in vessels, under the influence of great initiates, which had been built according to these measurements. Before the time of our present humanity there was a kind of water or sea-life that was lived in vessels, in which humanity gradually accustomed itself to

life on land. The life of the Atlanteans was for the most part a life in vessels. Not only were they surrounded by a watery, misty air, but a large part of Atlantis was covered by the sea. This is the deep mystery of Noah's Ark. What is to be found in the original religious documents has an immense depth. A radiance of wisdom and limitless sublimity surrounds these primal records when we immerse ourselves deeply in them.

In Genesis you find the symbol of the snake. In the Roman catacombs you come upon the picture of the fish, which tradition tells us signifies the Christian or the Christ. If someone were to reflect on these symbols, he could, of course, find much that is ingenious, but this would only be speculation. We want to deal only with realities since these things, too, are given us out of the spiritual and astral worlds. If you will follow me for a few moments into the history of man's evolution, you will see what truths are contained in both these symbols.

Let us recall once again that the earth has had as many different embodiments as man. The human form was always present during the different earth incarnations — on Saturn, Sun and Moon. His ego, however, was acquired for the first time on the earth. Now we must turn our attention briefly to the appearance of the earth as it was in its first incarnation, while it was still Saturn. At that time rocks or fields for tilling did not yet exist. The human physical body existed but in a finer state. It was only gradually that it condensed to its present fleshy form.

When you examine the materials around you today, you will find that they exist in various conditions. First, there is the solid, called Earth in occultism; then the fluid, called Water in occultism — not only the water on earth is meant, but all that is fluid. Then all the gaseous matter, called Air in occultism. There is one still finer condition, Fire. Of course, physicists of today do not accept this, but the occultist knows that Fire can be compared with Earth, Water and Air, that Fire is the first etheric condition, that it is finer than Air. Where you find Fire or Warmth, something is present that is still finer than Air. Were we to picture a substance finer than Warmth, we would come to Light. What we, in the occult sense, term Earth, Water, and Air was not yet in existence on Saturn. These bodily states arose on the Sun, Moon, and Earth. The densest condition on Saturn was Warmth or Fire. Man lived within it, his body actually a kind of reflected image. To present this in greater detail would take us too far afield.

Saturn changed into the Sun. Air was added to Fire and was the densest condition on the Sun. When the physical body had reached the airy stage, it was impregnated with the etheric body. There were no other beings but Air beings. As man, one would have been able to penetrate these Air beings because they were just as penetrable as air is today. They could be compared with a Fata Morgana, so light and fleeting were they. To be sure, the air on the Sun was somewhat denser than our present air. The watery condition first arose on the Moon, and all that lived on this Moon was but a condensation of Water. Jelly fish and slimy creatures such as are still to be seen today give us a notion of these water beings. Only physical bodies of this kind were capable of taking up an astral body.

The development gradually proceeded. At the end of the Moon period certain watery parts had densified sufficiently so that a kind of firm ground like turf, slime or spinach was formed. The greatest densification resembled the wood of our present day trees. Then the Moon transformed itself into our present earth; the condition of the solid, the mineral, was added. The

outer sheath became firm; accordingly and gradually all beings became denser and firmer. Gradually, man developed into a being of flesh — at first on Saturn a Warmth being, an Air being on the Sun, a Water being on the Moon, and finally, on Earth he became a being of flesh.

Let us now consider the meaning of this development. On Saturn the germinal foundation for the physical body was formed; on the Sun the etheric body was added; on the Moon the astral body. But something additional happened on the Moon. The human being who remained on the Old Moon was then much lower in his development than he is today because the astral body in the Moon period was full of raging passions. Only later, when the ego was added, was the astral body purified. For this a planetary development was necessary. The Moon had again to fall back into the Sun, the bad lunar men had again to unite with the Sun beings. Thus, when the Earth began, the ancient Sun and Moon were again one body. It was the high beings who inhabited the Sun who had to cast out the Moon, and as a result the Moon became a dense mass with all its various impulses. Now all the bad beings who had been expelled with the Moon had to be rescued again, and so the reunion of the Moon with the Sun took place. What would have happened if this reunion had not occurred, if each had gone its own way? Then it would have been impossible for man to appear in his present form, nor would the Sun beings have progressed to what they are today. Had the Old Moon gone its own way alone, and not been enabled through reunion with the Sun to draw on new forces, then the highest being that could ever have been created on the Moon would have resembled a snake. The Sun beings, on the other hand, who were so spiritual that they had no physical body but possessed an etheric body as their lowest member, would have received a physical body whose highest form would have been that of a fish. Naturally, the fish-form would have been only the outer expression for souls who reached a much higher stage of development, just as our present fish group soul is something exalted.

The Moon fell back again into the Sun, and later our earth threw out the present moon, which took with it the worst substances. Thereby it became possible for the beings of our earth to develop themselves beyond the snake stage to that of the human. It was the Sun beings who bestowed upon the beings of our earth the strength to lift themselves above the snake. The material purity of the Sun condition of those high beings expresses itself in the fish form, for this is the highest material form that the old Sun nature could have attained.

The Christos is the Sun Hero who has transplanted all the strength of the Sun upon the Earth. Now you will be able to understand with what deep intuition esoteric Christianity conceived of the fish form, because it signifies the outer symbol of the Sun power, of the forces of the Christ. To be sure, the fish is outwardly an incomplete being but it has not descended so deeply into matter and it is penetrated to a small extent by egotism. The occultist says that the snake is the symbol for the earth as it developed itself out of the Moon. The fish is the symbol for spiritual being as it has developed itself out of the Sun. Our earth, as it stands before us with its solid substances, has its lowest being in the snake. What separated itself as watery substance, as pure water, could manifest itself as fish. To the occultist the fish is something that has been born out of the water.

What is it that, in a similar way, has been born out of air, or out of fire? These are regions that are hard to explain, but at least some indications can be given here.

What were things like on the earth when it had just developed from the Saturn to the Sun stage? Man was then a kind of air being. Death and dying, as understood at present, he did not know because he could transform himself. Let us make it clear to ourselves how man arrived at his present consciousness of death and dying. Man's soul was in the atmosphere of the Sun but it was related to what was there below as body. In our time man's astral body, even when it has slipped out at night, belongs to the physical body, and it was the same on Saturn and Sun except that it never slipped in. At the beginning of the Sun stage the body was below; above was something that as soul belonged to a definite body, that directed this body, that had spiritual consciousness. The body of this soul was subject to other laws of growth and dying off than is the case today. It lost certain parts, but it added new parts. For long stretches of time the soul lived on unchanged while the body changed. To be sure, when the Sun was in a certain condition, man identified himself in a certain way with his body. His body transformed itself into alternate conditions. At first a body of definite form was produced, then this form transformed itself into another, again into another, and then into a fourth. After its last change it came back to its first condition. The human being retained the same consciousness while these forms changed. When the first bodily condition arose again, when the human being came back to the first form, after he had lived through the other three, he then felt himself renewed. This transformation has been preserved for us in the butterfly that develops itself through four forms: egg, larva, pupa, and butterfly. This is the hieroglyph, the sign for the airy condition of the human being on the Sun. In the butterfly today, under our completely changed conditions, this state is, of course, a kind of decadence. The human being evolved beyond this state, but for the occultist the butterfly is the symbol for it. He designates it as the air being, just as he designates the snake as earth being, and the fish as water being. Why the birds are not designated as air beings will be dealt with at some other time.

Now let us go back to the first Saturn condition when the human being was a soul-spiritual being that always had the same body, that knew itself immortal on a lower level and continually changed his body. This condition, too, has been preserved for us in a peculiar being that, when considered as a whole group soul, stands in a certain way higher than man. This is the bee. When you study the whole hive, you have something totally different from the single bee. The whole beehive has a spiritual life that in some ways corresponds to life on Saturn on a lower stage, and that will be reached on Venus on a higher level. The body of the bee, however, has stayed on the old Saturn level. We must indeed distinguish the soul of the whole beehive as no ordinary group soul but a being in itself, and the single bee as having preserved the form that the human body passed through on Saturn. Because the bee is retarded as outer being, it could win a higher spiritual consciousness. Hence the wonderful social composition of the beehive! The bee is the symbol of the spiritual man who does not know mortality. When man was of such spirituality, our planet was in a fiery state. When, as Venus, it will again be quite fiery, man will again be a spiritual being. Thus, in the bee you have the being that is the fire being for the occultist.

It will be interesting to mention here a parallelism about which ordinary science has little to say. What does the man of today have in him of Saturn's warmth? His blood-heat. What at that time was distributed over the whole of Saturn has in a measure freed itself and today forms the warm blood of man and animal. When you investigate the temperature of a beehive, you find it to be about the same temperature as that of human blood. The whole beehive develops a

temperature comparable to that of blood because, in accordance with the nature of its being, it goes back to the same source as does the human blood.

So, the occultist designates the bee as born out of warmth. He designates the butterfly as air being and the snake as earth being. Again you see from these considerations how deeply symbols and occult signs are connected with what we know of the evolutionary history of the planets and of man.

Lecture III

The Symbolism of Numbers

The Mystics and the Time of Copernicus.
Involution, Evolution and Creation out of Nothingness.
The Number Four, the Sign of Creation.

Today we shall first occupy ourselves with a consideration of what is called the symbolism of numbers. When speaking of occult signs and symbols, it is necessary to mention the symbols that are expressed in numbers, even if only briefly. You may recall my elucidations of the day before yesterday in which I spoke of the numerical proportions in the universe, of the speed with which the single planets move and of the harmony of the spheres that comes about through these different speeds. Even from this you can see that numbers and numerical proportions have a certain meaning for the cosmos and the world. It is in numbers, we might say, that the harmony that wells through space is expressed. Now we shall turn our attention to a more intimate numerical symbolism, the meaning of which we can only touch upon, however. Were we really to immerse ourselves in it, many other things would have to be considered. Anyway, you will receive at least an idea of what is meant when it is said of the old occult Pythagorean School that it stressed the necessity of immersing oneself in the nature of numbers in order to gain an insight into the world.

To think about numbers may appear dry and dreary to many. To those who are affected by the materialistic culture of our times it will appear as mere playfulness if it is believed that, through a consideration of numbers, it is possible to gain knowledge of the nature of things. There was, however, a deep reason for the great Pythagoras to tell his pupils that knowledge concerning the nature of numbers would lead to the essence of things. But do not think it sufficient to reflect on the numbers 1, 3, or 7. Real occult teaching knows nothing of witchcraft and magic, nor of a superstitious meaning of some number. Its knowledge rests on deeper things, and from the short sketch I will give you, you will see that numbers can give you a clue to what is called meditation if you have the key to plunge deeply enough.

The number *one* must be our starting point. Later, in considering the other numbers, it will become clearer how far the number one symbolizes what I shall say. In all occultism the One has always designated the indivisible unity of God in the universe. God is indicated by the number one. We should not believe, however, that anything is to be gained by becoming engrossed in

nothing but this number. You will see later how this absorption should rightfully come about, and it will be far more fruitful if we first consider the other numbers.

Two is called the number of revelation in occultism. This means that whatever appears to us in the world, whatever reveals itself, whatever is not in any way concealed, stands as a duality. Thereby we acquire ground under our feet, whereas with the number one we are groping in the unfathomable. Everywhere in nature you find that nothing reveals itself without being related to the number two. Light alone cannot reveal itself. There must also be shadow or darkness — that is, a duality. There could never be a world filled with manifest light were there not corresponding shadow. Thus it is with all things. It would never be possible for good to manifest if it did not have evil as shadow-picture. The duality of good and evil is a necessity in the manifest world. There are infinitely many dualities. They fit all life, but we must look for them at the right spots.

There is one important duality in life about which men might well reflect. Yesterday, we considered various conditions that a man experienced before he became an inhabitant of our present earth. We saw that on Saturn and on Sun he had a certain immortality in that he directed his body from outside, that he broke off pieces of this body and added new ones, so that he perceived nothing of fading and dying. Human consciousness at that time was not as it is today, but was dull. Men have wrestled through to a consciousness for the first time on our earth. It is here that a man first becomes a being who knew something of himself and could distinguish himself from objects. For this to occur, it was necessary not only that he direct his body from the outside, that he broke off pieces of this body and added new ones, so that he perceived nothing of fading and dying. Human consciousness at that time was not as it is today, but was dull. Men have wrestled through to a consciousness that is bound up with self-consciousness for the first time on our earth. It is here that a man first became a being who knew something of himself and could distinguish himself from objects. For this to occur, it was necessary not only that he direct himself from outside, but he also had to slip into this body, perceive himself therein, and say “I” to it. Only because a man finds himself completely in his body has he been able to achieve his full consciousness. Now, however, he also shares the destiny of his body. Earlier, when he still hovered over it, this was not the case. It was only when a man had achieved this degree of consciousness that he came into relation with death. At the moment when his body falls apart, he feels the suspension of his ego because he identifies himself with his body. Only gradually, through spiritual development, will he again achieve the old immortality. The body is here as the school through which to wrestle through to immortality with self-consciousness. Through death a man acquires immortality on a higher level. As long as he had not experienced death, so long was the world unrevealed to him because duality belongs to the revealed world — death and life.

Thus, we could point out dualities at every step in life. In physics you find positive and negative electricity, in magnetism, forces of attraction and repulsion. Everything appears in duality. Two, duality, is the number of appearance, of manifestation.

There is, however, no revelation save that the Divine holds sway behind the scenes. In this way, behind every duality a unity is hidden. Therefore, *three* is nothing but two and one, that is, the revelation and the existent divinity backing it.

Three is the number of the Divinity revealing itself. There is a statement in occultism that says that two can never be the number for the Divinity. One is a number for God, and also the three. The one who sees the world as a duality, sees it only in its revelation. Whoever claims that this duality is all is always in the wrong. Let us make this clear to ourselves with an example. Even in places where spiritual science is discussed, sinning often occurs against the statement of true occultism that two is the number of revelation but not the number of fullness or completeness. You will often hear it said in popular occultism by people who do not really know, that all development runs its course through involution and evolution, but we shall see the direction this really takes. First, however let's examine a plant, a fully developed plant with roots, leaves, stems, blossoms, fruit, etc. This is an evolution. But now observe the small seed from which the plant has arisen or can arise. In this tiny seed the entire plant is, in a sense, already contained. It is hidden within it, ensheathed, because the seed is taken from the whole plant, which has laid all its forces into the seed. Here we may therefore make a distinction between two processes — the one in which the seed's forces have unfurled themselves and unfolded into the plant, evolution, and the other in which the plant has folded itself up and, as it were, crept into the seed, involution.

The process that occurs when a being that has many organs so forms itself that nothing of these organs remains visible, so that they contract to a tiny part, is called an involution. The process of expansion and unfolding is an evolution. Everywhere in life this duality alternates but always only within the manifest. You can follow this up not only in the plant but also in higher realms of life. Let us trace in thought, for example, the development of European spiritual life from Augustine to Calvin, that is, roughly through the Middle Ages. You will find in Augustine a kind of mystical inwardness. No one can read the *Confessions* or his other writings without experiencing the deep inwardness of this man's feeling life. When we advance further, we come across wonderful characters such as Scotus Erigena, a monk from Scotland called the Scottish St. John, who later lived at the court of Charles the Bald. He did not get on well with the Church, and it is told that the brothers of his order tortured him to death with pins. Of course, this is not to be taken literally, but it is true that he was tortured to death. A splendid book was written by him, *On the Divisions in Nature* which reveals a great profundity of thought even though it is found wanting in many ways from the anthroposophical point of view.

Proceeding further, we find the German mystics in the region of the Rhine, through whom an inner warmth poured itself out over great numbers of people. Not only did the highest of the clergy experience it, but also those who worked on the land and in the smithies. They were all picked up by this current of the time. Further along the way we find Nicolaus Cusanus (1400–64), and so we can follow along in time until the end of the Middle Ages. Always we find that depth of feeling, that inwardness, that spreads itself over all strata of the population.

If we now compare this time with that following it, with the period that began in the sixteenth century and extends into our own, we notice a tremendous difference. At the outset, we find Copernicus who, through a comprehensive idea, effected a renewal of spiritual life, whose thought has become so incorporated into human thinking that whoever believes something else today is counted a fool. We see Galileo, who discovered the law of gravity by observing the swinging of a church lamp in Pisa. Step by step we follow the passage of time up to the present, and everywhere we find the opposite, the strict opposite, of the Middle Ages. Feeling steadily

declines and inwardness disappears. The intellect comes steadily to the fore and men become more clever.

Spiritual science explains the difference between these two epochs and shows us that this change had to be. There is an occult statement that says that the period from Augustine to Calvin was one of mystical involution. What does this mean? From the time of Augustine to the sixteenth century there was an outward unfolding of mystical life; it was outside. But something else was also there — intellectual life hidden in germinal form. It was, as it were, like a sun buried in the spiritual earth that unfolded later after the sixteenth century. The intellect was involuted as the plant is in its seed. Nothing can come forth in the world that was not previously in such an involution. Since the sixteenth century, the intellect has been evolving, the mystical life withdrawing. Now the time has come when this mystical life must again appear, when through the Anthroposophical Movement it will be brought to unfolding, to evolution. In this way involution and evolution disclose themselves alternately everywhere in life.

Whoever stops here, however, is taking only the outer aspect into account. To reckon with the whole we must include a third aspect that stands behind these two. What is this third aspect? Imagine yourself facing a phenomenon in the outer world. You reflect over it. You are here, the outer world is there, and from within your thoughts arise. These thoughts were not there previously. When, for example, you form a thought about a rose, this thought first arises in the moment you make a connection with the rose. You were here, the rose there, and now the thought arises in you. When the image of the rose arises, something quite new has come about. This is also the case in other spheres of life. Imagine the artist, Michelangelo, arranging a group of models. Actually, he did this in the rarest of cases. Michelangelo is here, what he renders is there. Something new — the image — arises in his soul. This is a creation that has nothing to do with involution and evolution. It is something entirely new that arises from the intercourse between a being that can receive and a being that can give. Such new creations are always generated through intercourse of being with being, and such new creations are a beginning.

Recall what we considered yesterday, how thoughts are creative, how they can ennoble the soul, indeed, even work later on forming the body. Whatever a being once thinks, the thought creation, the concept creation, works and actively carries on further. It is a new creation, works and actively carries on further. It is a new creation and at the same time a beginning because it gives rise to consequences. If you have good thoughts today, they are fruitful into the remote future because your soul goes its own way in the spiritual world. Your body returns to the elements and decays. Even if everything through which the thought arose disintegrates, the effects of the thought remain.

Let us return to the example of Michelangelo. His glorious paintings have affected millions of people. These paintings, however, will one day fall into dust and there will be future generations who will never see his creations. But what lived in Michelangelo's soul before his paintings took outer form, what at first existed as new creations in his soul, lives on, remains, and will appear in future stages of development and be given form. Do you know why clouds and stars appear to us today? Because there were beings in preceding eras who had thoughts of clouds and stars. Everything arises out of thought creations.

There you have the number three! In revelation things alternate between involution and evolution. Behind this is a deeply hidden creation, a new creation born out of thought. Everything has arisen out of thought, and the greatest things in the world have gone forth from the thoughts of the Godhead. From what, then, do things arise since ideas are new creations? They arise out of nothing! Three different things are here connected: Creation out of nothingness, which always occurs when you have an idea; the manifestation of this creation; the course of its development in time through the two forms, involution and evolution. This is what is meant when certain religious systems speak of the world created out of nothingness. If today people deride this, it is only because they do not understand what is to be found in these documents.

In the world of manifestation, to sum it up once more, everything alternates between involution and evolution. At the root of this is a hidden creation out of nothingness that unites itself with the two (involution and evolution) to form a triad. This is a union of the Divine with the revealed.

So you can see how we can reflect on the number three. We should not take off and spin pedantic thoughts about it, but we must look for the duality and triad that is to be met at every turn. Then we consider the numerical symbols in the right way, in the Pythagorean sense, and can draw conclusions leading from one to the other. We could also say that light and shadow appear in the manifest world, and behind these lies a third, hidden element.

We come now to the number four. Four is the sign of the cosmos or of creation. As far as we can determine with our present organs, the present planetary condition of the earth is its fourth embodiment. Everything that is manifest to us on an earth such as ours presupposes that this creation is the fourth stage. This is but a special case for all creations that appear thus. They all stand under the sign of the four.

The occultist says that men today stand in the mineral kingdom. What does this mean? Because a man understands only the mineral kingdom, he can only control this kingdom. Using minerals, he can build a house, a clock, and other things because they are subject to mineral laws. For various other activities he does not have this capacity. He cannot, for example, form a plant from out of his own thinking. To be able to do this he would himself have to exist in the plant kingdom. Some time in the future this will be the case. Today men are creators in the mineral realm. Three other kingdoms, the elementary kingdoms, have preceded this; the mineral kingdom is the fourth. All told there are seven.

Men stand in the fourth kingdom. Only here do they reach their actual consciousness oriented to the outer world. On the Moon they were still operating in the third elementary kingdom, on the Sun in the second, and on Saturn in the first. In the future on Jupiter, they will be able to create plants as today they are able to construct a clock. Everything visible in creation stands in the sign of the four. There are many planets that are not to be seen with physical eyes, such as those in the first, second, and third elementary kingdoms. Only when such a planet within creation enters the mineral kingdom can it be seen. Four is, therefore, the number of the cosmos or of creation. With the entrance into the fourth condition a being becomes fully visible to eyes that can see external things.

Five is the number of evil. This will become clear to us if we again consider human beings. In their development men have become fourfold beings and thereby beings of the created world. Here on earth, however, the fifth member of their being, the spirit self, will be added. Were they to remain fourfold beings, they would be constantly directed by the gods — toward the good, of course — but they would never develop their independence. They have become free through the gift of their germinal fifth member, but it is also from this that they have received the ability to do evil. No being can do evil who has not arrived at “fivefoldness.” Wherever we meet with evil, such that it can actually adversely affect our own being, there a fivefoldness is at play. This is the case everywhere, including the outside world, but people are unaware of it, and our present materialistic world view has no conception of the fact that the world can be considered in this way. Actually, there is justification for speaking of evil only where fivefoldness appears. When, one day, medicine will make use of this, it will be able to influence beneficially the course of illness. Part of the treatment would be to study the illness in its development on the first and fifth days after its onset, on the separate days at the fifth hour past midnight, and again during the fifth week. Thus it is always the number five that determines when the physician can best intervene. Before that there is not much else he can do than to let nature take its course, but then he can intervene, helping or harming, because what can justifiably be called good or evil then flows into the world of reality. It is possible in many areas to show that the number five has meaning for outer events.

A man's life consists of periods of seven years — from birth until the change of teeth; puberty; seven or eight years later; toward thirty, followed by the seven year periods throughout the rest of his life. When, one day, he will take these periods into account and consider what had best come toward or stand aloof from him, he will come to know much about preparing a good old age for himself. He can thus bring about good or evil for the remainder of his life. In the early periods of life a great deal can be done by observing certain laws of education. Then, however, there comes an important turning point. This also may become a regression if he is turned loose in life with complete confidence too early. The accepted principle of today that sends young people out into life early is harmful; the fifth period should be passed before this happens. Such ancient occult principles are of great importance. This is why, in the past, at the direction of those who knew something of these things, the years of the apprentice and journeyman had to be completed before one could be called a master.

Seven is the number of perfection. Observation of man himself will make this clear. Today he is under the influence of the number five insofar as he can be good or evil. As a creature of the universe he lives in the number four. When he will have developed all that he holds at present as germ within him, he will become a seven-membered being, perfect in its kind. The number seven rules in the world of colour, in the rainbow; in the world of tone it is found in the scale. Everywhere, in all realms of life, the number seven can be observed as a kind of number of perfection. There is no superstition or magic in this.

Now let us look back again to the number one. Because we have considered other numbers, what is now to be said about one will appear in the right light. The essence of the number one is its indivisibility. Of course, it can be subdivided, for example, $1/3$, $2/3$, etc. but this can only be accomplished in thinking. In the world, especially in the spiritual world, when you take the two-thirds away, the one-third still remains a part of it. In the same sense it can be said that when

some part of God is separated from Him and becomes manifest, the remainder exists as something that still belongs to it. In the Pythagorean sense we can say, “Divide the unity, but never otherwise than to have in your underlying thoughts the remainder connected with what has been separated.”

Take a thin golden plate of glass and look through it. The world will appear yellow because that is the colour that will be reflected. But it white light other colours are also contained. What happens to them? They are absorbed by the object. Hence, a red object appears red because it reflects the red rays and absorbs the rest. It is not possible to separate red from white light without leaving the other colours behind. With this we touch the edge of a world secret. You look at things in a certain way. You see, for instance, a red cloth spread out on the table and visualize at the same time that green is hidden in it. In this way you have accomplished what in the Pythagorean sense is called “The division of the One so that the rest is preserved.” If you carry this out meditatively, if you again and again unite separated parts into a unity, you have brought about a meaningful development through which you can attain spiritual heights.

Mathematicians have an expression for this that holds good in all occult schools: $1 = (2-x) - (1+x)$. [Ed: see [Note 1](#)]. This is an occult formula that expresses how Oneness can be divided and the parts so arranged that the One results. It indicates that, as occultists, we should not think of Oneness simply as One, but as parts that we add together again.

So, in this lecture we have examined what is called number symbolism and learned that when we meditate on the world from the standpoint of numbers, we can penetrate deep world secrets.

To complete these remarks let it be said once more that in the fifth week, on the fifth day, or in the fifth hour we can find important things that can be missed or made good. In the seventh week, on the seventh day, or in the seventh hour (or in a definite relationship, say, $3 \frac{1}{2}$ because seven is also in this number), something can happen through the thing itself. On the seventh day of an illness, for instance, a fever will take on a definite character; this might also occur on the fourteenth day. These things are always based on number relationships that point to the structure of the world.

Those who steep themselves in the right way in what, in the Pythagorean sense, we may call the “study of numbers,” will learn to understand life and the world in this number symbolism. Of this the lecture today was meant to give you roughly sketched thoughts.

Note 1: We feel this mathematical expression to be a translation error: we will leave the original text alone (we're trying to stay true to the printed book), and offer this correction to the text from Matija Kolaric:

I posted the question to the German mailing group rudolf-steiner@etc.etc about this math thing. There were a lot of answers: I will insert one of them, my lines after the second solid line. I know you might not speak German, but you shall get the point.

Sorry Matija, I do not write German. Yes, there is a translation error. Here's the original German text:

“Wenn man das meditativ durchführt, daß man das Geteilte stets wieder zur Einheit verbindet, so ist das eine bedeutungsvolle Arbeit, durch die man in der Entwicklung hoch aufsteigen kann. Es gibt in der Mathematik einen Ausdruck dafür, der in den okkulten Schulen überall gilt:

$$1 = (2 + x) - (1 + x)$$

“Das ist eine okkulte Formel, welche ausdrücken soll, wie man die Eins teilt, und wie man die Teile so darstellt, daß sie wieder die Eins ergeben. Der Okkultist soll die Teilung der Einheit so denken, daß er die Teile immer zur Einheit wieder zusammenfügt.”

(GA 101 – 1.Auflage, Gesamtausgabe Dornach 1987)

Greetings from France,
Jean-Marc

There was, after this, a good explanation, looks like Steiner, but Felix Hau, who wrote it, did not say if it was Steiner or his own, or just his reinterpretation of Steiner. Nevertheless, it makes sense, and he used the expression from above.

Here is the point (in my own words):

The world is in itself enclosed Spirit. Symbolised with 1. However, as a man feels he is a separate being, so there is one more Spirit (the spirit, and the image).

Now, you can put on the left side 1, and on the right side 2, but now you have to subtract the enclosed Spirit. You get: $1 = 2 - 1$

And you can add to the duality all you want ($2+x$), because you have to subtract it together with the one ($1+x$), so you get:

$$1=(2+x)-(1+x)$$

So, from these two sources (whom I do not know, but I don't think they went through all the trouble just to make fun of someone), I strongly believe that this is the right thing. It makes sense, which is even more important. And, it works with ANY x ! This corresponds with the lecture, as far as I can tell. My truth-feeling is satisfied: it was very alarmed with the expression in the text.

After this I added part of the letter from Felix Hau (in German):

Das meint doch unsere Mathematik, wie sie heute so eifrig an den Universitäten gelehrt wird. Das ist aber nicht so. Die 2 kommt schon danach; aber es ist keine Steigerung, dass sie kommt, es ist nur eine Separation der 1. Und diese 1 ist immernoch da - nun schon als 2. Und wenn Sie jetzt, meine Damen und Herren, sich einmal den Zeitbegriff anschauen, wie wir ihn alltäglich benutzen, dann wird auch verständlich, dass wir in demselben Augenblick, in dem wir so bei der zwei angekommen sind, aus der All-Einheit der eins zunächst gefallen sind. Wir haben eine Ausdehnung im Zeitlichen hinter uns gebracht. Das ist im Grunde der Ursprung dessen, was die Mathematik die zweite Dimension nennt: Es ist die Zeit. Denn bislang, meine Damen und Herren, haben wir ja noch gar keinen Raum benötigt! Wir haben ja noch ***GAR KEINEN*** Raum benötigt! Wir waren ja rein im Geistigen - und dort haben wir zunächst die Zeit. Der Raum kommt später; davon will ich dann morgen zu Ihnen sprechen. Für heute soll es uns genügen, zu wissen, wie man in der okkulten Forschung das darstellen kann, dass die All-Einheit, die 1, die Zeitlichkeit - 2 - schon enthält. Und das, liebe Freunde, kann man so darstellen, dass man sagt: Nun, wir haben hier eine 1; die stellen wir auf die eine Seite. Auf die andere Seite stellen wir ihr die 2 gegenüber und entnehmen ihr den Geist - also die 1 -, der die zwei ja erst möglich gemacht hat. Denn der steckt ja in ihr drin, der Geist, er hat sich ja in ihr verdoppelt, aber er muss nun wieder hinaus, damit wir sehen, dass er drinnen war! Und nun meine lieben Freunde - es ist ganz erstaunlich - können Sie mit dieser okkulten Formel die ganze Welt in ihrer erscheinenden Zerstreuung, Sie können die gleichzeitig in sich geschlossene Diaspora des Geistes veranschaulichen. Denn es ist ganz gleich, was sie der 2 noch zugesellen, wenn Sie es hinten zusammen mit dem Geist wieder herausnehmen, dann haben Sie wiederum die 1 all-ein. Und es steht ja, und darauf ist hinzuweisen, meine lieben Freunde, es steht ja dort ***gleichzeitig*** auf der einen Seite der all-eine Geist und auf der anderen die Welt in der zerstreuten Erscheinung. So haben wir also eine Formel gefunden, die das ausdrücken kann, was der Okkultist auf allerlei Weise mitzuteilen sich bemüht. Und diese Formel ist folgende:

$$1=(2+x)-(1+x)$$

Herzlich,

Felix

I know I keep you busy :))), but it seems that I was right after all (the I part is not important, to find the truth, however, is). I myself did not take a look in the book, but I feel completely satisfied with the above expression. Of course, it is up to you, but I suggest, if I may, that you change it.

From the heart,
Matija

[We thank you, Matija – Ed]

Lecture IV

Man, the Most Significant Symbol.

The Seven Seals

The most significant of the symbols and signs that we have, and that has been acknowledged by occultists of all times, is man himself. The human being has always been called a microcosmos, a small world, and rightly so. Those who have learned to know him exactly and intimately have realized that everything spread out in the rest of nature is contained in miniature in man. This may at first be difficult to understand, perhaps, but when you think about it, you will grasp its meaning. In man there is to be found a kind of extract of all the rest of nature, of all materials and forces. If you study the nature of any plant deeply enough, you will find that there is contained in the human organism something of the same, even though it is there in ever so small a measure. If you study an animal, you will always be able to point to something in it that is of like nature in the human organism. In order to understand this rightly it is, of course, necessary to consider the development of the world from the occult standpoint. The occultist knows, for example, that men would not have the kind of hearts they have today if the lion did not exist out there in nature. Let us look back to an earlier time when there were still no lions.

Men, the oldest beings, already existed but at that time they had a differently constituted heart. To be sure, everywhere in nature there are obscure relationships. When, in the far remote past, the human heart acquired its present form, the lion appeared. The same forces formed both. It is as if these forces had extracted the leonine essence and with divine artistic skill fashioned the heart from it. You may feel that the human heart has nothing leonine in it; that it does is nevertheless so for the occultist. You must not forget the fact that when something is introduced into the relationships of an organism, it will then function quite differently from the way it functions when it is free. Conversely, it can be said that were you able to withdraw the essence of the heart and form a being from it that corresponds to this heart — that is, a being formed in such a way that the forces of the organism did not determine its structure — you would then produce a lion. All the traits of courage and daring, or, as the occultist says, the kingly traits of the human being, are derived from connections with the lion. The initiate, Plato, also placed the kingly soul in the heart.

Paracelsus used a beautiful comparison to demonstrate this connection of the human being with nature. He said that the individual beings in nature are letters, and men are the words that are composed from them. Outside, the great world, the macrocosmos; in us, the small world, the microcosmos. Outside, everything exists separately. In men it is determined by the harmonious

relation with other organs. Just this enables us to illustrate through human beings the development of the whole universe insofar as it belongs to us.

You have in the seven seals that were hung in the Festival Hall during the Munich Congress a picture of this evolution of men in connection with the world to which they belong. Let us see what they show us.

The first seal presents a person clad in white, his feet of molten metal, and a fiery sword projecting from the mouth. His right hand is surrounded by the signs of our planets — Saturn, Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus. Those familiar with the Apocalypse of St. John will remember that there is to be found in it a description that closely corresponds to this picture, for St. John was an initiate. It can be said that this seal represents the idea of total humanity. This will be understood when we recall some ideas already known to the older members here. When we go back in human evolution, we come to a time when men were at an imperfect stage. Thus, for example, they did not have heads like the ones you carry on your shoulders today. It would sound grotesque, indeed, were you to hear a description of the men of that time. Only gradually was the head developed, and it will continue developing. Men also have organs today that have come to the end of their development and in the future they will no longer form part of the human body. There are others that will transform themselves. An example is the larynx, which, to be sure, has a great future connection with the heart. At present the larynx is at the beginning of its development, but in times to come it will be transformed into a spiritualized organ of reproduction. You will get an idea of this mystery if you make clear to yourselves just what it is that a man achieves with his larynx today.



First Seal

While I speak to you, you hear my words. Through the fact that this sound fills the air and that certain vibrations are produced in it, my words are transported to your ears and to your souls. When I say a word, for example, “world,” the air vibrates in an embodiment of that word. What we produce in this way today is called “creation in the mineral kingdom.” The movements of the air are mineral movements, so to speak, and thus through the larynx we have a mineral effect on our environment. But men will progress and will also become effective in the plant kingdom. Then they will call forth not only mineral, but also plant-like vibrations. They will speak “plants.” The next step will be that men will be able to speak “feeling beings.” On the highest stage of their development, they will generate their like through the larynx. A man now can only express the contents of his soul through his larynx, but then he will express himself. As men in the future will be able to call people into being through their speaking, so it was that the forerunners of mankind, the gods, were gifted with an organ with which they expressed all things that are around us today. It is they who have made all men, animals and everything else that is manifest. In the literal sense of the word, all of you are words uttered by divine beings.

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and a God was the Word!” This does not mean a philosophical word in the speculative sense; St. John set down a primal fact that is to be taken quite literally.

At the end there will be the Word. Creation is a realization of the Word, and men in the future will bring forth a realization of what today is the Word. Then men will no longer have the physical forms they have today; they will have progressed to the form that existed on Saturn, to fiery matter.

That being who spoke forth all that is in the world today is the great prototype of men. He spoke forth Saturn into the universe, the Sun, Moon, Earth, Mercury, Jupiter and Venus. The seven planets in the seal point to this. They are the sign that indicates the height to which a man will be able to develop himself. His planet then will consist of fiery matter, and he will be able to speak creatively into this fiery matter. The fiery sword that projects from the mouth of the figure in the seal represents this. All will be fiery, hence the feet of flowing metal.

When you compare a man of today with the animals, the difference between them forces one to say that the man, as an individual, has within him what cannot be found in the single animal. The man has an individual soul, the animal a group soul. The individual human being is, in himself, a whole animal species. All lions together, for example, have only one soul. Such group-egos are like human egos except that they have not descended into the physical world, but are to be found only in the astral world. Here on earth one sees physical men, each of whom bears his ego. In the astral world one finds beings like one's self, but in astral sheaths rather than physical. One can speak with them as to one's peers. These are the animal group souls.



Second Seal

In earlier times, men also had group souls. Only gradually have they developed themselves to their present independence. These group souls were originally in the astral world and then descended to live in the physical body. When one investigates the original human group souls in the astral world, one finds four species from which humans have sprung. Were one to compare these four kinds of beings with the group souls that belong to the present-day animal species, one would find that one of the four is comparable to the lion, another to the eagle, a third to the cow, and a fourth to the man of ancient times before his ego had descended. Thus, in the second picture, in the apocalyptic animals, lion, eagle, cow and man, we are shown an evolutionary stage of mankind. There is, and always will be as long as the earth shall exist, a group soul for the higher manifestation of men, which is represented by the lamb in the center of the seal, the mystical lamb, the sign of the Redeemer. This grouping of the five group souls, the four of man around the great group soul, which still belongs to all men in common, is represented by the second seal.

Were we to go far back millions of years in human evolution, another picture would come toward us. At present, men are physically on earth, but there was a time when what wandered about here on earth was not yet able to take up a human soul because it was on the astral plane. Even further back in time, we come to a period when the soul was on the spiritual plane, in devachan. In the future, when it will have purified itself on earth, the soul will again ascend to this high plane. Its course moves from the spiritual, through the astral, the physical and then again up to the spirit. This seems a long development for the human



Third Seal

being, yet it still appears brief compared to the other planets. During those times men went through not only physical transformations, but spiritual and astral transformations as well. To follow these requires that we rise to spiritual worlds. There the music of the spheres can be heard, tones that swell and flood through space in this world, the harmony of the spheres, called by the occultist “the trumpet tones of the angels,” will sound forth for them. Hence, the trumpets in the third seal.



Fourth Seal

From the spiritual world there come the revelations that disclose themselves to men only when they continue to progress; then there will be opened for them the Book with the Seven Seals. These seals are just what we are considering here, and they will be revealed. Hence, you find the book in the middle of the seal and below it the four stages of mankind represented by four horses, which signify mankind's stages in its development down through time. But there is still higher initiation. Men derive from still higher worlds and they will ascend to them again. Then men and world will have ceased to exist in their present forms. What is now

outside in the world — the single letters of which a man is composed — he will again have taken into himself, and his form will become identical with the world's form. In a rather trivial theosophical teaching, one says that one searches for God within one's self. But those who would find God must look for him in his works that are spread out in the world. Nothing in the world is just matter, this is but seeming. In reality, all matter is an expression of spirituality, a message of the activity of God. Men will extend their beings, as it were, in the course of times to come, identifying themselves more and more with the world; thus it will become possible to represent them in the form of the cosmos instead of the human form. This you can see in the fourth seal with its rock, sea and columns. What passes as clouds through the world today will offer its matter so that the body of a man may be formed from it, and the forces that today are with the Sun spirits will in future provide men with what will develop their spiritual forces in a much higher way. It is this sun force to which men are striving. Contrary to the plant that sends its head-like roots towards the earth's center, a man turns his head to the sun. He will ultimately unite his head with the sun and receive higher forces. This is to be seen in the fourth seal in the sun's face that rests on the body of clouds, on the rock and columns. In that future time, the human being will have become self-creative. As symbol of the perfect creation, the many coloured rainbow surrounds him. In the Apocalypse of St. John you can find a similar seal in which there is a book in the middle of the clouds. St. John says that the initiate must swallow this book. Here is indicated the time when men will receive wisdom not only outwardly, but will be penetrated by it as is the case today with food, when they, themselves, will be an embodiment of wisdom.

The time will then draw near in which great changes will take place in the cosmos. When men will have attracted the sun power, the sun will once again be united with the earth. Men will become sun beings, and through the power of the sun, they will be able to bring forth suns. Hence, the woman that bears the sun in the fifth seal. Mankind will be so far along morally and ethically that all destructive forces resting in his lower human nature will have been overcome. This is represented by the animal with the seven heads and the ten horns. At the



Fifth Seal

feet of the sun woman is the moon, which contains all those base substances that the earth could not use but had not tossed out. Everything in the way of magical forces that the moon still exerts on the earth at present will then be overcome. When man becomes united with the sun, he will have overcome the moon.



Sixth Seal

The next picture shows us that the human being, when he had achieved the highest spirituality, takes on the form of Michael fettering the evil in the world, symbolized by the dragon.

In a certain way we have seen that both at the beginning and at the end of human evolution there are the same conditions and transformations. We have seen them portrayed in the man with the feet of molten fire and the sword projecting from his mouth. In a symbolism of great profundity, the world's whole being is now revealed to us in the symbol of the Holy Grail.

Let me set this seal before your eyes in a few words. The occultist who has acquainted himself with our world knows that space in the physical world is not simple emptiness, but something quite different. Space is the source from which all beings have, so to speak, physically crystallized. Imagine a cube-shaped, transparent glass vessel filled with water. Now imagine that certain cooling streams are led through this water so that it congeals in the most manifold forms into ice. This will give you an idea of the world's creation, of space, and of the divine creative word spoken into it. The occultist presents this space into which the divine creative Word has been spoken as the water-clear cube. Within this space various beings develop. The ones standing nearest to us can be characterized as follows. The cube has three perpendicular directions, three axes, length, height and breadth. It thus represents the three dimensions in space. Now imagine the counter-dimensions to these three outside dimensions of the physical world. You may visualize this by imagining someone moving in one direction and colliding with someone else coming from another direction. Similarly, there is a counter-dimension to every dimension of space, so that in all we have six counter-rays. These counter-rays represent the primal beginnings of the highest human members. The physical body, crystallized from out of space, is the lowest. The spiritual, the highest, is the opposite counter-dimension. In their development, these counter-dimensions first form themselves in a being that is best described when we let them flow together into the world of passions, sensual appetites and instincts. This it is at first. Later, it becomes something else. It becomes ever more purified — we have seen to what height — but it issued from the lower impulses, which are here symbolized by the snake. The process of purification is symbolized by the counter-dimensions converging in two snakes standing opposite each other. As mankind purifies itself, it rises through what is called the world spiral. The purified body of the snake, this world spiral, has deep significance. The following example will give you an idea of it.

Modern astronomy is supported by two postulates of Copernicus, but a third has not been taken into account. Copernicus said that the sun also moves. It advances in a spiral so that the earth, following the sun, moves in a complicated curve. The same is true for the moon that revolves around the earth. These movements are far more complicated than is assumed in elementary astronomy. You see here how the spiral has significance for celestial bodies, and these describe a form with which men will one day identify themselves. At that time, a man's generative power will be cleansed and purified, and his larynx will become his generative organ. What the human being will have developed as purified snake body will no longer work upwards, but from above downwards. The transformed larynx will become the chalice known as the Holy Grail. Even as one is purified, so also the other, which unites with this generative organ. It will be an essence of world force and of great cosmic essence. This world spirit in its essence is represented by the dove facing the Holy Grail. Here it symbolizes the spiritualized fructification that will be active out of the cosmos when men will have identified themselves with the cosmos. The complete creativity of this process is represented by the rainbow. This is the all-embracing seal of the Holy Grail. The whole gives the sense of the connection between world and men in a wonderful way, as a summation of the meaning of the other seals.



Seventh Seal

The world secret is found here as a circular inscription on the seal's outer edge, which shows how men in the beginning are born out of the primal forces of the world. Everyone, when he looks back, sees that he has gone through the process in the beginning of time that he goes through spiritually today when he is born anew out of the forces of consciousness. This is expressed in the Rose Cross by E. D. N., *Ex Deo Nascimur*, out of God I am born.

We have seen that within the manifest world a second is added to life, that is, death. That he find life again in this death, a man must find the death of the senses in the primal source of all that lives. This is the center of all cosmic development because we have had to experience death in order to gain consciousness. We will be able to overcome death when we find its meaning in the mystery of the Redeemer. Just as we are born out of God, so, in the sense of esoteric wisdom, we die in Christ — I. C. M., *In Christo Morimur*.

Because a duality is disclosed wherever something reveals itself, with which a third member must unite, the man who has overcome death will identify himself with the spirit that permeates the world, symbolized by the dove. He will rise from death and again live in the spirit — P. S. S. R., *Per Spiritum Sanctum Reviviscimus*.

Here stands the theosophical Rose Cross. It rays forth to those times in which religion and science will be reconciled.

You can see how the whole world presents itself in such seals, and because the magi and initiates have put the whole cosmos into them, they contain a mighty force. You can continually turn back to these seals and you will find that by meditating on them they will disclose infinite wisdom. They can have a mighty influence on the soul because they have been created out of cosmic secrets. Hang them in a room where such things are discussed as we have been doing

here, discussions in which one raises one's self to the holy mysteries of the world, and they will prove enlivening and illuminating in the highest degree, although people will often not be aware of their effect. Because they have this significance, however, they are not to be misused or profaned. Strange as it may seem, when the seals are hung around a room in which nothing spiritual is ever said, in which only trivial words are spoken, their effect is such that they cause physical illness. Trivial as it may sound, they destroy the digestion. What is born out of the spiritual belongs to the spiritual and must not be profaned. This is shown here by the very effect. Signs of spiritual things belong where spiritual things are enacted and reach effectiveness.