

Anthroposophical Society in New Hampshire
Michaelmas Newsletter
2024



Albrecht Dürer
Apokalypse von St Johannes

Soul Calendar Verse for Michaelmas

Nature! Your soul of motherhood
I bear within the being of my will;
And this will's fiery might
Steels my Spirit's impulses,
That self-awareness they beget,
To bear my Self in me.

A Michaelmas thought:

[...] instead of taking an interest merely in my own way of thinking, and in what I consider right, I must develop a selfless interest in every opinion I encounter, however strongly I may hold it to be mistaken. The more a man prides himself on his own dogmatic opinions and is interested only in them, the further he removes himself, at this moment of world-evolution, from the Christ. The more he develops a social interest in the opinions of other men, even though he considers them erroneous—the more light he receives into his own thinking from the opinions of others—the more he does to fulfill in his inmost soul a saying of Christ, which to-day must be interpreted in the sense of the new Christ-language.

Christ said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." The Christ never ceases to reveal Himself anew to men—even unto the end of earthly time. And thus He speaks to-day to those willing to listen: "In whatever the least of your brethren thinks, you must recognise that I am thinking in him; and that I enter into your feeling, whenever you bring another's thought into relation with your own, and whenever you feel a fraternal interest for what is passing in another's soul. Whatever opinion, whatever outlook on life, you discover in the least of your brethren, therein you are seeking Myself." Source: Rudolf Steiner - GA 193 - Inner Aspect of the Social Question/Problems of Society, an Esoteric View- 11 February 1919, Zurich

From: Lectures 2 and 3, Problems of Society, an Esoteric View: From Luciferic Past to Ahrimanic Future (former title: The Inner Aspect of the Social Question), GA 193, Bern, February 8, 1919 and Zurich, February 11, 1919

Lecture 2:

The public lecture I have been giving deal with the social problem, the social needs of today, not just as a theoretical appraisal shows them to be but as they actually manifest in the realities and occurrences of modern life in the world.

Anthroposophy can shed further light on all these things relating to human life, which nowadays require reflection of the broadest possible kind and in the widest possible circles. If we feel ourselves to be part of the Anthroposophic movement, we ought never to forget the vital importance of considering everything in the world, all outward phenomena, as something requiring further penetration by insights drawn from the world of spirit. Everything acquires its proper aspect of reality **ONLY** when we are able to conceive it as pervaded by spirit, by an essence which is initially invisible within the external earthly world but which nevertheless really does live in this world.

.....My reflections in yesterday's public lecture are of a kind that only come to full and detailed clarity if we also know how to illumine them with the light drawn from the supersensible world.

Today therefore I want to study this highly topical theme in more depth with the help of Anthroposophic insights. I wish to consider the social problem as a problem of all humanity.

However, humanity in its totality is for us not just the sum of souls who are living at any one time in social coexistence upon the earth, but also includes those who, at the same time, are living in the supersensible world, for they are connected by spiritual bonds to those on earth, and together they form the full scope of humanity.

In its earthly meaning, human culture or spiritual life is not the life of spiritual beings but something humankind experiences together in its social coexistence. This cultural life includes, above all, everything that encompasses science, art and religion. At the same time, it likewise includes everything that relates to schooling and education. We will therefore first consider what human beings experience as cultural life in their social coexistence. From what I said yesterday you will have gathered that this life of the human spirit—all schooling, education, all science, art, literary life and so forth—must take shape in its own distinct sphere of society. To make clear to

the outer world why this is so we have to formulate it in ways that this outer world itself can accept. It is clear that healthy human common sense has to be sufficient to fully fathom these things, although we can only gain a really tangible sense of them if we embrace an Anthroposophic view of the world. If we do, then what is called human culture appears in a very distinctive light.But for someone acquainted with the foundations on which Anthroposophically orient spiritual science originates, the cultural and spiritual life in which human beings are embedded is a gift of beings of spirit themselves. In this view it does not simply arise up like mist from underground economic factors, but **streams down instead from the life of the spiritual hierarchies**.In the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, we can only find our way into the human social organism as social beings, can only embed this life of spirit there, because of preparations we undertake for this earthly human culture **before birth**, before we descended to earthly existence, entering there into relationship with other spirit beings of the hierarchies, as we have often described.

At birth we enter into relationship with other human beings in **two ways**, and it is important to distinguish these clearly. One of these is to do with our destiny connections with others. We are drawn to one person or another, to a larger or smaller number of people in a destined context. Entering earthly existence at birth, we come to a particular family, to father, mother, siblings and the wider family around us. This is given as our destiny.

We also enter as individuals into destined connections with other individuals, living out the karma we have with them. How does this karma arise? How do these connections of destiny come about? They arise, or were prepared, by factors and circumstances that existed in our previous life on earth. Let's be clear about this: through birth you enter into relationship with others, you connect as one individual with other individuals and live out the destiny that corresponds to your life with these individuals in previous lives on earth. This is **one way** in which you enter into relationships with others—through destined connections.

But you develop other relationships too. You belong to a group of people who together form a nation, and you are not connected with all of them by destiny. You are born into a particular race and nation, into a particular territory, as it were. No doubt this is also to do with your karma, yet at the same time it means that you are forged into a social organism with many others to whom you do not intrinsically belong by destiny. In a religious community, too, you may share the same religious feelings or sensibility with many others with whom, however, you do not have a common destiny at all. Cultural life on earth creates the most diverse social and communal contexts between people without these all being rooted in destiny. These connections and contexts are not all prepared in previous lives but instead in the period you pass through between death and a new birth, especially towards the second half of this life after death, when the prospect of a new birth arises. Then you enter into a relationship with beings, above all of the higher hierarchies, and are influenced by their powers in a way that melds you spiritually with diverse groups of human beings. The spiritual, cultural life you experience in the context of religion, art, nation or even by virtue of sharing a common language, or through a very specific form of education and so on, is all prepared in pre-birth life but in a way that is distinct from purely karmic factors. At birth you bring with you into physical life on earth what you previously experienced in your pre-birth life. And these pre-birth experiences come to expression in cultural life, the life of spirit, in this earthly realm, albeit in a quite different way from how you experienced them before birth.

....We can only properly serve (the cultural life) if, instead of regarding it as ideology, we know that the world of spirit indwells in it. We only develop the right stance towards this life of earthly culture if we are aware that the powers of the world of spirit are everywhere active within it. Take it as a hypothesis if you like, that the thoughts of beings of spirit belonging to the

supersensible world—whether beings of the higher hierarchies who never assume an earthly body, or unborn human beings who have not yet entered upon their future life at birth—are alive, that their soul life lives in a kind of dream reflection within our earthly culture.If we can acquire a feeling of the sacred nature of the world of spirit, as the gift of spirit beings all around us who compose the spiritual world, then we can find a due **sense of gratitude** for these supersensible gifts which we experience as our earthly culture. And then this spirit-borne world of culture will inevitably find its proper and necessary place in humanity's whole social organism, as the furtherance of what we ourselves participate in before birth in the world of spirit. If we illumine the life of society through spiritual insight, it becomes self-evident that this cultural life of ours must have a distinct and autonomous reality.

The second sphere of society can be called the **external legislative state, or political life** in its narrower sense—everything that relates to legal relationships between people, in which all are equal before the law. This is the life of nationhood, of the state, which should comprise no more than this. Here again, certainly, our healthy common sense can show us the need for this state legislature, this life of public justice, which concerns the equality of all before the law, the equal rights of all human beings, to be an autonomous sphere of the social organism. And yet we can become aware of something quite different too in this domain if we study it with vision made keener by Anthroposophic spiritual science.

This sphere of law and justice is the only domain in society which has nothing to do either with pre-birth or after-death existence. It is an order and orientation established only in the world in which we live between birth and death. Only to this degree is the state, archetypally, a self-contained whole, as long as it does not impinge on anything that in some way relates to the supersensible world, whether looking back to pre-birth life or forward to life after death. "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's." But we can make the still clearer by adding: "Do not render unto Caesar the things that are God's, not unto God the things that are Caesar's." In both cases they will be repudiated!

....Earthly human culture is something that originates beyond birth and death, for it contains shadows, reflections, of the soul experiences of supersensible beings. When impulses living in the life of rights and legislature sought to take over the life of spirituality on earth, of human culture, people of deeper religious sensibility saw this as a power exercised or usurped by the iniquitous prince of this world (Note: Rudolf Steiner uses this expression in several lectures, indicating that this was used of Satan in esoteric Christianity. See also the lecture by Steiner on April 20, 1908 in Berlin, GA 102). This phrase—"the iniquitous prince of this world"—relates to what I have now described. And this was also why the circles interested in confounding and confusing the three distinct spheres of the social organism do not like hearing it spoken, and frown upon this expression.

Something different, again, holds true in our thinking, feeling and inner impulses in so far as we are involved in the **economic sphere** of the social organism. There is something very curious and distinctive here, though by now, schooled as you are in Anthroposophically oriented spiritual science, you will be used to grappling with seemingly paradoxical realities. When we speak of the economic sphere of the social organism, we have to be clear that in the terms we mean it now it is characteristic of the fifth post-Atlantean epoch only. In former ages of humanity's evolution these things were different. What I have to say therefore relates to our life today and in future. **In earlier times humankind engaged more instinctively in economic life, whereas now this must become ever more conscious.** As I have said previously, in the same way that we learn our times tables in primary school, and other basic things, **in future we will have to learn at school the**

things that relate to the social organism, to economic life. We have to be able to feel that we are a part of the economic organism. Naturally some will find this uncomfortable since they are used of other habits of thought and feeling, and these habits must change entirely. If someone today does not know what three times nine is, he will be considered uneducated. In some circles you will be thought uneducated if you do not know who Raphael or Leonardo was. But you are not generally regarded as uneducated if you are unable to define the nature of capital, production, consumption and the way these interrelate, or what the credit system and banking involves.....

As social conditions change these concepts will no doubt change too, and it will become easier in future to seek and find clarification of such matters. Nowadays people feel rather flummoxed if they try to fathom economics. Picking up a book on economics by an acknowledged expert in the field, you will be confused to find that different economists all give quite different definitions of capital. What would you think about the subject of geometry if you were to read three books about it and find that the theorem of Pythagoras is presented quite differently in each? Even acknowledged authorities on economics seem unable to clarify their subject, and one can therefore scarcely find fault with the general public for failing to seek more insight. But insight will be needed. People will have to build a bridge that connects them with the economic structures of the social organism. They will have to integrate themselves, their subjective existence, into economic life, into the social organism. They will have to learn to think about how they relate to other in this realm simply by virtue of the fact that they engage economically with others in a particular territory in relation of all kinds of goods and commodities. The thinking we develop here, informed by our whole relationship with the natural world, is quite different in kind from, say, the thinking that develops in the world of human culture. In this other realm, of spirit and culture, you gain an experience of the thinking of beings of the higher hierarchies, and of what you yourself experienced in your pre-birth life. In the thinking you develop as a participant in the economic struggle for survival, as paradoxical as this may seem, another person, a deeper person, is always thinking alongside and within you. Specifically when you feel yourself to be part of an economic entity, a deeper person is thinking in you and alongside you. Here, with your thinking, you are obliged to compile and conflate diverse factors of outward life. What will the right price be for this or that? How do I obtain one or another commodity? And so forth. Here your thoughts in a sense flit from one outward fact to the next, and your thinking is not informed by spirit but by outward, material things. And it is precisely because outward material factors live in your thinking, which has to be alert here to what is happening in economic life, and not merely instinctual experience as in the animal, that we can say that another, deeper human being is continually thinking within you about these things. S/he is the one who perpetuates these thoughts, creating connections between them and giving them a provisional conclusion. And this deeper person within you is an essential participant in everything you carry with you into the world of spirit at death. However paradoxical it may seem to many, consideration of material factors we are obliged to engage in here in the world, which are never finished and never come to a final conclusion, stimulated in us another inner, spiritual life that we carry through death into the supersensible world. Thus the feelings and impulses we develop in economic life have a closer connection with our life after death than is commonly realized. This may seem very strange and paradoxical; and yet **it is simply a more conscious version of what entered human instincts from the world of the spirit in atavistic eras of human evolution and developed in humankind back then.** Let me clarify this with the following thoughts.

In certain indigenous tribes you can discover very striking social arrangements. Now we must not entertain the nonsensical and foolish idea about such tribes that modern anthropologist

propound.In fact these indigenous tribes represent an element that has lapsed from an earlier condition....For this reason we can study in indigenous peoples much that once existed in humankind at times of atavistic clairvoyance, when, for example, the following social arrangements existed. The members of a particular tribe formed small groups, each of which had a certain name taken from a plant or animal of that region. This delineation of small groups within larger social contexts was connected with the following. One group, say—but here we will use modern names just to clarify what I mean—bore the name 'rye'; and this group had to ensure that rye was properly cultivated so that other groups (not called 'rye') could be supplied with the grain. Thus these people had to supervise rye cultivation and distribution, while other groups, with different names, could depend on supplies of rye from them. Another group might be called 'cattle', and had the task of husbanding cows, supplying produce from them to the other groups. Besides supplying the product for which they were responsible, as designated by their names, at the same time it was forbidden for other groups to cultivate a product not assigned to them. This was the 'totemic right', as it was called, of each group. This is the economic meaning of 'totem', which was at the same time part and parcel of a mystery culture in the regions where these totemic practices existed. Mystery culture was not, as modern people imagine, something altogether lofty and removed from daily life, but, drawn from the resolves of the gods which participants in the mysteries could decipher, it played into the smallest everyday details of existence as a socially organizing influence. It ordered the tribe according to totemic forms, totemic groups, and thus brought about a corresponding economic order. At the same time, in specific ways, it disclosed to people the intrinsic nature of the world of the spirit, showing how this world enters into and informs earthly culture, in a way that was appropriate at the time. As well as governance through the life of rights, with its solely earthly character, people here on earth prepared themselves through their economic arrangements and institutions so that at death they could once again enter a world in which they must develop connections that they could only previously prepare on earth through their engagement with the non-human realms of nature. These ancient tribes learned, through the guidance of their initiates, to include in their life on earth a sphere of economics with its due relationship to the cosmos.

.....By entering into a relationship with other creatures we acquire something that only fully unfolds in life after death. As far as our after-death condition is concerned, you see, we are still related here to lower forms of life, to animals, plants and minerals, and precisely in this experience of non-human entities we prepare something that will only grow up into our human nature after death. Our experience of animals, plants and minerals is an encompassing element for us on earth, surrounding us like a spiritual atmosphere within the earthly realm, whereas what people experience amongst each other is the basis only for a purely etheric element between birth and death.

What we experience below the human level, in economic life, only becomes human as such, is only raised into an earthly human element, once we have crossed the threshold of death.

.....**The life of spirit and culture appears to us to be very lofty on the one hand; but at the same time it is the realm in which we are actually always practicing theft, consuming what we bring into physical existence at birth.** Economic life seems to us to be the lowest aspect of human activity but this is only because it reveals its lowest aspect here between birth and death. In fact it allows us the time to develop, unconsciously, the spiritual aspect of economic life, which we bear into supersensible realms at death. **And what I mean, primarily, but the spiritual aspect of economic life is a sense of commonality and community with other human beings.**

.....Only one sphere of the social organism, relating to the state's outward organization, is purely earthly. The two other spheres are quickened by two aspects of super-terrestrial reality. On the one hand we have an earthly cultural life with which we are endowed as a superfluity, garnered in a

sense from a pre-birth, super-terrestrial life of spirit. And on the other hand, as corporeal human beings—and as such connected with the other creatures of the earth—we must submerge ourselves in merely economic activity. But we are not only corporeal. Within this body of ours, the soul is being prepared for subsequent lives on earth and subsequent supersensible life. In economic life something is being prepared that will raise a part of us that is not yet wholly human—the part of us that must be embedded in economic life—into the domain of the human. Within us, in a sense, we bear a partly superhuman aspect in so far as we can move towards a social context that is interwoven with earthly culture, with spirit on earth. We bear something merely human in us as citizens of the state. And we bear in us something that compels us to descend below both these, which the world of spirit at the same time compensates us for however, by preparing within this apparently lowest sphere of social experience something that will in turn lead us back and reintegrate us with the supersensible.

Reality is not superficial enough to be easily comprehended, even though many would prefer it to be so. Human life passes through the most diverse phases, and at each phase new momentum, new ingredients, new impulses enter life that can only emerge in the particular realms where they are given. We can observe how the threads of life which we spin here between birth and death are interwoven with the threads spun in the life between death and rebirth. Everything is meaningfully interwoven in this totality of human life. The threads spun between one human individual and another here in earthly life—what we do to someone by giving him pleasure, by inflicting an injury on him, by enriching his thoughts or impoverishing them, by teaching him something or other—prepares our karmic destiny in a subsequent life on earth.

But we must distinguish this from what we need in order to prepare ourselves for supersensible existence immediately after death. Here on earth we are led into certain social communities, from which we must be led forth once more. We are led forth from them by virtue of the fact that something surfaces from our merely economic activities, from mere economics, that guides us through the portal of death into the world of spirit so that we do not remain in the social community we found our into here, but can depart from it and be received into another in our next life. In this very meaningful way the karmic web connecting us here is interwoven with the warp of our more general life in the cosmos.

Lecture 3:

11 February 1919, Zurich

A week ago I was saying that we here, as Anthroposophists, are able to grasp in a much deeper sense all that is necessary for reaching a judgment on the burning questions of the present day. We can do much more in this way than is possible in wider circles. In a sense we can look on ourselves as a kind of leaven—if I may use the biblical word—so that everyone in his own situation may try to contribute something, out of a strong warmth of impulse, towards the needs of the time.

If we recall what has been said as the keynote of the public lectures, we shall appreciate that the immediate essential is to strive towards a certain differentiation—a certain “membering”—of the social organism. I say always “strive towards”—there is no question of wanting to effect a revolutionary change overnight. We must strive towards a differentiation of a great deal which under modern influences has become centralised. What we must work for—instead of the so-called unitary State—is that a certain realm of society, embracing all that has to do with *spiritual life*, should unfold freely and independently alongside the other realms. This realm will include the upbringing of children, education, art, literature, and also (as I have remarked already and shall mention in the public lecture tomorrow) everything concerned with the administration of civil and criminal law.

As a second "limb" of the social organism we should recognise, but in a restricted sense, that which has been known as the "State." It is precisely on the shoulders of this "State" that men nowadays want to pile as much as possible—State schools, State child-care, and so on. That has been the great tendency of the last four hundred years. And to-day, under the influence of social ideas and socialistic thinking, people want to weld economic life into a single whole with political life. These two realms must be separated once more. The *political* State must stand on its own independent ground, as the second sphere of society; and the same relative independence must distinguish the realm of domestic economy, where commodities circulate—that is, economic life.

Now, my dear friends, we will look at this question from a point of view not easily reached by anyone outside our movement. And we will carry the matter to a certain culmination, so that out of this culmination a deeper understanding of the human situation to-day may spring forth.

Let us look first at what is called, in an earthly sense, spiritual life. Spiritual life in this earthly sense embraces everything which in one way or another lifts us out of our solitary egoism and draws us into community with other human beings. Let us take, as the most important manifestation of earthly spiritual life for most people still, that aspect of it which should bring us into relation with super-earthly spiritual life—I mean the practice of religion, as this takes its course in the various congregations.

In the human soul are needs which cause people to seek each other out; people are united by experiencing similar needs. The upbringing of a child means that one soul is caring for another.

Anyone who reads a book is drawn out of the egoistic circle of his individual life, for it is not he alone who absorbs the author's thoughts; even when he is only half-way through a book he is already sharing these thoughts with a great company of other readers. And so, through this kinship of soul-experience, a certain human community is formed. This is an important characteristic of spiritual life: it has its springs in freedom, in the individual initiative of the single human being, and yet it draws men together, and forms communities out of what they have in common.

Here, for anyone who seeks deeper understanding, is a fact to be kept in mind—a fact which brings every kind of human fellowship into relation with the central event of earth-evolution—the Mystery of Golgotha. For since the Mystery of Golgotha everything concerned with human fellowship belongs in a sense to the Christ Impulse. That is the essential thing—the Christ Impulse belongs not to single men but to the fellowship of men. In truth, according to the mind of Christ Himself, it is a great mistake to suppose that the solitary individual can establish a direct relation with Christ. The essential thing is that Christ lived and died, and rose from the dead, for humanity as a whole. Since the Mystery of Golgotha, therefore, the Christ Event is immediately relevant (we shall return to this point) wherever human fellowship unfolds. And accordingly, for anyone who really understands the world, the earthly spiritual life which springs from the most individual source, from personal circumstances and gifts, leads to the Christ Event.

Let us now first consider this earthly spiritual life—religion, education, art and so forth—on its own account. We gain through it a certain connection with other human beings. Here we must distinguish between the connections we form through our individual destiny and karma, and those which in this narrow sense are not dependent on our karma. Some of the connections we establish in the course of life are the direct outcome of relationships formed in earlier lives; some will bear karmic fruit in future lives. Human beings form connections with one another in manifold ways. The connections formed directly through our karma must be distinguished from the wider connections that arise when we meet people through joining a society, or a religious body or a fellowship of belief, and also from those that come through reading the same book or through common enjoyment of a work of art, and so on. The people we encounter in these ways on earth are not always related to us

karmically from an earlier life. Certainly, there are communities which point to a common destiny in earlier lives; but with the wider groupings of which I have just spoken it is generally not so. This brings us to a further point.

Towards the end of our time in the super-sensible world, between death and a new birth, when we reach the period just before our next incarnation, we enter into relations—as far as we are ripe for them—with Angels, Archangels and Archai, and with the higher Hierarchies as well. But also we come near to other human souls, due to be incarnated later than ourselves—souls which have to wait longer, one may say, for their incarnations. During this period we have a whole range of super-sensible experiences to go through, according to our individual stage of development, before we are plunged again into earthly life. And the forces we thus receive place us on earth in the situation which will enable us to find our way into those experiences of earthly spiritual life of which I have just spoken.

The essential point to grasp is that our spiritual life on earth—all that we experience through religion, or through upbringing and education, through artistic impressions and so on—is not determined solely by earthly circumstances. Our earthly spiritual life takes its character from the experiences we have had in super-sensible realms before birth. Just as an image in a mirror indicates what is being reflected, so does earthly spiritual life point to what the human being has experienced before entering his physical body.

Nothing on earth stands towards the super-sensible world in so intimate, real and living a relationship as this earthly spiritual life—which indeed shows aberrations, many aberrations ... but these very aberrations have a relation full of meaning to all that we experience—certainly, in a quite different way—in the super-sensible. This connection with pre-earthly life places spiritual life on earth in a quite special situation. Nothing else in earthly life is so closely bound up with our life before birth!

This is a fact to which the spiritual investigator is bound to draw particular attention. He distinguishes spiritual life from man's other earthly activities, because super-sensible observation shows him that spiritual life on earth has its roots and impulse in the life before birth. So for the spiritual investigator this earthly spiritual life marks itself off from other human experiences. It is different with what can be called, in a strict sense, political life, the life of civic rights, which brings administrative order into human affairs. You see, however hard one may try to discover, with the most exact methods of spiritual science, the deeper connections of political life ... one can find no relation between this political life and the super-sensible. Political life is entirely of the earth! We must clearly understand what this signifies.

For example, what shall we take as a preeminently earthly type of legal relationship? The relation to property, to ownership. If I own a plot of land, then it is solely by political means that I am given an exclusive right and tenure of the land. It is this which enables me to exclude all others from using the land, building on it, etc. So it is with everything that has to do with public law. The sum total of public law, together with the means taken to protect a society from external interference—all that makes up political life in the strict sense.

This is the genuine earth-life—the life connected solely with impulses which take their course between birth and death. However much the State may imagine itself to be God-given ... the truth to which all religious creeds, in their deeper meaning, bear witness is as follows. The first truth was conveyed by Christ Jesus when in the old phraseology he said: "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Faced with the pretensions of the Roman Empire, He wished above all to separate everything to do with political life from all that bears the imprint of the super-sensible. But when the purely earthly State seeks to make itself the bearer of

a super-earthly impulse—when, for example, the State seeks to assume responsibility for religious life, or for education (this last responsibility, unfortunately, is taken for granted in our day)—then we have the situation characterized by the deeper teachings of religion, when they said: Wherever an attempt is made to mix the spiritual-super-sensible with the earthly-political, there rules the usurping Prince of this world.

What is the meaning of the "usurping Prince of this world?" You know, perhaps, my dear friends, that people have thought a great deal about this, without getting anywhere. Only through spiritual science can one reach the meaning. The usurping Prince of this world rules whenever an authority which should be concerned only with the ordering of earthly affairs arrogates to itself the spiritual—and seeks also, as we shall see later, to assimilate economic life. The rightful Prince of this world is he for whom the political realm includes only those things which belong wholly to the life between birth and death.

So we have come to an understanding of the second "limb" of the social organism, in the sense of spiritual science. It is the realm orientated towards those impulses which run their course between birth and death.

Now we come to the third, the economic realm. Just think, my dear friends, how economic life draws us into a particular relation with the world. You will readily understand what this relation is if you compel yourselves to imagine that it were possible for us to be entirely absorbed in economic life. If that could happen, what should we be like? We should be thinking animals, nothing else. We are not thinking animals for the reason that besides economic life we have a life of rights—a political life—and a knowledge of the spirit, an earthly spiritual life. Through economic life we are thus plunged, more or less, into the midst of human relationships. And because of this interests are kindled—precisely in this field of human relations we are able to develop interests which in the true sense of the word are fraternal. In no other realm than that of economic life are fraternal relationships so easily and obviously developed among human beings.

In the spiritual life ... what is the ruling impulse in earthly spiritual life? Fundamentally, it is personal interest—an interest arising out of the soul-nature, certainly, but none the less egoistic. Of religion, people demand that it shall make them holy. Of education, that it shall develop their talents. Of any kind of artistic representation, that it shall bring pleasure into their lives, and perhaps also stimulate their inner energies. As a general rule, it is egoism, whether of a grosser or more refined sort, which leads a person—quite understandably—to seek in spiritual life whatever satisfies *himself*.

In the political life of rights, on the other hand, we have to do with something which makes us all equal before the law. We are concerned with the relation of man to man. We have to ask, what our right should be. No question of rights exists among animals. In this respect, also, we are raised above the animals, even in our earthly affairs. But if we are connected with a religious community, or with a group of teachers, then—just as much as in civic relationships—we come up against personal claims, personal wishes. In the economic sphere, it is through the overcoming of self that something valuable, not derived from personal desires, comes to expression—brotherhood, responsibility for others, a way of living so that the other man gains experience through us.

In the spiritual life we receive according to our desires. In the sphere of rights we make a claim to something we need in order to make sure of a satisfactory human life as an equal among equals. And in the economic sphere is born that which unites men in terms of feeling: that is, brotherhood. The more this brotherhood is cultivated, the more fruitful economic life becomes. And the impulse towards brotherhood arises when we establish a certain connection between our property and

another's, between our need and another's, between something we have and something another has, and so on.

This fraternity, this brotherly relation between men which must radiate through economic life if health is to prevail there, may be thought of as a kind of emanation rising from the economic sphere—and in such a way that if we absorb it into ourselves we are able to take it with us through the gate of death and carry it into the super-sensible life after death.

On earth, economic life looks like the lowest of the three social spheres, yet precisely from this sphere arises an impulse which works on into super-earthly realms after death. That is how the third member of the social organism presents itself in the light of spiritual science. Its character is such that in a certain sense it drives us into regions below the human level; yet in fact this is a blessing, since from the fraternity of economic life we carry through the gate of death something which remains with us when we enter the super-sensible world. Just as earthly spiritual life points backward, like a mirrored image, to super-sensible spiritual life before birth, so does economic life, with all that arises from its influence on men—social interests, feeling for human fellowship, brotherhood—so does economic life point forward to super-sensible life after death.

Thus we have distinguished the three social spheres, in the light of spiritual science: spiritual life, pointing back to super-sensible life before birth; political life, bound up with the impulses which take their course between birth and death; and economic life pointing forward to the experiences we shall encounter when we have passed through the gate of death.

Now, just as it is true that the being of man belongs not only to earthly but to super-earthly realms—that he bears in himself the fruits of his pre-natal life in the super-sensible, and develops in himself the seeds (if I may use this image) of the experiences that will be his in the life after death—just as it is true that in this connection human life is threefold, unfolding on earth between these two reflections of the super-earthly, so in truth must the social organism be itself “three-membered,” if it is to serve as foundation for human soul-life as a whole.

For those, accordingly, who through spiritual science understand man's place in the cosmos, there are much deeper reasons for recognizing that the social organism must have a threefold structure, and that if everything is centralized, if everything is piled on to a chaotically jumbled social life, then man is bound to degenerate ... as indeed in modern life he has, in some respects, which has led on to the frightful catastrophe of the last four years.

You see: to grasp human life in such a way as to realize that every human fellowship is inwardly related to the whole of humanity and to the wider world—this is what ought more and more to come home to men from the deepening of spiritual-scientific knowledge. This is also the true Christ-Knowledge for our time and the immediate future. That is what we shall learn if we are willing, today, to listen to the Christ. He Himself said—I have often quoted it: “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.” This means: Christ did not speak only during His time on earth; His utterance continues, and we must continue to listen for it. We should not wish merely to read the Gospels (though certainly they ought to be read over and over again); we should listen to the living revelation that springs from His continued presence among us. In this epoch He declares to us: “Make new your ways of thinking” (as His forerunner, John the Baptist, said: “Change your thinking”), “so that they may reveal to you man's threefold nature which demands also that your social environment on earth shall have a threefold membering.”

Thoughts in preparation for the Festival for the Dead on Saturday, November 2,
4pm in the Garden Room, Groh Farm

Consciousness after death:

It is even difficult to coin words for those quite different conditions (after death), compared with the conditions we experience in our physical bodies. One thinks simply that the human being after he has gone through the gate of death has only again to get a consciousness for himself. It is not really that way. The human being experiences no lack of consciousness when he passes the gate of death.

On the contrary, his soul experiences a superabundance of consciousness. He lives and weaves completely in consciousness, and as well as the strong sunlight dazes the eyes, he is dazed at first by consciousness, he has too much consciousness. First, this consciousness must be dampened, so that he can orientate himself in the life, into which he has entered after death.

This lasts for a longer time; more and more moments happen in which the consciousness makes such an orientation possible. The soul becomes conscious for a more or less short time and then it again enters into a condition similar to sleep as you may call it. Then such moments become gradually longer and longer, the soul comes more and more in such conditions, until it is able to orient itself entirely in the spiritual world.

Source: Rudolf Steiner - GA 159 - The Mystery of Death - 2. The Path of the Human Being through the Gate of Death - A Transformation of Life - 19 February 1915, Zurich

From: Lecture 5, Heidenheim, June 12, 1919, GA 193 Problems of Society, An Esoteric View (formerly called The Inner Aspect of the Social Question)

.....we have come to a very, very important point in human evolution. The man of to-day cannot form sensible decisions at all if he does not wake up with them in the morning. This is true, however strange it may sound, and men will recognize it more and more from external acts. It is not necessary that we should be conscious of these decisions; in our sub-consciousness we live through in the night what we can experience on the following day. Man has not yet got so far as to be able to survey it prophetically, but that is not the point. If you harbor a thought at 3:30 or 6 o'clock, it may be a thought that you have already had in the night and now arises in you again. If, however, a thought arises that you have not already formed in the night but which is produced from out of the events of the day, it cannot be a reasonable thought in the case of the man of to-day. The man of to-day has to draw his most important impulses from the spiritual world. These do not come from the physical world at all. To-day we cannot but be "unreasonable" if we do not bring our decisions with us, if we do not appeal to this life in the spiritual world. When our "astral body" is free at night, *i.e.*, outside the physical and "etheric" bodies and together with the spiritual world, that which is most essential takes place; it is prepared for the Reason of the day (and more so than in the case of our ancestors). The moment of waking should be sacred for the modern man. He should feel: I come from the spiritual world and enter the physical; all that is good, all that makes me capable of being a reasonable man, I have experienced between falling asleep and waking up, through intercourse with the spiritual world, **through intercourse with the dead I have known in life and who have died before me—in short, through intercourse with those who are no longer in a physical body.** I experience it when I am with them in the purely spiritual world. From this experience I ought to draw the fundamental mood of sacred regard for the moment of waking; this fundamental feeling will then make it possible for me throughout the day to say in one case "Here I am helped by a spiritual impulse" and in another case "Here I receive no help; this must not be decided before tomorrow."

Calendar of Events

Saturday
September 21
7:30pm in the.
Garden Room.

Beatrice Birch will speak about the work of *Inner Fire*, a therapeutic residential community in southern Vermont, that provides support and guidance through art therapy, work experiences and healthy nutrition to those struggling with soul and mental health issues, and helping those who wish to leave behind the psychotropic meds that they have, for the most part, been prescribed. Everyone welcome.

An excellent article about Inner Fire here:

<https://www.madinamerica.com/2024/09/modern-psychiatry-human-soul/>

Saturday
November 2
4pm in the
Garden Room.

A Festival for the Dead

We will share music, poetry, verses and prose from Rudolf Steiner, all aiming to enhance our awareness of and connection with those who have crossed the Threshold of Death.

All those over the age of 14 are welcome.

If you have a poem or other contribution you would like to share, please contact Alice Groh at

groh.alice@gmail.com



The Dream of St. Joseph by
Stefano Maria Legnani
(1660-1715)