

Now the possibility exists for a comparatively quick ripening of insight into karmic connections if, for a considerable time, we endeavour patiently, and with inner activity, to picture in our consciousness, more and more clearly, an experience which would otherwise simply take its course externally, without being properly grasped, so that it fades away in the course of life. After all, this fading away is what really happens with the events of life. For what does a man do with events and experiences, as they approach him in the course of the day? He experiences them, but in reality only half observes them. You can realise how experiences are only half observed if you sit down one day in the afternoon or in the evening—and I advise you to do it—and ask yourself: ‘What did I actually experience this morning at half-past nine?’ And now try to call up such an experience in all details before your soul, recall it as if it were actually there, say at half-past seven in the evening—as if you were creating it spiritually before you. You will see how much you will find lacking, how much you failed to observe, and how difficult it is. If you take a pen or pencil to write it all down, you will soon begin to bite at the pen or the pencil, because you cannot hit upon the details—and, in time, you want to bite them out of the pencil!

Yes, but that is just the point, to take upon oneself the task of placing before the mind, in all precision, an experience one has had,—not at the moment when it is actually there, but afterwards. It must be placed before the soul as if one were going to paint it spiritually. If the experience were one in which somebody spoke, this must be made quite objectively real: the ring of the voice, the way in which the words were used, clumsily or cleverly—the picture must be made with strength and vigour. In short, we try to make a picture of what we have experienced. If we make a picture of such an experience of the day, then in the following night, the astral body, when it is outside the physical body and the etheric body, occupies itself with this picture. The astral body itself is, in reality, the bearer of the picture, and gives shape to it outside the body. The astral body takes the picture with it when it goes out on the first night. It shapes it there, outside the physical and etheric bodies.

That is the first stage (we will take these stages quite exactly): the sleeping astral body, when outside the physical and etheric bodies, shapes the picture of the experience. Where does it do this? In the external ether. It is now in the external etheric world; it does this in the external ether.

Now picture to yourself the human being: his physical and etheric bodies lie in bed, and the astral body is outside. We will leave aside the ego. There outside is the astral body, reshaping this picture that has been made. But the astral body does this in the external ether. In consequence of this the following happens—think of it: the astral body is there outside, shaping this picture. All this happens in the external ether which encrusts, as it were, with its own substance that which is formed as a picture within the astral body. So the external ether makes the etheric form (dotted (dark) outline) into a picture which is clearly and precisely visualised by the eye of spirit.



In the morning you return into the physical and etheric bodies and bear into them what has been made substantial by the external ether. That is to say: the sleeping astral body shapes the picture of the experience outside the physical and etheric bodies. The external ether then impregnates the picture with its own substance. You can imagine that the picture becomes stronger thereby, and that now, when the astral body returns in the morning with this stronger substantiality, it can make an impression upon the etheric body in the human being. With forces that are derived from the external ether, the astral body now stamps an impression into the etheric body.

The second stage is therefore: The picture is impressed into the etheric body by the astral body.

There we have the events of the first day and the first night. Now we come to the second day. On the second day, while you are busying yourself with all the little things of life in full waking consciousness, there, underneath the consciousness, in the unconscious, the picture is descending into the etheric body. And in the next night, when the etheric body is undisturbed, when the astral body has gone out again, the etheric body elaborates this picture.

Thus in the second night the picture is elaborated by the man's own etheric body. There we have the second stage:—The picture is impressed into the etheric body by the astral body; and in the next night the etheric body elaborates the picture. Thus we have: the second day and the second night.

Now if you do this, if you actually do not give up occupying yourself with the picture you formed on the preceding day—and you can continue to occupy yourself with it, for a reason which I shall immediately mention—if you do not disdain to do this, then you will find that you are living on further with the picture. What does this mean—to continue occupying yourself with it? If you really take pains to shape such a picture, vigorously, elaborating it plastically in characteristic, strong lines on the first day after you had the experience, then you have really exerted yourself spiritually. Such things cost spiritual exertion. I don't mean what I am going to say as a hint—present company is, of course, always excepted in these matters!—but after all, it must be said that the majority of men simply do not know what spiritual exertion is.

Spiritual exertion, true spiritual exertion, comes about only by means of activity of soul. When you allow the world to work upon you, and let thoughts run their course without taking them in hand, then there is no spiritual exertion. We should not imagine, when something tires us, that we have exerted ourselves spiritually. Getting tired does not imply that there has been spiritual exertion. We can get tired, for instance, from reading. But if we have not ourselves been productive in some way during the reading, if we merely let the thoughts contained in the book act on us, then we are *not* exerting ourselves. On the contrary, a person who has really exerted himself spiritually, who has exerted himself out of the inner activity of his soul, may then take up a book, a very interesting one, and just “sleep off” his spiritual exertion in the best possible way, in the reading of it. Naturally, we can fall asleep over a book if we are tired. This getting tired is no sign at all of spiritual exertion.

A sign of spiritual exertion, however, is this: that one feels—the brain is used up. It is just as we may feel that a demand has been made on the muscle of the arm when lifting things. Ordinary thought makes no such strong claims upon the brain. The process continues, and you will even notice that when you try it for the first time, the second, the third, the tenth, you get a slight headache. It is not that you get tired or fall asleep; on the contrary, you cannot fall asleep; you get a slight headache from it. Only you must not regard this headache as something baleful; on the contrary, you must take it as actual proof of the fact that you have exerted your head.

Well, the process goes on ... it stays with you until you go to sleep. If you have really done this on the preceding day, then you will awake in the morning with the feeling: “There actually *is* something in me! I don't quite know what it is, but there is something in me, and it wants something from me. Yes, after all it is not a matter of indifference that I made this picture for myself yesterday. It really means something. This picture has changed. Today it is giving me quite different feelings from those I had previously. The picture is making me have quite definite feelings.”

All this stays with you through the next day as the remaining inner experience of the picture which you made for yourself. And what you feel and cannot get rid of through the whole of the day—this is a witness to the fact that the picture is now descending into the etheric body, as I have described to you, and that the etheric body is receiving it.

Now you will probably experience on waking after the next night—when you slip into your body after these two days—that you find this picture slightly changed, slightly transformed. You find it again ... precisely on waking the third day you find it again within you. It appears to you like a very real dream. But it has undergone a transformation. It will clothe itself in manifold pictures until it is other than it was. It will assume an appearance as if spiritual beings were now bringing you this experience. And you actually receive the impression: Yes, this experience which I had and which I subsequently formed into a picture, has actually been brought to me. If the experience happened to be with another human being, then we have the feeling after this has all happened, that actually we did not only experience it through that human being, but that it was really brought to us. Other forces, spiritual forces, have been at play. It was they who brought it to us.

The next day comes. This next day the picture is carried down from the etheric body into the physical body. The etheric body impresses this picture into the physical body, into the nerve-processes, into the blood-processes. On the third day the picture is impressed into the physical body. So the third stage is: The picture is stamped into the physical body by the etheric body.

And now comes the next night. You have been attending throughout the day to the ordinary little trifles of life, and underneath it all this important process is going on: the picture is being carried down into the physical body. All this goes on in the subconscious. When the following night comes, the picture is elaborated in the physical body. It is spiritualised in the physical body. First of all, throughout the day, the picture is brought down into the processes of the blood and nerves, but in the night it is spiritualised. Those who have vision see how this picture is now elaborated by the physical body, but it appears spiritually as an altogether changed picture. We can say: the physical body elaborates the picture during the next night.

1st Day and 1st Night:

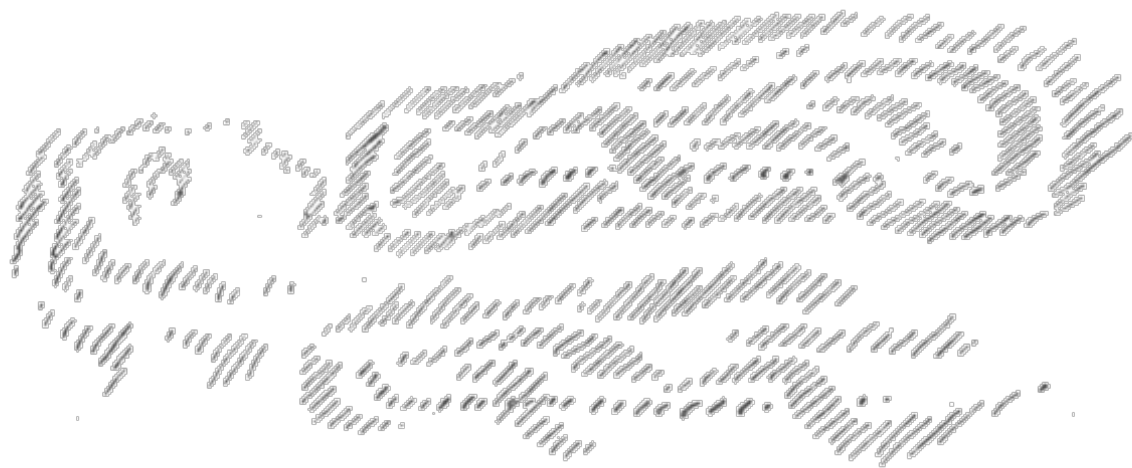
When outside the physical and etheric bodies, the astral body shapes the picture of the experience. The outer ether impregnates the picture with its own substance.

2nd Day and 2nd Night:

The picture is stamped by the astral body into the etheric body. And the etheric body elaborates the picture during the next day.

3rd Day and 3rd Night:

The picture is stamped by the etheric body into the physical body. And the physical body elaborates the picture during the next night.



Now this is something of which you must make an absolutely correct mental picture. The physical body actually works up this picture spiritually. It spiritualises the picture. So that when all this has really been gone through, it does happen—when the human being is asleep—that his physical body works up the whole picture, but not in such a way that it remains within the physical body. Out of the physical body there arises a transformation, a greatly magnified transformation of the picture. And when you get up in the morning, this picture stands there, and in truth you hover in it; it is like a kind of cloud in which you yourself are. With this picture you get up in the morning.

So this is the third day and the third night. With this picture, which is entirely transformed, you get out of bed on the fourth day. You rise from sleep, enveloped by this cloud. And if you have actually shaped the picture with the necessary strength on the first day, and if you have paid attention to what your feeling conveyed to you on the second day, you will notice now that your will is contained in the picture as it now is. The will is contained in it! But this will is unable to express itself; it is as though fettered. Put into somewhat radical terms, it is actually as if one had planned after the manner of an incredibly daring sprinter, who might resolve to make a display of a bravado race: I will run, now I am running to Ober-Dornach, I make a picture of it already, I've got it within me. It is my will ... But in the very moment when I want to start, when the will is strongest, somebody fetters me, so that I stand there quite rigidly. The whole will has unfolded, but I cannot carry out the will. Such, approximately, is the process.

When this experience of feeling yourself in a pillory develops—for it is a feeling of being in a pillory after the third night—when you again awake in it, feeling in a pillory as it were, with the will fettered through and through, then, if you can pay attention to it, you will find that the will begins to transform itself. This will becomes *sight*. In itself it can do nothing, but it leads to our seeing something. It becomes an eye of the soul. And the picture, with which one rose from sleep, becomes objective. What it shows is the event of the previous earth-life, or of some previous earth-life, which had been the cause of the experience that we shaped into a picture on the first day. By means of this transformation

through feeling and through will, one gets the picture of the causal event of a preceding incarnation.

When we describe these things, they appear somewhat overpowering. This is not to be wondered at, for they are utterly unfamiliar to the human being of the present time. They were not so unknown to the men of earlier culture-epochs. Only, according to the opinion of modern men who are clever, those other men—in their whole way of living—were stupid! Nevertheless, those 'stupid' men of the earlier culture-epochs really had these experiences, only modern man darkens everything by his intellect, which makes him clever, but not exactly wise.

As I said, the thing seems somewhat tumultuous, when one relates it. But after all, one is obliged to use such words; for since the things are utterly unknown to-day, they would not appear so striking if they were worded more mildly. They must appear striking. But the whole experience, from beginning to end, throughout the three days, as I have described it to you, must take its course in inner intimacy, in rest and peace of mind. For so-called occult experiences—and these are such—do not take their course in such a way that they can be bragged about. When one begins to brag about them, they immediately stop. They must take their course in inner repose and quietude. And it is best when, for the time being, nobody at all notices anything of the consecutive experiences except the person who is having them.

Now you must not think that the thing succeeds immediately, from the outset. One always finds, of course, that people are pleased when such things are related. This is quite comprehensible ... and it is good. How much there is that one can learn to know! And then, with a tremendous diligence people start on it. They begin ... and it doesn't succeed. Then they become disheartened. Then, perhaps, they try it again, several times. Again it does not succeed. But, in effect, if one has tried it about 49 times, or, let us say, somebody else has tried it about 69 times, then the 50th or the 70th time it does succeed. For what really matters in all these things is the acquisition of a kind of habit of soul concerning them. To begin with, one must find one's way into these things, one must acquire habits of the soul. This is something that certainly ought to be carefully observed by the Anthroposophical Society which, since the Christmas Foundation, is intended to be a complete expression of the Anthroposophical Movement.

One does not reach inner continuity in following up all that germinates and ripens in the soul, if there is a desire to hurry in this way, from the new to the new; the essential point is that things must mature within the soul. We must accustom ourselves to inner, active work of the soul, work in the spirit. This is what helps us to achieve such things as I have explained to you to-day; this alone will help us to have, after the third day, the inner attitude of soul in connection with some experience we may wish to see through in the light of karma.

This must always be the mode of procedure if we are to learn to know the spiritual. To begin with, we must say to ourselves: the first moment when we approach the spiritual in

thought in some way, was the first beginning; it is quite impossible to have any kind of result immediately; we must be able to wait. Suppose I have an experience to-day that is karmically caused in a preceding incarnation. I will make a diagrammatic sketch. Here I am, here is my experience, the experience of to-day (right). This is caused by the quite differently-constituted personality in the same ego in a previous earth-life (left). There it is. It has long ceased to belong to my personality, but it is stamped into the etheric world, or into the astral world, which lies behind the etheric world. Now I have to go back, to retrace the way backwards.



I told you that at first the thing appears as if some being were really bearing the experience towards me. This is so, on the second day. But after the third day it appears as if those who have brought it to me, those spiritual beings, withdraw, and I become aware of it as something of my own, which I myself, in a previous incarnation, laid down as cause. Because this is no longer within the present, because this is something I must behold in the past earth-life, I seem to be fettered. This state of being fettered ceases only when I have perceived the thing, when I have a picture of what was in the previous incarnation, and when I then look back to the event which I have not lost sight of through the three days. Then I become free, as I return, for now I can move about freely with the effect. As long as I am only within the cause, I cannot move about with the cause. Thus I go back into a previous incarnation, there become fettered as it were by the cause, and only when I now enter right into this present earth-life, is the thing resolved.

Now let us take an example: suppose somebody experiences at a certain time on a certain day that a friend says something to him that is not altogether pleasant—perhaps he had not expected it. This friend says to him something not altogether pleasant. He now ponders what he experiences in listening to what his friend says. He makes a vivid picture of what he has experienced, how he got a slight shock, and how he got vexed, perhaps he was also hurt, or the like. This is an inner working, and as such it must be brought into the picture. Now he lets the three days elapse. The second day he goes about and says to himself: 'This picture which I made yesterday has had a strange effect upon me. The whole day long I have had within me something like an acid, as it were, something that comes from the picture and makes me feel inwardly out of sorts ...' At the end of the whole process, after the third day, he says to himself: 'I get up in the morning and now I have the definite feeling that the picture is fettering me.' Then this event of the previous incarnation is made known to me. I see it before me. Then I pass over to the experience which is still quite fresh, which is still quite present. The fettering ceases, and I say to myself: 'So this is how it was in the previous earth-life! This is what caused it; now there is the effect. With this effect I can live again ... now the thing is present again.'

This must be practised over and over again, for generally the thread is broken on the very first day, when we make the first effort. And then nothing comes.

It is particularly favourable to let things run parallel, so that we do not stop at one event, but bring a number of events of the day into picture-form in this way. You will say: 'Then I must live through the next day with the greatest variety of feelings.' But this is quite possible. It is not at all harmful. Only try it; the things go quite well together. 'And must I then be fettered so and so often after the third day?' This does not matter either. Nothing of this matters. The things will adjust themselves in time. What belongs, from an earlier incarnation, to a later one, will find its way to it. But it will not succeed at once; it will not succeed at the first attempt; the thread breaks. We must have patience to try the thing over and over again. Then we feel something growing stronger within the soul. Then we feel that something awakens in the soul, and we say to ourselves: 'Until now you were filled with blood. You have felt within you the pulsation of the blood and the breath. Now there is something within you besides the blood. You are filled with something.'

You can even have the feeling that you are filled with something of which you can say quite definitely that it is like a metal that has become aeriform. You actually feel something like metal, you feel it in you. It cannot be described differently; it really is so. You feel yourself permeated with metal, in your whole body. Just as one can say of certain waters, that they 'taste metallic', the whole body seems to 'taste' as if it were inwardly permeated by some delicate substance, which, in reality, is something spiritual.

You feel this when you come upon something which was, of course, always in you, but to which you only now begin to pay attention. Then, when you begin to feel this, you again take courage. For if the thread is always breaking and everything is as it was before—if you want to get hold of a karmic connection, but the thread is always breaking—you may easily lose courage. But when you detect within yourself this sense of being inwardly filled, then you get courage again. And you say to yourself: it will come right in time.

But, my dear friends, these things must be experienced in all quietude and calmness. Those who cannot experience them quietly but get excited and emotional, spread an inner mist over what really ought to happen, and nothing comes of it.