**The Mission of Folk-Souls, GA#121**

**Part of Lecture 4**

…Therefore if we want to understand man, such as he appears before our eyes to-day, we must look at a wonderful tissue, woven out of many and various forms. It must be quite clear to us, that only when we, in a sense, draw this tissue apart and observe the activity of the several Beings, do we learn to understand how through the co-operation of these Beings man has come into being. We are then able to say, that the chief Being who comes into consideration for the present-day man, is the one who has given him the possibility of saying ‘ I ’ to himself, of gradually coming to the consciousness of the ‘ I ’, and we know that this possibility was first given by the Spirits of Form, those Beings whom we call Powers, Exusiai. If we listen to the activity of these particular Beings which they direct to man and ask ourselves what would happen to him if these Beings alone — and of these only those who are in normal evolution, — were chiefly to be active in him, we should find that these are the donors of the ‘ I ’-organization. If we consider them according to their own nature, we find that their chief interest lies in bringing to man his ‘ I ’. But now what these Beings have really to accomplish in man, only actually comes about in the life of present-day man at a certain age; it can only appear at a certain age.

If you remember what has been said about the education of the child from the standpoint of spiritual science, you will admit that man, in the period between his physical birth and the changing of the teeth, that is up to his seventh year, principally develops his physical body. These Spirits of Form have no particular interest in the development of this physical body, for this is, on the whole, a repetition of what happened to man on the old Saturn, and which has already often been repeated, and which after the last physical birth and up to the seventh year, has for the present been repeated up to last time in a particular way. Then comes the time from the seventh to the fourteenth year, *i.e.*, up to puberty. That too is a stage in which the Spirits of Form take no particular interest; for that is a repetition of the old Sun-period, and the Spirits of Form wished to set to work with their chief activity, that of bestowing the ‘ I ’, only during the condition of the Earth-life. We then come to the third age, which runs its course between the fifteenth and twenty-first or twenty-second year. During this time the astral body, which normally belongs to the Moon-evolution, evolves in man as a repetition. There too, those Spirits of Form who are evolving normally still have no interest in man. So that we must say: the three ages of man which precede the actual birth of his ‘ I ’, which only comes in about his twentieth year, have no direct interest for the Spirits of Form. They only intervene, out of their own nature, one might say, somewhere about the twentieth year of life: so that, if you come to think of it, you will no longer find it very strange, that so far as the actual intentions of the Spirits of Form are concerned, man need only come into existence in the condition in which he is to be found somewhere about his twentieth year. All that is developed in man before that time, is in reality to those Spirits of Form a kind of embryonic state, a sort of germinal condition, and if I may be allowed to speak somewhat metaphorically I might say, that these Spirits of Form who have developed themselves normally would far prefer everything to go on with a certain regularity, and that no one should till then have dabbled in their handiwork. If no one interfered with these Spirits of Form until the twentieth year, then, in the first seven years of his life man would have had the consciousness belonging to the physical body; that as a matter of fact is a very dim state of consciousness such as is possessed by the mineral world. In the second stage, in the time between his seventh and his fourteenth year, he would have a sleep consciousness. From his fourteenth to his twentieth year, he would be very active inwardly, but he would live in a sort of dream-consciousness. Only after this consciousness as a Moon-being, at about his one-and-twentieth year, would man really wake up. Then only would he arrive at the ‘ I ’-consciousness. If he followed a normal development he would only then come out of himself and survey the outer world in that representation of it which is the one familiar to us.

So you see that in reality, if we only take into consideration the activity of the Spirits of Form, man attains his present-day consciousness much too soon, for you know that in the man of to-day, this consciousness awakes to a certain degree soon after physical birth. It would not awake in the form in which it sees the physical external world clearly and distinctly, if other Spirits who in reality are Spirits of Motion had not remained behind and renounced the development of certain capacities which they could have acquired up to the time of the Earth-evolution if they had not stood still, so that now, during the Earth-evolution, they might be able to intervene in a particular way in the development of man. Because they went through their evolution in a different way, they are in a position to bring to man earlier that which he would otherwise only have acquired in his twentieth year or thereabouts. These, therefore, are spiritual Beings who renounced the possibility of carrying on their evolution normally up to the Earth-evolution, spiritual Beings who might have been Spirits of Motion during the Earth evolution, but who remained at the stage of the Spirits of Form and are now active as Spirits of Form in the Earth-evolution. Thus they are able, during the Earth-evolution, to bestow upon man that which he is not as yet in the least ripe for, having still too much to retrieve from an earlier epoch. They can bestow that which in the normal form of evolution would have only been bestowed at about his twentieth year.

Thus man comes into existence and receives capacities from the abnormal Spirits of Form, which he would otherwise only receive about his twentieth year. All this has very significant consequences. Just imagine for a moment that this had not occurred. If these Spirits with an abnormal development were not to interfere, then man would only come into consideration, as far as the physical world is concerned, in the condition which is his at about his twentieth year, that is to say, he would have to be born in this condition as a physical being and would have to go through quite different germinal conditions. In fact, through these abnormal Spirits of Form, the evolution of man is transposed into the physical world already from birth on, up to the twentieth year, *i.e.*, by about the first third of our earth life. We must therefore say: The first third of our earth-life is not directed by the spiritual Beings who rule the conditions of the earth, but by other abnormal spiritual Beings; and because these take part in evolution, we therefore do not possess the form we should have if we were born in the condition we are in about our twentieth year. Man must pay for this by passing the first third of his life — the time up to his twentieth year — under the great influence of these abnormal Beings. During the whole period of growth man is in reality under the influence of these abnormal Beings; he has to pay for this when the middle third of his life has passed away, — which on the whole belongs only to the normal Spirits of Form, — in that a descending course, a going-back begins, and his etheric and astral organizations crumble away. So that life is divided into three parts or portions, an ascending third, a middle third and a descending third. Man really only becomes man during his earth life in the middle part, and in the last third he has to give back that which he received during the first, or ascending third; in other words he must repay the corresponding installment. If man had indeed been exclusively given up to the influences of the normal Spirits of Form, all that happens to-day up to his twentieth year would have quite a different appearance, quite a different form. Everything would have happened quite differently, so that all that is connected with the present development of man in the first of his three epochs of life is, on the whole, a premature existence, one that forestalls much that belongs to the later epochs of life. Through this man has become a more material being up to the second epoch of his life than he would otherwise have been. He would otherwise up to that period of his life have gone through purely spiritual conditions, and would have descended to the present material densification only at that period of his development which he goes through in the twentieth, or twenty-first year of his life, when he finds himself bound to the earth. Spiritual Science therefore tells us, that if his development had proceeded in that way, man would really have descended to the earth only in the condition which he now reaches in his twentieth or twenty-first year. He would not have been able to go through the preceding states upon the earth. He would have been obliged to go through them soaring above the earth, around it.

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|  | **[Diagram 2](http://www.rsarchive.org/Lectures/GA121/English/APC1929/Diag.php?images/MissFolk192902.gif+2)** Diagram 2 Click image for large view |  |

And now you can understand the whole course of human development through child and youth. You can see, if we take this straight line (B C) as being the earth-path, that the Spirits of Form would have intended man to come down only at this point (twenty, one-and-twenty). Man would have reached the earth only here (B), and he would have ascended again after his fortieth year (C) and would have gone through the last third of his life in a spiritualized state. Through the abnormal Beings man was compelled to descend here (A) and at once take up his life on the earth. That is the secret of our existence.

If all this had become what it did not become, that is to say, if man had gone through the first and last thirds of his life up above in the periphery of the earth, and had only come down to earth during the middle part, and had therefore become quite a different being, he would not have been bound to the earth to the extent he actually is to-day. If that had happened, then all the persons who walked on earth would have been of the same form and nature; all the people who have wandered over the face of the earth would have had the same form. There would have been only one kind of human being. That which makes us into beings capable of manifesting the specific attributes of the various races expressed in all humanity, is not comprised in the middle third of life. By means of all that appertains to the preceding age, of all that happens in the first third of life, we with all our forces are bound to the earth more than the normal Spirits of Form have intended us to be. For this reason, however, man has become more dependent on the earth upon which he lives, than he would otherwise have been. He has become dependent upon that part of the earth on which he lives, and because he descends earlier to the earth, — against the intentions of the Spirits of Form, as one might say, — he becomes dependent upon that place, because he unites himself to the earth in a state which is not designed for him. If he had only set foot on the earth in the middle third of his life, he would have been independent of whether he did so in the north or the south, in the east or the west. But because he has become dependent upon the earth, because his youth is spent in the way we have described, he becomes earthbound, he becomes a being who is connected with and belongs to the country in which he was born. He thus becomes dependent upon all the conditions of the earth belonging to that place, upon the incidence of the sun's rays, upon the circumstance of whether his birthplace is in the neighborhood of the Equator in the torrid zone, or in a more temperate region, upon whether he is born on low-lying land, or on a high tableland. The respiration is quite different in the plain from what it is in the mountains. Man therefore becomes altogether dependent upon the earthly conditions of the place in which he is born. So we see that man has thoroughly grown together with his mother-earth through being so closely connected with the place, with that part of the earth on which he is born; and that he is determined by those attributes which he thus receives, by the earth-forces connected with that particular place acting within him. All these things determine his racial character, and in this indirect way the abnormal Spirits of Form, — those Spirits of Form, or Powers, who give what we call our present earthly consciousness, not between the ages of twenty-one to forty-three but at a different time — are the originators of the racial differences in mankind over the whole earth, which therefore depend upon the part of the world in which a man is born.

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