

14. Seeing I to I

Extract from a lecture given in Berlin on 6 January 1906

In this passage, the social aspect of the Grail comes to the fore, and is related closely with the future mastery of life forces. At present we can only control physical forces in the mineral, material world, creating buildings and technologies that express human endeavour and striving. We will not achieve the stage of consciously mastering and creating life, says Steiner, until we also attain a higher, harmonious, all-embracing community. Logical and intellectual agreement about indisputable truths—such as mathematical truths—can today give us an inkling of how in future we might achieve unanimity in all other realms of human experience, founded on all-encompassing love. Such community cannot be imposed but must arise freely in the soul of each separate individual, as it does, slowly, during Parzival's trials. While these are far-off goals, such ideas also have immediate relevance in modern societies, with all their conflicts, classes and divisions. What unifies us above and beyond—and without suppressing—differences, in a way that allows every individual to weave his particular and distinct gifts into the social fabric? According to Steiner, the only way to do this is by each of us individually developing spiritual perception and learning to resonate truly with the laws at work in the cosmos. The healing and transforming of the division between the sexes is one level where this work can start.

The symbol of all that we do nothing to achieve, of what is simply given us, is drawn from sexual life. There the human being is, indeed, productive, but what manifests in this productive power has nothing to do with human art, science

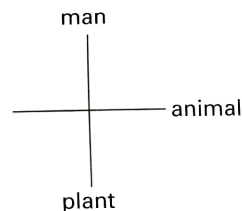
or ability. From it is excluded everything which comes to expression in the three pillars²² of the 'royal art'. So when some present these sexual symbols to humanity they mean: in this symbol is expressed human nature not as we ourselves have made it, but as it was given us by the gods. This finds its expression in Abel, the hunter and herdsman, who offers the sacrificial animal, the lamb, thus offering what he himself has done nothing to produce and which came into existence without his help.

What did Cain offer, in contrast? He sacrificed what he obtained by his own labour, what he had won from the fruits of the earth by tilling the soil. What he sacrificed needed human skill, knowledge and wisdom; it required comprehension of what one has done, based, in a spiritual sense, on human freedom to decide things for ourselves. This has to be paid for with guilt: by killing first of all the living things nature gives, which divine powers give, just as Cain slew Abel.

Through guilt lies the path to freedom. Everything which divine powers endow us with and which we can at best act on only in a secondary way, is given us primarily in the kingdoms of nature over which we have no control. These kingdoms (the plant, animal and human) are not available for any primary human contribution because they are perpetuated by physical reproduction. All the reproductive forces in these kingdoms are granted us by nature. Insofar as we take what is living for our use—because the world is our dwelling place, evolved from living things—we offer the sacrifice only of what is simply given to us, as Abel offered the sacrifice given to him.

The symbol of these three kingdoms is the cross. The lower beam symbolizes the plant kingdom, the middle or cross beam the animal kingdom, and the upper beam the human kingdom.

The plant has its roots buried in the earth and directs upwards, in the blossom, those parts which in us are directed downwards. In the blossom appear the plant's reproductive organs. The downwards directed part of the plant, the root, is the plant's head, buried in the earth. The animal is the plant turned half way, carrying its backbone in a horizontal orientation in relation to the earth. The human being is the plant turned completely around, so that the lower part corresponding to the root, the head, is directed upwards.



This underlies all the mysteries relating to the cross. Theosophy shows us how the human being must pass in the course of his evolution through the various kingdoms of nature, through the plant, animal and human kingdoms. This is the same thing as Plato expressed in the beautiful words: 'The world soul is nailed to the cross of the world body.' The human soul is a spark struck from the world soul, and the human being, as physical human being, is plant, animal and physical human being at the same time. Insofar as the world soul has divided itself into the individual sparks of human souls it is, as it were, nailed to what is expressed in the three kingdoms of plant, animal and human. Powers we have not mastered are at work in these kingdoms. If we wish to master them we must create a new kingdom of our own, which is not expressed in the cross.

When talking of this subject I am often asked: Where is the mineral kingdom in all this? The mineral kingdom is not symbolized in the cross because it is there that human beings can already express themselves in blindingly clear ways, where we have learned to apply the techniques of weighing and calculating, or geometry and arithmetic; in fact, everything pertaining to inorganic nature, to the mineral kingdom.

If you contemplate a temple you can see that the human being has erected it with ruler, compass, square, plumb line and spirit level, and finally with the thinking that inorganic nature has transmitted to the architect in geometry and mechanics. And as you continue your contemplation of the whole temple you will find it to be an inanimate object born out of human freedom and brainwork. You cannot say this, however, if you observe a plant or an animal.

So you see that what human beings have mastered, what we can master, has so far been the inanimate realm. And everything which the human being has converted to harmony and order out of the inanimate world is the symbol of his 'royal art' on earth. If you go back to the time of the ancient Chaldeans and Egyptians—when not only the intellect was used in building but when heightened perceptions permeated everything, the mastery of inorganic nature was then seen as the royal art—which is why control of nature was characterized as 'free masonry'. [...]

Look back to the construction of the Egyptian pyramids, in which stone was fitted to stone through human agency. Nature's creation was given a new form as a result of human thought. Human wisdom has thus transformed the earth. [...] This is the first pillar, that of wisdom.

Somewhat later we see the second pillar established, the

pillar of beauty, of art. Art is likewise a means to pour the human spirit into lifeless matter, and again the result is an ensoulment of the inanimate in nature. Try for a moment to picture in your mind how the wisdom in art gradually overcomes and masters lifeless nature, and you will see how what is initially there without our participation is reshaped by us. One can visualize how the whole earth has been transformed by human hands, how the whole earth has become a work of art, full of wisdom and radiating beauty: built by human hands, radiating human wisdom. This may seem fantastic, but is more than that. It is in fact humanity's mission on earth to transform the planet artistically. You find this expressed in the second pillar, that of beauty.

To this you can add, as the third pillar, the reshaping of the human race in the life of nations and states: the propagation of the human spirit in the world, in the lifeless realm. [...] Even the statesman or politician structures what is naturally endowed. [...]

Thus the medieval thinker of the twelfth century looked back at the esoteric wisdom of the ancient Chaldeans, at Greek art and beauty and at the strength embodied in the Roman state. These are the three great pillars of world history—wisdom, beauty and strength. Goethe portrayed them in his 'fairy-tale' as the three kings: esoteric wisdom in the Gold King, beauty as in Greece in the Silver King, and, in the Brass King, strength as embodied in the Roman concept of the state and then adopted in the organization of the Christian Church. And the Middle Ages, with its chaos, resulting from the effect of migrating peoples, and with its mixtures of styles, is expressed in the misshapen Mixed King made of gold, silver and brass. In him, what was separate in various ancient cultures, is all mixed together. Later these separate

forces will once again need to develop and emerge from this chaotic mix to a higher level.

All who took the Holy Grail as their symbol in the Middle Ages set themselves the task of using human powers to bring these separate forces to a higher stage of development. The Holy Grail was to be something essentially new, even though its symbolism is closely related to the symbols of a very ancient mystical tradition.

What then is the Holy Grail? For those who can properly understand this legend it signifies the following:

Until now, the human being has only mastered the inanimate forces of nature. Transformation of the living forces, of what sprouts and grows in the plants, and of what manifests in animal [and human] reproduction, is beyond his power. Human beings as yet have no access to these mysterious powers of nature and cannot encroach on them. They cannot fully comprehend what results from these forces. [...] But just as human beings have gained mastery of inanimate nature and gravitational forces with spirit level and plumb line, with geometry and mechanics, so in future they will come to control what at present they receive only as a gift from nature or from divine powers—that is, living forces. [...]

In the Middle Ages a radically new impetus was thus introduced into Freemasonry, and is denoted by the symbol of the Holy Grail, as the power of self-sacrifice. I have often said that harmony in human relationships is not brought about by preaching it but by creating it. Once the necessary forces have been awoken in human nature, lack of brotherliness can no longer persist. Such concepts as 'majority' and 'minority' become meaningless. [...]

Although our age is not yet so advanced as to be able to master living forces, and although the era has not yet arrived

when living and life-giving forces can be consciously employed, a preparatory school for this endeavour already exists, founded by the movement called the Lodge of the Holy Grail. The time will come however—a quite specific point in time—when humanity, unlike now, will recognize that deep, inward soul forces cannot be decided by majority decisions; that no vote can settle questions involving the limitless realm of love, or what one feels or senses. The force common to all humanity, which comes to expression in the mind as an all-embracing unity about which there can be no conflict, is called *manas*. And when human beings have reached the stage of being not only one in their intellect but also in their perceptions and feelings, and are in harmony in their inmost souls—meeting one another in what is noble and good, lovingly joining in one objective in the same way that nowadays they agree that two times two makes four, and three times three equals nine—then the time will also have arrived when they can master living forces too. Unanimity—objective unanimity of perception and feeling—with a love encompassing all humanity, is the precondition for achieving mastery over the forces of life.

Those who founded the movement of the Holy Grail in the twelfth century said that this control over living nature was at one time available to the gods who created the cosmos and descended to earth to give humanity the germ of the capacity for the same divine forces they themselves already possessed. Thus the human being is now on the way to becoming a god, having something in his inner being which strives upwards towards where the gods once stood. Today, the intellect [*manas*] is the predominant force; in the future it will be love [*buddhi*] and, in a still more distant future, human beings will attain the stage of *atma*.

Combined, these powers give humanity mastery over what is symbolized by the cross. The gods' use of this power is embodied in the symbol of a triangle with its apex pointing downwards.



Divine power

Expressed through human beings, striving from below upwards towards the divine, this force is symbolized by a triangle with apex pointing upwards.



Human strength

The gods have raised themselves out of human nature and withdrawn; but they have left behind the triangle which will develop further in us. This triangle is also the symbol of the Holy Grail.



The symbol of the Holy Grail

The medieval occultist expressed the symbol of the Grail—the symbol for awakening perfection in the living realm—in the form of a triangle. This does not necessitate a common Church encircling the globe with rigid organizational forms, although this may well give something to the individual soul. But if all souls are to strike the same note then the power of the Holy Grail must be awoken in each individual. Whoever wants to awaken the power of the Grail within him will gain

nothing by asking the powers of the official Church to kindly instruct him. Instead he must awaken this power in himself, without asking others' permission too much. We start from dullness and progress through doubt to strength. This pilgrimage of the soul is expressed in the figure of Parzival who seeks the Holy Grail. This is one of the many diverse deeper meanings of the Parzival figure.

Does it further my knowledge if a corporate body, however wise and great, issues an official proclamation of the truth? If I want to learn mathematics I must study it and gain an understanding of it for myself. And what use is it if such a corporate body possesses the power of the cross? If I wish to make use of this power, mastery of the living realm, I must achieve this myself. No one else can tell it to me or communicate it through words: at best they can show it to me in the symbol, give me the shining symbol of the Grail, but it cannot be told in an intellectual formula.

The first achievement of this medieval occultism, therefore, was what appeared in so many different movements in Europe: the striving for individual religious experience, and escape from the rigid uniformity of the organized Church. You can scarcely grasp the extent to which this tendency underlies Wolfram von Eschenbach's *Parzival*. What manifested for the first time during the Reformation was already inherent in the Grail symbol. Those who have a sense of the profound meaning symbols can embody will understand this symbol's deep cultural significance. The great things of the world are not born in noise and tumult but in intimacy and stillness. Humanity's development does not advance by the thunder of cannons but through the strength of what is born in the intimacy of such secret brotherhoods, and of what is expressed in such world-encompassing symbols which inspire humanity.

Since that time, through innumerable channels, human hearts have received an influx from what was conceived by those initiated into the mysteries of the Holy Grail in the middle of the twelfth century. Such individuals had to hide from the world and live anonymously. But really they were the leaven preparing the culture of the past 400 years. [...]

Slowly but surely, humanity's development will come to embrace organic, living forces. A time will come—however fantastic this may seem now—when people will no longer paint only pictures, will no longer make only lifeless sculptures, but will be able to breathe life into what they now merely paint, merely form with colour or with a chisel.

What may appear less fantastic is that this is already dawning in a particular sphere: these living forces are already starting to intervene in the life of society. That is the real secret surrounding the Grail. The last event initiated in the social sphere by old Freemasonry was the French Revolution. Here the basic ideas of Freemasonry came out into the open as 'equality, liberty and fraternity'. Those who know this are also aware that ideas emanating from the Grail were propagated through innumerable channels and constituted the really active force in the French Revolution.

The socialism of today exists only as an abortive and impossible experiment: as a final, desperate struggle, one can say, in a receding wave of humanity's evolution. It cannot achieve any really positive result. What it tries to achieve can only be achieved through living activity; the pillar of strength is not enough. Socialism can no longer be controlled through inanimate forces. The ideas of the French Revolution—liberty, equality, fraternity—were the last ideas to flow out of the inanimate. Everything that still runs on that track is fruitless and doomed to die. The great evil existing in the

world today, the dire misery that comes to expression with such terrible power in what is called the 'social question', can no longer be controlled by inanimate means. A royal art is needed for that; and this was inaugurated in the symbol of the Holy Grail.

Through this royal art human beings must come to control something similar to what sprouts in the plant—the same force that the occultist uses when he accelerates the growth of a plant before him. In a similar way, something of this force must be used for social salvation. This power, which is described by those who know something of the Rosicrucian mysteries—as, for example, Bulwer Lytton did in his futuristic novel *The Coming Race*²³—is at present still at an elementary, germinal stage. In the Freemasonry of the future, it will become the real content of the higher degrees. The royal art will, in the future, be a social art. [...]

What the human spirit has given shape to, in matter, will remain present in the world as a continuing force. Cologne's Gothic cathedral will for example pass away; but it is of far-reaching significance that the atoms were once in this form. This form itself is the imperishable thing that will henceforth participate in humanity's ongoing process of evolution, just as the plant's living force participates in nature's evolution! The painter who paints a picture today, who imprints dead matter with his own intensity of soul, is also creating something that will sooner or later be dispersed in thousands of atoms. What is imperishable and has lasting value, what is eternal, is that he has *created*, that something has flowed into matter from his soul.

States and all other human communities come and go before our eyes. But these communities formed by human

souls constitute humanly-conceived ideas of eternal value, with eternally enduring significance. And when this human race once again appears on earth in a new form, then it will see the fruits of these elements of eternal value.

Whoever turns his gaze upwards to the starry heavens today sees a wonderful harmony which has evolved—it was not always there. When we build a cathedral we place stone upon stone; when we paint a picture we place colour next to colour; when we organize a community we make law upon law. In exactly the same way, creative beings once worked upon and fashioned what we see today before us in the cosmos. Neither moon nor sun would shine, no plant would reproduce, unless everything we find in the cosmos had not once been fashioned by beings who worked as we work today on refashioning the cosmos. Just as we work upon the cosmos today through wisdom, beauty and strength, so too did beings who do not belong to our present human kingdom once work on the cosmos.

Any harmony is always the outcome of a former disharmony. Just as stones abounded in a perplexing variety of forms before they were given form as a Greek temple, thus becoming a coordinated structure, and just as the profusion of colours on a palette is meaningfully arrayed in a picture, so all matter was in other chaotic relationships before the creative spirit transformed it into this cosmos. The same thing is being recapitulated at a new level, and only he who sees the whole can properly work on the details. Everything of real significance for humanity's progress has been brought about with care and judgement, through initiation into the great laws at work in the world. What the day produces is ephemeral. What is created in the day through knowledge of the eternal laws is, however, imperishable. Freemasonry

really means creating in the day with knowledge of eternal laws.

In fact one can say that, properly understood, Freemasonry engenders all art, science and religion, all that goes beyond what the gods give us as expressed in the symbol of the cross. In this sense Freemasonry is intimately involved in everything that human hands have shaped. Everything that culture has created from raw, inanimate matter. [...]

In the end, everything must undergo schooling. The last 400 years were a schooling for humanity—the school of godlessness, purely human experimentation: from a certain perspective a return to chaos. Everyone is experimenting today, without being aware of our connection with higher worlds—apart from those who have once more sought and found that connection. Nearly everyone lives entirely for himself today, without perceiving anything of the real, all-penetrating common design. And this of course is also what causes such terrible dissatisfaction everywhere.

What we need is a renewal of the Grail chivalry in a modern form. By approaching this we can come to know the real forces still lying concealed within human evolution.

Today so many people take up the old symbols without understanding them; what is thus, uncomprehendingly, made of sexual symbols comes nowhere near a correct understanding of Masonic concepts. Such understanding is to be sought in precisely those things which redeem natural forces: in penetrating and mastering what is living in the same way that the geometrician penetrates and masters inanimate matter with his rule, compasses, spirit level and so forth; and in working upon the living in the same way that those who build a temple place stones together. [...]

There is a very ancient symbol in Freemasonry, the so-

called Tau. This is basically nothing other than a cross from which an arm has been removed. If one lets the plant kingdom come into play, one obtains the upwards-directed cross [...]:



You may remember the legend of Hiram Abiff I spoke of in my last lecture on Freemasonry; of how, at a particular moment he makes use of the Tau sign when the Queen of Sheba wishes him to summon all the workers engaged in building the temple. The people working together in social partnership would never appear at Solomon's command; but at the sign of the Tau, which Hiram Abiff raises aloft, they appear from all sides. The Tau symbolizes an entirely new power, based on freedom and involving the awakening of a new natural force. [...]

One can easily understand that control over inanimate nature leads to such things as wireless telegraphy, working across a great distance from the transmitter to the receiving station. The apparatus can be set to work at will, is effective over great distances, and one can make oneself understood by it. In a future age, a similar force to that by which wireless telegraphy works will be at human beings' disposal, without any apparatus at all. This will make it possible to cause great devastation at great distances, without anyone being able to discover the origin or cause. These developments will culminate, then eventually implode on themselves.

What is expressed by the Tau is a driving force which can, in contrast, only be set in motion by the power of selfless love. It will be possible to use this power to drive machines—

which will however cease to function if egotistical people make use of them. [...] A propelling force that can only be moral is what the future holds: a most important force with which culture must be inoculated if it is not to implode. The mechanical and moral must interpenetrate, since the mechanical is nothing without moral impetus. Today we stand at the threshold of this. In future, machines will be driven not only by water and steam but by spiritual force, by spiritual morality. This power is symbolized by the Tau sign and was indeed poetically symbolized by the image of the Holy Grail. The human being is no longer merely dependent on what nature freely gives him to use: he can shape and transform nature, has become a master craftsman of the inanimate. In the same way he will become a master craftsman of what is living. [...]

The Masonic art stands at a turning point in its development and has the closest links with the work of the Lodge of the Grail, with what can appear as salvation in the dreadful conflicts raging all around us.

These conflicts are only just beginning. Humanity is unaware that it is dancing on a volcano. But it is so. The revolutions beginning on our earth make a new phase of the royal art necessary. Those who do not drift thoughtlessly through life will know that they need to participate actively in our earth's evolution. From a certain point of view, therefore, this very ancient royal art must assume a new form to stand alongside what is so ancient, in which lies an inexhaustible force. Those who can grasp the new Masonic ideas will strike new sparks from Freemasonry's ancient symbols. [...]

Hitherto the royal art has been a male art, and women were excluded from it. Tasks carried on in the Lodges were kept separate from everything related to the family. [...] Man by

his nature embodies the energy that works on inanimate matter whereas woman is regarded as embodying the living, creative force that develops the human race from its natural basis. This antithesis must be resolved.

What has to be achieved in future can only happen by overcoming everything relying on the old symbols, expressed precisely in what is sexual in nature. [...] The old, sexual symbols are what need to be overcome in the broadest sense; then we can discover what in future must be the creative and truly effective principle in the concept of uniting both male and female spiritual forces. The outward manifestation of this advance in Freemasonry is through admission of the female sex.

There is a significant custom in Freemasonry which relates to this. Everyone inducted into the Lodge is given two pairs of gloves. One he puts on himself, the other is to be put on his chosen lady. This is symbolic of the fact that the couple should only touch each other with gloves on, so that sensual impulses have nothing to do with Freemasonry. This is also expressed in another symbol: the apron symbolizes overcoming sexuality, which is as it were covered by the apron. [...] The gloves can even be taken off, however, once lower impulses have been conquered by invoking the free spiritual forces of both sexes. Only then will what manifests today in sexuality be finally overcome. When human creation is free, completely free and autonomous, when man and woman work together on the great edifice of humanity, gloves will no longer be needed, for man and woman will be able freely to stretch out their hands to each other so that spirit speaks to spirit and not sensuality to sensuality. This is the great idea that the future holds. [...]