

YOU have seen from the preceding lectures that a study of man's faculty of memory can give us valuable insight into the whole of human life and its cosmic connections. So today we will study this faculty of memory as such, in the various phases of its manifestation in human life, beginning with its manifestation in the ordinary consciousness that man has between birth and death.

What man experiences in concrete, everyday life, in thinking, feeling and willing, in unfolding his physical forces, too — all this he transforms into memories which he recalls from time to time.

But if you compare the shadowy character of these memory-pictures, whether spontaneous or deliberately sought, with the robust experiences to which they refer, you will say that they exist as mere thoughts or mental presentations; you are led to call memories just 'pictures'. Nevertheless, it is these pictures that we retain in our ego from our experiences in the outer world; in a sense, we bear them with us as the treasure won from experience. If a part of these memories should be lost — as in certain pathological cases of which I have already spoken — our ego itself suffers injury. We feel that our immemorial being, our ego, has been damaged if it must forfeit this or that from its treasury of memories, for it is this treasury that makes our life a complete whole. One could also point to the very serious conditions that sometimes result in cases of apoplectic stroke when certain portions of the patient's past life are obliterated from his memory.

Moreover, when we survey from a given moment our life since our last birth, we must feel our memories as a connected whole if we are to regard ourselves rightly as human souls.

These few features indicate the role of the faculty of memory in physical, earthly life. But its role is far greater still. What would the external world with all its impressions constantly renewed, with all it gives us, however vividly — what would it be to us if we could not link new impressions to the memories of past ones! Last, but not least, we may say that, after all, all learning consists in linking new impressions to the content borne in memory. A great part of educational method depends on finding the most rational way of linking the new things we have to teach the children to what we can draw from their store of memories.

In short, whenever we have to bring the external world to the soul, to evoke the soul's own life that it may feel and experience inwardly its own existence, we appeal to memory in the last resort. So we must say that, on earth, memory constitutes the most important and most comprehensive part of man's inner life.

Let us now study memory from yet another point of view. It is quite easy to see that the sums of memories we bear within us is really a fragment. We have forgotten so much in the course of life; but there are moments, frequently abnormal, when what has been long forgotten comes before us again. These are especially such moments in which

a man comes near to death and many things emerge that have long been far from his conscious memory. Old people, when dying, suddenly remember things that had long disappeared from their conscious memory. Moreover, if we study dreams really intimately — and they, too, link on to memory — we find things arising which have quite certainly been experienced, but they passed us by unnoticed. Nevertheless, they are in our soul life, and arise in sleep when the hindrances of the physical and etheric organism are not acting and the astral body and ego are alone. We do not usually notice these things and so fail to observe that conscious memory is but a fragment of all we receive; in the course of life we take in much in the same form, only, it is received into the subconscious directly, where it is inwardly elaborated.

Now, as long as we are living on earth, we continue to regard the memories that arise from the depths of our soul in the form of thoughts as the essential part of memory. Thoughts of past experience come and go. We search for them. We regard that as the essence of memory.

However, when we go through the gate of death our life on earth is followed by a few days in which pictures of the life just ended come before us in a gigantic perspective. These pictures are suddenly there: the events of years long past and of the last few days are there simultaneously. As the spatial exists side by side and only possesses spatial perspective, so the temporal events of our earthly life are now seen side by side and possess 'time-perspective'. This tableau appears suddenly, but, during the short time it is there, it becomes more and more shadowy, weaker and weaker. Whereas in earthly life we look into ourselves and feel that we have our memory-pictures 'rolled up' within us, *these* pictures now become greater and greater. We feel as if they were being received by the universe. What is at first comprised within the memory tableau as in a narrow space, becomes greater and greater, more and more shadowy, until we find it has expanded to a universe, becoming so faint that we can scarcely decipher what we first saw plainly. We can still divine it; then it vanishes in the far spaces and is no longer there.

That is the second form taken by memory — in a sense, its second metamorphosis — in the first few days after death. It is the phase which we can describe as the flight of our memories out into the cosmos. And all that, like memory, we have bound so closely to our life between birth and death, expands and becomes more and more shadowy, to be finally lost in the wide spaces of the cosmos.

It is really as if we saw what we have actually been calling our ego during earthly life, disappear into the wide spaces of the cosmos. This experience lasts a few days and, when these have passed, we feel that we ourselves are being expanded too. Between birth and death we feel ourselves within our memories; and now we actually feel ourselves within these rapidly retreating memories and being received into the wide spaces of the universe.

After we have suffered this super-sensible stupor, or faintness, which takes from us the sum-total of our memories and our inner consciousness of earthly life, we live in the third phase of memory. This third phase of memory teaches us that what we had called ourself during earthly life — in virtue of our memories — has spread itself through the wide spaces of the universe, thereby proving its insubstantiality for us. If we were only

what can be preserved in our memories between birth and death, we would be nothing at all a few days after death.

But we now enter a totally different element. We have realised that we cannot retain our memories, for the world takes them from us after death. But there is something objective behind all the memories we have harboured during earthly life. The spiritual counterpart, of which I spoke yesterday, is engraved into the world; and it is this counterpart of our memories that we now enter. Between birth and death we have experienced this or that with this or that person or plant or mountain spring, with all we have approached during life. There is no single experience whose spiritual counterpart is not engraved into the spiritual world in which we are ever present, even while on earth. Every hand-shake we have exchanged has its spiritual counterpart; it is there, inscribed into the spiritual world. Only while we are surveying our life in the first days after death do we have these pictures of our life before us. These conceal, to a certain extent, what we have inscribed into the world through our deeds, thoughts and feelings.

The moment we pass through the gate of death to this other 'life', we are at once filled with the content of our life-tableau, i.e. with pictures which extend, in perspective, back to birth and even beyond. But all this vanishes into the wide cosmic spaces and we now see the spiritual counter-images of all the deeds we have done since birth. All the spiritual counter-images we have experienced (unconsciously, in sleep) become visible, and in such a way that we are immediately impelled to retrace our steps and go through all these experiences once more. In ordinary life, when we go from Dornach to Basle we know we can go from Basle to Dornach, for we have in the physical world an appropriate conception of space. But in ordinary consciousness we do not know, when we go from birth to death, that we can also go from death to birth. As in the physical world one can go from Dornach to Basle and return from Basle to Dornach, so we go from birth to death during earthly life, and, after death, can return from death to birth. This is what we do in the spiritual world when we experience backwards the spiritual counter-images of all we have undergone during earthly life. Suppose you have had an experience with something in the external realm of Nature — let us say, with a tree. You have observed the tree or, as a woodman, cut it down. Now all this has its spiritual counterpart; above all, whether you have merely observed the tree, or cut it down, or done something else to it, has its significance for the whole universe. What you can experience with the physical tree you experience in physical, earthly life; *now*, as you go backwards from death to birth, it is the spiritual counterpart of this experience that you live through.

If, however, our experience was with another human being — if, for example, we have caused him pain — there is already a spiritual counterpart in the physical world; only, it is not our experience: it is the pain experienced by the other man. Perhaps the fact that we were the cause of his pain gave us a certain feeling of satisfaction; we may have been moved by a feeling of revenge or the like. Now, on going backwards through our life, we do not undergo *our* experience, but *his*. We experience what he experienced through our deed. That, too, is a part of the spiritual counterpart and is inscribed into the spiritual world. In short, man lives through his experiences once more, but in a spiritual way, going backwards from death to birth.

As I said yesterday, it is a part of this experience to feel that beings whom, for the present, we may call 'superhuman', are participating in it. Pressing onwards through these spiritual counterparts of our experiences, we feel as if these spiritual beings were showering down their sympathies and antipathies upon our deeds and thoughts, as we experience them backwards. Thereby we feel what each deed done by us on earth, each thought, feeling, or impulse of will, is worth for purely spiritual existence. In bitter pain we experience the harmfulness of some deed we have done. In burning thirst we experience the passions we have harboured in our soul; and this continues until we have sufficiently realised the worthlessness, for the spiritual world, of harbouring passions and have outgrown these states which depend on our physical, earthly personality.

At this point of our studies we can see where the boundary between the psychical and the physical really is. You see, we can easily regard things like thirst or hunger as physical. But I ask you to imagine that the same physical changes that are in your organism when you are thirsty were in a body not ensouled. The same changes could be there, but the soulless body would not suffer thirst. As a chemist you might investigate the changes in your body when you are thirsty. But if, by some means, you could produce these same changes, in the same substances and in the same complex of forces, in a body without a soul, it would not suffer thirst. Thirst is not something in the body; it lives in the soul — in the astral — through changes in the physical body. It is the same with hunger. And if someone, in his soul, takes great pleasure in something that can only be satisfied by physical measures in physical life, it is as if he were experiencing thirst in physical life; the psychical part of him feels thirst, burning thirst, for those things which he was accustomed to satisfy by physical means. For one cannot carry out physical functions when the physical body has been laid aside. Man must first accustom himself to live in his psycho-spiritual being without his physical body; and a great part of the backward journey I have described is concerned with this. At first he experiences continually burning thirst for what can only be gratified through a physical body. Just as the child must accustom himself to use his organs — must learn to speak, for example — so man between death and a new birth must accustom himself to do without his physical body as the foundation of his psychical experiences. He must grow into the spiritual world.

There are descriptions of this experience which, as I said yesterday, lasts one-third of the time of physical life, which depict it as a veritable hell. For example, if you read descriptions like those given in the literature of the Theosophical Society where, following oriental custom, this life is called Kamaloka, they will certainly make your flesh creep. Well, these experiences are not like that. They can appear so if you compare them directly with earthly life, for they are something to which we are so utterly unaccustomed. We must suddenly adapt ourselves to the spiritual counter-images and counter-values of our earthly experience. What we felt on earth as pleasure, is there privation, bitter privation, and, strictly speaking, only our unsatisfying, painful or sorrowful experiences on earth are satisfying there. In many respects that is somewhat horrible when compared with earthly life; but we simply cannot compare it with earthly life directly, for it is not experienced here but in the life after death where we do not judge with earthly conceptions.

So when, for example, you experience after death the pain of another man through having caused him pain on earth, you say to yourself at once: 'If I did not feel this pain, I would remain an imperfect human soul, for the pain I have caused in the universe would continually take something from me. I only become a whole human being by experiencing this compensation.'

It may cost us a struggle to see that pain experienced after death in return for pain caused to another, is really a blessing. It will depend on the inner constitution of our soul whether we find this difficult or not; but there is a certain state of soul in which this painful compensation for many things done on earth is even experienced as bliss. It is the state of soul that results from acquiring on earth some knowledge of the super-sensible life. We feel that, through this painful compensation, we are perfecting our human being, while, without it, we should fall short of full human stature. If you have caused another pain, you are of less value than before; so, if you judge reasonably, you will say: In face of the universe I am a worse human soul after causing pain to another than before. You will feel it a blessing that you are able, after death, to compensate for this pain by experiencing it yourself.

That, my dear friends, is the third phase of memory. At first what we have within us as memory is condensed to pictures, which last some days after death; then it is scattered through the universe, your whole inner life in the form of thoughts returning thereto. But while we lose the memories locked up within us during earthly life — while these seek the cosmic spaces — the world, from out of all we have spiritually engraved upon it, gives us back to ourselves in objective form.

There is scarcely a stronger proof of man's intimate connection with the world than this; that after death, in regard to our inner life, we have first to lose ourselves, in order to be given back to ourselves from out of the universe. And we experience this, even in the face of painful events, as something that belongs to our human being as a whole. We do, indeed, feel that the world takes to itself the inner life we possessed here, and gives back to us again what we have engraved upon it. It is just the part we did not notice, the part we passed by but inscribed upon spiritual existence with clear strokes, that gives us our own self again. Then, as we retrace our life backwards through birth and beyond, we reach out into the wide spaces of spiritual existence.

It is only now, after having undergone all this, that we enter the spiritual world and are really able to live there. Our faculty of memory now undergoes its fourth metamorphosis. We feel that everywhere behind the ordinary memory of earthly life something has been living in us, though we were not aware of it. It has engraved itself into the world and now we, ourselves, become it. We have received our earthly life in its spiritual significance; we now become this significance. After travelling back through birth to the spiritual world we find ourselves confronting it in a very peculiar way. In a sense, we ourselves in our spiritual counterpart — in our true spiritual worth — now confront the world. We have passed through the above experiences, have experienced the pain caused to another, have experienced the spiritual value corresponding to an experience with a tree, let us say; we have experienced all this, but it was not self-experience. We might compare this with the embryonic stage of human life; for then — and even throughout the first years of life — all we experience does not yet reach the level of self-consciousness, which only awakens gradually.

Thus, when we enter the spiritual world, all we have experienced backwards gradually becomes ourself, our spiritual self-consciousness. We *are* now what we have experienced; we are our own spiritual worth corresponding thereto. With this existence, that really represents the other side of our earthly existence, we enter the world that contains nothing of the ordinary kingdoms of external Nature — mineral, plant and animal kingdoms — for these belong to the earth. But in that world there immediately come before us, first, the souls of those who have died before us and to whom we stood in some kind of relationship, and then the individualities of higher spiritual beings. We live as spirit among human and non-human spirits, and this environment of spiritual individualities is now our world. The relationship of these spiritual individualities, human or non-human, to ourselves now constitutes our experience. As on earth we have our experience with the beings of the external kingdoms of Nature, so now, with spiritual beings of different ranks. And it is especially important that we have felt their sympathies and antipathies like spiritual rain — to use yesterday's metaphor — permeating these experiences during the retrospective part of the life between death and birth that I have described to you schematically. We now stand face to face with these beings of whom we previously perceived only their sympathies and antipathies while we were living through the spiritual counterpart of our earthly life: we live among these beings now that we have reached the spiritual world. We gradually feel as if inwardly permeated with force, with impulses proceeding from the spiritual beings around us. All that we have previously experienced now becomes more and more real to us, in a spiritual way. We gradually feel as if standing in the light or shadow of these beings in whom we are beginning to live. Before, through living through the spiritual worth corresponding to some earthly experience, we felt this or that about it, found it valuable or harmful to the cosmos. We now feel: There is something I have done on earth, in thought or deed; it has its corresponding spiritual worth, and this is engraved into the spiritual cosmos. The beings whom I now encounter can either do something with it, or not; it either lies in the direction of their evolution or of the evolution for which they are striving, or it does not. We feel ourselves placed before the beings of the spiritual world and realise that we have acted in accordance with their intentions or against them, have either added to, or subtracted from, what they willed for the evolution of the world.

Above all, it is no mere ideal judgment of ourselves that we feel, but a real evaluation; and this evaluation is itself the reality of our existence when we enter the spiritual world after death.

When you have done something wrong as a man in the physical world, you condemn it yourself if you have sufficient conscience and reason; or it is condemned by the law, or by the judge, or by other men who despise you for it. But you do not grow thin on this account — at least, not very thin, unless you are quite specially constituted. On entering the world of spiritual beings, however, we do not merely meet the ideal judgment that we are of little worth in respect of any fault or disgraceful deed we have committed; we feel the gaze of these beings resting upon us as if it would annihilate our very being. In respect of all we have done that is valuable, the gaze of these beings falls upon us as if we first attained thereby our full reality as psycho-spiritual beings. Our reality depends upon our value. Should we have hindered the evolution that was intended in the spiritual world, it is as if darkness were robbing us of our very existence. If we have done something in accordance with the evolution of the spiritual world, and its effects

continue, it is as if light were calling us to fresh spiritual life. We experience all I have described and enter the realm of spiritual beings. This enhances our consciousness in the spiritual world and keeps us awake. Through all the demands made upon us there, we realise that we have won something in the universe in regard to our own reality.

Suppose we have done something that hinders the evolution of the world and can only arouse the antipathy of the spiritual beings whose realm we now enter. The after-effect takes its course as I have described and we feel our consciousness darken; stupefaction ensues, sometimes complete extinction of consciousness. We must now wake up again. On doing so, we feel in regard to our spiritual existence as if someone were cutting into our flesh in the physical world; only, this experience in the spiritual is much more real — though it is real enough in the physical world. In short, what we are in the spiritual world proves to be the result of what we ourselves have initiated. You see from this that man has sufficient inducement to return again to earthly life.

Why to return? Well, through what he has engraved into the spiritual world man has himself experienced all he has done for good or ill in earthly life; and it is only by returning to earth that he can actually compensate for what, after all, he has only learnt to know through earthly experience. In fact, when he reads his value for the world in the countenances of these spiritual beings — to put it metaphorically — he is sufficiently impelled to return, when able, to the physical world, in order to live his life in a different way from before. Many incapacities for this he will still retain, and only after many lives on earth will full compensation really be possible.

If we look into ourselves during earthly life, we find, at first, memories. It is of these that, to begin with, we build our soul-life when we shut out the external world; and it is upon these alone that the creative imagination of the artist draws. That is the first form of memory. Behind it are the mighty 'pictures' which become perceptible immediately after we have passed through the gate of death. These are taken from us: they expand to the wide spaces of the universe. When we survey our memory-pictures we can say that there lives behind them something that at once proceeds towards the cosmic spaces when our body is taken from us. Through our body we hold together what is really seeking to become 'ideal' in the universe. But while we go through life and retain memories of our experiences, we leave behind in the world something still further behind our memories. We leave it behind us in the course of time and must experience it again as we retrace our steps. This lies behind our memory as a third 'structure'. First, we have the tapestry of memory; behind it, the mighty cosmic pictures we have 'rolled up' within us; behind this, again, lives what we have written into the world. Not until we have lived through this are we really ourselves, standing naked in spirit before the spiritual universe which clothes us in its garments when we enter it.

We must, indeed, look at our memories if we want to get gradually beyond the transient life of man. Our earthly memories are transient and become dispersed through the universe. But our Self lives behind them: the Self that is given us again from out of the spiritual world that we may find our way from time to eternity.