

The Riddle of Humanity

Lecture Seven

LECTURE SEVEN:

Dornach, 12 August 1916

When we speak of the great world and the small world, of the macrocosm and the microcosm, we are referring to the whole universe and to the human being. Goethe, for example, spoke in these terms in *Faust*. He called the whole cosmos 'the great world', and the human being 'the small world.' We have already had many occasions to observe how manifold and complicated are the relationships between man and the cosmos. Today I would like to remind you of some of the things we have spoken about at various times, connecting these with a consideration of humanity's relationship to the cosmos. You will remember that when we spoke of the senses and of what man, as the possessor of his senses, is, we said that the senses lead us back to the ancient Saturn phase of evolution. That is where we find the first impulses for the development of the senses, the first seeds of the senses. You will find these things described again and again in previous lecture cycles. Now, obviously, the early seed-like phases of the senses during the Saturn period are not to be imagined as if they already resembled the senses as we know them today. That would be foolish. As a matter of fact, it is extremely difficult to imagine what the senses were like during ancient Saturn development. It is already difficult enough to picture the senses as they were during the ancient Moon period. Even that far back in time they were thoroughly different from the senses we know now. Today I would like to throw some light on what the senses were like during the ancient Moon phase of evolution. By that time they were already in their third phase of development — Saturn, Sun, Moon.

As regards their form, the senses of today are much more dead than were the senses of Old Moon. At that period the sense organs were much livelier, much more full of life. Because of this they were not suited to provide the foundations for fully conscious human life, but were only suited to the dreamy clairvoyance of Moon man. Such clairvoyance excluded the possibility of freedom. There was no freedom to act or to follow impulses and desires. Humanity had to wait for the Earth phase of evolution before it could develop the impulse to freedom. Thus, the senses during Old Moon were not the basis for the kind of consciousness we now have, but rather for a consciousness that was both more dull and more imaginative than ours. As I have often explained, it was much more like today's dream consciousness. People generally assume that we have five senses. We know, however, that this is not justified, but that, in truth, we must distinguish twelve human senses. There are seven further senses that must be included with the usual five, since they are equally relevant to earthly, human existence. You know the usual list of the senses: sense of sight, sense of hearing, sense of taste, sense of smell, and sense of feeling. The last of these is often called the sense of touch and is mixed together with the sense of warmth, although more recently there are some who distinguish the one from the other. In earlier times these two completely distinct senses were mixed together, confusedly, as a single sense. The sense of touch tells whether something is

hard or soft, which has nothing to do with the sense of warmth. And so, if one really has a sense — if I may use that word — for the way humanity relates to the rest of the world, one will have to distinguish twelve senses. Today I would like, once again, to describe these twelve senses.

The sense of touch is the sense that relates us to the most material aspect of the external world. With our sense of touch we, so to speak, bump into the external world; through touch we are continually involved in a coarse kind of exchange with the external world. Nevertheless, the process of touching takes place within the boundaries of our skin. Our skin collides with an object. What then happens to give us a perception of the object must, as a matter of course, take place within the boundaries of our skin, within our body. Thus, what happens in touching, in the process of touch, happens inside us —

The sense that we shall call the sense of life involves processes that lie still more deeply embedded in the human organism. This sense exists within us, but we are accustomed to ignore it, for the life sense manifests itself indistinctly from within the human organism. Nevertheless, throughout all our daily waking hours, the harmonious collaboration of all the bodily organs expresses itself through the life sense, through the state of life in us. We usually pay no attention to it because we expect it as our natural right. We expect to be filled with a certain feeling of well-being, with the feeling of being alive. If our feeling of alive-ness is diminished, we try to recover a little so that our feeling of life is refreshed again. This vital enlivening or damping down is something we are aware of, but generally we are too accustomed to the feeling of being alive to be constantly aware of it. The life sense, however, is a distinct sense in its own right. Through it we feel the life in us, precisely as we see what is around us with our eyes. We sense ourselves through the life sense just as we see with our eyes. Without this internal sense of life we would know nothing about our own vital state.

What can be called the sense of movement is still more inward, more physically inward, more bodily inward. Through feelings of well-being or of discontent the life sense makes us conscious of the state of the whole organism. Having a sense of movement, on the other hand, means being able to be aware of the way parts of the body move with respect to each another. I do not refer here to movements of the whole person — that is something else. I am referring to movements such as the bending of an arm or leg, or the movements of the larynx when you speak. The sense of movement makes you aware of all these inner movements that entail changes in the position of separate parts of the organism.

A further sense that must be distinguished is the sense we will call balance. We do not normally pay any attention to it. If we get dizzy and fall, or if we feel faint, it is because the sense of balance has been interrupted. This is exactly analogous to the way the sense of sight is interrupted when we close our eyes. When we relate ourselves to the world, orientating ourselves with respect to above and below and to right and left so that we feel upright, we are employing our sense of balance, just as we employ the sense of movement when we are aware of internal changes of position. Our sense of balance, therefore, is due to a distinct sense. Balance is a proper sense in its own right.

The senses mentioned so far involve processes that remain within the bounds of the organism. If you touch something, you have collided with an external object, it is true, but you do not get inside it. If you come up against a needle you will notice that it is pointed, but of course you do not get inside the point. Instead, you prick yourself, and that no longer has anything to do with touching. Everything that happens, happens within the boundaries of your organism. You can touch an object, to be sure, but everything you experience through touch takes place within your skin. Thus, experiences of touch are internal to the body. What you experience through the life sense is likewise internal to the body. It does not show you what is going on somewhere outside you; it lets you look within. Equally internal is the sense of movement: it is not concerned with how I can walk about in the world, but with the internal movements I make when I move part of myself or when I speak. When I move about externally there is also internal movement. But the two things must be distinguished from one another: on the one hand there is my forward movement, on the other, there is the movement of parts of me, which is internal. So the sense of movement gives us internal perceptions, as do the senses of life and balance. In balance, too, you perceive nothing external — rather, you perceive yourself in your state of balance.

The first sense to take you outside yourself is the sense of smell. With smell you already come into contact with the external world. But you will have the feeling that smell does not take you very far outside yourself. You do not experience much about the external world through the sense of smell. Furthermore, people do not want to have anything to do with the intimate connection with the world that a developed sense of smell can give. Dogs are much more interested. People are willing to use the sense of smell to perceive the world, but they do not want the world to come very close. It is not a sense through which people want to get very involved with the outer world.

With the sense of taste we get more deeply involved with the world. When we taste sugar or salt, the experience of its qualities is already very inward. What is external is taken inward — more so than with smell. So there is already more of a connection established between inner world and outer world.

The sense of sight involves us even more with the external world. In seeing we take into ourselves more of the properties of the external world than we do with the sense of smell. And we take yet more into ourselves with the sense of warmth. What we see, what we perceive through the sense of sight, remains more foreign to us than what we perceive through the sense of warmth. The relationship to the outer world perceived through the sense of warmth is already a very intimate one. When we are aware of the warmth or the coldness of an object we also experience this warmth or coldness — we experience it along with the object. On the other hand, in experiencing the sweetness of sugar, for example, one is not so involved with the object. In the case of sugar we are interested in what it becomes as we taste it, not in what it is out there in the world. Such a distinction ceases to be possible with the sense of warmth. With warmth we are already participating in what is within the object perceived.

When we turn to the sense of hearing, the relation to the external world acquires another

degree of intimacy. A sound tells us very much indeed about the inner structure of an object — more than what the sense of warmth can tell, and very much more than what sight reveals. Sight only gives us pictures, so to speak, pictures of the outer surface. But when a metal resonates it tells us what is going on within it. The sense of warmth also reaches into the object. When I take hold of something, a piece of ice, say, I am sure that the ice is cold through and through, not just on its outer surface. When I look at something, I can see only the colours at its outer limits, on its surface; but when I make an object resonate, the sounds bring me into a particular relationship with what is within it.

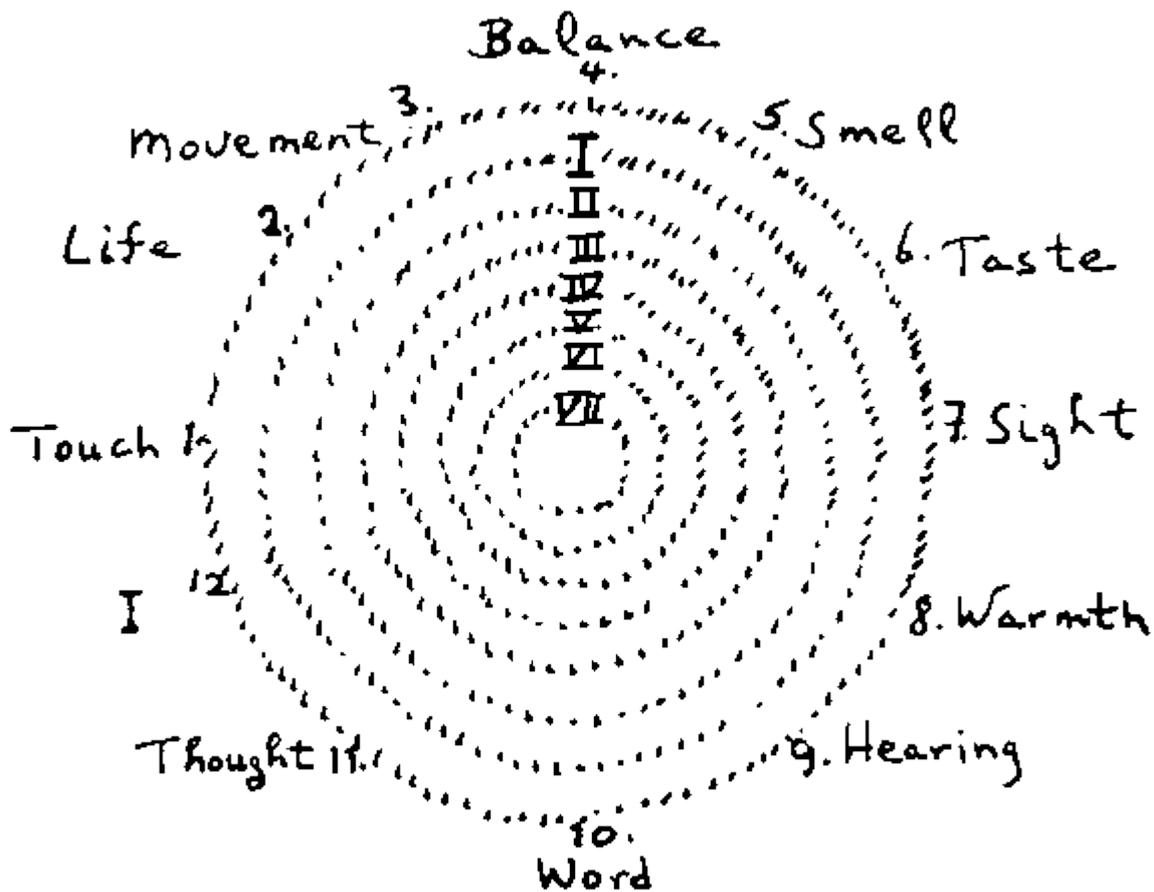
And the intimacy is greater still if the sounds contain meaning. Thus we arrive at the sense of tone: perhaps it would be better to call it the sense of speech or the sense of word. It is simply nonsense to think that perception of words is the same as perception of sounds. The two are as distinct and different from one another as are taste and sight. To be sure, sounds open the inner world of objects to our perception, but these sounds must become much more inward before they can become meaningful words. Therefore it is a step into a deeper intimacy with the world when we proceed from perceiving sounds through the sense of hearing to perceiving meaning through the sense of the word. And yet, when I perceive a mere word I am still not so intimately connected with the object, with the external thing, as I am connected with it when I perceive the thoughts behind the words. At this stage, most people cease to make any distinctions. But there is a distinction between merely perceiving words and actually perceiving the thoughts behind the words. After all, you still can perceive words when a phonograph — or writing, for that matter — has separated them from their thinker. But a sense that goes deeper than the usual word sense must come into play before I can come into a living relationship with the being that is forming the words, before I can enter through the words and transpose myself directly into the being that is doing the thinking and forming the concepts. That further step calls for the sense I would like to call the sense of thought. And there is another sense that gives an even more intimate sense of the outer world than the sense of thought. It is the sense that enables you to feel another being as yourself and that makes it possible to be aware of yourself while at one with another being. That is what happens if one turns one's thinking, one's living thinking, towards the being of another. Through living thinking one can behold the *I* of this being: the sense of the *I*.

You see, it really is necessary to distinguish between the ego sense, which makes you aware of the *I* of another person, and the awareness of yourself. The difference is not just that in one case you are aware of your own *I* and, in the other, of someone else's *I*. The two perceptions come from different sources. The seeds of our ability to distinguish one another were sown on Old Saturn. The beginnings of this sense were implanted in us then. The basis of your being able to perceive another person as an *I* was established on Old Saturn. But it was not until the Earth stage of evolution that you obtained your own *I*; so the ego sense is not to be identified with the *I* that ensouls you from within. The two must be strictly distinguished from one another. When we speak of the ego sense, we are referring to the ability of one person to be aware of the *I* of another.

As you know, I have never spoken of materialistic science without acknowledging its truth and its greatness. I have given lectures here that were for the express purpose of appreciating

materialistic science fully. But, having appreciated it, one must deepen one's knowledge of materialistic science so lovingly that one also can hold up its shadow side with a loving hand. The materialistic science of today is just beginning to bring its thoughts about the senses into some kind of order. The physiologists are finally recognising and distinguishing the senses of life, of movement and of balance from one another, and they have begun to treat the senses of warmth and touch separately. The other senses about which we have been speaking are not recognised by our externally-orientated, material science. And so I ask you to carefully distinguish the ability to be aware of another *I* from the ability you could call the consciousness of self. With respect to this distinction, my deep love of material science forces me to make an observation, for a deep love of material science also enables one to see what is going on: today's material science is afflicted with stupidity. It turns stupid when it tries to describe what happens when someone uses his ego sense. Our material science would have us believe that when one person meets another he unconsciously deduces from the other's gestures, facial expressions, and the like, that there is another *I* present — that the awareness of another *I* is really a subconscious deduction. This is utter nonsense! In truth, when we meet someone and perceive their *I* we perceive it just as directly as we perceive a colour. It really is thick-headed to believe that the presence of another *I* is deduced from bodily perceptions, for this obscures the truth that humans have a special, higher sense for perceiving the *I* of another.

The *I* of another is perceived directly by the ego sense, just as brightness and darkness and colours are perceived through the eyes. It is a particular sense that relates us to another *I*. This is something that has to be experienced. Just as a colour affects me directly through my eyes, so another person's *I* affects me directly through my ego sense. At the appropriate time we will discuss the sense organ for the ego sense in the same way that we could discuss the sense organs of seeing, of sight. With sight it is simply easier to refer to material manifestations than it is in the case of the ego sense, but each sense has its own particular organ.



If you view your senses from a certain perspective you can say: each sense particularises and differentiates my organism. There is a real differentiation, for seeing is not the same as perception of tone, perception of tone is different from hearing, hearing is not the same as perception of thought, perception of thought is not touching. Each of these senses demarcates a separate and particular region of the human being. It is this separation of each into its special sphere to which I want you to pay especially close attention, for it is this separation that makes it possible to picture the senses as a circle divided into twelve distinct regions. (See diagram.)

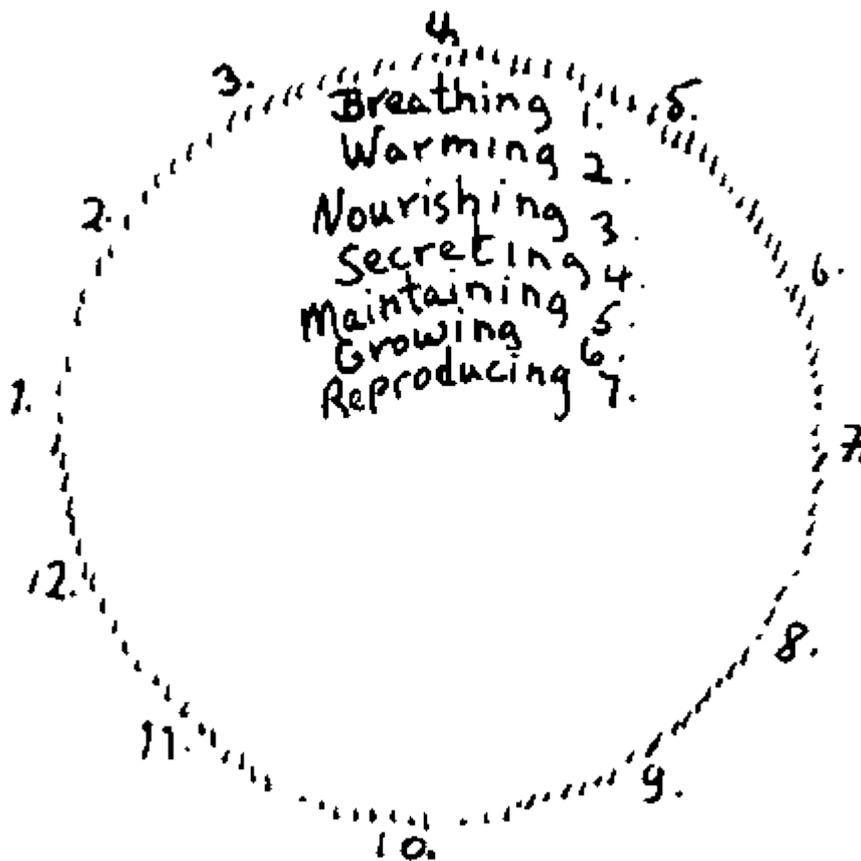
The situation of these powers of perception is different from the situation of forces that could be said to reside more deeply embedded within us. Seeing is bound up with the eyes and these constitute a particular region of a human being. Hearing is bound up with the organs of hearing, at least principally so, but it needs more besides — hearing involves much more of the organism than just the ear, which is what is normally thought of as the region of hearing. And life flows equally through each of these regions of the senses. The eye is alive, the ear is alive, that which is the foundation of all the senses is alive; the basis of touch is alive — all of it is alive. Life resides in all the senses; it flows through all the regions of the senses.

If we look more closely at this life, it also proves to be differentiated. There is not just one life process. And you must also distinguish what we have been calling the sense of life, through which we perceive our own vital state, from the subject of our present discussion. What I am talking about now is the very life that flows through us. That life also differentiates itself within us. It does so in the following manner (see diagram). The twelve regions of the

twelve senses are to be pictured as being static, at rest within the organism. But life pulsates through the whole organism, and this life is manifested in various ways. First of all there is breathing, a manifestation of life necessary to all living things. Every living organism must enter into a breathing relationship with the external world. Today I cannot go into the details of how this differs for animals, plants and human beings, but will only point out that every living thing must have its way of breathing. The breathing of a human being is perpetually being renewed by what he takes in from the outer world, and this benefits all the regions associated with the senses. The sense of smell could not manifest itself — neither sight, nor the sense of tone — if the benefits of breathing did not enliven it. Thus, I must assign 'breathing' to every sense. We breathe — that is one process — but the benefits of that process of breathing flow to all the senses.

The second process we can distinguish is warming. This occurs along with breathing, but it is a separate process. Warming, the inner process of warming something through, is the second of the life-sustaining processes. The third process that sustains life is nourishment. So here we have three ways in which life comes to us from without: breathing, warming, nourishing. The outer world is part of each of these. Something must be there to be breathed — in the case of humans, and also animals, that substance is air. Warming requires a certain amount of warmth in the surroundings; we interact with it. Just think how impossible it would be for you to maintain proper inner warmth if the temperature of your surroundings were much hotter or much colder. If it were one hundred degrees lower your warmth processes would cease, they would not be possible; at one hundred degrees hotter you would do more than just sweat! Similarly, we need food to nourish us as long as we are considering the life processes in their earthly aspects.

At this stage, the life processes take us deeper into the internal world. We now find processes that re-form what has been taken in from outside — processes that transform and internalise it. To characterise this re-forming, I would like to use the same expressions that we have used on previous occasions. Our scientists are not yet aware of these things and therefore have no names for them, so we must formulate our own. The purely inner process that is the basis of the re-forming of what we take in from outside us can be seen to be fourfold. Following the process of nourishing, the first internal process is the process of secretion, of elimination. When the nourishment we have taken in is distributed to our body, this is already the process of secretion; through the process of secretion it becomes part of our organism. The process of elimination does not just work outward, it also separates out that part of our nourishment that is to be absorbed into us. Excretion and absorption are two sides of the processes by which organs of secretion deal with our nourishment. One part of the secretion performed by organs of digestion separates out nutriment by sending them into the organism. Whatever is thus secreted into the organism must remain connected with the life processes, and this involves a further process which we will call maintaining. But for there to be life, it is not enough for what is taken in to be maintained, there also must be growth. Every living thing depends on a process of inner growth: a process of growth, taken in the widest sense. Growth processes are part of life; both nourishment and growth are part of life.



And, finally, life on earth includes reproducing the whole being; the process of growth only requires that one part produce another part. Reproduction produces the whole individual being and is a higher process than mere growth.

There are no further life processes beyond these seven. Life divides into seven definite processes. But, since they serve all twelve of the sense zones, we cannot assign definite regions to these—the seven life processes enliven all the sense zones. Therefore, when we look at the way the seven relate to the twelve we see that we have 1. Breathing, 2. Warming, 3. Nourishing, 4. Secretion, 5. Maintaining, 6. Growth, 7. Reproduction. These are distinct processes, but all of them relate to each of the senses and flow through each of the senses: their relationship with the senses is a mobile one. (See drawing.) The human being, the living human being, must be pictured as having twelve separate sense-zones through which a sevenfold life is pulsing, a mobile, sevenfold life. If you ascribe the signs of the zodiac to the twelve zones, then you have a picture of the macrocosm; if you ascribe a sense to each zone, you have the microcosm. If you assign a planet to each of the life processes, you have a picture of the macrocosm; as the life processes, they embody the microcosm. And the mobile life processes are related to the fixed zones of the senses in the same way that, in the macrocosm, the planets are related to the zones of the zodiac — they move unceasingly through them, they flow through them. And so you see another sense in which man is a macrocosm.

Now, someone who is thoroughly versed in contemporary physiology and knows how physiology is pursued today could well say to us: ‘This is all just clever tricks; it is always possible to find relations between things. And if a person has divided up the senses so as to come out with twelve, of course he can relate them to the twelve signs of the zodiac; and the

same goes for distinguishing seven life processes which can then be related to the seven planets.' To put it bluntly, such a person might believe that all this is the product of fantasy. But this is truly not the case, for the human being of today is the result of a slow process of unfolding and development. During Old Moon, the human senses were not as they are today. As I said, they provided the basis for the ancient, dreamlike clairvoyance of Old Moon existence. Today's senses are more dead than those of Old Moon. They are less united into a single whole and are more separated from the sevenfold unity of the life processes. The senses of Old Moon were themselves more akin to the life processes. Today, seeing and hearing are quite dead, they involve processes that occur at the periphery of our being.

Perception, however, was not nearly so dead on Old Moon. Take any of the senses, the sense of taste, for example. I imagine all of you know what that is like on Earth. During the Moon era it was rather different. At that time a person was not so separated from his outer surroundings as he is nowadays. For us, sugar is something out there: to connect with it we have to lick something and then inner processes have to take place. There is a clear distinction between the subjective and the objective. It was not like this during Old Moon. Then, the process was much more filled with life and there was not such a clear distinction between subjective and objective. The process of tasting was more like a life process, more like — say — breathing. When we breathe, something real happens in us. We breathe in air but, in so doing, all the blood-forming processes in us are affected—all these processes are part of breathing, which is one of the seven life processes and does not permit of such clear distinctions between subject and object. In this case, what is outside and what is within must be taken together: air outside, air within. And something real happens through the process of breathing, much more real than what happens when we taste something. When we taste, enough happens to provide a basis for the typical consciousness of today, but on Old Moon tasting was much more similar to the dreamlike process that breathing is for us today. We are not nearly so aware of ourselves in our breathing as we are when we taste something. But on Old Moon, tasting was like breathing is for us now. Man on ancient Moon experienced no more of his tasting than we experience of our breathing, nor did he feel a need for it to be otherwise. The human being had not yet become a gourmet, nor could he become one, for tasting depended on certain internal happenings that were connected with his processes of maintenance, with his continued existence on Old Moon.

Sight, the process of seeing, was also different on Old Moon. Then one did not simply look at external objects, perceiving the colour as something outside oneself. Instead, the eye penetrated into the colour and the colour entered through the eyes, helping to maintain the life of the viewer. The eye was a kind of organ for breathing colour. The state of our life was affected by how we related to the outer world through our eyes and by the perceptual processes of the eyes. On Old Moon, we expanded upon entering a blue region and contracted if we ventured into a red region: expanding-contracting, expanding-contracting. Colour affected us that much. Similarly, all the other senses also had a more living connection, both with the outer world and with the inner world of the perceiver, a connection such as the life processes have today.

And what was the sense of another ego like on Old Moon? There could not have been any

such sense on Old Moon, for it is only since the Earth stage of development that the *I* has begun to dwell within us. The sense of thought, of living thought as I previously described it, is also connected with Earth consciousness. Our sense of thought did not yet exist on Old Moon. Neither did humanity speak. And since there was nothing like our perception of each other's speech, the sense of word was also absent. In earlier times the word lived as the Logos which streamed through the whole world, including humanity. It had significance to man, but was not perceived by him. The sense of hearing was already developing, though, and was much more filled with life than the hearing of today. That sense has, so to speak, now come to rest on Earth, to a standstill. When we listen, we stay quite still, at least as a rule. Unless a sound does something of the order of bursting an eardrum, hearing does not change anything in our organism. We remain at rest within ourselves and perceive the sounds, the tones. This is not how things were during Old Moon. Then the tones really came close. They were heard, but that hearing involved being inwardly pervaded by the tones, it involved inwardly vibrating with the sounds and actively participating in their creation. Man participated actively in the production of what we call the Cosmic Word, but he was not aware of it. Thus we cannot call it a sense, properly speaking, although Moon man participated in a living fashion in the sounds that are the basis of today's hearing. If what we hear today as music had been played on Old Moon, there would have been more than just an outward dancing! If that had happened, all the internal organs, with few exceptions, would have reacted the way my larynx: and related organs react when I use them to produce a tone. Thus, it was a conscious process, but a life process in which one actively participated, for the whole inner man was brought into vibration. These vibrations were harmonious or dissonant, and the vibration was perceived in the tones.

The sense of warmth was also a life process. Today we are comparatively calm when we regard our surroundings; we just notice that it is warm or cold outside. Of course we experience it to a mild degree, but not as during Old Moon, when a rise or fall in temperature was experienced so intensely that one's whole sense of life changed. In other words, the participation was much more intense: just as one vibrated with a tone, one experienced oneself getting inwardly cooler or warmer.

I already have described what the sense of sight was like on Old Moon. There was a living involvement with colours. Some colours caused us to enlarge our body, others to contract it. Today we can only experience this symbolically, if at all. We no longer collapse when confronted with red, nor do we inflate when surrounded by blue — but we did do this on Old Moon. The sense of taste has also been described already.

The sense of smell was intimately bound up with the life processes on Old Moon. There was also a sense of balance, it was already needed. And the sense of movement was much livelier. Today we have more or less come to rest in ourselves — we are more or less dead. We move our limbs, but not much of us actually vibrates. But just imagine all the movement there was to be aware of on Old Moon when tones generated inner movement.

Now, as for the sense of life, you will gather from what I have been saying that no sense analogous to our sense of life could have been present on Old Moon. At that time one was

altogether immersed in life, in life as a whole. The skin was not the boundary of inner life. Life was something in which one swam. There was no need for a special sense of life since all the organs that today are sense organs were organs of life in those times — they were alive and they provided consciousness of that life. So there was no need for a special sense of life on Old Moon.

The sense of touch came into being along with the mineral world, which is a result of Earth evolution. On Old Moon there was nothing analogous to the sense of touch that we have developed here on Earth in conjunction with the mineral realm. There was no such sense on Old Moon where it was no more needed than was a sense of life.

If we count how many of our senses were already to be found on Old Moon as organs of life, we find there were seven. Manifestations of life are always sevenfold. The five senses unique to Earth evolution fall away when we consider Moon man. They join the other seven later, during our Earth evolution, to make up the twelve senses, because the Earth-senses have become fixed zones as have the regions of the zodiac. There were only seven senses on Old Moon, for then the senses were still mobile and full of life. Thus there was a sevenfold life on Old Moon, a life in which the senses were still immersed.

This account is the result of living observations of a super-sensible world which — initially — is beyond the limits of earthly perception. What has been said is just a small, an elementary part of all that needs to be said to show that our account is not the product of arbitrary whims. The more one presses on and achieves a vision of cosmic secrets, the more one sees that all this talk about the relation of seven to twelve is not just a game. This relationship really can be traced through all the manifestations of life. The relation of the fixed stars to the planets is a necessary outer expression of it and reveals one of the mysteries of number that underlie the cosmos. And the relationship of the number twelve to the number seven expresses one of the mysteries of existence, the mystery of how man, as bearer of the senses and faculties of perception, is related to man as the bearer of life. The number twelve is connected with the mystery of how we are able to carry an *I*. The establishment of twelve senses, each at rest in its own proper region, provided a basis for earthly self-awareness. The fact that the senses of Old Moon were still organs of life meant that Moon man could possess an astral body, but not an *I*; for then the seven senses were still organs of life and only provided the basis for the astral body. The number seven is concerned with the mysteries of the astral body just as the number twelve is concerned with the mysteries of the human *I*.