On Spiritual Research

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I would like to indicate here briefly some essential points on how one can become a spiritual researcher today, completely in keeping with the organization of today's human body.

Not everybody needs to become a spiritual scientist, but some people aspire to do so. Up to a certain point, everybody can at least become an experimenter in spiritual science, by taking up the exercises I have described in my books and lectures. But whoever wants to become a spiritual scientist nowadays must no longer do it through the physical chanting of mantras, but use instead the purely supersensible practice of thought.

Now, we have learned to think precise thoughts. If I look at the starry sky in scientific astronomy, I am dealing with precise thinking in physics and chemistry. We are striving for the same in biological research, the exploration of living beings, and we feel especially satisfied if we know how to investigate the material world in the same manner in which we train our thoughts to solve mathematical problems. This has even led to the saying that there is only as much exact natural science as there is mathematics in the sciences. For this reason one speaks of exact sciences. Everything must be surveyed in observation and experiment, in the same way we survey the matter when solving a mathematical problem. This is what "exact science" means.

Anthroposophical spiritual science speaks in the same way about "exact clairvoyance." As the contemporary scientist investigates the world exactly, the person who becomes an anthroposophical researcher does the same, only in a different field. One discovers gradually that there are forces hidden in the souls, which remain unused in ordinary life and ordinary science. One discovers, little by little, that the soul, spirit, and physical-sensory are really not yet separated in the very young child, and that the child to some extent pours into speech, into thinking, into upright walking, forces that previously existed in supersensible form. Everything which pours into the blood during the first stage of life, everything which vibrates in the organs, all this pours itself out to the extent that the human being is oriented outward; it pours out into speech, and especially into thought.

But we can turn back the flow. The oriental sage's disciple attempted to attain through chanting, meditation, or inner speaking what one might call the connection between the supersensible in man and the supersensible in the world. Modern humanity must turn thinking itself inward. We must be able to tell ourselves in complete earnestness: We have come a long way with the observation of external nature. We are looking at the exact thoughts of the star constellations and the planetary paths. We are looking at the exact thoughts of electricity, magnetism, warmth, sound, and light. We look into the world—exact thoughts re-create this world within us. As spiritual scientists we must be able to put ourselves in a situation in which we look away from all the thoughts that lead us outward to the stars, electricity, magnetic, and warmth phenomena. Like the old sage turning his mantras inward and thus allowing the logos to reveal itself to him, we must be able to turn the power of thinking inward. We must learn to soar inward in our thinking with the same energy we apply outwardly through our senses. The senses are bodily structures that help us, so that we need not use up our own strength, the strength of soul. Thus our meditative thinking will become so strong that our

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thoughts, even while developed in the inner soul being, become as vivid as sensations.

Just think how alive, how intense everything is when you hear sounds, when you see colors, when sensations of warmth and cold pervade your body. Think how dry and abstract those thoughts are that you retain from your experience of the outer world. Meditation consists in so strengthening, so intensifying the thoughts that dawn within us when we hand ourselves to the impassive observation of our thoughts, that they become as bright and clear as sensations. In this way, we achieve a new level of thinking. Ordinary day-by-day thinking is such that one feels passive: these thoughts are actually devoid of strength, mere images, copies of the outer world. It is possible, through meditation, to learn to live in the world of thoughts as one lives in one's forces of growth, as one lives in hunger and thirst, as one lives in an inner sense of physical ease—this is the fruit of meditation. One only needs to learn one thing in order to experience the thought world in this manner: one must learn to weave lovingly in thoughts.

Being a spiritual scientist means having to practice this science with the same devotion as the physicist practicing year-round in his lab. The astronomer practices all year at his observatory. It is really no easier to be a spiritual scientist than to be an astronomer or a physicist. Everybody can verify the spiritual scientist's claims. All it takes is a little attention, as I described in my book *How to Know Higher Worlds*. But just as little as it is necessary to become an astronomer in order to apply the fruits of astronomy in one's worldview, just as little does one need to become a spiritual scientist in order for spiritual science to become an element of our civilization, of our cultural life. Quite the contrary, the kind of interpersonal connections which it can bring about, and which actually must arise in the not-too-distant future—in order to stop the decadence—the kind of social cooperation, of community between human beings that will become necessary and possible, and which is already needed now, these will be substantially stimulated if one restores confidence to human social life. Those deserve our trust who, from the depth of their soul, speak about spiritual supersensible worlds because as spiritual scientists they arise to them.

Wherever souls can live in intimate closeness, so that the intimacy of the supersensible world can be shared in the supersensible being of humanity, in such a social order forces will be revived that can uniquely fortify our social life. Therefore it is entirely unfounded and only egotistical to say: I do not value the results of anthroposophical science research about the supersensible, for I cannot see things for myself. We all are so constituted that we each have a predisposition for truth, not for untruth. Not everybody can do research about the supersensible world, just as not everybody can paint a picture. As everybody can admire an image that was painted artfully, so anyone can acknowledge the truth of spiritual science as described here, provided he is fully human, with a predisposition for truth, not out of blind faith but out of an inner experience of the truth of spiritual science. This spiritual science can only be obtained insofar as through meditation, through (thoughtful) concentration in the thinking life itself, one can progress from abstract thinking to a concrete pictorial thinking, to a thinking that is inwardly alive. In this thinking, cosmic thoughts are resurrected. In this thinking, the person will feel he is on the first step of the path to the supersensible world.

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Ancient humanity proceeded from something more material, from speech directed inwardly. Modern humanity must start from something more spiritual, from thought directed inwardly, find a connection with the supersensible in the world, and regain the ability to speak of this supersensible realm in the world. If one thus enters the supersensible world by way of inwardly experienced thinking and the supersensible in one's own being partakes of the supersensible in the universe, what one finds will not remain empty words. In precisely the same way the mate-

rial world surrounds us with the multitude of plant forms, animal forms, and the light streaming down from the stars, just so to some extent the material world will fade before spiritual contemplation is revealed in pictorial thinking and a spiritual world dawns for us. We now do not just experience the sun's physical radiance; we see a world of spiritual beings, whose physical image is the physical sun. We draw the physical appearance of the sun into the spiritual being of the sun. And through the physical appearance of the moon, we penetrate to the spiritual moon-beings. We learn to see that spiritual moon-beings lead the human soul out of spiritual-soul worlds, through birth, into earthly life, where the mother and the father receive them into the body. We learn to know how, in the spiritual sun beings, lie the forces that later lead the human being through death, and we learn to see the path of the human soul out of supersensible worlds.

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This knowledge is still amplified if instead of training the will by adopting body postures, as the ancient Orientals used to do, one develops the will in the same way one has developed thinking into a precise clairvoyance. It was a training of the will, when human beings suppressed their orientation to the outside world, crossed their legs and sat on them in order to receive from the supersensible world, through the human being, perceptions from different streams in the world. Modern humans cannot do this. Their organism is different, they must work directly with the will. Whatever the ancient Easterner might have developed in a more physical fashion through body postures (also by turning the body to the east, the west, the south), all this has become an imposture for modern people. Modern humans must take their will immediately in hand. And you will find in *How to Know Higher Worlds* and *Esoteric Science* a whole series of exercises for self-control, self-education, especially cultivation of the will. Here are a few.

A person who is used to following the course of external events earlier to the later may change his/her thinking: for instance in the evening, visualize the last thing one experienced in the day, then what was experienced earlier in the day, and so forth until morning. By visualizing the course of nature in reverse sequence, the person can think beyond the natural flow of events, the person thinks at cross-stream. This strengthens the activity of will in thinking. This is particularly the case if one pays attention to very small details. Say you imagine climbing stairs: instead of picturing yourself climbing the staircase, visualize yourself standing on the last step, going backward breaking loose from the actual experience and present the ascent as a descent. This strengthens the will activity in thinking. I can also fortify this will when undertaking my self-education by telling myself: I have such and such a habit; I will alter it; three years from now I must in one particular respect have acquired a completely different habit. There are hundreds of such exercises, will exercises, aimed directly at transforming the will, so that it is loosened from the restrictions of mere physicality.

In so doing, modern man performs an exercise similar to the one practiced in the Eastern sage's postures. We cannot return to these old exercises for reasons I have explained. But in this way, modern humans can achieve an immediate relationship between their own supersensible being and the supersensible being of the world.

This can be clarified with a metaphor. Take the human eye: what makes it a seeing organ? Imagine the cataract: it is a hardening of the lens or the cornea, which shows that if matter becomes dominant in the eye, the eye can no longer be used to see. In order to serve vision, the eye must be absolutely transparent in particular parts of its organ. It must to some extent be "selfless" to serve the human being. Just so our body, when we fortify it through exercises, becomes a spiritual sense organ. Our body at particular moments of cognition, not in ordinary life, is no longer penetrated by compulsions, instincts, desires. It becomes purified, as does the eye, in order to become transparent. And just as one sees the world of color through the transparent eye, so

with a wish- and desire-free body, the body is not always transparent but it can be made transparent for particular times. It gets trained for transparency to the spiritual world, the supersensible world to which one belongs as supersensible essence.

Thus we learn to know what is truly supersensible in man. To see through what happens with a person who made his body transparent and lives in the purely supersensible world, means having solved the riddle of death. In that contemplation, we have life out of the body—we know how one lives after relinquishing the physical body and crossing the gate of death. One knows what it means to live in the world without the body. In this fashion one learns to know one's own supersensible being. And insofar as we learn to know it, as we see it crossing the gate of death while alive, we learn that it can be taken up in a supersensible world, just as, at conception it was released into earthly life by the supersensible world. And by learning to know our own human supersensible nature, by learning how in life the soul can cross the gates of death, we also learn that the soul can be received by a supersensible universe, just as it was originally released into earthly life by the supersensible world. We learn to see now the supersensible realm of the world. In living thought achieved through meditation, we learn to see behind the sun the spiritual sun-world, behind the moon the spiritual moon-world, these spiritual beings that lead man into earthly existence and that lead him out of earthly existence. And then we know that after death our living soul is received by the living being of the world, the living being of the Universe, the supersensible Universe. Just as our body is received by the material world and called to death, so too our human soul is called to life in the eternal realm by those beings which one sees through in the supersensible realm of the world.

We can then see the path followed by human civilizations as one that gives us strength to incorporate morality and religion into the natural world order, by cultivating the will, a cultivation which can be effected in very precise exercises, just like mathematics, through thought exercises that lead to an exact clairvoyance. This is what we need today.