

# A School of Spiritual Science

by

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A school of Spiritual Science is a natural link in the chain of evolution in our time. Art, science, and religion have been going their own ways for a long time in a state of more or less definite separation, but the tendency of the day is towards a reunion of things that have grown apart.

In his work, *The Birth of Tragedy out of the Spirit of Music*, Nietzsche has shown that the separation of science from the original trinity of art, science, and religion, came to pass in Greece, and he made Socrates responsible for this. But it was left to the mind of Aristotle, with the clear knowledge that the age of mythology had passed, to create logic and therewith science, as a separate entity. The Middle Ages, through the distinction that was made between worldly and spiritual development, then proceeded to make a cleavage between art and religion, although art, to begin with, was still regarded as the handmaid of religion.

One of the last great Schools, although this was in very early times, wherein art, science, and religion were still one and undivided, was the spiritual School of the Hibernian Mysteries which worked across the British Isles on into the Continent. In visions of a religious character, such, for example, as those of the legendary St. Bride, the Mystery of Golgotha was a real experience in the north-west of Europe, too. In the spirit St. Bride beheld the birth of the child Jesus. The story in the legend is narrated in artistic form. Fed by such visions, Irish Christianity came into being, based, not as the Christianity of Rome, upon history and tradition, but upon visions connected with nature. Borne by emigrant saints and holy men, this Irish form of Christianity permeated the Continent and its offspring are the Schools, and therewith the science which about the time of Charlemagne led to the founding of the School of Tours. It is there that this science begins, living on then in many modified forms in Orleans, Chartres and Paris.

The conception of Rome, however, was alien to this connection between religious experience and nature, and justification by record and tradition was here regarded as the essential. Theology as a cosmic cult in which science, art, and religion were still one, was here confronting philological theology.

Irish Christianity is akin to the experiences of the Paulines, not to those of the adherents of the Church of Peter. Paul's vision in Damascus was similar in character to the inner experiences of the Irish monks which are in line with the tradition of history.

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A School whose aim it is to fill the gap between the separate sciences and the several branches of art, to work towards re-establishing world-wide unity of outlook, cannot but be interested in these early historical connections, if the place of its inception is Great Britain.

Pope Gregory I was wise enough to be able to treasure a form of Christianity that was independent of Rome, and it was on this ground that he advised his emissary Augustine to take account of the independence of the English as well as of the Franconian Church.

*Bangor was the place where the two worlds had to meet.*

The development of modern culture has led to science itself being organized in such a way that it is simply not possible for certain forms of knowledge to come into being. For the pupil of a truly universal, world-wide outlook it goes without saying that biological evolution as a part of cosmic evolution must be studied in connection with the great cosmos.

Let us give some examples of the connections between domains of knowledge which it would never occur to a modern scientist to bring together. Anyone who studies, for instance, the divisions of cells, the process of egg-fertilization, the strange movements of the spermatozoa, and has previously schooled himself to regard such things from the cosmological point of view, will rediscover the courses and evolution of comets, suns, and planets in the cell and its transformations. The evolution of what is macroscopic will be found again in the minute and the microscopic. In truth it is not an accidental happening that humanity should have discovered the microscope and telescope at the same moment. The history of science gives us every reason to study the two worlds together. But such is the nature of our university training that undergraduates have to decide to specialize entirely either in biology or in astronomy, and so it is left to amateurs to deal with the *connections* between astronomy and biology and between the other sciences.

The materialism of modern science lies not only in the contents of the single sciences, but in the very organization of science itself, in its tendency to exaggerated specialization which separates and divides domains of knowledge which ought to be regarded as one whole.

The same could be said of educational science and medicine. Bad education provides patients for the doctor, even though it be after the lapse of many years. The educationist has an entirely inadequate knowledge of the real nature of the human being, and the doctor knows too little about the delicate interplay between the soul and the body. The teacher has opportunity to observe the soul and spirit permeating the body stage by stage, whereas a doctor is not so acquainted with this process. It is through the soft part at the top of the child's head that the spirit comes down into the body. It is a process of which we must make a concrete, not an abstract, picture. This may well seem to a modern doctor to be pure fantasy. A study of Sanscrit, however, would lead to an understanding of the word *Atma*, which is the term for this spiritual essence which comes down into the body. But Sanscrit

is part of the philological faculty, not of the medical. Of course, a modern doctor will say that he cannot have anything to do with ideas of mythology. But he would never say such a thing if he gave any heed to the genetic history of the organs in the body. Here again, it is only a man who has studied comparative zoology who has the necessary knowledge. A zoologist knows quite certainly that all the organs shift their positions, that in the lower animals the heart is situated in the head, in the fishes in the larynx, in the mammals in the breast. One who really knows the science of these migrations of the organs—and a specialist in phylogeny *does* know it—can perceive how the spirit comes down from above into the body. The teacher should be able to see how the child, in his life of *soul*, repeats what is actually physical in the evolution of the animals. For the change of teeth (and this is by no means a purely physical process, but is bound up with essential changes in the life of soul) takes place in the head, puberty lower down in the metabolic system, and the one goes over into the other. To begin with, the child is incarnated in the senses and is an imitative being, just as the senses are imitative; then the breathing is permeated with soul and the spirit penetrates more deeply into the body. The child will often hold his breath when he is listening. This is something that a younger child cannot do. When he is a little older his soul reacts to the voice of admonition and he begins to realize the nature of authority. The next stage is that the soul and the spirit lay hold of the blood circulation, and finally, about the fourteenth or fifteenth year, of the metabolic system. Puberty sets in, and now the man as a being belonging to a species is complete and self-responsible. The path of gradual incarnation is by way of the senses, into the rhythmic system of lungs and heart, into the metabolic system. A man who is a true educationist will follow this process of incorporation, noting any disturbances that may arise. To comprehend everything that belongs really only to the first elements in this sphere, one would have to be a student of the Upanishads, an educationist, a doctor, possessing a knowledge of comparative anatomy and zoology—or at least knowing something about these things—before it would be possible to speak of any universal science.

And what of chemistry? There is no close connection between physiology and chemistry. Professors of chemistry as a rule know little of medicine, and doctors have an inadequate knowledge of the real nature of the substances contained in their prescriptions. Are there many doctors to-day who, even if they had the time, would be capable actually of preparing the medicines they prescribe or of giving instructions as to the season of the year or time of the day when the necessary plants should be picked? It will be said that I am asking too much. I ask nothing, but I say that nobody should consider himself a *real* doctor who has no possibility of understanding these things. Otherwise he is simply living on tradition, and he is able to be a doctor only because before his time there have been other, real doctors, in

the world.

Think now of a substance like lime. Its origin ought to be known and understood. In its totality it belongs to the animal kingdom, but there is no real understanding of this truth. A specialized science, geochemistry, is already in existence where all these things are dealt with. No educationist, no chemist, should neglect to read the geochemistry of a very eminent Russian scientist, Vernadsky by name, for a whole world will open up before him as he reads. Vernadsky indicates that lime, taken back to its origin, is either a direct excretion from animals or is due to a process in which animals or creatures akin to animals have played an essential part. Furthermore, there is a connection between the production of the substance of lime and *mental* activity. Lime substance is found in the surroundings of the nerves in the higher animals. The spinal cord is surrounded by the bones of the spine and the brain by the skull bones. Thus it is clear that the processes of mental life, and especially the process of thinking, are connected with the material production of lime. We can really say that lime may be regarded as the materialized ashes of the process of thinking.

It may now occur to someone to say: "Yes, then what about the oyster with its shell? Does the oyster think?" The answer is that in a way, it does, because chemically speaking the body of the oyster represents an early stage of a brain which obviously cannot be used for thinking. Phosphorus is also a constituent of the human brain and the oyster, when taken as food, has a definite effect upon the brain—although those people who are in the habit of eating oysters are probably the last to know anything of this fact! All these things are part of the science that is connected with lime. It would be quite possible to write a whole book on this one subject, and a knowledge of physiology, chemistry, medicine, zoology, at least, would be necessary before such a book could be written in the proper way.

What of history? People say that human beings have always been the same, that, for instance, there have always been and will always be wars. But the truth is that people in different epochs have not always seen even the same colours. Take the Greeks, for example. There is no "blue" sky in the writings of Homer. There is no mention of or teaching about *green* before Aristotle, nor any adoration connected with *blue* before the Middle Ages. Why is it that children love red colours whereas grown-ups have a greater liking for blue? Have people not noticed that the eye is metamorphosed in the course of evolution? Everything is metamorphosed! I have shown that the position of the heart changes, and it is the same with the eye. At first the eye lay in the middle of the brow and was what is now the pineal gland. Modernists will say: "But this is all a fairy tale. Now we have come to the Cyclops!" Yet a specialist who studies the ichthyosaurus knows quite well that the one-eyed Cyclops did actually live once upon a time. Two eyes came into existence with the separation into two sexes, although there is hardly a doctor or a zoologist who is aware of it. We must study

Egyptology in order to know that there is a fundamental difference between the two eyes. The Egyptians said that the right eye is masculine, the left eye, feminine. This is considered fantasy to-day, but none the less it corresponds with a physiological fact.

Humanity passes from the red end of the spectrum towards the blue-violet. Before men saw red they were only capable of seeing twilight colours, half-shades. Therefore in Sanscrit the word for the colour of blood and the colour of snow is the same, designating not the colour itself, but the quality of radiance possessed by the colour. Everything is in process of evolution, and most professors of history who, in speaking of a Greek landscape, refer to the "eternal" blue of the sky, do not know how far from "eternal" it is! History and psychology belong together.

Specialization in science has been a necessity, but what is needed in the present age is a supplement: a *Universal World-Conception*. I am reminded that there was once a professor who gave lectures on ornithology. He spoke of how the hen takes a delight in the colours of the cock's feathers. The whole of his listeners were enchanted with his description. But, unfortunately, in the same University, another professor gave a lecture in which he said that hens are colour-blind!

Things like this happen very often indeed, but they are not noticed. There is a real need for a School of universal science. And we have made a humble beginning. Such a School may be regarded as a peaceful revolution—but it is necessary.

In the course of history, human knowledge has passed through the greatest transformations. What did it signify when Aristotle, contemplating the flames that were consuming the temple at Ephesus, suddenly realized that the ancient time had now passed away? The mythological consciousness of humanity perished in the burning of the temple of Ephesus. The times when man lived in picture-consciousness were over. Plato was the last teacher who spoke in pictures and myths. Then came his pupil, Aristotle, and spoke of—*Categories*. Alas, there exists no really intelligent book concerning the Categories of Aristotle. A prize should be offered for the writing of one. The Categories of Aristotle are God's. The old mythological consciousness spoke of "Chronos," meaning the God who regulates Time: Saturn. We are told by Greek mythology that Chronos, i.e. Saturn, consumes his own children. This is what Time does, in reality. Aristotle no longer says "Chronos." He says: "Time." He places the *concept* in the place of the *God*. And so with the other Categories. *Aristotle deprived the world of Gods*. Instead of "Zeus" he says: "Space." Zeus is the God who regulates and governs all the phenomena of Space: dawn and twilight, condensation of the clouds and the like. But Aristotle says: "Space."

The same may be said of the Hierarchies of Dionysos the Areopagite and the ten Sephiroths of the Cabbala. But Aristotle was the first to deprive the heavens of Gods, to create

Logic. Thereby he prepared for the Event of the Logos becoming flesh. Pagan as he was, Aristotle became the very foundation upon which the philosophy of the Church was built. In Dante's vision he is still burning in hell.

I have nothing to say against Scholasticism. My opinion is that those who do not study it have not really the right to the title of "doctor." It is not necessary for everyone to be a Doctor Angelicus or Seraphicus. To be a human doctor is enough, that is to say, a man who has the faculty of using his intelligence in a universal sense. A "title" is really a dreadful thing. A title should express a truth. To-day it maybe a right often possessed without right.

Real understanding of the being of man should take the place of "tests" to-day, but the specialized sciences do not provide what is necessary to make a true examiner. Tests are now beginning to be substituted for examinations. This denotes the complete bankruptcy of the modern mind. Machines are to discover whether a human being is useful or not, for men are no longer capable of it.

All this development dates back to Aristotle. We are now standing at the other end of the cycle. We can understand why Thomas Vaughan (who, be it remembered, wrote a book called *Anthroposophia*) had such harsh things to say about Aristotle. But in his day Aristotle was certainly right. To-day it is a question of pouring new life into the Categories, into concepts. We must find the way to the Hierarchies once again. Arts and sciences as hierarchically ordered teachers of humanity and as stages to the Divine must again conic into their own. We need a new way to Plato, the resurrection of a new mythology, a universal consciousness. This mythology must draw its pictures from the being of *man* himself and will therefore be "Anthroposophia," not "Theosophia," Yet it leads to "Theosophia."

The School of Spiritual Science would like to include people connected with all the sciences, all the arts, all the philosophies and religions. What it has to teach as yet exists only in part. The members of this School should all be the teachers one of another. For the universal arises when the specific offers itself as a sacrifice. The School must open up a path of self-education and self-control, for this path may not be opened by diletantism. There can be no question of a regression into pre-scientific consciousness. Theoretical knowledge must not preponderate, for art alone educates the human being in his entirety, makes visible what has been attained in knowledge, and enables the fantastic to be excluded.

The really universal point of view cannot be attained all at once, but only gradually, and for this reason it is necessary to proceed in stages, working out other points of view year by year. The educational principles according to which the School works must be those universal principles which it works out for itself. Thus it will have an inner process of growth.

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