

PATHS TO KNOWLEDGE OF HIGHER WORLDS by Rudolf Steiner. A lecture given in Oslo, November 26, 1921. Steiner Book Centre, North Vancouver, third printing, 1980; 36 pages; \$2.95.

We can be most grateful to see this little pamphlet back in print, one that should be on the work table of every serious representative of "Our Cause" alongside the verses and the myriad meditations — for it gives the key that unlocks the gate to the Way Beyond.

Some lectures can be lived with for decades, can be studied again and again. They contain "esoterics" of the highest order, that is although the words are clear and simple, it is only with time and effort they let go their secrets.

Such a one is this lecture given to students at the Oslo University in autumn 1921, part of a series attended by hundreds on the Reality of the Spirit Worlds. This setting is significant in that it often seems as though the real and living esoteric in our day is for the public. In fact the safest place, if one considers the dangers revealed secrets may incur, is out in the open, free from anything sectarian. This is reminiscent of the famous Isenheim Altar by Gruenewald, where mysteries of Christianity are visible when the panels are closed that they may heal the sick to whom the chapel was dedicated. As the panels swing open, the life story unfolds. And within? The church dignitaries, representing their theologies, appear in crown and halo.

The Paths to Higher Worlds lecture breaks into three parts, concluding with the urgently needed fruits of anthroposophy: new impulses in medicine, the arts, education, and the social order — each in its way in disarray. The central section is devoted to the cultivation of new kinds of activity of the human spirit now possible, in as much as the old ways of scientific thought are confined to the limited fields of sense perception, which is the opening theme. (In itself a beautiful instance of shaping an address in accord with the What, the How, and the Why.)

The key to the path, of course, is thinking, that fallen gift from heaven, now much maligned as mere tool for conquest of the worldly. But taken as the schooling for man's spirit, "mathematizing" science has, since Greek times, been the awakener of individual self-awareness. Today this ripened human spirit stands ready for a new awakening, for a transformation of the powers so far achieved.

Every man thinks "scientifically" nowadays, if, that is, he thinks at all (many obviously do get along instinctively with very little). But this tool of the spirit is space- and thing-bound, good for manipulating whatever can be seen and sensed, unhandy for grasping moving and growing processes in time. Needed now is a thinking that can handle time-sequences, cycles, and rhythmic processes of the living. And one also that is equal to coping with abrupt changes too, those explosive anomalies and revolutions, especially where consciousness is operative, and the inner becomes the outer.

The scope then includes three distinct forms of thinking: 1) the observational scientific — mathematical, or philosophic; 2) the metamorphic or developmental; 3) a super-metamorphic or emergent. They function in Space, in Time, and Beyond

Time and Space — bordering the Eternal.

Toward the end of the lecture, something was said about Nuts and Shells. It was in reference to architecture but applies generally to the outer expression of the inner; and to the question of honesty.

Our Thing is rich in "Nuts," nut-meats of wisdom. The form we give it to the world we call Art, whatever be the medium: word, stage, color, or print. The message: The Shell shall fit the Nut! — for they are alike in origin.

Here we face the eternal query: Do we represent to others what we stand for? Does the cover fit the book? Do buildings portray the life within them? Mastheads, logos or insignias, names of institutions and centers, are they honorable? (*Ehrlichkeit* is the word.) Or do they imply some sentimental deception, a fad or sidling-up to local favor? Or have we yet to go the Path and learn the secret of how the creative word embodies the living workings of world-thought?

Speaking of such, cast a glance at the cover of this pamphlet. A 17th century pictorial representation of the seven stages of an old, bygone path of initiation, the fourth being "putrefaction"! For heaven's sake. What is it with publishers? Their Shells don't fit their Nuts. Wherever — aside from Vancouver — be it London, New York, or the august of Europe, whose aesthetic sense is this, seen wagging its wit on book covers? Could it be...? Nay, best not say! We suggest, however, that hook people get with it and metamorphose their thinking.

One wonders whether this lecture will be read in days to come more intensely than in the past. There has appeared thus far little evidence of this genuinely "living with time" — this metamorphic thinking, and even less of that wondrous super-metamorphic thinking, transcending time and space, exemplified by Goethe.

Most endeavors seem happily to run their course in space, with variations, alongside the popular arts and sciences firmly rooted in the fields of sense perception, however much imbued with missionary intent, spiritual feeling, and good will.

These new forms of thinking are the two esoterics required for productive work out of spirit-fields, as has been demonstrated by those well along on the Path. Furthermore, for us "lesser-philites" they are the two kinds of spirit-ego-activity essential to experiencing the secret of "freedom," and by extension, one might add, of deriving I-power, enthusiasm, and soul nurture not only from the study of the Philosophy of Freedom, but from all serious wrestling with the basic written hooks. For such was the manner, (said to these Oslo students) the style chosen, and the reason for — the way in which this wisdom had to be given in the 20th century. A way or path that can set men free from the mortal bondage to things earthly.

Such a path, an inner one, is not to be much talked about, but to be taken to heart and made one's own.

— George O'Neil