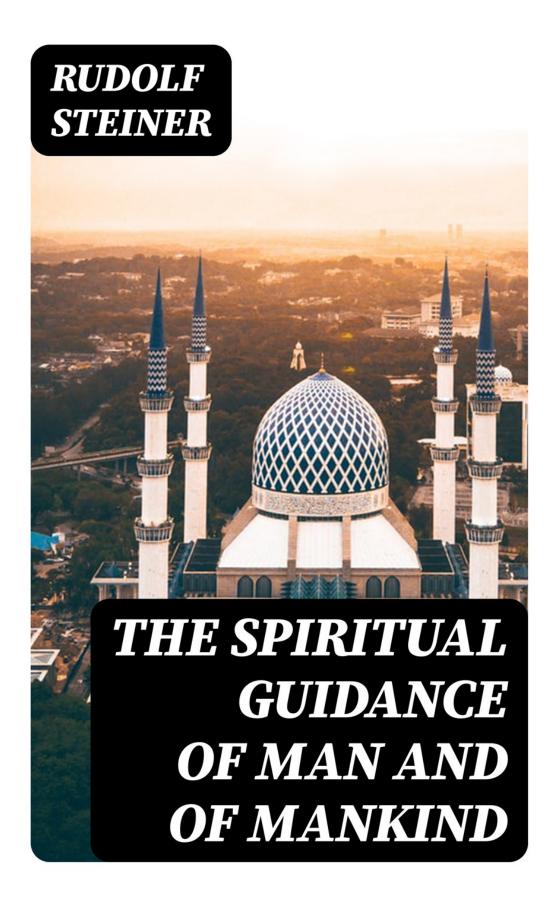
### RUDOLF STEINER



THE SPIRITUAL
GUIDANCE
OF MANAND
OF MANKIND



#### **Rudolf Steiner**

# The Spiritual Guidance of Man and of Mankind

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#### **PREFACE**

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In the following pages are reproduced the contents of some lectures delivered by me at Copenhagen in June last, in connection with the General Meeting of the Scandinavian Theosophical Society. What is here set forth was therefore spoken to an audience acquainted with occult science, or theosophy. A similar acquaintance is assumed in this work. It is throughout based on the foundations given in my books, "Theosophy" and "An Outline of Occult Science." To anyone taking up the present work who is unacquainted with these premises, it must needs appear the strange outpouring of mere fancy, but the above-named books point out the scientific basis of everything stated in this one.

I have completely re-written the shorthand report of the lectures; nevertheless it has been my intention on publishing them, to preserve the character given in oral delivery. This is specially mentioned because it is in general my opinion that the form of work intended for reading should be quite different from that used in speaking. I have expressed this principle of mine in all my earlier writings, as far as they were intended for the press. If in this instance I have worked out my subject in closer connection with the spoken word, it is because I have reasons for letting the work appear at this juncture, and an adaptation completely in accordance with the above rule would take a great deal of time.

## THE SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE OF MAN AND OF MANKIND

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#### LECTURE I.

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A man reflecting on his own nature soon becomes conscious that there is within him a second and more powerful self than the one bounded by his thoughts, his feelings and the fully-conscious impulses of his will. He becomes aware that he is subject to that second self, as to a higher power. It is true that at first he will feel it to be a lower entity as compared with the one limited by his intelligent and fully-conscious soul, with its inclinations towards the Good and True. And at first he will strive to overcome that lower entity.

But closer self-examination may reveal something else about the second self. If we often, in the course of our lives, make a kind of survey of our acts and experiences, we make a singular discovery about ourselves. And the older we are, the more significant do we think that discovery. If we ask ourselves what we did or said at a particular period of our lives, it turns out that we have done very many things which are only really understood in later years. Seven or eight, or perhaps twenty years ago, we did certain things, and we know quite well that only now, long afterwards, is our

intelligence ripe enough to understand what we did or said at that earlier period.

Many people do not make such discoveries about themselves, because they do not lay themselves out to do so. But it is extremely profitable to hold such communion frequently with one's own soul. For directly a man becomes aware that he has done things in former years which he is only now beginning to understand, that formerly his intelligence was not ripe enough to understand them,—at a moment such as this, something like the following feeling arises in the soul: The man feels himself protected by a good power, which rules in the depths of his own being; he begins to have more and more confidence in the fact that really, in the highest sense of the word, he is not alone in the world, and that everything which he understands, and is consciously able to do, is after all but a small part of what he really accomplished in the world.

If this observation is often made, it is possible to carry out in practical life something which is very easy to see theoretically. It is easy to see that we should not make much progress in life if we had to accomplish everything we have to do, in full consciousness, with our intelligence taking note of every circumstance affecting us. In order to see this theoretically, we have only to reflect as follows: In what section of his life does a human being perform those acts which are really most important as regards his own existence? When does he act most wisely for himself? He does this from about the time of his birth up to that period to which his memory goes back when in later life he surveys his earthly existence. If he recalls what he did three, four or

five years ago, and then goes farther and farther back, he comes at last to a certain point in childhood, beyond which memory cannot go. What lies beyond it may be told by parents or others, but a man's own recollection only extends to a certain point in the past. That point is the moment at which the individual felt himself to be an ego. In the lives of people whose memory is limited to the normal, there must always be such a point, but previously to it, the human soul has worked in the wisest possible manner on the individual, and never afterwards, when man has gained consciousness, can he accomplish such vast and magnificent work on himself as he carries out, from subconscious motives, during the first years of childhood.

For we know that at birth man takes into the physical world what he has brought with him as the result of his former earthly lives. When he is born, his physical brain, for instance, is but a very imperfect instrument. The soul has to work a finer organization into that instrument, in order to make it the agent of everything which the soul is capable of performing. In point of fact the human soul, before it is fully conscious, works upon the brain so as to make it an instrument for exercising all the abilities, aptitudes, qualities, etc., which appertain to the soul as the result of its former earthly lives. This work on a man's own body is directed from points of view which are wiser than anything which he can subsequently do for himself when in possession of full consciousness.

Moreover, man during this period not only elaborates his brain plastically, but has to learn three most important things for his earthly existence. The first is the equilibrium