

Part 1 Vowels: The Sounds of the Soul

Life is a constant interplay between the external and the internal, the world that surrounds us and our inner world

These two dynamics are reflected in language in the contrast between *consonants* and *vowels*.

Whereas the former speak of the world around us, its landscapes and shapes and forces, the vowels sing our from our heart to express how we are experiencing the world, in joy or pain or love or sorrow. They express our thoughts and feelings, as well as our impulses to do things in the world. Vowels are truly the language of the soul, and each of the vowels expresses one of the pure, archetypal human feelings. An exploration of the vowels can open up a whole treasure box of experiences for us. For many people, the feeling life is turbulent: for others it is flattened and dull. When we learn to feel deeply the power of each of the different vowels, it is as if we meet the blessing fairy godmothers whom we heard about in children's stories, each of which gave one gift to the small child.

Indeed, as we enter the world of the vowels in eurythmy and speech, we realize how the vowels are the signature of the *truly human*. The depth of experience that we experience in the vowels is a world that will never be available to machines. The journey through the vowels is one more way in which eurythmy helps us know what we really are as human beings: human spirits living consciously in the physical-material world.

Each of the vowels has a special correspondence to one of the planets. The fairy godmothers I mentioned are like the gods or goddesses of the planets who have given to the human being mythological soul archetypes. These archetypes live in our feeling life and in the organs of our body. They support us as we learn to stand in our selves and develop our biographies on earth. They guide the different life cycles we pass through as we grow, leading us through archetypal life patterns in harmony with the planets. Nothing, however, is predetermined, and as we grow and develop, we also separate ourselves from the general human-consciousness, and become individuated ego beings. This entire story is revealed in the vowels. In these essays I will concentrate on only seven major sounds, corresponding to seven major planets. I will, however, have to omit most of the diphthongs, or combination vowels, such as au, i, oi, and the like. Nor will I go into the differences between long vowels and short vowels.

Remember that any sound that can be made by the mouth can also be expressed in movement: the sounding and the movement are *identical* in nature. It requires a bit of practice, however, to be able to perceive how to vary a sound to express its unique coloring. In English we have what is called a "vowel cloud," in that in addition to the archetypal vowel sounds, we have almost infinite variations on all of them. Linguists acknowledge, for instance, that the sound A (ah) is a basic archetypal sound, but in English we vary that to include uh and æ and many more sounds that exist as combinations between A (ah) and E (ā) or O (ō).

The most beautiful way to introduce the vowels is to bring them in the order that they appear in the classical romance languages, namely, AEIO and U (in English, ah, ā, ē, ō and oo). In this sequence, they tell a beautiful story of the unfolding and the maturing of our soul life. They can tell us the story of the evolution of a human being from birth to death, or the evolution of a loving relationship from wonder through separation to higher union. Essentially, they tell the great story of humanity, who has evolved from innocence through pain to self-conscious individuation, rising to love, from which the fruits of our biography can be offered back to our Creator, on a dearer and higher level.

These vowels bring love and clarity and grounded-ness to us. Enjoy your journey!