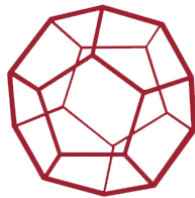


The Four Seasons and the Archangels

GA 229



The Four Seasons and the Archangels

GA 229

Rudolf Steiner

October 1923

Source: Rudolf Steiner Archive

Table of Contents

Preface

I. The Michael Imagination

II. The Christmas Imagination

III. The Easter Imagination

IV. The St. John Imagination

V. The Working Together of the Four Archangels

Preface

These lectures contain profound descriptions of the experience of the year in four Cosmic Imaginations. The activities of four mighty Archangels are described: Michael in autumn at Michaelmas, Gabriel in winter at Christmas, Raphael in spring at Easter, and Uriel in summer at St. John's Tide. These Imaginations provide material for endless meditative study. Included are 5 color plates of Steiner's blackboard drawings.



I The Michael Imagination

Dornach, 5 October, 1923

To-day I would like first to remind you how events which take place behind the veil of appearance, outside the physical, sense-perceptible world, can be described in pictorial terms. One has to speak in this way of these events, but the pictures correspond throughout with reality.

With regard to sense-perceptible events, we are living in a time of hard tests for humanity, and these tests will become harder still. Many old forms of civilisation, to which people still mistakenly cling, will sink into the abyss, and there will be an insistent demand that man must find his way to something new. In speaking of the course that the external life of humanity will take in the early future, we cannot — as I have often said — arouse any kind of optimistic hopes. But a valid judgment as to the significance of external events cannot be formed unless we consider also the determining, directing cosmic events which occur behind the veil of the senses.

When a man looks out attentively with his physical eyes and his other senses at his surroundings, he perceives the physical environment of the earth, and the various kingdoms of nature within it. This is the milieu in which comes to pass all that manifests as wind and weather in the course of the year. When we direct our senses towards the external world, we have all this before us: these are the external facts. But behind the atmosphere, the sun-illuminated atmosphere, there lies another world, perceptible by spiritual organs, as we may call them. Compared with the sense-world, this other world is a higher world, a world wherein a kind of light, a kind of spiritual light or astral light, spiritual existence and spiritual deeds shine out and run their course. And they are in truth no less significant for the whole development of the world and of man than the historical events in the external environment of the earth and on its surface.

If anyone to-day is able to penetrate into these astral realms, wandering through them as one may wander among woods and mountains and find signposts at cross roads, he may find "signposts" there in the astral light, inscribed in spiritual script. But these signposts have a quite special characteristic: they are not comprehensible without further explanation, even for someone who can "read" in the astral light. In the spiritual world and in its communications, things are not made as convenient as possible: anything one encounters there presents itself as a riddle to be solved. Only through inner investigation, through experiencing inwardly the riddle and much else, can one discover what the inscription on a spiritual signpost signifies.

And so at this time — indeed for some decades now, but particularly at this time of hard trials for mankind — one can read in the astral light, as one goes about spiritually in these realms, a remarkable saying. It sounds like a prosaic comparison, but in this case, because of its inner significance, the prosaic does not remain prosaic. Just as we find notices to help us find our way — and we find signposts even in poetical landscapes — so we encounter an important spiritual signpost in the astral light. Time and time again, exactly repeated, we find there to-day the following saying, inscribed in highly significant spiritual script:

*O Man,
You mould it to your service,
You reveal it according to the value of its substance
In many of your works.
Yet it will bring you healing
Only when it reveals to you
The lofty power of its spirit.*

Injunctions of this kind, pointing to facts significant for man, are inscribed, as I have said, in the astral light, presenting themselves first as a kind of riddle to be solved, so that men may bring their soul-forces into activity.

Now, during our days here, we will contribute something to the solving of this saying — really a simple saying, but important for mankind to-day.

Let us recall how in many of our studies here the course of the year has been brought before our souls. A man first observes it quite externally: when spring comes he sees nature sprouting and budding; he sees how the plants grow and come to flower, how life everywhere springs up out of the soil. All this is enhanced as summer draws on; in summer it rises to its highest level. And then, when autumn comes, it withers and fades away; and when winter comes it dies into the lap of the earth.

This cycle of the year — which in earlier times, when a more instinctive consciousness prevailed, was celebrated with festivals — has another side, also mentioned here. During winter the earth is united with the elemental spirits. They withdraw into the interior of the earth and live there among the plant-roots that are preparing for new growth, and among the other nature-beings who spend the winter there. Then, when spring comes, the earth breathes out, as it were, its elemental being. The elemental spirits rise up as though from a tomb and ascend into the atmosphere. During winter they accepted the inner order of the earth, but now, as spring advances and especially when summer comes on, they receive more and more into their being and activity the order which is imposed upon them by the stars and the movements of the stars. When high summer has come, then out there in the periphery of the earth there is a surging of life among the elemental beings who had spent the winter in quiet and silence under the earth's mantle of snow. In the swirling and whirling of their dance they are governed by the reciprocal laws of planetary movement, by the pattern of the fixed stars, and so on. When autumn comes, they turn towards the earth. As they approach the earth, they become subject more and more to the laws of earth, so that in winter they may be breathed in again by the earth, once more to rest there in quietude.

Anyone who can thus experience the cycle of the year feels that his whole human life is wonderfully enriched. To-day — and it has been so for some time past — a man normally experiences, and then but dimly, half-consciously, only the physical-etheric processes of the body which occur within his skin. He experiences his breathing, the circulation of his blood. Everything that takes its course outside, in wind and weather, during the year; all that lives in the sprouting of the seed-forces, the fruiting of the earth-forces — all this is no less significant and decisive for the whole life of man, even though he is not conscious of it, than the breathing and blood-circulation which go on inside his skin.

When the sun rises over any region of the earth, we share in the effects of its warmth and light. But **when a man accepts Anthroposophy in the right sense, not reading it like a sensational novel but so that what it imparts becomes the content of his mind, then he gradually educates his heart and soul to experience all that goes on outside in the course of the year.** Just as in the course of a day we experience early freshness, readiness for work in the morning, then the onset of hunger and of evening weariness, and just as we can trace the inner life and activity of the forces and substances within our skin, so, by taking to heart anthroposophical ideas — entirely different from the usual descriptions of sense-perceptible events — we can prepare our souls to become receptive to the activities that go on outside in the course of the year. We can deepen more and more this sympathetic participation in the cycle of the year, and we can enrich it so that we do not live sourly — one might say — within our skin, letting the outer world pass us by. On the contrary, we can enrich our experience so that we feel ourselves living in the blossoming of every flower, in the breaking open of the buds, in that wonderful secret of the morning, the glistening of dew-drops in the rays of the sun. In these ways we can get beyond that dull, conventional way of reacting to the outer world merely by putting on our overcoat in winter and lighter clothes in summer and taking an umbrella when it rains. **When we go out from ourselves and experience the interweaving activities, the flow and ebb, of nature — only then do we really understand the cycle of the year.**

Then, when spring passes over the earth and summer is drawing near, a man will be in the midst of it with his heart and soul; he will discern how the sprouting and budding life of nature unfolds, how the elemental spirits fly and whirl in a pattern laid down for them by planetary movements. And then, in the time of high summer, he will go out of himself to share in the life of the cosmos. Certainly this damps down his own inner life, but at the same time his summer experience leads him out — in a cosmic waking-sleep, one might say — to enter into the doings of the planets.

To-day, generally speaking, people feel they can enter into the life of nature only in the season of growth — of germination and budding, flowering and fruiting. Even if they cannot fully experience all this, they have more sympathy and perception for it than they have for the autumn season of fading and dying away. But in truth we earn the right to enter into the season of spring growth only if we can enter also into the time when summer wanes and autumn draws on; the season of sinking down and dying that comes with winter. And if during high summer we rise

inwardly, in a cosmic waking-sleep, with the elemental beings to the region where planetary activity in the outer world can be inwardly experienced, then we ought equally to sink ourselves down under the frost and snow-mantle of winter, so that we enter into the secrets of the womb of the earth during mid-winter; and we ought to participate in the fading and dying-off of nature when autumn begins.

If, however, we are to participate in this waning of nature, just as we do in nature's growing time, we can do so only if in a certain sense we are able to experience the dying away of nature in our own inner being. For if a man becomes more sensitive to the secret workings of nature, and thus participates actively in nature's germinating and fruiting, it follows that he will livingly experience also the effects of autumn in the outer world. But it would be comfortless for man if he could experience this only in the form it takes in nature; if he were to come only to a nature-consciousness concerning the secrets of autumn and winter, as he readily does concerning the secrets of spring and summer. When the events of autumn and winter draw on, when Michaelmas comes, he certainly must enter sensitively into the processes of fading and dying; but he must not, as he does in summer, give himself over to a nature-consciousness. On the contrary, he must then devote himself to self-consciousness. In the time when external nature is dying, he must oppose nature-consciousness with the force of self-consciousness.

And then the form of Michael stands before us again. If, under the impulse of Anthroposophy, a man enters thus into the enjoyment of nature, the consciousness of nature, but then also awakes in himself an autumnal self-consciousness, then the picture of Michael with the dragon will stand majestically before him, revealing in picture-form the overcoming of nature-consciousness by self-consciousness when autumn draws near. This will come about if man can experience not only an inward spring and summer, but also a dying, death-bringing autumn and winter. Then it will be possible for the picture of Michael with the dragon to appear again as a forcible Imagination, summoning man to inner activity.



For a man who out of present-day spiritual knowledge wrestles his way through to an experience of this picture, it expresses something very powerful. For when, after St. John's tide, July, August and September draw on, he will come to realise how he has been living through a waking-sleep of inner planetary experience in company with the earth's elemental beings, and he will become aware of what this really signifies.

It signifies an inner process of combustion, but we must not picture it as being like external combustion. All the processes which take a definite form in the outer world go on also within the human organism, but in a different guise. And so it is a fact that these inner processes reflect the changing course of the year.

The inner process which occurs during high summer is a permeation of the organism by that which is represented crudely in the material world as sulphur. When a man lives with the summer sun and its effects, he experiences a sulphurising process in his physical-etheric being. The sulphur that he carries within him as a useful substance has a special importance for him in high summer, quite different from its importance at other seasons. It becomes a kind of combustion process. It is natural for man that the sulphur within him should thus rise at midsummer to a specially enhanced condition. Material substances in different beings have secrets not dreamt of by materialistic science.

Everything physical-etheric in man is thus glowed through at midsummer with inward sulphur-fire, to use Jacob Boehm's expression. It is a gentle, intimate process, not perceptible by ordinary consciousness, but — as is generally true of other such processes — it has a tremendous, decisive significance for events in the cosmos.

This sulphurising process in human bodies at midsummer, although it is so mild and gentle and imperceptible to man himself, has very great importance for the evolution of the cosmos. A great deal happens out there in the cosmos when in summer human beings shine inwardly with the sulphur-process. It is not only the physically visible glow-worms (*Johannis Käferchen*) which shine out around St. John's Day. Seen from other planets, the inner being of man then begins to shine, becoming visible as a being of light to the etheric eyes of other planetary beings. That is the sulphurising process. At the height of summer human beings begin to shine out into cosmic space as brightly for other planetary beings as glow-worms shine with their own light in the meadows at St. John's time.

From the standpoint of the cosmos this is a majestically beautiful sight, for it is in glorious astral light that human beings shine out into the cosmos during high summer, but at the same time it gives occasion for the Ahrimanic power to draw near to man. For this power is very closely related to the sulphurising process in the human organism. We can see how, on the one hand, man shines out into the cosmos in the St. John's light, and on the other how the dragon-like serpent-form of Ahriman winds its way among the human beings shining in the astral light and tries to ensnare and embrace them, to draw them down into the realm of half-conscious sleep and dreams. Then, caught in this web of illusion, they would become world-dreamers, and in this condition they would be a prey to the Ahrimanic powers. All this has significance for the cosmos also.

And when in high summer, from a particular constellation, meteors fall in great showers of cosmic iron, then this cosmic iron, which carries an enormously powerful healing force, is the weapon which the gods bring to bear against Ahriman, as dragon-like he tries to coil round the shining forms of men. The force which falls on the earth in the meteoric iron is indeed a cosmic force whereby the higher gods endeavour to gain a victory over the Ahrimanic powers, when autumn comes on. And this majestic display in cosmic space, when the August meteor showers stream down into the human shining in the astral light, has its counterpart — so gentle and apparently so small — in a change that occurs in the human blood. This human blood, which is in truth not such a material thing as present-day science imagines, but is permeated throughout by impulses from soul and spirit, is rayed through by the force which is carried as iron into the blood and wages war there on anxiety, fear and hate. The processes which are set going in every blood-corpuscle when the force of iron shoots into it are the same, on a minute human scale, as those which take place when meteors fall in a shining stream through the air. This permeation of human blood by the anxiety-dispelling force of iron is a meteoric activity. The effect of the raying in of the iron is to drive fear and anxiety out of the blood.

And so, as the gods with their meteors wage war on the spirit who would like to radiate fear over all the earth through his coiling serpent-form, and while they cause iron to stream radiantly into this fear-tainted atmosphere, which reaches its peak when autumn approaches or when summer wanes — so the same process occurs inwardly in man, when his blood is permeated with iron. We can understand these things only if we understand their inner spiritual significance on the one hand, and if on the other we recognise how the sulphur-process and the iron-process in man are connected with corresponding events in the cosmos.

A man who looks out into space and sees a shooting-star should say to himself, with reverence for the gods: "That occurrence in the great expanse of space has its minute counterpart continuously in myself. There are the shooting-stars, while in every one of my blood-corpuscles iron is taking form: my life is full of shooting-stars, miniature shooting-stars." And this inner fall of shooting-stars, pointing to the life of the blood, is especially important when autumn approaches, when the sulphur-process is at its peak. For when men are shining like glow-worms in the way I have described, then the counter-force is present also, for millions of tiny meteors are scintillating inwardly in their blood.

This is the connection between the inner man and the universe. And then we can see how, especially when autumn is approaching, there is a great raying-out of sulphur from the nerve-system towards the brain. The whole man can then be seen as a sulphur-illuminated phantom, so to speak.

But raying into this bluish-yellow sulphur atmosphere come the meteor swarms from the blood. That is the other phantom. While the sulphur-phantom rises in clouds from the lower part of man towards his head, the iron-forming process rays out from his head and pours itself like a stream of meteors into the life of the blood.

Such is man, when Michaelmas draws near. And he must learn to make conscious use of the meteoric-force in his blood. **He must learn to keep the Michael Festival by making it a festival for the conquest of anxiety and fear; a festival of inner strength and initiative; a festival for the commemoration of selfless self-consciousness.**

Just as at Christmas we celebrate the birth of the Redeemer, and at Easter the death and resurrection of the Redeemer, and as at St. John's Tide we celebrate the outpouring of human souls into cosmic space, so at Michaelmas — if the Michael Festival is to be rightly understood — we must celebrate that which lives spiritually in the sulphurising and meteorising process in man, and should stand before human consciousness in its whole soul-spiritual significance especially at Michaelmas. Then a man can say to himself: "You will become lord of this process, which otherwise takes its natural course outside your consciousness, if — just as you bow thankfully before the birth of the Redeemer at Christmas and experience Easter with deep inner response — you **learn to experience how at this autumn festival of Michael there should grow in you everything that goes against love of ease, against anxiety, and makes for the unfolding of inner initiative and free, strong, courageous will.**" **The Festival of strong will — that is how we should conceive of the Michael Festival.** If that is done, if nature-knowledge is true, spiritual human self-consciousness, then the Michael Festival will shine out in its true colours.

But before mankind can think of celebrating the Michael Festival, there will have to be a renewal in human souls. It is the renewal of the whole soul-disposition of men that should be celebrated at the Michael Festival — not as an outward or conventional ceremony, but as a festival which renews the whole inner man.

Then, out of all I have described, the majestic image of Michael and the Dragon will arise once more. But this picture of Michael and the Dragon paints itself out of the cosmos. The Dragon paints himself for us, forming his body out of bluish-yellow sulphur streams. We see the Dragon shaping himself in shimmering clouds of radiance out of the sulphur-vapours; and over the Dragon rises the figure of Michael, Michael with his sword.

But we shall picture this rightly only if we see the space where Michael displays his power and his lordship over the dragon as filled not with indifferent clouds but with showers of meteoric iron. These showers take form from the power that streams out from Michael's heart; they are welded together into the sword of Michael, who overcomes the Dragon with his sword of meteoric iron.

If we understand what is going on in the universe and in man, then the cosmos itself will paint from out of its own forces. Then one does not lay on this or that colour according to human ideas, but one paints, in harmony with divine powers, the world which expresses their being, the whole being of Michael and the Dragon, as it can hover before one. A renewal of the old pictures comes about if one can paint out of direct contemplation of the cosmos. Then the pictures will show what is really there, and not what fanciful individuals may somehow portray in pictures of Michael and the Dragon.

Then men will come to understand these things, and to reflect on them with understanding, and they will bring mind and feeling and will to meet the autumn in the course of the year. Then at the beginning of autumn, at the Michael Festival, the picture of Michael with the Dragon will stand there to act as a powerful summons, a powerful spur to action, which must work on men in the midst of the events of our times. And then we shall understand how this impulse points symbolically to something in which the whole destiny — perhaps indeed the tragedy — of our epoch is being played out.

During the last three or four centuries we have developed a magnificent natural science and a far-reaching technology, based on the most widely-distributed material to be found on earth. We have learnt to make out of *iron* nearly all the most essential and important things produced by mankind in a materialistic age. In our locomotives, our factories, on all sides we see how we have built up this whole material civilisation on iron, or on steel, which is only iron transformed. And all the uses to which iron is put are a

symbolic indication of how we have built our whole life and outlook out of matter and want to go on doing so. But that is a downward-leading path. Man can rescue himself from its impending dangers only if he starts to spiritualise life in this very domain, if he penetrates through his environment to the spiritual; if he turns from the iron which is used for making engines and looks up again to the meteoric iron which showers down from the cosmos to the earth and is the outer material from which the power of Michael is forged. Men must come to see the great significance of the following words: "Here on earth, in this epoch of materialism, you have made use of iron, in accordance with the insight gained from your observation of matter. Now, just as you must transform your vision of matter through the development of natural science into Spiritual Science, so must you rise from your former idea of iron to a perception of meteoric iron, the iron of Michael's sword. Then healing will come from what you can make of it." This is the content of the aphorism:

.....

*O Man,
You mould it (iron) to your service,
You reveal it (iron) according to the value of its substance
In many of your works.
Yet it will bring you healing
Only when it reveals to you
The lofty power of its spirit.*

.....

That is, the lofty power of Michael, with the sword he has welded together in cosmic space out of meteoric iron. Healing will come when our material civilisation proves capable of spiritualising the power of iron into the power of Michael-iron, which gives man self-consciousness in place of mere nature-consciousness.

You have seen that precisely the most important demand of our time, the Michael-demand, is implicit in this aphorism, this script that reveals itself in the astral light.

II The Christmas Imagination

Dornach, 6 October, 1923

Yesterday there stood before us the picture of Michael battling with the Dragon, as shown to us through an inner understanding of the course of the year. And art can really be nothing else than a reflection of what human beings feel in relation to the universe. Of course this is possible at various levels and from various standpoints; but on the whole we can speak of a work of art only when it expresses human feeling in such a way that through it the soul is opened to the secrets of the universe.

To-day, in the same spirit that led us to the culminating picture of Michael and the Dragon, we will carry further our study of the seasons of the year.

We know from yesterday's lecture that when autumn draws on, a kind of in-breathing by the Earth, a spiritual in-breathing, occurs, and the elemental beings are drawn back into the bosom of the Earth. Those who went out in the height of summer and turned back at Michaelmas are drawn further and further in, until in the depths of winter they are united most intimately with the Earth.

Now we must realise that in winter the Earth is above all self-contained, enclosed in itself. It has drawn back everything of a spiritual nature which it had allowed to stream out from itself during the summer. Hence in the depths of winter the Earth is more earthly, more truly itself, than at any other time. And while for our further studies we must keep firmly in view this winter character of the Earth, we must of course not forget that when winter prevails over half the Earth, the other half is experiencing summer. This is a fact we must keep in the background of our minds. But just now we are concerned with the coming of winter to one part of the Earth. It is then that the Earth unfolds its own nature in the deepest sense; the nature that makes it truly Earth.



Let us now look at this Earth of ours. It has a solid core, hidden below its visible outer surface, which in turn is largely covered by water, the hydrosphere. The continents are only floating, as it were, in this great watery expanse. And we can picture the hydrosphere as extending up into the atmosphere, for the atmosphere is always permeated by a watery element. Certainly this is much thinner than the water of the sea and the river, but there is no definite boundary in the atmosphere where the watery element comes to an end. Hence if we are to show schematically what the Earth is like in this respect we shall have, first, a solid core in the centre. Around it we have the watery regions (blue). I must of course indicate the jutting up of the continents: they will have to be exaggerated, for they should really be no more prominent than the irregularities on the skin of an orange. Then I must put in the hydrosphere, this watery part of the atmosphere all round the Earth. Let us look at this picture (blue) and ask ourselves what it really represents? It is not something made up out of itself: it is water shaped by the whole cosmos. The reason why this body of air and water is spherical is because the cosmos extends round it as a sphere on all sides. And this means that strong forces play in on the Earth as a whole.

The effect is that if we were to look at the Earth from some other planet, it would appear to us as a great water-drop in the cosmos. There would be all sorts of prominences on it — the continents, which would be rather

differently coloured — but as a whole it would appear to us as a great water-drop in the midst of the universe.

Let us now consider this from a cosmic standpoint. What is this great water-drop? It is something which takes its shape from its whole cosmic environment.

If one approaches the matter from a spiritual-scientific point of view, bringing Imagination and Inspiration to bear on it, one comes to know what this water-drop really is. It is nothing other than a gigantic drop of quicksilver; but the quicksilver is present in an extraordinarily rarefied condition.

The possibility of these high attenuations has been shown by the work of Frau Dr. Kolisko. At our Biological Institute in Stuttgart the attempt has been made to put this on an exact footing. It has been possible to make dilutions of substances up to one part in a trillion, and in fact to establish precisely the effects which such high dilutions of particular substances can have. Hitherto, in homoeopathy, this has been merely a matter of belief; now it has been raised to the level of exact science. The graphs which have been drawn leave no doubt to-day that the effects of the smallest particles follow a rhythmical course. I will not go into details; the work has been published and these findings can now be verified. Here I wish to point out only that even in the earthly realm the effects of enormous dilutions must be reckoned with.

Here we are concerned with something of which we can say, when we use it on a small scale — this is water. We can draw water from a river or a well and use it as water. Yes, it is water, but there is no water that consists solely of hydrogen and oxygen. It would be absurd for anyone to suppose that water consists of hydrogen and oxygen only. In the case of mineral waters and such-like, it is of course obvious that something else is present. But there is no water composed solely of hydrogen and oxygen: that is only a first approximation. All water, wherever it appears, is permeated with something else. Essentially, the whole water-mass of the Earth is quicksilver for the universe. Only the small quantities we use are water for us. For the universe, this water is not water, but quicksilver.

Hence we can say, first of all, that in so far as we are considering the hydrosphere in relation to water, we have to do with a drop of quicksilver in the cosmos. Embedded as it were in this drop of quicksilver, naturally, are metallic substances — in brief, all the earthly substances. They

represent the solid mass of the Earth, and they tend to assume their own special forms. Thus in the structure as a whole we observe [the general spherical form of quick]silver. Ordinary metallic quicksilver, one might say, is only the symbol produced by nature for the general activity of quicksilver, leading quite definitely to a spherical form. Embedded in the whole sphere are the metallic crystals, with the manifold variety of their own distinctive forms. Hence we have before us this formation of warmth, water, air: its tendency, as I have said, is to assume a spherical form, with individual crystal forms within it.

Even if we single out the air (dark red) which surrounds the Earth as its atmosphere, we can never speak simply of air, for the air always has a tendency to contain warmth in some degree: the air is permeated with warmth (violet). Thus we must add this fourth element, warmth, which enters into the air.

Now this warmth, which comes into the air from above, carries pre-eminently within it the sulphur-process, imparted to it from the cosmos. And to the sulphur-process is added the mercurial process, as I have described it in connection with the hydrosphere. Thus we have air-warmth — the sulphur-process; water-air — the mercurial process.

If now we turn towards the inner part of the Earth, we come to the acid-formation process, and especially to the salt-process, for the salts derive from the acids; and this is what the Earth really wants to be. Hence, when we look up into the cosmos, we are really looking at the sulphur-process. When we consider the tendency of the Earth to form itself into a cosmic water-drop, we are really looking at the mercurial process. And if we turn our gaze to the solid earth underfoot, which in spring gives rise to all that we see as growing, sprouting life, we are looking at the salt-process.

This salt-process is all-important for springtime life and growth. For the roots of plants, in forming themselves out of the seeds, depend for their whole growth on their relation to the salt-formations in the soil. It is these salt-formations — in the widest sense of the term — which give substance to the roots and enable them to act as the earthly foundation of plant-life.

Thus in turning back to the Earth we encounter the salt-process. This is what the Earth makes of itself in the depths of winter, whereas in summer there is much more intermingling. For in summer the air is shot through with sulphurising processes, which indeed occur also in lightning and thunder; they penetrate far down, so that the whole course of the season

is sulphurised. Then we come at Michaelmas to the time when the sulphur-process is driven back by meteoric iron, as I told you yesterday. During summer, too, the salt-process mingles with the atmosphere, for the growing plants carry the salts up through their leaves and blossoms right up into the seeds. Naturally, we find the salts widely distributed in the plant; they etherealise themselves in the etheric oils and so on; they approach the sulphurising process. The salts are carried up through the plants; they stream out and become part of the being of the atmosphere.

In high summer, accordingly, we have a mingling of the mercurial element, always present in the Earth, with the sulphurising and salt-forming elements. If at this season we stand here on Earth, our head actually projects into a mixture of sulphur, mercury and salt; while the arrival of deep winter means that each of these three principles reverts to its own inner condition. The salts withdraw into the inwardness of the Earth, and the tendency for the hydrosphere to assume a spherical shape reasserts itself — imaged in winter by the snow-mantle that covers parts of the Earth. The sulphur process withdraws, so that there is no particular occasion to observe it. In place of it, something else comes to the fore during the deep winter season.

The plants have developed from spring until autumn, finally concentrating themselves in their seeds. What is this seeding process? When plants run to seed, they are doing what we are constantly doing in a dull human way when we use plants for food. We cook them. Now the development of a plant to blossom and then to seed-production is nature's cookery; it approaches the sulphur-process. The plants grow up into the sulphur-process. They are most strongly sulphurised, so to speak, when summer is at its height. When autumn draws on, this combustion process comes to an end.

In the organic realm, of course, everything is different from the processes we observe in their coarse inorganic form; but the outcome of every combustion process is ash. And in addition to the salt-formation, which comes from quite another quarter and is needed within the Earth, we must add all that falls down on to the Earth from the blossoming and seeding of plants as a result of the cooking or combustion process. This falling down of ash — just as ash falls down in our stoves — plays a great role which is usually overlooked. For in the course of seed-formation — which is fundamentally a combustion process — the seed-nature is continually showering down on the Earth, so that from October onwards the Earth is quite impregnated with this form of ash.

If therefore we observe the Earth in the depths of winter, we have first the internal tendency to salt-formation; besides this we have the mercurial shaping-process in its most strongly marked form; and while in high summer we have to pay attention to the sulphurising process in the cosmos outside the Earth, we now have in winter the ash-forming process.

So, you see, the tendency which reaches its culmination at Christmas is prepared in advance from Michaelmas onwards. The Earth is gradually more and more consolidated, so that in deep winter it becomes really a cosmic body, expressing itself in mercurial formation, salt-formation, ash-formation. What does this signify for the cosmos?

Now, if we can suppose that a flea, let us say, were to become an anatomist and were to study a bone, it would have before it an exceptionally small piece of bone, because the flea itself is so small and it would be examining the bone from a flea's perspective. The flea would then discover that in the bone we have to do with phosphoric lime in an amorphous condition, with carbonic acid, lime and so forth. But our flea anatomist would never come to the point of realising that the fragment of bone is a small part only of a complete skeleton. Certainly, the flea jumps, but in studying the tiny piece of bone he would never get beyond it. Similarly, it would not help a human geologist or mineralogist to be able to jump about like a gigantic earth-flea. In studying the mountain ranges of the Earth, which in their totality represent a skeleton, he would still be working on a miniature scale. The flea would never come to describing the skeleton as a whole; he would hack out a tiny piece with his little hammer. Suppose this were a tiny piece of collar-bone; nothing in the constituents of the little piece, carbonate of lime, phosphate of lime and so on, would reveal to the flea that it belonged to a collar-bone, still less that it was part of a complete skeleton. The flea would have hacked off a tiny piece and would then describe it from his own flea-standpoint, just as a man describes the Earth when somewhere — let us say in the Dornach hills — he has hacked out a bit of Jura limestone. Then he describes this bit, and works up his findings into mineralogy, geology, and so on. It is still the same flea-standpoint, though certainly somewhat enlarged.

This, of course, is no way to arrive at the truth. We need to recognise that the Earth is a single whole, most firmly consolidated during winter through its salt-formation, its mercurial formation and its ash-formation. Let us then ask what the whole nature of the Earth signifies when we look at it not from the flea's point of view, but in relation to the cosmos.

We will first consider salt-formation, taking this in the widest sense to connote a physical deposit, exemplified in the way ordinary cooking-salt dissolved in a glass of water will separate out as a deposit on the bottom of the glass. (I will not now go into the chemical side of this, though the result would be the same if I did). Now a salt-deposit of this kind has the characteristic of being porous, as it were, to the spiritual. Where there is a salt-deposit, the spiritual has a clear field of entry. In mid-winter, accordingly, when the Earth consolidates itself on the basis of salt-formation, the effect is, first of all, that the elemental beings who are united with the Earth have, one might say, an agreeable abode within it. But other spiritual elements, too, are drawn in from the cosmos and are able to dwell in the salt-crust which lies immediately below the Earth's surface. Here, in this salt-crust, the Moon-forces are particularly active — I mean the remains of those Moon-forces which were left behind, as I have often mentioned, when the Moon separated from the Earth.

These Moon-forces are active in the Earth chiefly because of the salt present in it. So in winter — beneath the snow cover which strives in one direction, one might say, towards the quicksilver form and in the other passes down into the salt deposits — we have the solid earth-substance, the salt, permeated with spirituality. In winter the Earth does indeed become spiritual in itself, through the consolidating influence, especially, of its salt-content.

Now water — that is, cosmic quicksilver — has the inner tendency to shape itself spherically. We can see this inner tendency everywhere. And because of this the Earth in mid-winter is enabled not only to become rigid through its salt-content and to permeate the salt with spirit, but also to vivify the spiritualised substance and to lead it over into the realm of life. In winter the whole surface of the Earth is reinvigorated. The quicksilver principle, working into the spiritualised salt, activates everywhere this tendency towards new life. Below the Earth's surface, in winter, there is a tremendous reinforcement of the Earth's capacity to produce life.

This life, however, would become a Moon-life, for it is chiefly the Moon-forces that are active in it. But because ash falls down from the seeds of plants, so that everything I have just described is impregnated with ash, something is present which keeps the whole process in the domain of the Earth.

The plants have striven upwards into the sulphur-process, and out of this process the ash has fallen down. This is what draws the plant back to Earth, after it has striven up into the etheric-spiritual. So in the depths of winter we have on the Earth's surface not only the tendency to absorb the spirit and to reinvigorate itself, but the tendency also to transform the Moon-like into the earthly. Through the remains of the fallen ash the Moon is compelled to promote Earthly life, not Moon life.

Now let us turn from the Earth's surface and look at the air-formation that surrounds the Earth. For the air, it is of the utmost importance always, but especially in midwinter, that the Sun radiates warmth and light through it — though the light is less relevant to our immediate considerations.

You see, science treats things always in isolation from one another, as in reality they never are. Air, we are told, consists of oxygen and nitrogen and other elements. But in fact this is not so: the air is not made up merely of oxygen and nitrogen, for it is always rayed through by the Sun. That is the reality: air is always permeated in the daytime by the activity of the Sun. And what does this activity signify? It signifies that the air up above is always seeking to tear itself away from the Earth. If salt-formation, mercurial formation and ash-formation were alone active, then nothing but the earthly would be there. But up above, because the activities striving upwards from the Earth are taken up into the activity of Sun and air, Earth-activity is transmuted into cosmic activity. The power to work on its own accord in the living-spiritual is taken away from the Earth. The Sun makes its power felt in everything that grows and sprouts upwards from the Earth. And so, in a certain region above the Earth, a quite special tendency is apparent to spiritual vision. On the Earth itself everything seeks to become spherical (dark red); in this upper region the sphere is continually impelled to flatten out into a plane (reddish). Naturally it will tend to resume its spherical shape, but up there the spherical is always inclined to flatten itself out. The upper influences would really like to break up the Earth, to disintegrate it, so that everything might become a flat surface, spread out there in the cosmos.

If this were to come about, the Earth's activities would disappear completely, and up above we should have a kind of air in which the stars would be active. This is very plainly expressed in man himself. What part do we as human beings have in the sun-filled air above? We breathe it in, and because of this the activity of the Sun extends right into us, downwards certainly in a sense, but chiefly upwards. Through our head we are continually drawn away from the influences of the Earth, and on this

account our head is enabled to participate in the whole cosmos. Our head would really always like to go out into the region where the plane prevails. If our head belonged only to the Earth, especially in winter-time, our whole experience of thinking would be different. We should then have the feeling that all our thoughts wished to take a rounded shape. In fact they do not; they have a certain lightness, adaptability, fluidity, and this we owe to the characteristic incursion of the activity of the Sun.

Here we have the second tendency; here the Sun-like strikes into the Earthly. But this is at its weakest in winter. If we were to go still further out, something else would come into the picture. Then we should have to do no longer with the activity of the Sun, but only with the activity of the stars, for the stars in turn have a great influence on our head. Inasmuch as the Sun gives us back to the cosmos, so to speak, the stars have their own deeply penetrating influence on our head, and so on the whole formation of the human organism.

But now I must tell you that what I have just been describing no longer holds good to-day, for in a certain way man has emancipated himself, in his growth and his whole evolution, from the Earth's activities. If we were to go back to the old Lemurian time, or especially to the Polarian time that preceded it, we should find the whole thing quite different. We should observe that everything that occurred on the Earth had a great influence on the human organism. You will indeed have gathered this from the account of the evolution of the Earth given in my *Occult Science*. In those early times we should find man placed in the very midst of the activities I have been telling you about. To-morrow I will describe how man has emancipated himself from all this; to-day I will speak as though we were still fully involved in it. And here we come to something that to present-day understanding will seem highly paradoxical.

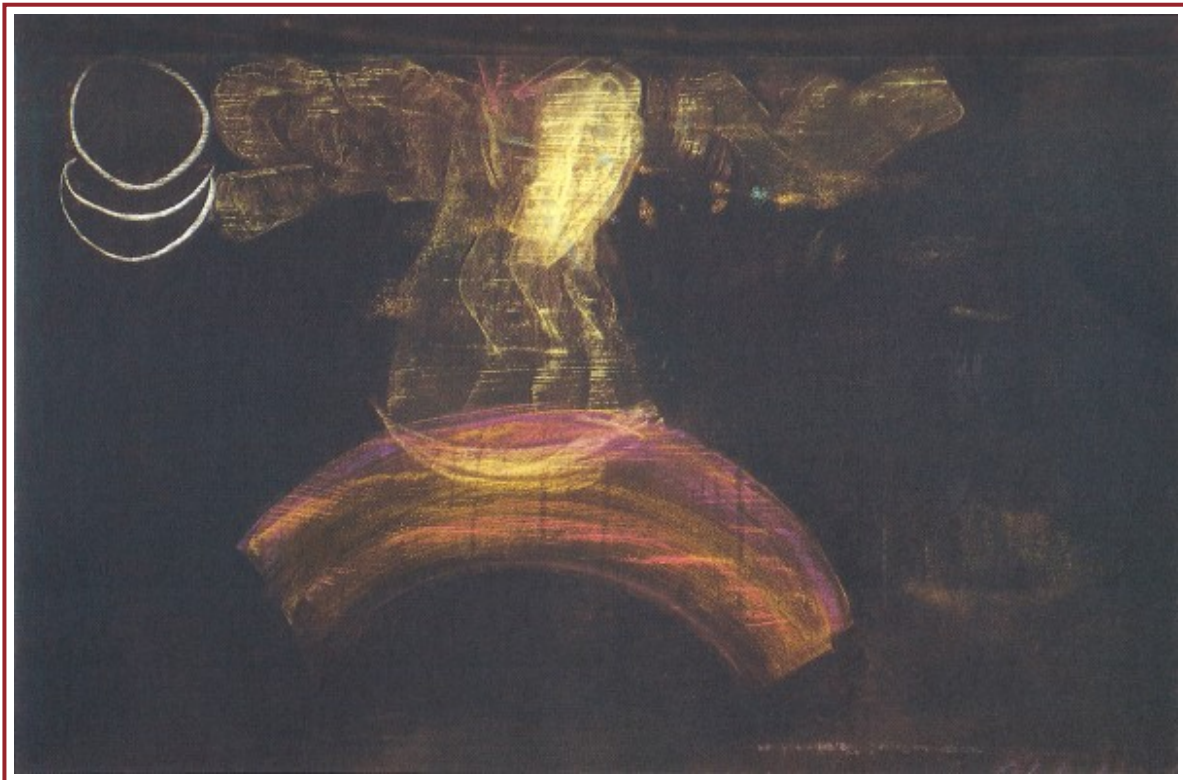
We can ask the question: What does a mother become when she is beginning to develop a new human being? Originally — after all that has first to happen in order that a new human being may come into existence on Earth — it is the salt-forming Moon-forces which chiefly influence the female organism at that time. So we can say that while a woman is otherwise and in general a human being, the salt-forming Moon-forces then have the strongest influence on her. We can put this in spiritual-scientific terms by saying: The woman becomes Moon, just as the Earth — especially just below its surface — becomes Moon when Christmas approaches.

So it is not the Earth only which becomes mostly Moon when deep winter prevails; this tendency of the Earth to become Moon occurs again, in like manner, when a woman prepares herself to receive a new human being. And precisely because of this, the Sun-influence on her becomes different, just as it is different in mid-winter, compared with high summer. And the formation in the woman of the new human being stands wholly under the influence of the Sun. Because the woman takes up the Moon-activities, the salt-activities, so strongly into herself, she becomes able to take up the Sun-activities on their own account. In ordinary life the Sun-activities are taken up by the human organism through the heart and from there spread out over the whole organism. But directly a woman prepares herself to bring forth a new human being, the Sun-activities are concentrated on the forming of this new life. Thus we can say schematically: The woman becomes Moon so that she can take up the Sun-activities into herself; and the new human being, existing first as an embryo, is in this sense wholly Sun-activity. The embryo is enabled to come into being through this concentration of Sun-activities.

The old instinctive clairvoyance knew this in its own way. At one time in old Europe a remarkable idea prevailed. It was thought that before a new-born child had taken any earthly nourishment, it was a quite different being from what it became after imbibing its first drop of milk. That was the old Germanic belief. For these people had an instinctive feeling that the new-born infant was a Sun-being, and that through the first earthly nourishment it received it became a creature of Earth. Hence the new-born infant did not at first belong to the Earth at all. Again, according to occult laws which I might touch on at some other time, old Germanic custom gave the father — at whose feet the child was always laid directly it was born — the right either to let it grow up or to destroy it; for it was not yet a creature of Earth. If it had taken one single drop of milk, he no longer had the right to destroy it. It would then have to remain an Earth-creature, because it had been ordained by nature, by the world, by the cosmos, to be one. In such old customs there lives something of immensely profound significance.

Here indeed is the basis of the saying: The child is of the Sun. So it is possible now to look on the woman who has borne the child as a being who is in the deepest sense related to all earthly processes. For the Earth prepares itself in mid-winter through the salt-tendency — that is, the Moon tendency — so that it may be best able to receive the Sun-element. The Earth then reaches out beyond the Sun-element to the heavens, to which also the human head belongs.

Hence we can say something like this. In order to bring the essence of Christmas rightly before our souls, let us transpose ourselves into the being of man. In the Christmas spirit is expressed the coming to birth of the Jesus-child, who is ordained to receive the Christ into himself. Let us look closely at this. If we look at the figure of Mary, we are bound to see that her head reflects something heavenly in its whole appearance, its whole expression. We must then indicate that Mary is preparing to take into herself the Sun, the child, the Sun as it rays through the encircling air. And then we can see in the form of Mary the Moon-Earthly element.



Now imagine how this could be portrayed. First we have the Moon-Earth element, spread out below the Earth's surface. Then, going out into the great spaces, we find a raying forth from man into the cosmos, and this could be shown as a heavenly Earth-star radiance, sent out by the Earth into the cosmos. The head of Mary is like a radiant star, which means that her whole countenance and bearing must give expression to this star-radiant quality.

If then we turn to the breast, we come to the breathing process; to the Sun-element, the child, forming itself out of the clouds in the atmosphere, shot through by the rays of the Sun.

Further down we come to the Moon-like, salt-forming forces, given outward expression by bringing the limbs into dynamic relation with the Earth and letting them arise out of the salt and the Moon-elements in the Earth. Here we have the Earth in so far as it is inwardly transfigured by the Moon.

All this would really have to be shown through a kind of rainbow colouring. For if we were to look from the cosmos towards the Earth, through the shining of the stars, it would be as though the Earth were wishing to shine inwardly, beneath its surface, in rainbow colours. On the Earth we have something related to the Earth-forces, to gravity and to the formation of the limbs, which can be expressed only through the garment which follows the Earth-forces in its folds. So we should have the garment down below, in relation to the Earth-forces. Then we should have to portray, a little higher up, that which gives expression to the Earth-Moon element. We could even picture the Moon, if we wished to symbolise; but the Moon-element is clearly expressed in the configuration of the Earth.

Higher up still, we must bring in that which comes forth from the Moon-element. We see how the clouds are permeated with many human heads, pressing downwards; one of them is condensed into the Sun resting on Mary's arm: the Jesus-child. And all this must be completed, in an upward direction, through the star-radiance expressed in the countenance of Mary.

If we understand the depths of winter, how it shows us the connection of the cosmos with man, with man who takes up the birth-forces in the Earth, the only possible way of presenting the woman is in this form: formed out of the clouds, endowed with the forces of the Earth: with the Moon-forces below, with the Sun-forces in the middle, and above, towards the head, with the forces of the stars. The picture of Mary with the little Jesus-child arises out of the cosmos itself.

If we understand the cosmos in autumn, so as to represent all its formative forces in a picture, we come by necessity to an artistic portrayal of Michael and the Dragon, as I indicated yesterday. In the same way, everything we feel at Christmas-time flows together into the picture of Mary and the child — that picture which hovered so often before painters in earlier times, especially in the first Christian centuries, and of which the last echoes have been preserved in Raphael's Sistine Madonna.

The Sistine Madonna was born out of the great instinctive knowledge of nature and the spirit which prevailed in ancient times. For it is a picture of the Imagination which must in fact come to a man who transposes his inner vision into the secrets of Christmas in such a way that they become for him a living picture.

Hence we can say: The course of the seasons must come to expression for inner vision in clear and glorious Imaginations. If one goes out with one's whole being into the world, the approach of autumn becomes the glorious Imagination of Michael's fight with the Dragon. Just as the Dragon can be represented only in a sulphurous form — born out of the sulphur-clouds — and just as the sword of Michael emerges when we think of the meteoric iron as concentrated in the sword and blended with it, so out of all that we can feel at Christmas time, arises the picture of Mary the mother, the folds of her robe following the forces of the Earth, while in the region of the breast — even these details are apparent in the painting — her garment has to be inwardly rounded, taking on the quicksilver form, so that here one has a feeling of inward enclosure. Here the Sun-forces can find entry, and the innocent Jesus-child, who must be thought of as having yet received no earthly nourishment, is the Sun-activity resting on Mary's arm, with the radiance of the stars above. That is how we have to represent the head and eyes of Mary, as though a light were shining out from within them towards men. And the Jesus-child in Mary's arm must appear as though emerging from the rounded cloud-shapes, tender and lovable, inwardly sheltered; and then the garment, subject to earthly gravity, expressing what the force of earthly gravity can become.

All this is best rendered in colours. Then we have the picture which comes to shine out for us as a cosmic Imagination at Christmas-time — a picture we can live with until Easter, when out of cosmic relationships once again an Easter Imagination can arise; we will speak of it tomorrow.

You will see from this that art is drawn from the heavens and their interplay with the Earth. True art is an expression of that which man experiences in the cosmos, spiritual-psychical-physical, which reveals itself to him in magnificent Imaginations. So, in order to represent all that is involved in the inner struggle for the development of self-consciousness out of nature-consciousness, nothing will do but the grand picture of Michael's fight with the Dragon; and in order to bring before us everything that can work from nature into our souls during the deep winter season, we have an artistic, imaginative expression of it in the picture of the Mother and child.

To observe the course of the seasons is to follow the great cosmic artist, so that the things which the heavens imprint on the Earth are brought to life again in powerful pictures — pictures which grow into realities for the mind of man.

Thus the course of the year can reveal itself to us in four Imaginations: the Michael Imagination, the Mary Imagination and — as we shall see later on — the Easter Imagination and the St. John Imagination.



III

The Easter Imagination

Dornach, 7 October, 1923

We must realise clearly how it is that in the depths of winter the Earth, in relation to the cosmos, is a being enclosed within itself. During the winter the Earth is, so to speak, wholly Earth, with a concentrated Earth-nature. In high summer — to add this contrast for the sake of clarity — the Earth is given over to the cosmos, lives with the cosmos. And in between, during spring and autumn, there is always a balance between these extremes.

All this has the deepest significance for the Earth's whole life. Naturally, what I shall be saying applies only to that part of the Earth's surface where a corresponding transition from winter to spring takes place.

Let us start, as we have always done in these lectures, by considering the purely material side. We will look at the salt-deposits which we have had to treat as the most important factor in winter-time. We will study this first in the limestone deposits, which are indeed a phenomenon of the utmost importance for the whole being of the Earth.

You need only go out-of-doors here, where we are surrounded everywhere by the Jura limestone, and you will have before you all that I am going to begin by describing to-day. Ordinary observation is so superficial that for most people limestone is simply limestone, and outwardly there really is no perceptible difference between winter-limestone and spring-limestone. But this failure to distinguish between them comes from the standpoint which yesterday I called the flea-standpoint. The metamorphoses of limestone appear only when we look further out into the cosmos, as it were. Then we find a subtle difference between winter-limestone and spring-limestone, and it is precisely this which makes limestone the most important of all deposits in the soil. After all the various considerations we have gone into here, and since we know that soul and spirit are to be found everywhere, we can allow ourselves to speak of all such substance as vivified, ensouled beings. Thus we can say that winter-limestone is a being content within itself.

If we enter into the being of winter-limestone with Intuition — the Intuition described in my book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* — we find it permeated throughout with the most diverse spirituality, made up of the elemental beings who dwell in the Earth. But the limestone is as it were contented, as a human head may be when it has solved an important problem and feels happy to have the thoughts which point to the solution. We perceive — for Intuition always embraces feeling — an inner contentment in the whole neighbourhood of the limestone formations during the winter season.

If we were to swim under water, we should perceive water everywhere; and similarly, if we move spiritually through the process of limestone formation, we perceive this winter contentment on all sides. It expresses itself as an inner permeation of the winter-limestone by mobile, ever-changing forms — living, spiritual forms which appear as Imaginations.

When spring approaches, however, and especially when March comes, the limestone becomes — we may say — dull in respect of its spiritual qualities. It loses them, for, as you know from previous accounts, the elemental beings now take their way, through a kind of cosmic-spiritual breathing-out into the cosmos. The limestone's spiritual thinking qualities are dulled, but the remarkable thing is that it becomes full of eager desire. It develops a kind of inner vitality. A subtle life-energy arises increasingly in the limestone, becoming steadily more active as spring draws on, and even more so towards summer, as the plants shoot up.

These things are naturally not apparent in a crude outward form, but in a subtle, intimate way they do occur. The growing plants draw water and carbonic acid from the limestone in the soil. But this very loss signifies for the limestone an inner access of living activity, and it acquires on this account an extraordinary power of attraction for the Ahrimanic beings. Whenever spring approaches, their hopes revive. Apart from this, they have nothing particular to hope for from the realm of outer nature, because they are really able to pursue their activities only within human beings. But when spring draws near, the impression which the spring-limestone makes on them gives them the idea that after all they will be able to spread their dragon-nature through nature at large. Finding the spring-limestone full of life, they hope to be able to draw in also the astral element from the cosmos in order to ensoul the limestone — to permeate it with soul. So, when March is near, a truly clairvoyant observer of nature can witness a remarkable drama. He sees how everywhere the hopes of the Ahrimanic beings play over the Earth like an astral wind, and how the

Ahrimanic beings strive with all their might to call down an astral rain, as it were. If they were to succeed, then in the summer this astral rain would transform the Earth into an ensouled being — or at least partly, as far as the limestone extends. And then, in autumn, the Earth would feel pain at every footfall on its surface.

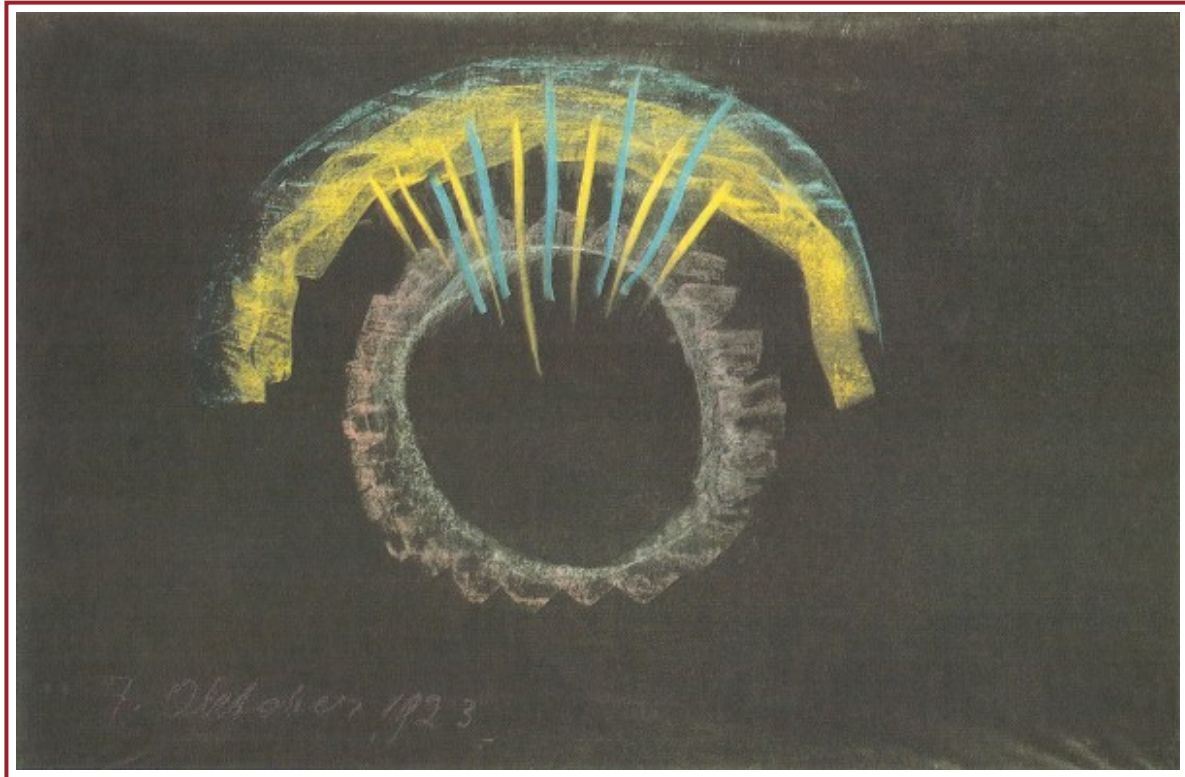
This endeavour, this illusion, lays hold of the Ahrimanic beings every spring, and every spring it is brought to nothing. From a human standpoint one might say — surely by now the Ahrimanic beings must have become clever enough to give up these hopes. But the world is not just as human beings imagine it to be. The fact is that every spring the Ahrimanic beings have new hope of being able to transform the Earth into an ensouled, living being through an astral rain from above, and every year their illusions are shattered.

But man is not free from danger in the midst of these illusions. He consumes the nature-products which flourish in this atmosphere of hopes and illusions; and it is naïve to suppose that the bread he eats is merely corn, ground and baked. In outer nature these hopes are shattered, but the Ahrimanic beings long all the more to achieve their aim in man, who has a soul already. Thus every spring man is in danger of falling a victim — in subtle, intimate ways — to the Ahrimanic beings. In spring he is much more exposed to all the Ahrimanic workings in the cosmos than he is during other times of the year.

But now, if we direct our gaze upwards, to where the elemental beings of the Earth ascend, where they unite themselves with the cloud-formations and acquire an inner activity which is subject to planetary life, something else can be seen. As March approaches, and down below the Ahrimanic beings are at work, the elemental beings — who are wholly spiritual, immaterial, although they live within the material Earth — are transported up into the region of vapour, air and warmth. And all that goes on up there, among the active elemental beings, is permeated by Luciferic beings. Just as the Ahrimanic beings nourish their hopes and experience their illusions down below, so the Luciferic beings experience their hopes and illusions up above.

If we look more closely at the Ahrimanic beings, we find they are of etheric nature. And it is impossible for these beings, who are really those cast down by Michael, to expand in any other way than by trying to gain domination over the Earth through the life and desire that fill the limestone in spring.

The Luciferic beings up above stream through and permeate all the activities that have risen up from the Earth. They are of a purely astral nature. Through everything that begins to strive upwards in spring, they gain the hope of being able to permeate their astral nature with the etheric, and to call forth from the Earth an etheric sheath in which they could then take up their habitation.



Hence we can say: The Ahrimanic beings try to ensoul the Earth with astrality (reddish); the Luciferic beings try to take up the etheric into their own being (blue with yellow).

When now in spring the plants begin to sprout, they assimilate and draw in carbonic acid. Hence the carbonic acid is active in a higher region than it is in winter; it rises into the realm of the plants, and there it comes under the attraction of the Luciferic beings. While the Ahrimanic beings strive to ensoul the living limestone with a kind of astral rain, the Luciferic beings try to raise up a sort of carbonic acid mist or vapour from the Earth (blue, yellow). If they were to succeed, human beings on Earth would no longer be able to breathe. The Luciferic beings would draw up all that part of man, his etheric nature, which is not dependent on physical breathing, and by uniting themselves with it they would be able to become etheric beings,

whereas they are now only astral beings. And then, with the extinction of all human and animal life on Earth, up above there would be a sheath of etheric angel-beings. That is what the Luciferic spirits strive and hope for, when the end of March comes on. They hope to change the whole Earth into a delicate shell of this kind, wherein they, densified through the etheric nature of man, could carry on their own existence.

If the Ahrimanic beings could realise their hopes, the whole of humanity would gradually be dissolved into the Earth: the Earth would absorb them. Finally there would arise out of the Earth — and that is Ahriman's intention — a single great entity into which all human beings would be merged: they would be united with it. But the transition to this union with the Earth would consist in this: man in his whole organism would become more and more like the living limestone. He would blend the living limestone with his organism and become more and more calcified. In this way he would transmute his bodily form into one that looked quite different — a sclerotic form with something like bat's wings and a head like this. This form would then be able to merge gradually into the earthly element, so that the whole Earth, according to the Ahrimanic idea, would become a living Earth-being.



If the Luciferic beings, on the other hand, could absorb the etheric nature of man, and thus condense themselves from an astral to an etheric condition, then out of them would arise something like an etheric form, in which the lower parts of the human organism would be more or less absent, with the upper part transformed. The body would be formed of Earth-vapour (blue), developed only as far down as the breast, with an idealised human head (red). And the peculiar thing is that this being would have wings, born as it were out of clouds (yellow). In front, these wings would concentrate into a sort of enlarged larynx; at the sides they would concentrate into ears, organs of hearing, which again would be connected with the larynx.

You see, I tried to represent the sclerotic form through the figure of Ahriman in the painting in the dome of the Goetheanum and plastically in the wood-carving of the Group. Similarly, the Luciferic shape, created out of Earth-vapour and cloud-masses, as it would be if it could take up the etheric from the Earth, is represented there. (The central motif, painted from a sketch by Rudolf Steiner, in the small dome of the first Goetheanum, and in Rudolf Steiner's woodcarving of the Representative of Humanity. See images in the frontispiece.)

Thus the two extremes of man are written into the life of the Earth itself: first, the extreme that man would come to if under the influence of Ahriman he were to take up the living limestone and thereby become gradually one with the Earth, dissolved into the whole living, sentient Earth. That is one extreme. The other extreme is what man would come to if the Luciferic beings were to succeed in causing a vapour of carbonic acid to rise from below, so that breathing would be extinguished and physical humanity would disappear, while the etheric bodies of men would be united with the astrality of the Luciferic angel-being up above.

Again we can say: These are the hopes, the illusions, of the Luciferic beings. Anyone who looks out as a seer into the great spaces of the cosmos does not see in the moving clouds, as in Shakespeare's play, a shape which looks first like a camel and then like something else. When March comes, he sees in the clouds the dynamic striving forces of the Luciferic beings, who would like to create out of the Earth a Luciferic sheath. Man sways between these two extremes. The desire of both the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic beings is to blot out humanity as it exists today.

These various activities are manifested within the life of the Earth. The hopes of the Luciferic beings are shattered once more every spring, but they work on in man. And in spring-time, while on one hand he is exposed to the Ahrimanic forces, he is also exposed more and more — and right on through the summer — to the Luciferic beings.

These forces, certainly, work in so subtle a way that they are noticed to-day only by someone who is spiritually sensitive and can really live with the course of events in the cosmos round the year. But in earlier times, even in the later Atlantean period, all this had great significance.

In those earlier times, for example, human reproduction was bound up with the seasons. Conception could occur only in the spring, when the forces were active in the way I have described, and births could therefore take place only towards the end of the year. The life of the Earth was thus wholesomely bound up with human life. (See the lecture entitled *Christmas at a Time of Grievous Destiny*, given in Basle, 21st December, 1916. Printed in *The Festivals and their Meaning, Vol. I: Christmas*. Rudolf Steiner Press.)

Now a principle of the Luciferic beings is to set free everything on Earth, and among the things that have been freed are conception and birth. The fact that a human being can be born at any time of the year was brought about in earlier times by this Luciferic influence, which tends always to loosen man from the Earth, and it has become an established part of human freedom. Next time I will speak of influences that are still active, but to-day I wished to show you how in earlier times the aims of the Luciferic beings were actually achieved, up to a certain point. Otherwise, human beings could have been born only in winter.

As against this, the Ahrimanic beings try with all their might to draw man back into connection with the Earth. And since the Luciferic beings had this great influence in the past, the Ahrimanic beings have a prospect of at least partly achieving their purpose of binding man to the Earth by merging his mind and disposition with the earthly and turning him into a complete materialist. They would like to make his capacity to think and feel depend entirely on the food he digests. This Ahrimanic influence bears particularly on our own epoch and it will go on getting stronger and stronger.

If, therefore, we look back in time, we come to something accomplished by the Luciferic beings and bequeathed to us. If we look forward towards the end of the Earth, we see man faced with the threatening prospect that

the Ahrimanic beings, since they cannot actually dissolve humanity into the Earth, will contrive at least to harden him, so that he becomes a crude materialist, thinking and feeling only what material substance thinks and feels in him.

The Luciferic beings accomplished their work in freeing man from nature, in the way I have described, at a time when man himself had as yet no freedom. Freedom has not arisen through human resolve or in an abstract way, as the usual account suggests, but because natural processes, such as the timing of births, have come under human control. When in earlier times it became obvious that children could be born at any season, this brought a feeling of freedom into the soul and spirit of man. Those are the facts. They depend far more on the cosmos than is commonly imagined.

But now that man has advanced in freedom, he should use his freedom to banish the threatening danger that Ahriman will fetter him to the Earth. For in the perspective of the future this threat stands before him. And here we see how into Earth-evolution there came an objective fact: the Mystery of Golgotha.

Although the Mystery of Golgotha had indeed to enter as a once-for-all event into the history of the Earth, it is in a sense renewed for human beings every year. We can learn to feel how the Luciferic force up above would like to suffocate physical humanity in carbonic vapour, while down below, the Ahrimanic forces would like to vivify the limestone masses of the Earth with an astral rain, so that man himself would be calcified and reduced to limestone. But then, for a person who can see into these things, there arises between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic forces the figure of Christ; the Christ who, freeing Himself from the weight of matter, has Ahriman under his feet; who wrested Himself free from the Ahrimanic and takes no heed of it, having overcome it, as we have shown here in painting and sculpture. And here is shown also how the Christ overcomes the force that seeks to draw the upper part of man away from the Earth. The head of the Christ-figure, the conqueror of Ahriman, appears with a countenance, a look and a bearing such that the dissolvent forces of Lucifer cannot touch them. The Luciferic power drawn into the earthly and held there — such is the form of the Christ as He appears every year in Spring. That is how we must picture Him: standing on the earthly, which Ahriman seeks to make his own; victorious over death; ascending from the grave as the Risen One to the transfiguration which comes from carrying over the Luciferic into the earthly beauty of the countenance of Christ.

So there appears before our eyes, between the Luciferic and the Ahrimanic forms, the Risen Christ in his Resurrection form as the Easter picture; the Risen Christ, with Luciferic powers hovering above and the Ahrimanic powers under His feet.

This cosmic Imagination comes before us as the Easter Imagination, just as we had the Virgin and Child as the Christmas Imagination in deep winter, and the Michael Imagination for the end of September. You will see how right it was to portray the Christ in the form you see here — a form born out of cosmic happenings in the course of the year. There is nothing arbitrary about this. Every look, every trait in the countenance, every flowing fold in the garment should be thought of as placing the Christ-figure between the forms of Lucifer and Ahriman as the One who works in human evolution so that man may be wrested from the Luciferic and Ahrimanic powers at the very time, the time of Easter and Spring, when he could most readily fall victim to them.

Here precisely in the figure of Christ we see again how nothing can be rightly done out of the arbitrary fancies which are favoured in artistic circles to-day. If a man wishes to develop full freedom in the realm of art, he does not bind himself in a slavish, Ahrimanic way to materials and models; he rises freely into spiritual heights and there he freely creates, for it is in spiritual heights that freedom can prevail. Then he will create out of a bluish-violet vapour a kind of breast-form for the Luciferic element, and a form consisting of wings, larynx and ear as though emerging from reddish clouds, so that this form can appear in full reality as an image both of what these beings are in their astral nature and of the etheric guise they threaten to assume.

Place vividly before you these wings of Lucifer, working in the astral and striving towards the etheric. You will find that because these wings are actually feeling about in the cosmic spaces, they are sensitive to all the secrets of force in the cosmos. Through their undulating movement, these wings, with their wave-like formation, are in touch with the mysterious, spiritual wave-activities of the cosmos. And the experience brought by these waves passes through the ear-formation into the inwardness of the Luciferic being and is carried further there. The Luciferic-being grasps through his ear-formation what he has sensed with his wings, and through the larynx — closely connected with the ear — this knowledge becomes the creative word that works and weaves in the forms of living beings.

If you picture a Luciferic being of this kind, with his reddish-yellow formation of wings, ears and larynx, you will see in him the activity which is sensitive to the secrets of the cosmos through his wings, experiences these secrets through the inward continuation of his ear-formation, and utters them as creative word through the larynx, bound up with wings and ears in one organic whole.

So was Lucifer painted in the cupola, and so is he represented in the sculpture-group which was intended to be the central point of our Goetheanum. Thus, in a certain sense, the Easter mystery was to have stood at this central point. But a completion in some form will be necessary, if one is to grasp the whole idea. For all that can be seen as the threatening Luciferic influence and the threatening Ahrimanic influence belongs to the inner being of the Nature-forces and the direction they strive to take in spring and on into summer; and standing over against them is the healing principle that rays out from the Christ. But a living feeling for all this will be attained when the whole architectural scheme is completed and what I have described exists in architectural and sculptured form, and when in the future it will be possible to present in front of the sculpture a living drama with two leading characters — man and Raphael

Within this architecture, and in the presence of the sculpture, there would have to be enacted a kind of Mystery Play, with man and Raphael as chief characters — Raphael with the staff of Mercury and all that belongs to it. In living artistic work everything is a challenge, and fundamentally there is no sculpture and no architecture which — if it is to be inwardly in accord with cosmic truth — does not call for a presentation in the space surrounding it of the artistic action it embodies. At Easter this architecture and sculpture would call for a Mystery Play, showing man taught by Raphael to see how far the Ahrimanic and Luciferic forces make him ill, and how through the power of Raphael he can be led to perceive and recognise the healing principle, the great world-therapy, which lives in the Christ-principle. If all this could be done — and the Goetheanum was designed for all of it — then at Easter there would be, amid much else, a certain crowning of all that can flow into mankind from the Ahrimanic and Luciferic secrets.

You see, if we learn to recognise the springtime activity of the Ahrimanic influence in the living limestone, through which a greedy endeavour is being made to take up the cosmic astral element, then we learn also to recognise the healing forces that reside in everything of a salt-like nature. The difference is not apparent in the coarser kind of activities, but it comes

out in the healing ones. Thus we learn to know these healing influences by studying the working of the Ahrimanic beings in the salt-deposits of the Earth. For whatever is permeated by Ahrimanic influences during one season of the year — we will go more closely into this next time — is transformed into healing powers at another season. If we know what is going on secretly in the products and beings of nature, we learn to recognise their therapeutic power. It is the same with the Luciferic element: we learn to recognise the healing forces active in volatile substances that rise up from the Earth, and especially those present in carbonic acid. For just as I explained that in all water there is a mercurial, quicksilver element, so in carbonic acid there is always a sulphurous, phosphoric element.

There is no carbonic acid which consists simply — as the chemists say — of one carbon atom and two oxygen atoms: no such thing exists. In the carbonic acid we breathe out there is always a phosphoric, sulphurous element. This carbonic acid, CO_2 , one atom of carbon and two of oxygen, is merely an abstraction, an intellectual concept formed in the human mind. In reality there is no carbonic acid which does not contain a phosphoric, sulphurous element in an extraordinarily diluted state, and the Luciferic beings strive towards it in the rising vapour.

Again, in this peculiar balance between the sulphur-element that becomes astral and the limestone that becomes living, the forces we can recognise as healing influences are expressed.

And so, among much else that is connected with the Easter Mystery, we should have the Easter Mystery Play enacted in front of the painting and the sculpture, and through it the communications about ways of healing which are given in the course of the year to those willing to listen would reach a climax in a truly living, artistically religious form. They would indeed be crowned by being placed in the whole course of the cosmos and the seasons; and then the Easter festival would embrace something that could be expressed in the words: "The presence of the World-Healer is felt: the Saviour who willed to lift the great evil from the world. His presence is felt." For in truth He was, as I have often said, the Great Physician in the evolution of mankind. This will be felt, and to Him will sacrifice be offered with all the wisdom about healing influences that man can possess. This would be included in the Easter Mystery, the Easter ritual; and by celebrating the Easter festival in this way we should be placing it quite naturally in the context of the seasonal course of the year.

To begin with, in describing the powerful Imaginations which come before man at Michaelmas and Christmas, I was able to show them to you only as pictures. But in the case of the Easter Imagination, where over against the activities of the Nature-spirits there arises the higher life of the spirit, as this can develop in the neighbourhood of the Christ, I could show how the Imagination can lead directly to a ritual in the earthly realm, a ritual embracing things which must be cherished and preserved on Earth — the health-giving healing forces, and a knowledge of the Ahrimanic and Luciferic forces which could destroy the human organism. For Ahriman hardens man, while Lucifer wishes to dissolve and evaporate him through his breathing. In all this the forces that make for illness reside.

All that can be learnt in this way under the influence of the great teacher Raphael — who is really Mercury in Christian terminology and in Christian usage should carry the staff of Mercury — can be worthily crowned only in so far as it is received into the mysteries and ritual of Easter. Much else can come into them; of this I will speak in later lectures.



IV

The St. John Imagination

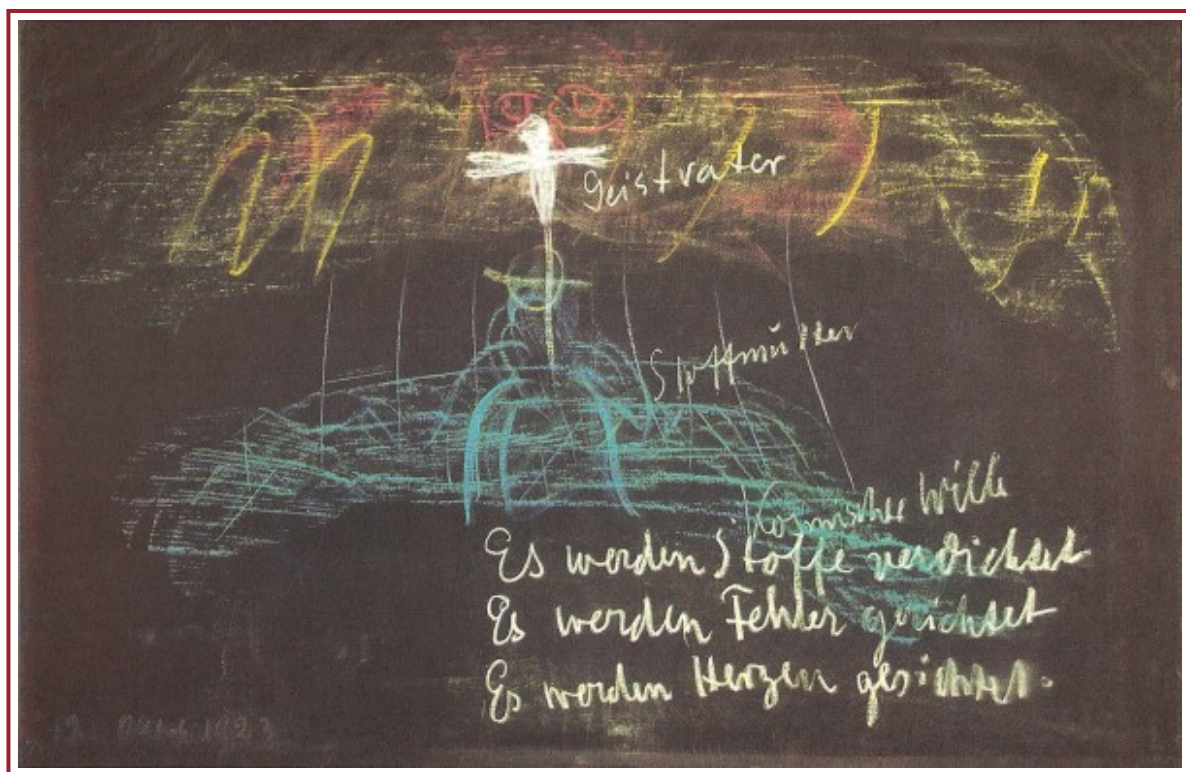
Dornach, 12 October, 1923

If now we go forward from Easter, the spring festival, we shall need to penetrate much more spiritually into the subject than we had to do in considering the previous seasons of the year. This may sound like a contradiction, but it is not so. In thinking of the Christmas season, we had to start from the way in which earthly mineral limestone is gradually transformed, and we carried this thought over to the time of Easter. In general, we have been turning our eyes on the active working of the spiritual in the material realm. Now in summer, high summer, man is really bound up with the being of Nature. From spring onwards into summer, Nature becomes constantly more active, more satisfied inwardly, and man with his whole being is woven into this mood of Nature. We can indeed say that in high summer man experiences a kind of Nature-consciousness. During spring, if he has the perception and feeling for it, he becomes one with all that is growing and sprouting. He blossoms with the flower, germinates with the plant, fruits with the plant, enters into everything that lives and has its being in the world outside. In this way he spreads out his own being over the being of Nature, and a kind of Nature-consciousness arises in him. Then, since in autumn Nature dies away and thus bears death within itself, man too, if he participates in what autumn — the time of Michaelmas — means for Nature, must experience in himself this dying away; but with his own self he must not take part in it. He must raise himself above it. In place precisely of a Nature-consciousness, a strengthening of his self-consciousness must occur. But in the glow of summer, just because a Nature-consciousness is then at its height in man, it is all the more necessary for the cosmos that — if only man is willing — the cosmos should bring the spiritual to meet him.

Hence we can say: In summer man is bound up with Nature, but, if he has the right feeling and perception for it, objective spirituality comes towards him from out of Nature's interweaving life. And so, to find the essential human being during the St. John's time, at midsummer, we must turn to the objective spirituality in the outer world, and this is present everywhere in Nature. Only in outward appearance is Nature the sprouting, budding — one might say the sleeping — being which calls forth from the

powers of sleep the forces of vegetative growth, in which a kind of sleeping Nature-life is given form. But in this sleeping Nature, if only man has the perception for it, the spiritual which animates and weaves through everything in Nature is revealed.

So it is that if we follow Nature in high summer with deepened spiritual insight and with perceptive eyes, we find our gaze directed to the depths of the Earth itself. We find that the minerals down there send their inner crystal-forming process towards us more vividly than at any other time of the year. If we look with Imaginative perception into the depths of the Earth at St. John's-tide, we really have the impression that down there are the crystalline forms in which the hard earth consolidates itself — the very crystalline forms which gain their full beauty at the height of summer. At midsummer everything down below the earth shapes itself into lines, angles and surfaces. If we are to have an impression of it as a whole, we must picture this crystallising process as an interweaving activity, coloured throughout with deep blue.



I will try to show it on the blackboard, though of course I can do so only in a quite sketchy way. So we can say: On looking downwards, we have an impression of line-like forms, suffused with blue, and everywhere the blue

is shot through with lines which sparkle like silver, so that everywhere within the silver-sparkling blue the crystallising process (white) can be discerned. It is as though Nature wishes to present her formative power in a wonderful plastic design, but a design that cannot be seen in the way we see with ordinary eyes. It is seen in such a way that one really feels oneself dissolved into the plastic design, and feels every silver-gleaming line down there to be within oneself, part of oneself. One feels that as a human form one has grown out of the blue depths of the earth's crust, and one feels oneself inwardly permeated with force by the silver-gleaming crystal lines. All this one feels as part of one's own being. And if one comes to oneself and asks — How is it that these silver-sparkling crystal lines and waves are working within myself? What is it that lives and works there, silver-gleaming in the blue of the Earth? — then one knows: That is cosmic Will. And one has the feeling of standing upon cosmic Will.

So it is when one looks down into the depths of the Earth. And if one looks up to the heights, how is it then? The impression one has is of out-spreading cosmic Intelligence. Human intelligence — as I have often said — is not of much value at its present stage. But the heavens at midsummer give one the feeling that cosmic Intelligence is alive everywhere — the intelligence not of single beings but of many beings who live together and within one another. Thus we have up there the out-spreading Intelligence woven through with light; the living Intelligence shining forth (yellow) as the polaric opposite of the Will. And while down below we feel — in that blue darkness everything is experienced only as forces, up above we feel — everything is such that in perceiving it we are illumined, permeated, with a feeling of intelligence.

And now within this radiant activity there appears — I cannot put it otherwise — a Form. When we were speaking of autumn, I had to name Michael as the most significant figure who rises before our souls out of the weaving of Nature. As to how Gabriel — to use the old name — enters into the time of Christmas, we shall have more to say. In the last lecture I showed you how at Easter, the season of spring, the figure of Raphael comes before us. He comes in dramatic guise, as the mediator who arouses in us the rightful approach, through reverence and worship, to what the Easter Imagination, the cosmic Easter Imagination, is. And now, for the St. John's time, there comes before us — to describe it in human terms, which are of course bound to be only approximate — an extraordinarily earnest countenance, which arises glowing warmly out of the pervading radiant Intelligence (red head in the yellow). We have the impression that this figure forms its body of light out of the radiant

Intelligence. And for this to happen at the height of summer, something I have already described must come in: the elemental spirits of the Earth must soar upwards. As they do so, they weave themselves into the shining Intelligence up above, and the shining Intelligence receives them into itself. And out of that gleaming radiance the figure I have just mentioned takes form.

This form was divined by the old instinctive clairvoyance, and we can give it the same name by which it was known then. We can say: In summer, Uriel appears in the midst of the shining Intelligence.

Autumn	Michael
Winter	Gabriel
Spring	Raphael
Summer	Uriel

It is with great earnestness that this representative of the weaving cosmic forces, seeking to embody himself in a vesture of light, appears in the time of summer. There are further things we can observe as the deeds accomplished by Uriel in the radiant light — Uriel, whose own intelligence arises fundamentally from the working together of the planetary forces of our planetary system, supported by the working of the fixed stars of the Zodiac; Uriel, who in his thoughts preserves the thoughts of the cosmos. And so, quite directly, the feeling comes: You clouds of summer, radiant with Intelligence, in which are reflected up above the blue crystal-formations of the earth below, just as these blue crystal-formations mirror in turn the shining Intelligence of the summer clouds — out of your shining there appears in high summer, with earnest countenance, a concentrated Imagination of Cosmic Understanding.

Now the deeds of this embodied cosmic Understanding, this cosmic Intelligence, are woven in light. Through the power of attraction residing in the concentrated cosmic Intelligence of Uriel, the silver forces (white) are drawn upwards, and in the light of this inwardly shining Intelligence, as seen from the Earth, they appear as radiant sunlight, densifying into a glory of gold. One has the immediate feeling that the gleaming silver,

streaming up from below, is received by the sunlit radiance above. And the earth-silver — the phrase is quite correct — is changed by cosmic alchemy into the cosmic gold which lives and weaves in the heights.

If we follow these happenings further, on through August, we gain an impression of something that completes the form of Michael, already described. I told you what the sword of Michael is made of, and whence the dragon draws his coiling life. But now, in the radiant beauty which appears spiritually out of the cosmic weaving at the height of summer, we ask ourselves: Whence does Michael, who leads us over to the autumn time of Michaelmas, derive his characteristic raiment — the raiment which first lights up in golden sunshine and then shines forth inwardly as a silver-sparkling radiance within the golden folds? Where does Michael acquire this gold-woven, silver-sparkling raiment? It comes from that which is formed in the heights through the upward-ricing silver and the gold that flows to meet it; from the transmutation by the sun's power of the silver sparkling up from the Earth. As autumn approaches we see how the silver given by the Earth to the cosmos returns as gold, and the power of this transmuted silver is the source of that which goes on in the Earth during winter, as I have described. The Sun-gold, formed in the heights, in the dominion of Uriel, during high summer, passes down to weave and flow through the depths of the Earth, where it animates the elements that in the midst of winter are seeking to become the living growth of the following year.

So you see that when we come to the time of sprouting, springing life, we can no longer speak of matter permeated by spirit, as we speak of the Earth in winter. We have to speak of spirit woven through with matter — that is, with silver and gold.

Of course you must not take all this in a crude sense; you must think of the silver and gold as diluted beyond human measure. Then you will come to feel that all this is a kind of background for the cosmic, light-filled deeds of Uriel, and a clear impression of the countenance and gaze of Uriel will come before you.

We feel a deep longing to understand this remarkable gaze, directed downwards, and we have the impression that we must look around to find out what it signifies. Its meaning first dawns upon the mind when as human beings we learn to look with spiritual eyes still more deeply into the blue, silver-gleaming depths of the Earth in summer. And we see that

weaving around these silver-gleaming crystalline rays are shapes — disturbing shapes, I might almost call them — which continually gather and dissolve, gather and dissolve again.

Then we come to perceive — the vision will be different for everyone — that these shapes are human errors which stand out against the natural order of regular crystals here below. And it is on this contrast that Uriel directs his earnest gaze. Here during the height of summer the imperfections of mankind, in contrast to the regularity of the growing crystal forms, are searchingly surveyed. Here it is that from the earnest gaze of Uriel we gain the impression of how the moral is interwoven with the natural.

Here the moral world-order does not exist only in ourselves as abstract impulses. For whereas we habitually look at the realms of Nature and do not ask — is there morality in the growth of plants, or in the process of crystallisation? — now we see how at midsummer human errors are woven into the regular crystals which are formed in the normal course of Nature.

On the other hand, all that is in human virtue and human excellence rises up with the silver-gleaming lines and is seen as the clouds that envelop Uriel (red). It enters into the radiant Intelligence, transmuted into cloud-shaped works of art.

It is impossible to look towards the increasingly earnest gaze of Uriel, directed towards the depths of the Earth, without also seeing there something like wing-like arms, or arm-like wings, raised in earnest admonition, and this gesture by Uriel has the effect of imparting to mankind what I might call the historic conscience. Here at high summer appears the historic conscience, which at the present time has become uncommonly feeble. It appears, as it were, in Uriel's warning gesture.

Of course, you must picture all this as an Imagination. These things are quite real, but I cannot speak of them in the way a physicist speaks of positive and negative, of potential energy and so on. I have to speak in pictures that will come to life in your souls. But everything expressed in these living pictures is reality; it is there.

And now if we have gained the impression of the connection of human morality with the crystalline element below and of human virtues with the shining beauty above, and if we take these connections into our inward

experience, the real St. John Imagination will come to meet us. For the St. John Imagination is there, just as we have the Michael Imagination, the Christmas Imagination, the Easter Imagination.

So to spiritual observation there appears, as a kind of culmination, this picture: Above, illuminated as it were by the power of Uriel's eyes, the Dove (white). The silver-sparkling blue below, arising from the depths of the Earth and bound up with human weaknesses and error, is gathered into a picture of the Earth-Mother (blue). Whether she is called Demeter or Mary, the picture is of the Earth-Mother. So it is that in directing our gaze downwards, we cannot do otherwise than bring together in Imagination all those secrets of the depths which go to make up the material Mother of all existence; while in all that is concentrated in the flowing form above we feel and experience the Spirit-Father of everything around us. And now we behold the outcome of the working together of Spirit-Father with Earth-Mother, bearing so beautifully within itself the harmony of the earthly silver and the gold of the heights. Between the Father and the Mother we behold the Son. Thus arises this Imagination of the Trinity, which is really the St. John Imagination. The background of it is Uriel, the creative, admonishing Uriel.

That which the Trinity truly represents should not be placed dogmatically before the soul, for then an impression is given that such an idea, or picture, of the Trinity can be separated from the weaving of cosmic life. This is not so. At midsummer the Trinity reveals itself out of the midst of cosmic life, cosmic activity. It stands forth with inwardly convincing power, if — I might say — one has first penetrated into the mysteries of Uriel.

If we were to present St. John's-tide in this way, there would have to be an arched or vaulted background, with the figure of Uriel and his gesture in the manner I have described. And against this background a living picture of the Imagination of the Trinity would have to emerge. Special arrangements would be necessary; the effect would have to be that of painting done instantly, perhaps by making artistic use of vaporous substances or the like. And if the true Imagination of these things is to be called up for people to witness, it must be at St. John's time. At Easter we have the complete picture only when we bring it into dramatic form, with Raphael present as a teacher in the Mystery Play that would have then to be presented; Raphael who leads man into the secrets of healing nature, of the healing cosmos. In a similar way, at St. John's time, all that can then

be seen in weaving pictures would have to be transposed into powerful music, so that the cosmic Mystery, as it can be experienced by man at this season of St. John, would speak to our hearts.

We must imagine how all that I have described should find artistic expression, on the one hand, in pictorial and plastic art. But what is experienced in this way must be given life by the musical tones that embody the poetic motif which plays through our souls when we feel our way into great Uriel, active in the light, who calls up in us a powerful impression of the triune, the Trinity. The silver-shining that rays up from below, and is revealed in the form-giving beauty of the light above, must be expressed at St. John's-tide through appropriate musical instruments. Thus we should find, through these musical harmonies, our own inner harmony with the cosmos, for in them the secret of man's living together with the cosmos at St. John's tide would have to sound forth. All this would have to be given voice in the music, so that in looking up to the heights we would be looking at the weaving gold of the cosmos, and would see the glowing form of Uriel emerging from the light-filled gold and directing his gaze and his gesture down to the Earth, as I have described it. All this would have to be not in any fixed form, but in living movement. That would be one motif, a heavenly motif through which a man can feel himself united, on one side, with the shining Cosmic Intelligence.

On the other side, down below, he feels himself united with the tendency to fixed form; with that which is immersed in the bluish darkness from out of which the silvery radiance streams forth. Down there he feels the material foundation of active spiritual being. The Heights become Mysteries, the Depths become Mysteries, and man himself becomes a Mystery within the Mysteries of the Cosmos. Right into his bony system he feels the crystal-forming power. But he feels also how this same power is in cosmic union with the living power of light in the heavens above. He feels how all that comes about through mankind as morality in these Mysteries of the Heights lives and weaves in these Mysteries of the Depths, and in the conjunction between the two. He feels himself no longer sundered from the world around him, but placed within it, united above with the shining Intelligence, in which he experiences, as in the womb of worlds, his own best thoughts. He feels himself united below, right into his bony system, with the cosmic crystallising force — and again the two united with one another. He feels his death united with the spirit-life of the universe; and he feels how this spirit-life craves to awaken the crystal forces and the silver-gleaming life in the midst of earthly death.

All this, too, would have to sound forth in musical tones — tones which carry these motifs on their wings and make them part of human experience. For these motifs are there. They do not have to be sought out; they can be read from the cosmic activity of Uriel. Here it is that Imagination passes over into Inspiration.

Man, however, lives in a certain sense as an embodied Inspiration, as a being brought into existence by Inspiration, in the Mysteries of the heights and depths and in the Mysteries of their conjunction. He lives in the Mysteries to which the Spirit-Father points upward; the Mysteries to which the Spirit-Mother points downwards, the Mysteries which are united by the fact that the Christ, though the working together of the Spirit-Father and the Spirit-Mother, stands directly before the human soul as the sustaining Cosmic Spirit.

That which is woven out of all these cosmic secrets I may put before you somewhat in the following way. It is as though the human being, placed in the midst of all that goes on in high summer, were to feel something like this. The first words endeavour to represent how the gaze of Uriel concentrates itself into Inspiration, united with the Spirit-tones of the whole choir:

The Heights:

*Schaue unser Weben
Das leuchtende Erregen
Das warmende Leben*

*Behold our weaving,
the kindling radiance,
the warming life.*

The Depths

*Lebe irdisch Erhaltendes
Und atmend Gestaltetes —
Als wesenhaft Waltendes*

*Live in the earth's sustaining,
and in the form-giving breathing,
with the power of true being.*

The Midst — The inner being of Man.

*Fühle dein Menschengebeine
Mit himmlischen Scheine
Im waltenden Weltenvereine*

*Feel the limbs of man,
from the heavens illuminated,
in the strength of worlds united.*

Here in these nine lines are the Mysteries of the Heights, the Mysteries of the Depths, and the Mysteries of the Midst, which are also those of the inner being of man. And then we have the whole gathered up as a cosmic statement of these Mysteries of the Heights, the Depths and the Midst, sounding out as though with organ and trumpet tones:

*Es werden Stoffe verdichtet
Es werden Fehler gerichtet
Es werden Herzen gesichtet.*

*Substances are densified,
errors are judged and rectified,
hearts are sifted.*

Here you have that which can permeate the human being at midsummer, supporting him, exalting him, confirming him — the St. John Imagination filled with Inspiration, the St. John Inspiration filled with Imagination — in these words:

*Schaue unser Weben
Das leuchtende Erregen
Das warmende Leben
Lebe irdisch Erhaltendes
Und atmend Gestaltetes —
Als wesenhaft Waltendes*

*Fühle dein Menschengewebe
Mit himmlischen Scheine
Im waltenden Weltenvereine*

*Es werden Stoffe verdichtet
Es werden Fehler gerichtet
Es werden Herzen gesichtet.*

*Behold our weaving,
the kindling radiance,
the warming life.
Live in the earth's sustaining,
and in the form-giving breathing,
with the power of true being.
Feel the limbs of man,
from the heavens illuminated,
in the strength of worlds united.*

*Substances are densified,
errors are judged and rectified,
hearts are sifted.*





The Working Together of the Four Archangels

Dornach, 13 October, 1923

During the last few days I have brought before you the four cosmic Imaginations which can be called up through an intimate human experience of the seasons of the year. If we are to arrive at an understanding of the whole place and situation of man in the world, we must seek it through the working together of the Beings who appear in conjunction with these imaginative pictures. And here I would like first to say something by way of introduction.

If we open our souls to the impressions which may come to us from the content of these pictures, then at the same time there will come to us much that has been experienced in the course of human evolution as an echo of old, instinctive clairvoyance; to-day this is sometimes treated historically, but fundamentally it is not understood. Real poets and spiritually inspired men lay hold of these often wonderful voices which sound from the traditions of the past, and make use of them just when they wish to express their highest and greatest conceptions. But even then they are very little understood. So in the first part of *Faust* there rings out a wonderful saying which is scarcely at all understood, though it is quoted often enough. It occurs when Faust, having opened the book of Nostradamus, comes upon the sign of the Macrocosm:

*Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,
Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!
Wie Himmelskräfte auf- und niedersteigen
Und sich die goldnen Eimer reichen,
Mit segenduftenden Schwingen
Vom Himmel durch die Erde dringen,
Harmonisch all das All durchklingen*

*How each the Whole its substance gives,
each in the other works and lives!
See heavenly forces rising and descending,
their golden urns reciprocally lending:*

*on wings that winnow sweet blessing
from heaven through the earth they're pressing,
to fill the All with harmonies caressing.*

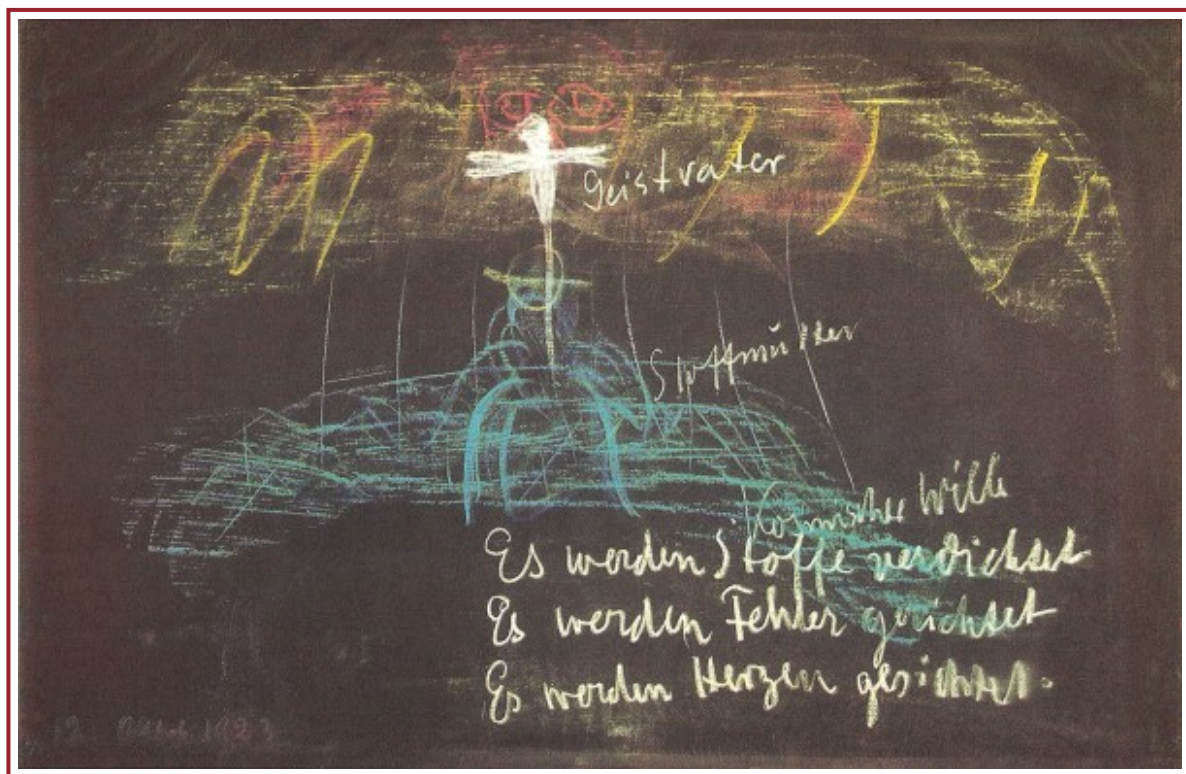
*(From the translation of Faust: Part One, by Bayard Taylor, revised
and edited by Stuart Atkins. Published by Collier Books, New York,
1962.)*

A magnificent picture — but if one knows Goethe one must say that it is real to him only through his *feelings*. For what Goethe has evidently drawn from his reading of old traditions and his feeling for them — all this stands in its full significance before our souls only if we have in mind the four great cosmic Imaginations, as I described them to you — the Autumn Imagination of Michael, the Christmas Imagination of Gabriel, the Easter Imagination of Raphael, and the Midsummer, St. John's Day, Imagination of Uriel. You must really picture to yourselves how from all these Beings, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel, Michael, forces stream out through the cosmos and as formative forces stream again into man. In order to understand this, we must see how man stands within the cosmos in — I might almost call it — a purely material way.

In this connection there is very little understanding, unfortunately, for how things really are. For example, medical textbooks always describe how man breathes in oxygen from the air and how the carbon within him takes up the oxygen; this process is then compared with external combustion, in which all sorts of external substances combine with oxygen. The whole process in the human organism, whereby oxygen is taken up by carbon, is then called combustion.

All this is said because one essential fact is not known — the fact that all external substances and processes become different directly they enter into the human organism. Anyone who speaks of this peculiar combination of oxygen with carbon in man and thinks of it as combustion is talking in just the same way as if someone said: "There is no need for a man to have two living lungs; he could equally well have a pair of stones suspended inside him." That is more or less how these people talk in speaking of the combustion of oxygen and carbon within the human organism.

Everything that takes place externally in nature is different as soon as it enters a human being. No process within the human organism takes place in the same way as in outer nature. A flame that burns externally is dead fire; that which corresponds to it within the human being is flame living and ensouled: Just as a stove stands towards a lung, so does the external flame stand towards the living activity that goes on in the human organism when carbon unites with oxygen there — a process which, viewed externally, is indeed combustion in chemical terms. All spiritual progress at the present day depends on our being able to grasp these things in the right way. Suppose you take salt with your food, or eat some albumen or anything else, people assume that it remains just the same substance within you as it was outside. That is not true. Whatever enters the human being becomes different immediately. And the forces which make it different proceed in a quite definite way from those Beings whom I have pictured in the four Imaginations.

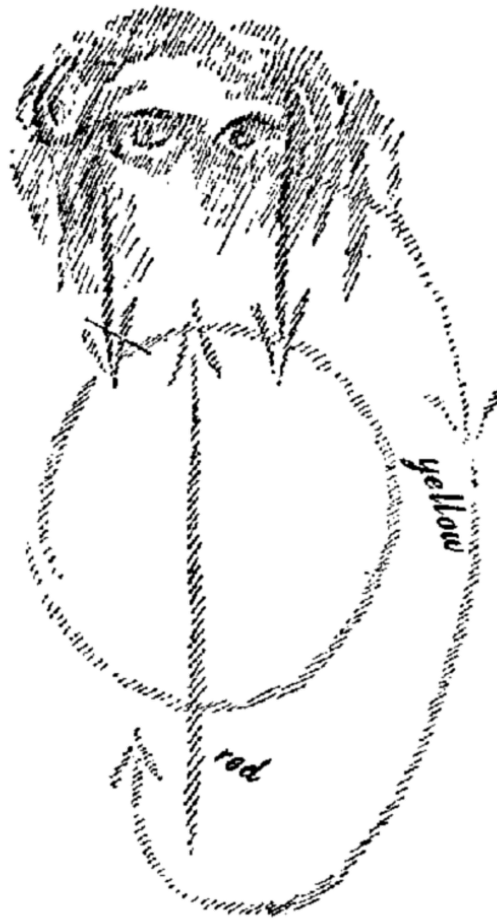


Let us recall the last picture: how at St. John's tide, Uriel hovers in the heights, weaving his body out of golden light in the golden radiance of the Sun (see Plate V, red.) As I told you, we must picture him with grave, judicial eyes, for his gaze is directed down towards the crystal realm of the earth, and he sees how little are human errors compatible with the abstract

but none the less shining beauty of the crystallisation process that goes on below the surface of the earth. That is the reason for his gravely judging gaze, as he looks down and compares human errors with the living activity in the crystals of the earth.

I spoke also of Uriel's gesture as a warning gesture, indicating to men what they ought to do. It calls upon them, if they understand it rightly, to transform their faults into virtues. For up above in the clouds appear the shining pictures of beauty, woven out of the Sun-gold, and they are pictures of all that by dint of virtue humanity has achieved.

Now from the Being who has to be described in this way — and can be described in no other way — there proceed forces which work directly in man, but have also a characteristic further effect. All that I am depicting goes on in high summer. The Uriel-Being, however, is not at rest, but in majestic movement. This must be so, for when it is summer with us, it is winter in the opposite hemisphere, and Uriel is there in the heights. We must picture this clearly, so that if we have the Earth here (see sketch), Uriel appears to us in summer, and then follows a course which brings him after six months to the other side. Then it is winter with us. While Uriel descends (yellow arrow) and while his forces are thus coming to us from a descending line, summer with us passes over into winter, and then Uriel is over the other hemisphere. But the Earth does not hinder his forces from coming to us; they penetrate through the forces which come to us directly from above (red arrows), seeking to permeate us with the Sun-gold of summer, penetrate right through the Earth in winter and permeate us as an ascending stream (red) from the other side.



If we bring before our souls the midsummer working of Uriel through nature into man — for his activity works into the forces of nature — we must picture the forces of Uriel streaming out in the cosmos, raying into the clouds, the rain, the thunder and lightning, and raying also into the growth of plants. In winter, after Uriel has made his way round the Earth, his forces stream up through the Earth and come to rest in our heads. And then these forces, which at other times are outside in nature, have the effect of making us citizens of the cosmos. For they actually cause an image of the cosmos to arise in our heads, illuminating us so that we become possessors of human wisdom.

We speak rightly if we say: Uriel makes his descent as summer passes through autumn into winter. Then in winter he begins to re-ascend, and from this descending and ascending power of Uriel we get the inner forces

of our heads. Thus Uriel works in nature at midsummer, and during the winter season he works in the human head, so that in this connection man is truly a microcosm over against the macrocosm.

We understand the human being only if we place him in the world not merely as a being of nature, but as a spiritual being. And just as we can follow the forces of Uriel and see how they stream into man through the course of the year, so must we do with Raphael, who pours his forces into the forces of nature in spring, as I have described. I had to show you how the Easter Imagination is completed through the teaching that Raphael, the great cosmic physician, can give to mankind. For precisely when we allow all that Raphael brings about, working in the springtime forces of nature as Uriel does in summer — when we allow all this to work on us at Easter through the spiritual hearing of Inspiration, then we have the crowning of all the truths of healing for mankind.

But the springtime activity of Raphael travels round the Earth, as Uriel does. In terms of the cosmos Uriel is the spirit of summer; he moves round the Earth and in winter creates the inner forces of the human head. Raphael is the spirit of spring, and in autumn, as he travels round the Earth, he engenders the forces of human breathing. Hence we can say: While during autumn Michael is the cosmic spirit up above, the cosmic Archangel, at Michaelmas Raphael works in human beings — Raphael who is active in the whole human breathing-system, regulating it and giving it his blessing. And we shall form a true picture of autumn only if on the one hand, up above, we have the powerful Michael-Imagination, with the sword forged from meteoric iron, the garment woven out of Sun-gold and shot through with the Earth's silver-sparkling radiance, while Raphael below is working in man, aware of every breath that is drawn, of everything that flows from the lungs into the heart and from the heart through the whole circulation of the blood. Thus man learns to recognise in himself the healing forces which play through the cosmos in the Raphael-time of spring, if in autumn, when the rays of Raphael pass through the Earth, he comes to know how Raphael is active in human breathing.

For this is a great secret: all the healing forces reside originally in the human breathing system. And anyone who understands truly the circuit of the breath, knows the healing forces from the human side. They do not reside in the other systems of the human organism; these other systems have themselves to be healed.

Look back and see what I have said about education: the breathing system comes specially into activity between the ages of seven and fourteen. There are great possibilities of illness during the first seven years of life, and again after fourteen; they are relatively least during the period when the breath pulses through the body with the help of the etheric body. A secret activity of healing resides in the breathing system, and all the secrets of healing are at the same time secrets of breathing. And this is connected with the fact that the workings of Raphael, which are cosmic in spring, permeate the whole mystery of human breathing in autumn.

We have learnt to know Gabriel as the Christmas Archangel. He is then the cosmic Spirit; we have to look up above to find him. During the summer Gabriel carries into man all that is effected by the plastic, formative forces of nourishment. At midsummer they are carried into man by the Gabriel forces, after Gabriel has descended from his cosmic activity during the winter to his human activity in summer, when his forces stream through the Earth and it is winter on the other side.

And when at last we come to Michael, we have him as the cosmic Spirit in autumn. He is then at his highest; he has reached his cosmic culmination. Then he begins his descent; in spring his forces penetrate up through the Earth and live in all that comes to expression in man as movement and the power of will, enabling him to walk and work and take hold of things.

Now bring before you the complete picture. First, the summer picture at the time of St. John: up above, the grave countenance of Uriel, with his judicial look, his warning mien and gesture — and, drawing near to men and permeating them, the mild and loving gaze of Gabriel, Gabriel with his gesture of blessing. So during summer we have the working together of Uriel in the cosmos, Gabriel on the human side.

If we pass on to autumn, we have the — I will not say commanding, but rather the guiding — look of Michael. For if we see it in the right light, Michael's gaze is like a pointing finger, as though wishing not to look into itself, but to look outwards into the world. Michael's gaze is positive, active. And his sword forged out of cosmic iron is held so that at the same time his hand points out to men their way. That is the picture up above.

Below, in autumn, is Raphael, with deeply thoughtful gaze, who brings to mankind the healing forces which he has first — one might say — kindled in the cosmos. Raphael, with deep wisdom in his gaze, leaning on the staff

of Mercury, supported by the inner forces of the Earth. Thus we have the working together of Michael in the cosmos, Raphael on Earth.

Now we go on to winter. Gabriel is then the cosmic Angel; Gabriel up above, with his mild and loving look and his gesture of benediction, weaving his garment of snow in the clouds of winter. And below, Uriel, with his grave judgment and warning, at the side of men: the positions are reversed.

And as we come round again to spring, up above we find Raphael, with his deeply thoughtful gaze; with the staff of Mercury which now in the airy heights has become something like a fiery serpent, a serpent of shining fire, no longer resting on the Earth, but as though held forth, using the forces of the air, mingling and combining fire, water and earth, so as to transmute them into healing forces, working and weaving in the cosmos.

And below, quite specially visible, is Michael, coming to meet mankind, with his positive gaze; a gaze that shows the way, as it were, into the world and would gladly draw the eyes of men in the same direction, as he stands close to mankind, the complement of Raphael, in spring.

So there, you see, are the pictures:

Winter: Gabriel above, Uriel below.

Spring: Raphael above, Michael below.

Summer: Uriel above, Gabriel below, with man.

Autumn: Michael above, Raphael below, with man.

Now let us take the words which have come down through the ages like an old magical saying and were used again by Goethe:

*Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,
Eins in dem andren wirkt und lebt!*

*How each the Whole its substance gives,
each in the other works and lives*

Yes, indeed, Uriel, Gabriel, Raphael and Michael work together, one working in the other, living in the other, and when man is placed in the universe as a being of spirit, soul and body, these forces work magically in him. And how far-reaching is the truth in these words, how far they go! Think what they mean:

*Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt,
Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!
Wie Himmelskräfte auf- und niedersteigen*

*How each the Whole its substance gives,
each in the other works and lives!
See heavenly forces rising and descending,*

— rising and descending! And then the lines that follow:

*Und sich die goldnen Eimer reichen,
Mit segenduftenden Schwingen
Vom Himmel durch die Erde dringen,
Harmonisch all das All durchlingen!*

*Their golden urns reciprocally lending:
on wings that winnow sweet blessing
from heaven through the earth they're pressing,
to fill the All with harmonies caressing.*

Remember how in yesterday's lecture I spoke of it all passing over from plastic form into musical sound, universally resounding harmony.

I cannot tell you what I felt when this stood before my soul and I read again these lines by Goethe: *vom Himmel durch die Erde dringen!* This *durch* — it can shake one profoundly, for that is just how it is — it is true! It is staggering to realise that these words ring through the world like a peal of bells and are regarded as poetic licence or something of the sort — or as words that anyone might write in letters or articles. It is not so.

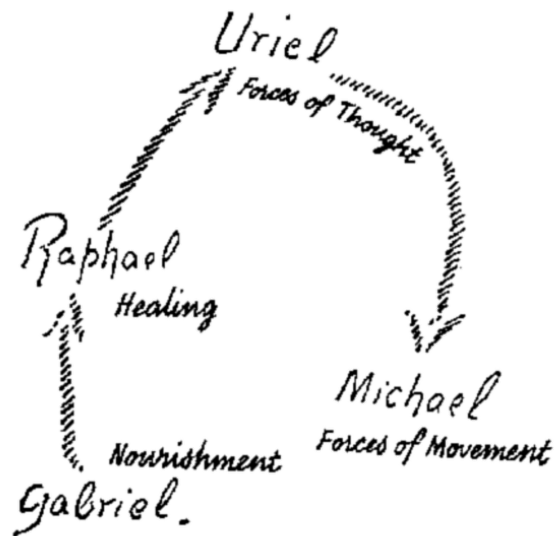
These are words which correspond to a cosmic fact. It is really shattering to read these words in the context of Goethe's *Faust* and to know how true they are.

Now we will go further. We have seen how the heavenly Powers with golden pinions — the Archangels — permeate the universe in harmony, working and living in one another. But that is not all.

Let us look at Gabriel, who draws nutritive forces out of the cosmos and carries them into man at midsummer. These forces are active in the human metabolic system.

Raphael rules in the breathing system. And now Gabriel and Raphael, as they ascend and descend, work together in such a way that Gabriel passes up into the breathing system those forces of his which are otherwise active in human nutrition, and there they become healing forces. Gabriel hands on the nourishment to Raphael, and it then becomes a means of healing. When that which is otherwise only a nutritive process in the human organism is interwoven with the secret of breathing, it becomes a healing force.

We must indeed observe carefully the transformation which external substances undergo in the nutritive system itself: then we come to recognise the significance of the Gabriel forces, the nutritive forces, in man. But these forces are led over into the breathing system. And in working on further there, they become not only a means of quenching hunger and thirst, and not only restorative forces: they turn into forces for the inward correction of illness. The transmuted nutritive forces become healing forces. Anyone who understands nutrition correctly, understands the first stage of healing. If he knows what salt should do in a healthy man, then, if he allows the metamorphosis from the Gabriel-way to the Raphael-way to work on him, he will know how salt can act as a means of healing, in this or that case. The healing forces within us are metamorphoses of the nutritive forces. Raphael receives the golden vessel of nutrition from Gabriel; it is passed on to him.



And now we come to a secret, familiar in early times but entirely lost today. Anyone who can read Hippocrates, or, if he cannot read Galen, can still gather something from him, will notice that, in Hippocrates, and even in Galen, those old physicians, there survived something of what is really a great human secret. The forces that prevail in our breathing system are healing forces; they are healing us continually. But when these breathing forces rise into the head, the healing forces become spiritual forces, active in sense-perception and in thinking. Here is the secret that was known at one time; the secret that is almost explicit in Hippocrates and can at least be drawn out of Galen. Thought, perception, the inner spiritual life of man, are a higher metamorphosis of therapy, the healing process; and when the healing element in the breathing system, which lies between the head and the digestive system, is driven further up, as it were, it becomes the material foundation for the spiritual life of man.

So we can say: The thought which flashes through the human head is really a transmutation of the healing impulses that reside in the various substances. Hence if a man sees truly into the heart of this, and has some healing salt-substance, let us say, in his hand, or some remedial plant-substance, he can look at it and say: Here is a beneficent healing force which I can give to man in accordance with his need. But if this substance penetrates into the man and passes beyond the realm of breathing, so that it works in his head, it becomes the material bearer of the power of thought: Raphael then hands on his vessel to Uriel.

Why does a remedy heal? Because it is on the way to the spirit. And if one knows how far on the way to the spirit a remedy is, one knows its healing power. The spirit cannot of itself lay hold directly on the earthly in man; but the lower stage of the spirit is a therapeutic force.

And just as Gabriel passes on to Raphael the nutritive forces, to be transmuted into forces of healing — in other words, he passes on his golden vessel — and just as Raphael passes on his golden vessel to Uriel, whereby the healing forces are made into the forces of thought, so it is Michael who receives from Uriel the thought-forces, and through the power of cosmic iron, out of which his sword is forged, transforms these thought-forces into forces of will, so that in man they become the forces of movement.

Hence we have this second picture: Uriel, Raphael, Gabriel, Michael, ascending and descending; Uriel and Gabriel, let us say, working in one another, but also working with one another, one giving his possession to the other, so that it can work on further in him. We see how the heavenly Powers rise and descend, passing to one another golden vessels — the golden vessels of nourishment, of healing, of the forces of thought and of movement. So these golden vessels move on from one Archangel to another, while at the same time each Archangel works with the other in cosmic harmony.

And again in *Faust* we find:

*Wie Himmelskräfte auf- und niedersteigen
Und sich die goldnen Eimer reichen!*

*See heavenly forces rising and descending,
their golden urns reciprocally lending:*

True indeed, down to the very word "golden," for these things are woven out of the Sun-gold radiating from Uriel, as I described yesterday.

Goethe had of course read the old saying to which he then gave poetic expression, and it made a tremendous impression on him. But the meaning I have been able to picture for you here — that he did not know. It is just this which staggers one — to find that when out of a certain poetic feeling

a spirit such as Goethe's takes hold of something handed down from old traditions, it so incredibly reflects the truth! This is the splendid thing that unites us, if we are cultivating Spiritual Science to-day and these things are revealed to us: when we truly see how Uriel and Raphael and Michael and Gabriel are working together, and how they really do pass on to one another their own particular forces. If we first see this for ourselves and then, having perhaps come across indirectly an ancient saying, through Goethe in this case, we let it work upon us, we see how an old instinctive truth — no matter whether mythical or legendary — was at one time widely current in the world. And then times change, and in our own time we see how the ancient truth has to be raised to a higher level.

O Hippocrates — it is all the same whether we now give the name of Raphael, or Mercury, or Hermes to the one who stood at his side — this Hippocrates lived at a time when twilight was falling over the knowledge of this working together of Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel, and of how the healing forces in the human organism lie between the thoughts and the nutritive forces. This was the source from which an ancient instinctive wisdom drew those wonderful old remedies which in fact are always being renewed. Today they are found among so-called primitive folk, and people cannot imagine how they have been come by. All this is connected with the fact that a primeval wisdom was once possessed by mankind.

But now there must really be a problem left in your minds. It is this. If you take everything I have put before you — how for example the Raphael forces are active in spring and in autumn are carried over by Raphael into the inwardness of the breathing system — you must have been led to suppose that man is entirely bound up with the working of the forces of the cosmos through the course of the year. Originally, indeed, that is how it was. But because man is a being who remembers, so that an outer experience is preserved in memory and after days or years can be relived as an inner experience, so these truths remain entirely valid for the cosmos; but a man does not inwardly experience the Raphael force in his breathing system only in the autumn, but on through the winter, summer and spring. A kind of memory of it, more substantial than ordinary memory, remains.

So while things are arranged in the way I have described, their effects are active in human beings throughout the year. As an experience remains fixed in the memory, so these effects continue all through the year; otherwise man could not be a uniformly developing being all the year round. In physical life, one person forgets more readily, or less readily, than

another. But the influence Raphael has implanted in our breathing system during the autumn would disappear by the following autumn when Raphael came again. Until then this nature-memory in the breathing organ remains active, but then it has to be renewed.

So is man placed in the course of nature; he is not excluded from the way the world goes, but planted in the midst of it. But he is placed there in yet another way. It is true that man, standing here on Earth, enclosed within his skin, with his organs embedded in his body, feels himself somewhat isolated in the cosmos, for the connections I have described are indeed full of mystery. But this is not so when man is a being only of spirit and soul — in his pre-earthly existence, for example. Between death and a new birth he lives in a realm of spirit; his soul gazes down not at an individual human body — it chooses this in the course of time — but at the whole Earth, and indeed at the Earth in connection with the whole planetary system, and with all the interwoven activities of Raphael, Uriel, Gabriel, Michael. In that realm, one is looking at oneself from outside.

It is there that the door opens for the entry of souls who are returning from pre-earthly to earthly life. It opens only during the period from the end of December to the beginning of spring, when Gabriel hovers above as cosmic Archangel, while below at man's side is Uriel, carrying cosmic forces into the human head. In the course of these three months the souls who are to be embodied during the whole year come down from the cosmos towards the Earth. They remain waiting there until an opportunity occurs in the Earth's planetary sphere: even the souls who will be born in October, let us say, are already within the Earth sphere, awaiting their birth. Much, very much, depends on whether a soul, after it has entered the Earth sphere and is already in touch with it, has to wait for its earthly embodiment. One soul has a longer wait; another, a shorter one.

The particular secret here is that — just as, for example, the fructifying seed enters the ovum at only one spot — the heavenly seeds enter into the whole yearly being of the Earth only when Gabriel rules above as the cosmic Angel, with his mild, loving look and gesture of benediction, while below is Uriel, with judicial gaze and warning gesture. That is the time when the Earth is impregnated with souls. It is the time when the Earth has its mantle of snow and surrenders to its crystallising forces; then man can be united with the Earth as the thinking earth-body in the cosmos. Then the souls pass out of the cosmos and assemble, as it were, in the Earth sphere. That is the annual impregnation of the Earth's seasonal being.

To all these things we come, if we have insight not only into the physical aspect of the cosmos, but into the activities of those cosmic Beings I have described for you in the four pictures. And if we have arrived at that, we can find in many a poem some indications of the cosmic creative activity, for it is there in the world:

*Wie alles sich zum Ganzen webt
Eins in dem andern wirkt und lebt!
Wie Himmelskräfte auf- und niedersteigen
Und sich die goldenen Eimer reichen,
Mit segenduftenden Schwingen
Von Himmel durch die Erde dringen,
Harmonisch all das All durchklingen!*

*How each the Whole its substance gives,
each in the other works and lives
See heavenly forces rising and descending,
their golden urns reciprocally lending:
on wings that winnow sweet blessing
from heaven through the earth they're pressing,
to fill the All with harmonies caressing.*

In these very words we can discern something of that wonderful working together of the four Archangel Beings who, in conjunction with the forces of nature, permeate and animate the bodily nature, the soul and the spirit in man — working in one another, working with one another.



Read & Write



kennethmdouglass.com