

Anthroposophical Society in
New Hampshire
Easter Newsletter
2024



The Resurrection
Painting by [Roman Sleptsuk](#), 2021

Soul Calendar Verses for Eastertide

30 March to 6 April

When from the soul's deep ground
The Spirit turns to the life of worlds
And beauty wells from widths of space,
Then from the farthest Heavens flows
Life's strength into the human form
And weds in mighty working
The Spirit's being to the life of man.

Easter Mood

When from the world's wide realms
The sun speaks to the human mind,
And joy from depths of soul
Unites with light in gazing,
Then thoughts from selfhood's sheath
Stream into far spread spaces,
And dimly bind
Man's being to the Spirit's life.

14-20 April

Into the outer world of sense
Thought power its own nature loses;
Once again the spirit worlds
Light upon their offspring, man,
Who needs must find his source in them

Yet fruit of soul
Within himself.

EASTER AS A CHAPTER IN THE MYSTERY WISDOM OF MAN

GA 233a

Lecture I

19 April 1924, Dornach

Easter is felt by many people to be associated on the one hand with the deepest feelings and sensibilities of the human soul, but on the other, with cosmic mysteries and enigmas as well. Our attention is drawn to this connection with world riddles by the fact that Easter is a so-called moveable feast, fixed each year by computing the position of a constellation of which we will have more to say in the following lectures. Yet if we trace the festival customs and cult rites that have become associated with the Easter Festival through the centuries — rituals having a deep meaning for a large part of mankind — we cannot fail to observe the profound significance with which humanity has endowed this Easter Festival in the course of its historical development.

Easter became an important Christian festival — not coincident with the founding of Christianity, but during the first centuries; a Christian festival linked with the fundamental idea, the basic impulse, of Christianity: the impulse to be a Christian, provided by the Resurrection of Christ. Easter is the Festival of the Resurrection; yet it points back to periods antedating Christianity, to festivals connected with the spring equinox that plays a part in determining the date of Easter, to festivals bearing on the re-awakening of Nature, on the life burgeoning from the earth. And this leads us directly to the heart of our subject.

As a Christian festival, Easter commemorates a resurrection. The corresponding pagan festival that occurred at about the same season was, in a sense, the celebration of the resurrection of Nature, of the re-awakening of what, as Nature, had been asleep throughout the winter time. But here we must emphasize the fact that with regard to its inner meaning and essence the Christian Easter in no sense corresponds to the pagan equinox festivals. On the contrary: comparing it with those of ancient pagan times, Easter, as a Christian festival, would correspond to old festivals that grew out of the Mysteries; and these were celebrated in the autumn. And the most interesting feature connected with determining the date of Easter, which is quite obviously related to certain old Mystery customs, is this: we are reminded precisely by this Easter Festival of the radical, far-reaching misapprehensions that have crept into the philosophic conceptions of the most vital problems during the course of human evolution. Nothing less occurred, in the early Christian centuries, than the confusion of the Easter Festival with quite a different one, with the result that it was changed from an autumn festival to a spring festival.

This points to something of enormous importance in human evolution. Let us examine the substance of the Easter Festival — what is its essence? It is this: the central figure in Christian consciousness, Christ Jesus, experiences death, as commemorated by Good Friday. He remains in the grave for the period of three days, this representing His coalescence with earthly existence. This period between Good Friday and Easter Sunday is celebrated in Christendom as a festival of mourning. Finally, Easter Sunday is the day on which the central being of Christianity arises from the grave. It is the memorial day of this event. That is the essential substance of Easter: the death, the interval in the grave, and the Resurrection of Christ Jesus.

Now let us turn to the corresponding old pagan festival in one of its many forms; for only by so doing can we grasp the connection between the Easter Festival and the Mysteries. Among many people of diverse localities we find ancient pagan festivals whose outer form — the nature of the rites — strongly resembles the form of what is comprised in the Christian Easter.

From among the manifold ancient festivals let us choose that of Adonis for examination. This was celebrated by certain peoples of the Near East for a long period of time during pre-Christian Antiquity. An effigy constituted the center of interest. It portrayed Adonis, the spiritual representative of all that appears in the human being as vigorous youth and beauty.

Now, the ancients undoubtedly confused, in some respects, the substance of an effigy with what it represented, hence the old religions frequently bore the character of idolatry. Many took the effigy of Adonis for the actually present god of beauty, of man's youthful strength, of the germinating force becoming outwardly manifest and revealing in living splendor all the inner worth, the inner dignity, the inner grandeur of which man is or might be possessed.

To the accompaniment of songs and of rites representing the deepest human grief and sorrow, this effigy of the god was immersed in the sea where it remained for three days. When the locality was not near the sea, a lake served the purpose; and lacking this as well, an artificial pond was dug in the vicinity of the sanctuary. During the three days of immersion a deep and serious silence enveloped the whole community that confessed this cult, that called it its own. At the end of the three days the effigy was brought out of the water, and the previous laments were changed into paeans of joy, into hymns to the resurrected god, the god come to life again.

That was an external ceremony, one that stirred the souls of a great multitude of people: through an outer act, an outer rite, it suggested what was enacted in the sanctuaries of the Mysteries in the case of every man aspiring to initiation. In these olden times every such candidate was conducted into a special chamber. The walls were black and the whole room, which contained nothing but a coffin or, at least, a coffin-like case, was dark and somber. Beside this coffin laments and songs of death were sung: the neophyte was treated as one about to die. It was made clear to him that by being laid in the coffin he was to go through what a man experiences in passing through the portal of death and in the three days following this event. The procedure was such that he became fully aware of this.

On the third day there appeared, at a certain point visible for him who lay in the coffin, a branch, denoting sprouting life. In place of the laments, hymns of rejoicing were sung. The initiate arose from his grave with transformed consciousness. A new language had been imparted to him, a new script: the language and script of the spirits. Now he might see, and he was able to see the world from the viewpoint of the spirit.

Comparing this initiation that took place in the sanctuaries of the Mysteries with the rites performed publicly, we see that while the substance of the rites was symbolical, its whole form nevertheless resembled the procedure followed in the Mysteries. And in due time the cult — we may take that of Adonis as typical — was explained to those who had participated. It was celebrated in the autumn, and those who took part were instructed approximately as follows:

Behold, it is autumn. The Earth sheds its glory of flowers and leaves. All things wither. In place of the greening, burgeoning life that in the spring time began to cover the earth, snow will envelop it, or drought will bring desolation. But while everything around you dies, you shall experience that which in man partly resembles the dying in Nature. Man, too, dies: he has his autumn. When he reaches the end of his life it is fitting that the souls of his dear ones be filled with deep sorrow. But it is not enough that you should meet death only when it comes to you: its whole import must be grasped in its profound significance, and you must be able to recall it to your memory again and again. Therefore you are shown every year the death of that divine being who stands for beauty and youth and the grandeur of man: you are shown this divine being going the way of all Nature. But when Nature becomes barren and passes into death, that is the time you must remember something else. You must remember that man passes through the portal of death; that in this Earth existence

he has known only what is transitory, like all that passes in the autumn, but that now he is drawn away from the Earth and finds his way into the vast cosmic ether. During three days he sees himself expand till his being contains the whole world. And then, while here the eye of the body is directed to the image of death, to the ephemeral, to what dies, yonder in the spirit there awakens after three days the immortal human soul. It arises in order to be born for the spirit land three days after death.

An intense inner transformation was brought about in the body of the candidate in the recesses of the Mysteries; and the profound impression, the terrific shock inflicted on the human life by this old method of initiation awakened inner soul forces, gave rise to vision.¹ That impression, that shock, brought the initiate to understand that henceforth he lived not merely in the sense world but in the spiritual world as well.

Other information imparted to the neophytes of the old Mysteries may be summed up thus: the Mystery ritual is an image of events in the spiritual world; what occurs in the cosmos is a likeness of what takes place in the Mysteries. No doubt was left in the mind of anyone admitted to the Mysteries that the procedure followed in these and enacted in man constituted images of what he experiences in forms of existence other than the Earth in the astral-spiritual cosmos.

Those who, owing to insufficient inner maturity, could not be deemed ready to have the spiritual world opened up to them directly were taught the corresponding truths in the cult; that is, in a semblance of the Mystery proceedings.

Thus the purpose of the Mystery festival corresponding to Easter — the one we have illustrated by the Adonis Festival — was as follows: during the autumnal withering and desolation in Nature, the drastic autumnal representation of the transience of earthly things — autumn's picture of dying and death — the certainty was to be conveyed to the neophyte — or at least the idea — that death, which envelops all Nature in the fall, overtakes man as well; and it comes even to the representative of beauty, youth and the glory of the human soul, to the god Adonis. He also dies. He dissolves in the earthly counterpart of the cosmic ether, that is, in water. But just as he arises out of the water, as he can be lifted out of it, so the soul of man is brought back, after about three days, from the world-waters — that is, from the cosmic ether — after having passed through the portal of death here on Earth.

The mystery of death itself, that is what the autumn festivals were intended to present in these old Mysteries; and it was to be made readily intelligible by having the ritual coincide, on the one hand and in its first half, with dying, with the death of Nature; and on the other, with the opposite of this: with what represented the essence of man's being. It was intended that the initiate should contemplate the dying of Nature in order to become aware of how he, too, apparently dies, but how his inner being rises again, to take part in the spiritual world. To reveal the truth concerning death, that was the purpose of this old pagan festival deriving from the Mysteries.

Now, during the course of human evolution a most significant event took place: in the case of Christ Jesus, the transformation experienced at a certain level by the candidate for initiation in the Mysteries — the death and resurrection of the soul — embraced the physical body as well. In what light does one familiar with the Mysteries see the Mystery of Golgotha? He envisions the ancient Mysteries; he observes how the soul of the candidate was guided through death to resurrection, meaning the awakening of a higher form of consciousness in the soul. The soul died in order to awake on a higher plane of consciousness. What must here be kept in mind is that the body did not die, and that the soul died in order to be reawakened to an enlightened consciousness.

What every aspirant for initiation experienced in his soul only, Christ Jesus passed through in His bodily principle; in other words, on a different level. Because Christ was not an Earth-man but a

Sun-being in the body of Jesus of Nazareth, it was possible for all the human principles of this Being to undergo on Golgotha what the former initiate experienced only in his soul.

Those with intimate knowledge of the old Mystery initiation, whether living at that time or in our own day, have best understood what took place on Golgotha; for what they have known is that for thousands of years the secrets of the spiritual world have been revealed to men through the death and resurrection of their soul. During the process of initiation, body and soul had been kept apart, and the soul was led through death to eternal life. What was experienced in this manner by a number of the elect penetrated even into the physical body of a Being Who descended from the Sun at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan, and took possession of the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Initiation, enacted through many centuries, had become a historical fact.

The important part of that knowledge was this: because it was a Sun-being that took possession of the body of Jesus of Nazareth, that which in the old neophyte had to do only with the soul and its experiences could now penetrate to the bodily life. In spite of the death of the body, in spite of the dissolution of His body in the mortal Earth, the resurrection of the Christ could be brought about because this Christ ascends higher than was possible for the soul of a neophyte. The neophyte could not sink the body into such profoundly sub-sensible regions as did Christ Jesus. For this reason the former could not rise to such heights in his resurrection as could Christ. But up to this point of difference, which is one of cosmic magnitude, the ancient enactment of initiation appeared as a historical fact on the hallowed hill of Golgotha.

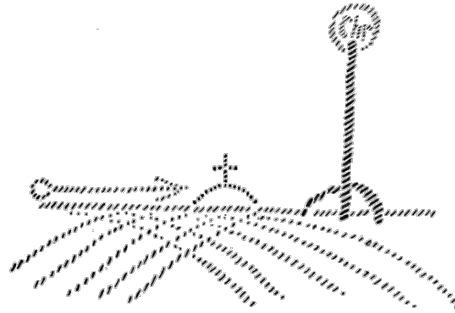
In the first centuries of Christianity very few men knew that a Sun-being, a cosmic being, had lived in Jesus of Nazareth, and that the Earth had been fructified by the actual coming of a being that previously could be seen from the Earth only in the Sun — by means of initiation methods. And for those who accepted Christianity with genuine knowledge of the old Mysteries, its very essence consisted in their conviction that Christ, to Whom they had raised themselves through initiation — the Christ Who could be reached through the old Mysteries by ascending to the Sun — that He had descended into a mortal body, the body of Jesus of Nazareth. He had come down to Earth.

At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, a mood of rejoicing, of holy elation, filled the souls of those who understood something of it. What then was a living substance of consciousness gradually became a festival in memory of the historical event on Golgotha — through developments to be described later.

But while this memory was gradually taking shape, the awareness of the identity of Christ as a Sun-being disappeared more and more. Those familiar with the old Mysteries could not be in doubt: they knew that the genuine initiates, by being made independent of the physical body, experienced death in their soul, ascended to the Sun sphere and there found the Christ; that from Him, the Christ in the Sun, they received the impulse for the resurrection of the soul. They knew who Christ was because they had raised themselves up to Him. From what took place on Golgotha these initiates knew that the Being who had formerly to be sought in the Sun had descended to men on Earth. Why? Because the old process of initiation, enacted to enable the neophyte to reach Christ in the Sun, could no longer be enacted: the nature of man simply had changed in the course of time. The ancient ritual of initiation had become impossible by reason of the manner in which the human being had evolved. Christ could no longer have been found in the Sun by the old methods, so He descended in order to enact on the Earth a deed to which men could look.

What is comprised in this secret is as supremely sacred as anything that can be revealed upon Earth.

How did the matter appear to those living in the centuries immediately following the Mystery of Golgotha? A diagram would have to be drawn somewhat like this:



In the old abodes of initiation the neophyte gazed up to the Sun existence, and through initiation he became aware of Christ. To find the Christ he looked out into space. In order to show the subsequent development I must represent time — that is, the Earth proceeding in time. Spatially the Earth is, of course, always there, but we will represent the course of time in this way. The Mystery of Golgotha has taken place. Now, a man, say of the 8th Century, instead of seeking Christ in the Sun from the Mystery temple, looks upon the turning point of time at the beginning of the Christian era, looks in time toward the Mystery of Golgotha (arrow in diagram), and can find Christ in an Earth deed, in an Earth event, within the Mystery of Golgotha. What had been spatial perception was henceforth, through the Mystery of Golgotha, to be temporal perception: that was the significant feature of what had occurred.

Eut if we reflect upon the Mystery ritual, remembering that it was a picture of man's death and resurrection; and if we consider in addition the form taken by the cult — the Festival of Adonis, for example — which in turn was a picture of the Mystery procedure, this threefold phenomenon appears to us raised to the ultimate degree, unified and concentrated in the historical deed on Golgotha.

What was enacted in a profoundly inner way in the sanctuary now appears openly in external history. All men now have access to what was previously available only for the initiates. There was no further need of an image immersed in the sea and symbolically resurrected. In its place was to come the thought, the memory, of what actually took place on Golgotha. The outer symbol, referring to a process experienced in space, was to be supplanted by the inner thought, unaided by any sense image — the memory, experienced only in the soul, of the historical deed on Golgotha.

Then, in the following centuries, the evolution of humanity took a peculiar turn: men are less and less able to penetrate into spirituality; the spiritual substance of the Mystery of Golgotha can gain no foothold in the souls of men; evolution tends toward the development of a materialistic mentality. Lost is the heart's understanding of facts like the following: that precisely where Nature presents herself as ephemeral, as dying desolation, there the living spirit can best be envisioned. And lost as well is the feeling for the festival as such, the feeling that autumn is the time when the resurrection of all spirit contrasts most markedly with the death of Earth Nature. And thus autumn can no longer be the time for the festival of resurrection; no longer can it emphasize the eternal permanence of the spirit by the impermanence of Nature. Man begins to depend upon matter, upon those elements of Nature that do not die — the force of the seed that is sunk in the ground in the fall and that germinates and sprouts in the spring resurrection. A material symbol for the spiritual is adopted because men are no longer able to respond through the material to the spiritual as such. Autumn no longer has the power to reveal, through the inner force of the human soul, the permanence of the spiritual by contrasting it with the impermanence of Nature. The imagination now needs the aid of outer Nature, outer resurrection. Men want to see the plants

sprouting from the ground, the Sun gaining power, light and warmth increasing. Nature's resurrection is needed to celebrate the resurrection idea.

But this exigency also means the disappearance of the direct relationship that existed with the Festival of Adonis, and that can exist with the Mystery of Golgotha. A loss of intensity is suffered by that inner experience which can appear at physical death if the human soul knows that man passes physically through the portal of death and undergoes, for three days, what indeed can evoke a somber frame of mind; but then the soul must rejoice in a festive mood, knowing that precisely out of death — after three days — the human soul arises in spiritual immortality.

The force inherent in the Festival of Adonis was lost, and the next event ordained for mankind was the resurrection of this force in greater intensity. One beheld the death of the god, of all the beauty and grandeur and vigorous youth in mankind. On the Day of Mourning this god was immersed in the sea. A somber mood prevailed, because first a feeling for the ephemeral in Nature was to be aroused.

But the intention was to transform the mood induced by the impermanence of Nature into that evoked by the super-sensible resurrection of the human soul after three days. When the god — or his effigy — was raised up out of the water, the rightly instructed believer saw in this act the image of the human soul a few days after death: Behold! The spiritual experience of the deceased stands before thy soul in the image of the arisen god of beauty and youth.

Every year in the fall something that is indissolubly linked with human destiny was awakened within the spirit of men. At that time it would have been deemed impossible to connect all this in any way with outer Nature. All that could be experienced in the spirit was represented in the ritual, in symbolical enactment. But when the time was ripe for effacing the old-time image and having memory take its place — imageless, inner memory of the Mystery of Golgotha experienced in the soul — mankind at first lacked the power to achieve this, because the activity of the spirit lay deep down in the substrata of the human soul. So up to our own time there has remained the necessity for calling in the aid of outer Nature. But outer Nature provides no complete allegory of the destiny of man in death; and while the idea of death survived, the idea of resurrection has faded more and more. Even though resurrection figures as a tenet of faith, it is not a living fact for people of more recent times. But it must once more become so; and the awakening of men's feeling for the true idea of the resurrection must be brought about by anthroposophy.

If, therefore, as has been explained elsewhere, the anthroposophically imbued soul must sense the heralding thought of Michael, must intensify the idea of Christmas, so the idea of Easter must become especially festive; for to the idea of death anthroposophy must add the idea of resurrection. Anthroposophy itself must come to resemble an inner festival of the resurrection of the human soul. It must infuse into our philosophy a feeling for Easter, a frame of mind appropriate to Easter. This it can do if men will understand that the ancient Mysteries can live on in the true Easter Mystery, provided the body, the soul and the spirit of man — and the destiny of these in the realms of body, soul and spirit — are rightly understood.

Excerpts out of Lecture 2: Easter as a Chapter in the Mystery Wisdom of Man

.....But humanity changed as a result of evolution, and the time came when only the effects of the Sun forces were known in the Mysteries. The knowledge of these survived longest in the therapeutic sections of the Mysteries, because the same forces that give man his freedom, the ability to make something of himself — namely, the Sun forces, the Christ forces — are also found

in certain plants and other beings and things of the Earth, and in this form contain healing properties.

For the most part, however, mankind lost just this contact with the Sun. For a long time people were still aware of their dependence upon the Moon forces, the Father forces; but the consciousness of being dependent upon the Sun forces for their liberation disappeared much earlier. And what we today call forces of Nature — about the only ones mentioned in our philosophies — are really nothing but the Moon forces reduced to complete abstractions. But One Who still knew the Sun forces and was able to be guided by them was the Christ Bearer, Jesus of Nazareth. He had to know them because it was His mission to receive them in His own body as they streamed down to Earth, whereas in the old Mysteries they could be reached only by ascending in vision to the Sun.

I explained that yesterday; but the essential point is that in the thirtieth year of His life a transmutation occurred in the body of Jesus of Nazareth; the same transformation that took place in everyone in primeval times, except that then the rays, so to speak, of the spiritual Sun entered into all men, whereas here it was the primal Being of the Sun, the Christ Himself, Who descended to enter human evolution and took up His abode in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. That is what underlies the Mystery of Golgotha as the primal fruit of the whole life of the Earth.

You will now be able to understand the whole context of these matters by considering the manner in which Easter was celebrated in the older Mysteries. Easter, as I might put it, existed as a quite human institution in those days, for it meant initiation. Primarily this comprised three stages; but the first requirement for attaining to true enlightenment, to initiation, was that everything offered the candidate by the Mysteries should engender in him a degree of inner humility such as nowadays hardly anybody can even dimly imagine. Today people consider themselves enormously modest in respect of their achievements, even in cases where one who can see through them knows that they are veritably possessed by vanity. At the inception of an initiation, the most important realization that had to come to the neophyte was that he could not think of himself as a human being at all: that it still remained for him to become one. Today it would be asking too much of anyone to admit that at any given period of his life he was not a human being. But that was the very first requirement, and the neophyte had to meditate as follows: Before descending into an earthly body I was indeed a human being; in pre-earthly existence I was a human being of soul and spirit. In this form I then descended into the physical body, received from my mother, from my parents. I was then — not clothed in a physical body — that would be a wrong term: I was permeated by this physical body.

Of the manner in which, over a long period of time, the spirit and the soul pervade the physical body — the nervous-sensory system, the rhythmic system, the metabolic-limb system — of all this men are completely unaware. They know nothing of it. They are conscious of perceiving with their senses, of seeing their physical surroundings with their eyes. But when soul and spirit have so far permeated a man's physical body that he considers himself a fully developed adult, where has he actually arrived? He can only see out of his eyes, listen out of his ears, perceive warmth and cold, roughness and smoothness, through his skin: he can only perceive outward, not inward. He cannot look into himself with his eyes: the most he can do is to dissect the human corpse and then imagine he is looking into himself. But in reality he is not. Supposing here is a house. It has windows, but I do not look in through them. Instead, I procure some tools, and if I am strong enough I demolish the house. Then I have all the separate bricks before me; but is it not childish to imagine I am looking into the house when I am only looking at this pile of rubbish? Yet that is the way people go to work nowadays. They dissect the human being and cut him up in order to learn to know him; but in

that way they do not learn to know him, for that is not at all the human being. If we would learn to know the human being we must be able to look back inward through the eyes, to listen back inward through the ears, just as today we perceive outward through the senses.

All that taken together — eyes, ears, the whole skin as an organ of touch and temperature — was called in the Mysteries the Door to Man, the Gate to Man. The point of departure in the initiations was the candidate's realization that he could know nothing of the human being; and having no human self-consciousness, he could not even be a human being. He must first learn to look inward through his senses as previously he had only looked outward. That was the first stage of initiation in the old Mysteries. And the moment the neophyte learned this looking inward he experienced himself also in his pre-earthly existence, for then he knew that he was in his spirit-soul element.

So the neophyte learned to look inward instead of outward, and in so doing he became aware of what had entered him through eyes, ears, skin, and so forth, as prenatal existence. At this point he was told that only now could he come to understand what today we would call natural science. How do we of today go about studying natural science? We are taught to observe the phenomena of Nature, to describe them, and so on. But this is the same as though I had known someone very well, and I were told to forget, when



I meet him again, everything we had ever had in common. Fancy, if you can, a married couple meeting again after a separation and being obliged to forget everything in the way of their common experiences! Well, I can imagine that occasionally it might be pleasant to do so; but life could not be maintained under such conditions.

Yet those are exactly the conditions imposed upon men of our time by our system of civilization, for they did learn to know the kingdoms of Nature from their spiritual aspect before descending to Earth. And while today men are encouraged to forget all they had learned about the minerals, plants and animals before descending to Earth, the old initiate, in the so-called first Mystery stage, was instructed somewhat as follows: he was shown, for example, a block of quartz; and then everything possible was done to recall to his memory what he had known, before descending to Earth, about quartz — or about the lily, or the rose, as the case may have been. Recognizing was the factor taught as natural science; and when the candidate had learned to study Nature in the light of what he had seen in his prenatal life, he was admitted to the second stage.

In the second stage he learned music and what was then architecture, geometry, surveying, etc.; for this second stage comprised everything the neophyte could perceive when he not only looked inward through his eyes and listened inward through his ears, but actually entered into himself. Then he was told that he was about to enter the human Temple Grotto, and this he came to know. It meant that which was physically permeated by the psycho-spiritual forces that constitute man before he descends to life on Earth. There he penetrated into himself. This Temple Grotto, he was told, was made up of three chambers. The first was the chamber of thought, where one learned everything connected with thinking. Seen from without, the head is small; but if one enters into it and looks at it from within, it is as comprehensive as the world, and there one's spiritual activity becomes manifest. That was the first chamber. In the second chamber one learned to know feeling; and in the third, willing.

In this way the initiate learned how man is organized in respect of his organs of thinking, feeling and willing; he learned about the factors concerned in the Earth life. Knowledge of Nature has significance not only in connection with the Earth: it is acquired before one descends to Earth. Here we must remember that yonder in the spiritual world houses are not built with tellurian architecture. There is music there, but it is spiritual *melos*. What we know as music is projected down into our air; it is a projection of heavenly music, but as we experience it, it is of this Earth. It is the same when we survey: we measure the Earth; and surveying, geometry and the like are earthly sciences. It was important for the candidate for the second stage to have his attention drawn to the fact that all thought of gaining enlightenment or knowledge by earthly means alone is delusive, except in the case of geometry, architecture or surveying; that a genuine science of Nature must consist in recalling prenatal knowledge. That is what he was taught; and he came to understand that geometry, architecture, music and surveying were the sciences that can be learned here on Earth. Thus the mystic entered into himself and came to know the human being as consisting of three chambers, as opposed to the human being of one particular incarnation, which is all one encounters by knowing him only from the outside. — And in the third stage the neophyte learned the nature of man as it was when he not only entered into himself, comprehending his spiritual self, but when his spiritual self learned about the body as well. In all the old Mysteries this was therefore the stage inevitably called the Portal of Death. There the initiate learned what he was like after laying aside the earthly body. But there was a difference between this actual death and the death of initiation. Why this had to be so I shall explain in the following lectures; at the moment I am merely emphasizing the facts.

When we actually die we discard the physical body and are no longer bound to it. It ceases to respond to Earth forces, and we are free of these. But one who is still bound to the physical body, as was the case in the initiations of old, must obtain by his own strength and efforts what comes to him automatically through death, namely, this freedom from the body; and he must sustain this condition for a certain length of time. Initiation demanded the attainment of these strong inner forces of the soul by which the latter could remain independent of the physical body; and these forces at the same time provided higher cognition of matters not to be perceived by the senses or thought by the intellect. They transported the initiate as a human being into the spiritual world, just as man is placed by his physical body into the physical world.

But at that point the candidate was far enough advanced to recognize himself as a psycho-spiritual human being, as an initiate, while still in his Earth existence. From that time onward he saw the Earth as a star existing detached from man; and in the older Mysteries it was with the Sun in particular that he had to live, instead of with the Earth. He knew what came to him from the Sun and how the Sun forces worked in him.

The stage that followed the one I have just described, the fourth, may be explained in this way: When a man eats on this Earth he knows, this is cabbage, that is game — he drinks various things, and he knows that now these things are outside him, now inside. He breathes the air which is alternately outside and inside. He is connected with the Earth forces in such a way as to carry within him the forces and substances of the Earth that are otherwise outside him. It was made clear to the candidate that before being initiated he was an Earth-carrier, a carrier of cabbage, game, pork, and so forth. But if you have completed the third stage of initiation, so he was told, and if you receive what you are now able to receive by having freed yourself from the body, you will no longer be a carrier of cabbage, pork and veal, but you will be a bearer of what the Sun forces give you. — And this spiritual gift of the Sun forces was called in all the Mysteries *christos*. Hence the neophyte who had passed beyond the third stage and could now feel himself as a bearer of the Sun

forces — just as on Earth he could feel himself to be a cabbage carrier — was called a *christophor*, a Christ bearer. In the majority of the old Mysteries that was the appellation of a neophyte of the fourth stage.

In the third stage certain things had to be thoroughly understood, in particular, that the craving for the physical body must cease if enlightenment was to enter; and the neophyte had clearly to realize that while he belonged to the Earth as far as his physical body was concerned, yet the function of the Earth was really to destroy that physical body, not to build it up. Now he came to know the constructive forces that derive from the cosmos.

And he learned something else when he became a *christophor*, namely, that even in the Earth's matter there are spiritual forces at work, only they are not perceptible to earthly senses. Another language was current in those times, but in modern words — and I can use only these — the sense of what was made clear to the candidate was this: if you would know the science of matter, know how different elements combine or separate, you must look to the spiritual forces that permeate matter out of the cosmos. That is impossible if you are not initiated: it is necessary to have passed through the fourth stage. You must be able to see by means of the forces of the Sun existence — then you can study chemistry.

Imagine nowadays confronting a candidate for the doctor's degree in pharmacology or chemistry with the requirement that he must first be able to feel himself in the same relation to the forces of the Sun as he does to the cabbage of the Earth! It would seem quite mad. — But in the old days realities were dealt with, and people came to understand that by means of all the forces active in the body — forces employed for ordinary learning — only geometry, surveying, music and architecture can be studied. Not chemistry. Today chemistry is studied from the outside, and so it has been since the old initiation wisdom was lost. In fact, anyone who seeks genuine enlightenment must despair at the official chemistry of today, for it is based wholly upon data, not upon inner penetration of the subject. And if people were open-minded they would realize that something more is necessary, that other things must be understood if chemistry is to be studied. What stifles such impulses in man is the cowardice of modern cognition in which he has been reared.

Now the neophyte had attained to the still higher stage of *astronomus*. The external study of the stars, by computation and the like, was considered wholly futile: spiritual beings inhabit the stars, and these can be known only after physical observation has been surmounted — after even geometry has been overcome — so that one can live in the universe and get to know the spiritual nature of the stars. Then the neophyte became a *resurrected one*; then he could really see the Moon and Sun forces at work upon earthly man.

Today I have described to you from two aspects how Easter was inwardly experienced in the old Mysteries — not at a given season but at a certain degree of human maturity: Easter was the arising of the psycho-spiritual man out of the physical body in the spiritual universe; and those who still knew something of Mystery wisdom saw the Mystery of Golgotha in this light when it took place. They asked themselves: What would have happened to humanity if the Mystery of Golgotha had not intervened? In olden times it was possible to be initiated into the secrets of the cosmos, for in still older times it was a matter of course for a man to experience his second birth in his thirtieth year or thereabouts. And later on there were at least memories, as well as the science of the Mystery schools, that kept alive in tradition what in earlier epochs had been actually experienced. At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, however, all that had been lost or forgotten; and humanity would have fallen into complete decadence had not that power, to which the initiate attained in becoming a *christophor*, descended into a Jesus of Nazareth and henceforth remained on Earth, so that man could be united with this power through Christ Jesus.

Undoubtedly, then, the Easter Festival as we know it is linked with a phase of the Mysteries, and we can really become conscious of the substance of our Easter only by reviving this aspect of them. You will readily understand that in this way we can at least approximate a realization of what the ancient neophyte experienced at his initiation. This will be the subject of further consideration. The neophyte could say to himself: Initiation has disclosed to me how Sun and Moon act within me in their mutual celestial relationship. For now I know that as a physical being I am constituted in a certain way. The circumstance that my eyes, my nose — my whole bodily form within and without — are shaped thus and so, that this bodily form could grow and is still growing through being nourished, all this depends upon the Moon forces, as does everything in the way of necessity. But that I can be active within my bodily nature as a free inner being, can transmute and master myself, this is due to the Sun forces, the Christ forces. These I must activate if I would, by conscious effort, build within me what otherwise they would have to bring about by compulsion. From all this we can understand why even today we look to Sun and Moon and their relative position to determine the date of Easter. Nothing remains of all this but our calculation, When is the first Sunday after the first full Moon after the spring equinox? We place Easter on the Sunday following this first full Moon, thus indicating that in the nature and form of Easter we see something that must be determined from above, from the cosmos. I shall elaborate that tomorrow. But what must be grasped anew is the idea of Easter. This can only be done by contemplating the old Mysteries, which first of all drew attention to what was experienced by introspection — the portal of man; by the achievement of freedom — the portal of death; by moving freely in the spiritual world — becoming a *christophor*.

The Mysteries themselves, of course, began to disappear when the time came for the development of human freedom to assert itself; but now the time has come to rediscover them. We must find and make them our own again; and we must fully realize that today efforts are necessary to this end.

With this in mind the Christmas Conference was held, for there is urgent need of a sanctuary on Earth where Mysteries can once more be established. The Anthroposophical Society must lead the way in its further development to the modern Mysteries. It will be one of your tasks, my dear friends, to collaborate in this way with the right understanding. But in order to succeed you will have to reflect on human life in its three stages: that of introspection, that of self-penetration, and that of a consciousness such as results in outer reality only through death.

And to remind us of what has been said in this hour, let us carry away with us and meditate upon these words:

Stand at the portal of man's existence,
Read above its arch-stones cosmic scripture.
Dwell in the deep of man's inner soul-life,
Feel within its orbit the world's beginning.
Ponder the end of man's earth-chapters,
Find thou there the turning-point of spirit.

Excerpt from Lecture 3, Easter as a Chapter in the Mystery Wisdom of Man, April 21, 1924

Now imagine this actual experience through which the mystic sped away from the Earth, as it were, and ascended as an initiated Earth-man to the light-being; and imagine this inner, human Easter experience of former times transformed into a cosmic festival. In later ages men no longer knew that such things could happen; that man is really able to withdraw from Earth conditions, unite with

those of the Moon, and from the Moon behold the Sun. But the memory of it was to be preserved, and this we have in the Easter Festival.

The ability to experience all this did not pass over into the later consciousness that was becoming materialistic; instead it turned into an abstract conception. Men no longer looked inward and said, I can unite with the moonlight. They looked at the Moon, the full Moon, and said, It is not a question of my aspiring upward: it is the Earth that strives to ascend. And when is this effort at its height? When spring begins, when there burst forth from the surface of the Earth all the forces that had lain dormant in seeds and plants under the ground. On the Earth they become plants, but they go further: they stream out into cosmic space.

The old Mysteries employed this image: man can most easily attain to the Moon-Sun initiation and become a *christophoros* in the season when the inner Earth forces, by means of the stems and leaves of plants, carry out of the ground what then streams forth from the Earth into the cosmos; for then he floats, as it were, on the forces that in spring ray out from the Earth and up to the Moon. But it must be the light of the full Moon.

All this, then, became a memory, but it also became abstract ... *It must be the light of the full Moon.* ... Subconsciously, no longer with the clear knowledge that this could be a human experience, people imagined that something or other — not man himself — streamed toward the full Moon, the first one after the beginning of spring. And what can this full Moon do now? It beholds the Sun; that is, the first day dedicated to the Sun: the first succeeding Sunday. Just as once a *christophoros*, from the viewpoint of the Moon, beheld the Sun-being, so now the Moon beholds the Sun — that is, its symbolization in Sunday.

We have the beginning of spring, March 21st, and the forces of the Earth are burgeoning forth into the universe. We must await the proper observer, the full Moon.

March 21st — full Moon — Sunday.

What does the Moon observe? The Sun; and the following Sunday is fixed as Easter Sunday. This is an abstract way of determining the date, surviving from a very real Mystery event that in former times frequently occurred for many men.

That is actually what our present spring Easter Festival has come to be. It represents a Mystery act that has often been performed in spring; but it is not the one I described day before yesterday. The latter led man to a comprehension of the death event. I explained that the idea of resurrection, clarified by something like the Adonis celebration in the fall, really led men to the experience of death, to the spiritual resurrection after about three days; and this process of resurrection really belongs in the autumn, for the reasons I gave.

The process I described today is a different one, performed in other Mysteries for certain initiations — those of the Sun and Moon; and this process confronted the neophyte with life's beginning. So you see, we can look back at a period in which certain Mysteries saw the descent of man from the pre-earthly to the earthly life, while others dwelt on the ascent in the spirit. But in later epochs, when the living substance of man's relation to the cosmic spirit could no longer be discerned, men went so far as simply to combine the autumn Mystery of the ascent with the spring Mystery of the descent into one festival.

Thus the confusion manifesting itself in the course of human evolution is evidence of the gradual effect of materialism: not only has the latter engendered false beliefs, but it has completely confused men's minds concerning an issue that at one period of human events existed, I might say, in a sacred order that caused mankind at the approach of autumn to celebrate a cosmic festival. But this in turn pointed to a Mystery act that evoked the thought: Nature falls into barrenness, it wilts and dies away, and this is like the physical dying of man; but while in Nature only the perishable is

seen to be active, there lives in man the eternal, which must now be observed spiritually, disregarding the course of Nature, as the element of resurrection in the spiritual world after death. The spring Mysteries made it clear that Nature is conquered by the spirit, that, in turn, the spirit acts out of the cosmos, and that matter germinates and sprouts from the ground because it is driven by the spirit.

But this was intended to remind men — not of their passing into the spirit through death, but of their origin in the spirit, their descent from the spiritual world. Precisely where Nature begins to ascend, man was to remember his descent into the physical; and where Nature disintegrates, man was to contemplate his ascent, his spiritual resurrection. There is no doubt that such an understanding of man's relation to the cosmos intensified his soul life enormously.

From: The Sun; the Ancient Mysteris and a New Physics, Georg Blattmann, 1972, in English from Floris Books, 1985

1.6 *Mysterious Twilight (the Corona)*

.....To sum up then: We see in the mysterious charm of the zodiac light what our imaginations had intimated to us in earlier observations. The sun, extending far beyond what we usually take to be the center of light and warmth, is also perceptible at night, for it is a cosmic entity embracing the whole. Our earth, like all the other planets, floats in the delicately lit medium of the vast sun body which, in its extended form, we justly call the 'corona'. *Our earth moves on its orbit like a ship, lapped by the sun's waves.* It is evident to us that the corona constitutes the essential nature of the sun and, as we have defined it, fills all space around the sun's orb, including the most distant planets.

As a matter of fact, we are astonished by the wisdom of nature that places sun and moon at just the right distances enabling us to see the corona, however seldom when the moon exactly covers the sun's bright disc. The deceiving glare of the center drops out in the same moment as the sun's true nature becomes visible. Is the whole harmony of the world directed towards addressing man - speaking to him in a symbolic language which would help him solve the closest riddle?

So grasp without delay

Holy open secret.

(Goethe, 'Epirrhema')

..... Do you seek the highest, the greatest?

The plant can teach you.

What it *is* involuntarily, you must *be* voluntarily....

(Schiller, 'Das Höchste' The Highest)

In a comparison of human and plant we arrive at an understanding of a basic fact in the cosmos. Originally, the human being also stood in a mediating position, but to an even greater extent. However, we have lost our first translucent, receptive nature. Self-indulgence and willfulness have obscured our perception. A separation has occurred; we have fallen asunder. This occurrence demonstrates what 'sin' is. We usually conceive of sin too moralistically and narrowly, using it to pass judgement on particular transgressions. If we understand 'sin' in its genuine meaning then we see it as a sundering (separation) arising from the emphasis on self. Briefly one could say: *Everything that differentiates the human from the plants is sin.*What nature is involuntarily you must be voluntarily.

The plant is the earth's *sense-organ* for the sun, or should we say the sun's sense-organ for the earth? An organ which perceives the duality of the cosmic forces and copies them in its own

compliant nature. What for the human being is a goal to be striven for, is visible in the forms of the plant kingdom in spontaneous perfection. It can be made the object of scientific research.

George Adams and Olive Whicher, mentioned earlier (in the book), wrote a book entitled *The Plant between Sun and Earth*. As the title indicates, the work deals thoroughly with the three aspects of our theme. The astonishing correspondence of plant form to the polarity of the sun-earth field of force is illustrated in many beautiful color pictures.

If botany can be so augmented by a study of the sun, should not this new science, 'Plant between sun and earth', be a source of pioneering knowledge for solar research? Reading George Adams and Olive Whicher we gain this impression, and we can experience how isolation, specialist sciences begin to be united in a single science of man and the cosmos. Of their book, it is no exaggeration to say that the treatment of this triad leads the reader into a holy drama of initiation that brings heaven and earth into living dialogue.

(here is a link to sales of this book. It is long out of print and is now available as used but only for ridiculous prices. If people chose to study it, we could photocopy some of the chapters.

<https://www.abebooks.com/book-search/title/plant-between-sun-earth/>)

From: Cosmic Ego and Human Ego, Microcosmic-Supersensible Beings, the Nature of Christ, the Position of the Anti-Christ to Christ, Christ the Resurrection, lecture by Rudolf Steiner delivered at Munich, January 9, 1912

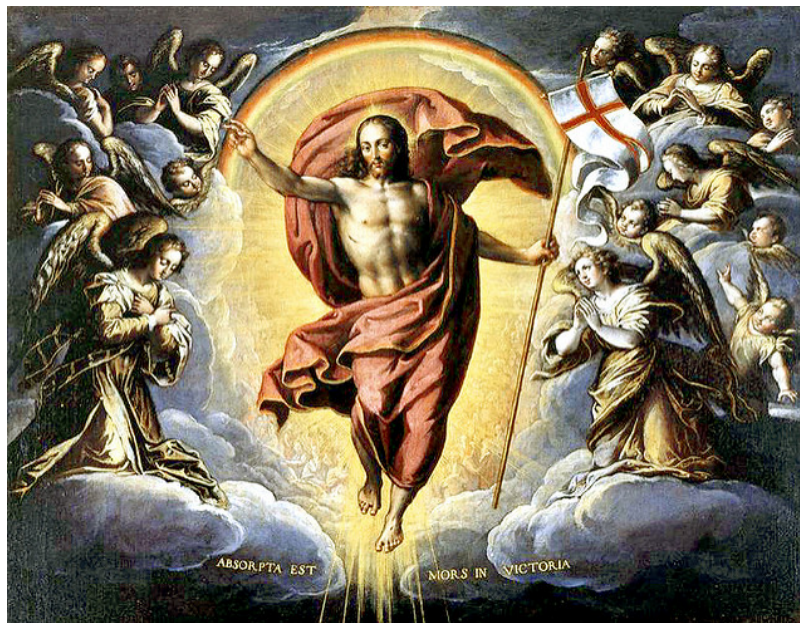
.....Jesus of Nazareth stood by the Jordan. His ego separated from the physical body, the etheric body and the astral body, and the macrocosmic Christ Being came down, took possession of these three bodies, and then lived until the 3rd of April of the year 33—as we have been able to determine. But it was a different kind of life; for, beginning from the baptism, this life of Christ in the body of Jesus of Nazareth was a slow process of dying. With each advancing period of time during these three years, something of the sheaths of Jesus of Nazareth died away, so to speak. Slowly these sheaths died, so that after three years the entire body of Jesus of Nazareth was already close to the condition of a corpse, and was only held together by the power of the macrocosmic Christ Being. You must not suppose that this body in which the Christ dwelt was like any other body—let us say a year and a half after the John baptism in the Jordan; it was in such a state than an ordinary human soul would have felt at once that it was falling away from him—because it could only be held together by the powerful macrocosmic Christ Being. It was a constant, slow dying, which continued through three years. And this body had reached the verge of dissolution when the Mystery of Golgotha took place. Then it was only necessary that those people mentioned in the narrative should come to the body with their strange preparation of spices and bring about a chemical union between these special substances and the body of Jesus of Nazareth, in which the macrocosmic Christ Being had dwelt for three years, and then that they should place it in the grave. Very little was needed then to cause this body to become dust; and the Christ Spirit clothed Himself with **an etheric body condensed, one might say, to physical visibility**. So the risen Christ was enveloped in an etheric body condensed to physical visibility; and thus He went about and appeared to those to whom He could appear. He was not visible to everyone, because it was actually only a condensed etheric body which the Christ bore after the resurrection; that that which had been placed in the grave disintegrated and became dust. And according to the latest occult investigations, it is confirmed that there was an earthquake. It was astonishing to me to discover, after I had found from occult investigation that an earthquake had taken place, that this is indicated in the Matthew Gospel. The earth divided and the dust of the corpse fell in, and became united with the entire substance of the earth. In consequence of the violent shaking of the earth,

the cloths were placed as they were said to have been found, according to the description in the John Gospel. It is wonderfully described in the Gospel of St. John.

From: *Mystery of the Christ; Aspects of Christology in the work of Rudolf Steiner* by Oskar Kürten (translated by Paul King), Part Three *Jesus of Nazareth—A Contribution*. Temple Lodge Press 2023

.....The etheric body appeared in condensed form when, after the Resurrection, Christ appeared to the disciples and later also to St Paul, because it was connected with the reconstituted phantom of the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth (for more on the Phantom, see Chapter 4 of this book and also the lectures by Rudolf Steiner *From Jesus to Christ*). The phantom of this physical body had been committed with the physical body to the Earth. However, after this phantom had been saved in its full integrity, it could be reconstituted at the Resurrection through the forces of the etheric body. (What follows is taken from the lectures *From Jesus to Christ*, GA131, lecture 9, 1909):

If Paul had seen only the appearance of a pure etheric body independent of the physical body, he would have spoken differently. He would have said that he had seen one who had been initiated and continued to live with earthly development independently of the physical body. And this would not have surprised him very much. But what he experienced before Damascus could not be that. What he beheld was what he knew could only be experienced once 'the Scriptures were fulfilled': that the day would come when in the spiritual atmosphere of the Earth a complete human phantom, a (redeemed, healed, rescued) human body risen from the grave, would be present in supersensory form. This is what could convince him that Christ was already present, that he was not still to come, that he was really in a physical body and that this physical body had saved the real archetype of the physical body for the good of all humankind.



Death is swallowed up in victory