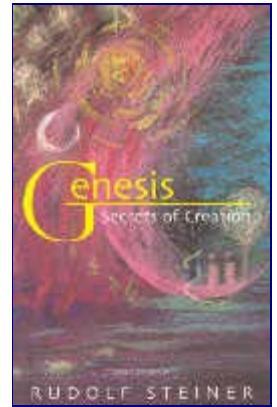


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A READER'S JOURNAL
Genesis — Secrets of Creation
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by
Rudolf Steiner
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In my reading of "Ecstatic Confessions" by Martin Buber, I found this quote in the Editor Introduction by Paul Mendes-Flor.

**[page xxiii] Hebrew as a supernal language spoken by God himself
is regarded as being uniquely capable of articulating the infinite truths of Creation.**

Paul Mendes-Flor gives us an excellent academic explanation of the explicative power of the Hebrew language, but it tantalizes us more than it enlightens. It does however describe succinctly the thesis of these lectures by Rudolf Steiner. Genesis was written in the Hebrew language by ancient people who knew directly by supersensible experience how the foundations of the world were laid out. These Hebrew sages used a language which, in the process of speaking reenacted the process of creation. The verses of Genesis in the Bible comprise poetry of the highest form, rightly understood.

If this sounds like a mystery to you, study the lectures of this book to have the mystery unraveled and displayed before your eyes. If you are looking for a textual exegesis of Genesis, look elsewhere. Steiner is not interpreting Genesis textually at all. Rather he tells us that he forced himself to ignore the Bible before he had experienced the events of creation directly himself, and only then did he read the Bible. There he found a concise accurate description, and more than that, a re-enactment of the events of creation and evolution portrayed in the process of speaking the text in its original Hebrew.

Get ready for learning some Hebrew if you wish to understand how this all fits together. You would also do well to have studied Steiner's [Outline of Occult Science](#) before undertaking a study of these lectures on Genesis. Please note I use "study" rather than "read". One can read a book, but a detailed study of Steiner's books is necessary to mine the gems contained in these lectures. In this review I will put on display some of the gems I found herein for you to marvel at, but you will have to mine and polish them for yourself before their true beauty will shine for you.

The opening words of the Bible are in Hebrew: *B'rechit bara elohim et hashamayim v'et ha'aretz* which are translated into English as "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." in the King James version. We need to note right off that the word God is used in the place of "elohim." Steiner points out that after the seven days of creation are done, the Hebrew scribes changed from the seven elohim working together to a unity or elohimhood. This is clearly marked out in the King James version where the elohim are called "God" until after the seventh day when the elohim have completed their work and arrived at elohimhood. After this point the elohim in their elohimhood condition are referred to as "LORD God([1](#))". Here are the verses which show the change that takes place from the God to LORD God:

**[KJS 1:31 to 2:7] 31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was]
very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day. 2:1 Thus the heavens
and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. 2 And on the seventh day God
ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work**

which he had made. 3 And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. 4 These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens, 5 And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the LORD God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and [there was] not a man to till the ground. 6 But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. 7 And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

It is a seemingly minor difference, but one misses the underlying spiritual reality if one glosses over it. Steiner explains the difference in the reality of the seven elohim and the unity of the elohimhood.

[page 88, 89] When we see a tiny child on the threshold of earthly existence we know that he has not yet developed what we call an integrated consciousness. It is only after some time that he even calls himself 'I', which brings unity into the consciousness. It is only then that the contents of his soul life become knit together in an integrated consciousness. The child grows to a further stage through the drawing together of the various activities which in the baby are still decentralized. Thus in the human being this drawing together signifies an advance to a higher stage. We can think of the progressive development of the elohim as analogous to this. During the preparatory stages of human creation they learnt a certain activity. Whilst performing this activity they themselves learnt something and contributed something towards raising themselves to a higher stage. As a group they have now attained to a kind of unified consciousness; they have not remained simply a group but have become a unity. This unity became a kind of being. This fact is an extremely important one. Up to now I was only able to tell you that the various elohim each had his own special capacity. Each of them was able to contribute something to the common resolve, the common image of the human being they wanted to form; and yet this was still only an idea upon which they could co-operate. To begin with it was not real. Something real existed only after they had created the common product. But in the course of this work itself they developed to a higher stage, they made their unity a reality, so that they were no longer seven but a sevenfold whole. We can now speak of an 'elohimhood' which reveals itself in a sevenfold way. This 'elohimhood' only arose in course of time. The elohim raised themselves to this level.

The Bible knows this. The Bible recognizes the idea that the elohim were previously members of a group and then formed themselves into a unity. That first they co-operated as members of a group and were later on governed by a common organism. And this real unity of elohim in which the single elohim are active as organs of a body, is called in the Bible Jehovah-Elohim. This gives us a more profound idea of Jehovah than was possible before. This is why the Bible at first speaks simply of the elohim and then, when the elohim themselves have progressed to a higher stage, to a unity, it starts speaking of Jehovah-Elohim. This the deeper reason why, at the end of the book of creation, the name of Jehovah suddenly appears. This shows how necessary it is to have recourse to occult sources if one wants to understand such things.

Surely there is nothing negative about having recourse to occult(2) resources to understand why the Bible changes from elohim to Jehovah Elohim during the book of Genesis. Steiner merely gives us his translation into images of the physical world which he has received through his supersensible sight. He offers us readers this caveat, however, we must not construe the images he builds for us of the supersensible world as literal descriptions of the physical world.

[page 2] The resulting experience must, however, not be mistaken for a description of things and events of the physical sense world, and we must be aware the whole time that

we are having dealings with an entirely different realm — one which does indeed underlie and maintain the ordinary sense world and the mental images, impressions and perceptions which belong there, but which does not actually identify with it at all.

If one is encapsulated in a box, one cannot give a description of the box as it appears from outside the box. That should be clear to any right-minded scientist. But science itself has carefully chosen itself to be limited to data received from the sensory world — thus, science cannot see out of the box called the sensory world!

[page 2] If we want to portray the origin of this our sense world including that of the human being himself, our ideas must not remain confined to the sense world. No science equipped solely with ideas taken from the world of the senses can reach the origins of sense existence. For sense existence is rooted in the supersensible element, and although we can go a long way back historically and even geologically, we must realize that if we want to arrive at the origins, we must, at a certain point in the primordial past, leave the sphere of the sense world and rise up into regions that can only be grasped supersensibly.

Genesis deals with the origin of the cosmos which includes the Sun, Earth, Moon, and humankind, and as such must describe a time when the human being had no sensory experiences, nor was there any sensory data available from the physical world.

[page 2, 3] What we call Genesis does not begin with the portrayal of anything to do with sense perceptions, a portrayal of anything that could be seen with eyes in the external physical world. In the course of these lectures we shall have ample chance to become convinced that we should be quite mistaken to take the words of the first sections of Genesis as referring to things or events which can be seen with the physical eye. Therefore as long as you connect the words 'heaven and earth' with anything containing a residue of the sensuously visible, you have not reached the dimension to which the first sections of Genesis are referring.

In this next passage Steiner explains in an abstract way what Paul Mendes-Flor referred to in the passage at the head of this review. Instead of pointing merely to the language as Flor does, Steiner points to the way the Hebrew language in speech caused experience to rise in the souls of the ancient people speaking the words written in Genesis.

[page 3] If I may put it abstractly to begin with, their secret lies in the fact that they are written in the Hebrew tongue, a language which works upon the soul quite differently than any modern language can. Although the Hebrew of these early chapters may not work in the same way today, it did at one time have the effect that when a letter was sounded it called up a picture in the soul. Pictures arose in the soul of someone who entered with living interest into the words and let them work upon him — pictures harmoniously arranged, organic pictures, pictures which may be compared with what the seer can still see today when he proceeds from the realm of the-senses to the realm of the supersensible. The Hebrew language or, to be more exact, the language of the first chapters of the Bible, enabled the soul to call up pictorial images very similar to those the seer encounters when, freed from his body, he is able to look into supersensible regions of existence.

Steiner wants us individually "to conjure up those very pictures which arose in the Hebrew scholars of old when a particular sound worked creatively within them." (Page 4) If you have studied the various forms which modern day biblical exegesis takes, you will understand the unique quality of Steiner's approach. He shares with us how the Hebrew text called up in the ancient scholars images which match those he received in his own time of the supersensible beginnings of our cosmos and humanity. By this method we

are able to see the timelessness of the Bible. If the images transmitted to us down through the ages from ancient Hebrew sages and those accessed by a modern clairvoyant sage are found to match, this synchronicity can only be due to a deep connection of the two sources with one reality. The words of the ancient Hebrew sages add credence to Steiner's words and Steiner's words add clarity to the sages' words for us.

What is the placement in the evolution of the Earth of the Genesis account?

First, a brief review of the evolution of the cosmos in which we live. In Steiner's Outline of Occult Science, he describes how the three preliminary stages of evolution were the Old Saturn, Old Sun, and Old Moon. In the Saturn stage, the element of fire or warmth was first created. When the Sun split off from Saturn, the element of air was added. Later the Moon (containing the current Earth and Moon) split off from the Sun and the element of water was added. With the split off of the Moon from the Earth, the element of earth (or mineral) was added to the world and also to the human beings which acquired each of these four elements as the cosmos around them acquired them. Also the spiritual forms of the physical body, the etheric or life body, the astral body, and the Ego Body (the I Am) were added to human beings during each of the four stages.

After we arrived at the fourth stage of evolution we call Earth, a recapitulation of the previous stages had to be repeated and then we arrive at the time described in Genesis.

[page 6] Let us picture this moment when the sun withdraws from its unified planetary existence and from now on sends its forces down to the earthly element from outside. Let us bear in mind that this is what made it possible that within the earthly element the solid element — which in a material sense we call solid — could begin to condense. If we focus on this moment we have the point of time at which Genesis, the Bible, begins. This is what it is describing.

The words "In the beginning" refer not to the beginning of the evolution of the cosmos, but to the beginning of the Earth Epoch when the four elements of fire, air, water, and earth are present and the human being is a being of fire, air, water, and earthen minerals for the first time. This is the beginning that Genesis is referring to in its opening line.

[page 6] We must not associate with the opening words of Genesis the abstract, shadowy ideas we think of when we utter the words 'In the beginning'. Compared with what the ancient Hebrew sage felt it would be unspeakably poverty-stricken. If we want to fill our souls in the proper way with the sound *b'reshit* — in the beginning — we must conjure up the whole picture of that twofoldness which came into being through the separating of sun nature from earth nature, everything that was there at the actual moment when the separation had just taken place. And further, we must also be aware that throughout the whole of the Saturn, Sun and Moon stages evolution was guided and carried by spiritual beings; and that what we call the elements of warmth, air and water are always only the outer expression, the outer garments of the spiritual beings who are the reality of evolution. Even when we behold the condition existing at the moment of separation between the elements of sun and earth, and picture it to ourselves in thoughts full of material images, we must not forget that in all our picturing of the elements of water, air and fire we are seeing the expressions of the flowing world of spirituality which, having progressed through the Saturn, Sun and Moon stages, has now reached this particular point in evolution.

Then we must conjure up the image of the spiritual beings organizing the forces of fire, air, and water in the human beings. Steiner gives the picture and then explains how this picture was the one called up by the ancient Hebrew sages who wrote Genesis when the sounds *b'reshit* entered their souls. He breaks it down letter by letter for us.

[page 7] **Bet**, the first letter, called up the weaving together of the substance of the outer shell, **resh**, the second accompanying sound, called up the countenances of the spiritual beings who did the weaving within the shell, and **shin**, the third sound, called up the prickly force that was working its way out to manifestation.

The words heaven and earth as they appear in the first line of Genesis are best understood by inspecting what arose in the souls of the Hebrew sages by the words *hashamayim* and *ha' aretz*. The elohim were the cosmic beings thinking and doing the creating or *bara*. By following the lead of Steiner's image we can arrive at an inner revelation we call "heaven" and an external revelation we call "earth."

[page 10] Suppose the one kind of thought is the picture either of some activity or of some external thing or being which does not enter his consciousness by way of outer perception but through thinking, through creative soul activity. Suppose the second set of ideas occurring to the individual is a desire, something which the person's whole disposition and constitution can prompt him to will. So we have elements both of thought and of desire arising in our inner soul activity. Now imagine this inner activity happening not in the human soul but in the beings called in Genesis the elohim. Instead of the single human soul imagine a multiplicity of spiritual beings thinking, and in a similar way calling up out of their inner being two sets of images which I would like to compare with what I have just been describing to you — an element of pure thought and an element of desire. So, instead of imagining a human soul thinking, we think of an organization of cosmic beings calling up in a similar way — except that their thinking is cosmic — two sets of mental images, one of the nature of thought, that is, one which reveals something by manifesting itself outwardly, and another of the nature of desire, full of inner activity. So let us picture the cosmic beings called the elohim thinking in this fashion, and realize that this is the picture of 'created', *bara*. And then let us imagine by means of this creative thinking two such sets of mental images arising, one which is more of the nature of outer revelation, external manifestation, and another which is inwardly alive and active; then we have approximately the two sets of mental images which arose in the souls of the ancient Hebrew sages when the words *hashamayim* and *ha'retz* — represented nowadays by 'heaven and earth' sounded within them. Let us try as hard as we can to forget what present-day people think of as 'heaven and earth', and try to bring the two sets of mental images to mind: the set which tends more to manifest and to call forth an outer effect, and the set which is inwardly active, tending to remain as an inner experience. Then we have the essence of *hashamayim* and *ha'retz*.

If you would understand rightly the beginning line of Genesis, you would conjure up for yourself an image of the elohim by their thinking and desire producing an inward activity which was outwardly manifesting. Here is Steiner's summary of the passage:

[page 12, 13] So let us forget all that a modern person can feel and think when he pronounces the words 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth'. Bearing in mind all that I have told you today, try to put this picture before you: There is a sphere in which fiery, gaseous and watery elements weave, and within this active weaving, elemental sphere there is a group of spiritual beings who are engaged in thinking creatively, and the goal of their creative thinking is to direct the whole force of their joint activity towards the image of man. The first fruit of their thinking is the conception of something manifesting itself outwardly and of something else inwardly active: In the elemental sheath the primordial spirits brought into being out of themselves the creative thought of a process outwardly manifesting, a process inwardly active.

Try to picture in these terms what is said in the opening lines of the Bible; for here we have the foundation of all we shall be looking at in the next few days regarding the true significance of those all-powerful primordial words which are for humankind such

a tremendous revelation, the revelation of our own origin.

Science came into being out of the thinking done by the Scholastics which culminated in Francis Bacon's pulling all the pieces together for understanding the world around us solely on the basis of sensory experience and data. Since the Scholastics were religious men, one can see the religious roots of the science we find around us today. If science is to be considered amateurish, as Steiner avers in the next passage, then we might also deem the religions we find around us today to be childish. They offer us a kindergarten view of the spiritual and yet they wonder why so many adherents when they mature question their religion and find some tenets of their religion unacceptable.

[page 45] If we recall what we have learnt about the conditions of evolution in periods prior to the existence of our earth circumstances, we can picture that what later became our solar system was all contained in a planetary existence which we call ancient Saturn; and we keep very firmly in mind that ancient Saturn consisted solely of the interweaving movement of warmth. If anyone from the standpoint of modern physics wants to raise any objections to my speaking of a cosmic body consisting solely of warmth, I must refer him to what I said two days ago — that I myself could raise all the objections of so-called science against the things said here today or at any other time. But there is really not the time in these lectures to touch on what this gullible modern science has to say. Compared with the sources of spiritual scientific investigation the whole range of what has come from modern scientific knowledge seems pretty amateurish. I intend one day to deal with some of the objections raised, probably beginning next spring at the time of my lectures in Prague when I shall be speaking not only about the whole basis of anthroposophy but, in order to satisfy contemporary minds, also about the arguments against it.

If you wonder about the possibility of a cosmic body consisting solely of warmth, Steiner's lectures in Prague(3) are mandatory reading to clear up for you how that is possible. Those who dispute what is taught in anthroposophy need to know that Steiner was aware of their objections, and stated their positions many times. Steiner refuted their materialistic science which he studied and understood, while they, yet today, attempt to refute what they neither study nor understand.

[page 46] Later on I shall repeat these lectures in other places, and people will then see that we ourselves are fully aware of the objections which can be made against what is taught in anthroposophy, and can say it all ourselves. Anthroposophy has a firm foundation, and those who think they are able to refute it do not yet understand it. This will be adequately shown in the course of time.

The evolutionary conditions of our planet proceeded through the condition of warmth (Old Saturn), added the condition of air (Old Sun), added the condition of water (Old Moon), and in the current condition (Earth) added the condition of minerals or earth. Let's follow briefly how each condition condensed to the next. This is how warmth condenses into air below and light (light ether) above as we went from Saturn to Sun condition:

[page 47] Then we press forward to the second evolutionary condition of our planet, to ancient Sun, and speak of how, in the development of the elements, warmth has condensed to what we call a gaseous or aeriform state. Here we have to differentiate between warmth on the one hand and gas or air on the other. However, we have already referred to the fact that alongside the condensation of warmth into air, that is to say, with the descent of the elemental state into something coarser, there is an ascent to something more rarefied, more of an etheric nature. So if we call the elemental condition below warmth 'air', we have to call the next one above warmth 'light', light ether. If we then look at the elemental conditions all together during the Sun evolution, we should

say that in ancient Sun there was an intermingling of warmth, light and air, and all life at that time clothed itself in the elements of warmth, light and air. We must realize once again that if we direct our attention only to these elemental manifestations of warmth, light and air we are only so to speak seeing the outer aspect — the *maya*, the illusion — of what is really there. In reality these are spiritual beings manifesting themselves outwardly by means of warmth, light and air. It is somewhat as if we were to put a hand into a heated room and say to ourselves: The reason why this room is warm is because there is a being in there who is giving out warmth, and for whom this spreading of warmth is a means of manifestation.

Here is how the condition of air (Sun) descended into water below and sound ether above as we went from Sun to Moon condition:

[page 47, 48] If we now advance to ancient Moon, there again we have warmth as the middle condition and below it a consolidation into air or gas and below that a consolidation into water. Light appears again, and then, above light so to speak, what is a finer, more etheric state. I have already said that we may give the name 'sound ether' to this force which works within substances as an organizing principle, combining them and splitting them apart. We could also call it 'numerical ether', because it is this spiritual sound which arranges all material existence according to measure and number. Human beings only recognize this force with their outer senses when it is transmitted by the air, yet spiritually it is at the foundation of all existence. So even though we say we ascend from light to sound we must not confuse it with external sound conveyed by the air, but recognize it as something that is only perceptible when the clairvoyant sense is awake to it. Both in old Moon itself, therefore, and in all that works upon it from outside, we see the elemental conditions of warmth, air, water, light and sound.

And here is how the condition of water (Moon) condensed into the current condition of earth below and life ether above as we went from Moon to Earth condition. This is the stage of evolution we presently find ourselves within, and as such it is the one we know best. And one that, with the advent of science and religion in our time, we are taught to experience or come to know only through the mechanisms of our bodily senses, which unfortunately disguise more than they reveal, up until now.

[page 48] When we advance to the fourth stage, the coming into being of the actual earth, a further level of condensation and a further level of rarefaction are added — the earthy or solid condition below, and what we call 'life ether' above, which is a still finer ether than sound ether. So we may describe the elemental consistency of the earth by saying that warmth is again the middle condition, the denser ones being air, water and solid matter, and the rarefied ones light, sound and life ether.

In our Earth condition we can follow a progression downward from life ether, sound ether, light ether to warmth (fire), and then progressing down further through air, water, and earth. And yet all of these exist in us human beings at the same time. During Saturn there was only warmth (fire). During Sun only light ether, warmth, and air. During Moon, sound ether, light, warmth, air, and water.

[page 48, 49] To make sure that there is no risk at all of anything remaining unclear, I will explicitly state once again that what is described as earth or solid matter must not be confused with what modern science calls earth. What is being described here is something which is not directly visible around us. In an occult sense what we stand on when we stand on the ground is of course earth in so far as it is solid, but gold, silver, copper and tin are also earth. Everything of a solid/material nature is earth from the occult point of view. The modern physicist will of course say that this distinction means nothing. 'Let us distinguish our various elements, but we know nothing about a kind of archetypal earthly substance that is meant to be the basis of these elements.' Only when

the clairvoyant eye penetrates the external elements — some seventy of them — and searches for the foundation of solid matter, for the forces that make matter into the solid state, does he discover, behind sense existence, the very forces which, in the occult sense, form, shape and put together the solid, fluid and gaseous elements. This is what we are talking about. And this is also what Genesis is talking about, if we really understand it. According to Genesis, then, we shall expect to find that of these four conditions the first three are bound to repeat in some fashion, but that the fourth appears as something new in earth existence.

We must understand the four conditions of evolution which we have progressed through in order to understand what Genesis is talking about as we go through the so-called "days" of its verses. Genesis begins with the progression of our planet from the Moon condition to Earth condition which is accompanied by a recapitulation of all three previous conditions. Since Moon was a condition of water, we can expect the beginning to involve warmth and water.

[page 49] And this is just what we do find if we really understand Genesis. I told you that the words that are usually translated as 'And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters' really mean that the soul/spiritual essence of the elohim spreads out and that this very element of warmth — the kind of warmth we think of as radiating down from the hen into the eggs in the process of brooding — enters into the elements that were there at the time. With the words 'The spirit of God radiated as a brooding warmth over the elements or the water' you have an indication of the recapitulation of the warmth of ancient Saturn.

The first day of Genesis progresses as the Sun stage is recapitulated, and we find the rarefaction into light (light ether) getting first mention over the condensation into air in Genesis.

[page 49] The next condition ought to be one that represents a recapitulation of ancient Sun. For the time being let us ignore the condensation process which proceeded from warmth to air, and only look at the process of rarefaction, the element of light. Let us pinpoint the fact that during the Sun period the light invaded cosmic space, then the recapitulation of the old Sun evolution in earth's development will be the coming of the light. This is announced in the mighty words: 'And God said, Let there be light! and there was light.'

The second day of Genesis progresses as the Moon stage is recapitulated and the sound ether stirs up the elements as a violin bow on the edge of a metal plate will divide up the dust on the plate into what we call Chladni sound figures. The elohim use the sound ether to divide the elements into an above portion known as "Heaven" and the below portion known as "Earth". "And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day."

[page 50] What, then, are we actually told about the moment of creation which followed the coming of the light? We are told that the elohim stirred up the masses of elemental substance so that a change came about in the way they were arranged, and some of them streamed upwards and some of them collected together below. A force entered into the elemental masses and altered the way they were arranged, just as sound takes hold of the dust and brings about the Chladni sound figures. In the same way as the dust moves into different places and forms a pattern, the elemental masses moved, and some streamed upwards, and some gathered together below.

Having recapitulated the three conditions prior to the Earth condition, we would expect during the third

day to find in Genesis some notice taken of the appearance of the rarefied life ether as we enter the Earth condition during the third day. In fact we do. "And God said, Let the earth put forth grass, herbs yielding seed, and fruit-trees bearing fruit after their kind, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, herbs yielding seed after their kind, and trees bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after their kind: and God saw that it was good. 13 And there was evening and there was morning, a third day."

[page 51] After the moment in the coming into being of the earth when sound ether has brought about a change in the elements to the point where some rise upwards and the others accumulate below, we ought to expect to find something becoming active which we have described as the rarefied substance of the earth, and have called life, life ether. Something can be expected to follow on after the second 'day' of the creation which would indicate that life ether was pouring into the elemental masses of our earth just as previously light and organizing sound ether had poured in. There should be some phrase in Genesis to indicate that life ether burst in and brought about the stirring and unfolding of life. Look at the Genesis account of the third 'day' of creation. We are told that the earth brings forth green and living things, herbaceous plants and trees according to their kind. Here is a vivid description of the pouring in of life ether, calling forth everything that is said to have come into being on the third 'day'.

Is Steiner retroactively making up his cosmogenesis to match the events described in Genesis? Some scientist might make that objection. Not only do we receive a resounding "no" from Steiner about the matter, but consider this: Steiner is not the only clairvoyant seer to perceive this super-sensible view of the origin of our cosmos.

[page 52] I can assure you that when, in my Outline of Occult Science, I was describing the way the earth came into existence as a recapitulation of ancient Saturn, ancient Sun and ancient Moon, I quite deliberately and scrupulously ignored anything which could have been found in Genesis. I only presented what I was able to discover independently of any external document. But if you then compare these independent findings with Genesis you see that the latter presents us with a document which says just what our independent research has enabled us to say. This is the wonderful harmony I pointed to yesterday, where what we can say of our own accord comes sounding back to us, as it were, through the spiritual faculties of seers who spoke to us millennia ago.

During the fourth day, the appearance of the concept of day arrives, which makes it impossible to equate what is called a "day" in Genesis to what we normally think of as a twenty-four hour day. Most biblical exegetes either ignore this aspect or trivialize it.

[page 55, 56] The first difficulty arises of course when we come to the fourth 'day', when Genesis first speaks of the setting up of the sun and the moon to direct time. Every child today knows that the regulating of our twenty-four hour day depends on the relationship of the earth to the sun. But if this relationship was not set up until the fourth 'day' we cannot speak of that kind of day before that. So anyone who tries to adhere to the naive belief that we are dealing in Genesis with days of twenty-four hours would be transgressing against Genesis itself. There may be such people of course, but they have to be told that by insisting that Genesis refers to days such as ours they are certainly not supported by revelation. As to the vagaries of those who try to find a way out by giving geological meaning to these 'days' of creation, they are really not worth bothering about.

"14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years: 15 and let them be for lights in the firmament of heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so." Steiner tells us that "the elohim appointed beings to regulate the course of time for the creatures on earth, to be the regulators of particularly impressive

moments, of larger and smaller periods of time, which are usually rendered 'year' and 'day'." He explains that this is the reference to the *archai* as the time spirits and the *archangels* who are the regulators or sign fixers and carry out the detailed activities of the archai. (Page 71)

In this summary below Steiner explains how occult (esoteric) science, the science of those realities which are not sense perceptible, sheds light on the truths contained forever inside Genesis.

[page 73] Thus we see, if we know how to interpret these things correctly, that Genesis points clearly to the archangels. If you think about what the usual run of commentators say, you will always feel dissatisfied. But if you turn for help to the same source from which Genesis arose, esoteric science, you will be able to throw light on whichever part you are looking at. It will all appear to you in a new light. And this ancient document which — because of the impossibility of translating the living words of old into our own language, would otherwise inevitably remain incomprehensible — will endure as a document which speaks to humankind for all time.

What we must realize is that the study of cosmogenesis is not just another academic discipline about some distant time which has no bearing on us today. Each of the spiritual beings which helped shape our cosmos lives inside of each of us this very moment. What they brooded back then, they live inside of now!

[page 81] If you now try to bring sensitive and perceptive feelings into all this, you will say that at the foundation of all we see around us with our senses there is an elemental realm. There is an element of earth, yet in reality there live within it the spirits of will(4) (thrones); there is a fluid element in which in truth live the spirits of wisdom (kyriotetes or dominions); an airy element within which in reality live the spirits of movement (dynamis or mighty); and a warmth element wherein in truth live the spirits of form (exusiai), the elohim.

If you do not think it's possible for these beings to be part of your body, read and study Steiner's [An Occult Physiology](#) and discover for yourself how even the planets are part of the physiology of your body as you read these very words today. In the First Hierarchy of spiritual beings, we find the Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim. We mentioned the roles of Thrones earlier as the Spirits of Will. Above them are the Cherubim (Spirits of Harmony) and Seraphim (Spirits of Love). Where do we find the physical manifestation of the Cherubim and Seraphim in our daily lives? Look outside and, if there are clouds, you will see the surface of formations of water rising up from realm of the Spirits of Wisdom which the Cherubim have gathered together. The Cherubim govern the surrounding air of the earth. Deep inside these clouds we may catch a glimpse every so often of the Seraphim when lightning flashes forth with its attendant thunder.

[page 85, 86] Anyone who has become aware through clairvoyant investigation that on our earth the thrones or the spirits of will govern the earth element, the spirits of wisdom the watery element, the spirits of movement the airiform element and the elohim the element of warmth, will gradually come to realize that in the gathering of the clouds, in that unique process going on in the circumference of our earth in which the watery vapor turns to water, beings belonging to the hierarchy of the cherubim are at work. When we look at the solid matter of our elemental existence we see the elohim co-operating with the thrones. When we look upward to the airy element, even though it is governed by the spirits of movement, we see the cherubim at work in it, so that the water rising up from the realm of the spirits of wisdom can accumulate as clouds. It is just as true that the cherubim govern the earth surroundings as it is true that the thrones, the spirits of wisdom and the spirits of movement govern the elemental existence on our earth. If we now look into the active essence of these cloud formations themselves, into their hidden depths, which are only revealed now and then, we are aware of lightning and thunder coming forth. This is not something which comes from

nothing. The seer knows that the spirits whom we call the seraphim move and have their being in this activity. Remaining within the limits of our earth sphere, including the circumference of our earth, we have now found every one of the hierarchical ranks.

Everyone has heard the story about Ben Franklin's kite-flying experiment which first showed that lightning and electricity are related at the physical level. Steiner shows us that the Seraphim are active in lightning at the spiritual level of reality.

[page 86] Thus in what we experience with our senses we see the manifestations of hierarchical activity. It would be utter nonsense to imagine that what you see when lightning flashes forth from the clouds is the same as what you see when you strike a match. Every time electricity, the element active in lightning, comes forth from matter, quite different forces are at work, namely the seraphim. So we can find the totality of the hierarchies in the earth's environment just as we can find them out there in the cosmos. For the hierarchies, as we see, also extend their activity to what is in our immediate environment.

Science fiction has had fun with the concept of the "Invisible Man" over the past century or more. What is fictional about the concept is that an invisible man, were there such a being, would be completely blind! Light is invisible to us until it contacts and is absorbed by our retinal surfaces. If it passes through the retina, and it certainly must if one is completely invisible, as the fictional stories portray, then one gets no visual information about one's environment and thus must necessarily be blind. Light in flight is invisible until it contacts and is partially absorbed and partially reflected from a surface. In outer space someone doing a space walk away from a space ship would see a sky completely black except for pinpoints of stars shining starkly around them. No twinkling, but pinpoints of light because it is the passage through our atmosphere which causes stars to appear to be twinkling.

There came a period in cosmogenesis in which material existence began to absorb and reflect light for the first time, and that was during the Earth epoch, and not before.

[page 103] The first time this sun realm became separated was during the ancient Moon evolution. It was then that the light was for the first time active from without, but not then as light. I have just told you that the statement in Genesis 'And God saw the light' could not possibly have been spoken with regard to the Moon evolution. Then, one would have had to say that the elohim speeded through space with the light, were within the light, but saw it not. Just as today someone swimming in water moves forward in it without seeing it, at that time light was invisible, for it was a carrier of activity in cosmic space. It was with the coming of earth evolution that light began to appear, to be reflected by objects.

Thus, Steiner points out on page 104, "the seer who wrote the Genesis account, while describing the second 'day', had to omit the words 'And God saw . . .' "

Where was Paradise or Eden and what was the nature of the Fall from Paradise? The details of the Fall are described in Genesis, but the location is unclear. Many religious-minded archaeologists and explorers have searched for Eden and their strivings have created more questions than answers, have they not? Steiner tells us plainly that Paradise existed where the upper atmosphere of the Earth is, and human beings at that time had bodies of no material or mineral substance which gravity could attract, until Lucifer's gift caused their bodies to materialize by filling with minerals which created a heaviness in their bodies. That mineralization literally caused them to Fall to Earth from Paradise, no longer able to reside there because of the newly created weight of their bodies⁽⁵⁾.

[page 117] To anyone who knows the truth of the matter, it is really very odd that the commentators should argue as to whether paradise, from which we human beings came,

was in this part or the earth or that. It is only too clear in many accounts of creation, including the Bible, that paradise was not on the earth at all, but was raised above the earth's surface, more or less at cloud height, and that while man lived in paradise he was a creature of warmth and air. He most certainly did not walk about on the earth with two legs; that is materialistic day-dreaming. So even after the 'days' of creation were over we have to think of man as a being belonging not on the surface but in the periphery of the earth.

[page 118] . . . because of the contraction of the human body brought about by the luciferic influence, the human being became heavier and descended out of the periphery on to the surface of the earth. That was the withdrawal from paradise as described in picture form. Not until now did man acquire so to speak the force of gravity to sink down from the periphery on to the earth's surface. This is the descent of man on to the physical earth, what brought him right down to earth, whereas he had hitherto dwelt in its periphery. Therefore the luciferic influence has to be reckoned among the actual formative forces which have fashioned man.

When we work at a weekday job which sometimes involves working even on Saturday, what do we do on Sunday? We rest from that job in which we work for others and we work or devote ourselves to our own evolution or progress as a human being on Earth. In other words, after six days of working on something else, we need to spend the seventh day working on ourselves. If it is, perhaps, a period of six years which we spend designing, building, and decorating a large house, then we might spend the seventh year figuring out to design and build houses for other people as our primary business, in conjunction with those who helped us on the first house. In other words, we might form together a contracting business or corporation, a business-hood. Steiner tells us what happened on that seventh day in Genesis when the seven elohim rested or ceased their work on us and formed an elohim-hood.

[page 145] The Bible also speaks of a seventh 'day', and we are told that on this seventh 'day' the elohim ceased their work. What does this actually mean? How are we to understand this further episode? We only grasp it properly from a spiritual scientific point of view when we realize that this is the very moment when the elohim go through their advancement to Jehovah-Elohim. But we must not think of Jehovah-Elohim as being the whole hierarchy of elohim, but rather that the elohim send only part of their being to the moon and hold the rest in reserve, and continue their own further evolution in this established part of their being. This means that as far as this part of them is concerned their work is no longer devoted to the nurturing of man, and they only worked further on mankind with the part of their being which has become Jehovah-Elohim. The other part does not work directly upon the earth but devotes itself to its evolution. This is what is meant by 'resting' from working with earthly matter, by the sabbath day, the seventh 'day'.

"When knowledge ends, discussion begins." This is one of the most useful phrases I have acquired through my study of Rudolf Steiner's works. Nowhere is it more true than about the Bible. Many volumes of books, television programs, and college courses in religion have been devoted to discussing the Bible in absence of knowledge. Thank God for Rudolf Steiner's extensive work of 6,000 lectures and many books and essays which allow us to replace discussion with supersensible knowledge, such as this amazing series of lectures on the book of Genesis in the Bible. They allow us to see that those who would *throw bile at the Bible* are really throwing it at other exegetes like themselves. With those words I will let Steiner have the closing remarks.

[page 121, 122] Today it is easy to criticize the Bible so long as you ignore the fact that the ideas under attack were only born a few centuries ago. And those who rail against the Bible the most are fighting against a fanciful invention of the human mind and not the Bible. They are fighting against something that does not exist at all, but was

imagined in the first place. So it is up to spiritual science, by communicating its findings, to point once more to the true meaning of the Bible, thereby clearing the way for the tremendous impact it bound to have on us when we come to understand what resounds to us so impressively from ancient times.

----- *Footnotes* -----

Footnote 1. The ASV (American Standard Version) uses Jehovah God and the DRB (Darby's) uses Jehovah Elohim.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 1.](#)

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**Footnote 2.** By *occult* Steiner refers simply to direct supersensible sight and/or knowledge derived therefrom. The word *occult* had no other meanings at the time Steiner spoke. This is the reason his book was originally titled "An Outline of Occult Science" and only recently had its title changed to "An Outline of Esoteric Science." It was for the twenty-first century reader who may have adopted the evaluative negative meaning of *occult* in place of its descriptive positive meaning of *supersensible*.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 2.](#)

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Footnote 3. Those lectures in Prague can be found in this book, [An Occult Physiology](#), given March 20-28, 1911, just as he had planned.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 3.](#)

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**Footnote 4.** To help keep track of the spiritual beings with their various Christian esoteric names and the spiritual scientific descriptive names coined by Steiner (Spirits of X), this [Spiritual Hierarchy Table](#) is useful.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 4.](#)

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Footnote 5. This passage from Genesis will take on a literal description for you if you recall the nature of the Cherubim as clouds and Seraphim as flashing lightning (Darby's): "24 And he drove out Man; and he set the Cherubim, and the flame of the flashing sword, toward the east of the garden of Eden, to guard the way to the tree of life." This also places the "tree of life", the pure etheric body uninfected by luciferic influences, in the upper regions surrounding Earth where it is protected by Cherubim and Seraphim.

[Return to text directly before Footnote 5.](#)

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