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*A READER'S JOURNAL*

**The Twelve Holy Nights and the Spiritual Hierarchies**

by

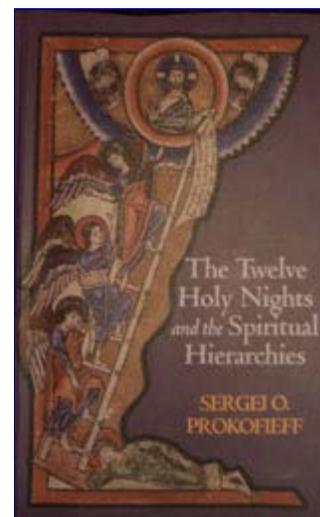
**Sergei O. Prokofieff**

Foreword by Author

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2013  
Chapter: Spiritual Science



The cover art shows a 12th Century Flemish image of Jacob's Ladder and the author of this book shows us how to climb the ladder into the Spiritual World, a ladder whose rungs are the twelve days from Christmas through to the Feast of Epiphany or King's Day on January 6th. The subtitle [I](#) chose from the Table of Contents for this review indicates that these twelve nights after Christmas take us on a path from the Man Jesus to the Great Spirit we call Christ. It is a path which takes us completely around the circle of the Zodiac and the Spirits associated with each zodiacal constellation. Rightly understood, we humans have the possibility to understand and traverse in our imagination each of the Spiritual Hierarchies that Christ traversed on His path which culminated with Jesus of Nazareth being baptized by John in the Jordan([1](#)).

Christ descended through the twelve Spiritual Hierarchies to become human, and we humans can begin where we are on Christmas Day and each day we can ascend one rung on the ladder until we arrive at the level from which Christ began His descent. Imagine the twelve signs, the "little animals([2](#))", arrayed across the heavens. From the realm of the sky marked off by each sign, one level of Spiritual Being worked on the evolution of the human beings over time. We are most familiar with the level of Archangels (Goat) and Angels (Waterman) as they are closest to us humans (Fishes). Christ recapitulated the path of the twelve Spiritual Beings who formed us and our cosmos, coming through the Ram, Bull, Twins, Crab, Lion, Virgin, Scales, Scorpion, Archer, Goat, Waterman, and Fishes. Prokofieff sees the "starry script as a key" for unlocking our individual understanding of what it means to be fully human.

**[page 37] Just as man receives life, so does this Being radiate life over our whole cosmos. This is the Being who was able to bring the Great Sacrifice and who is inscribed in the zodiac as the Spirit that sacrifices Himself for our world. As man aspires to the zodiac, so does this Being grant to us His sacrificial offering from the sphere of the Ram, which belongs to Him as do the Scales to man. And as man directs his ego to the Scales, so does this Being let His life stream forth over our sphere of existence as a sacrifice.**

This may be too big a bite to take, so let's take a few steps backward and see what position the Scales (Libra) occupy in the rungs of the Spiritual Hierarchy's ladder. We can see the lowest realm of a human's activity is the Fishes (Physical Body) and the highest realm is Virgin (Spirit-Man or *Atman* ). "There are other Beings for whom man's highest realm of activity represents their lowest," the author tells us.

[page 37]

Let us now go in search of these Beings, whose lowest realm of activity is equivalent to that of man in the Scales. If we inscribe man in the zodiac, we find him reaching to the realm of

7 Spirit-Man  
6 Life-Spirit  
5 Spirit-Self  
4 Ego  
3 Astral Body  
2 Etheric Body  
1 Physical Body

### Page 37 Diagram

♈	Ram	12th Member
♉	Bull	11th Member
♊	Twins	10th Member
♋	Crab	9th Member
♌	Lion	8th Member
♍	Virgin	7th Member
♎	Scales	6th Member
♏	Scorpion	
♐	Archer	Archais
♑	Goat	A. Angels
♒	Waterman	Angels
♓	Fishes	MAN



the Scales. The Spirit who belongs with His own being fully to the zodiac, whose forces belong entirely to the zodiac and who reveals Himself in planetary existence only at the lowest level of His activity, designated by the Scales — just as man's lowest member is designated by the Fishes — is that Being who, as you may see, imbues our whole universe with life:

To the page 37 Diagram, I have added some helpful markers showing the Angeloi and 7 Light and 5 Dark constellations. Already we find revealed that our planetary cosmos extends from Fishes to Scales and that at the level of Virgin we move into the level of the celestial cosmos as we achieve Spirit-Man or *Atman*. We can see that the two lowest levels of the Great Spiritual Being overlaps with the two highest levels of us humans in our time in Fishes (the Age of Pisces). When we humans attain Spirit-Man or *Atman*, we will be able to affect the celestial cosmos (the zodiac) by our actions; we "will be a being that pours forth something that has passed out of the stage of time into the stage of duration, or eternity." (Page 36) The Diagram is like a roadmap to our future evolution as humans and at the same time an itinerary showing how we have arrived to our current location in the evolution of the cosmos: it shows the both the planetary and celestial cosmos, among many other things.

[page 37, 38: Steiner's words, as quoted from GA#102(3)]

Just as a man receives life, so does this Being radiate life over our whole cosmos. This is the Being who was able to bring the Great Sacrifice and who is inscribed in the zodiac as the Spirit that sacrifices Himself for our world. As man aspires to the zodiac, so does this Being grant to us His sacrificial offering from the sphere of the Ram, which belongs to Him as do the Scales to man. And as man directs his ego to the Scales, so does this Being let His life stream forth over our sphere of existence as a sacrifice.

That is why this Being is designated as the sacrificial 'Mystic Lamb', for the Lamb is the same as the Rain; hence the designation of Christ as the sacrificial lamb or ram. Christ has now been characterized for you as belonging to the whole cosmos. His Ego aspires to the Ram, and when His Ego streams upwards to the Ram, He Himself becomes the 'Great Sacrifice'. He relates thus to the whole of mankind, and in a certain way those beings and forces that exist on the Earth are His creations. *His abode is, essentially, in the Sun and through His creations He is connected with the Moon and the Earth, while His power lies in the constellation of the Lamb.* Thus the forces that enable

**Him to become the creator of these beings lie in the constellation of the Ram or Lamb. The designation of 'Sacrificial Lamb' or 'Mystic Lamb' is drawn from Heaven itself.**

From reading this book of Prokofieff and the GA#102 Steiner, one can come to grasp the meaning of the quote from Steiner which graces Chapter 2 of Part I of this book, "The Starry Script as a Key to Anthroposophical Christology":

*It is a provision of the spiritual world that every real spiritual fact appears in the script of the starry heavens.*

— Rudolf Steiner, 12 December 1910, GA#124

Steiner provides us with a key to unlocking the majestic vision of the celestial realm and making sense of it. Just as the stars provide a navigation aid to seafaring voyagers, so do they provide us a chart for our navigation through the reaches of time and eternity as human beings.

We can best understand the higher spiritual beings and their sacrifices by this crude analogy. Consider an Andrew Carnegie who rose to the top of the business world in his time when steel was king. (Today, the internet is king and we have modern day Carnegies.) What did Carnegie do with all his money? He gave it away in philanthropy. *Phil-anthropy* means "love of humankind". He sacrificed his money for the good of human kind coming up behind him. The higher up in the world of business one gets, the greater the sacrifice one can make to the good of humanity. One can make no greater sacrifice than Christ made when he came down from the highest hierarchy, the Ram, into the lowest body of the human, a physical body, and then experienced death as a human being, a death every human being experiences, each in an individual way.

Human beings were not always free. As recent as the ancient Greek writer, Homer, humans depended on the thoughts placed into them by the Beings of the spiritual world — we call them Muses, now. It's an amusing name for a very serious process yet in Homer's time. When he wrote down the oral tradition which became his *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, he began each with "Speak to me, O Muse, of Achilles/Odysseus" and wrote down their words to him. Mere centuries later, humans had evolved to the point where Virgil could begin his *Aeneid* with these words, "Of arms and a man, I sing." Virgil was free in a way that Homer had not been. Concomitant with this lack of freedom was an ability to see into the spiritual world the Muses and other spiritual beings which appeared to and spoke to people. Then the forces of our nascent ego began to infiltrate our astral and etheric bodies and a dramatic change about, which finally culminated in Virgil's time, we came to be free for the first time. We can now say, to build upon Descartes, "I think, therefore I am — Free!"

**[page 41] As the ego-forces were penetrating the astral and etheric bodies, man was still possessed of a high degree of clairvoyance and in his clairvoyant consciousness he perceived the Archangels guiding his ego in the astral body, and later the Angels guiding it in the etheric body. Only when the ego-forces penetrated through to the physical body did the leadership of the higher Hierarchies begin gradually to withdraw from man so that, by the time ego-consciousness became fully immersed in the physical body, and had completely lost his ancient clairvoyance, man was left to his own devices. This deepest point in the descent of the ego into matter was reached in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch.**

We have only been in this fifth post-Atlantean epoch since the year 1453 A.D., and thus, we are able to discern in ancient Greek and Roman writings distinct signs of the progression of humanity's emerging egohood. We are now in the Age of Pisces (Fishes) and soon heading into the Age of Aquarius (Waterman). In Fishes we near the bottom, the deepest point of descent for the Christ Being, and our path upward is laid out in the celestial navigation map shown in the Page 37 Diagram above.

**[page 41] Only now, in the Fishes, does man experience to the full his isolation from the world of the Hierarchies — but at the same time also his freedom; for in the physical body his ego is manifested only in the shadowy and insubstantial images of abstract**

**though and, because of their purely reflective character, these have no power to compel.**

We can, in our present time, to build upon Descartes, say with confidence, "I think, therefore I am — Free!" Understanding the celestial roadmap of the stars did not compel ancient navigators to sail out of the sight of land, but it allowed the intrepid to do so successfully. Similarly today, understanding the celestial roadmap to our future evolution does not compel us to cast off our physical moorings and move into these higher worlds, but it becomes possible for the courageous to do so, especially with the help of our Anthroposophical Navigator, Rudolf Steiner.

**[page 41] On the other hand, thanks to Anthroposophy, there opens up for every individual, just from this point of deepest descent, the possibility of taking his higher development into his own hands and beginning his new, though now fully conscious, ascent into higher worlds. In terms of the starry script this would be seen as the way back from the Fishes through the Waterman, the Goat and so forth, to the Scales and even to the Virgin.**

If one counts down six constellations from the top of the Page 37 Diagram, one reaches the space between the Virgin and the Scales. At the mid-point of Atlantean evolution, there were six light signs above that center point and six dark signs below it. As we have progressed into the fifth post-Atlantean epoch, the Scales have moved upward into the light side of center and we now have 7 seven light signs from Ram to Scales, and 5 dark signs from the Scorpion to the Fishes. The Scales sign marks the dividing line between the ascending (light) starry signs above and the descending (dark) planetary signs below — it is the *Balance* point and thus the origin of the name Scales. It is like the Sun, which is both a member of the starry realm and a member of our planetary realm. It is the lowest constellation which the Lamb, the Cosmic Christ reaches down to and the highest one that human beings can aspire to while maintaining a physical body. Here's what Steiner says about the rising and falling signs:

**[page 44: Rudolf Steiner in GA#102, Jan. 27, 1908] When, therefore, you think of the whole Zodiac, you must picture that some of its forces are descending and some are ascending. We think of the forces which are now involved in the ascending line of evolution, collectively, as the Ram, the Bull, the Twins, the Crab, the Lion, the Virgin, and the Scales — because they actually belong to these constellations. These seven constellations comprise the ascending forces. The descending forces are comprised, approximately speaking, in the five constellations of the Scorpion, the Archer, the Goat, the Waterman, and the Fishes. Thus forces rain down from the Zodiac and ascend again: seven constellations of ascending, five of descending forces. The ascending forces also correspond, in man, to the higher members of his being, to his higher, nobler attributes. The forces which are in the descending phase of evolution have first to pass through man and within him to attain to the stage at which they too can become ascending forces.**

The seven ascending forces are celestial forces (of the Stars) and the five descending forces are planetary forces (of our Solar System). These five forces descend into us and we have the mission, if we choose to accept it, of transmogrifying these into ascending forces as we progress through human evolution. "And once all earthly humanity has accomplished this step, the whole 'dark zodiac' will finally be changed into a region of Light; while humanity, having completely transformed its own planetary origins, will be able to move on to a purely cosmic, stellar creativity (the seventh stage)." (Page 45)

Rightly understood, *our mission is to boldly go where no man has gone before*[\(4\)](#), *only the Christ Being Himself.*

**[page 46] For the fundamental mission of Anthroposophy in the world is this: to forge a path leading man from the confines of his earthly existence to a union with the Cosmic Christ Himself. 'Anthroposophy is a path of knowledge that would lead the spiritual in**

## the human being to the spiritual in the universe' (GA#26)

Now we are prepared to grasp the [Four Sacrifices of Christ](#) on His passage to Earth where He will become Man.

**[page 57] Firstly, the Christ-Being, as Son-principle, enters the circle of the zodiac through the gate of the Ram. As a result, through His sacrificial offering to the whole created cosmos, Christ becomes the 'Great Sacrifice', the 'Mystic Lamb', embracing all the starry Hierarchies as far as the Spirits of Wisdom and to some extent also the Spirits of Movement. This is the first Sacrifice of Christ. Then Christ enters the Sun through the gate of the Virgin, uniting Himself at first only with its 'starry' aspect. Then, gradually penetrating and spiritualizing the whole Sun-sphere with His own Being. He unites with the 'planetary' aspect of the Sun, with the region of the Spirits of Form, and spreads His power over all the planets of our solar system(second Sacrifice). Next, Christ leaves the Sun through the gate of the Scorpion and, approaching ever closer to the Earth, enters the sphere of the Moon, into the circle of the Archangels (third Sacrifice). Finally, He leaves this sphere also, through the gate of the Goat, so as directly to unite, at the Baptism in the Jordan, with the man Jesus of Nazareth(fourth Sacrifice).**

To sum up the matter, Christ descends first to the starry aspect of the Sun, then to the planetary aspect of the Sun, then to the Lunar (Moon) sphere, and finally to the Earth sphere during the Baptism in the Jordan. More recently the Archangel Mi-cha-el, which means He who is like God, has become our means as humans of communicating with Christ. Steiner says, "To understand Michael in our time means to find the path to the Logos, Who as Christ lives amongst men on Earth". (Page 108, from GA#26) Christ as revealed by Steiner in GA#194 turns to us and says, *"I have not only revealed Myself to you in those days when the Gospels were written — I shall speak to you through my Day-Spirit, Michael, whenever you seek the path to me."* (Page 108)

Prokofieff pulls the quotes from Steiner together to explain Michael as a World-Being:

**[page 111] 'He journeys as a World-Being' — for his consciousness, which is that of Michael-Christ, embraces the whole hierarchic cosmos — so that he is in a position 'to bring forces down to the Earth' . . . 'From all places in the cosmos', that is, from all twelve zodiacal regions, as a new Revelation of the Cosmic Christ.**

With the Twelve Holy Nights approaching us at the end and beginning of every year, we should endeavor to mediate on each of the twelve stages of Christ's descent, beginning with His entry point of the Ram (Christmas Eve), and ending with His lowest descent into Fishes where He entered into the physical body of a human being, Jesus of Nazareth, during his Baptism in the Jordan (Epiphany). This annual meditation can be for us like the meditation of Fifth-Graders in school contemplating the remainder of the Twelve Grades through which they must receive passing grades in order to be ready for Graduation Day. It can spur us on the path from Jesus to Christ.

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### Footnote 1.

Wikipedia says, "Originally the baptism of Christ was celebrated on Epiphany." Epiphany is celebrated on January 6 each year, the day after the Twelfth Holy Night.

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

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**Footnote 2.**

The word "zodiac" in Greek means "little animals".

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

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**Footnote 3.**

At the time I began writing this review, I had not read GA#102 which contains 12 lectures Steiner gave in Berlin in 1908, so I began reading the first several lectures to gain some background detail to what Prokofieff is discussing in this book. I heartily recommend those lectures to my Good Readers and expect to review those lectures soon. The GA#102 book will be titled, [The Influence of Spiritual Beings on Man](#), and the link at left will point to my review when it is completed.

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

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**Footnote 4.**

Gene Roddenberry likely penned, or at least inspired, these opening words for each episode of the original *Star Trek* series, and the voyages of the crew of the Enterprise reflects upon, but pales in comparison with, the cosmic proportions of the voyage each one of us is embarked upon, whether we know it or not. Given the choice, is it not better to know?

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

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