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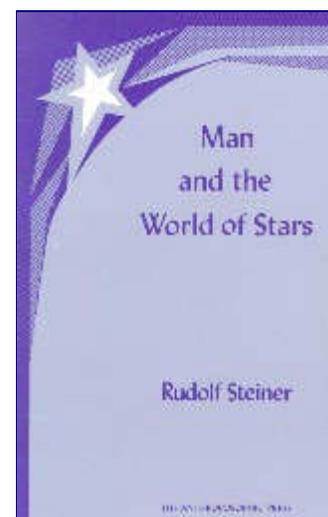


## *A READER'S JOURNAL*

### **Man and the World of Stars, GA# 219** by **Rudolf Steiner**

The Spiritual Communion of Mankind  
12 Lectures in Dornach in November, December, 1922

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A Book Review by Bobby Matherne ©2003



At the age of twenty-three, the inevitability of death first hit me, like a brick upside my head. As a graduate physicist, I was capable of understanding phenomena of all sorts, but nothing in my course work had prepared me for understanding non-existence. Let me re-state that — all of my materialistic scientific training had prepared me to understand death as non-existence by the act of equating my physical body with existence. And now, sitting on the couch in my living room in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, I was sharing with my wife this sudden revelation of mine. In trying to communicate this insight to her, I asked what she thought death was. Her response was both naive and insightful, but at the time I only saw the naïveté of her words. She said, "I guess it's like going to sleep." It wasn't until in recent years, as I began to study Rudolf Steiner's works for the first time, that I discovered that her words were very naïve — they were ingenuous, artless, and childlike, in a word: insightful. In the following passage he explains the connection between what happens *as soon as (directly)* we die or go to sleep.

**[page 2] When we are living between death and rebirth we cannot, however, speak in the same sense of what is 'within' us. For directly we pass through the gate of death, even directly we go to sleep, the conditions of our existence are such that the whole universe may be designated as our inner being.**

During the period between death and a rebirth, what is our inner nature between birth and death, becomes our outer experience. From that outer experience we fashion the seed of what is to become our next body in our future physical experience on Earth. That seed falls to Earth a short time before we do, to fashion the embryo in our mother-to-be. During that time we pull together from the universe the substances of our etheric and astral bodies, so that as a union of Ego, Astral, and Etheric bodies, we unite with our physical body in the womb as it has been fashioned by the spirit seed that went ahead of us to do its work on the embryo-fetus. (Summarized from page 3.)

We belong not only to Earth, but to the spiritual world. The greatest deeds of humanity on Earth in the sciences and in engineering construction feats are paltry in comparison to the deeds that we humans perform in tandem with the spiritual Beings of the stars [the Higher Hierarchies]. With our great achievements of biogenetic engineering, nano-machines, and quantum computers we are but as children on a playground making mud-pies in imitation of Mommy in her kitchen, making forts of cardboard in imitation of what Daddy builds as a carpenter.

**[page 4] Let it never be imagined that man's achievements in culture and civilization on the Earth, however complex and splendid they may be, are at all comparable with the greatness of what is achieved by him together with the Beings of the Higher Hierarchies in order to build this wonder-structure of the human physical organism.**

As great as the contributions of the spiritual Beings are to our physical body, there are three faculties that we must first live on Earth to acquire: thinking, speaking, and walking. Steiner looks at walking first.

**[page 5-6] Orientation in that world is of a purely spiritual character. Here on the Earth we lift our legs to walk, we place ourselves in the field of gravity. The corresponding process in the spiritual world is that of becoming related to some Being of the Higher Hierarchies, belonging, let us say, to the rank of Angel or Archangel. A man feels himself inwardly near in soul to the influence of a Being, say, of the Hierarchy of Angels, or of the Exusiai, with whom he is then working. This is how he finds his orientation in the life between death and a new birth. Just as here on the Earth we have to deal with our weight, in yonder world we have to deal with what proceeds from the several Beings of the higher Hierarchies by way of forces of sympathy with our own human individuality.**

Here on Earth, we breathe in Earth with each breath and exhale Earth in the form of air molecules and minute dissolved particles of Earth in the air. In the spiritual world, we breathe in the entire universe in one moment and then exhale it in the next. And these two forms of breathing, one in the microcosm here on Earth and the other in the macrocosm, are related.

**[page 7-8] As I breathe in Earth, so do I receive back into myself what I experienced while my being was poured out into the Cosmos. — This is constantly taking place between death and a new birth. . . . when we have poured our being over the Cosmos and draw it in again, it begins — I cannot express it otherwise — it begins to tell us what it was that we embraced when our being was outspread as it were, in the cosmic expanse. When we draw our being together again it begins to tell use what it is in reality, and we then say, between death and a new birth: The *Logos* in whom we first immersed ourselves — the *Logos* is speaking in us.**

Here is Steiner's summary of walking, speaking, and thinking when a human being first arrives on Earth. He is not organized for thinking, speaking, or walking, but instead

**[page 9] . . . he is organized for movement and for orientation among the Beings of the Higher Hierarchies. He is not organized for speaking but for enabling the Logos to resound within him. He is not organized for the shadowy thoughts of earthly life, but for the thoughts that become radiant in him, within the Cosmos.**

If this sounds a lot like the condition of early human beings on Earth, it is no *coincidence*, as the reductionist materialists would call it, but it is rather an *indication of the macrocosm of evolutionary time within the microcosm of a human lifespan*. Or, said a different way, it is the recapitulation of our human phylogenetic evolution within our individual ontogenetic evolution. In simple terms, this represents how each of us, during our growth from embryo to old age, retrace the development of our earliest human ancestors, from one generation to the next, up to our time. This was a profound insight of [Fritz Müller](#) who formulated it as the biogenetic fundamental law. [See ARJ, [The Body in the Mind](#) and [Truth and Knowledge](#).]

What is the interface between these two worlds, our waking and sleeping worlds, or asked in another way, our time between birth and death compared to our time between death and a rebirth? Surprisingly, it is an everyday phenomenon that Steiner says, "may also bring the human breathing-rhythm into disorder."

**[page 15-16] Between them, in effect, are all the phenomena pertaining to *meteorology*. If**

**on the Earth there were no blizzards, storms, wind, cloud formations, if the air did not contain, in addition to oxygen and nitrogen for our breathing, these meteorological phenomena which are always there, however clear the air may appear to be — then we should look out into the Universe and be aware of a different rhythm — actually the counterpart of our breathing rhythm, only transformed into infinite grandeur. Between the two spheres of weather, separating the cosmic rhythm and the human breathing rhythm from each other.**

We humans on Earth are subject to gravity and orient ourselves according to gravity. In the spiritual world we orient ourselves according to the lines of force that radiate out in all directions but which run through the Beings of the Hierarchies. What is the interface between these two methods of orientation?

**[page 16] Now just as meteorological phenomena lie between the two rhythms, so between the force of gravity and the opposite heavenly force of orientation there lie the volcanic forces, the forces which manifest in earthquakes. These are the *irregular forces*.**

On page 17 Steiner makes fun of materialistic geologists of his time who claimed that a large earthquake was due to tectonic tremors in the Earth. Essentially, Steiner says that the geologists were being as foolish as the doctors that claimed sleeping potions had a *dormitive* principle in them, a way of explaining something without actually shedding any light on the subject. A dormitive principle is something that causes sleep, and thus it is but another name for a sleeping potion. Tectonic tremors are merely another name for earthquakes. We now know that the tectonic plates move over and under one another, causing mountains to rise and earthquakes to be spawned, but we are no closer than the geologists of Steiner's time to explaining why huge earthquakes, such as the one that devastated the subcontinent of India a few days ago, occur when they do. (January 26, 2001, over 13,000 deaths so far) "If we are to understand volcanic and meteorological phenomena, we *must* turn towards the Spiritual." (page 18)

Rightly understood, when geologists who deal with rocks turn toward the Spiritual, they will find the *stone that is not a stone (lithos oy lithos)*, and a geology that comprehensively explains and describes the occurrence and timing of volcanic eruptions and earthquakes will have evolved on the Earth.

Everyone has likely seen a Mexican piñata, which is a hollow papier-maché figure filled with candies and goodies of all kinds. It is a favorite at children's parties where the children take turns hitting it with a bat-shaped tool until the goodies are revealed and spill forth to the joy of all present. The piñata is a apt metaphor for the Sun — a hollow shell that contains numerous spiritual Beings, but from the outside all we can see is the colorful shell, the rays of its light. If with the tool of spiritual science we are able to penetrate to the center of the Sun, to see beyond the seering surface of light, we can experience the Sun's soul and spirit and say not that the Sun casts its light on rocks to heat them and plants to make them green, but rather we will say, 'The Sun dreams and its dreams envelop the Earth and fashion the plants.' (Page 23)

**[page 25] During summer and its heat, that which lives in our Ego and astral body remains more, so to speak, in the psycho-spiritual atmosphere of the human world. During winter this same content is borne out into the far distances of the Universe.**

The knowledge of the spiritual realities of the world are often revealed in the fables, stories, and songs of a culture. In the popular Christmas song, *Santa Claus is Coming to Town*, we are instructed that Santa, "knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake." Compare those lyrics with Steiner's words below.

**[page 26] So it is not so much whether we are foolish or clever on Earth that comes before the gaze of the Divine-Spiritual Beings at the time of Christmas, but simply whether we are good or evil men, whether we feel for others or are egoists. That is what is communicated to cosmic worlds through the course of the yearly seasons.**

Our thoughts are carried out or communicated to the Cosmos on a daily basis, our feelings on a annual basis, the deeds of our will when we pass through the gate of death. And once we enter the period between death and a new birth, we encounter our thoughts, feelings, and deeds in the Cosmos.

**[page 30] Here on Earth we have day and night; when we have passed through the gate of death, we have as day and night the results of our wisdom and our foolishness. And what man experiences here on this Earth as spring, summer, autumn and winter in the yearly cycle, as changing temperatures and other sentient experiences, of all this he becomes aware — when he has passed through the gate of death — also as a kind of cycle, although of much longer duration. He experiences the warmth-giving, life-giving quality (life-giving, that is to say, for his spiritual Self) of his good feelings, of his sympathy with evil, with the immoral. . . . After death we are the product of our moral nature on Earth.**

No one would blatantly perform acts that risk the loss of one's eyesight on Earth, but what if there are acts performed on Earth between birth and death that would cause blindness during the period between death and a new birth?

**[page 32] To shut out knowledge of the spiritual worlds while we are on the Earth is to blind ourselves in soul and spirit after death. A man will enter the spiritual world as a cripple when he passes through the gate of death, if here, in this world, he disdains to learn about the world of spirit . . .**

In the realm of influence from the planets, we err egregiously if we imagine the influence beaming down on us as rays. Steiner says it would be as silly as if we spoke of the influence of an apple tree as rays spreading out from the tree onto us, whereas the influence from the apple tree came from an apple we picked and ate as we passed the tree. During the day we are influenced by the substances we eat as food and by night by the substances we take in from the Stars.

**[page 36] It might be said — and not in a figurative sense for it has real meaning — that by day man eats the substances of the Earth and by night takes into himself what the Stars and their activities give him.**

In one of the curious examples of evidence as to the influence of the Stars on human beings, Steiner tells us that "hardened criminals are never tormented during their sleep by bad dreams or the like."

**[page 39] This [torment] only happens when they dip down again into their etheric bodies, for it is there that the moral qualities lie.**

**[page 60] Man passes through death even if on Earth he acquires no knowledge of the supersensible world; but he enters then into a world where he sees nothing, where he can only grope his way about.**

And there are two hosts of spiritual beings that are vying from the possession of our being. On one side the Luciferic hosts permeate the elements of warmth and air and exhort us to view Christ as a glorious myth. On the other side the Ahrimanic hosts permeate the elements of earth and of water and cajole us to believe that Jesus was nothing but a simple man of Nazareth. If we listen to either side, we are lost to the reality of the deed of Christ — the great spiritual Being who "descended to Earth through the Mystery of Golgotha." (Page 45)

One may think that in order to understand these great mysteries of the spiritual world one needs have supersensible sight or clairvoyance, and one would be wrong to think that to be true today. Clairvoyance is like the oscilloscope of the electronics engineer — necessary to design and troubleshoot a CD player, but totally unnecessary for the end user to understand how to operate the player.

**[page 61] Today, spiritual knowledge must be consciously acquired — *spiritual knowledge*, I say, not clairvoyance. As I have always emphasized, clairvoyance too can be attained, but that is not the essential here. The essential thing is that what is discovered through clairvoyant research shall be understood — as it *can* be understood — by ordinary human reason, healthy human reason. Clairvoyance is needed to investigate these things, but it is *not* needed for acquiring the faculty of sight in the supersensible world after death.**

In the United States a new president, George W. Bush, has just been inaugurated and spoke these inspiring words written by John Page to Thomas Jefferson after the signing of the Declaration of Independence:

**We know the Race is not to the swift, nor the Battle to the strong. Do you not think an Angel rides in the Whirlwind and directs this Storm?**

Compare the above words with this passage, and ask yourself if the "angel in the whirlwind" that John Page referred to above was not the elemental beings referred to by Steiner below:

**[page 65] We men are really too cumbersome, too ponderous, to be able without more ado to hold fast our thoughts with the ordinary consciousness. Elemental beings must be there, beings who help us ever and again to hold fast our thoughts.**

"What foolishness is this?" the skeptics among you may be thinking. Does Steiner want us to overthrow the progress of science for the past 600 years and go back to the superstitious malarkey of the past? Haven't we outgrown such illusionary poppycock? Shouldn't we be going forward in technological progress?

**[page 86] We do not hark back to ancient conditions but we desire to guide the modern attitude of soul into the spiritual, away from its preoccupation with what is purely spatial and material. In other words, we want to learn to talk about *spiritual* things, as people in the Galileo-Copernican age grew accustomed to talk about substances, about forces.**

It seems to me that Steiner is saying very clearly that the postulation of forces, whether it be gravity, electric force, magnetic force, nuclear *weak* or *strong* forces, while it has proven useful in science at a materialistic level, must be transcended by a postulation of spiritual realities behind the forces, which after all, are only described by science, not explained in their intrinsic nature. Our acceptance of *described*, but *unexplained* forces seems to me to be due to our conception of Space in this physical world of Earth between birth and death, while the spiritual Beings we reside with in our time between death and a new birth have a vivid conception of Time. Steiner says that when these Beings look down on Earth what interests them least is the kind of work carried out by professors. (paraphrased from page 88) What would be most useful for us as humans on Earth to do is to build bridges between the physical world of Space and the spiritual world of Time. And the agent of that divine engineering feat will be Steiner's spiritual science, anthroposophy. As I was typing the passage below about "providing a bridge to the Divine-Spiritual," it occurred to me that is what I am doing with my Steiner reviews.

**[page 88] And it is this that quickens the impulse for anthroposophical Spiritual Science. Its desire is to transform the scientific ideas and concepts that are unintelligible to the Gods in such a way that they are spiritualized and are thus able to provide a bridge to the Divine-Spiritual.**

To understand the need for this bridge, one must first understand the nature of the gap to be spanned. What is the gap? Imagine a process computer in a chemical plant. It has sensors to measure temperatures, valve positions, and chemical composition, among other things. These sensors are necessary for the monitoring and control of the chemical reactions to ensure safety, efficiency, and product quality. These sensors are connected between the process computers and the plant, but the sensors, while a conduit for the information about plant's condition, are themselves invisible to the process computer. As such the

sensors belong to another world from plant whose status is sensed by them. How does this apply to humans and our senses? Steiner says that when we withdraw our attention from the outer world and begin living within our own senses we are in the world of the spiritual Beings in the hierarchy one step above us, the Angels.

**[page 97] What is it that actually happens in our senses? We can fathom it if we are able to observe the inner activity of the senses while we are not actually perceiving with them.**

If we do this, we will realize that our rhythmic breathing is what allows our astral body to connect with what our senses contact in the outside world. How is this possible?

**[page 97] When we breathe in, the inhaled air passes into the very finest ramifications of the senses, and here the rhythmical breathing comes into contact with what is called in Spiritual Science, the astral body of man. . . . Thus when you hear a tone, it is because in your organ of hearing the astral body can come into contact with the vibrating air. It cannot do this in any other part of the human organism, but only in the senses. The senses are present in man in order that the astral body can contact what arises in the human body through the breath.**

The breath is rhythmic by its very nature, in and out, in a definite rhythm, about four heart beats to a breath. The action of our senses have an intrinsic rhythmic nature as well, as one can easily determine for oneself. Stare without blinking and the scene begins to fade away. Press an object against one's skin and soon the sensation of contact disappears. Change from drinking coffee with sugar to coffee with honey and soon the different taste of the honey disappears. Steiner says that any "prolonged surrender to a sense-perception impairs consciousness of it." (page 100) This can be extended to large time periods such as the diurnal processes of waking and sleeping, which is a rhythmic breathing, if you will, in and out of the astral and Ego body on a daily basis.

**page 100-102] The spheres of the senses in us are already almost an outer world - if I may use an expression which, though paradoxical, you will understand. Think, for example, of the human eye. It is like an independent being — naturally I meant this only analogously — but it is truly like an independent being placed in the cavity in the skull . . . the sense-organs or the spheres of the senses are like gulfs which the outer world extends into us, as it were, and in the spheres of the sense we participate far more in the outer world than we do in the other domains of our organism. . . . When you look out in the normal way, then the astral body draws into the eye and participates in the outer world.**

As sense beings of breath we have our roots in the world of the Angels, but as waking and sleeping beings (which may be considered as a longer breathing process), we have our roots in the next higher level, the Archangels, who pass in and out of us as we go to sleep and wake up. Many scientific studies have been made of what is available to the senses of an external observer when a human being sleeps, the various brain rhythms and the REM or rapid eye-movement periods. Other studies of sleep-deprived people indicate that one becomes jittery and finds it hard to concentrate if one goes a long time without sleep.

**[page 105] If our waking life was not interrupted by sleep, although impressions of the outer world would come to us, these impressions would last for only a short time. We could not develop a lasting power of memory.**

There is another aspect of sleeping and waking — we can consider the two as part of a longer process of breathing, only the breathing is of time instead of air. During our waking day we experience the world of time as going forward and during our sleeping night we experience the world of time as going backwards over the events we experienced during the previous period of waking consciousness. Thus we breathe Time in during waking and exhale what we had taken in as we sleep. This process

leads to a discontinuity, a leap forward in Time as we awake, which can be understood by considering the following. (paraphrased from pages 106, 107) Today is January 29. When I went to sleep last night on the 28<sup>th</sup>, I began to breathe out the time I had inhaled yesterday, that is, I went back in time over all the events that occurred to me during the day, so that shortly before I awoke this morning on the 29<sup>th</sup>, I had reached the morning of the 28<sup>th</sup>. How is this connected with long-term memory?

**[page 107-108] You impel your soul forward in *Time*. and through this process your soul-being, your astral body, becomes so condensed within Time, that it carries the impressions of the outer world not only for a short period, but as enduring memory. . . . Just as we cultivate the power of sense-perception and the combining of sense-perceptions together with the Beings of the hierarchy of the Angeloi, so do we cultivate the power of memory, which is more inward power, more connected with the centre of our being, in communication with the world of the Archangeloi.**

"Self-knowledge is at the same time knowledge of the Gods, knowledge of Spirit, because every step that leads into man's inner being leads . . . into the spiritual world." Steiner says, as he leads us to see that self-knowledge leads us into spiritual knowledge.

In ancient times, wisdom or deep thoughts were revealed directly to humans, not created from the inside of themselves. One can see direct evidence of this process by examining the first sentence of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*, in which a spiritual Being is exhorted to reveal the stories to be unfolded in the texts. The writers paid no heed to the interconnection of the thoughts received, but merely wrote them down. Today we are quite different.

**[page 113-114] We regard our thoughts as the possession of our soul; we know that we have worked to acquire them. They have, as it were, been born from our own life of soul, they have risen out of ourselves, and *we regard them as our property*. The man of olden time could not regard his thoughts in this way. They were illuminations; they had come to him together with the pictures.**

Some people have taken issue with [Galambos's](#) concept of primary property (one's thoughts and ideas), saying that ideas cannot be property, and these skeptics are entitled to their opinion. Definitions are an individual thing — everyone is free to choose their own definition and live by it. What the previous passage shows clearly is Steiner considered that thoughts may be regarded as property in our time.

An ancient ritual sprang up during Midsummer in which people in olden times gave thanks once a year to the Beings who so filled them with wisdom during the year. In the ritual, the leaders brought symbols of their wisdom, and during the ceremony, divested themselves of the symbols one by one, so that by the end of the rite, they were ready to acquire wisdom once again during the next year. They said, as it were, to their followers, "We have become nescient again." (page 116) *Nescient* means ignorant or empty of wisdom or knowledge. They had, in effect, emptied their teacup so that new tea might be poured forth for them to drink during the coming year. What struck me about this ritual was its intimate connection with the common school year summer vacations, coming after the end of one school year and before the beginning of the next. Perhaps the reader can recall, as I, the unsettling feeling of nescience that overcame you during those summer months as you thought of entering the new grade level, the daunting thoughts about all the new stuff, about which you know nothing now, that you will have to learn during the next year.

**[page 116] To share in this way in the course taken by the seasons of the year, entering as Midsummer approaches into the possession of wisdom, then passing into a state of nescience (*Torheit*) before becoming wise again — this was actually felt by men to be a means of escape from the Luciferic powers. They strove to participate in the life of the cosmos. As the cosmos lets Winter alternate with Summer, so did they let the time of**

**wisdom alternate in themselves with the time of entry into the darkness of space.**

Steiner tells us that the "time-organisms of the course of the day and the course of the year must become realities" for us if we are to avoid having as dry and abstract a relationship with Nature as we have with the materials in our chemical and physical experiments. In Summer we best strive to see the opening up of the Earth to the Cosmos; in Winter, how the Earth closes into herself. In our sleeping life as humans, our physical and etheric bodies are in their Spring and Summer of budding, sprouting, and blooming; when we awake, the two bodies enter their Fall and Winter states of dormancy and death. If we examine the astral and Ego body we find the situation is reversed: blooming happens during our waking lives and dormancy during our sleeping lives. In the Earth, the presence of Summer is always balanced by the presence of Winter, but in opposite hemispheres. In humans the presence of Summer and Winter in the two sets of dual bodies is always balanced at any one time, whether awake or asleep. Thus, while in the Earth the laws and forces of Nature work in sequence, in humans these same forces neutralize each other. (summarized from page 152). How is this important? Rightly understood, this leads to the possibility of freedom in human beings!

**[page 153] Freedom can never be understood until it is realized how the Summer and Winter forces of man's spiritual life can neutralize the Summer and Winter forces of his outer physical and etheric nature.**

**[page 177] Man is a part of Nature, but since the natural forces oppose each other in his organism they cancel one another and it is as though he were a part of Nature no longer. But for that very reason, man is a *free being*. Natural laws cannot be applied to him, for in him there is not *one set* of natural laws, but two, working against one another, and cancelling each other out.**

What I understand about this is that no matter how much blooming astrality and egoity is present in me at any one time, I can find in my dormant physical and etheric body the resources to balance out the excesses so that I may make a decision in freedom. No matter how much confusion may arise in my physical and etheric bodies, I can find in my dormant astral and Ego body the resources to restore myself to a balance that will allow me to make a decision in freedom. For example, no matter how hopelessly addicted to alcohol one becomes, an alcoholic can always make a decision out of free choice to stop drinking. This powerful insight of the Alcoholics Anonymous program could have been designed by someone who had studied Steiner closely.

How does a spiritual scientist experience this sequential balancing of Earth's seasons and the simultaneous balancing of Man's seasons? In this poetic passage, Steiner likens it to the sonorous knell of a church's bells.

**[page 153-154] In the being of man you must hear something together what can only be heard as separate tones in the flow of Time. — But if you develop spiritual hearing, the tones of Summer and Winter can be heard ringing simultaneously in man, and they are the same tone that we hear in the outer world when we enter into the flow of Time itself. *Time becomes Space*. The whole surrounding universe also resounds to us in Time: expanded widely in Space, there ring forth what resounds from our own being as from a centre, gathered as it were in a single point.**

The whole business of the four bodies being balanced in sleeping and awaking may be a tad difficult to comprehend on first glance, so I'll include this poetic passage which conjures up for me the image of the Sun and Air hovering over and filling with nourishment the Plants rooted in the moistened Earth.

**[page 178] Let us picture man asleep. His physical and etheric bodies lie in the bed. Spiritual vision sees them as soil, as mineral matter, out of which plant life is sprouting. It is a different form of plant life, of course, from the one we see around us, but recognizable as such by spiritual sight. Above gleam the Ego and astral body like a**

**flame, unable to approach the physical and etheric. Sleeping man therefore is a sort of budding, sprouting plot of ground, with a gleaming Ego and astral body belonging to it, but detached.**

In the plant kingdom there is to the spiritual eye an astral glow that surrounds flowers. On page 182, Steiner tells us that this glow merely touches the upper part of the plants and the flowers appear, so that, rightly understood, "the flowering of the plant is the kiss exchanged between the Sun's light and the plant." In the blooming of the flowers we can experience in Nature a *coming into being*. In the soil and the plant's body we experience the past and we may say to the Earth as Steiner does on page 183, "You crystals, you mountains, you budding and sprouting plants, I see in you monuments of a living, creative past which is now in the process of dying." But in the human being, due to the balancing of his Summer and Winter conditions, we can see "past and future side by side."

**[page 183] Man's physical and etheric organisms die, but man does not, because the nature of the astral and Ego within him carries within it, not death but an *arising*, a *coming into being*.**

A few hours after Steiner spoke these final words below at the close of his last lecture on New Year's Eve, 1922, the magnificent wooden building of the Goetheanum blazed into the sky and fell to ashes:

**[page 188] One of the poems recited this afternoon began with these words: "Every year finds new graves!" That is profoundly true. But equally true is it that every year finds new cradles. As this year touches the past, so does it also touch the future. And today it is man's first obligation to grasp this future, to reflect that the budding and sprouting life in the external world contains within it the seeds of *death*, and that we must seek for *life* with our *own* power of action. Every New Year is a symbol of this truth. If we see on the one hand the graves, let us behold on the other hand, self-renewing life waiting to receive the seed of the future into itself.**

We cannot, as human beings, avoid our responsibility as shepherds of the Earth; we must not only enjoy it as we find it, but we must nurture and care for it. We must do for the Earth, whose physical and etheric bodies represent only the *past*, what it cannot do for itself: for only in us resides the power to craft out of the *past*, the *future*.

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