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## *A READER'S JOURNAL*

### **The Mission of the Spirit GA# 214**

by  
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THE MYSTERY  
of the  
TRINITY  
and  
The MISSION of the SPIRIT



RUDOLF STEINER

In the four lectures that comprise the first half of  
this book, which are reviewed under the title  
"The Mystery of the Trinity," Steiner makes it

clear that abstract thinking is the "corpse of our spiritual and soul being as it was before our descent into the earthly world." Abstract thinking, while useful for proof or for logical deductions about the sensory world, hinders us if we use it as our starting point to understanding of the supersensible world.

**[page 73] Because of this hindrance alone it is often said that the results of supersensible research cannot be understood by anyone who is not a researcher of the supersensible.**

If we are unbiased, Steiner said in many lectures, our ordinary healthy human understanding is sufficient to comprehend the results of supersensible research. In the first lecture on meditation, he says that he will impart initiation knowledge. In normal science, we are the subjects who seek knowledge about objects, but in supersensible science, we become the objects who are seeking the subjects. (paraphrase from page 75) Instead of being in the position of the scientist peering into the petri dish at bacteria, we are the bacteria peering up at the scientist. [See Review of first half of this book, [The Mystery of the Trinity](#), for the three processes we use for this investigation: Imagination, Inspiration, and Intuition.]

**[page 75] In ordinary knowing we think about the things; in initiation knowledge we seek to discover how we are being thought by the cosmos.**

To discover how we are being thought by the portion of the cosmos closest to us, the Third Hierarchy (angels, archangels, and archai), we must meditate until we begin to perceive this curious circumstance: when we are awake, something is vibrating in our body that is at rest in our head and *vice versa* when we are asleep, at which time this something is at rest in our body, but in constant movement in our head. This something is what Steiner gives the name "etheric body" to, what he calls a "time body" opposed to the stationary "space body" of the physical body. When we awake, we catch a glimpse of our etheric body's movements just before we awake and call these dreams. (paraphrased from pages 78, 79) If we observe a plant over the course of a year, we can notice the activity of its etheric body above the ground in the summer, and we can measure its root growth, which is the activity of its etheric body below the ground, in winter. If we understand that the head of the human being corresponds to the root of the plant, we can discern the correlation with the human being when awake and asleep. In fact, we think of plants as awake during the summer months and asleep during the winter months. In this way the yearly cycle of the Earth corresponds to the daily cycle of the human being. [See my Review of [The Cycle of the Year](#) by Steiner.]

**[page 79] Someone who meditates for a long time in the fashion I have indicated arrives at a stage where he can form pictures into the etheric body which permeates the head when it is at rest. In the book *Knowledge of Higher Worlds and Its Attainment* I have called these pictures Imaginations.**

The spiritual world is a reversal, an inside-out version, of the physical world. Nowhere is this inversion more dramatic than in the time between death and a new birth, during which time our inner and outer worlds will be turned inside-out: the Sun, Moon, planets, and stars we will experience as *inside of us* and our interior organs of lung, spleen, kidneys, heart, etc, we will experience as *outside of us*.

**[page 95] What the lung and heart will be then is something much greater, something much more wonderful than what the sun and moon are now to the human eye. . . . The human lung as we see it now is mere semblance; so is the heart. The truth is that our lung is only a magnificent part of our cosmos, our heart even more so. For in its true essence our heart is something much more majestic, something vastly greater than any sun.**

We live in a majestic universe during the midway point between death and a new birth, but gradually our universe begins to shrink: the planets surging within our etheric body form into our organs, the stars of the zodiac into our living nerves and senses. As the universe that was ours shrinks, we feel an urge to come down to Earth to unite with a physical body. For centuries before we incarnate into a physical body, we have been a mediator in the union of our great-great... grandparents meeting each other. In the Western world people tend to make fun of Hindus of India who have their marriages planned for them by their parents. If Westerners but knew the truth, they'd know that each marriage arranged by a couple who have selected each other because they are in love is just as arranged as Hindu marriages, only by human souls seeking incarnations in distant future incarnations in their descendants. The mythic image of Cupid shooting an arrow into the heart of two lovers expresses the spiritual reality of incarnating souls arranging a future physical body for themselves. (paraphrased from pages 96, 97)

Can we communicate with the dead? Yes, Steiner says, and points how that *nouns* of their language spoken while on Earth are the first things that the dead lose - they retain only the *verbs*. By this I assume that Steiner is referring to nouns as carriers of *content* and verbs of *process*. Content is an object, a process that has been reified (i.e., thing-ified). Process refers to an on-going activity. What I gather from this material is that to talk to the dead, one would do best to think in terms of actions and speak using action-words or verbs. Steiner also gives a brief precis of his understanding of the innate meaning in sounds: how the sound "A" in "Father" evokes a sense of wonder in him. When attached to "ch" the wonder goes right through him, as in the German word for "Attention!" or "Ach!". (paraphrased from pages 100-101) In the fourth and last lecture, Steiner speaks again about language on pages 141 through 143. He calls the language we must speak to the dead, "a child of human language".

The next subject has to do with the forming of the human heart as we pass through the Sun while it is in the sign of Leo.

**[page The interior of the sun is not a ball of gas; it is something even less than space — a realm where space itself has been taken away. If you begin by imagining space as something extended, with pressure everywhere present within it, then you must picture the interior of the sun as *negative space*, as space that is emptier than empty, a realm of suction. Few people have an adequate idea of what this means.**

Few people had any idea of what *negative space* might be like when Steiner spoke these words, but today the popular concept of a *black hole* today seems to fit his description of an enclosed region of negative space or suction. A black hole that existed within the Sun would create such a negative space and the gases attracted to the outside of the Sun might provide the visual image we get of the Sun. Remember the black hole is a theoretic concept for which scientists have yet to provide visual evidence of a nearby

example, so far as they know. Suppose it was right under their noses, or, rather more accurately, shining upon their noses? The Sun's huge electromagnetic charge moving in the intergalactic magnetic would be enough to create the enormous energies that the Sun pours out from its outer atmosphere (which is all we have any direct information about) into outer space to illumine the planets and warm the Earth without presupposing any thermonuclear conversion of hydrogen into helium.

**[page 112] In ancient times the human being felt the reality of all spiritual things by looking into the past. He said to himself: I must look back to the time before my birth if I want to seek the spirit, back into the past. That is where the spirit is. I was born out of this spirit; I must find it again. But I have distanced myself from it. . . . In the past the human being felt the spirit, from whom he had separated himself, as the spirit of the Father. . . . When the students of the mystery religions entered through the gates of the mystery centers . . . when they stood before the highest initiate, they saw this highest initiate as the representative of the Father God. The "Fathers" were higher initiates than the "Sun Heroes." The Father principle ruled before the mystery of Golgotha.**

But, as we have mentioned before in [The Mystery of the Trinity](#), if we had continued living in the Father principle, we would have never developed freedom, we would have been good because the Father principle worked through us. Something new had to come to Earth and whenever something new comes in our life, it usually appears as a problem at first. This something new was *sickness*, and it came into the human being as the seed of freedom.

**[page 113] In order to come to inner freedom something that could only be seen as a sickness had to make a place for itself in the human being. It was a sickness compared to humanity's former, pristine condition. In a sense, all humanity was suffering from the Lazarus sickness. The sickness was not unto death but rather for liberation and for a new knowledge of the eternal in the human being.**

Until the 8<sup>th</sup> Century A. D., people saw in the stars the spiritual beings they left behind when they incarnated, in sunlight they saw the radiant wisdom they had previously lived inside of and breathed, and in the Sun itself, they saw the "choirs of the higher hierarchies from which they had been sent down to earth." (paraphrased from page 113) Something happened in humanity which resulted in the Romanized ecumenical councils squelching this way of understanding the spiritual realities. (For more details, see [The Mystery of the Trinity](#).) Steiner says on page 114 that "If external history says nothing of this, that is simply a failing of external history." We may have lost our visions and understandings of the spiritual worlds, but we continue to hold these unconscious unanswered questions:

**[page 114] Around us is the world of nature but where is the spirit whose children we are? Where can we see the spirit whose children we are?**

As humans forgot their origins they held firmly in the depths of their souls to the belief that they were born out of God, that is, *Ex deo nascimur!* But something that they had left behind in the spiritual world that they came to know as Christ began to bug them. Before Jesus and even before Plato people knew of this great spiritual being who had lost his mission. He had planted "into human souls memories of the time before birth" but humans had come to forget the memories. Initiates knew that something would have to happen to allow humans to recover these memories.

**[page 115-116] As the initiates lived on, the consciousness arose in them more and more: This being, whom primeval humanity could remember during its life on earth, this being, whom we see having an ever lessening amount of activity in spiritual worlds, will have to seek a new sphere of life. He will descend to the earth in order to awaken supersensible spirituality in man once again.**

During the immediate centuries following the incarnated life of Christ on Earth, the biography of the man

Jesus was of little interest. "The object of research was Christ and how he had descended from heaven." They looked up to supersensible worlds, saw the descent of Christ to the Earth, and did not have to believe, they *saw*. What Christ spoke to his disciples, those "nearest to him after his death as he appeared to them in spiritual form," Steiner relates to us from his spiritual research:

**[page 117] Earlier I gave you the ability to remember your supersensible, pre-earthly existence. Now, if you take me into your souls, if you take me into your hearts, I give you the power to go through the gate of death with consciousness of immortality. And you will no longer recognize the Father alone — *Ex deo nascimur*. You will feel the Son as the one with whom you can die and yet remain alive — *In Christo morimur*.**

When I grew up, I wanted to know how things worked with a great passion. I took clocks, toys, and radios apart and put them back together. How did they work? I wanted to know. I majored in Physics in college because I wanted to know how things work. Engineers built things - I didn't want to do that, I wanted to know how they worked, and then moved on. By the age of twenty-three I was infused with everything the sciences had to offer about how the world worked, and they seemed to offer everything except an explanation of life and death. As I explain in more detail in [Man and the World of Stars](#), at age 23 I got a strong whiff of the odor of death, and didn't have a clue as to where that odor came from, up until now.

**[page 119] For the modern initiate the sciences are the grave of the soul. The soul feels itself living united with death when it acquires knowledge of the world in the fashion of modern science. Sometimes he feels this dying deeply and intensely. He then seeks the reason why he always dies when knowing things in the modern sense, why he experiences something like the odor of a corpse just when he rises to the heights of modern scientific knowledge, the greatness of which he can truly appreciate, even though such knowledge brings him a premonition of death.**

If we look with the vision of our earthly eyes at a human being, we see a being filled with flesh and blood and fully alive and vibrant. It has a physical body phantom with its embedded earthen elements filled by a vibrant etheric body, it breathes in and out a cosmic astral body, and it is governed by a young sprout of individuality, its "I". At death, the physical body is abandoned by the etheric, astral, and I, and, by chemical actions alone, it is *not* able to hold the earthen elements together within itself. They decompose and return to the Earth from whence they came. On the other hand, if we look with the heavenly vision of initiated eyes, we can now look "back into our own souls."

**[page 120] We look at our thoughts in the life between birth and death, at the thoughts arising from modern wisdom and science. And we recognize that just as the corpse of the human being is related to a fully alive human being, so too, our thoughts, the ones we revere as the highest riches knowledge of external nature can bring us, are merely the corpse of what we were before we descended to the earth. That is what the initiate can experience. In his thoughts he does not experience his real life; in his thoughts he experiences the corpse of his soul. That is a fact.**

No dead person can ever coerce you into doing something that you don't want to do. No matter how convincing Aristotle's argument about the motion of objects, Newton was not coerced into accepting them. One may think that one is coerced by human-made laws, but one has only to look at the lives of Socrates, Giordano Bruno, or Joan of Arc to see that such laws cannot coerce a human being unless they willingly relent. Such human laws are remnants of dead thoughts and dead thoughts cannot coerce you.

**[page 120] Someone who walks through the gates of initiation today discovers these thoughts in his soul, thoughts that, precisely because they are *not* living, can make living freedom possible. These thoughts, which are the whole basis of human freedom, do not coerce us, precisely because they are dead, because they are not alive. The human being today can become free because he works not with living but with dead thoughts.**

There is one more key idea to be expressed before we can connect this to the mission of the spirit as the title of these lectures promise. To sum up: before we incarnated in this lifetime, we lived in the spiritual world where everything was full of life and movement, a world of spiritual beings of the higher hierarchies and the elemental beings of nature. When we were in that world everything in our soul was alive, now our thoughts are the dead remnants from there. With the help of Christ (as St. Paul said, "Not I, but Christ in me.") we are able to experience living thoughts rising from the tomb of nature. (paraphrased from page 121)

**[page 121] We would feel sick and unhealthy if we were to approach nature, looking up into the world of stars, with only the calculating vision of the astronomers, and if we then allowed these dead thoughts to sink into the world; we would feel sick and the sickness would be unto death. But if we let Christ accompany us, if we carry our dead thoughts in the presence of Christ into the world of stars, into the world of the sun, of the moon, of the clouds, mountains, rivers, minerals, plants, and animals, into the whole physical world of man, then in our vision of nature everything comes alive. As if from a grave, from all beings in nature, the living spirit, the Holy Spirit arises, the one who heals and awakens me from death.**

Only in this way will we comprehend Christ's gift to us in the Mystery of Golgotha as the center point of earthly history. And understand the other great gift Christ gave to humanity on Pentecost when he gave us the Holy Spirit, which arises from all nature, from the entire cosmos, to speak to us as living spirit.

**[page 122] The idea of the Trinity of the Father God, of the Son God, and God of the Holy Spirit is not a cleverly thought-out formula. It is something deeply united with the entire evolution of the cosmos. When we bring Christ himself as the Resurrected One to life within us, then our knowledge of the Trinity is not dead but alive, for Christ is the bringer of the Holy Spirit.**

And when we have passed through the first two steps of *Ex deo nascimur* and *In Christo morimur*, we are ready to complete the trinity with the final step: *Per spiritum sanctum revisiscimus* — through the Holy Spirit, we are brought back to life.

In deep unconscious sleep we enter a world that would be incomprehensible to us if we did not let Christ take our hands and lead us into understanding.

**[page 132] This point is important because our karma appears, actually appears to our sun-eye, the moment we step into this sphere of whirling confusion, this sphere of planetary movement and of the fixed star constellations of the zodiac. All human beings perceive their karma, but only in the sleeping state. The afterimage or afterglow of this perception slips into our waking state through our feelings.**

Consider this when someone asks you for an explanation for some decision you've made and all you can think of as a reason is, "It feels right to me." If Christ has been your guide during your sleeping periods, to *go with your feelings* is to experience the afterglow of your previous lifetimes of karmic interaction and to benefit from acting in accordance with them.

In Eastern tales, great Bodhisattvas such as Buddha were initiated by ascending into the heavens, but in Greek tales their heroes were often initiated by a descent into the underworld where they confronted the chthonic powers in the Earth. When one has undergone a chthonic initiation, whether as an ancient Greek hero or someone falling in love today, one might express it this way:

**[page 137] I have a relationship to a particular person; the lilies tell me, the roses tell me, because the forces of the roses, the forces of the lilies, the forces of the tulips have driven me precisely to this place. The entire earth becomes a kind of "book of life" that enlightens us about the human world, the world in which we live, the world of human**

**souls.**

But Indian Bodhisattvas, ancient Greek heroes, or modern lovers do not a *science* of the spirit make, do they? A new science must replace the old myths. And just as Newton replaced the old myth of Aristotle's laws of motion with his modern laws of motion, Rudolf Steiner has created for us in his books and lectures a modern science of the spirit.

**[page 140] Now that the secrets of heaven and the secrets of earth have been studied in the old science of initiation we need a *modern* science of initiation that can move back and forth between heaven and earth, that can ask heaven when it wants to know something about earth and that can ask the earth when it wants to know something about heaven. . . . If I may say so in all modesty, this is how the questions are posed and given preliminary answers in my book *An Outline of Occult Science*.**

Let us close this review of "The Mission of the Spirit" with what Steiner said that he wanted to leave in the hearts and souls of the intimate circle of friends he gathered for his last lecture in London on August 30, 1922:

**[page 145] Through the descriptions given by modern initiation science, I would like to awaken strength so that a few people are actually present in the world who can find the proper place between what wants to come into the earthly world from spiritual worlds and what, from the direction of the earthly world, wants it to be impossible for spirituality to penetrate into the life of earth.**

Steiner warns us that this effort of his will meet immense opposition, but that we are nevertheless to continue to express the insights of his spiritual science as best we can, even though it will require a "great exertion of force" — an apt way of describing what I experienced in writing the two reviews of the eight lectures that comprise this book.

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The book cover for "The Mystery of the Trinity and The Mission of the Spirit" by Rudolf Steiner. The title is written in red, serif font, with "of the" and "and" in smaller font between the main words. Below the title is a red line drawing of a stylized human figure with arms raised, standing on a base. The author's name, "RUDOLF STEINER", is printed in red, all-caps, sans-serif font at the bottom of the cover.

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