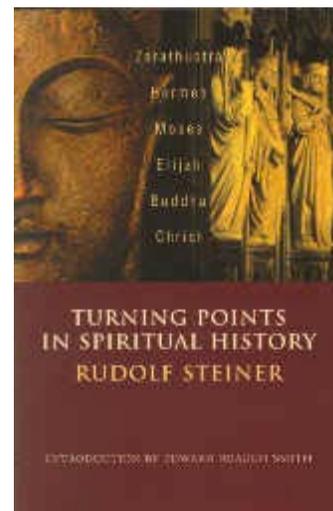


A READER'S JOURNAL

Turning Points in Spiritual History, GA#60, 61 by **Rudolf Steiner**

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Translated by Walter F. Knox
Introduction by Edward Reaugh Smith
Edited by Harry Collison



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To me the phrase "turning point" refers to revolution. It conjures up a complete turning away from the ways of the past, much as the American Revolution turned the colonists thoughts away from Britain's legacy of tyranny to a new life for themselves independent of offshore rule. Since revolution carries with it the baggage of fighting, the more general term evolution seems preferable when talking about the turning points of history generated by the lives and deeds of these great men. By evolution we are not talking about the physical world of minerals, plants, animals, and human beings as science does, but rather the structure of the invisible world of human consciousness as it changes during these dramatic turning points in history. It is the evolution of consciousness that we do well to focus upon as we review these lectures by Rudolf Steiner.

Steiner, who writes about these turning points in history, has been responsible for many turning points of his own, and a future look back at great "turning points in spiritual history," will no doubt include the contributions of Rudolf Steiner. In his Introduction to this book, Edward Reaugh Smith writes about one of Steiner's contributions, the revelation that Lazarus after being raised from the dead took the name John:

[page x] [Rudolf Steiner] in his landmark book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* . . . first identified Lazarus as Evangelist John.

Similarly, Steiner revealed to the world that Naboth and Elijah in parts of the Bible were the same human being. Smith discussed how this came to be in his essay "Widow's Son" in his book [The Burning Bush](#), crediting Steiner for describing the nature of the connection between Naboth and Elijah:

[page xii] The focus of that essay was the personality known in the book of Kings as both Naboth and Elijah, for until Steiner it could hardly be known that they were one and the same. Naboth was the personality's name prior to his initiation into the mysteries of Mithra, Elijah the name given to him when initiated as described in the book of Kings.

Smith's twenty-seven page Introduction provides an excellent précis of the many contributions Steiner made to furthering our understanding of how Zarathustra, Hermes, Moses, Elijah, and Buddha each played

a crucial role in the life of Jesus and his subsequent baptism. His Introduction is itself worth the price of the book.

One short excerpt shows the connection between the Jesus infant in the Luke Gospel and Buddha's perfected astral body which had filled the infant.

[page xxvi] It is said of the righteous and devout Simeon, who when the parents brought the infant Jesus to the temple according to the custom of the law took the infant up in his arms and blessed him, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace . . . for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," that he Simeon was reincarnated Asita, the wise man who had recognized the infant Gautama as the Bodhisattva at his birth and now recognized his former master in the infant Jesus Child.

Zarathustra

While many encyclopedias place Zarathustra as an historical figure around 600 B. C., Steiner points out that Greek historians place Zarathustra as a pre-historic figure living about 5,000 years before the Trojan War of 1200 B. C. Steiner gave this reason for the discrepancy: the great Spirit who infused the original Zarathustra later returned several times, particularly around 600 B. C. where he was also known as Zoroaster, among other names.

During Zarathustra's time, about 8,000 years ago, people had clear visions of spiritual realms, but, because this was also a time *before* we had developed the ability to write, we have no descriptions of this vision capability *per se*. As a result, many scientists scoff at the possibility that these ancient people were so dramatically different from the way we are today. To confirm this attitude, one need only read about how scientists deride the ancients; they call with their tales fantastic, because these so-called scientists are unable to understand the evolution of consciousness which lies like a chasm between the ancients' way of comprehending the world and their way. But the raw truth is that we can only understand the ancients rightly if we take their tales as descriptions of spiritual realities that they perceived and described as best they could at the time. Only then can we begin to understand that these ancient tales offer us a valuable way of understanding of these realities. Jung hinted at the possibility of doing this⁽¹⁾, but Steiner made it an explicit reality.

Steiner explains why we have lost this ability to directly perceive spiritual realities over time:

[page 5, 6] It is a fundamental principle underlying the evolution of the human race that in no case can any one quality be developed except at the expense of some other attribute; hence it came about that from epoch to epoch the faculty through which in olden times humankind obtained a clear inner vision of the spiritual realms became less and less pronounced. Our present-day exact methods of thought, our power of expression, our logic and all that we regard as the most important driving forces of modern culture did not exist in the remote past. Such faculties have been acquired during later periods at the expense of the old clairvoyant consciousness, and it is now for humankind to regain and cultivate this long-lost power. Then, in the future of human evolution, a time will come when in addition to human beings' purely physical consciousness, intellectuality and logic, they will again approach the condition of the ancient seer.

The physical world meant so little to the ancient people of India that they called what was perceptible through their material senses, *maya*, or illusion. Traces of this ancient attitude are still present in modern day India. But the ancient Persians developed, with Zarathustra's instruction, their perception of the sensory world of colors, sounds, and textures.

[page 11] Zarathustra counseled his followers *not* to draw away from the material world

but to pass outward and beyond it, so that they might say, "Whenever we experience perceptual manifestations in the outer physical world, we realize that therein lie concealed and beyond our sense perceptions the workings and achievements of the spirit."

In the Greco-Roman times the two paths of India and Persia were intertwined. The inner path of mysticism was represented by their god, Dionysus, and the external path of the senses and logic by their god, Apollo. These diverse paths can be found in college curricula of today, the Arts and Sciences, the arts of Dionysus and the science of Apollo.

Zarathustra saw the human body as a combination of internal and external realities, and likewise he experienced the Sun the same way. Steiner imagines him teaching his doctrine this way:

[page 13] "When you regard human beings, you must realize that they do not consist only of a material body — this is but an outer expression of the spirit that is within. Even as the physical covering is a manifestation in condensed and crystallized form of the true spiritual human being, so is the sun that appears to us as a light-giving mass, when considered as such, merely the external manifestation of an inner spiritual sun."

This was the first appearance of a doctrine which proclaimed that a great spiritual being resided within the confines of our Sun whose visible rays are only the outer garments of that being. The name of the Being has changed over the millennium, from Ahura Mazda (Persia) to Ra (Egypt) to Apollo (Greece) to Christ (Europe, America, etc) with each advancing age and religion, but the reality as perceived by those with spiritual eyes has remained the same.

The idea that an extra-perceptual reality exists within the Sun and other physical objects, animate or inanimate, may seem strange to some, especially to scientists. Steiner rarely made definite statements about the future, but here is one prominent exception, and one whose truth has already come true within a hundred years. First the statement:

[page 23] I will now make a definite statement, which when viewed from the standpoint of modern cosmic ideas is liable to awaken bitter feeling. I assert that before long it will be discovered and recognized by external science that a superperceptual element underlies all physical phenomena and that latent spirit exists in everything that comes within the limits of our sense perceptions. Further, science will be driven to admit that in the physical structure of human beings there is much that is a counterpart of those forces that permeate and spread life throughout the whole universe and which flow into the body, there to become condensed.

The Bell Theorem predicted that two sub-atomic particles, once in contact with one another, will maintain their connection no matter how many light-years they may separate from each other, *and*, that a change in one particle will result *instantaneously* in a perceptible change in the other particle. Scientists, such as Albert Einstein (with his EPR Paradox), ridiculed the idea of such a connection right up until the time an experiment around 1980 proved the Bell Theorem to be accurate. That connection is definitely superperceptual and yet it "underlies all physical phenomena" exactly as Steiner averred in his definite statement above. It is also known all atoms of atomic number greater than that of iron (Fe, AN=57) must have been formed in a supernova. Since we have such atoms in our body, and atoms are known to be condensed energy ($E=mc^2$) or forces, the forces spread through the universe by the explosions of supernovae can be found to have flown into us as atoms which are condensed in our body, exactly as Steiner claimed. An interesting sidelight to this is that since supernovae are *super* stars, each of us has a claim to being a superstar.

Hermes

After the time of Zarathustra in the Persian Epoch, we entered the time of Hermes in the Egypto-Chaldean

Epoch. The ability to see into the spiritual world had continued to dim over time, but people had begun to make records of what specially-equipped humans could still perceive of spiritual realities. These records are called today myths and legends and are treated by so-called serious exegetes of history with derision; they are called childish fantasies and false conceptions of nature. The process used by such scholars I call "retrodition," because they use the way we have of understanding nature and spirit today and apply it retroactively. Thus applied, it is easy to scoff at myths and legends and dismiss them as useless for understanding the world. Steiner, for his part, applies his own spiritual insight and discovers the underlying truths to be valid and real in these myths and legends. Obviously Steiner's words are dismissed by otherwise brilliant scholars who apply the process of retrodition when reading his words out of context of his full works, up until now. Exactly as one cannot expect to understand history by examining a single event out of the context in which it occurred, so too one cannot expect to understand Steiner's words out of context of his full *oeuvre*.

One cannot rightly understand the impact of great figures of human history unless one understands the evolution of consciousness which involved a decreasing ability of spiritual vision (of inside reality) accompanied by an increasing ability of logical, rational, and descriptive vision (of surface reality).

[page 37] As time went on, the power necessary to the old clairvoyance dimmed, and the visions faded. One might say that the doors leading to the higher realms were slowly closed, so that the pictures manifested to those whose souls could still peer into the spirit world held less and less spiritual force until, toward the end, only the lowest stages of supersensible activity could be apprehended. Finally, this primeval clairvoyant power died out insofar as humanity in general was concerned, and humanity's vision became limited to that which is of the material world and to the apprehension of physical concepts and things. From that time on the study of the interrelation of these factors led step by step to the birth of modern science. Thus it came about that when the old clairvoyant state was past, our present intellectual consciousness gradually developed in diverse ways among the different nations.

As this diminution of spiritual sight began to set in, the Egyptians learned to prize those who kept this ability. The average Egyptian could only see enough of the spiritual realities to know the veracity of those who could still see them clearly. Hermes was such a man. The original Hermes was called "Thrice-Great Hermes" or Hermes Trismegistos to distinguish him from men of a later period, who would have the primeval wisdom of the first Hermes, and whom they also called Hermes in their time. Also note that the Greeks called this man Hermes, but to the Egyptians, he was called Thoth. To understand Hermes is to understand the spiritual realities represented by what we call the myths of Osiris and Isis.

You may have read about Osiris as the Sun and Isis as the Moon, but what does that mean to us, and more importantly, to avoid the tendency of retrodition, what exactly did that mean to the ancient Egyptians who learned from Hermes about the reality of Osiris and Isis?

[page 44] Even as the elements that form the physical body enter into it, there to combine and become operative, so did those olden peoples picture the Osiris forces as descending upon human beings to flow into their being and inspire within the power of constructive thought and cognition — the veritable Osiris force. On the other hand, the expression "Isis force" was applied to the universal, living cosmic influence that flows directly into the thoughts, concepts, and ideas of human kind. In this manner we must picture the uplifted vision in the souls of the old Egyptians, and it was thus that they regarded Osiris and Isis.

These ancient people as yet had no written language, so they strove to communicate the nature of these two types of forces using the script written in the sky. Steiner imagines how an ancient one might have described the matter:

[page 45] "The Osiris-Isis force works within me. . . . The supersensible power that the human being feels as Osiris can be apprehended and expressed in perceptual terms if regarded as that active force emanating from the sun and spread abroad in the great cosmos. The Isis force may be pictured as the sun's rays reflected from the moon, which waits upon the sun so that she may pass on the power of his radiance in the form of Isis influence. But until she receives his light, the moon is dark — dark as a soul untouched by the uplifting of thought."

The old Egyptian said, "The sun and moon that are without reveal to me how I can best express, figuratively, my ideas concerning all that I feel within my soul." (Page 45) And, just as Zarathustra saw the great spirit, Mazda, as residing inside the Sun and the Sun's rays as merely vestures clothing the outside of Mazda, so the ancient Egyptians thought of the human being's inner nature as Osiris-Isis and its physical body as merely its garments. (Page 47) Steiner summarizes the contribution of Hermes thus:

[page 67] Such noble spirits as Zarathustra and Hermes at once claim and rivet our attention. They appear to us so exalted and so glorious because it was THEY who, in the dim dawn of human life, gave to humankind those first most potent and uplifting impulses.

Buddha

An amazing statement is waiting in the first two pages of the section on Buddha, namely, that Buddha, who is so identified with reincarnation, was responsible for minimizing the importance of reincarnation. In fact, Buddhism exhorts us to remove ourselves from the wheel of reincarnation as Buddha did. But Steiner points to the Western writer, Gotthold Lessing, as an independent source for our understanding of the value of repeated earthly lives.

[page 73] Gotthold Lessing [confesses] that he himself was a believer in the doctrine of reincarnation. With regard to this belief, he gives expression to those deeply significant words "Is not all eternity mine?" Lessing was of the opinion that the repetition of our earthly lives was proof that benefit would accrue from mundane endeavor and that existence in this world is not in vain. For while we toil, we look forward to ever-widening and fuller recurring corporal states in which we may bring to maturity the fruits of our bygone earthly lives.

To understand the Buddhist or B-Man, let's first review the ancient Indian yoga or Y-Man and the ancient Persian Zarathustran or Z-Man. First Steiner gives us his idea of a Yoga or Y-Man speaking:

[page 79, Y- Man] Indians have ever striven to reestablish their connection with those spirit worlds from whence they came, and it has been their constant endeavor to eliminate from their earthly life all that was spread around them in external creation and by thus freeing themselves from material things to regain their union with that spiritual region from whence humanity has emanated. The principle underlying Yoga philosophy is reunion with the divine realms and abstraction from all that appertains to the perceptual world.

Next he explains what the Z-Man would have spoken about reality as he experienced it. Note the progression from inner to outer world as we move forward in time from the old Indian epoch to the old Persian epoch:

[page 78] [A Z-Man expressed himself] after this fashion: "Interwoven throughout this world, which is now our portion, is the same divine essence that was spread about us and permeated our very beings in bygone ages; this spiritual component we must now see amid our material surroundings. It is our task to unite ourselves with all that is good and of the spirit and, by so doing, to further the progress and evolution of creation." These

words indicate the essential nature of the current of thought that was occupied with external physical perception and went forth from those Asiatic countries where the Zarathustran doctrine prevailed, which lay northward of the region where humankind [RJM: the Y-Man] looked back in meditation, pondering over that great spiritual gift that had passed away and was indeed lost.

But the B-man is a loner as epitomized by Buddha who spent his time alone under the Bodhi or fig tree seeking the enlightenment which would free him from the so-called "wheel of reincarnation." "He conceived a factor (wherein was no wisdom) that he termed 'the thirst for existence' to be the true source of all the misery and sorrow that so trouble the world." (Page 85) The B-Man stands "isolated and alone, concerned only with the basic principles of their individual being and always seeking to gain through the conduct of their personal life those powers that may lead to freedom from the thirst for existence, so that having attained to this freedom they may at last win redemption from rebirth." (Page 89)

Now we listen as Steiner contrasts the viewpoint of the B-Man and the C- Man (the Christian). The B-Man "would say, "I have been taken out of a divine spiritual realm and placed upon this earth; when I look around me I find nothing but illusion — all is maya."

[page 92, C-Man] The Christian, on the other hand, would say, "When I came down into this material life, had I but conformed to the order and intent of that divine plan in which I had my part, I could even now look beyond this perceptual pretense, behind all this deception, this maya, and I would at all times have the power to realize and discern that which is genuine and true. Because my deeds were not in harmony with those things that had been ordained when I descended upon this earth, I have, through my own act, caused this world to become an illusion."

To the question, "Why is this world one of maya?" the Buddhist answers thus: "It is the world itself that is maya." But the Christian says: "It is I who am at fault, I alone; my limited capacity for discernment and my whole soul state have placed in such a position that I can no more apprehend that which was in the beginning. And my actions and conduct have ceased to be of such a nature that results follow smoothly, ever attended with beneficial and fruitful progress. I myself have enwrapped this material life in a veil of maya."

The B-Man seeks Nirvana, but the C-Man seeks his Ego or "I" — that Spiritual Center which resides in the depths of his being — if he can but extract it from the maya which surrounds it.

[page 94, C-Man] Christians seek liberation from their lower personality and look forward to the awakening of a higher self, that more exalted Ego, which they alone have veiled, so that through awakening they may at last apprehend this perceptual world in the light of divine truth.

The C-Man recognizes himself as error prone and he strives to atone for his errors.

[page 95, C-Man] The only way in which humans may truly atone, when indeed the will is there, is for them to raise themselves upward from their present conscious state and existing Ego to a higher plane of personality — a more exalted "I." Those words of Saint Paul — "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me" — could then be characterized as "Yet not I, but a higher consciousness liveth in me."

The "Christ in me" can be seen as a modern expression of the Sun spirit, Ahura Mazdao, of Zarathustra, the Osiris principle of Hermes, and the Apollo principle of the Greeks. The same spiritual reality as viewed and understood by Persians, Egyptians, Greeks, and now Christians whose number fill all countries and corners of the world to a greater or lesser extent. And Steiner explains how it was Christianity, rightly understood, which "first revealed the true meaning of the doctrine of reincarnation."

[page 101] We can now state that the reason why humans must experience recurrent earth lives is so that they may be again and again instilled with the true import of material existence; with this object they are confronted with a different aspect of being during each incarnation. There is throughout humanity an upward tendency that is not confined merely to the isolated individual but extends to the entire human race with which we feel ourselves so intimately connected. The Christ impulse, the center of all, causes us to realize that humans can become conscious of the glory of this divine relationship. Then no more will they acknowledge only the creed of Buddha, who cries out to him, "Free thyself!" They will become aware of their union with the Christ, whose deed has reclaimed them from the consequences of that decadence symbolically represented as the fall of the human being through sin.

Moses

Have you ever planted seeds you saved from last year's harvest? If so, you know very well that this year's sprout must break through the seed's covering, that last year's shell or husk which shielded the sprout from the light of day before it could grow and prosper. In ancient myths and stories, we find the Moses story repeated many times in cultures of other lands who had no access to the biblical account. Steiner explains why it might be so that Moses was soon after birth reported to have been placed in an Egyptian-woven covered basket and set afloat.

[page 118] Let us suppose that we wished to express figuratively that at birth some personality entering upon earthly life came upon the world endowed with certain divine gifts that would later raise him to great heights in his relation to humankind. We might well indicate this concept by developing a narrative telling us that it was essential that this being, shortly after birth, should pass through a material experience of such a nature as to cause all his sense perceptions and powers of external apprehension to be for a time entirely shut off from the physical world. . . . we find intimated in a wonderful way that the imperishable message Moses was destined to bring to humanity was, one might say, enfolded and lay within an outer shell encompassed and enveloped by the old Egyptian culture and mission.

Moses' mission was to perceive the Ego or "I" directly. "I" is an ingenious name because each one who says it is talking about one's self, one's own Ego or "I". We know that any bush that is on fire will be consumed by the fire, so the fire that Moses saw enveloping the burning bush was a spiritual fire, and the phrase "spiritual fire" is the best description we can achieve of the Ego, "I", or "I Am". And what does Moses receive in answer to his question of the Great Spirit in the burning bush, "Who shall I say sent me?" — "Tell them the 'I Am' sent you." Thus, when Moses told them "The 'I Am' sent me." it could sound like he was talking about his individual 'I Am.' The power that Moses felt pouring from the burning bush and filling him from the voice which spoke led him to speak of a Great Spirit or God speaking as the "I Am." As it turns out, Moses was one of the first human beings to say the words "I Am" or simply "I" in reference to themselves. Before Moses's time and for a couple of thousand years later, there were no words for "I" in human languages. If we look at ancient languages, we find instead that the conjugation of verbs were used to indicate one self as the actor or recipient of an action. The "I" was not a soul power, but a deep spiritual fire whose advent to humanity was proclaimed by the burning bush, in metaphor as well as verbal form, "I Am the I Am."

[page 127] It was for Moses to recognize a cosmic spirit of a very different order — one that did not manifest as a soul power, owing its origin to various spirit influences that while exhibiting a certain similitude find ultimate expression in varied form. The spirit of the cosmos, which it was ordained that Moses should apprehend, was of a wholly different character, for its revelation can alone take place in the innermost and holiest midpoint of soul life, the Ego. There works the spirit of the universe — in the place

where the human soul is conscious of its very center.

The "I Am" that confronted Moses from the burning bush was the new element that was to sprout into being from out of the old shell of Egyptian civilization. When Moses spoke to the Pharaoh, it was as if the "I Am" of Moses was talking and trying to reason with the "I Was" of the Pharaoh.

[page 130] We next come to the conference between Moses and Pharaoh. It is easy to see that when these two came together, they could not understand each other. The account is intended to convey the idea that all those things about which Moses spoke proceeded from an entirely changed order of human consciousness and must, therefore, have been quite unintelligible to Pharaoh, in whom only the old clairvoyant Egyptian culture continued to be active. . . . Moses spoke a new language. He clothed his speech in words that emanated from the Ego-consciousness of the human soul and were therefore incomprehensible to Pharaoh, who could follow only the old train of thought.

Animals trust their instincts and are able to tell in advance of the occurrence of earthquakes and other natural phenomena and flee from the scene before humans know of the happening. Human beings of today insist on logical reasons before they allow themselves to act for the most part. Still there are others who have learned to trust their instinctive judgments and refuse to offer reasons to themselves or others.

[page 133, 134] Those who use the forces of their soul and through its attributes and its virtues win power to utter statements beyond the scope of their intellectual consciousness feel uncomfortable when people come to them and say, "Why is that so? Give us proof of your assertions." Such persons never realize that knowledge of this nature comes by quite a different path from that born of logical reasoning. It is a striking and pertinent fact that Goethe, when he looked out a window, could often predict hours in advance what kind of weather was in store.

Moses had a power similar to Goethe and used it to great effect in getting his people to the Promised Land. But when they reached the banks of the Jordan, Moses knew from that very power that he should not cross into the new land with its new culture. This power of Moses was sufficient to impart the necessary impulse for his people to enter the new promised land and create a new culture, but Moses' primary power was like that of the Pharaoh and of an old clairvoyant kind that would not fit in as part of the new culture. He was overjoyed at accomplishing his task, but he knew instinctively that he could not be part of the new culture he had sown in the soil of the Promised Land.

[page 136] The knowledge and wisdom Moses acquired through his clairvoyant powers sufficed to impart the necessary impulse but could not itself be of the new culture, for this new cultural faculty was destined to manifest in ways that would be the antithesis of the old order of clairvoyant consciousness.

Moses had a mission that was unique in the history of the world, to bring to human consciousness the existence of the "I Am", to feel in the deepest part of our soul the existence of the "I Am." But the full importance of the mission Moses accomplished was only to be understood much later.

[page 137,138] It was through the mission of Moses that humankind was first led to realize that the most positive feeling human beings can experience of the absolute reality of the all-pervading cosmic spirit, that divine principle that is ever active and interwoven throughout the whole earth, is centered in the "I AM" — the very midpoint of the human soul. But in order that these two simple words might be imbued with the utmost import, the "I AM" must first store within itself the full measure of a content that will once again embrace the world. To reach this end necessitated yet another mission, which is expressed in those deeply significant words of Saint Paul "Yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Elijah

Who was Elijah? What are the spiritual realities behind the events surrounding this great prophet in the Bible? In a startling revelation, Steiner explains that Naboth and Elijah were the same person, and clarifies the events surrounding Naboth, Jezebel, and Ahab in 1 Kings 21. Here Steiner talks about his intent in this lecture on Elijah:

[page 143] The object of my discourse is not merely to supply information concerning the personality and significance of the prophet Elijah; its true purport is at the same time to present an *example* of the manner in which spiritual science weighs and regards such matters and, by virtue of the means at its disposal, can shed fresh light upon facts connected with the growth and development of humanity, which have come to our knowledge through other sources.

If you read 1 Kings 21, you'll find it mostly concerning a man named Naboth, whose vineyard abuts King Ahab's. The king covets the vineyard and Naboth treasures his land and wishes it to pass down to his children. What is not revealed in the biblical version is that the great spirit of Elijah was living in Naboth at the time of the events described in 1 Kings 21. Steiner explains the back story of Naboth, Ahab and Jezebel in considerable detail.

In this next passage we can read how Elijah-Naboth conquered the 450 priests of Baal that opposed him on Mt. Carmel.

[page 160, 161] Elijah-Naboth then prepared his sacrifice. He made an offering to his God using the full force of his soul, that soul which had passed through all those trials we have already described. The sacrifice was consummated and achieved the fullness of its purpose, for the souls and hearts of the people were stirred. The priests of Baal, the four hundred and fifty opponents of Elijah, were driven to admit defeat. *They were destroyed in their very souls by that which they had desired* — killed, as it were, by Elijah-Naboth. Elijah-Naboth had won the day!

This amazing feat by Elijah-Naboth seems beyond the ability of any human today, but that is not the case. A similar event took place in the Siberian taiga just a few years ago when a group of men in a helicopter, with guns and modern equipment, tried to kidnap Anastasia to take her and her son to a scientific compound outside Moscow. Their attempt to take her away by force failed dramatically, and in the process of their attempt, the men did not die, but they were *nearly destroyed in their souls by what they had desired*. The events of the abortive kidnap attempt and Anastasia's escape and her subsequent miracle healing of a young girl of the local village are chronicled in Book 3 of the Ringing Cedar Series, [The Space of Love](#).

In this next passage Steiner reveals how Elisha received the spiritual power from Elijah in order to lead his people.

[page 169] Elijah spoke again and said to this effect: I must now ascend into the higher realms; if thou art able to perceive my spirit as it rises upward, then has thou attained thy desire and my power will enter in unto thee. And Elisha indeed saw the spirit of Elijah as he "went up by a whirlwind into heaven" (2 Kings 2:11), and the mantle of Elijah fell down [upon him], which was a symbol denoting the spiritual force in which he must now enwrap himself. Here, then, we have a spiritual vision that indicated and at the same time caused Elisha to realize that he might now indeed become the true successor of Elijah.

With the popularity of the Anastasia books in Russia, Europe, and increasingly in America, one might wonder how a mysterious recluse could dwell in the midst of the Siberian taiga and yet exercise such forces of power and intensity as she is reputed to have. Steiner observes that great forces often operate in

isolation and obscurity, going back to the days of Elijah.

[page 173] Although these days it is inconceivable that a mysterious personality such as we have portrayed, and known only through rumor, could dwell in our midst in the guise of a simple and homely neighbor without all the facts becoming known, in olden times such a circumstance was undoubtedly possible. We have learned that throughout all human evolution it is precisely those forces that are of greatest power and intensity which operate in an obscure and secret fashion.

Elijah's mission is spelled out by Steiner, giving as the main reason the sinking of the Hebrew people into materialism so far that disaster would soon fall upon them. Elijah was to turn the hearts of his people away from materialism and back to the spiritual world.

[page 175] At the time of Ahab, the Hebrew people were for the most part so far sunk in materialism that there was danger not only that disaster would overtake them but also that the actual course of the spiritual evolution of humankind might be hindered; the matter had gone to such a length as to call for divine intervention. For this reason it was ordained that Elijah, whom we must regard as a truly exalted spirit, should descend upon the earth and that his mission would be to turn the heart of the people once more to Yahweh. . . .

There is a similarity in the mission of Anastasia which can only be discovered by a careful reading of the entire Ringing Cedars Series. My reviews of the Series may be a help for those unable to immediately obtain the books. She explains in [Book 6](#) how a world-wide catastrophe was narrowly averted by the events which followed September 11, 2001. Her explanations of how human beings are able to live without all the trappings of materialism provides a way out of any future disasters for humankind. The process is simple and can be done one person, one family at a time. The dachniks in Russia have been following her advice for years and their successes demonstrate the wisdom of the advice provided by Anastasia. Powerful academic scientists using tools of coercion were unable to extract Anastasia from her glade in the taiga where her spirituality continues to save her beloved dachniks and the rest of the people in the world. Elijah was a man whose spirituality saved his people. Such spirituality is possible for every human being, every *Man* in Anastasia's words, who returns to the land to live today as Elijah did when he lived as the humble peasant Naboth. Against such spiritual power the kings, tyrants, scientists, and other rulers of the world today will not be able to prevail.

Christ

Steiner in this final lecture in the book shares his scientific knowledge of Christ. This is such an extraordinary thing to do, even more so now than in Steiner's time, that he feels the necessity to point out the declining interest among philosophers for such understanding. Today we are definitely in need of the spirit of Elijah to help us throw aside the detritus of materialism so that a deep view of our spiritual roots may be revealed to everyone, peasant or philosopher alike.

[page 179] It cannot be denied, even by those who have made only a slight study of spiritual life, that the subject chosen for our consideration today has aroused an interest in the widest circles. We might add that this desire for knowledge is of a scientific character. On the other hand, there seems to be an ever-increasing tendency toward the formation of a world philosophy in which such questions as are associated with the name of Christ find no true and proper place.

Philosophers today — hardly worthy of that name — use the crutch of retrodiction to brush away Steiner's works by claiming that he merely tried to revive the old gnosis of early Christianity. They seem, as it were, irritated by the sizzle of Steiner's griddle, and never get to taste or savor the pancakes of his spiritual science.

[page 181] In many ways the concepts of the spiritual science of today, which will be recapitulated in this lecture, extend far beyond the ancient gnosis of those early Christian times, but this very fact makes it the more interesting that we should at least touch upon these old spiritual conceptions.

Steiner's spiritual insights into gnosis is thus *not* some mimicking of early gnosis as some like to claim, but a building anew upon the early foundations of gnosis from early Christian times. We have left from those times scant more than traces of foundations because the early Church destroyed every extant copy of books written about gnosis about the 3rd century, A.D., calling those original spiritual insights heresy and burning at the stake those who publically professed to be gnostics. But since the foundations of gnosis exist eternally in the spiritual world, they cannot be extirpated, only stunted for a time and to sprout anew in each generation. The difference between spiritual science and religious dogma is no better illustrated than by the process, namely book-burning, by which religious dogma strives ever to darken and destroy views outside the orthodoxy of its beliefs. Spiritual science, on the other hand, strives ever to build truth upon truth so as to enlighten and expand rather than obfuscate the truth of a spiritual matter. Simply put, Steiner in his works does not give us a catechism, but a scientific essay.

Nowhere is Steiner's view of spiritual realities more potent and coherent than his presentation of the evolution of humanity as it mirrors the evolution of our cosmos. How can we truly understand our long-term destiny as human beings unless we can fit ourselves into the evolution of the cosmos in which we find ourselves? What specifically is this cosmos that I am talking about? Consider all the objects which astronomers call our Solar System and those radiations and occasional visitors (comets, asteroids) which comprise it. That is our cosmos, our local region of space built up in a region of our Milky Way galaxy which was previously uninhabited. Our cosmos is, rightly understood, our "kin's domain" (2) in the largest sense of *kin*, where kin refers to all the humans who have ever lived on Earth or ever will.

Like on a kin's domain described by Anastasia, humans came in spirit form, and with the help of beneficent spirits, began to design, shape, and evolve their own kin's domain on what eventually became the planet Earth upon whose surface we now live. Each major evolution our kin's domain went through is recorded in our human constitution. The dramatic events during the Old Saturn stage of evolution helped us to form our amazing physical body, which is best considered in this Earth stage of evolution as a phantom (think: dress-maker form) into and upon which the minerals of our present earthly body are situated. During the Old Sun stage our cosmos acquired a Sun and we humans acquired a life body (etheric body) which each of you reading these words at this moment possesses, for if you did not, you would be a near-corpse or corpse because the life body flows back into the macrocosm (what surrounds our local cosmos) when life in the physical body ceases. During the Old Moon stage our cosmos acquired a Moon, and we humans acquired an astral body which each one reading these words also possesses because you are awake and conscious and the astral body leaves the physical body when we are asleep. That brings us to the Earth stage which we are safely ensconced within at the present time. We live on an Earth which has separated from the Old Moon, so that we may see the remnants of our previous stages of evolution in the sky: the Sun by day, and the Moon by night. And on a daily basis, each of us flows into and out of consciousness as our astral body returns upon awakening in the morning and leaves upon entering sleep at night. Evolution, understood as Steiner has portrayed it for us, is something that lives in our body at every moment, and whose effects we can witness about us in the sky which surrounds us. What did we add to the constituency of our body with the advent of the Earth stage of evolution? Why, it is the very subject of this series of lectures, especially the one we are discussing at this very moment. We added the Ego or "I Am" — the four constituent part of our human body; the Ego rounds out our body's parts: physical, etheric, astral, and Ego.

Recall that in discussing Moses and Buddha we discussed the Ego or "I Am" as it first began to appear to human beings in historical times. The Ego is the newest of the four bodies and its job in this center point of our cosmos' evolution (Earth stage) is to create the higher spiritual bodies during the next three stages

of evolution during which Earth itself as a physical object will cease to exist to sensory perception. All humans will thenceforth live on as spiritual beings, and their task will be the furthering of evolution for future development of the macrocosm(3).

Where are we situated in the course of the Earth stage of evolution? One can get an overview by looking at the [Sevens Table](#). We are past the midpoint and about a third of the way towards the Sixth Cultural Epoch, which resides in the Fifth Great Epoch.

With this thumbnail summary of cosmic evolution, we are now ready to understand how Christ is placed in cosmic evolution, and particularly, what the insights of the early Christian gnostics meant.

[page 181] During the first few centuries of the Christian era, this ancient gnosis put forward the most profound ideas concerning the Christ-being — momentous indeed in relation to the enlightenment that came with the dawn of Christianity. This higher spiritual wisdom maintained that the Christ-being was eternal and not alone associated with evolution of the cosmos taken in its entirety.

In other words, Christ was present in the beginning of time, or better said, "Before time was, I was." It was only in the fullness of time that the Christ being chose to incarnate into the perfected Hebrew male we know as Jesus of Nazareth during his baptism in the Jordan. The fullness of time refers specifically to the time at which Man was doomed to die to the spiritual world forever because of the precipitous decline into materialism which had progressed for so long. That Fall was triggered by a great spirit being, Lucifer, who brought a gift to Man which precipitated his Fall. The one-way fall could only be reversed by another great spirit who was capable of undoing or redeeming Man from the effects of the earlier gift. That spirit was known for at least eight thousand years going back to the original Zarathustra who perceived the Christ spirit living in the sphere of the Sun and who taught that the Christ spirit (although he called it another name) would one day come to Earth and take up residence in a human being. Zarathustra's teachings were taken up again by Zoroaster in historical times (600 B.C.) who taught his students — who were variously called Kings or Magi — to look for the birth of that human being.

[page 183, 184] The event that took place on the banks of the Jordan when Jesus of Nazareth was baptized by John, and which is recorded in the Bible (Mark 1:9-11), was regarded by this ancient gnosis as a manifestation of the entering of the Christ-being into the course of human evolution. The gnosis further declared that some very singular spiritual condition had been engendered with regard to Jesus through this sacred baptism, which event we may consider as wholly symbolic or otherwise.

[page 184, 185] The divine power and supreme spiritual quality that flamed up in the soul of Jesus of Nazareth manifested in wholly new indwelling attributes; from them arose a godlike inner life, shedding fresh light upon all forms of human culture enlivened by its example. It was the divine essence that entered into the innermost being of Jesus of Nazareth — that glorious and most Holy Spirit creating in him a newborn life — that the ancient gnosis termed THE CHRIST.

All the nominalizations in the above passage by Steiner must surely lead scientists and many lay people to say, "That is all an abstraction, a purely visionary notion — what we want is reality, something that directly affects our actual material life." (Page 186) And yet, notice how often a person who has an outwardly successful material life, becomes depressed or even commits suicide for reasons having to do with what those same people would call abstractions. To refer to one's soul life as an abstraction may be logically correct, but no one who ever felt sadness, depression, or joy in their soul life would call those abstractions unimportant or in some way not actualities.

[page 186] Humanity is still far from experiencing the feeling of greater satisfaction that comes of spiritual thought and realizing how much more true is the substantiality of all that underlies those spiritual concepts to which we may raise ourselves than is that of the

things most people regard as perceptual, concrete, and having absolute reality.

Ideas are created in the now. There is no such thing as an historical idea because the one who names it an historical idea is having that idea in the present. Thus we can see that the evolution can only leap forward on the backs of ideas created in the present. Those ideas may be built upon thoughts and ideas created in the past, but the *very thing which makes an idea original and unique* is some component which is created in the person who has the idea *in the present*. The *idea*, rightly understood, begins as an inspiration or intuition which arrives in the human soul and mind from the spiritual or supersensible world.

[page 192] The whole process of human evolution would be lifeless and spiritless if it proceeded merely historically and if it were not that those ideas that enter into the souls of human beings are the expression of invisible and supersensible impulses, which rule and govern the whole of human growth and development.

Moses worshiped a Moon God, Jahweh, and since the human astral body was perfected during the Old Moon stage of evolution, we might expect that Moses' God was one who was found in the astral body of feelings, emotions, and temptations. Moses presented his people with a decalogue of commandments designed to order their astral body of feelings, emotions, and temptations. Here's how you are to feel about your God and parents; here's the things you should avoid doing under states of intense emotion; here are the temptations you are to avoid. The "thou shalt not" clauses gave clear directions to the actions that the human astral body was to avoid to keep from offending their Moon God, God of the Astral Body.

[page 200] If we would know in what manner that great and vital change wrought in the world's history by the coming of the Christ impulse is regarded when viewed in the light of spiritual science, then we must first realize that the human being consists of a physical body, an etheric or life body, and an astral body; deep within and underlying all is the Ego — that true "I" which continues from incarnation to incarnation. An awareness of the presence of this ultimate center of life broke in upon human consciousness last of all, such that in pre-Christian times humans had no thought of its existence. Even as the physical body is directly united and in contact with the physical world and the astral body with the astral world, so is the human being's deepest life center, the Ego born of the spirit world that passes the human beings' uttermost understanding. Hence, the great message that Christianity and the Christ impulse brought to humankind may be thus expressed: Seek not the deity and the godlike primordial principle in the astral body but in the human being's innermost being, for there abides the true Ego.

Several passages in the Bible Jesus seem to urge that we disrespect our close relatives, but the deeper meaning reveals the central truth of Christ's teachings lie in respect for all human beings, whether blood relations or fellow countrymen, respect because they are human beings. Here is one such passage, given to us by Steiner:

[page 203] Christ Jesus uttered . . . [in Luke 14:26] . . . , "If any *man* come to me, and forsaketh not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." We must not regard the significance of this passage as in any way conflicting with the just claims of relationship and child love but rather as indicating that the Christ had brought into the world the principle of divine spirit that all human beings, *because they are human beings*, may find if they only seek steadfastly in the very center of their being. It was because of this transcendent deed that afterward humankind would enter into closer and closer contact with the very heart of Christianity. Then would this most sacred principle rise up supreme and, while overcoming all diversity and error, bring about the realization of that universal quality that all may discern who look deep within.

You, by virtue of reading this review of a set of lectures by Rudolf Steiner, may be thinking that this is

like preaching to the choir — you know much of this already. But there are many people who have lost their way because the external sciences haven't been systematically undermining the very basis of Christ Jesus's divinity. By using methods of history, archaeology, and anthropology they strive to convince people that He was but a human being, if he existed at all, and that his teachings are just one among many great teachings which may benefit gullible believers.

[page 206] Both natural science and history have come to a stage where there is definite skepticism concerning all spiritual matters, and these external sciences are now employed merely in collecting and associating outer perceptual facts, wholly regardless of that underlying spiritual reality that may be apprehended in all phenomena capable of sense perception.

External scientists have no tools or procedures which allow them to do anything but assiduously avoid any taint of spiritual or otherwise supersensible influences. As a trained physicist, I was carefully taught in that manner, if I were to keep to the straight and narrow pathway of *real science*. Unfortunately for our scientific community that kind of training puts blinders on them, similar to those we used to put on horses which had to travel through the streets of our cities. Horses would be spooked by the dark shadows from the buildings to either side of the street, and be subject to bolting unexpectedly. The only way to keep the horse pulling the cart down the middle of the street was to put blinders on it. We cannot allow external scientists to have the last words on the existence of the spiritual world or any of the realities which exist outside their measuring tools and procedures. Scientists who wear blinders in their everyday work life are apt to keep them on in their personal lives and miss much of the soul and spiritual life which is happening all around them, but outside the purview of their blindered sight, up until now.

[page 207] The position that human beings have assumed as expert and judge of the world does not represent reality, for they can arrive at true concepts only after they have freed themselves from their present false ideas, risen to a higher standard of thought, and overcome those barriers that cause them to view all things in distorted and unreal form — such a consummation would be perceptive redemption.

Goethe said, "The eye must thank the light for its being." What am I to think as a physicist when such a saying goes contrary to everything that I was taught? The eye is an instrument which records the presence of light and color patterns in the world. It would be as ridiculous for me to believe that light caused the presence of eyes as to believe that light caused the existence of cameras. And yet, if there were no light, would anyone have ever had cause to build a camera? Besides that, the human eye is not a man-made instrument, but a human-evolved instrument. Consider how we have sensors which react to the presence of pressure, the presence of heat, and even ears which respond to the presences of low to high frequency compression waves in the air (sound). It is as though whatever way there is of sensing the physical presence of the world, humans have evolved a mechanism for doing so. There were no doubt millennia which went by when the presence of the Sun's rays on the surface of the face signaled human bodies that something was out there which it should be able to perceive. With that signal, the human body began to evolve the organs we know as eyes, in order to perceive what was out there. Thus it came to be that:

[page 209, 210] the light has brought forth a corresponding instrument suitable to receive its impressions. Thus has the eye formed itself in the light, so that it could be sensible to its touch and so that the illumination which is within could meet and blend with the rays coming from the outer world. Even as the eye has been fashioned through the light's action and apprehension of the latter comes through the agency of this organ of experience and rebirth of soul brought about by that supreme Christ event — the Mystery of Golgotha. Spiritual science tells us that before the advent of the Christ impulse, such inner experience could occur only under the stimulus of an external influence created through the agency of the Mysteries and not, as is now the case, through a form of self-initiation induced with the human being's very being.

Each of us realize not only Goethe's words, "eye thank the light for being", but "I thank the Light of Christ for being." We should thank Christ for the Light that shines within our deepest being as our "I" — our Ego — which today gives us the power of freedom and independence that only Moses, Elijah, and the other great spiritual beings we have studied in these lectures possessed in their own times. And we should thank Rudolf Steiner for helping spread abroad in the twentieth century a great illumination of the reality of the Christ impulse from his time onward.

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

Footnote 1. See "Man and His Symbols" by Carl Gustave Jung, etal, Part 2, "Ancient myths and modern man".

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

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**Footnote 2.** The term "kin's domain" was originated by Anastasia, a recluse in the Siberian taiga. She uses it to refer to a hectare of land (about 2.5 acres) upon which one builds a sustainable life for one's family. See the [Ringing Cedars Series](#) for more details on the design of a kin's domain.

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

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Footnote 3. Details of human and cosmic evolution are given Steiner's landmark book, [An Outline of Occult Science](#), which reveals to us what has been occulted or hidden, up until now.

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

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