

Ascension comes when the season of blossoming is reaching fullness. Trees & plants, stirring upwards in growth, have been touched by the warmth & light from above & show forth the blessing of the heavens in color & scent. The whole of nature reaches upwards towards the heights.

The longing of the human soul strives also, upward, in unison with nature, seeking the touch of world-warmth from the sun. This mood of ascension attunes all of life to the cosmic expanses.

However closely heaven & earth are aligned, their relationship is not always the same. In this we see the miracle of the seasons –the breathing-in, & the breathing-out, of the earth soul.

At the time of the Ascension of Christ, nature celebrates the ascension of the soul of the earth. - It is not by chance that the 40 days between Easter & Ascension coincide with this season.

Every year, when the earth breathes out in the springtime, the mystery of the Ascension of Christ, Who is the Spirit of the Earth, is renewed.

The stars in their constellations are shifting into their Summer places now, & the planets tread the ordered measure of their courses around them. These dots of light in the distance, point us to the spiritual beings who direct the life of the universe.

From this point of view, **Ascension is a festival of the hierarchies.**

Remember, that when Christ descended thru the heavens, & came into human form, the hierarchies lost His presence. They could only find Him by looking into the depths – bearing witness to the God Who entered physical existence to remind earthly humanity of its cosmic citizenship.

At the Ascension, the mystery of the resurrection was brought back to the company of heaven - Signaling the return of the lost world of earth into the community of the stars. Since that time, the life of this planet is renewed with the cosmic forces that stream earthward.

The sacrifice of Christ initiated on earth, was the antidote to the consequences of death brought on by the Fall – the redemptive deed that turns death into life.

The Concentrated seed of Christ's deed continues to grow in the earth thru this connection to the stars.

This reconnection was prefigured in the story of Jacob from the Old Testament. Thru his dream of the stairway to heaven, Jacob gave us the prophecy of the Ascension - A golden ladder set between heaven & earth, on which choirs of angels & our beloved dead can ascend & descend.

When the Risen Christ returned 'to sit at the right hand of the Father', at the Ascension, He became the bridge between the above & below.

The Christ impulse dwells in the earth, & extends into the Divine Presence, to fulfill the prophecy of Jacobs ladder, so that thru this deed, mankind is brought near again to cosmic beings.

As the Christ has ascended, so too, in the fullness of time will humanity be transfigured. The company of the hierarchies wait, for us, their younger siblings to ascend in our thinking to meet them in fellowship, as they work all the while at our sides.

The Christ-Revelation 'coming in the clouds' is here- Showing us the bridge that brings a harmonizing spring-dialogue between the worlds. At the Ascension, Christ becomes "Lord of the heavenly forces upon earth".

The fulfillment of the secret promise of the Ascension, is the Second Coming. It was said to the apostles, "He will come again, in like manner, as you have seen Him go up into the clouds of heaven."
The Ascension is the seed of this Second Coming, & the Second Coming is the fulfillment of the Ascension.

The poet Novalis touched on this occult truth:

**"In heavy clouds let Him ascend
And so also let Him downward tread.
In cooling streams let Him be sent,
In flames of fire blaze His descent,
In air & essence, sound & dew
To permeate our whole earth thru"**

These lines from Novalis are a true prayer revealing the occult connection between the Ascension & the Second Coming.

Here too we see that, elemental beings *form* the earth under the patronage & protection of the higher worlds.

In this way **Ascension can be called the Festival of the Elements.**

When we attune ourselves to beings such as **Raphael, Archangel of Spring**, we can awaken to the way these spiritual entities constantly interact with earth thru the elements.

The messengers of cosmic warmth in the rays of the sun activate the ascension of the element of water. Through its union with air, clouds are born. In the cloud, which is between the depths of earth & the heavenly heights, in the sphere of the etheric realm - a mobile balance manifests. – We see it in the blue sky, dancing with the ever changing clouds. It is the primal image of metamorphosis, of organic forming & transforming, the never-resting developing, blessed by the heights. For this reason, blossoms & fruits are in reality not just products of earth but heavenly forms filled with earthly substance, like us.

And so for 40 days after the Resurrection, amidst this seasonal activity, the apostles received from the risen Christ His esoteric teachings; essentially the contents of the 5th Gospel given to us by Rudolf Steiner.

Then they witnessed The Christ, being received into the clouds, moving out of their sight - an expansion of His being - like the unfolding of a lotus flower into the universe. Rudolf Steiner tells us, that *at the same time*, the vivid spiritual reality of what *would have happened* to earth existence *if* the mystery of Golgotha had not occurred; came into their consciousness. It was revealed to them that human bodies would have so deteriorated that all of humanity would have perished.

Our physical bodies have earth-gravity, but our etheric bodies have sun levity, so if the Christ deed had not taken place, our etheric bodies would have left the physical for good as well, & the existence of mankind would have come to an end, having no formative forces to give them life.

We know that until the Mystery of Golgotha, the sun was the dwelling place of the Christ. The human etheric body, which was in danger of being drawn out towards the sun, like clouds, & dispersed –is held together, contained thru this cosmic deed, so that we are not dispersed, but can remain as individuals.

Christ remains in union with the earth, which rescues for the earth the sunward-striving etheric body. - *But* to be able to take effect in a human being's *spirit & soul nature*, the Christ impulse must also be able to penetrate into the human soul during sleep. And this is only possible if a person *consciously* recognizes the significance of the Mystery of Golgotha. The spiritual effect can only proceed from a true recognition of its content.

Mankind must come to realize that on the one hand Christ rescued the human physical body, & holds back the etheric body in its urge towards the sun; but on the other hand, mankind's *ego & astral body*, can receive the Christ impulse only in the time between falling asleep & waking – which is only possible when knowledge of this impulse has been acquired in waking life.

The mystery here is that in the festival of Ascension not only do the forces of the macro-cosmic kingdom of the Son come into Earth-existence, but it also opens us to the forces proceeding from the sphere of the Father. This is big folks, the gospel of Mark tells us: 'Then the Lord, after He had spoken to them, was taken up into the heavenly spheres & sat down at the right hand of the World-Father as the fulfiller of His deeds'.

As a result of the conversations over the 40 days with The Risen Christ, the apostles were able to receive the primal sources of a new imaginative clairvoyance, removing the veil hiding the true image of death, which is really a facet of the Father-God in the aspect of Creator. – What is born must die, but thru Christ death becomes life. This revelation of the apostles' higher imagination brings the true content of death with its connection to the kingdom of the divine Father into perceptive.

At the moment of the Ascension the true meaning of death was made manifest to the apostles, they beheld it with their own eyes to be a process of union with the world of the Divine.

From that turning point of time onward, Rudolf Steiner tells us that, one of the 1st experiences of every human being after death is a contemplation of Christ's Ascension; which can reveal to the person's soul, the true picture of death & its connection with the highest sphere of the Father.

For the person who on earth worked to understand the mystery of Golgotha, this picture of the ascension after death becomes an affirmation, but for the soul that has not worked towards true spiritual knowledge, it is a picture of reproach. Helping us seek in freedom to understand this mystery in our next life.

Rudolf Steiner tells us: 'It is the Christ-impulse that works on after death; it is this impulse under whose influence man frees himself from the Moon-sphere, penetrates the starry Sun-sphere, & from the impulses given to him by beings of the starry world is there able to work upon the forming of the physical organism for his next earthly life'. Dornach 15 Sept. 1922

Christ takes this Moon-Karma upon Himself, enabling the soul to find the path of the true Ascension, which leads to the world of the fixed stars. –

So in the scene of the Ascension we have an indication of the all-encompassing influence of the Christ Being, as the Lord of Karma, upon the life of the human soul after death. -

It was for this reason that when the apostles experienced the Ascension, which was for them not only the proof of the vast significance of the Christ for the life of every human soul after death, but was at the same time, the event thru which they were able to attain the knowledge of a new relationship between microcosm & macrocosm – Revealing the secret, that the human soul can come into contact with the cosmic sphere where Christ derived the forces for His Resurrection Body. The sphere of the Father, where the Atma, or future Spirit Human, is derived.

And now, since in the resurrection, Christ has united the forces of the Cosmic midnight hour directly with earth evolution, this created a bridge for all human beings over the cosmic abyss – Unlocking the gate between this cosmic midnight hour & the mid-day moment of cosmic existence. This then provided the opportunity for The Holy Spirit, who illuminates individual ego-consciousness, to be able to appear in earthly evolution among the 12 at Whitsun, flashing in thru this opened gate, to pour into them the true knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha & the Ascension in full wisdom.

Since that time, Easter, Ascension & Whitsun/Pentecost, have remained inseparable from one another - they form the foundation of the only moveable feasts in the cycle of the year, which succeed one another in accordance with cosmic law, having to do with the alignment of Sun, Full Moon & Earth after the Spring Equinox. –

In this way the inner substance of this great 3-fold Festival, can illuminate this turning point of time for all Humanity.

Just as the experience of the Ascension lies between Easter & Whitsun, so between Good Friday & Easter lies the event known as Christ's Descent into Hell. Both hold the image of Christ disappearing from sight.

By His death Christ opened up the paths of the higher spheres for those exhausted souls trapped in kamaloka, so they could ascend into the upper planetary realms & be renewed.

The Descent into Hell rescued the heavenly forces for humanity; the Ascension rescued the formative forces.

At the Baptism the Christ Being united with the physical body of Jesus of Nazareth & was therefore united with earthly evolution as a whole.

At the Transfiguration Christ permeates the etheric body of Jesus. In the scene of the transfiguration, Christ reveals his higher sun nature, to the 3 chosen disciples, A visionary manifestation of the fully transformed etheric body, which radiates light like a Sun.

These events are mirrored, & transformed by the mystery of Golgotha, **Ascension relates to the Transfiguration & Whitsun to the Baptism.**

In the Ascension, Christ showed the connection to the spiritual Sun forces which became manifest in the Transfiguration, with the etheric bodies of all human beings.

When Christ entered into Jesus at the Baptism, His Sun-Being took over the ego of Jesus, the Zarathustra soul had to leave the body or be completely overpowered.

After the resurrection the Christ impulse can live within mankind without taking over the ego-consciousness. *But in order for this to happen, Christ had to Ascend.* Then after 10 days He sent the Holy Spirit- that divine Being of the Trinity that does not overpower, but enhances the individual ego of human beings. -So now the Christ impulse can enter human souls thru the mediation of the Holy Spirit, so that we can retain our "I" in freedom.

The benevolent Sun, that gives life generating warmth to all existence, is a bridge, connecting the macrocosm with the microcosm.

So besides the imagination of Jacobs's ladder, we can picture the connection between the descent into Hell on Holy Saturday with the Ascension which is the metamorphosis of the scene of the Transfiguration; & in Whitsun, the transformation of the Baptism.

I will touch briefly here on a subject that is vast enough for its own series of lectures: the image of the phantom body of Christ as the reconstituted New Adam, & the Resurrection Body, which points us in the

direction of our future evolution- not back to the garden - but going forward toward the New Jerusalem. Materializing & dematerializing at will just as the Christ did during the time between Easter & Ascension.

This 'body' encompasses the whole of humanity. It is like a cell that is multiplying; growing ever more evident in the etheric realm. – Rudolf Steiner calls it a redeeming of the group-soul of mankind.

Christ has united with the earth in order to make it the new Sun of a new universe.

The expression “Put on the Resurrection Body” used by the apostle Paul, is a true picture of what can happen for us. An imagination of this is hidden in the allegory of the Chymical Wedding of Christian Rosenkreutz .

Goethe's Fairy Tale is another powerful imagination that came thru when I was brainstorming on images that capture the essence of the Ascension. It's been said that 'The Green Snake & the Beautiful Lily', which is full of esoteric symbolism, was born out of Goethe's reading of The Chymical Wedding . This Tale was also written as a response to a work by Friedrich Schiller called 'Letters on the Aesthetic Education of Man'.

One of the main ideas centers on the question of human freedom. Schiller was trying to build an inner bridge between reality & the 'ideal human being'.

He wrote these 'Letters' during the time of the French Revolution, which was driven by a desire for *outer* social changes, to enable human beings to become free. But both Schiller and Goethe recognized that freedom cannot be 'imposed' from the outside, it must arise from within.

So Goethe took this inspiration & set about writing a Fairy Tale that would show, in imaginative pictures, the way in which a human soul could become whole & free by bridging the abyss between the human & the divine within.

Rudolf Steiner, in his 1918 book 'Goethe's Standard of the Soul', tells us: “On the river stands the Temple in which the marriage of the Young Man with the Lily takes place. The 'marriage' with the supersensible. The realization of the free personality is possible in a human soul whose forces have bridged the state of regularity with the divine forces of transformation.”

This article by Steiner led to an invitation for him to speak to the German Theosophical Society which eventually led to his becoming its General Secretary...& this story continues to live on in us...

To help us digest all I have spoken, let us hear this tale of 'The Green Snake & the Beautiful Lily' told by Nancy Melvin.

To help us prepare to receive this imagination let us 1st come together a 'Folk Eurythmy' exercise –

Rhythm is expressed in every living being.
The heart throbs in expansion & contraction.
We experience the ebb & flow of the seasons-
Living within the in-breath & the out-breath of nature.
The coming & going of the life-cycle with its many milestones –
The give & take of Life & death -

In to out: The Christ-will encircling us holds sway,
Out to In: In world rhythms,
In to Out : bestowing Grace upon souls
Out to In: Light divine,
In to Out: Christ-Sun,
Out to In: Warm Our hearts;
In to Out: Enlighten Our heads;
Out to In: That good may become
In to Out: What from our hearts We are founding,
Out to In: What from our heads We direct,
In to Out: With focused will. ~from The Foundation Stone by Rudolf Steiner

~hag = ~[Hazel Archer Ginsberg](#)
Ascension Thursday, 29 May, 2014



Climbing Jacob's Ladder - A Festival of Ascension

7pm -9pm Thursday 29 May 2014

At the Rudolf Steiner Branch of The Anthroposophical Society 4249 North Lincoln Avenue. Chicago, IL. 60618

A Musical Prelude: Classical Guitar & Violin with **Kurt & Sarah Estep**

The prefiguring of Ascension-The Old testament Story of Jacob's Ladder: **Nancy Melvin**

Art in Ascension: **Mark Pelnar**

From Seed to Star- The Foundation Stone in Motion: **ALL**

Tone of the Day: **Hazel Archer Ginsberg**

Goethe's Fairy Tale-The Green Snake & the Beautiful Lily: **Nancy Melvin**

From Seed to Star- Climbing the Ladder: **ALL**

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