

Cosmic Cycles, Earthly Rhythms

By Mary Stewart Adams for the Central Regional Council "Speaking with the Stars" Project

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I. The Cycle of the Year as a Breathing Process

In his lecture cycle "The Cycle of the Year as a Breathing Process of the Earth" from 1923, Rudolf Steiner likens the course of one Earth year to one full respiration in the human being. By way of much-abbreviated explanation, we can follow the course of our own breathing and note that between every full in-breath and every full out-breath, there is a slight pause. Were there no pause, the human being would hyperventilate.

This pause in the human breathing is akin to the Solstice moments in the cycle of the Earth year: At Winter Solstice (December 21st), and Summer Solstice (June 21st). At the Solstice moments, it appears to us on the Earth as though the Sun has reached a point furthest above or below the celestial equator, at which point it appears to pause in its upward or downward trajectory, and return in the opposite direction~just as when the human being breathes fully in or out, then pauses before the breath moves in the opposite direction. Solstice literally means the standing still (*-stice*) of the Sun (*-sol*).

Due to the nature of Sun-Earth relationship, the exact moment of the Solstice changes over time, at a rate of about 1 degree of the zodiac every 72 years. If we calculate the circle of the zodiac at 360 degrees, and multiply it by the rate of this motion (72x360), then we find that the Sun-Earth relationship achieves a unity within the circle of the zodiac every 25,920 years (72x360=25,920). This 25,920 year rhythm is referred to as the "Platonic World Year", and has a remarkable synchronicity with human breathing. On average, the human being breathes 18 times each minute. At 60 minutes in an hour and 24 hours in a day, then we find that in every 24 hour cycle, the human being breathes 25,920 times (18x60x24=25,920). We find in this harmony of rhythms that the human being is specifically 'synched' with the larger, celestial rhythm (for more on the Platonic World Year, see the following lecture from 1917 by Rudolf Steiner: <http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/19170128p01.html>)

II. Conceiving the New Year

So let us consider the Summer Solstice moment in the cycle of the year specifically. At Summer Solstice, it is as though the Earth has completed a full out breath, and in essence is reaching highest upward as possible into its celestial environment. The soul of the human being is as though borne up and out with this Earth exhalation, carrying within itself the fruits of Earth experience that have been gathered since the time of deepest inhalation, at Winter Solstice. In this picture, the human being appears as the mediator between Earth and Cosmos, breathing Earth substance in and bearing it up to the cosmos, and offering it there at Summer Solstice for fructification by the celestial world, and then, further on, bearing this star-imbued 'substance' back to the Earth, where it is offered at Winter Solstice. With the Solstice moments as the pause in human breathing and in the Earth year, they represent a significant moment for interaction with the celestial environment at Summer Solstice, and the Earth environment at Winter Solstice.

In his annual lecture cycle on the Mystery of John, Karl Koënic described how, at the full out breath at Summer Solstice, a sublime event takes place that can be likened to the conception of a human being, only what is being conceived is not now a soul-spirit being, but the cycle of the new year. It is as though the solstice-pause is an opening, through which the human being offers up the Earth experience of the year for celestial fructification, and then, when the pause fulfills and the in breath begins, this fructified 'substance' is then borne back earthward by the human being, as the new year. So, at Summer Solstice 2014, the human being, breathed out into cosmos with Earth soul, bears out the year 2014, and breathes in the spirit germ of 2015, and is as though 'pregnant' with this spirit germ of the new year.

Taking this pregnancy image further, we see that with a human being, there are nine months of gestation, usually divided into the tri-mesters of three months each, during which time different developmental processes take place. In our case, we can consider that what we conceive at Summer Solstice 2014 will as though be 'born' nine months later, at Spring Equinox 2015. *Spring Equinox 2015 is the date of the Total Solar Eclipse that occurs in between the two Total Lunar Eclipses of 2014 and the two Total Lunar Eclipses of 2015 (more on this later).*

So, from Summer Solstice in June until late August when we had our call, we are in the 'first trimester' of this cycle. During the first tri-mester with a human embryo, a process takes place that is referred to as the "organogenesis"~the beginning development of the major organs. At the fulfillment of this time the embryonic stage fulfills and the 'physiology' is in place, which includes the heart completing its division into four chambers. The placenta is fully forming, replacing the mother's womb as the most intimate sheath around what has now developed from embryo to fetus.

In the cycle of the year when we are conceiving the spirit germ of the new year rather than that of a soul coming to birth, this stage of the development of the major organs can be likened to the development of an *organ of perception*~a sense within the human being regarding what is coming, or what seeks one, in the coming year. This sense, or this perception, begins to rise up within the human being about nine weeks after the Summer Solstice 'conception', and we are as though 'activated' toward this perception by the fact that on August 22nd each year, the Sun appears to touch the heart star Regulus in the constellation Leo, which activates the heart forces, just prior to its entering the region of the Divine Feminine~the Isis, Mary, Sophia, Virgo, and also, Astraea, Greek Goddess of Justice and Virtue.

Astraea was active particularly during what the Greeks referred to as the Golden Age, but when evil and violence plagued the world in the Iron Age, she fled to the heavens and became a constellation. She was regarded as the last remaining divine being to walk among humans on the Earth, and had stayed during the four great ages (Golden, Bronze, Silver and Iron). Her return was prophesied and longed-for, but until such time, she could be seen as the constellation of the maiden, Virgo, reclining as though asleep along the ecliptic (the path that the Sun, Moon and planets seem to follow around the Earth).

III. Awakening the Divine Feminine as a Process of Speaking with the Stars

How do we awaken this divine feminine from her place among the stars?

In her Isis aspect, Rudolf Steiner likens her to the consort and queen of Osiris, who was responsible for re-membering his dismembered body and restoring it to a common grave. In the 1920 lecture cycle “Search for the New Isis, the Divine Sophia”, Rudolf Steiner further develops the Isis-Osiris myth by describing how, like Osiris, Isis herself is slain, only rather than being cast out across the earth, her body is as though flung into the cosmos and there lies asleep as though in its grave, until such time as we can awaken again our relationship and speaking with the stars. And while Osiris is slain by his brother Seth, God of Storms, Isis is slain by the Copernican thought, which tears the Earth away from the center of attention of a living cosmos, and replaces it with the Sun as the physical center of our system. Further, Isis remains in her grave so long as we only regard our celestial environment according to the laws of celestial mechanics, which have as their foundation the heliocentrism of Copernicus from the 15-16th century.

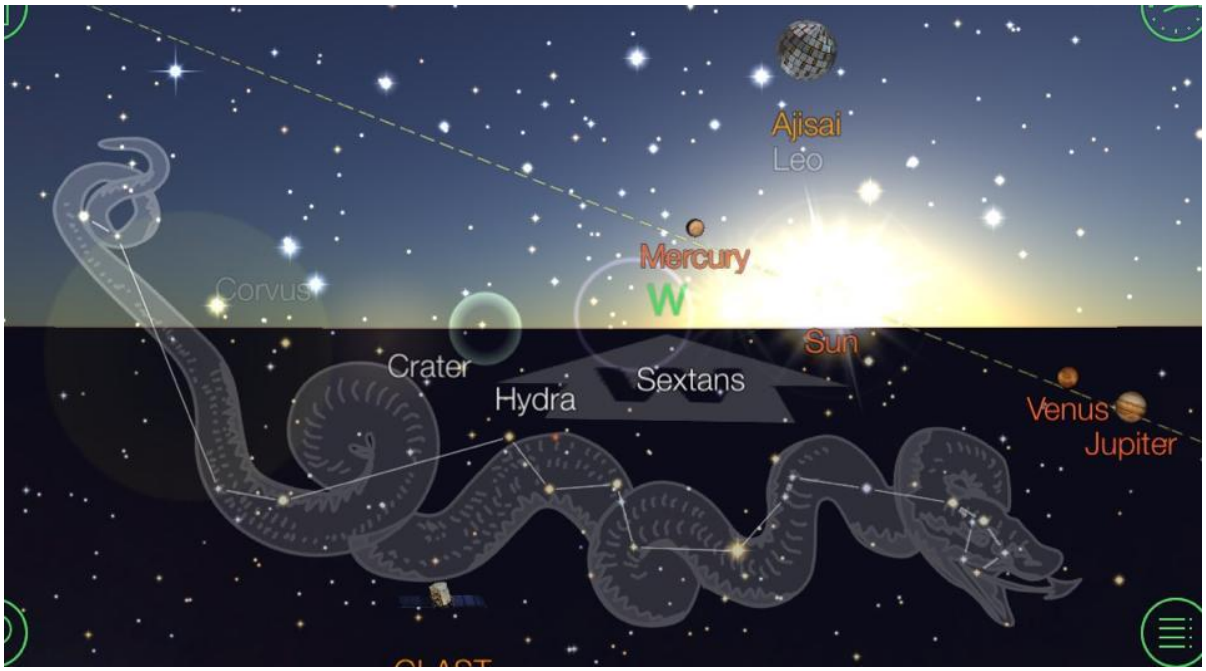
We find an image of the awakened Divine Feminine in the Book of Revelations, ch 12, where the apocalypse writer describes the vision of a woman, clothed with the Sun, the Moon beneath her feet, and a crown of stars on her head (Book of Revelations, ch 12, verse 1). This image is particularly striking at present, because the Moon was just at New Phase on August 25, 2014, and within two days will be waxing through the region of the foot of the constellation Virgo. When we look into this region of the sky, which is close on the Sun as it sets in the west, we can bring a living imagination into play. When the Moon moves through the foot region of Virgo, we can, in our mind’s eye, stand her up, the whole constellation, at which point the starry crown, Corona Borealis, will appear on her head. The Sun has just activated the heart forces, stirring the divine feminine to stand, with the Moon beneath her feet, and the starry crown appears on her head.

In her aspect as Astraea, Goddess of Justice and Virtue, she bears the Libra Scales in her hand. At present the planets Mars and Saturn are there, as though ‘hanging in the balance’~Mars with its relation to the metal iron, and Saturn in relationship to time and structure. So this is a current cosmic picture, and it is occurring this year during the period of time when we first begin to experience the coming year through a newly-developing organ of perception, which was conceived at Summer Solstice during the out breath.

We have also just passed the Feast of the Assumption of the Virgin in to the Heavens, August 15, which enhances the picture of the role of the divine feminine in this season. As Mary, she bears toward us the gesture of taking up our Earthly tasks, especially since it may be difficult or undesirable to awaken from the Summer dream.

While we have been as though asleep on the out breath, with the Sun arcing through the high constellations of Summer, the constellation of the Hydra, the many-headed serpent, has been snaking around the horizon, coiling itself around all that we left behind. With our emerging organ of perception we can begin to sense and feel the weight of challenge brought by this serpent, and in this sense, we must seek the might of the dragon-slayer Michael, in order that we not lose the

perception of what seeks us from the future. It is as this time that we also begin to first perceive what we have been about in the cycle of time prior to this season. It is as though we wake up to ourselves, and this is reflected in verse 20 from the *Calendar of the Soul*: *"I feel at last my life's reality, Which, severed from the world's existence, Would in itself obliterate itself, And building only on its own foundation, Would in itself bring death upon itself."*



The Hydra as it appears in this season, late August 2014. The Sun appears to chase Venus and Jupiter over the horizon and into its jams. These two planets appear in the morning sky ahead of the Sun, at this time.

IV. The Stars Spoke Once to Man

The guiding verse for our work together can be understood as a reference to the three stages of development in our relationship to the stars. This 'astro-history' begins when the "stars spoke once to man", which is a reference to the ancient star wisdom of the Egyptians/Chaldeans/Babylonians, and can rightly be referred to as the astro-logos, or star-word, that was understood during that time (referred to in the anthroposophical world view as the 3rd post-Atlantean epoch). This comes down to us through history in distorted form as 'astrology.' During this epoch it was understood that each human being comes from a star, and that the spirit germ descending toward incarnation from that star gathered the formative forces for the human body from the fixed stars; the rhythmic forces for the inner organism from the wandering stars, our planets.

The "world destiny" moment that is referenced next in the line points our attention to the historical period known as the "Copernican Revolution" when the heliocentric idea of Polish Astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus (1473-1543) moved the Earth from the center of our universe and replaced it with the Sun. As this idea took hold, we find the astro-nomia developing, the body of knowledge about the physical construction of our planetary system (ie how far away is the Sun; what is the chemical composition of the atmosphere of Jupiter; what is the core of the neighboring stars...). In

speaking about this period of time, which Rudolf Steiner described it as the 'slaying of Isis'. When we only regard our star environment as a mighty machine governed by what is referred to as 'celestial mechanics' then Isis stays asleep in her grave. The speaking of the stars grows silent in this approach to the cosmos.

Within this silence, there does yet stir in the human being a capacity for sensing a connection with the stars, despite the deepening silence of contemporary astronomical approaches. To be attentive to this sense is to begin to awaken the wisdom, or Isis of the stars, which we can refer to as the astro-sophia, and so a renewed relationship/understanding/conversation can begin. This awareness that we are speaking with the stars strengthens our relationship to the celestial forces, especially as they are woven into the spirit germ of the individual as it descends toward Earthly incarnation. This has consequence for all future incarnations. Knowing the starry world strengthens our bodies, and further, it awakens capacities that will only be available to us when we have achieved the stage of conscious development referred to esoterically as Spirit Man.

Further, that which begins to stir in the human being as a capacity for sensing a connection with the stars is an actual organ of perception. When applied to the cycle of the year, it reveals how we are intimately woven into the cycle through our rhythmic system, and how we can bring a living imagination to the star pictures so as to awaken a latent capacity for knowing that it is we who mediate between heaven and earth, we who bear the Earth substance to the cosmos, the cosmic substance to the Earth, and we who can perceive what has been and what can be.

Stars spoke once~astrology~Egypto-Chaldean-Babylonian epoch

World Destiny~astronomy-Copernican revolution

What man speaks to the stars~astrosophia~beginning 20th century through the work of RS

Now, we can apply the three-fold nature of this verse further:

If we imagine that the full outbreath moment of the year occurs at Summer Solstice, and that this is the time during which we 'conceive' the new year, then it follows that the 'birth' will occur nine months later, at Spring Equinox. Typically, the human gestation is divided into three trimesters of roughly 13 weeks each.

During the first trimester, the 'embryonic stage' completes and we move to what's called the 'fetal stage'. This is the time during which the major organs develop and the heart completes its division into four recognizable chambers.

Further, during this period, we could imagine that the star forces are still working quite directly into the spirit germ, though it has descended from the starry world into the womb of the mother. This continues until the placenta is fully formed, during the second trimester. We will refer to this first trimester as the 'stars speaking' stage.

In the second trimester, from fall equinox to winter solstice, the Earth, when viewed as though from the Sun, moves through the region of the springtime constellations. This is as though an 'open space' in the cycle, since every 9 month gestation lacks three months for a complete cycle of

twelve. The three months indicate three zodiacal regions where the Sun doesn't move. In other words, if you are conceived at Summer Solstice and born at Spring Equinox, then the Sun will not move through the Spring constellations during your gestation. However, in the second trimester, the Earth moves through that region of the sky, as though gathering into the fetus the forces left by the Sun. This is the period when the stars grow silent, the individual destiny begins to work into form. During this time it is as though the Sun holds our relationship to the stars for us.

Then comes the third trimester, where the fetus that has woven its individual destiny into the universal physical form, begins to take on the rhythm of the coming life. In our consideration, this stage encompasses the time from Winter Solstice to Spring Equinox, when we begin to know our speaking with the stars.

Stars Spoke Once~astrology~1st trimester; major organs develop

World Destiny~astronomy~2nd trimester; transition from embryonic to fetal stage

What man speaks~astrosophia~3rd trimester; individual destiny works into form; we begin to speak to the stars