

Finding the Divine Feminine in the Mystery of Easter
By Mary Stewart Adams
3.4.15

This article is based on a lecture given via conference call to members of the Central Region of the Anthroposophical Society in America on 24 February, 2015. This was the third such call in a series planned to inform and support individuals and their communities seeking to engage in activity around the Spring Eclipses of 2015. This initiative was described as the “Speaking With the Stars” project, in reference to Rudolf Steiner’s verse that describes the evolution of human relationship with the starry worlds, which he gave to Marie Steiner at Christmas, 1922.ⁱ

Our work together began formally with a gathering in June 2014 at the Headlands International Dark Sky Park in Northwest Lower Michigan where I serve as Program Director. This date was chosen in part because it was available, and also because it was nine months ahead of the Spring Eclipses of 2015, which allowed for making an analogy to a human gestational rhythm of nine months. As a result, we likened our work to being ‘pregnant’ with an intention that would come to birth through each one’s activity in the Spring. As with such an experience, there was an emphasis on how one cannot ever fully know what will come to pass, but that through striving ever onward, we find ourselves engaged in a moment in which we are called upon to act.

The nine months were addressed as the ‘tri-mesters’ of a pregnancy, and each call was regarded as an attempt to ‘bless the way’ toward the coming Eclipses.

Another image that arose early on was that of the Beehive Cluster which is found in the central region of the constellation Cancer, the Crab. In ancient astrological tradition, the region of Cancer is ruled by the Moon, and since we are dealing with eclipses, it seemed fitting to take hold of an imagination I have formed about this region of the sky. Cancer is also linked to the human rib cage, which, like a crab’s shell, can be regarded as a hard outer container for the soft and developing inner organism of heart and lung. The Beehive Cluster is not yet these organs, but is a suggestion of their becoming. The heart star comes only later, in the constellation Leo, with the bright star Regulus. The gathering together of individuals in initiative could be likened to the development of a thriving community, as a ‘heart center’ of activity.

Our call took place on 24 February, 2015, the Feast of Matthias and eve of the anniversary of the birth of Rudolf Steiner, in 1861. Matthias holds the mystery of community in his role as the 12th member of the Apostles, chosen to replace Judas ten days after the Ascension.ⁱⁱ It is no coincidence that Rudolf Steiner’s birth should follow this feast day, since much of his work was toward realizing what he described as the World Pentecost.

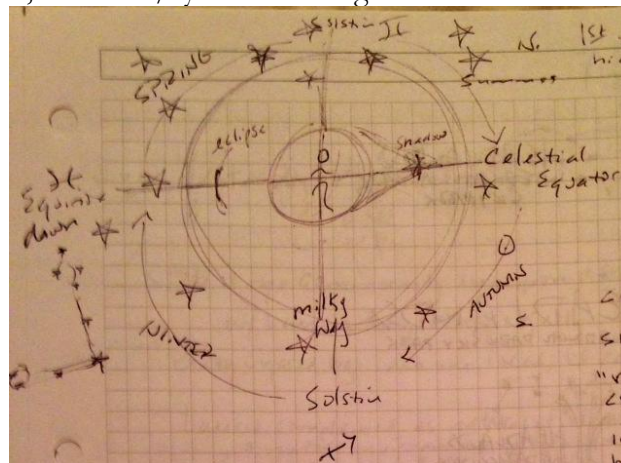
Now, specifically to the content of the call:

The celestial environment in which the Easter Festival occurs every year is never the same from one year to the next, so it is incumbent upon us as spiritual scientists and researchers to be aware of the celestial gesture each year. In the lectures contained in “The Wrong and Right Uses of Esoteric Knowledge”ⁱⁱⁱ, Rudolf Steiner drew attention to the solstice and equinox axes of Gemini/Sagittarius and Pisces/Virgo respectively. While the Gemini/Sagittarius axis is aligned to the forces of midday and midnight, the axis of Pisces/Virgo is aligned to the forces of dawn and dusk, and it is here that we can have a free encounter with the beings of the spiritual world. The example is of how one can

strive to be cognizant of experience just before waking from sleep (dawn), and of what one carries into sleep (dusk). In the cycle of the year, the Sun appears in front of the region of Pisces stars at its moment of Vernal Equinox during our time (first day of Spring is akin to dawn in the cycle of the year), while standing opposite, one finds the stars of Virgo, the maiden (where point of Autumn Equinox occurs, which is akin to dusk in the yearly cycle).

At this point participants in the call were asked to have a pencil and paper in hand, and to draw the following, in order to find ourselves spatially in this celestial environment:

1. Draw a human figure
2. Draw a circle around the figure
3. Make a cross from top to bottom and left to right through the figure
4. Draw a larger circle around the first circle
5. Extend the left to right line on either side of the smaller circle until it touches the larger outer circle
6. On the left side where the line touches the outer circle, write the word 'dawn'; this is the Vernal Equinox point
7. On the right side where line touches outer circle, write the word 'dusk'; this is the Autumn Equinox point
8. Beyond the dawn point, write the name or symbol of the constellation Pisces
9. Beyond the dusk point, the name/symbol for Virgo



What happens in the sky at the moment of Vernal Equinox is that the Sun appears to rise up across the Celestial Equator, which is the Earth's Equator (the line drawn from left to right) projected onto an imaginary celestial sphere (the outer circle). If we were able to see the stars beyond the Sun at this moment, we would see the stars of the constellation Pisces, the Fish.

The Festival of Easter is not celebrated at this moment of Sun crossing the celestial equator into the Northern Celestial Hemisphere, but can only happen on the first Sun-day, after the first Full Moon after this moment of Sun at Equinox. At this point in the call, participants were asked to draw an image of the Sun just above the line at the point of dawn/equinox on the left, and an image of the Moon just below the line at the point of dusk/autumn equinox on the right. This was to demonstrate the celestial drama taking place at the time of the Easter Festival each year, which is that the Sun has returned to dominance in the skies of the Northern Hemisphere, whereas the Moon, now come to its fullest phase, can only come Full below the celestial equator. Every Full Moon is on the opposite side of the Earth from the Sun, so if the Sun is above the Celestial equator,

every Full Moon must be below. The first Full Moon below the celestial equator each year, known as the Vernal Full Moon will always appear in front of the stars of Virgo. So the image is of Sun rising up in front of Pisces stars shining toward humanity on the Earth, which appears from the Sun perspective to be in front of the region of Virgo stars.

If we imagine Virgo as the Divine Feminine, the Isis-Mary-Sophia, then we can find in this celestial configuration the sublime image of the Woman of the Apocalypse.^{iv} Shining from the Pisces region, the Sun casts its light toward Earth in front of the Virgo region, as though clothing the woman with the Sun.

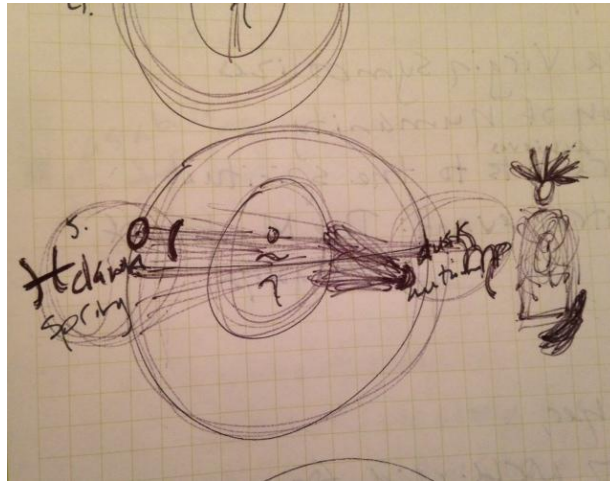
When you look at Virgo in the sky, it is as though she appears lying down, or reclining along the ecliptic (the apparent path of Sun, Moon, and planets as they move through the zodiac). Here is where we must engage a living imagination, to develop an ‘inner astronomy’, as Rudolf Steiner described in the powerful set of lectures “The Search for the New Isis, the Divine Sophia.”^v In this series of lectures, Rudolf Steiner explains that we must find the new Isis myth, that, in short, this being is as though slain by the kind of approach to the cosmos that is rooted only in the forces of celestial mechanics and no longer sees the living reality of the spiritual world. Isis is not cast into an earthen grave as is her consort Osiris, rather, she is cast into a celestial grave and will only awaken when human beings actively engage living imaginations through an inner astronomy rooted in the reality of the spiritual world. He goes on to make the profound statement that *"We must realise that through the force of the Christ we can find an inner astronomy, which reveals to us once more the origin and life of the cosmos, as grounded in the force of the spirit. And then, when we have this insight into the cosmos, awakened through the newly-found power of Isis, which is now become the power of the divine Sophia, then will the Christ, Who has united with the earth since the Mystery of Golgotha, become active within us, because then we shall know Him. It is not the Christ we lack, my dear friends, but the knowledge and wisdom of the Christ, the Sophia of the Christ, the Isis of the Christ."*

With the Sun casting its light from Pisces toward Earth in Virgo at the time of Vernal Equinox, the Vernal Full Moon will appear in the opposite region of the sky, *below* the celestial equator. At this moment it is as though the Moon has been put beneath the feet of Virgo, the divine feminine, this ‘new Isis’. Holding the imagination that Virgo is clothed with the Sun, with the Moon beneath her feet, it is possible to imagine her standing up. Standing with the Moon beneath her feet, this divine feminine arises where the region of the starry crown, Corona Borealis, will appear as though upon her head. This is not an actual ‘event’ that one sees take place in the starry skies around the earth, it is a living imagination that happens within the human being, an activity that informs the celestial environment and can be likened to the human being ‘speaking with the stars.’ We find the Woman of the Apocalypse, this Divine Feminine and New Isis in the *effect* of the Vernal Sun casting its light toward Virgo stars, where the Vernal Moon will appear.

It is important to note that in this region of the sky, the serpent/dragon Hydra also appears, below the region of Virgo, as though lying in wait for the activity, as described in ch 12 Book of Revelation. It is at this moment that the Michaelic striving must enter in, to vanquish the dragon.

So here we have this imagination of the Divine Feminine, intimately woven into the effects of the Easter Festival, but only through the active engagement of the living human imagination. And while we find this particular configuration each year between Vernal Sun and Vernal Full Moon, we must consider other elements to find the Easter Mood for the year in question. This year, just before the Sun reaches its Equinox Point (on the dawn/left side of the image above) it will be totally eclipsed

by the Moon. Two weeks later, just as Moon comes to Full Phase below the Celestial Equator (dusk/right side of image), it will pass wholly through Earth's shadow and also be totally eclipsed. The question that emerges from this picture is how to clothe the Divine Feminine, and give her a place to stand. The Sun is eclipsed, so not casting its light; the Moon is eclipsed, so not giving a place to stand. The gesture seems to be one of calling the human being into the drama, to engage in a manner that keeps the spiritual world free (as described in "Wrong and Right uses"), and bears substance into the season that is as spiritual light and foundation.



The intention of our shared striving and activity is to fortify the human being in relationship to the spiritual world in a manner that builds a community of understanding. The imagination I have shared here has developed over many years of research in anthroposophy and astrosophy, and can be rendered artistically through speech, art, and movement. I offer it here as an idea that can inform individual and shared activity, which can be as a light-woven garment for this Being of the Divine Feminine, offered from the foundation of our hearts, that good may become, even against the background shadows of the 2015 Spring eclipses.

ⁱ The stars spoke once to man.

It is world destiny that they are silent now.

To be aware of this silence can be pain for earthly man,

But in the deepening silence, there grows and ripens

What man speaks to the stars.

To be aware of this speaking

Can become strength for Spirit Man.

ⁱⁱ See Acts of the Apostles, ch 1&2

ⁱⁱⁱ Given at Dornach in the Fall, 1917

^{iv} Ch 12, Book of Revelation

^v Given at Dornach, Dec 23-26, 1920