



## From Group-Soul to Life Spirit

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*“What lives in the “I,” is the same spiritual substance that weaves and lives through the world as Spirit. Thus, we gradually work our way up to understand this “I,” i.e., the bearer of the human individuality, that which goes from incarnation to incarnation.” - Rudolf Steiner*

## Do Humans Have a Group Soul?

To answer the question of whether humans have a group-soul requires an answer based upon a broad evolutionary perspective that would necessitate a sort of biography of the human “I Am”, which derives its nature from the “I Am” of the Cosmic Being of Christ, the second person of the Holy Trinity (Solar Logos). Thus, a biography of the Cosmic Christ is also necessary to understand from whence came the human “I Am”, made in the ‘image of God.’ As a quick overview, one could say that the human “I Am” biography might begin with Christ’s creation of every human “I Am” through the combined Beings of the Spirits of Form (Seven Elohim) when the Adam Kadmon (spirit being) of each individual human “I Am” was created and held back in the astral realm of the Angels. Then, individual human souls began to descend to Earth through the four archetypal group-souls (Angel (Unfallen Man), Eagle, Lion, Bull). This vision of Ezekiel’s fiery wheels of beasts is the image of the archetypal human group-soul configuration in the astral light at that time.

Then, over millennia, individuals developed their personal “I Am” (ego) to the point that they could leave behind the vestiges of race, tribe, nation, and even family to develop the personal ego in freedom. Individual humans began to have free thoughts, independent of the transcendental, divine world. Christ then incarnated on Earth in a physical body, once and only once, to bring to birth the personal ego of every free human being from that time forward. With further spiritual development of the personal ego, each liberated human ego can rise into the astral light (Spirit Self), lower devachan (Life Spirit), and higher devachan (Spirit Man) to reclaim the three higher egos that reside in the three supersensible realms where our older siblings, the Angels, Archangels, and Archai, live and help sustain the human astral, etheric, and physical bodies. Ultimately, the free human individual, acting freely out of the impulses of Christ’s

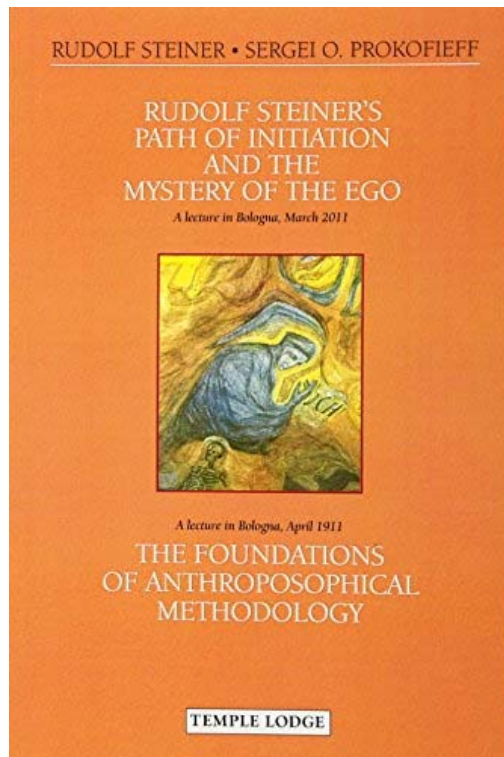
love, returns to the place whence they have come, but now with the gifts of personality and individualization that make each person a unique facet of the divine.

Rudolf Steiner's spiritual science tells us that in ancient times, Old Moon, the ego of the human being was part of a group-soul configuration of ego consciousness based upon a division of the starry realms into four areas. We might see these four archetypal images, which combine to create the group-soul of man, as the four "Fixed Signs" of the Zodiac – Aquarius (Man), Scorpio (Eagle), Leo (Lion), Taurus (Bull). Steiner makes it clear that the "Man" of Ezekiel is the human "I Am" before the fall into matter (from the astral realm). This "Man" is more like an Angel-Man according to spiritual science. The Eagle of Scorpio was the initial animal associated with that sign. Thus, the "Man" represents the "I Am" of the archetypal human being and the Eagle represents "thinking in the head", while the Lion represents "feeling in the heart", and the Bull represents "willing in the metabolic/limb system." It took all four, the archetypal human and the three soul forces of thinking, feeling, and willing, to create a free and independent human being.

Thus, the biography of the human being is interwoven with the Pre-Earthly, Earthly, and Etheric deeds of Christ that have given humans the gift of standing upright, speaking, thinking, and memory. The human ego is the carefully tended seed of Christ, gardening the soul-seeds into spirit-seeds that reunite the "I Am" of the human being with the World Ego – the group-soul of humanity which is the future Life-Spirit. This Life-Spirit is also the realm of the Archangels where the etheric body of each human individual is maintained by the etheric body of Christ and the Archangels. This re-enlivened and "resurrected" etheric body is turned into the Life-Spirit (Higher Ego) of the individual which takes its life directly from Christ – the Solar Logos Who tends the etheric body of the Earth and each individual's etheric body with the loving care of a gardener. We are the offspring of Christ and someday, when we rise into the realm of the Archangels, we will become "Christened Beings" who are part of the group-soul of Christ – the World Ego.

Eagle	fire (warmth) - nerves and senses (head/spine)	Old Saturn
Lion	air - rhythmic system (blood/breath/breast)	Old Sun
Bull/Cow	water - metabolic system (digestive)	Old Moon
Man/Angel	earth (solid) - limbs/movement	Earth

In the selections from Rudolf Steiner below, there is a progression of this biography of the human “I Am” in full detail. Dr. Steiner tells us that to advance on the path of personal initiation the initiate must understand the full nature of the human group-soul and its evolution into a free, individualized thinker. But most Anthroposophist are confused about the nature of the three egos Steiner refers to in only a few lectures.



Sergei O. Prokofieff has written a book that highlights these indications in a most useful and illuminating fashion. Suffice it to say, the three egos are basically the human Spirit Self (reincarnating ego), Life-Spirit (higher ego - Christened group-ego), and the Spirit Man (Christ ego united with the Father – Zodiacal Ego). The

Earthly ego is birthed in the Intellectual Soul and can develop into the spiritual aspects of the Consciousness Soul that are part of Universal Law and eternal wisdom. This part of the Consciousness Soul rises into what Steiner called the Spiritual Soul. The Spiritual Soul retains the spiritual elements the soul has found on Earth that can cross over the threshold between the physical and spiritual worlds – supersensible wisdom. This Spiritual Soul is the beginning of the Spiritual Self (ego) which transforms the human astral body into higher thinking called Imagination.

Thus, the Earthly ego that disenchants matter and finds spiritual content in the physical world rises up into becoming an Angel in the astral realm (astral light) of the Spirit Self. This is essentially the beginning development our immortal ego, that which goes from life to life. The second ego is found when the Spirit Self (Manas), called the Virgin Sophia by spiritual science, prepares for the wedding described in the book of *Revelation* by St. John. The purified and prepared “bride of the soul” marries the Lamb of God (hero of the Apocalypse) – Christ – who gains victory over evil and harvests the fruits of ascension. The “higher ego” sings the ‘New Song’ of the ‘Eternal Gospel’ of the Lamb of God and is wedded in New Jerusalem as a bride to the groom in a celestial marriage. This ultimate spiritual communion is similar to the return of the ‘prodigal son’ to the Father. It is the ‘mysterious conjunction’ of the soul to the spirit, spiritual alchemy.

There is a third stage of ego development that Steiner refers to as the “third current” which can see the physical and the supersensible at one time. This third current is the third stage of ego development called Spirit Man (Atman). This level of consciousness is almost indescribable and far beyond what a human mind can cognize. Steiner refers to this stage of ego development as ‘becoming a Zodiac.’ The True Ego, at this stage, takes responsibility for a sphere of activity called a Zodiac as the individual becomes a Christ Being working consciously with an entire Zodiac. This stage of cosmic transcendence makes the individual into a co-creator with the Father God principle. The Spirit Self (Manas), Life-Spirit (Buddhi), and Spirit Man (Atman) directly relate to the Holy Spirit (Spirit Self), Christ (Life-Spirit), and the Father God (Atman). Each individual, over multiple incarnations of the Earth entailing vast amounts of time, has the possibility of rising up through these three realms to ascend back to the throne of

the Creator (Father) to fully redeem the Fall into Matter and claim one's Christ-given gifts that accompany ascension.

The image of the twelve-fold "Zodiac", at this third and highest level of the development of the three human egos, reminds one of the four fixed astrological constellations represented in the four group-souls that humanity evolved from – Aquarius, Scorpio, Leo, and Taurus. From the initial four signs of the Zodiac in the beginning of human development, to the twelve signs found in the Zodiac stage of ego development seems to be a type of returning home. We began as gifts from the hierarchy working from the realm of the stars and, in the end, we return to our home in the stars – the whole Zodiac. This type of conscious awareness is far beyond what the human soul can strive to understand about our Earth, our planets, and our loving Sun. Christ is the "Sun" that dwells on the throne of the heart for anyone who has given their ego over to selflessness for the love of others – the Christ deed of 'loving your neighbor.'

Christ's sustaining love works partially from the realm of the Spirits of Form, the Beings who help maintain the planets in our solar system. Christ also works from the realms of the Holy Trinity and the entire second rank of the hierarchy. The kingdom of Christ's Father is 'not of this world', it is the world of the stars (Zodiac) from whence came the life of the human body that is the vessel of the human ego – the heart of love, the gift of the "I Am" of Christ made personal and individualized out of the donations of the entire cosmos.

## Human Ego Development

In pre-historic times, ancient tribes, peoples, nations, and cultures were led by spiritual leaders and priest/kings who were in direct communication with the spiritual world. Humans did not have a personal ego, per se. They followed the wise leadership of those who could directly communicate with the divine and bring down to Earth the wisdom of the gods. Steiner tells us that humanity was strongly organized into group-souls up until the time of the fourth subrace of Atlantis. Individuation of the human ego only began in the fifth subrace onward. The human physical body became a blended merger of the etheric formative

forces underlying the three archetypal group-souls of Bull (during Lemurian epoch), Lion (late Lemurian and throughout Atlantean epoch), and Eagle (a third influence during Atlantean epoch). The three influences flowed together and were balanced in the fourth group soul of Man, or what Steiner calls “Man before the Fall.” The Bull influence worked most strongly on the physical body of the human being, the Lion on the etheric, and the Eagle on the astral body.

In each human being a unique mixture of the four group-souls was developed. An over-emphasis of one or the other force created the different races and even the division of the sexes. This was symbolized in the Egyptian Sphinx – Woman, Lion, Eagle, Bull.

Long after Atlantis, some humans started to develop a balanced use the forces of the group-ego and become clear thinkers – abstract thinkers who could objectify the material world. Father Abraham was an example of that type of new and independent thinker. The Hebrew people, in general, identified with Abraham and the Hebrew forefathers through their blood memory and respect for the hereditary chain of the tribe. The saying was: I and Father Abraham are one. The intent of spiritual development is to let the tribes, caste system, races, and nations go to the wayside as a personal ego developed that did not need a religious leader, doctrine, or dogma to tell the individual ego what is right or wrong. Christ’ gift of a budding spiritual ego would eventually become a developed ego can has the capacity to ascend.

Unification is the term Rudolf Steiner used for denoting the concept of Christ as the future group-soul of humanity helping redeem the astral, etheric, and physical body of each individual. In a way, this can be seen as the concept of the Second Adam, Christ the Redeemer, and the underlying principle of love that is born from the wisdom of Sophia, what Rudolf Steiner called “the Sophia of Christ, the Wisdom of the Cosmic Christ.” The developed higher ego of the human being helps create this unification of the soul to the spirit, the Virgin Soul (Sophia or Wisdom) with the Lamb of God (Christ or Love).

These various perspectives are like different images that describe the same reality: the human phantom (the redeemed astral, etheric, and physical body) lies at the basis for the resurrection process, and since all human phantoms will link



into the Christ World Ego, a new kind of group-soul for humanity will establish itself that will provide the transition to the next incarnation of Earth, to Future Jupiter, and there form the basis for humanity's living environment of love.

In the *Bible* we have a picture of the human being's biography in a nutshell. *Corinthians* 15:45 – “And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a life-giving spirit.” This first Adam (Adam Kadmon) is the label used for the spiritual seed of humanity, in which the ego, consisting of higher soul and spirit, could incarnate and go through the “Fall” or Luciferic infection/temptation. The Second Adam is Christ's resurrection body as the Life-Spirit in which future spiritualized humanity will integrate – the Christ World Ego, the Christ Group-Soul.

The Biblical concept of the Second (or last) Adam describes the group-soul evolution effect of the souls who, during the Earth development stage, have ennobled and redeemed their lower bodies. When man uses his “I Am” to consciously work the improvement and spiritualization of his lower bodies, this affects his higher components in the Spirit World. As each individual is purifying this second man in their soul, this Second Adam, they are building the future Jupiter incarnation of the Earth wherein they will incarnate as Angels. This Second Adam could be seen as a after the resurrection, following the Mystery of Golgotha, the resurrected pure ether body of Christ and the individual human being forms the basis for what will attract like a magnet and create this unification. Ultimately, all future human beings who will freely join their purified ether bodies with other Christened souls in the realm of Life Spirit will become part of the Christ Group-Soul, the World Ego.

The mysteries of the human group soul are profound and far-reaching and must be contemplated thoroughly to begin to understand their importance. The ramifications of the effects of either “Falling” again into group-soul consciousness or evolving into Christ-consciousness are critical for human spiritual development. It is a key factor of initiation to join with the higher forces of consciousness emanating from the Christened Group-Soul (our Life Spirit) and transform the lower bodies into the vehicles of the higher three egos.

This development provides the necessary language of the spirit needed to communicate in these higher spiritual realms. Once we have learned to enter these realms and communicate with these Beings, we will find that the group-egos of the kingdoms of nature also are directed by hierarchy above the Spirits of Form. These higher egos of the animals, plants, and minerals are parts of our own higher nature that are tended with love by the higher hierarchies. Over time, we find that we are egos within egos within egos of higher beings who simultaneously maintain our astral, etheric, and physical bodies. Knowing these higher egos and the true nature of the evolution of the human group-soul (group-ego) can open direct communication with higher beings.

**Kingdom    Hierarchical Rank where Group-Soul Resides**

Human	Elohim-Spirits of Form (Christ works through this realm)
Animal	Dynamis-Spirits of Motion
Plant	Kyriotetes-Spirits of Wisdom
Mineral	Thrones-Spirits of Willpower

## Rudolf Steiner Quotes Concerning Group-Souls

The quotes below can be found in their complete form in the individual selections from Rudolf Steiner's lectures and books found throughout this article.

- All animals of the same formation share a group-soul, a group-ego
- The single plant is just one among the whole number of beings constituting a group-ego
- All minerals have their group-egos in the higher worlds, on the higher devachanic plane
- All-embracing group-souls were the basis of the human races on the Old Moon

- The individual human being is, in himself, a whole animal species
- The human ego is really a group-ego which has descended from the astral plane to the physical plane, and thus becomes an individual ego
- There were present on the Old Moon all-embracing group-souls filled with wisdom
- The tribe represented a single organism and a group of men who were related by blood had one "I-Soul" in common
- The present "I" has developed from such a group-consciousness, a group-ego
- These [human] group souls were originally in the astral world and then descended to live in the physical body
- There are four chief types of [human] group-souls, four prototypes
- On one side something like the image of a Lion, on the other the likeness of a Bull, up above something like an Eagle and below something similar to Man
- These four group-souls have developed out of the common Divine-Human which descends
- The group-souls of the minerals are to be found in the sphere of the Thrones, those of the plants in the sphere of the Spirits of Wisdom, and the animals in the sphere of the Spirits of Motion
- Man has so received his group-soul that with the inflowing of his ego, a group-soul was originally given him, as an emanation from the Spirits of Form
- The group-soul of man was originally allotted by the Spirits of Form to be a unitary soul for the whole of humanity
- Man was created to be one all the world over; in this unity the primeval ego of man was to assert itself as a group-soul dwelling in all men, a group-soul which had descended to the physical plane
- The four Apocalyptic animals are the four classes of the group-souls which live in the astral world by the side of the human being with his individual soul
- A whole species of animals is a being on the astral plane, a being with whom conversations can be held as with an individual here on earth
- Men being torn away from group-soul qualities; through one man drawing close to another; only thus can true love develop

- Where egos are united within the group-soul there is no true love - beings must be separated from each other so that love may be offered as a free gift
- In the fifth post-Atlantean epoch Christ comes in an etheric body, in the sixth epoch in an astral body, and in the seventh in a mighty Cosmic Ego that is like a great Group-Soul of humanity
- Starting from a physical man on Earth, the Christ gradually evolves as Etheric Christ, as Astral Christ, as Ego-Christ, in order, as Ego-Christ, to be the Spirit of the Earth who then rises to even higher stages together with all mankind
- Two origins of man were formed for the Ego to develop: a lower man, consisting of physical body, ether body, and astral body, and a higher man, consisting of Spirit Man (Atman), Life-Spirit (Buddhi), and Spirit Self (Manas)
- The Life-Spirit (Buddhi) was formed with the assistance of the Cherubim on the Old Sun
- The “higher man” (Spirit Man, Life-Spirit, Spirit Self) also exists in the consciousness of the Spirits of Form
- When man has evolved the Spiritual Soul, the upper triad, Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man come to meet him, so that the opening flower of his being can receive into it this upper triad from above
- The gift from above that is indicative of the nature of humanity in the far future is He who lives, the Life-Spirit, the Son of the Living God
- The Son of Man evolves upwards from below while the Son of the living God, comes down to meet him from above
- In the ancient Mysteries there were three stages of initiation into the macrocosm – Spirit Self, Life-Spirit and Spirit Man
- We are in connection with that which is to come to us in the future - our Spirit Self – the hierarchy of the Angels
- We are in connection with what is to come to us in the future as our Life-Spirit, the hierarchy of the Archangels
- Man can experience in the middle of a long sleep, what may be called an inner union with the Spirit Self - he can have a meeting with his genius in the form of an Angel
- This second meeting with the Life-Spirit depends on the nearness of Christ Jesus who reveals Himself through the Life-Spirit through an Archangel

- A third meeting with the Spirit Man is brought near to him by a being belonging to the hierarchy of the Archai
- The daily course of universal world processes includes our meeting with our genius: the yearly course includes our meeting with Christ Jesus: and the course of a whole human life, includes the meeting with the Father-Principle
- Out of the purified astral body there arises the Spirit Self (Manas) – ether-body births Buddhi (Life-Spirit) – physical-body births Atman (Spirit Man)
- At a higher level, the ego will refashion and transmute the etheric or life-body into Life-Spirit or Buddhi
- The Intellectual or Mind-Soul is a feeble foreshadowing of what the Life-Spirit or Buddhi will be
- There is a group soul for the higher manifestation of men, which is represented by the lamb in the center of the seal, the mystical lamb, the sign of the Redeemer
- These people will then experience that as their Fall, as a new Fall of mankind, as a falling back into conscious connection with the group-soul
- Those who do not develop their individual “I,” will be obliged to join on to a certain group from which they will be directed as to how they should think, feel, will, and act
- The group-ego of the animal travels in a continual circular movement around the earth at all heights and in all directions
- These group-egos [of animals] are wise, but one thing they have not yet got: they have no knowledge of love
- In the physical world below the animal has love; above, on the astral plane, it has wisdom
- All that connects men, through folk, race and family, will be ever more completely severed; everything in man tends more and more to result in individual manhood
- When men unite together in a higher wisdom, then out of higher worlds there descends a group-soul once more
- In that together we turn our hearts towards a higher wisdom, we give a dwelling-place to the [Christ] group-soul

- That is expressed when it is said that the Holy Spirit, the group-soul, sank down as it were into incarnation to become the dwelling-place for the Being who descends out of higher worlds
- If his individual soul keeps itself aloof too long on the earth it could come about that it lets the chance of union go by -- it would then itself become a sort of elemental being and the elemental beings originating from man would be of quite an evil nature
- There is actually active in the human being an ancient feminine principle as group-soul and a new masculine principle as individualizing element
- What lives in the "I," is the same spiritual substance that weaves and lives through the world as Spirit

## Prokofieff on the Three Human Egos

**Rudolf Steiner's Path of Initiation and the Mystery of the Ego, by Sergei O. Prokofieff, A lecture in Bologna, March 2011, Temple Lodge Press**

The real being of man lives outside of the body. **Ego consciousness otherwise experienced as the everyday ego is only a mirror image of the higher ego in the body. We must seek the path to the transcendental human ego by dropping the prior developed symbolic pictures and voluntarily extinguish them and concentrate on the pure power within us that creates the pictures within us.** We must direct our attention to the inner activity itself and not the pictures. This is how we create a free space inside our soul into which the spirit world can flow. One can then perceive one's essential nature and find one's own consciousness outside of the body. This is designated as the "higher human ego."

Beyond the **everyday ego** and the **higher human ego** there is **another ego that can only be found by eliminating from his consciousness all the inner experiences of his own self that he has achieved with so much effort. This third ego leads to intuition. This ego is called the "World Ego" or the third or true ego.** In accordance with the concept of three egos,

this means that a person must initially come to a conscious connection with the second, higher ego. It is the intermediate station on the path leading from the earthly ego via the higher ego to the true ego. **The third ego embodies the mystery of the human ego in connection with the whole world, with the cosmos.**

**The path leads from earthly ego to the higher ego and then to the true ego as the road to supersensible knowledge** – imagination (angelic realm), inspiration, (archangelic realm), and intuition (archai realm). The more the soul develops supersensible cognitive powers, the nearer it comes to the Christ Being. **The Christ being is related to the human ego; for in the spiritual world, Christ represents the principle of the ego as its highest example and also its eternal archetype.** Here they converge: **the human soul developing upward from below and Christ, who mercifully inclines towards it from the heights.** With man, we are only concerned with the microcosmic human ego. **With Christ we have to do with the World Ego, the comprehensive divine ego.**

**The true ego is inseparably connected with the Christ Being, the understanding of it leads at the same time to the new Christ Consciousness within man.** Christ is the only one in the spiritual world who possesses the consciousness that pervades everything in heaven and on Earth. A complete *union with Christ* is only possible at the level of intuition (Spirit Man) but begins with the level of inspiration (Life-Spirit). **This happens with the help of the physical body, which in this process assumes the role of a mirror in which the reflection of the ego appears, thus enabling a person to become conscious. The true (higher) ego however remains in the spiritual world and can only be found there.**

**The earthly ego examines the physical world of the senses while the higher ego examines the supersensible world. These two currents must be supplemented by a “third” current coming to meet them which is capable of beholding the synthesis of the sensible and the supersensible.** The confluence of the two currents may be conceived as given through a possible further development of the life of the mind up to intuitive cognition. **Only within this third current is that polarity superseded. It**

*is at the stage of intuition where the true human ego, which is so deeply connected with the Christ Being, can be grasped. There it is possible to unite both polarities in a synthesis, which at the same time is that of heaven and Earth and also represents the conscious path leading from Earth to heaven and back again.*

## Group-Souls of the Animals, Plants, and Minerals

*The Group-Souls of Animals, Plants, and Minerals, by Rudolf Steiner, Frankfurt-on-Main, February 2, 1908, GA 98*

“Looking at the other beings it might at first be thought that those of the animal kingdom had no soul such as man possesses. It is true that the human ego, the human soul, is different from that of the animal. The human soul lives on the physical plane. When we study the animal as such, each single animal has a physical body, an etheric body, and an astral body. Besides these members, each man when awake has an ego within him. **The animal does not have its ego on the physical plane; for that, indeed, we must look deeper, into the so-called astral world. As here on the physical plane the population consists of human beings, we find the astral plane to be populated by the egos of the animals.** And just as down here a man meets other men, the seer on the astral plane meets the egos of the animals - as separate personalities. **All animals of the same formation share a group-soul, a group-ego. Here on the physical plane, we see the animals moving around, and each has a physical body, an etheric body, and an astral body. What physically we see, lions for example, are the outwardly projected organs of the lion ego living in the astral world. The lion ego, the group-ego of all physical lions, is just as much a separate entity as is the human being when on earth. Each group of animals has an ego on the astral plane; on that plane is found the lion ego, the tiger ego, the ego of the vultures, and so on.** The single animals here on the physical plane are like the fingers thrust through a screen. When we watch the single animals many of them appear extraordinarily clever, but they are directed from the astral



plane where the animal group egos are to be found. **The astral plane is populated by beings who are far cleverer than man; these animal egos are very wise beings.** Look at the birds in flight, how they sweep over the different regions, and how well-ordered they are; how in autumn they go off, in their flocks, to some warmer climate, coming back again with the Spring. When we see the wisdom in this ordering, it prompts us to ask: Who is thus in command behind the screen? The answer is the group-egos. **We are walking about all the time through beings we do not see, through the animal egos invisible to our physical eyes.**

Just as this describes what we begin to feel with regard to these unsuspected beings, so it is where the souls of the plants are concerned. **The plant egos dwell in a higher world than the animal egos. The separate group egos of the plants live on what we call the Devachanic Plane. We can even state the place where they actually are - in the very center of the earth, whereas the animal group souls circle round the earth like trade winds. All these plant egos at the center point of the earth are mutually interpenetrating beings, for in the spiritual world a law of penetrability prevails, and all beings pass through one another.** We see the animal group souls moving over the earth like trade winds, and how in their wisdom they carry out what appears to be done by the animals. **Studying the plant, we see that its head - the root - is directed towards the center of the earth where its group-ego is to be found. The Earth itself is the outward expression of soul and spirit beings. From the spiritual point of view the plants seem like the nails of our fingers. The plants belong to the earth, and when we look at them singly, we do not see a complete entity, for the single plant is just one among the whole number of beings constituting a group-ego.** In this way we can enter into what the plants themselves feel. The part of the plant that springs up out of the earth, what from within the earth strives up to the surface, is of a different nature from what is growing under the earth. There is a difference between the cutting off of blossoms, stalk, leaves, and the tearing up of a root. The former gives the plant soul a feeling of well-being, of pleasure. But when the roots of the plants are pulled up, then that is painful for the plant souls. Even stone is without life only on the physical plane. **All minerals have their group-egos in the higher**

worlds, on the higher Devachanic Plane, and these, too, feel pain and pleasure.

***The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man, by Rudolf Steiner,*  
Lecture I, Berlin, January 6, 1908, GA 102**

“You will have gathered from the lectures given here recently that when we ascend with clairvoyance into the higher worlds we there meet with beings who, it is true, do not belong to our physical world, but who are in themselves so independent that we can describe them as ‘persons’ for those worlds, just as we call men here on the physical plane ‘persons.’ **You have seen that groups of animals of the same species together belong to a group-soul or group-ego and that on the astral plane we come upon the lion-soul, the tiger-soul, and so on, as independent personalities whom we can meet there as we meet the human being on the physical plane. In the same way we find in still higher regions, on the Devachanic Plane, the egos of quite large plant groups, and in the highest parts of Devachan we find the egos of the minerals, personalities as distinct as men are here on the physical plane.** We saw in this way that in these higher worlds we meet with certain beings who, so to speak, extend part of their organism, their separate members, down into the physical plane. If a man were to extend his fingers through openings in a curtain or partition, we should only see the ten fingers, the man himself would be behind the partition. So, it is with the group-egos of the animals. **Here with the physical eye, we see what is extended down below as members by higher beings of the astral world, and the actual ego is behind the partition, behind that wall which separates the physical world from the astral world. And in a corresponding way this holds good for the other group-egos, the group-egos of the plant or the mineral world.** When we raise ourselves from the physical world into higher worlds we meet not only these beings who have been described as extending their members down below here, but we meet a whole number of other beings who may equally well be considered personalities for those worlds, but whose physical members are not so directly visible and evident as those of the group egos of animals, plants, and minerals.”

## Human Group Souls

*“As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.” - Ezekiel 1:10*

### **The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture VI, Berlin, March 24, 1908, GA 102**

“On our Earth therefore, man had a kind of group-consciousness connected with his group-soul. **If we were to go back to the Old Moon where the human being had not a restricted ego of this sort embedded in the group-consciousness, but where he had no ego at all, where he still consisted of physical body, etheric body, astral body, we should find that this Old Moon-consciousness was not a smaller one but embraced immensely great groups - that in fact all-embracing group-souls were the basis of the human race on the Old Moon.** These group-souls who, so to speak, set individual Old Moon-men on to the Old Moon merely as their limbs, were wise souls. We have, as you know, also described the animal group-souls on the Earth and have also found wisdom as their out-standing characteristic. **These Moon group-souls have implanted in our planet’s previous embodiment the wisdom which we know today and which we so much wonder at and admire.** And when today we are amazed how every bone, how heart and brain, how every plant leaf, is permeated and imbued with wisdom, then we know that the wisdom of the group-souls trickled down from the atmosphere of the Old Moon - as clouds today let the rain trickle down - and membered itself into all the beings. These received it as a propensity and brought it out again when they appeared on the Earth after the Pralaya. Thus, there were present on the Old Moon all-embracing group-souls filled with wisdom.”

## The Common “I-Soul”

***The Apocalypse of St. John, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture II,  
Nuremberg, June 19, 1908, GA 104***

**“The tribe represented a single organism and a group of men who were related by blood had one “I-soul” in common.** In those days you yourselves were members of a great community, just as to-day your two arms belong to your “I.” This may be clearly seen in the case of the people dealt with in the *Old Testament*. Each single member felt himself to be a member of the race. The individual did not speak of himself in the highest sense when he uttered the ordinary “I,” but he felt something deeper when he said, “I and the Father Abraham are one.” For he felt a certain “I-consciousness” which descended from Abraham through all the generations to each member of the race. **That which was related by blood was included in one “I.” It was like a common “group-soul-I” which included the whole race** and those that understood the matter said: That which really forms our inmost immortal being dwells not in the separate members but in the entire race. All of the several members belong to this common “I.” Hence one who understood the matter knew that when he died, he united himself with an invisible being which reached back to Father Abraham. The individual really felt that he returned into Abraham’s bosom. **He felt that his immortal part found refuge, as it were, in the group-soul of the race. This group-soul of the entire race could not descend to the physical plane. The people themselves saw only the separate human forms, but these were to them not the reality, for this was in the spiritual world. They dimly felt that that which flowed through the blood was the Divine. And because they had to see God in Jehovah, they called this Divinity “Jahve” or also his Countenance, “Michael.” They considered Jahve as the spiritual group-soul of the people.**

The individual human being on the physical plane could not see these spiritual beings. The initiate, on the other hand, who experienced the great moment when the astral body was imprinted in the etheric body, was able to see first of all the most important group-souls. **When we look back into ancient periods of humanity, we everywhere find that the present “I” has developed**

**from such a group-consciousness, a group-ego;** so that when the seer looks back he finds that the individual human beings flow together more and more into the group-souls. Now there are four chief **types of [human] group-souls, four prototypes.** If we observe all the various group-souls of the different souls, we notice a certain similarity but there are also differences. If we classify them there are four groups, four types. **The spiritual observer sees them clearly when he looks back to the time when man was not yet in the flesh, when he had not descended to the earth.** We must now consider more exactly the moment when from the spiritual regions man descended into flesh. This can only be represented in great symbols.

There was a time when our earth was composed of very much softer material than it is now, when rock and stone were not so solid, when the forms of the plants were quite different, when the whole was as if embedded like a primeval ocean in water-caves, when air and water were not separated, when all the beings now dwelling on the earth, the animals and plants, were developed in water. **When the minerals began to assume their present form, man emerged from invisibility.** The neophyte saw it in this way: **Surrounded by a kind of shell, man descended from the regions which are now the regions of air.** He was not yet as physically condensed when the animals already existed in the flesh. **He was a delicate airy being even in the Lemurian epoch and he so developed that the spiritual picture presents the four group-souls: On one side something like the image of a Lion, on the other the likeness of a Bull, up above something like an Eagle and below something similar to Man.** Such is the spiritual picture. **Thus, man moves forth from the darkness of the spirit-land. And the force which formed him appears as a kind of rainbow. The more physical powers surround the entire structure of this human being like a rainbow** (*Revelation 4*). We have to describe this development of man in various realms and in various ways. The above description represents the way it appears to the investigator when he looks back and sees how **these four group-souls have developed out of the common Divine-human which descends.**

**There you see these four group-souls emerging from an indefinite background, the rainbow surrounding it and the number twelve. Now**

**we must understand what this number twelve signifies.** When that which has just been described is seen coming forth, there is a clairvoyant feeling that it is surrounded by something of an entirely different nature from that which emerges from the indeterminate spiritual. In ancient times that by which it is surrounded was symbolized by the Zodiac, by the twelve signs of the Zodiac. The moment of entering into spiritual vision is connected with many other experiences. The first thing perceived by one whose etheric body goes forth is that it seems to him as if he grew larger and larger and extended himself over what he then perceives. The moment comes when the initiate says: **“I do not merely see these four forms, but I am within them, I have expanded my being over them.” He identifies himself with them. He perceives that which is symbolized by the constellations, by the number twelve.”**

## The Spirits of Form Donate the Group-Soul of Humanity

***Spiritual Beings in the Heavenly Bodies and in the Kingdoms of Nature, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture X, Helsinki, April 14, 1912, GA 136***

“We have seen that in man everything is compressed into the physical plane which as it were, for the mineral, is distributed over the world. We have found group-souls for the minerals, plants, and animals. **Is there also a sort of group-soul for the human being? Oh, yes, there is. The group-souls of the minerals are to be found in the sphere of the Thrones, those of the plants in the sphere of the Spirits of Wisdom, and the animals in the sphere of the Spirits of Motion; but man has so received his group-soul that with the inflowing of his ego, a group-soul was originally given him, as an emanation from the Spirits of Form. This group-soul of man was originally allotted by the Spirits of Form to be a unitary soul for the whole of humanity.** What differentiated this group-soul into such variety that differences of race, differences of tribe arose? This was brought about through the action of other spirits. **Man was created to be one all the world over; in this unity the primeval ego of man was to assert itself as a group-soul dwelling in all men, a group-soul which had**

**descended to the physical plane.** Just as the external form only of the minerals can be brought into being by the Spirits of Form, so by these same Spirits of Form was the group-ego created for humanity, which was then differentiated by the activity of other beings of the various hierarchies.”

## The Group-Soul in the Human Astral Body

**Theosophy of the Rosicrucian, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture II, The Ninefold Constitution of Man, May 25, 1907, Munich, GA 99**

“Just as the human being has an individual ego, so **in every astral body there lives something of a group-ego; this animal-ego lives in the human astral body and the human being does not become independent of this animal-ego until he develops astral sight and becomes a companion of astral beings, when the group-souls of the animals confront him on the astral plane as individual animals confront him here.** In the astral world there are beings who can only come down in fragments, as it were, to the physical plane as so-and-so many animals. When the life of these animals comes to an end, they unite in the astral world with the rest of this astral being. **A whole species of animals is a being on the astral plane, a being with whom conversations can be held as with an individual here on earth.** Although there is not exact similarity, the group-souls are not incorrectly characterized in the second seal of the Apocalypse where they are divided into four classes: Lion, Eagle, Bull, Man (i.e., man who has not yet descended to the physical plane). **These four Apocalyptic animals are the four classes of the group-souls which live in the astral world by the side of the human being with his individual soul.**”

## The Group-Soul and Love

**Universe, Earth and Man, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture VIII, The Earth's Mission, August 12, 1908, Stuttgart, GA 105**

“This love which is to develop on Earth can only develop through earthly egos being related one to another in the way described. **Development in this direction can only take place through men being torn away from group-soul qualities; through one man drawing close to another; only thus can true love develop. Where egos are united within the group-soul there is no true love. Beings must be separated from each other so that love may be offered as a free gift.** Only by such a separation as has come about in the human kingdom, where ego meets ego as independent individual, has love as a free gift become possible. **This is why an increasing individualism and a uniting of separate individuals had to come about on earth.**

Think of the various beings that are united within a group-soul; the group-soul directs them as to how they shall act. Can it be said that the heart loves the stomach? No, the heart is united to the stomach by the being within who holds them together. **In the same way the several animals in a group are united one with the other within the group-soul nature, and what they have to do is regulated by the wise group-soul. Only when the group-nature is overcome, and individual confronts individual ego, can the sympathy of love be offered as a free gift from one being to another.**

Man could only be prepared for this mission gradually, and we see how he passes through a kind of preparatory school for love before he is fully individualized. **We see how, before he possessed a complete ego of his own, he was gathered into groups that were related by blood by guiding beings, and the members of these groups loved each other because of the blood tie.** This was a great time of preparation for humanity.”

## Christ's Cosmic Ego is the Group-Soul of Humanity

***Buddha and Christ: The Sphere of the Bodhisattvas, by Rudolf Steiner, Milan, September 21, 1911, GA 130***



“The Bodhisattva who incarnated in Jeshu ben Pandira and in other personalities too, returns again and again, until in about three thousand years from now, he will attain Buddhahood and as Maitreya Buddha live through his final incarnation. **The Christ-Individuality was on the Earth in the body of Jesus of Nazareth for three years only and does not come again in a physical body; in the fifth post-Atlantean epoch He comes in an etheric body, in the sixth epoch in an astral body, and in the seventh in a mighty Cosmic Ego that is like a great Group-Soul of humanity.**

When a human being dies, his physical, etheric, and astral bodies fall away from him and his ego passes over to the next incarnation. It is exactly the same with the planet Earth. What is physical in our Earth falls away at the end of the Earth-period and human souls in their totality pass over into the Jupiter condition, the next planetary embodiment of the Earth. **And just as in the case of an individual human being the ego is the center of his further evolution, so for the whole of future humanity the Christ-Ego in the astral and etheric bodies of men goes on to ensoul the Jupiter-existence. We therefore see how starting from a physical man - on Earth the Christ gradually evolves as Etheric Christ, as Astral Christ, as Ego-Christ, in order, as Ego-Christ, to be the Spirit of the Earth who then rises to even higher stages together with all mankind.**

## The Realm of Life-Spirit or Buddhi

**Comic Memory, by Rudolf Steiner, xvii, *The Life of Earth, GA 11***

“At the same time, something else was taking place during the three great cycles on Saturn, Sun, and Moon. During the last Saturn cycle the Spirit Man (Atman) was formed with the help of the Spirits of Will (Thrones). During the penultimate Sun cycle, **the Life-Spirit (Buddhi) was joined to it with the assistance of the Cherubim.** During the third from the last Moon cycle, the Spirit-Self (Manas) united with the two others through the help of the Seraphim. Thus, actually **two origins of man were formed** during these three great cycles: **a lower man, consisting of physical body, ether body, and astral body,**

**and a higher man, consisting of Spirit Man (Atman), Life-Spirit (Buddhi), and Spirit self (Manas). The lower and the higher nature of man followed separate paths at first. The earth development serves to bring the two separate origins of man together.**

It is the same powerful entity which formed the Spirit Man (Atman) with the help of the Thrones on Saturn, **the Life-Spirit (Buddhi) with the assistance of the Cherubim on the Sun**, and the Spirit Self (Manas) together with the Seraphim on the Moon.

But now this changes. Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim ascend to higher spheres, and the higher man now receives the assistance of the **Spirits of Wisdom, of Motion, and of Form. These are now united with Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man** (with Manas-Buddhi-Atman). **The “higher man” (Spirit Man, Life-Spirit, Spirit-Self) also exists in the consciousness of the Spirits of Form.**

## Three Meetings with the Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man

***The Gospel of Matthew, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture XI, September 11, 1910, Bern, GA 123***

“Following on this age [fifth] will come the sixth post-Atlantean age, which is to witness the impressing of the forces of the Spirit Self on human nature; **and the seventh age will see that of Life-Spirit.** Beyond this our vision reaches out to a far distant future, in which the Spirit Man or Atman will be impressed on normal humanity.

In the course of his development man evolves the Spiritual Soul [higher aspect of the Consciousness Soul] so that in it the Spirit Self may appear. **When he has evolved the Spiritual Soul, the upper triad, Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man come to meet him, so that the opening flower of his being can receive into it this upper triad from above.**

**When a man has made himself receptive by developing his Spiritual Soul, the higher triad, Spirit Self (Manas), Life-Spirit (Buddhi), and Spirit Man (Atman), draw near; this may be likened to a spiritual fructification coming towards him from on high. While with the other principles of his being he grows upwards from below, unfolding the blossom of the 'Son of Man,' there must come to meet him from on high, so that he may gain his "ego-consciousness", that which brings with it Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man.**

Who is the representative of the gift which comes down to man from above and is indicative of the nature of humanity in the far future? **It is the Son of God, he who lives, the life-spirit, the Son of the Living God!**

So, in the scene to which we have just referred Christ Jesus asked the question, 'What is to come to men through My impulse?' The answer is, **'The life-giving Spirit-Principle from on high!'**

**So, we have to distinguish the Son of Man who evolves upwards from below, and the Son of God, the Son of the living God, Who comes down to meet him from above.**

**In the ancient Mysteries, and to a certain extent in the new, there were three stages of initiation into the macrocosm. The first stage brought knowledge of all that could be perceived through the Spirit Self. The initiate was then not only a man in the new sense, but he had attained to what, in the language of the hierarchies, is called "Angel-Nature" - the nature of the hierarchy next above man. Thus in the Persian Mysteries a man who had advanced to this stage at which he had expanded to the Macrocosm, when the Spirit Self was active in him was called either a Persian (since he was no longer an isolated being but belonged to the Angel of the Persian nation) or he was simply called an Angel, one whose nature was divine. The second stage is that in which the Life-Spirit had awaked in like manner; at this stage a man was called a 'Sun-hero' in the old Persian Mysteries, for he had then advanced to the point where he could draw into himself the spiritual forces of the Sun, when these forces had approached the Earth. Such a man might also be**

**called 'Son of the Father.'** And he who had won to the heights of the third stage, the stage of Atman (Spirit Man), was called in the ancient Mysteries **'the Father.'** These were the three stages of initiation - **'Angel,' 'Son or Sun-Hero,' and 'Father.'**

Only the highest initiates can judge when initiation is about to awaken in man. Hence Christ said: **'Initiation will come when you have travelled further along the way on which I have led you; you will then ascend to the Kingdom of Heaven; but the hour of your arrival is known neither to the Angels (those initiated with the Spirit Self, nor to the Son (those initiated with Life-Spirit), but only to the highest initiates, those initiated with the Father.'** Here once more the language of the *Gospel of Matthew* conforms absolutely with the tradition of the Mysteries. And we shall see as the Gospel continues how **all that Christ tells His disciples concerning the Kingdom of Heaven is merely a prediction of what they are to experience in initiation.**

The three meetings of the human soul with the Being of the Universe informs us that each of the two beings I have referred to bears within him that I might call two sub-beings. **The more external man the physical and etheric body, the more inner man the ego and astral body.** Now we know moreover that man is to undergo further development. The earth as such will someday come to an end. It will then evolve further, through a Jupiter, Venus, and a Vulcan planetary evolution. **Man during this time will rise stage by stage; to his ego-will, as we know, be added a higher being - the Spirit-Self which will manifest within him. This will reach full manifestation during the Jupiter evolution, which will follow that of our Earth. The Life-Spirit will attain full manifestation in man during the Venus period, and the actual Spirit Man during the Vulcan period.** When, therefore, we look forward to the great cosmic future of man, to these three stages of evolution, we look forward to the Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man. **But these three which in a sense await us in our future evolution are even now in a certain respect related to us, although they are as yet not in the least developed; for they are still enclosed in the bosom of the divine Spiritual Beings whom we have learned to know as the Higher**

**Hierarchies. They will come forth to us from out the Higher Hierarchies; and we today are already in a continuing relationship with these Higher Hierarchies, who will endow us with the Spirit Self, Life-Spirit, and Spirit Man.** So that today, instead of using the more complicated expression and saying: 'We are in connection with the Hierarchy of the **Angeloi**'; we can simply say: '**We are in connection with that which is to come to us in the future - our Spirit-Self.**' And instead of saying that we are in connection with the **Archangels**, we can say: '**We are in connection with what is to come to us in the future, as our Life-Spirit,**' and so on.

Indeed, we human beings are already in a certain respect more than merely four-principled beings consisting of physical body, etheric body, astral body, and ego. **We already bear the germ of the Spirit Self within us, as well as that of the Life-Spirit and Spirit Man;** they will evolve out of us in the future, though at present we only have them in germ within us. This is no mere abstract saying, it has quite a concrete significance, **for we have meetings, real meetings with these higher principles of our being.** These meetings take place in the following way. We as human beings would, as time went on, feel ourselves increasingly estranged from everything Spiritual - a state of things very difficult to endure - did we not from time to time encounter our Spirit Self. **Our ego must meet that Higher Self - the Spirit-Self - which we have yet to develop, and which in a Spiritual respect is of like nature to the Hierarchy of Angels.** So therefore we may say in simple language, and speaking in the Christian sense: **we must from time to time meet with a being of the Hierarchy of the Angels, a being closely related to ourselves; and when it comes to us, it brings about in us a spiritual change, which will enable us some day to take in a Spirit Self. We must also meet with a being of the hierarchy of the Archangels, for this being then so affects us that something is prepared which will someday lead to our developing the Life-Spirit.**

Whether in the Christian sense we place this being in the hierarchy of **Angels, or whether we refer to it in the older sense understood by the ancients when they spoke of their genius as the guiding genius of man,** makes no difference. We know that we are living at a time when but few people - though

this will soon alter - few can gaze into the spiritual world and perceive the things and the beings therein. The time has now gone by when the beings and even the various processes of evolution in the spiritual world could be perceived in a much wider and more comprehensive sense; for at the time when one spoke of the genius of a man, there was a direct, concrete perception of that being.

**This genius is none other than the Spirit Self in process of evolution, though borne by a being belonging to the hierarchy of Angels.** It is of great importance that one should enter somewhat deeply into these things; for when this genius becomes perceptible it has its own special conditions. This subject can be considered from another very different point of view, but we will now consider it from the following one.

**Man must necessarily from time to time enter into inner communion with his Spirit Self, with the Spirit Self which is visible in the astral aura in rudimentary form as I have described; but it still has to be developed; it will be rayed down, as it were, from above, and stream in from the future.** Man must from time to time be brought into touch with his Spirit Self.

None the less **he too can experience in the middle of a long sleep, what may be called an inner union with the Spirit Self - that is, with the Spiritual qualities from which the Spirit-Self will be extracted; he can have a meeting with his genius. Thus, this meeting with one's genius takes place every night, that is, during every period of sleep - though this must not be taken too literally. This meeting is important for man. For all the feelings that gladden the soul with respect to its connection with the spiritual world proceed from this meeting with one's genius during sleep. The feeling, which we may have in our waking state, of our connection with the Spiritual world, is an after-effect of this meeting with our genius. That is the first meeting with the higher world.**

The second meeting of which we now have to speak is higher. From the indications already given it may be gathered that **the first meeting with the genius is in connection with the course of the day.** If we had not, through

modern civilization, become free to adjust our lives according to our own convenience, this meeting would take place at the hour of midnight. A man would meet his genius every night at midnight. But on account of man's exercise of free will the time of this meeting has become movable; the hour when the ego meets the genius is now not fixed. The second meeting is however not so movable; for that which is more connected with the astral body and etheric body is not so apt to get out of its place in the cosmic order. That which is connected with the ego and the physical body is very greatly displaced in present-day man. **The second meeting is already more in connection with the great macro-cosmic order. Even as the first meeting is connected with the course of the day, the second meeting is connected with the course of the year.** The life of man in its entirety does not run its course quite evenly through the year. When the sun develops its greatest heat, man is much more dependent upon his own physical life and the physical life around him than in the winter when, in a sense, he has to struggle with the external phenomena of the elements, and is more thrown back on himself; but then his spiritual nature is more freed, and he is more in connection with the spiritual world - both his own and that of the Earth - with the whole spiritual environment.

The peculiar sentiment we connect with the mystery of Christmas and with its festival is by no means arbitrary but hangs together with the fixing of the festival of Christmas. At that time in winter, which is appointed for the festival, man, as does indeed the whole earth, gives himself up to the spirit. He then passes, as it were, through a realm in which the spirit is near him. **The consequence is that at about Christmastime and on to our present New Year, man goes through a meeting of his astral body with the Life-Spirit, in the same way as he goes through the first meeting, that of his ego with the Spirit-Self. Upon this meeting with the Life-Spirit depends on the nearness of Christ Jesus. For Christ Jesus reveals Himself through the Life-Spirit. He reveals Himself through a being of the Realm of the Archangels. He is, of course, an immeasurably higher Being than they, but that is not the point with which we are concerned at the moment;** what we have to consider is that He reveals Himself through a Being of the order of the Archangeloi. Thus, through this meeting we draw especially near to Christ Jesus at the present stage of development - which has existed since the

Mystery of Golgotha - and in a certain respect **we may call the meeting with the Life-Spirit: the meeting with Christ Jesus in the very depths of our soul.** Now when a man either through developing spiritual consciousness in the domain of religious meditation or exercises, or, to supplement these, has accepted the concepts and ideas of Spiritual Science, when he has thus deepened and spiritualized his life of impression and feeling, then, just as he can experience in his waking life the after-effects of the meeting with his Spirit Self, so he will also experience the after-effects of **the meeting with the Life-Spirit, or Christ. It is actually a fact, my dear friends, that in the time following immediately on Christmas and up to Easter the conditions are particularly favorable for bringing to a man's consciousness this meeting with Christ Jesus. Indeed, roughly speaking, in a sense He disappears into us and permeates us, so that He can remain with us during the season that follows the Mystery of Golgotha - the season of summer - during which, in the ancient Mysteries, men tried to unite themselves to John in a way not possible after the Mystery of Golgotha.**

**A third meeting is that in which a man approaches the Spirit-Man, which will only be developed in the far future, and which is brought near to him by a being belonging to the hierarchy of the Archai.** We may say that the ancients were sensitive to this, as are even the people of the present day, although the latter, in speaking of such things, no longer have a consciousness of the deeper truth of the subject. **The ancients felt this meeting as a meeting with that which permeates the world, and which we can now hardly distinguish in ourselves or in the world, but in which we merge in the world as in a unity.** Just as we can speak of the second as a meeting with Christ Jesus, **so can we speak of the third as a meeting with the Father-Principle, with the Father, with that which lies at the foundation of the world, and which we experience when we have the right feeling for what the various religions mean by the 'Father.'** This meeting is of such a nature that it reveals our intimate connection with the Macrocosm, with the Divine Spiritual Universe.

The daily course of universal processes, of world processes, includes our meeting with our genius: the yearly course includes our meeting with Christ Jesus: **and**



**the course of a whole human life, of this human life of ours, my dear friends - which can normally be described as the patriarchal life of seventy years - includes the meeting with the Father-Principle.** The after-effects of this may extend into later life, if we develop sufficiently fine perceptions to note that which thus comes into our life from within ourselves, as the after-effects of our meeting with the Father-Principle.

**The Gospel of St. John, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture III, Basle, November 18, 1907, GA 100**

<b><u>Saturn</u></b>	<b><u>Sun</u></b>	<b><u>Moon</u></b>	<b><u>Earth</u></b>
Spirit Man	Spirit Man	Spirit Man	Spirit Man
	Life Spirit	Life Spirit	Life Spirit
		Spirit Self	Spirit Self
			Ego ("I")
		Astral body	Astral body
	Etheric body	Etheric body	Etheric body
Physical body	Physical body	Physical body	Physical body

**The European Mysteries and their Initiates, by Rudolf Steiner, Berlin, May 6, 1909, Ga 57**

“The Mysteries which were illuminated by the Christ Impulse have one quite definite feature in common whereby they are raised to a higher level than that of the more ancient Mysteries. Initiation always means that a man attains to a higher kind of sight and that his soul undergoes a higher development. Before he sets out on this path, three faculties live within his soul: thinking, feeling, and willing. He has these three soul-powers within him. In ordinary life in the modern world, these three soul-powers are intimately bound together. **The Ego**

**of man is interwoven with thinking feeling and willing because before he attains initiation he has not worked with the powers of the ego at the development of his higher members. The first step is to purify the feelings, impulses, and instincts in the astral body. Out of the purified astral body there rises the “Spirit Self” or “Manas.”** Then man begins to permeate every thought with a definite element of feeling so that each thought may be said to have something ‘cold’ or ‘warm’ about it. He is transforming his “ether-body” or “life-body.” **Out of the transformed ether-body (it is a transformation of feeling), arises “Buddhi” or “Life-Spirit.” And finally, he transforms his willing and therewith the physical body itself, into “Atman” or “Spirit Man.” Thus, by transforming his thinking, feeling, and willing man changes his astral body into Spirit Self or Manas, his ether-body into Life-Spirit or Buddhi and finally his physical body into Spirit Man or Atman.** This transformation is the result of the initiate’s systematic work upon his soul, whereby he rises to the spiritual worlds.”

***The Mission of the Individual Folk Souls, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture I, Angels, Folk Spirits, Time Spirits: their Part in the Evolution of Mankind, Oslo, June 7, 1910, GA 121***

“The ego will transmute the astral body into Manas or Spirit Self, so that it becomes something different from what it is today. **In the same way, at a higher level, the ego will refashion and transmute the etheric or life-body into Life Spirit or Buddhi.** Finally, the highest achievement of man that we can envisage at present is the spiritualization of the physical body, the most intractable member of his being. When our present physical body, the densest and most material member, is transmitted into Atman or Spirit Man it will be the highest member of man’s being. Thus, we are familiar with three members of the human organism which were developed in past epochs, the organism in which we are at present incarnated and three others which the ego will fashion into something new in the future.

Between the initial development of the higher members in the past and their further development in the future there lies an intermediate stage. We know that we must think of the ego itself as inwardly organized. The ego works upon a kind

of intermediate being. Therefore, between the astral body which man has inherited from the past and the Spirit Self or Manas which he will fashion out of the astral body in the distant future, there are the three preparatory members; the Sentient Soul, the lowest member in which the ego has already worked, the Intellectual or Mind Soul and the Spiritual or Consciousness Soul. **But very little of Spirit Self or Manas that we are in the process of developing is present in man today, at most only the first indications.** On the other hand, man has laid the foundations of this future development by having learnt to control his three lower members to some extent. He learned to control the astral body by permeating it with his ego and forming the Sentient Soul within it. **Just as the Sentient Soul stands in a certain relationship to the sentient body, so does the Intellectual Soul or Mind-Soul to the etheric body, so that the Intellectual or Mind Soul is a feeble foreshadowing of what the Life Spirit or Buddhi will be - a feeble foreshadowing, it is true, but none the less a foreshadowing.** And in the Spiritual Soul (or Consciousness Soul) the 'I' has worked down into the physical body to a certain extent. Therefore, the Spiritual Soul is a feeble foreshadowing of what will one day be Spirit Man or Atman.

Since we know that we continue our evolution into the future and that we further develop our present astral body, etheric or life-body, and our physical body, the question arises: is it not equally natural that the Beings who have already experienced the human stage have now reached the stage when they are transmuting their astral body into Spirit Self or Manas? **Just as during the next incarnation of the Earth, the Jupiter stage, we shall complete the transmutation of our astral body into Spirit Self or Manas, so the Angeloi who underwent the human stage on Old Moon have completed the transmutation of their astral bodies into Spirit Self or Manas, or will do so during our Earth evolution, a stage that we shall first have to undergo in the next incarnation of the Earth.** If we look still further back to the Beings who underwent the human stage on Old Sun, we realize that they already experienced on Old Moon the stage we shall have to experience for the first time in the next incarnation of the Earth. **They are performing the work which will be the prerogative of man when, in his ego, he transmutes his etheric or life-body into Life Spirit or**

**Buddhi. These Archangels, therefore, are Beings who are two stages beyond man; they have reached the stage that will one day be ours when from within our ego, we shall transform the life-body into Life Spirit or Buddhi.** When we contemplate these Beings, we recognize them as Beings who are two stages beyond ourselves, who foreshadow what we ourselves will experience in the future; they are Beings who are now working upon their etheric or life-body and are transmuting it into Life Spirit or Buddhi. In the same way we are aware of yet higher Beings, the Spirits of Personality (Archai). They are at a still higher stage than the Archangels, a stage which man will reach in a still more distant future when he will be able to transmute his physical body into Atman or Spirit Man.

**Just as the group-soul directs the regular migrations of birds, so will man, after he has developed Spirit Self or Manas, command his physical and etheric bodies; he will control and direct them. He will do this in a still higher sense from without when he has so far perfected himself that he is still in the process of transmuting his etheric or life-body.** The Beings who can already do this today are the Archangels or Archangeloi. They are Beings who can already do what man will be able to do some day, Beings who are able to compass what is called 'directing the physical and etheric bodies from without', but who are able at the same time to work upon their own etheric body.

**Try to form an idea of Beings living and working as it were with their ego in the spiritual atmosphere of our Earth, whose ego has already transformed the astral body and who with their fully developed Spirit Self or Manas continue to work on our Earth and into human beings, transforming our etheric or life body; Beings who are themselves at the stage of transmuting their etheric or life-body into Buddhi or Life Spirit. If you imagine such Beings who are at the Archangel stage among the spiritual Hierarchies, you will then have an idea of what are called the "Folk Spirits", the directing Folk Spirits of the Earth.** The Folk Spirits belong to the rank of the Archangels or Archangeloi. We shall see how they, for their part, direct their own etheric or life-body, and how they thereby work down into mankind and thus draw mankind into the sphere of their

own activity. If we survey the various peoples on Earth and select out individual examples, then we see in the life and activity of these peoples, in the characteristic attributes peculiar to these peoples, a reflection of what we regard as the mission of the Folk Spirits.

**An Esoteric Cosmology, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture XI, The Devachanic World - Heaven, Paris, 1906, GA 94**

“It is quite different in the case of an **initiated disciple. He develops his etheric body in earthly existence in such a way that it is conserved and is fit to pass into Devachan after death. Here on Earth, he is able to awaken, within his etheric forces, a ‘Life-Spirit’ which constitutes one of the imperishable principles of his being.** The Sanskrit term for the etheric body which has developed into Life-Spirit is Buddhi. **When this principle of Life Spirit has developed in the disciple, it is no longer necessary for him entirely to re-mold his etheric body between two incarnations. His period of Devachanic existence is then much shorter and for this reason the same character, temperament and outstanding traits are carried forward from one incarnation to another.** When the master in occultism has reached the point of conscious control not only of his etheric but of his physical body, another, higher spiritual principle comes into being – Spirit Man (in Sanskrit, Atman). At this stage the Initiate preserves the characteristics of his physical body every time he incarnates on Earth. With unbroken consciousness, he passes from earthly to heavenly life, from one incarnation to another. Here we have the origin of the legend referring to initiates who lived for a thousand or two thousand years. For them there is neither Kamaloka or Devachan but unbroken consciousness through deaths and births.”

## The Lion, the Cow, the Eagle, and Man

**Occult Signs and Symbols, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture IV, Man, the Most Significant Symbol, Stuttgart, September 16, 1907, GA 101**

“When you compare a man of today with the animals, the difference between them forces one to say that the man, as an individual, has within him what cannot be found in the single animal. **The man has an individual soul, the animal a group soul. The individual human being is, in himself, a whole animal species.** All lions together, for example, have only one soul. **Such group-egos are like human egos except that they have not descended into the physical world but are to be found only in the astral world.** Here on earth, one sees physical men, each of whom bears his ego. In the astral world one finds beings like one’s self, but in astral sheaths rather than physical. One can speak with them as to one’s peers. These are the animal group souls.

**In earlier times, men also had group souls. Only gradually have they developed themselves to their present independence. These group souls were originally in the astral world and then descended to live in the physical body.** When one investigates the original human group souls in the astral world, one finds **four species from which humans have sprung.** Were one to compare these four kinds of beings with the group souls that belong to the present-day animal species, one would find that **one of the four is comparable to the lion, another to the eagle, a third to the cow, and a fourth to the man of ancient times before his ego had descended.** Thus, in the second picture, in the apocalyptic animals, lion, eagle, cow and man, we are shown an evolutionary stage of mankind. **There is, and always will be as long as the earth shall exist, a group soul for the higher manifestation of men, which is represented by the lamb in the center of the seal, the mystical lamb, the sign of the Redeemer.** This grouping of the five group souls, the four of man around the great group soul, which still belongs to all men in common, is represented by the second seal [*Book of Revelation*].

## From Group-Soul to Individuality

***The Ego, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture I, Munich, December 4, 1909, (also: The Universal Human, Individuality and the Group Soul) GA 117***

“We could also look back in another way into past epochs of human evolution. Then we would see that **the farther we go back to the ancient clairvoyance**, at the same time, the more we have united with the human soul, what one can call the character of **group-soulness**. The consciousness of the group-soulness existed in the ancient Hebrew people in an eminent degree.

There was a real connection between every [Hebrew] initiate and the racial father Abraham. That was a kind of group-soulness. **One felt what expressed itself in Abraham as the group-soul of the people. One felt group-souls similarly in the rest of humanity. Mankind in general goes back to group-souls. The farther we go back in human evolution, the less do we find expressed the single individuality.** That which we still find today in the animal kingdom: that a whole group belongs together - that was **existing among mankind, and appears ever clearer and clearer, the farther we go back to ancient times. Groups of human beings then belonged together, and the group-soul was essentially stronger than what constituted the individual soul in the single human being.**

**Today in our time, the group-soulness of people is still not yet overcome.** Whoever keeps it in mind will very quickly see that certain human beings not only appear alike in their physiognomy, but that also the **soul-qualities are similar in groups of human beings**. The boundaries drawn between the single nations fall away more and more; but other groupings are still perceptible. Certain basic characteristics stand so connected in some people, that he who will only look, can still today perceive the last relics of the group-soulness of man.

Now we, in our present age, are living in the most eminent sense, in a transition. All group-soulness has gradually to be stripped off. Just as the gaps between single nations gradually disappear **as the single parts of different nations understand each other better, so also will other group-soul qualities be shed, and the individual nature of each single person come to the foreground more and more.**

That idea whereby the group-soulness chiefly expresses itself loses meaning ever more and more in the evolution of mankind, i.e., the idea of race. If we go back

beyond the great Atlantean catastrophe, we see how the human races are prepared. In the old Atlantean age human beings were grouped according to external characteristics in their bodily structure, far more strongly than today. What we call races today are only the relics of those important distinctions between human beings as were customary in old Atlantis. **The idea of race is only really applicable to old Atlantis. Since we deal with a real evolution of mankind, we have never employed the idea of race in the most eminent sense for the post-Atlantean age.** We speak of an old-Indian period of civilization, of an old-Persian period of civilization, etc. If relics of the old Atlantean distinctions, of their group-soulness, are still existing in our time, so that one can still say the racial division continues to work on - that which is preparing for the sixth period of time consists just in the character of race being stripped off. That is the essential. Therefore it is necessary that that movement which is called **the anthroposophical movement, which should prepare the sixth period of time, adopts in its basic character this stripping off of the character of race - that especially it seeks to unite people out of all "races," out of all nations, and in this way bridges over these differences, these distinctions, these gaps, which are existing between various groups of human beings.** For the old racial standpoint had in a certain connection a physical character, whereas what will fulfil itself in the future will have a much more spiritual character. Therefore, it is so urgently necessary to understand that our anthroposophical movement is a spiritual one, which looks to the spirit, and overcomes just that which arises from physical distinctions.

It is, of course, thoroughly comprehensible that any movement has, as it were, its childish illnesses, and that in the beginning of the theosophical movement, matters were so represented as if the earth fell into seven periods of time - they were called Root-races - and each of these Root-races into seven sub-races. **But one must get beyond the illnesses of childhood and be clear that the idea of race ceases to have any meaning, especially in our age.**

It is now the task of the anthroposophical way of thinking - and the method of thought is more important than the theories - that **we learn to speak a language**, which is really not merely understood by the human soul so long as it



is in a physical body, but understood also when this soul is no longer bound to the instrument of the physical brain; for instance, either by a soul still in the body, but able to perceive spiritually, or by a soul gone through the gate of death. If we bring forward those ideas which explain the world, which explain the human being, then that is a speech which cannot merely be understood here in the physical world, but also by those who are no longer incarnated in physical bodies but live between death and a new birth. Yes, what is spoken on our anthroposophical basis, is heard and understood by the so-called dead. There they are fully one with us on a basis **where the same speech is spoken**. There we speak to all human beings. **And because we penetrate to the soul of man, we liberate man from all group-soulness, i.e., man becomes in this way more and more capable of really grasping himself in his ego, his "I."** And that is the characteristic, that those who come to anthroposophy today, who really take up anthroposophy, appear in comparison with others who remain far from it, as if through anthroposophical thoughts, **their ego would crystallize as a spiritual being, which is then carried through the gate of death. With the others, in that place where the I-being is, which remains there - which is now there in the body, and which remains after death - there is a hollow space, a nothingness.** The central point of man's being is grasped through what we take up as anthroposophical thoughts. **That crystallizes a spiritual substance in man; he takes that with him after death, and with that he perceives in the spiritual world. He sees and hears with it in the spiritual world, with it he penetrates that darkness which otherwise exists for man in the spiritual world.** And thereby it is brought about that when through these anthroposophical thoughts and way of thinking man develops this "I" in him today, which now stands in connection with all the world wisdom we can acquire - if he develops it - he carries it over also into his next incarnation. Then he is born with this now developed "I," and he remembers himself in this developed "I." **That is the deeper task of the anthroposophical movement today, to send over to their next incarnation a number of human beings with an ego in which they remember themselves as an individual ego.** They will be the human beings who form the kernel of the next period of civilization. These people who have been well prepared through the anthroposophical spiritual movement, to remember their individual "I," will be spread over the whole earth. For the

essential in the next period of culture will be that these people will not be limited by single localities but spread over the entire earth. These individual people will be scattered over the whole earth, **and within the whole earth sphere will be the kernel of humanity, who will be essential for the sixth period of civilization. And so it will be the case among these people, that they will know themselves as those who in their previous incarnation strove together for the individual "I."**

More and more human beings will have this memory of their former incarnation - in spite of their not having developed the "I." **But they will not remember an individual "I," because they have not developed it, but they will remember the group-ego, in which they have remained. Thus people will exist, who in this incarnation have cared for the development of their individual "I" - they will remember themselves as independent individualities, they will look back and say: You were this or the other. Those who have not developed the individuality will be unable to remember this individuality.**

**If one has not cultivated the "I", it is not there as an inner human being; one looks back, and remembers as a group-ego, what one had in common.** So that these people will say: Yes, I was there, but I have not freed myself. These people will then experience that as their FALL, **as a new Fall of mankind, as a falling back into conscious connection with the group-soul.** That will be something terrible for the sixth period of time; to be unable to look back to oneself as an individuality, to be hemmed in by not being able to transcend the group-soulness. If one will express it strongly, one could say: **The whole earth with all it produces will belong to those who now cultivate their individuality; those, however, who do not develop their individual "I," will be obliged to join on to a certain group, from which they will be directed as to how they should think, feel, will, and act. That will be felt as a fall, a falling back, in the future humanity.**

**Now the time is come where man begins to develop the human faculty of remembering backwards.** It is only a question of our developing it aright, i.e., that we train in us an individual "I;" for only what we have created in our own soul can we remember. If we have not created it, then there only remains to us a

fettering memory of a group-ego, and **we feel it as a kind of falling down into a group of higher animality**. Even if the human group-souls are finer and higher than the animal, yet they are but group-souls. Humanity of an early age did not feel that as a fall, because they were intended to develop from group-soulness to the individual soul. If they are now held back, they fall consciously into it, **and that will be the oppressive feeling in the future of those who do not take this step aright**, either now or in a later incarnation. They will experience the fall into group-soulness.

The real task of anthroposophy, is to give the right impulse. We must thus grasp it within human life. If we keep in mind that the sixth period of time is that of the first, complete conquest of the racial idea. **It is a question of seeing that the word "race" is a term only having validity for a certain time. This idea no longer has any meaning for the sixth period. Races have only in themselves the elements which have remained from the Atlantean age.**

In the future, that which speaks to the depths of man's soul will express itself more and more in the external nature of man; and that which man on the one side as a quite individual being has acquired, and yet, again experiences un-individually, will express itself by working out even to the human countenance; so that the individuality of man - not the group-soulness - will be inscribed for him on his countenance. That will constitute human manifoldness. Everything will be acquired individually, in spite of its being there through the overcoming of individuality. And we will not meet groups among those who are seized of the ego, but the individual will express itself externally. That will form the distinction between human beings. There will be such as have acquired their egoity; they will indeed be there over the whole earth with the most manifold countenances, but one will recognize through their variety how the individual ego expresses itself even into the gesture. **Whereas among those who have not developed the individuality, the group-soulness will come to expression by their countenance receiving the imprint of the group-soulness**, i.e., they will fall into categories similar to each other. That will be the external physiognomy of our earth: a possibility will be prepared for the individuality to carry in itself an external sign, and for the group-soulness to carry in itself its external sign.

This is the meaning of earthly evolution, that man acquires more and more the power of expressing externally his inner being. **There exists an ancient script in which the greatest ideal for the evolution of the “I,” the Christ Jesus, is characterized by the saying: When the two become one, when the external becomes like the inner, then man has attained the Christ nature in himself.**

## The Three Egos of the Human Being

**Esoteric Development II, The Psychological Foundations of Anthroposophy and its Standpoint in Relation to the Theory of Knowledge, by Rudolf Steiner, Bologna, April 8, 1911 GA 35**

“The living and moving within the content of the soul, thus rendered possible, can be called a real beholding of oneself. **The inner being of man thus learns to know itself not merely through reflecting about itself as the bearer of the sense impressions and the elaborator of these sense impressions through thinking; on the contrary, it learns to know itself as it is, without relationship to a content coming from the senses; it experiences itself in itself, as super-sensible reality.** This experience is not like that of the ego when in ordinary self-observation, attention is withdrawn from the things cognized in the environment and is directed back to the cognizing self. In this case, the content of consciousness shrinks more and more down to the point of the “ego.” Such is not the case in the real beholding of the self by the spiritual researcher. In this, the soul content becomes continuously richer in the course of the exercises. **It consists in one’s living within law-conforming interrelationships;** and the self does not feel, as in the case of the laws of nature, which are abstracted from the phenomena of the external world, that it is outside the web of laws; but, on the contrary, it is aware of itself as within this web; **it experiences itself as one with these laws.**

To an inner life thus attained, there is now the possibility of a super-sensible knowledge characterized by a higher degree of certitude than that of mere **imaginative cognition.** At this point in the soul’s development, the following

manifestation occurs. The inner experience gradually becomes filled with a content which enters the mind from without in a manner similar to that in which the content of sense perception enters through the senses from the outer world. **Only, the filling of the mind with the super-sensible content consists in an actual living within this content.** If one wishes to employ a comparison with a fact taken from ordinary life, it may be said that the entering of the ego into union with a spiritual content is now experienced as one experiences the entering of the ego into union with a mental picture retained in memory. Yet there is the distinction that the content of that with which one enters into union cannot be compared in any respect with something previously experienced and that it cannot be related to something past but only to something present. Knowledge of this character may well be called knowledge “through **inspiration.**”

Through **intuitive knowledge**, the whole relationship in which the human being as “soul” finds himself with respect to his bodily organization is altered for the direct observation of the inner being of the soul. **Before the faculty of spiritual vision, the etheric body appears, in a sense, as a super-sensible organism differentiated within itself. And one recognizes its differentiated members as adapted in a definite way to the members of the physical bodily organization. The etheric body is experienced as the primary entity and the physical body as its copy, as something secondary.** The horizon of consciousness appears to be determined through the law-conforming activity of the etheric body. The coordination of the phenomena within this horizon results from **the activity of the differentiated members of the etheric body striving towards a unity.** The etheric body rests upon an all-embracing cosmic web of laws; basic in the **unification** of its action is the tendency to relate itself to something as a center. **And the image of this uniting tendency is the physical body. Thus the latter proves to be an expression of the World-Ego, as the etheric body is an expression of the macrocosmic web of laws.**

But this signifies nothing else than that **the ego, with its mathematical representation, is not outside the transcendental mathematical law-**

**conformity of things but inside this.** Therefore, one will arrive at a better conception of the ego from the viewpoint of the theory of knowledge, not by conceiving the ego as inside the bodily organization and receiving impressions “from without,” but by conceiving **the ego as being itself within the law-conformity of things, and viewing the bodily organization as only a sort of mirror which reflects back to the ego through the organic bodily activity the living and moving of the ego outside the body in the transcendental.** If, as regards mathematical thinking, one has familiarized oneself with the thought that **the ego is not in the body but outside it, and that the bodily activity represents only the living mirror, from which the life of the ego in the transcendental is reflected, one can then find this thought epistemologically comprehensible concerning everything which appears within the horizon of consciousness.**

One could then no longer say that the ego would have to leap beyond itself if it desired to enter the transcendental; but one would have to see that **the ordinary empirical content of consciousness is related to that which is truly experienced in the inner life of man’s core of being as the mirrored image is related to the real being of the person who is viewing himself in the mirror. The being of the person who is reflected is outside the mirror.**

**This core of being, however, is not to be located in the interior of the physical organization, but in the transcendental. Spiritual research would then be conceived as the way by which one attains knowledge of the real nature of that which is reflected.** Obviously, the common basis of the laws of the physical organism and those of the super-sensible would lie behind the antithesis, **being and mirror.** This, however, is certainly no disadvantage for the practice of the scientific method of approach from both directions. With the maintenance of the antithesis described, **this method would, so to speak, flow in two currents, each reciprocally illuminating and clarifying the other.** For it must be maintained that, in the physical organization, we are not dealing with a reflecting apparatus, in the absolute sense, independent of the super-sensible. **The reflecting apparatus must, after all, be considered as the product of the super-sensible being who**

**is mirrored in it. The relative reciprocal independence of the one and the other method of approach mentioned above must be supplemented by a third method coming to meet them, which enters into the depths of the problem and which is capable of beholding the synthesis of the sensible and the super-sensible. The confluence of the two currents may be conceived as given through a possible further development of the life of the mind up to the intuitive cognition already described. Only within this cognition is that confluence superseded.**

For these lead to the conclusion that it is a theoretically understandable possibility that the core of man's being may have an existence free of the physical organization, and that the opinion of the ordinary consciousness - that the ego is to be considered a being absolutely within the body - is to be adjudged an inevitable illusion of the immediate life of the mind. **The ego - with the whole of man's core of being - can be viewed as an entity which experiences its relationship to the objective world within that world itself, and receives its experiences as reflections in the form of impressions from the bodily organization.**

**The condition of mind of the spiritual researcher can be understood as one in which the illusion of the ordinary consciousness is overcome, and which gains a starting point in the life of soul from which it actually experiences the human core of being in free release from the bodily organization.** All else which is then achieved through exercises is only a deeper delving into the transcendental, in which the ego of ordinary consciousness really exists although it is not aware of itself as within the transcendental."

## **Prokofieff on the Three Human Egos**

**Rudolf Steiner's Path of Initiation and the Mystery of the Ego, by Sergei O. Prokofieff, A lecture in Bologna, March, 2011, Temple Lodge Press**

“The real being of man lives outside of the body. **Ego consciousness otherwise experienced as the everyday ego is only a mirror image of the higher ego in the body. We must seek the path to the transcendental human ego by dropping the prior developed symbolic pictures and voluntarily extinguish them and concentrate on the pure power within us that creates the pictures within us.** We must direct our attention to the inner activity itself and not the pictures. This is how we create a free space inside our soul into which the spirit world can flow. One can then perceive one’s essential nature and find one’s own consciousness outside of the body. This is designated as the “higher human ego.”

Beyond the **everyday ego** and the **higher human ego** there is **another ego that can only be found by eliminating from his consciousness all the inner experiences of his own self that he has achieved with so much effort. This third ego leads to intuition. This ego is called the “World Ego” or the third or true ego.** In accordance with the concept of three egos, this means that a person must initially come to a conscious connection with the second, higher ego. It is the intermediate station on the path leading from the earthly ego via the higher ego to the true ego. **The third ego embodies the mystery of the human ego in connection with the whole world, with the cosmos.**

**The path leads from earthly ego to the higher ego and then to the true ego as the road to supersensible knowledge** – imagination (angelic realm), inspiration, (archangelic realm), and intuition (archai realm). The more the soul develops supersensible cognitive powers, the nearer it comes to the Christ Being. **The Christ being is related to the human ego; for in the spiritual world, Christ represents the principle of the ego as its highest example and also its eternal archetype.** Here they converge: **the human soul developing upward from below and Christ, who mercifully inclines towards it from the heights.** With man, we are only concerned with the microcosmic human ego. **With Christ we have to do with the World Ego, the comprehensive divine ego.**

**The true ego is inseparably connected with the Christ Being, the understanding of it leads at the same time to the new Christ**



**Consciousness within man.** Christ is the only one in the spiritual world who possesses the consciousness that pervades everything in heaven and on Earth. A complete union with Christ is only possible at the level of Intuition (Spirit Man) but begins with the level of Inspiration (Life-Spirit). **This happens with the help of the physical body, which in this process assumes the role of a mirror in which the reflection of the ego appears, thus enabling a person to become conscious. The true (higher) ego however remains in the spiritual world and can only be found there.**

**The earthly ego examines the physical world of the senses while the higher ego examines the supersensible world. These two currents must be supplemented by a “third” method coming to meet them which is capable of beholding the synthesis of the sensible and the supersensible.** The confluence of the two currents may be conceived as given through a possible further development of the life of the mind up to the intuitive cognition. **Only within this third current that polarity is superseded. It is at the stage of Intuition where the true human ego, which is so deeply connected with the Christ Being, can be grasped. There it is possible to unite both polarities in a synthesis, which at the same time is that of heaven and Earth and also represents the conscious path leading from Earth to heaven and back again.”**

## Unification Leading to the Holy Spirit and Group-Soul

***The Festivals and their Meaning, Ascension and Pentecost, The Festival of United Soul-Endeavour, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture V, Cologne, June 7th, 1908***

“Now the kind of ego man has to-day is only to be found in man, in the human being living on the earth; every man has his ego enclosed within himself. It is different with the animals: they have a group-ego, a group-soul; that is to say, a group of animals with the same form have a common group-ego. We must not imagine the animal-ego to be like the human being of course, though if we

consider man as he is as a spiritual being, we can then certainly compare the animal group-ego with him.

**In many animal species the group-ego is a wise being.** Anywhere you like in the animal kingdom you can find the wisdom of the group-egos. Only gradually will it become known how the one or the other achievement of the human spirit is connected with what the group-souls have introduced into the world.

When the clairvoyant looks at an animal, he sees a glimmer of light along the whole length of its spine. The physical spine of the animal is enveloped in a glimmering light, in innumerable streams of force which everywhere travel across the earth, as it were, like the trade winds. They work on the animal in that they stream along the spine. **The group-ego of the animal travels in a continual circular movement around the earth at all heights and in all directions.** These group-egos are wise, but one thing they have not yet got: they have no knowledge of love. Only in man is wisdom found in his individuality together with love. In the group-ego of the animals no love is present; love is found only in the single animal. What underlies the whole animal-group as wise arrangements is quite devoid of love. **In the physical world below the animal has love; above, on the astral plane, it has wisdom.** When we realize this a vast number of things will become clear to us.

**Only gradually has man arrived at his present stage of development; in earlier times he also had a group-soul, out of which the individual soul has gradually emerged.** Let us follow the evolution of man back into ancient Atlantis. Mankind once lived in Atlantis, a continent now lying beneath the Atlantic Ocean. At that time the vast Siberian plains were covered with immense seas; the Mediterranean was differently distributed, and in Europe itself there were extensive seas. The farther we go back in the old Atlantean period, the more the conditions of life alter, the more the sleeping and the waking state of man changes. **Since that time consciousness during the sleeping condition has darkened, as it were, so that to-day man has, so to say, no consciousness at all in this condition.** In the earliest Atlantean times the difference between sleeping and waking was not yet so great. In his waking state at that time man still saw things with an aura around them; he did not attain to any greater clarity than this in his perception of the physical world. Everything

physical was still filled out, so to say, with something unclear, as if with mist. **As he progressed, the human being came to see the world in its clear-cut contours, but in return he lost his clairvoyance.**

When in those earlier times man descended into his physical body, he got the feeling: "Thou art a single being." When he returned into the spiritual world in the evening, however, the feeling came over him: "Thou art in reality not a single being." It was out of this condition of things that there arose such practices as the blood-feud, the vendetta. **The whole people formed a body which belonged to the group-soul of the folk.**

Now we must put ourselves the question: Can we compare the anthropoid apes with man himself? **The vital difference is that the ape preserves the group-soul condition throughout, whereas man develops the individual soul.** But the ape group-soul is in a quite special position to other group-souls. We must think of a group-soul as living in the astral world and spreading itself out in the physical world, so that, for instance, the group-soul of the lion sends a part of its substance into each single lion. Let us suppose that one of these lions dies; the external physical part drops away from the group-soul, just as when we lose a nail. The group-soul sends out a new ray of being, as it were, into a new individual. **The group-soul remains above and stretches out its tentacles in a continual process of renewal. The animal group-soul knows neither birth or death; the single individual falls away and a new one appears, just as the nails on our fingers come and go.** It is not at all so, however, with the apes. When an ape dies the essential part does return to the group-soul, but a part does not; a part is severed from the group-soul. The ape detaches substance too strongly from the group-soul. There are species where the single animal tears something away from the group-soul which cannot return to it. With all the apes, fragments are detached in each case from the group-soul. It is the same with certain kinds of amphibians and birds; in the kangaroo, for example, something is kept back from the group-soul. **Now everything in the warm-blooded animals that remains behind in this way becomes an elemental being of the kind we call a salamander.**

**Now it could happen that man himself might entirely detach himself from the group-soul in becoming an individual and find no means of**

**developing further as an individual soul.** If he does not accept spiritual knowledge in the right way, he can run the risk of complete severance.

What is it that protects man from an isolation which is, without the direction and purpose which, earlier on, the group-soul had given him? We must clearly recognize that man individualizes himself more and more, and today, he has to find a connection once again with other men out of his free will. **All that connects men, through folk, race and family, will be ever more completely severed; everything in man tends more and more to result in individual manhood.**

Already nowadays men are no longer held together by spiritual ties. Each one has his own opinion, his own religion; indeed, many see it as an ideal state of affairs that each should have his own opinion. But that is all wrong. If men make their opinions more inward, then they come to a common opinion. It is a matter of inner experience, for example, that 3 times 3 makes 9, or that the three angles of a triangle make up 180 degrees. That is inner knowledge and matters of inner knowledge need not be argued about. **Of such a kind also are all spiritual truths. What is taught by Spiritual Science is discovered by man through his inner powers; along the inward path man will be led to absolute agreement and unity. The ideal lies in the greatest possible inwardness of knowledge; that leads to peace and to unity.**

**In the past, mankind became free of the group-soul. Through spiritual-scientific knowledge mankind is now for the first time in the position to discover, with the utmost certainty of purpose, what will unite mankind again. When men unite together in a higher wisdom, then out of higher worlds there descends a group-soul once more.**

What is willed by the Leaders of the spiritual-scientific Movement is that in it we should have a society in which hearts stream towards wisdom as the plants stream towards the sunlight. **In that together we turn our hearts towards a higher wisdom, we give a dwelling-place to the group-soul; we form the dwelling-place, the environment, in which the group-soul can incarnate. Mankind will enrich earthly life by developing what enables spiritual beings to come down out of higher worlds.**

This spirit-enlivened ideal was once placed before humanity in a most powerful way. **It was when a number of men, all aglow with a common feeling of fervent love and devotion, were met together for a common deed: Then the sign was given, the sign that could show man with overwhelming power how in unity of soul he could provide a place for the incarnation of the common spirit.** In this company of souls, the same thing was living: in the flowing together, in the harmony of feeling they provided what was needed for the incarnation of a common spirit. **That is expressed when it is said that the Holy Spirit, the group-soul, sank down as it were into incarnation. It is a symbol of what mankind should strive towards, how it should seek to become the dwelling-place for the Being who descends out of higher worlds.**

**The Easter event gave man the power to develop these experiences; the Whitsun event is the fruit of this power's unfolding. Through the flowing of souls together towards the common wisdom there will always result that which gives a living connection with the forces and beings of higher worlds,** and with something which, as yet, has little significance for humanity, namely the Whitsun festival. **When men come to know what the down-coming of the Holy Spirit in the future can mean for mankind, the Whitsun festival will once more become alive for them.** Then it will be not only a memory of the event in Jerusalem; but there will arise for mankind the everlasting Whitsun festival, **the festival of united soul-endeavor.**

It will depend on men themselves what value and what result such ideals can have for mankind. **When in this right way they strive towards wisdom, then will higher spirits unite themselves with men."**

## Speech and the Group-Soul

**Wisdom of Man, of the Soul, and of the Spirit, The Group-Soul and the Role of the Ego, by Rudolf Steiner, Berlin, October 27, 1909, GA**

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“The next question is how it came about that at one time in the course of his development man achieved the ability to perceive sounds and, as a result, **to acquire speech**? How was he endowed with speech? If he was to learn to speak, not just to hear, it was necessary not only that an outer perception should penetrate, but that **a certain current within him should flow in the same direction as that taken by the currents of the sentient soul when they press forward from the rear**. It had to be something acting in the same direction. That was the way in which speech had to originate, and this faculty had to appear before the sense of visualization, before man was able to sense the conception contained in the words themselves. Men had first to learn to utter sounds and to live in the consciousness of them before they could combine conceptions with them. What at first permeated the sounds they uttered was sentience.

This development had to take place at a time when the transposition of the circulatory system had already occurred, for animals cannot speak. **The ego had to be acting downward from above with the blood system in a vertical position. As yet however, man had no sense of visualization, consequently no visualizations. It follows that he could not have acquired speech through the agency of his own ego, but rather, he received it from another ego that we can compare with the group-ego of animals. In this sense speech is a gift of the gods. It was infused into the ego before the latter itself was capable of developing it. The human ego did not yet possess the organs needed to give the impulse for bringing about speech, but the group-ego worked from above into the physical, etheric and astral bodies, and as it encountered an opposing current, a sort of whorl came into being at the point of contact.** A straight line drawn through the center of the larynx would indicate the direction of the current employed by the speech-giving spirits, and the larynx itself represents the physical substance, the dam, that resulted from the encounter of the two currents. That accounts for the peculiar shape of the human larynx.

**It was under the influence, then, of a group-soul that man had to develop speech.** In what manner do group-souls operate on earth? In animals

the current of the group-soul passes through the spinal cord horizontally, and these force currents are in continual motion. The force currents running downward from above move constantly around the earth, as they did around the old Moon. They don't remain in one spot but move around the earth retaining their vertical direction of influence. **If men were to learn to speak under the influence of a group soul, they could not remain in one place, they had to migrate. They had to move toward the group soul.** Never could they have learned to speak if they had remained in one spot.

## From Race and Tribe to Individuality

***The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man, by Rudolf Steiner,*  
Lecture I, Berlin, January 1, 1908, GA 102**

“We stand today at a transitional point; **race will gradually disappear entirely and something else will take its place.** Those who will again grasp spiritual truth as it has been described will be led together of their own free will. Those will be the connections of a later age.

The human beings of earlier times were born into connections, born into the tribe, the race. **Later we shall live in the connections and associations which men create for themselves, uniting in groups with those of similar ideas while retaining their complete freedom and individuality.**

To realize this is necessary for a right understanding of something like the Anthroposophical Society. The Anthroposophical Society is intended to be a first example of such a voluntary association, although we may be well aware that it has not yet reached very far. The attempt had to be made to create a group in which men find themselves together without the differentiation of the ancient group soul's nature and there will be many such associations in the future. **Then we shall no longer have to speak of racial connections but of intellectual-ethical-moral aspects with regard to the associations that are formed. The individuals voluntarily allow their feelings to stream**

**together and this again causes the forming of something which goes beyond the merely emancipated man.** An emancipated human being possesses his individual soul which is never lost when it has once been attained. But when men find themselves together in voluntary associations, they group themselves round centers. **The feelings streaming in this way to a center once more give beings the opportunity of working as a kind of group-soul, though in quite a different sense from the early group-souls. All the earlier group-souls were beings who made man unfree. These new beings, however, are compatible with man's complete freedom and individuality.** Indeed, in a certain respect we may say that they support their existence on human harmony; it will lie in the souls of men themselves whether or not they give as many as possible of such higher souls the opportunity of descending to man. The more that men are divided, the fewer lofty souls will descend into the human sphere. **The more that associations are formed where feelings of fellowship are developed with complete freedom, the more lofty beings will descend and the more rapidly the earthly planet will be spiritualized.**

So, we see that **if man is to acquire any idea of future evolution, he must have a thorough understanding of the character of the group-soul element.** For otherwise, if his individual soul keeps itself aloof too long on the earth, and does not find the link of companionship, it could come about that it lets the chance of union go by. **It would then itself become a sort of elemental being, and the elemental beings originating from man would be of quite an evil nature.** Whereas those which have arisen from the earlier kingdoms are very useful for our orderly course of nature, the human elemental beings will by no means possess this quality.

We have seen that such severed beings arise in certain border regions, and they arise also on the boundary made by the transition from the group-soul nature to the independent group associations where the connections are of an aesthetic, moral, intellectual character. Wherever such connections arise, group-beings are there.”



## Group-Souls and Elemental Beings

***The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man, by Rudolf Steiner,*  
Lecture IX, Berlin, June 1, 1908, GA 102**

**“We have seen how such elemental beings come into existence as a sort of irregularly severed parts of group-souls.** We have said that these group-souls play the same role in the astral world as our human soul in the physical world. **The human ego is really a group-ego which has descended from the astral plane to the physical plane, and thus becomes an individual ego.** The animal egos are still normally on the astral plane, and what is here on the physical plane as the separate animal possesses only physical body, etheric body, and astral body. The ego is in the astral world, similarly formed animals being members of their own group-ego. We can realize from this fact how birth and death in human life have not the same significance in the life of the animal. For when an individual animal dies, the group-soul or group-ego remains alive. **The group-soul of the animals knows changes, metamorphoses; knows, so to speak, the severing of the members which then extend into the physical world, the loss of these members and their renewal.**

When an animal dies, what falls away must be entirely exhausted in the surrounding world, while the soul and spirit nature of the animal must stream back into the group-soul, to be extended afresh and grow to a new individual entity. **There are in fact certain animal forms which cannot send everything back into the group-soul; and these parts which remain over, which are cut loose, torn loose from the group-soul, then lead an isolated life as elemental beings.** Our evolution has gone through the most varied stages and at each stage such elemental beings have been separated off, so you can well imagine that we have a fairly large number of such elementals around us in what we call the supersensible world.

**It will become increasingly indispensable to grasp the nature of the group-souls, and such knowledge will play a great role even in the purely external evolution of humanity. If we go back thousands and**

**thousands of years we find man himself as a being still belonging to a group-soul.** Human evolution on our Earth is from the group-soul nature to the individual soul. Man advances through the gradual descent of his ego-endowed soul into physical conditions, there having the opportunity of becoming individual. We can observe different stages in the evolution of mankind and see how the group-soul gradually becomes individual.

So, we see a second stage of the evolution of mankind: the group-soul age which finds its external expression in the blood relationship of the generations. A people which has particularly developed this lays very special value on continually emphasizing: **As folk we have a folk group-soul in common. That was particularly the case for the people of the Old Testament, and the conservatives among them strongly opposed therefore the emphasis of the “I am” of the individual ego.**

**The human being has grown out of the group-soul condition and emancipates himself from it increasingly. If we look at groups instead of the souls, we have family connections, connections of tribe and nation, and finally connected races. The race corresponds to a group-soul. All these group connections of early humanity are what man outgrows and the more we advance the more the race conception loses its meaning.**

**We stand today at a transitional point; race will gradually disappear entirely and something else will take its place.** Those who will again grasp spiritual truth as it has been described will be led together of their own free will. Those will be the connections of a later age. The human beings of earlier times were born into connections, born into the tribe, the race. **Later we shall live in the connections and associations which men create for themselves, uniting in groups with those of similar ideas while retaining their complete freedom and individuality.** To realize this is necessary for a right understanding of something like the Anthroposophical Society. **The Anthroposophical Society is intended to be a first example of such a voluntary association, although we may be well aware that it has not yet reached very far.** The attempt had to be made to create a group in which men find themselves together without the differentiation of the ancient group

soul's nature and there will be many such associations in the future. **Then we shall no longer have to speak of racial connections but of intellectual-ethical-moral aspects with regard to the associations that are formed. The individuals voluntarily allow their feelings to stream together and this again causes the forming of something which goes beyond the merely emancipated man.** An emancipated human being possesses his individual soul which is never lost when it has once been attained. But when men find themselves together in voluntary associations they group themselves round centers. The feelings streaming in this way to a center once more give beings the opportunity of working as a kind of group soul, though in quite a different sense from the early group souls. **All the earlier group-souls were beings who made man unfree. These new beings, however, are compatible with man's complete freedom and individuality. Indeed, in a certain respect we may say that they support their existence on human harmony; it will lie in the souls of men themselves whether or not they give as many as possible of such higher souls the opportunity of descending to man. The more that men are divided, the fewer lofty souls will descend into the human sphere. The more that associations are formed where feelings of fellowship are developed with complete freedom, the more lofty beings will descend and the more rapidly the earthly planet will be spiritualized.**

So we see that if man is to acquire any idea of future evolution, he must have a thorough understanding of the character of the group-soul element. **For otherwise, if his individual soul keeps itself aloof too long on the earth, and does not find the link of companionship, it could come about that it lets the chance of union go by. It would then itself become a sort of elemental being, and the elemental beings originating from man would be of quite an evil nature.** Whereas those which have arisen from the earlier kingdoms are very useful for our orderly course of nature, the human elemental beings will by no means possess this quality.

**We have seen that such severed beings arise in certain border regions, and they arise also on the boundary made by the transition**

**from the group-soul nature to the independent group associations where the connections are of an aesthetic, moral, intellectual character. Wherever such connections arise, group beings are there.”**

## Community and Clan Spirit

***The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture XII, The Christ Impulse as Conqueror of Matter Berlin, 1908, GA 102***

“We have seen how, in the Egyptian myths and mysteries, all the mighty pictures of the Sphinx, of Isis, of Osiris, were memories of ancient human conditions. All this was like a reflection of ancient events on earth. Man looked back into his primeval past and saw his origin. The initiate could experience again the spiritual existence of his forebears. **We have seen how man grew out of an original group-soul condition. We could point out how these group-souls were preserved in the forms of the four apocalyptic beasts. Man grew out of this condition in such a way that he gradually refined his body and achieved the development of individuality.** We can follow this historically. Let us read the *Germania* of Tacitus. In the times described there, in the conditions of the Germanic regions in the first century after Christ as there portrayed, we see how the consciousness of the individual is still **bound up with the community, how the clan spirit rules**, how the Cherusker, for example, still feels himself as a member of his clan. This consciousness is still so strong that the individual seeks vengeance for another of the same group. It finds expression in the custom of the blood-feud. **Thus, a sort of group-soul condition prevailed. This condition was preserved into late post-Atlantean times, but only as an echo. In the last period of Atlantis, the group-consciousness generally died out.** It is only stragglers whom we have just described. In reality, the men of that time no longer knew anything of the group-soul. In the Atlantean time, however, man did know of it. Then he did not yet say “I” of himself. This group-soul feeling changed into something else in the following generations.”

## Passing through Four Animal Group-Souls

***The Apocalypse of St. John, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture X, Nuremberg, June 27, 1908, GA 104***

“Four of the conditions, out of the total number, **man went through during the Atlantean epoch in such a way that he felt himself as a group-soul, as we have described, as eagle, lion, bull, and man.** He gradually developed these four group-souls during these four root-races of the Atlantean epoch. Now, because races always continue, just as for instance, the Indian has continued, although later ones have developed (they pass into one another), for this reason the four heads indicating the group-souls also remained at the beginning of the fifth age of Atlantean civilization and we have this four-headed beast. **Now when man began to harden himself from the etheric into the physical, he developed four different parts of the body in accordance with his fourfold group-soul. And through the former group-soul consciousness changing into the individual-consciousness, man had within him a conjunction of the earlier fourfoldness at the beginning of the fifth age of Atlantis.** He bears within him the four heads which are summed up in his head which gradually arises. It is composed of the four group-heads as it developed in the course of the fifth period. Man has four parts of the physical body corresponding to the four heads. These are the four horns. So that you may imagine that because man was etheric, he had four heads, four animal heads, only the last is already human-animal, for that is what is meant. He was four-headed, and each force-system corresponding to one of these head formed physical organs. We saw in our last lecture that there was a force-system which formed **the heart, namely, that which is connected with the lion head. The various organs of man are like condensations of the corresponding parts of the etheric body.** This is the view of the writer of the Apocalypse. He says: That which is physical is a densification of the etheric. Just as you would think: “This skin thickens and forms a callosity,” so the Apocalypticist thinks: “man exists etherically and this condenses and becomes physical.” And because man is fourfold, consisting of four group-souls, four condensations are formed. These constitute his physical

body. This is the reason why one described as “horn” that which in the physical body corresponds to the etheric body. Horn is a callous thickening. **Man is described, as far as he had developed in the fourth age of the Atlantean epoch, as an animal with four heads and four horns.** He then evolves further towards an individual human being. This begins in the neighborhood of the present Ireland. Man passes through the last three ages in such a way that he possesses the germ of the ego-being. He no longer develops an animal body outwardly, but has risen to the human stage. He matures his human nature more and more until he absorbs the Christ-principle. If we regard present-day man, we see that he was not always as he appears to-day. **In order for him to become what he now is, he had to pass through four animal group-souls, he had to be incarnated in bodies corresponding to the present lion form, the bull form, the eagle form, and the human form. He then pressed forward and became more and more human, and the form of the earlier group-soul disappeared.** It is no longer there, man has assumed human shape.

## Group-Soul Derivatives of Male and Female

***Egyptian Myths and Mysteries, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture VIII, The Four Human Types, September 10, 1908, Leipzig GA 106***

“Through this, four human types developed. **A number of men appeared who had worked out the physical body especially. Then there were men who had received their stamp from the etheric body, others whose astral nature predominated, and also ego-men, strongly marked ego-men.** Each man showed what predominated in him. In the ancient times when these four forms originated, one could meet grotesque shapes, and the clairvoyant discovers what is present in the different types. There are representations, although these are not well known, in which the memory of this has been preserved. For example, those men in whom the physical nature became especially strong and worked on the upper parts, bore the mark of this in their upper part. Something was formed that was entirely suited to the baser form, and

through what was thus active there appeared the shape that we see retained in the apocalyptic picture of the Bull, although not the bull of today, which is a decadent form. **What was governed principally by the physical body at a certain time, remained stuck at the stage of the bull.** This is represented by the bull and all that belongs to this genus, such as cows, oxen and so on. The human group in whom the etheric rather than the physical body was strongly marked, in whom the heart region was especially powerful, is also preserved in the animal kingdom. This stage, beyond which man has progressed, is preserved in the lion. **The lion preserves the type that was worked out in the group of men in whom the etheric body was intensely active. The human stage in which the astral body overpowered the physical and etheric is preserved for us, although degenerated, in the mobile bird-kingdom, and is portrayed in the *Apocalypse* in the picture of the Eagle.** The predominating astrality is here repelled; it raised itself from the earth as the race of birds. Where the ego grew strong, a being evolved that should actually be called **a union of the three other natures, for the ego harmonizes all three members.** In this group the clairvoyant actually has before him what has been preserved in the Sphinx, for the Sphinx has the lion-body, the eagle-wings, something of the bull form - and in the oldest portrayals there was even a reptilian tail, pointing to the ancient reptile form - and then at the front there is the human face, which harmonizes the other parts.

These are the four types. **But in the Atlantean time the man-form predominated, as the human shape gradually constructed itself out of the eagle, lion, and bull natures.** These transmuted themselves into the full human form, and this gradually transmuted itself into the shape that was present in the middle of Atlantis. Something else occurred through all these events. Four different elements, four forms, merged harmoniously in man. One is present in the physical body, in the bull nature; these are the predominating forces that evolved up to the evolutionary period of the Balance. Then we have the lion nature in the etheric body; in the astral body, in the predominating forces of the astral, the eagle or vulture nature; finally, the predominating forces of the ego, the true human nature. In single beings, one or another of these members had the upper hand. Through this the four types arose. But one could meet still other combinations. For example, the physical, astral, and ego might be equal, while

the etheric predominated; that is a particular type of mankind. Then there were beings in whom the etheric, astral, and ego had the upper hand, while the physical was less developed, so that we have men in whom the higher members prevail over the physical body. **Those human beings in whom the physical, astral, and ego predominated, are the physical ancestors of the males of today, while those in whom the etheric, astral, and ego predominated, are the physical ancestors of the females of today.** The other types disappeared more and more; only these two remained and evolved into the male and female forms.”

**Theosophy of the Rosicrucian, by Rudolf Steiner, Lecture XII,  
Evolution of Mankind on the Earth II, June 1907, Munich, GA 99**

**“Thus, we have reached the period in which we have seen the earlier dual-sexed organism, representing a kind of group-soul, divide into a male and a female, so that the similar is reproduced through the female, what is varied and dissimilar through the male. We see in our humanity the feminine to be the principle which still preserves the old conditions of folk and race, and the masculine that which continually breaks through these conditions, splits them up and so individualizes mankind. There is actually active in the human being an ancient feminine principle as group-soul and a new masculine principle as individualizing element. It will come about that all connections of race and family stock will cease to exist, men will become more and more different from one another, interconnection will no longer depend on the common blood, but on what binds soul to soul. That is the course of human evolution.**

In the first Atlantean races there still existed a strong bond of union and the first sub-races grouped themselves according to their coloring. This group-soul element we have still in the races of different color. **These differences will increasingly disappear as the individualizing element gains the upper hand. A time will come when there will no longer be races of different color; the difference between the races will have disappeared, but on the other hand there will be the greatest differences between individuals.** The further we go back into ancient times the more we meet with



the encroachment of the racial element; the true individualizing principle begins as a whole only in later Atlantean times.”

## The Apocalyptic Beasts: Bull, Eagle, Lion, Man

### ***The Four Human Group-Souls - Lion, Bull, Eagle, Man, by Rudolf Steiner, Berlin, October 29, 1908, GA 107***

“Thus, a group of people existed at that time, who were united because **their egos formed a unity** - and indeed, there were actually four such group-egos. You must imagine these human beings in accordance with the laws of the spiritual world. The group-souls of the four groups passed into each other. They were not inwardly united but passed into each other. **One calls these four group-souls by the names of the apocalyptic beasts: Bull, Eagle, Lion, Man.** The Man, however, was at another stage of evolution than the man of today.

Let us place ourselves as vividly as possible in the early ages of Lemurian life. The souls which today are incarnated in human bodies had not yet descended as far as the physical bodies. They had not yet the tendency to unite themselves with physical matter. Even the bodies which later were to become human bodies were very, very animal-like. The most grotesque physical beings were on earth, which would even seem grotesque compared with what we should call today the most grotesque creatures. Everything was still in a soft, slippery form - seething, watery, or fiery - human beings, as well as the environment. Among these grotesque forms were already, of course, the ancestors of the human physical bodies, **but these were not yet taken possession of by the egos. The four group-souls, whom we have already characterized as four group-souls before the entry of the spirit into the physical organization, actually represented four egos who waited to incarnate** - such egos as were adapted to quite special forms, which were down there below. One category was adapted to enter the organizations already existing physically, in quite definite shapes, another category to enter another. The forms which were below must correspond in their formation, in a certain way, to the kinds of egos which waited.

There were forms existing which were especially adapted to receive the Lion egos, others the Bull egos, etc. That was in a very early age of earth evolution. Now consider that the group-soul we have called the Bull-soul enters quite definite forms which are there below. These have a quite definite appearance. Similarly, the Lion-soul was drawn to other special forms.

Thus, what is physical on earth shows us a fourfold picture. The one group especially develops the organs whose functions coincide more with those of the heart. They were organized one-sidedly in the heart nature; an especially aggressive, courageous, attacking element was in them. They were courageous, self-assertive, sought to overcome the others - were, as it were, already conquerors, born as conquering natures even in their form. They were those in whom the heart, the seat of the ego, had been made strong. In others, the organs of digestion, of nourishment, of procreation, were especially developed. In the third group, it was especially the organs of movement. In the fourth group, these tendencies were equally shared - both the courageous, aggressive, and the tranquil - which comes through the development of the digestive organs. Both were developed. **The group in which the aggressive quality belonging to the organization of the heart was specially developed, formed the human beings whose group-soul belonged to the Lion. The second group was that of the Bull. The third group, with the mobile element that does not wish to know much of the earth, belongs to the group-soul of the Eagle. They are the ones who can raise themselves above what is earthly. And those in whom these things were held in equilibrium belonged to the group-soul "Man."** Thus we have, in due form, the projection of the four group-souls into the physical. At that time, a quite peculiar sight would have offered itself to the observer. One would have found one kind of race, of which someone with a prophetic gift could have said: Those are physical beings who remind one somewhat of the lion, who reproduce the character of the lion, even though they looked different from the lion of today. **They were lion-hearted people, aggressive human germs. Then again there was a group of bull like people, everything adapted to the physical plane. You can easily complete for yourselves the third and fourth races. The third race was already strongly visionary. While the first were combative, while the second cultivated everything**

**connected with the physical plane and working it over, you would have found the third class of people, who were very visionary. As a rule, they had something which, in relation to the other bodies, was misshaped. They would have reminded you of people who have much psychism and believe in visions, and because they do not bother much about the physical, have something dried up, something stunted compared with the abundant force of the other two groups. They would have reminded you of the bird nature. “I will hold back my Spirit,” that was the tendency of the eagle men. The others had something which, as it were, was mixed out of all the parts. Something else must be added to this.**

One who could have seen more deeply into these things, could have made the experience that these lion natures (who reminded one of what we see today in quite another way in the lion body) developed a special attractive force for the male forms of the etheric bodies. These felt themselves especially drawn to the lion men, so that these were beings who had outwardly a lion body - inwardly, however, a male etheric body. **There was a powerful etheric being with a male character, and a small part of this etheric being densified itself to the physical lion body. The bull race, however, had a special attractive force for the female etheric body.**

**The physical body of the woman has proceeded from the lion nature, whereas the physical Bull-body is the ancestor of the male body.**

We must say that woman, so long as we look away from what in general transcends this differentiation, has, through her evolution, something Lion-like in her nature. The male physical body has that which in the true sense we can call the Bull-nature. **You thus see how these group-souls have worked together. They so work that the lion and Bull group-souls cooperate in their work. These divine beings cooperate and, in the man of today, the labors of the different Divine group-souls are concealed.”**

## Appendix

### **Ezekiel 1**

1 Now it came to pass in the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, in the fifth day of the month, as I was among the captives by the river of Chebar, that the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.

2 In the fifth day of the month, which was the fifth year of king Jehoiachin's captivity,

3 The word of the Lord came expressly unto Ezekiel the priest, the son of Buzi, in the land of the Chaldeans by the river Chebar; and the hand of the Lord was there upon him.

4 And I looked, and, behold, **a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire enfolding itself, and a brightness was about it**, and out of the midst thereof as the color of amber, out of the midst of the fire.

**5 Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man.**

6 And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings.

7 And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the color of burnished brass.

**8 And they had the hands of a man under their wings on their four sides; and they four had their faces and their wings.**

9 Their wings were joined one to another; they turned not when they went; they went every one straight forward.

**10 As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle.**

11 Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upward; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies.

12 And they went every one straight forward: whither the spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went.

13 As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning.

14 And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning.

15 Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures, with his four faces.

16 The appearance of the wheels and their work was like unto the color of a beryl: and they four had one likeness: and their appearance and their work was as it were a wheel in the middle of a wheel.

17 When they went, they went upon their four sides: and they turned not when they went.

18 As for their rings, they were so high that they were dreadful; and their rings were full of eyes round about them four.

19 And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up.

**20 Whithersoever the spirit was to go, they went, thither was their spirit to go; and the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.**

21 When those went, these went; and when those stood, these stood; and when those were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up over against them: for the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels.

22 And the likeness of the firmament upon the heads of the living creature was as the color of the terrible crystal, stretched forth over their heads above.

23 And under the firmament were their wings straight, the one toward the other: every one had two, which covered on this side, and every one had two, which covered on that side, their bodies.

**24 And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings.**

25 And there was a voice from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood, and had let down their wings.

**26 And above the firmament that was over their heads was the likeness of a throne, as the appearance of a sapphire stone: and upon the likeness of the throne was the likeness as the appearance of a man above upon it.**

27 And I saw as the color of amber, as the appearance of fire round about within it, from the appearance of his loins even upward, and from the appearance of his loins even downward, I saw as it were the appearance of fire, and it had brightness round about.

**28 As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about.** This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord. And when I saw it, I fell upon my face, and I heard a voice of one that spake.

Listen to Dr. Gabriel's lecture on this topic. Here is the YouTube link: <https://youtu.be/U7G3RMCVff8>

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**Dr. Douglas Gabriel**

