

April

From a series of monthly meditational essays by Eugene Halliday.

Our fourth month was the second month of the ancient Roman calendar. Tradition says its name derives from the Latin "Aprilis", from "aperire", which means *to open*, for April is the month of opening buds, the month when trees and plants burst forth with the green life winter had hidden away inside them. It is the month when the earth herself seems to open to receive the sun's light and warmth and to give in return the first evidence of her secret inner vitality.

In this month the Romans held games, wild dances and orgies in honour of the Mother Goddess Cybele, and her lover Attis, the youthful god of vegetation. Almost everywhere in the ancient world, under one name or another, a Mother Goddess was worshipped as a personification of the earth and her potential fruitfulness.

Today, in spite of all our accumulation of scientific knowledge, we can still stand in wonder at Mother Earth's endless power to bring forth the myriads of living beings we see around us.

But we can take out of a box no more than has been put into it. And we have to say the same about the earth. Whatever may evolve from the earth we are forced to say that it must have been involved into it. We know that at some remote period the earth was not as it now is. We know that it has been condensed from some primary mass of solar energy, as have other planets. We know, therefore, that whatever may come out of the earth has been condensed into it from the original mass of energy constituting the solar system.

We are therefore compelled to say that every living thing, every plant and animal, and every human being on earth has somehow originally been involved into the earth. No evolution without previous involution! Whatever the properties of matter which have enabled it to give rise to the life-forms we know, we must accept that these properties existed originally in the mass of the solar energy system. So far science would not disagree with us.

But the greatest question we can ask ourselves is, "How did the intelligence which evolves in living beings get into the original energy mass of the solar system?" This is a question with which science is not yet equipped to deal, though it is a question of the utmost importance.

We know that the earth today is a condensation of energy originally dispersed in space. Today we walk upon this compacted energy mass and accept it as "solid". We say "the earth is God's foot-stool" and understand that somehow it serves as a central point of reference from which life may manifest itself and extend its influence back again into the outer space from which it came. The astronauts who leave the earth are rocketed into outer space not as into something totally unfamiliar to them. The substance of the stars is not totally alien to our own.

The ancients were not wholly irrational when they personified the earth as the Great Mother. Nor were the priests of early religions wrong to conceive the original energy of the universe as the All-Father. For between the earth and the boundless energy beyond it, and from the interplay of these two factors, has sprung all the living forms with which we are familiar.

The Great Earth Mother is a condensation of the Heavenly Father's spiritual energy. Just as Eve was made from the substance of Adam, so the principal of material existence, the Earth Mother was made from the substantial energy of God the Father. And whatever the great Earth Mother may produce from within her, whatever living beings she may bring forth from within her substance, the energy of these living beings has been placed in her by the Great Spiritual All-Father.

Thus in April, when we see Mother Earth putting forth her life-force in her children, the plants and trees, the animals and men she bears, we can see them as evidence of the work of the All-Father graciously poured into her. There is nothing the earth may bring forth from within her substance that has not been placed in her by the original creative intelligent power of the Infinite Spirit.

What we can say of the earth as a whole we can say also of its parts. There is no part of the earth that has not received its qualities from the creative spirit that produced it. And there is no creature upon earth which has not received from the same source its vital energies and intelligence and will.

The material of our own bodies, derived from the earth, is thus ultimately derived from the same source as the earth. What we find in our bodies, our action tendencies, our appetites, and feeling and thinking process, all has its origin in the creative intelligent energy that brought the earth into being.

We need to familiarise ourselves with this fact, for upon it rests the whole meaning of humanity's presence on earth.

In the beginning of God's creative action He made the heaven and the earth. Hidden in the earth were the "seeds" or potentialities of all the living beings that would later show themselves on earth. The potentialities of every plant and animal and human being were involved into the substance of Mother Earth, and she, like any other mother, held them inside herself until the time came for each kind of life to show itself.

In a certain sense the earth is like a vast tomb in which have been buried all the forms of all the living beings which have come out of her, and all those yet to come. And this tomb is the very same tomb, in its widest symbolical sense, from which Christ called Lazarus forth. And "Lazarus" signifies here *that which is taken out of the tomb*. Life itself is called forth from the dark earth with the potent words, "Lazarus, come forth!"

Here we stand on the edge of the Great Mystery. From the dark, compacted, apparently dead and inert earth is called forth by the vibrant voice of the Incarnate Spirit

the evidence of the All-Father's abounding, infinite life, poured into the Earth-Mother by an incomprehensible act of grace.

The Anglo-Saxons called April the "Easter Month" after Eostre, their Goddess of Spring. Here in April we can feel the real significance of the opening of the earth's mysteries. We can see the ever-brightening sun's rays strike upon the dark receiving earth, feel the sun's increasing warmth conjuring the hidden life-forms from within the Earth Mother, opening to his call.

And we can feel our own souls opening in response to the call of infinite life that pours into us.

We have only to open our understanding to be able to comprehend the significance of all openings.

He that was dead can live again. He that is locked in the tomb of his own dark self-imagery can answer the calling voice of the infinite life; "Lazarus, come forth!"