



TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE JANUARY 21st

Overnight on January 20-21 a total lunar eclipse will occur over North and South America (see image at end). It will reach its fullest just after midnight on the 21st at Eastern time in the USA, taking about an hour from start to completion. For USA time zones west of Eastern time it will occur one, two and three hours earlier respectively. This is the first lunar eclipse in 2019, which is a year heavy with eclipses, three solar and three lunar eclipses. The only other total eclipse is a solar eclipse over the south Pacific Ocean near South America on July 2nd. Lunar eclipses occur at Full Moon when the Moon is in its own node, meaning it is on that point where the path of the Moon crosses the apparent path of the Sun (the path of the Earth), called the ecliptic. Therefore the Moon is in a direct line opposite the Sun on the same plane, not at a tilted angle, so that the Earth passes directly between them causing the Earth's shadow to pass across the Moon. This eclipse will occur with the Moon in the stars of Cancer (the Crab) and the Sun opposite just having crossed into the fixed stars of Capricorn (the Sea Goat) the day before. This Full Moon is also what is called a "supermoon" because it is in its perigee at the time of full moon. The perigee is that point of the slight ellipse of the moon's orbit which brings it closest to the Earth, thus it appears larger than normal.

Every eclipse has a life span which is about 70 years much like the human life. This is called the Saros period and they are each numbered and tracked. This lunar eclipse is Saros 134 and has a "life span" of 72 eclipses, with one eclipse every 18 years (1 eclipse "year" = 18 earth years), of which this one is the 27th eclipse in its biography. One could in some ways see the parallels to human developmental biography of 72 years and the 7 year life cycles for these eclipse biographies. Thus you could say that

the time of the total eclipse occurs during its adulthood. Then it passes into later life before disappearing completely. This Saros 134 was "born" on April 1, 1550 and will pass away on May 29, 2830 with its last very partial eclipse. This Saros began its full eclipses at its 19th eclipse "year" in 1874 and its last total eclipse will be in 2325 in its 44th eclipse "year". So you can see that we are looking at a long life span over history. A thorough study of these eclipse beings in relation to historical events would be indeed quite complex. One could ask, what happened in 1550 at this eclipse birth? How did it unfold over history?

So with these astronomical facts, how can we more deeply relate ourselves to these eclipses? Rudolf Steiner had something to say about the spiritual reality underlying eclipses. After speaking of solar eclipses he continues with lunar eclipses:

*And again, when there is an eclipse of the moon, the man of today merely says: "Now the earth comes between the sun and the moon; hence we see the shadow cast upon the moon by the earth." That is the physical explanation. But in this case also the old initiate knew that a spiritual reality was behind the physical fact. **He knew that when there is an eclipse of the moon, thoughts stream through darkness down upon the earth; and that such thoughts have a closer relationship with the subconscious life than with the conscious life of the human being.** The old initiates often made use of a certain simile when speaking to their pupils. It is, of course, necessary to translate their words into modern language, but this is the gist of what they said: "Visionaries and dreamers love to go for rambles by moonlight, when the moon is full. **There are, however, certain people who have no wish to receive the good thoughts coming to them from the cosmos, but who, on the contrary, are desirous of getting hold of evil, diabolical thoughts. Such people will choose the moment of a lunar eclipse for their nocturnal wanderings.**"*

Here again we approach a spiritual reality in a physical event. Today we must not absorb such teaching in its old form. Were we to do so, we should be led into superstition. But it is very necessary to reach a point at which we are able once more to perceive the spiritual which permeates all cosmic processes. Eclipses of the sun and moon, recurring as they do in the course of every year, may really be looked upon as "safety-valves." A safety-valve is there to avert danger, to provide an outlet for something or other — steam, for instance — at the right moment. One of the safety-valves which makes its appearance in the cosmos and to which we give the name of a solar eclipse, serves the purpose of carrying out into space in a Luciferic way, the evil that spreads over the earth, in order that evil may work havoc in a wider, less concentrated sphere. The other safety-valve, the lunar eclipse, exists for the purpose of allowing the evil thoughts which are present in the cosmos to approach those human beings who are desirous of being possessed by them. In matters of this kind people do not, as a rule, act in full consciousness, but the facts are nevertheless real — just as real as the attraction of a magnet for small particles of iron. Such are the forces at work, in the cosmos — forces no less potent than the forces we analyse and investigate today in our chemical laboratories. (Human Questions and Cosmic Answers)

Rudolf Steiner makes one very important statement in the above quote which must be considered here: **Today we must not absorb such teaching in its old form.** Earlier in this same lecture he speaks about how the ancients in the mysteries would place their questions to the Sun at New Moon, meaning when the Moon and Sun were conjunct together, and then wait the approximately 14 days to receive the answer from the Sun given by the Full Moon reflection of the Sun. These were the times before the incarnation of the Sun Spirit, the Christ, into the Earth when the human being sought answers through

initiation from the cosmos of stars. Now things have changed completely and this is something that must not be forgotten. This is why "teaching in its old form" should not be used today because it is no longer valid for modern human beings. This is also the essence of the new astrosophy, in which the human being must begin to "speak to the stars" out of the new Christic Ego forces. There will be in fact those who do seek to use this eclipse in the "old ways", even consciously working against the Sun nature in the Earth to achieve darker goals. As Steiner states, there are certain people desirous of getting hold of evil thoughts. This of course is a reality then and now. With this eclipse particularly, those who seek to serve the goals of materialism and those who are working consciously with the forces of darkness will make use of this shadow.

However, how do we who are pursuing the new path, the new Sun Christic initiation, now possible through the Incarnation, meet this eclipse?

This is the Full Moon which follows the New Moon which occurred at Epiphany on January 6th, so it is deeply related to that New Moon. At that New Moon we remembered that event which was the entry of the Sun Spirit into incarnation at the Baptism of John. We then were uniting our consciousness with this new birth into the Earth which would give us the power to begin the reunion of humanity with its true purpose, to freely serve the impulse of love that will transform our Earth. Thus at this Full Moon instead of looking outside ourselves to the stars for answers as those ancients did, we are to offer in full consciousness to the cosmos our efforts in uniting the Earth and our own "I" with the Christ impulse. We are to activate in us that which was born at Epiphany, the entirely new Sun impulse in the Earth. In this way we counter-act the "shadow" that blocks the cosmic Sun at Full Moon with our answer to this shadow force.

This Full Moon as said before occurs with the Moon in Cancer and the Sun in Capricorn. An understanding of these constellations can give us some answers in how we can meet this eclipse. The constellation of Cancer is connected with the philosophical world view of materialism, the world view that everything is a material process and there is no spiritual. Capricorn is connected with the philosophical world view of spiritualism, the view that all genuine reality is found only in the spirit and matter is only an illusion. Thus we have the Moon in materialism opposite the Sun in spiritualism which normally would maintain a kind of cosmic balance, but at the eclipse the Sun balance is blocked so that the lunar impulse irradiated from Cancer is predominate. This Cancer impulse of separation from the spiritual once served the purpose to lead humans to freedom but now serves the anti-Christic efforts in the world. The Cancer symbol is the vortex, two in-curving swirls with a gap between them in the center. It could be seen as a whole sphere or circle that is broken. This is a picture of the "broken bridge" between the Divine Spiritual and the Earthly world of humanity, to which Cancer is related. It is remembered in the Norse myth of the Bifrost Bridge, the shining rainbow bridge, which once connected Asgard and Midgard, the world of the gods with the world of humans. Yet in our time, we can know that the "gap" or the vortex center of Cancer has been filled with the incarnation of that through which the new bridge can be built. The center of the vortex is a potent "empty space" which can be the center point source of transformation or a kind of black hole. So it must be remembered that Cancer is not simply a force for materialism but is also now the place of the potential of the spiritual "I" to arise out of this "gap", this empty place.

Cancer is also the constellation where the vernal point stood during the Ancient Indian epoch, when humanity for the first time experienced the loss of that direct vision of the gods it once enjoyed. The

Ancient Indian still longed for this time of union with the gods and experienced the world of the senses as the world of maya, of illusion, and strove in their spiritual practices to "remember" that union with the divine which was receding, turning away from the earthly. Cancer is also that region of stars which are connected with the descent of the human into earthly birth, into embodiment on Earth. It was always seen as the "gate of birth". Capricorn is opposite and was in ancient times seen as the "gateway to the gods". It was the path of initiation into the divine world. So we have many pictures of these two constellations with which to enhance our spiritual understanding of this event in these starry regions.

Finally, we can look at one other clue as to how we can meet this eclipse. This eclipse will occur in the same location in the zodiac in which the Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter will occur at Christmastime in December of 2020. Coincidence? I doubt it. Without going into depth about this Great Conjunction which could take us into great complexity, it can be noted that this Great Conjunction is a memory of the Great Conjunction connected to the star of the Magi and the birth of Zarathustra. It is one corner of a great cosmic triangle known as the Golden Star. The name Zoroaster (Zarathustra) means golden star. It was the Christmas Star, but to elaborate further on this would go well beyond the scope of this article. This triangle rotates over time around the stars of the zodiac so that each corner is activated every 60 years, with a Great Conjunction happening in one corner every 20 years. Thus you can say that this corner is related to the Great Annunciation and historically can be seen in this way as a "remembering" and a call to humanity to unite with this impulse of a new annunciation. In recent history, this corner of the Golden Triangle was activated with the Great Conjunction of 1901 which was at the end of Kali Yuga in 1899 and was at the start of Rudolf Steiner's public teaching - a new annunciation. It was again activated in 1961 and can be related to much of the "new" impulses towards a universal humanity that began in the 1960's human rights movements. It is returning in December, 2020.

In the cosmos we must learn to see the mysteries of Time in relation to the planetary world, the cosmic intelligences. This is not time as we relate to it in our earthly thinking, which is time as quantity or distance, where we use spatial concepts such as long and short in relation to time. But rather time as qualitative, the rhythmical relationships among the cosmic intelligences and the human being - time as movement, living weaving angular gestures.

So, at the eclipse on this midnight of January 21, we can think about that event commemorated at the New Moon of January 6th this year, Epiphany, and our new capacity out of that event in history to both prepare for the Great Conjunction of 2020 as a new spiritual annunciation or impulse in the world to counter the ever hardening impacts of materialism. We can think thoughts out of the true Sun spirit to counter that which might rise up out of our subconscious more strongly in this shadow time (which is not only that one night of the eclipse but which precedes and follows the eclipse). This subconscious sphere is not only in our own personal untransformed subconscious, but is also the realm of the "subconscious" or one could say the sub-earthly realms inside the Earth, which also work up in us and in humanity at large in opposition to the higher awakening of the true "I" in us and in the Earth.

Jonathan Hilton, January 20th, 2019

