



## Advent and the Stars

The first Sunday of the four Advent Sundays was November 28th. The last Advent Sunday will be December 19th, taking us almost to winter solstice. We then have the "gap" of five days until Christmas Eve on December 24th and the festival of the birth of the child in the manger leading us into the Holy Nights. One important point that is found in cosmology is the significance of the "gap". Precision is a function of machines, not of life. So, we see, for example, in the cycle of the year, the festivals do not fall exactly on the astronomical solstices/equinoxes, but there is a gap of a few days. Likewise, though calculation is an important tool in star knowledge, when one enters into the realities, one continually encounters inexactitude. For example, the geometric forms created by the planet geocentric orbits never come back to close off into an exact form but leave a bit of a gap before starting the new form. Or one realizes that most of the numbers in cosmological measurements often shift a bit due to the eccentricity of planetary movements or other factors. Or a measurement number will very often not be exact but end with a decimal figure that goes on into "eternity", such as Phi, the Golden Mean, which goes into infinity after the decimal point. The "gap" holds a profound spiritual truth in many areas of esotericism. So, these gaps are to be celebrated because they represent the breathing life element, even the spiritual element, that continually prevents the mechanization of the cosmos.

How can we bring a cosmological consciousness to this Advent time? First, it is important to remember that in astrophysics we ever strive to transform the modern mechanistic materialistic view of the cosmos of stars into a spiritual perspective. This means that we learn to "see, hear and ultimately know" the stars not as material objects "out there" in space, but as realms of consciousness and being with whom we seek to unite our consciousness. The material objects are only the necessary pointers for us in our

time of object consciousness, which we must use but which now we begin to transform thru spiritual cognition. We begin by re-cognizing that the stars are our own being, for example, the zodiac is our human form, Saturn lives in our bones and our karma and our memory and Jupiter in our nervous system, our thinking and our ideals and goals for the future. This truth is beautifully presented by Rudolf Steiner in his verse on the Isis Sophia, who was "slain" by Lucifer and carried off into the world of "space". But the verse continues with, "Christ Will working in the human being shall free you [Sophia] from the bonds of Lucifer [the illusion of matter] and on the sails of spirit cognition in human souls, waken you to new life." This is the path of astrosophy. So, let us begin with the spatial and temporal as a starting point to bring new light to our understanding of the time of Advent.

The time period of Advent is four weeks, but to be precise, it is four Sundays. This distinction is of supreme importance. Why? Four weeks is 28 days. This is a lunar cycle. It takes 27.3 days for the Moon to complete one sidereal orbit (meaning from a star point and back to that star point) and 29.5 days for the cycle of new moon to new moon (meaning from conjunction with the Sun to the next conjunction with the Sun). This synodic period is slightly longer because the Sun is also moving so the Moon must catch up to it again. This 28/29-day cycle has an interesting and significant correlation to the orbit of Saturn, which is 29.45 years for one complete cycle or orbit. The time being of the Moon mirrors the time being of Saturn. In this correlation we can get a glimpse of the profound wisdom in the cosmos revealed in rhythm and ratios. We have the Moon, that sphere closest to the Earth as a kind of microcosmic image of Saturn, that sphere which lies at the periphery of our cosmos (in terms of the classical planets). The orbital days of one are the same as the orbital year of the other. This astronomical reality reflects a deeper truth. Both Saturn and the Moon are profoundly correlated to incarnation. They stand on either "end" of our journey between death and a new birth and are both deeply connected to embodiment. In the sphere of Saturn, we complete our long experience after one incarnation and we also turn our attention to the return into a new incarnation. This is why the Saturn sphere is often called the time of the cosmic midnight. Here in the Saturn realm we form the seed, or the blueprint even, for our coming incarnation within the bosom of lofty beings. This "seed" or karmic plan is as great as the universe (of course we are not speaking spatially) and it is this plan which then becomes the basis for our karma even to the physical organism. This seed formation in the Saturn realm receives the twelvefold human form from the zodiac which becomes the foundation for our ego experience on the Earth. It also imprints in this seed the "master plan" for our karma. In the Moon sphere this seed or plan takes on flesh. Rudolf Steiner describes a moment, which can be calculated in astrosophy, when the human being while in the Moon sphere prior to incarnation, experiences a "loss". It is the moment when the "spirit seed" unites with the embryo creation on the Earth. It is then that the human being turns towards the oncoming life and the beings of the Moon sphere, the human angel, goes to work. For it is in the Moon sphere that during the ten lunar months of gestation, this plan (along with all that we have picked up on the return journey through the cosmic spheres) is woven into the embryo in the womb of the mother. We become flesh. Also, in the sphere of the Moon, that which was left behind from the previous incarnation as too dross to enter into higher realms, that which was part of our lower nature, awaits us and is also incorporated into our being for the oncoming incarnation. So, in this 28/29 rhythm we have both the Moon, our last stepping stone to Earth, and Saturn, our very beginnings towards a new incarnation. Both of them deeply related to our "body".

Yet as pointed out above, there is an important distinction in Advent. It is not defined so much as 28 day or four weeks but is focused more on the four Sundays, i.e. four Sun Days leading to Christmas. In just this detail we have the crux of Advent, in that it points to the Sun, not the Moon, and the task of the Sun in superseding the Moon. This points us to the work of Rudolf Steiner in revealing the pre-earthly sacrificial deeds of Christ in preparation for embodiment in the physical body. So, in lighting the four

Advent candles we are bringing to awareness this process of the light, "the true light which enlightens everyone", the spiritual Sun, approaching incarnation. It is just this dynamic between the Sun and the Moon in us which is the content of our activity during Advent. We too must take on the preparation, through sacrifice, of our own being, our Moon nature, for the birth of the Light, for the Sun in us to supersede and transform the Moon in us. Saturn and Moon are about our becoming flesh, entering the karma of Earth existence. Advent is about our preparation for, not only Christmas, but for the entire other half of the cycle of the year to summer, which is about the further transformative power of the Christ in us and in the Earth to lead us and it into the future.

We not only have this cosmological temporal rhythm in Advent, but we also have a spatial/temporal activity during Advent which can help us in our work to "speak" to the cosmos of the stars. In our age, during Advent, the Sun traverses the actual stars of the constellation of Scorpio (see the cover image of the Sun in Scorpion now). The Sun entered the stars of Scorpio on November 23rd and will step into the Archer (to the tip of the arrow) just before winter solstice. If we look back to the article on the Micha-el season, we can remember this mighty trinity of constellations: the Virgin Sophia (Virgo) being defended by Michael (Scales) from the Dragon forces (Scorpio), depicting the great war in heaven fought by Michael when the dragon forces were cast down to the Earth and into humanity. The Sun progresses during the Micha-el season through these stars and now during Advent into the stars of the fallen dragon forces. So, the Sun passing through the stars of Scorpion are a cosmic picture of our soul challenges during Advent. To carry the higher Self, the Sun, into the fallen forces of Scorpion in ourselves!

The Scorpion was at one time an Eagle. If we look at the four archetypes of Lion, Bull, Eagle and Man cosmologically, they are represented by Leo, Taurus, Scorpio and Aquarius respectively. Rudolf Steiner describes the origins of these archetypes as related to the evolution of the human being as the various animal forms descended early into physicality so that the true human form might evolve properly. Each of these four forms reveals an aspect of the fourfold human being that condensed so to speak into an animal nature: the Lion, the etheric; the Bull, the physical; the Eagle, the astral, culminating in Man, the ego. But what happened that the Eagle became the Scorpion? The story of the Fall as described in Genesis tells us what happened. The astral nature, the Eagle nature, was inculcated with the Luciferic principle, drawing the human into self-awareness and awakening the desire element inherent in egotism. Thus, the astral body was corrupted as part of the greater plan for human independence. The Eagle astral element, that once lived in the heights and soared above in a clairvoyant perception, fell and become the sting of death, which is the condition of separation from the divine. So that now the Scorpion carries the consequences of that separation in the astral nature and on into the bodily nature. Scorpio altogether carries what Willi Sucher describes as the "death perspective", the consequence of separation. In his lectures *Egyptian Myths and Mysteries*, Rudolf Steiner presents mighty pictures of human evolution, and points out that the Scorpion is deeply connected with that time when duality of sex first appeared and corresponds to "that which was the summit of animal evolution, the time when man acquired sex", which he elsewhere describes as the creative Word of Brahmin enclosed in Eros love. Here we encounter very deep mysteries of the relation to the creative power of the Word and the forces in sexuality, probably one of the most powerful forces in human existence. So, Scorpion carries much that corresponds to the animal nature which has been corrupted over evolution as this nature became more identified with the body and the world of the senses through the astral body. It is the cosmological imagination of the untransformed astral nature awaiting redemption by the higher Self working in us. Thus, the path of Advent is the path of self-knowledge, or the path, as described in *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, of meeting the lesser guardian of the threshold which asks of us to become purified so that we are prepared at Christmas to meet the pure Child, the pure Nathan being.

For this Child of the manger is the one who did not participate in the Fall, but appears again as the first Adam in pure uncorrupted form to become the bearer of the Christ. Willi Sucher presents a new future image of the Scorpion, which is not a return to the Eagle of old clairvoyance, but rather a new bird, the Dove, which is the image of the Holy Spirit, the transformed astral body.

When we speak of Advent as a time of "becoming" I am reminded of the words during Advent as part of the Christian Community Act of Consecration of Man, which speaks of "becoming". Also, in the prologue to the gospel of John are the words, to those who receive the I AM is given the "power to become" children of the Divine. Rudolf Steiner gave specific gospel readings for the various festival seasons. It is striking that from Michaelmas to Advent the gospel readings are drawn from the Book of the Apocalypse, which are mighty cosmic pictures of human evolution into the future and the trials on a grand scale of the future ages of humanity. Yet, during Advent, the gospel readings given by Steiner are from the so-called "Little Apocalypse" spoken by Christ (Luke 21: 25-36) which speak of the huge upheavals and disasters as well as great fear and destruction within humanity (much like what seems to be in preview in our times now). Yet it also speaks of the appearance of the etheric Christ proclaiming that our redemption is near if we can stand upright and wakeful at all times. With the current world we live in, these words in Luke and this time of Advent take on an even more potent meaning...to be wakeful at all times and stand upright.

In the outer world, Advent is perhaps a time of greatest busy-ness and shopping (though it may be all digital during covid time), distracting us from the true challenge of Advent which is to confront our "self" (with a small 's') with all that is in need of transformation and prepare the way for the Sun at midnight, the birth of the higher Self at Christmas. Sergei Prokofieff in his book, *The Cycle of the Year*, describes the four weeks of Advent as a path that leads from the ordinary earthly self, or lower self, to the higher self in the Nathan child on December 25th. Then the Holy Nights lead us from this higher self to the True I AM, the cosmic Christ at Epiphany who became flesh. As we look to our starry home, we can see these truths in their script. However, as Rudolf Steiner expresses in another verse, now is the time for us to begin to learn to speak to the stars. It is not the stars themselves determining us, but rather our conscious spiritual striving which offers something to the world of the stars. This means that our spiritual path on and with the Earth gives something to the beings of the stars who await our activity of sacrifice. In this way do we become, not children, but brothers and sisters to the gods in fulfilling the divine evolutionary plan for humanity.

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