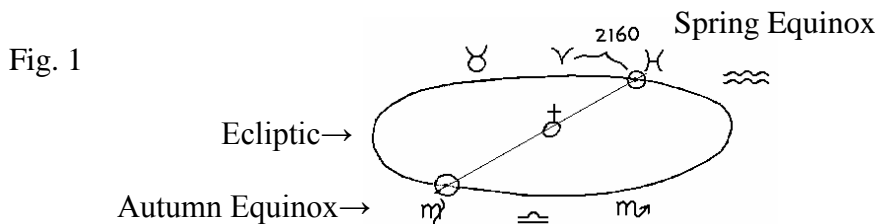


PROFILE OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY
Unrevised Lecture Course by WILLI SUCHER
July 14-21, 1966 at Hawkwood College, Stroud
(Drawings in these lectures were not drawn by Willi)

THE BACKGROUND - July 14 1966
2907 BC (Egypt)—747 BC (Greece—Rome)—1413 AD (Modern Age)

In these coming lectures, we must try to find our bearings in the background of the 20th century and also find a strong relationship between the cosmic world and our planet. Therefore, we should regard the cosmic rhythms from various aspects of the cosmos for our guidance. To do this, we will first of all deal with the precession of the equinoxes. We know that the vernal point, or equinox, indicates the beginning of spring around March 21, when the Sun is especially related to one of the constellations of the fixed-star Zodiac. These fixed stars, consisting of the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, are a stable feature in the heavens.

We have to remember that the Sun, in its journey round the ecliptic, returns to the same position every 365 days, and when we look in the direction of the Sun, we see the world of the fixed stars standing behind it in extra-solar space. Approximately every 2,160 years the Sun gradually moves from one constellation to the next, and this is called the precession, the path of the Sun around the ecliptic (see Fig. 1). Incidentally, we are approaching this from the Ptolemaic aspect, in which, with the Earth as center, we have no sense of the Earth's movement but only that of the apparent movement of the Sun around the Earth on which we stand.



Today I wish to take the movement of the autumnal equinox rather than the spring equinox, which is the opposite viewpoint, as it is seen at Michaelmas. In spring the cosmic forces pour down upon our Earth, but in the autumn there is a kind of recession or withdrawal, leaving humanity alone. It is then that we can and must endeavor to retain our integrity and develop our own consciousness with renewed inner strength.

I want you to note particularly the constellations of Virgin, Scales, and Scorpion. Remember, too, that at the time of Christ the autumnal equinox moved from Scales to Virgin. This we may call the great transition.

In the ancient Mystery places, the neophyte experienced great forces streaming from the solar system, either through deep meditation or intuition, which can be described as the Scales element, or that of equilibrium. The shorthand symbols that were given to the constellations provide an even deeper insight.

In Egypt, a pair of Scales was held before Osiris, during the time that the souls of the dead were brought before him by the dog-headed Anubis and weighed against a feather, so that they might prove themselves worthy to go on to higher spiritual realms. The constellation of Scales can still be experienced as a realm connected with probation and purification, whereby one can inwardly evolve and rise to higher stages of experience and existence. This is the Scales aspect at Michaelmas.

More than two thousand years ago, this was proved by the trials of the Jewish people after the Exodus, when they were given their true task in history by Moses. This was a time of probation for them, when they prepared for the coming of Christ through varying vicissitudes, such as the forty years in the desert, right up to their exile from Palestine. These were among the tremendous trials of humanity.

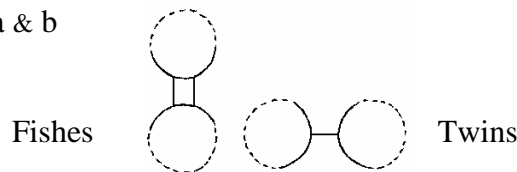
The autumnal side of the equinox is connected with the inner human soul element, while the spring equinox is connected with the cosmic counterpart. Therefore, we must compare the autumnal Scales with the spring Ram. With the spring equinox in the opposite constellation of Ram, we find it indicated that the Jewish people had to prepare for Christ. At the Exodus they were given the symbol of the Passover Lamb—the Ram symbolically laden with the sins of the whole world, or people, and pushed into the abyss. Why a ram? John the Baptist explained, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world.” This was an imagination annually prepared before the Jewish people. The Imagination of the Christ was recognized by John the Baptist as a Being of a high esoteric degree from a Hierarchy of Divine Beings, who was called The Ram of God, as Head of the Kyriotetes. Rudolf Steiner refers to the Kyriotetes as the Spirits of Wisdom, who long ago endowed beings with the power of life, and Christ was their Head.

Now, let us discuss the moving of the equinoctial points to Fishes (spring) and Virgin (autumn). We have seen Scales as a realm of probation, though this is only one facet of the cosmic story. Rudolf Steiner suggested that the symbol of Virgin represented three portals, which seem to be flanked by a serpent. As we move in the direction of Virgin, we move toward the greater cosmic mysteries, not actually more important but those leading to our cosmic origins and that of the world. Therefore, it would seem that initiation follows probation, for the Egyptian neophyte was carefully prepared and purified and finally passed through three portals, or stages of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. Finally, the neophyte experienced the stages of evolution.

This is the Michaelmas experience of the present Age and why we chose this as our background. Rudolf Steiner was obliged to bring us *Occult Science* as a vital message, because we must learn to recognize the wisdom of the cosmic serpent and also comprehend the cosmic wisdom of the Anthropo-Sophia.

The spring equinox, opposite the autumn, is in Fishes. In Fishes two worlds meet, it seems to me, whereas in Twins they depart, and the cosmic and human worlds are separated rather than united (see below). But in Fishes as they lie side-by-side, they are united, and we find here the symbol of cosmic brotherhood. We must learn again in this Age to stand toward the cosmos, not as separate entities, but in order to find the spiritual world on our own level and to raise ourselves in an established communion.

Fig. 1a & b



The autumnal equinox will move into Lion within about 500 years, but Pisces is more extended. The cosmos gives impetus, but the inertia of the Earth is much slower in its realization. What is the Michaelmas expectation for humanity?

The symbol of Lion would seem to represent the head of a lion with a long tail and no body. However, a circle always indicates an entity that has come into being, one that has found itself. The present human difficulty is to find oneself in our innermost being and to find our own integrity. Once this is achieved, we must go to the periphery, into infinity, and gain a new relationship to the cosmos. The future Age of the autumnal point in Lion, with Waterman as the vernal point, indicates a totally new relationship for humanity.

When the Sun enters the Aquarian vernal point, we can be aware of two waves representing both height and depth—a rhythmic movement—as above, so below. When we have found our self in the cosmos as an ego being, we can go safely into the periphery for the first time. We would become lost if our ego weren't strong enough, but through our strengthening we can realize the cosmic rhythms in freedom, because we will have worked with the natural rhythms in the past. In the future, we will be required to work with cosmic rhythms and forces and yet retain our identity.

The Age of Lion/Waterman will bring to humanity the necessity to live with cosmic rhythms. We already know the rhythms of the year and of the Moon, but they are only a fraction of the cosmic rhythms. If we will learn to work with these, we may achieve miracles. For instance, the morning and evening rhythms connected with meditation and medicaments: Dr. Hauschka has proved that the latter can be preserved without alcohol for years, solely by exposure to the rising and setting sun for short periods at a time. We must learn to work consciously with such rhythms, and for this we will need the Michaelmas quality of retaining our identity while yet being able to go out into the cosmos.

When we look back to the points of Bull (spring) and Scorpion (autumn), we find we are back in the Egypto-Chaldean civilization. We realize there is hidden a tremendous mystery and truth in symbols, but they are no longer understood. Sometimes the Scorpion is represented with the sting pointing downward and sometimes upward. We can compare it with Virgin, for it also has three portals to cosmic life. But now in our time we go downward to find the new secrets.

We noted earlier that in Scales we moved through the portals of the mysteries. In Virgin we begin to penetrate to the cosmic mysteries. Through Scorpion we move toward the lesser mysteries: Isis being a Goddess who represented the soul forces appearing in humans. In Scorpion, Archer, etc., we can now enter the lesser mysteries of the human soul and its development, of people and the higher principles to be manifested in them.

Scorpion is associated with death—cosmic death in the human soul—in all mythologies, even with the American Indian, while Virgin is associated with cosmic life. Not only is the riddle of death demonstrated by the Scorpion symbol, but also the mystery of the human resurrection and rejuvenation. It is therefore significant as to whether its sting points down to death only, or whether it points up and toward resurrection through the three portals. This upward thrust is also spear-like and reminds us of the story of Parsifal, in which the spear had caused so much desolation and sickness. The mystery of death played a great part in the Egyptian mysteries, which were inspired by Isis, the Soul Being of the cosmos, and the great riddle of the human soul.

The Bull is opposite in the vernal equinox. This gives a tremendously exalted picture of the cosmos: Ram as the Lamb of God and the Bull symbol as the Logos. The God Ptah was the great inspirer of all artists, the guardian God of all craftsmen. He was the architect of the cosmos, and all was created by His word. All Egyptian buildings and temples were built on this principle.

However, the gate to the cosmos slowly closed, and people ceased to learn what stood beyond their creations. We need this background for our future evening work, especially the present perspective of Virgin and Fishes. We must live through this situation, called upon by the Divine World, to break through to the mysteries of cosmic life (see *Occult Science*). Also, there is arising in humanity a strong spiritual requirement to create brotherhood later in external conditions, but this must first be realized spiritually. We must start with human social conditions. The present problem weaves through our social life as to what to do with the racial problem and hierarchical social orders, with many unhappy attempts at a solution. This can only be done on a spiritual foundation, by establishing our Virgin background—our origins and future. This must be recreated anew, out of a cosmic wisdom. Only this can solve the problem of the Age, and of Fishes.