

## *Astronomical Letters*

By Willi Sucher while at Albrighton Hall – November 1951 to 25 December 1952

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### *Letter 3 - April 1952*

The time has come again to prepare a star-map and a calendar of the major events in the sky for the coming four months. In the course of these preparations, this question impressed itself on me very strongly: What do we really attempt by making these calendars and by watching the events in the starry world? I believe the answer can be put into a few words. We want to acquire the capacity of reading the script of the stars in a manner that is congenial to the requirements of the present age and the ages to come.

How can we achieve this aim? It would certainly not be very helpful to you if I gave you predictions similar to those that you can find in all sorts of almanacs. The present age, and the future still more, will require the attainment of such capacities in full consciousness. We must learn to have a full comprehension at any moment of the given facts without falling back on any authority, not even the authority of tradition. Only then can we hope to fulfill our task in the preparation of the future.

An excellent example of the futility of the old style of astrological prediction is Nostradamus (1503-1566). It is certainly fascinating to read his prophecies, which he gave in his book, *Centuries*. They are partly contained in very veiled indications, but some of the contents that have been deciphered have become true in an amazing fashion. Yet we must admit that these prophecies, although they reveal the most fascinating visionary capacities of their author, are not really helpful. However interesting the tableau of the future appears in his book, *Centuries*, humanity seems to be a helpless victim of the wheels of fate in it. Only if we comprehend the sources of such knowledge in full consciousness can we expect to find the healing medicine for the turmoil of external events.

It should be needless to say that on this road we have chosen, we shall require first of all a fundamental understanding of anthroposophy. We certainly could not make any progress without having prepared ourselves through anthroposophy first. In particular, the indications about the attainment of higher knowledge must be taken by us very seriously. We should never forget that a new spiritual cosmology is only one of the steps of Rosicrucian Initiation. (See *Occult Science*, chapter V: Cognition of Higher Worlds; Initiation, the seven stages of higher knowledge). Rudolf Steiner has emphasized over and over again that an occupation with the script of the stars should not be undertaken at the beginning but rather at the end of a career as an occultist.

It is essential to study these stages of Initiation, to collect and to observe all the advice that Dr. Steiner has given on these matters. (In lecture cycle No.2, *The Theosophy of Rosicrucianism*, lecture 14, he also speaks about the seven stages of Christian and Rosicrucian Initiation.)

One of the major mistakes that is very often made in the study of the stars is an attitude of direct expectation. We are inclined, of course, to look away from the Earth and up to the stars, where we perceive them in cosmic space and thus hope to decipher their meaning. This approach is mistaken and certainly does not lead to essential results in the reading of the script of the stars. A radical change of attitude is required if we want to succeed. Of course, a sound astronomical knowledge gained on the basis of observation and disciplined thinking is essentially needed, otherwise we are like blind wanderers in a strange country.

In ancient times one knew quite well that a direct gazing upward to the stars does not lead to a wisdom of the stars. There has survived into our age the custom of making charts of starry events. This was done in ancient days, not only for the purpose of remembering those events, but the initiates created thereby a kind of reflecting surface or mirror of what went on in cosmic space, and thus they could read the meaning.

We find traces of this kind of “reversed star gazing” in the documents of all ancient peoples. This is especially evident in Celtic civilizations. All the so-called Druid circles, etc., have been gigantic charts on which the initiates followed the events in the sky. Also some details of Celtic mythology unmistakably reveal this fact; for instance, the stories of the Cauldron of Annwn that King Arthur attained. (I cannot go into details concerning this fact, but I shall tell you more about it when I come to visit the groups in the future.)

Nostradamus, too, gained his unique insight by similar means. The information that we have about him is not very clear, but he must have used a kind of basin of water, or the like, in which he observed the reflection of

the starry sky, and from this reflection, he drew his prophecies. Of course, we cannot fall back on any such ancient means of observation. They would inevitably throw us back into a kind of dreamy semi-consciousness, and we would thereby lose all power of distinction. We might well come under the spell of evil and destructive spiritual-beings, who are incessantly hovering around us trying to inspire destructive ideas and impulses.

In our Age, we must conceive the whole planet Earth as the slate or tablet on which appear the writings of the stars, and as much as our physical and etheric organizations belong to the Earth, so much are we also “slates” of the stars. You will find in *Isis Sophia II*, much amplification of the fact that our organization is a microcosmic reflection of the macrocosm. These cosmic forces penetrate our whole being and also all existence on the Earth. We collect the cosmic substances while we descend into each incarnation, when our gaze is directed from cosmic space to the Earth.

In our cosmological studies, we try to recollect this fact quite realistically. You have surely noticed that I usually represent the Zodiac in a “reversed” order. The first constellation of Ram is on the left side of the chart, and from there the succeeding constellations follow in a clockwise fashion. This is contrary to the traditional representations, for instance, by modern astrologers. There you find the constellations proceeding in an anti-clockwise manner, which is merely that of “gazing”. If you watch the starry sky during a suitable evening, looking toward the south, you may discover the constellation of Ram to your right, possibly near the western horizon. Looking from the west toward the east you will then detect the constellations of Bull, Twins, Crab, Lion etc. To take up such a position is essential if you are involved in astronomical studies. Then you must start from observation.

We take the opposite view: after having acquired all the details of astronomical observation, we then put ourselves into a position as if we were looking down upon the Earth from the surrounding sphere. In a sense, we try to be the sphere on which the stars appear. Of course, our bodily organization objects to this position at first, because we have on Earth a centrally orientated consciousness; however, in time we may overcome this difficulty, especially if we cultivate a meditative life according to the suggestions of anthroposophy. Then our physical and etheric organizations become more independent and emancipated from the material body. Of course, this emancipation can only be healthy if it is under the strict control of our will. We may then find at a certain moment that we carry the whole sphere of the starry sky in our own being. This is possible because the spiritual foundation of our physical vehicle is of zodiacal origin. I have described this fact in Part Two of *Isis Sophia II*, where I spoke about the so-called “Mysterium Magnum”. Likewise are the spheres of the planets in our ether body, where they appear as functions such as uprightness, thinking, speech, etc.

Therefore, if we take up such a position as I have described, we assimilate into our organization the whole cosmos. It is a matter of exercise to make such an experience as vivid as possible. The greatest difficulty is the usual spatial conception of the solar universe with all its distances, etc., but this can be overcome. Another obstacle is our shadowy conception of the stars. For instance, if we try to think of the Sun, we have usually in our mind that dead picture of a ball of glowing gas, etc.; but I hope that my description of the nature of the planets and the Sun in Part Four of *Isis Sophia II* will help you to create a conception of the real spiritual majesty of the Sun. It is, however, advisable not to try in the beginning to comprise too many details of the sphere of the stars. One may have to content oneself for a long time to leave the positions of the planets and the Sun in the Zodiac out of consideration. Altogether it is better to start with the Sun first and then add the planets and finally include the Zodiac only when one is firm enough with regard to the planetary cosmos. In that way, we try to build up a real Imagination of the cosmic world. However, the suggested gaze from the sphere down to the Earth prevents us from losing ourselves in cosmic heights. We have a firm focus, which is the purpose of all our work.

Now we can go one step further. We eliminate the Imagination that we have created. You will find that this step is in exact accordance with the advice of spiritual science concerning meditative practice. For instance, Rudolf Steiner has described in numberless passages this step of inner evolution. It is not easy, for we usually do not like to depart from that picture-world that we have created. We may also feel lost on an ocean of uncertainty if we give up what we have acquired under great pain. However, we cannot advance to true Inspiration if we do not plunge into that abyss of what appears at first to be utter emptiness.

With regard to these cosmological exercises that we have in mind, we must go still further. We were looking down upon the Earth. Now this Earth that we experience to a certain degree as a celestial body,

although we don't have the usual materialistic conception, has also vanished from our inner sight. In its place is "emptiness". But what is this emptiness, really?

In order to find an answer, we must recollect a few details of the nature of our Earth. We know, of course, that from an external viewpoint it is a solid body that exerts gravitation, etc., on its neighborhood. We also know that a fundamental change has taken place since the Mystery of Golgotha. Let us put before our eyes once more the facts of which we have heard so often. The Spirit who went through the Mystery of Golgotha, the Christ, descended to the Earth from the Sun. The great Zarathustra recognized Him still as the Aura of the Sun, Ahura Mazda. Then, when the time of Fulfillment had come, He entered the body of Jesus. This happened at the time of the Baptism in the Jordan, after which He dwelt for about three years in the bodily vessel of Jesus of Nazareth, uniting more and more with it. Finally, on Golgotha He went through the death-experience and united with the planet Earth in those most subtle processes that took place during the three days in which His body was lying in the grave. Then on Easter Sunday morning, He entered that still greater Mystery of the Resurrection, which was the beginning of a new Earth existence.

It is still very difficult for us to realize the fact that in Christ the Spirit of the Sun united with the Earth. There seems to be no external proof of it, although it can be proven in a strictly scientific way. However, this is a long and involved story. Besides, we still have rather materialistic ideas about the Sun that do not "lend a hand" to picture a spiritual Sun, as it were, in the Earth. I tried in the past to speak about these matters, as far I feel able to penetrate these profound mysteries. It was certainly only a beginning. Some of it I have written down which appears in Part Four of *Isis Sophia II*.

The Sun in the sky has been the great creative agency in our solar system for millions of years, because it is itself of non-spatial nature. Like our human ego, which is certainly also a non-spatial entity, it arranged the solar universe around its focus and maintained its existence (details you will find in Part Four). The present Sun in the sky is still carrying on with the initial activity, but it does it out of a kind of continued cosmic memory. The great guiding Spirit has left the Sun and has united with the Earth. We must therefore find something in our planet of that creative and maintaining capacity that once long ago worked from the Sun into cosmic space.

Here we touch on the secrets of the Resurrection. Let us imagine that great Non-Space-Being working within the Earth, we might say from the center of the Earth. He is the great cosmic Representative, the Reality of what appears in the single human being as the shadow of the Ego. He Who is for the external, materialistic view Non-Space—in other words, non-existent, a vacuum—but Who is for spiritual vision the Fullness of the Spirit, capable of attracting the cosmic substances from the depths of the universe that are woven into earthly material existence. Therefore, He could appear after the Resurrection to His disciples in human form, but this is also the reason why the mystics of the middle ages experienced His Presence also in the kingdoms of nature.

It is this Non-Space-Being Whom we experience if we progress in our cosmological exercise from the effort to imagine cosmic facts and events to the renunciation. As long as our inner senses are not awakened, we face darkness and emptiness by looking down from the periphery to the Earth. But relentless exercise and inner patience and peace will open the organs of spiritual perception, and we will hear the mighty sounds of the Creative Word. We realize the revivification of cosmic existence that constantly takes place through the Spirit of the Earth. Thus only can we understand that the Earth is the focus of a New Creation.

We are actively involved in these processes. The cosmos is present in the forces and substances of our bodily organism. They are constantly exchanged according to definite rhythms, and thus we take part even in the current events and facts of the cosmos. Normally we are not aware of this connection with the heavens, but by inner discipline and exercise, we can lift up our consciousness by degrees to the presence of the starry world in our own being. This is the task that we have set ourselves in our cosmological studies.

From this point, which is individually different according to the standard achieved of inner awareness, we advance to that realm of inner silence and emptiness. We consciously sacrifice, as it were, our share in cosmic existence. In the realm of conscious Imagination, this is not too difficult, because our pictures of the cosmos have the tendency, in any case, to vanish rather quickly from our inner perception. The difficulty is to hold consciously this moment of suspense with full control and resolution.

Such moments of inner concentration can become events of consecration of our human existence. We can feel invigorated by hitherto unknown forces, permeated by new hope and new impulses in life. Sometimes the effect may come only some time after such an experience; it need not be simultaneous. The Spirit of the Earth,

accepting our sacrifice and uniting with it, has given us a kernel of a new and incorruptible existence, our place in the New Creation.

We can of course reject that consecration in the inner silence. Then we can still accumulate, consciously or unconsciously, cosmic forces and substances in our organization, but we partake in a dying existence, because the cosmos of the stars around us is in a dying state once it has entered the realm of the Earth. Only through the revivifying Deed of the Sun Spirit in the Earth can that cosmic Death be transformed into eternal Life. This Life we experience in those new hopes, impulses and ideas that stream toward us from the depths of the emptiness of which I have been speaking.

This Life, which enters our being through that cosmic consecration, is not limited to our own being. Above I pointed to that constant exchange of cosmic substance that takes place in us. Especially in the moment of death, when we give back to the cosmos our etheric and astral organizations, comes the great moment of judgment. Once upon a time, we received these principles as the gifts of the cosmic world. Now, in the moment of death, it will be the question of whether or not during our earthly life we have made them our own and filled them with the essence of New Creation inspired by the Sun Spirit of the Earth. Through ever more conscious participation in these processes of cosmic consecration, we can become a real citizen of the universe. If we fail, we may be only a useless nuisance.

These are my ideas of a cosmological work, of which I can naturally only speak in intimate circles. This is also the reason why I should like to ask you to let these thoughts stand where they are at present, not to discuss them too much outside your own group. In this sense, I should like to draw your attention to one single event in the sky during the coming four months. You will understand from the above description that I cannot yet attempt to do more in this moment.

On 24 June, St. John's Day, a superior conjunction of Venus with the Sun will take place. Now, let us proceed systematically in building up the full picture. Venus will be far out behind the Sun in cosmic space. The sphere will be in a state of exhalation. Great cosmic aspects are inherent in this picture, but the danger of losing the proportions and the power of judgment adequate to earthly conditions and requirements is also indicated. The Sun as a cosmic entity will, of course, also be involved in it.

The sphere of Venus (Occult Mercury) is related to the interconnections and interrelationships that the Earth dwellers develop in one way or another (see Part Four of *Isis Sophia II* for more detailed information). The Sun points toward the mysteries of the "I" of the cosmos. The season on the Northern Hemisphere of the Earth will be midsummer, a time which has its own blessings but also its dangers, as we know. All this we try to imagine as vividly as we can, not by staring up into the sky, but by looking down from the periphery to the Earth. We try to feel the Sun and Venus as if resting in our own being. If we are still capable, we can add the inner significance of the constellation in which this conjunction will take place, the constellation of Twins.

In Twins is contained a memory of the third (and to a certain extent also of the fourth) cycle of the Ancient Saturn condition, the division of the still unified "Saturn planet" into single bodies or "cells", the forerunners of our present individual physical bodies (see *Isis Sophia II*, Part Two). Furthermore, we find in Twins the cosmic memories of the fourth Round of Ancient Sun, the Archai impressing their higher Imaginations into our Sun-human organization. Below are the Archangels who go through their human stage, living in the link between Sun-human and the kingdom below. Concerning the Ancient Moon evolution, we find here the events during the fourth Round, especially the rejuvenation of Moon-human in the Sun sphere. Finally, we remember the events during the fourth great cycle of the Earth, the utmost externalization, division, and mineralization that was the basis for the development of the object-consciousness, our Ego (see Part Two, pg. 129).

However far we have gone in our Imagination of these facts, now comes the moment when we sacrifice all that we have attained as the gift of the cosmos. We enter consciously that realm of inner silence. Then the words of Love and Healing from the great Inspirations of Christ, who is the Spirit of the Earth, will come back to us sooner or later, provided we have carried our exercises through with spiritual sincerity and devotion. I have described the impact of the conjunction only in general terms. Individual people will experience it in connection with difficulties that will arise from human relationships. Issues of far-reaching importance may arise for discussion and cut deeply into human destinies, shaping the future. And it may be felt that more souls and beings than only those incarnated on the physical plane are present at such a moment. More I cannot say about this conjunction lest I should fall into the error of making futile predictions. Even the most correct

prediction can become dangerous and create obstacles in our modern age. Presence of mind and inner awareness are the attitudes that are required of us in the present age. This we practice when we collect the facts about the cosmic events. Furthermore, when we are able to enter that realm of inner silence and cosmic concentration, we shall find ourselves in a position of facing any situation that may arise. This active reading of the script of the stars does not bind and oppress anyone, but it makes us free and creative. Consequently, a real spiritual cosmology belongs to the most practical things that we can imagine.