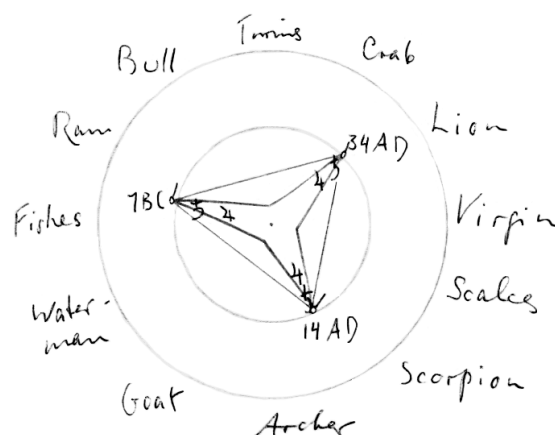


SHEPHERDS - Spiritual Freedom ~ 31 December 1954  
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Today I would like to speak about the shepherd stream and its reflection in the cosmic rhythm. Last time we spoke about the three streams and their representatives in humanity. One can imagine these three different streams as thinking, feeling, and willing. These are three different streams, which we can see in the triangle made from conjunctions between Saturn and Jupiter that take place in intervals of 20 years in three different places in the Zodiac. We worked out last time that the conjunctions move forward, coming back to the same three places every 60 years. This star-triangle is not visible; it can only be found through calculation of the conjunctions. It is not stationary; it rotates around the Earth—the Earth swims in it, so to speak.

Today we shall mainly concern ourselves with the conjunction of 7 BC and the one following it 60 years later in Fishes. In the repetition of the Great Conjunctions, we can read something like a reflection of the experiences, the fate of the stream of the Shepherds in this case. It is difficult to give a definite date of the birth of Jesus, but much is recorded in the Gospel of St. Luke. The shepherds, referred to in the story of St. Luke, are related to the birth in a special sense. What are the shepherds? What the many nativity plays express, gives the attitude of the shepherds. In all the nativity plays the shepherds are humble human beings, strongly connected with the Earth, with that which is natural and that which gives food to their sheep. They are even lying down on the ground among their sheep when they hear the message of the angels. They then come to the stable in great devotion. They have great humility and a deep, great loyalty to the Earth. Their danger is that they have a certain flatness of the mind, and they also have a tendency to easily become materialistic. With all these virtues and all these dangers, they move, so to speak, as representatives through human history, through Christian history. These shepherds, in all their humility and loyalty to the Earth, are connected with what took place long before the events in Palestine; they were also connected with Buddha. This has been described by Rudolf Steiner in many lecture cycles. The shepherds were filled with worries, anxieties, the daily misfortunes, and all that is in connection with the Earth, etc. But they also have a kind of divine hope, a divining of the Great Hope and the Great Promise in humanity. Thus they are prepared and they are “called” to witness the child in the stable.

This “calling” of the stream is carried out by certain groups in humanity. They are representatives of a certain part of humanity that can speak of the forces that come into humanity through the Christ. It is sort of living out the forces that came in through Christ. It is the deed, the spiritual impulse in their heart; for it must live in the human heart. This part of humanity went through evolution, and the stages of inner evolution can be read through the Great Conjunction as it moves through the Zodiac. At the time of the birth of Jesus it is in Fishes. One complete rotation of the star-triangle takes about 2,600 years. This point of the star-triangle is at present in the constellation of Archer, and in another 600 years it will be back in Fishes. The next conjunction of this corner of the star will take place in 1961, and it will just be entering Goat.

With regard to the conjunction in Fishes, think of it as something that takes place either on the Earth or in the cosmos. The planets are the expression of time intervals. Oppositions take place in the same direction, and they are similar to the conjunctions. They are markings of time; they are expressions of the Divine Beings Themselves. These conjunctions and oppositions are like signs of the beings of the spiritual world by which they announce that certain things should be done and certain things have happened. Because of these things having happened, one has to come to some resolutions with regard to the future. If we use our inner capacities and penetrate to higher perception, we would enter the cosmic mansions in which the Divine Beings Themselves dwell.

The constellation of Fishes is the constellation that seemingly comes at the end of the Zodiac. It is the end, but in a sense it is also a beginning. One of the fish in Fishes swims toward Ram, the other toward Waterman. They are held together by a ribbon of stars, thus they hold the beginning and the end together—"I am Alpha and Omega." We find the sign of the Fish in the catacombs. It is that which the shepherds witnessed, the beginning and the end; and it is they who are called to hold the beginning and the end. We see the great drama in its first act; the great drama of the incarnation of Christ.

About the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, this corner moved into Ram, where there is a different gesture. Ram is the beginning of the Zodiac, but the Ram's head is looking back toward the past. The forces streaming down from Ram, after millions of years, build-up that which appears as the organization of the human head. The Ram beings moving toward the future are brilliant, in a way, and are radiating light. It represents the Christianity of personalities such as St. John the Divine, and those that followed him, that are expressed here, as much as they are progressive beings. There are also some who are looking or holding back and still living in tradition. These are expressed by Ram looking back into the past; for instance, when Christianity looks back to the glories of the past, which we see manifest in the Roman world or in the Greek philosophers. This Christianity meets the Ram-civilization of the past, and we have then a Christian movement like the Gnostics, moving forward, but then there are also the persecutions. Thus the opposition to the Ram forces arose, and then the persecutions began. The persecutions, however, follow more the rhythms of the conjunctions of the Kings' stream, which we will talk about next time.

About 292, toward the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century, the conjunction of the Shepherds' stream entered the constellation of Bull, which brought a different mood to these conjunctions. The Ram is still in a kind of philosophic realm. The Bull expresses the desire to expand or spread out, but in this desire there can also be dangers in the temptation for want of power. We would again have to distinguish between those beings who work progressively and those others who are retarding beings, who are holding back.

In 324 Christianity became a State religion through Constantine the Great. St. Augustine was born at that time when there was a Great Opposition in Bull. Ambrosius was Bishop of Milan, establishing supremacy and political power about 380-86, which meant the beginning of papal power. Again there was an opposition of Saturn and Jupiter, which expresses the temptation of power. On the Earth Christianity was expanding, which is typical of Bull.

At the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century the Great Conjunction entered Twins. There is polarity and division in Twins. Beings are at work there who bring situations that require decisions—for instance, to continue the "forward" impulse and a potential division into the world. They can cut the thread, so to speak. The Roman Christianity was not the only group representing spiritual Christianity. There were also tremendous struggles working to destroy Gnostic and Celtic Christianity. St. Augustine landed in the British Isles when there was a Great Conjunction in Twins. One Twin, which developed in Rome, is the earthly Twin. However, it is also the moment in history when the first seeds of esoteric Christianity were laid.

There wasn't a conjunction in Crab, only an opposition. It is deeply marked with the Shepherds' stream. It is like its first descent, going into a kind of crisis.

The Great Conjunction that entered Lion was definitely there in 828-9. From Lion, Divine Beings are working who belong to the Sun-lodge. They are beings who direct the development within the solar system from that Sun-lodge; they have great influence in history but in a hidden, more occult way. The Roman Christianity had developed to a certain point. Then there was the Council of Constantinople, which took place in 868-9, when the spirit was disposed of. In that moment a certain darkness entered Christianity; yet it was also the moment when the Holy Grail and the story of Parsifal entered. Mighty Sun impulses entered into a sick

humanity. Amphortas was sick but he could not die. Certain remarks in the story about Amphortas point to Saturn in Crab when the illness of Amphortas was at its height. His illness could only be healed through the question from Parsifal. Saturn in Crab is the Amphortas-humanity having become sick. The Great Conjunction in Lion is the inauguration of Cosmic Christianity, which probably took place during the time of Parsifal.

The Great Conjunction in Virgin has a very subtle expression of the spiritual developments of the Shepherds' Christianity. It expresses such developments in history as we had in the Cathars' movements, which originated in a highly esoteric Christianity, for instance, in the Manichean and Grail movements. This subtle Christianity was not only for the elite; it was really a Christianity, in a sense, for the common people. It was a development of that Shepherd's Christianity, and it was inspired by what came from Virgin. However, there is also great danger, because the Hydra is underneath Virgin. The Cathars were eventually destroyed with great cruelty. The last Great Conjunction took place when the stronghold of Montsegur was destroyed in 1246.

In Scales there are beings who work to establish equilibrium in the world. It was also when the Templars were destroyed (1305-6) and when there was the destruction of the ancient wisdom. Through this destruction, the beginning of our present age was brought about, whereby humanity has to depend on itself. Those events took place when the conjunction was in Scales in 1414. This was the beginning of the new age of science and knowledge, which was and still is the yearning for freedom from the ancient bonds. This continued and became still more intense when the Great Conjunction entered Scorpion.

In Scorpion there are beings of a high nature at work, but there are also beings of strong martial impulses. It became a question of how to preserve humanity from Scorpion with these two dangers: the ancient atavistic forces and the martial forces. It was particularly important that the martial impulses should be checked. Then Buddha was ordained to enter the "martial" Mars sphere with his healing capacity c. 1603, when there was a Great Conjunction in Scorpion. At that time there were people, such as Copernicus, Kepler, etc., connected with Scorpion. It was a time of utmost danger for humanity, a time when freedom entered the world but also the danger of destructive thinking. Thus we can see that in 1603 the event of the Great Conjunction, belonging to the Shepherds' stream, is connected with Buddha. It is the Buddha corner of 7 BC, from the star-triangle, that is connected with the birth of which we read about in the Gospel of St. Luke.

We see this Great Conjunction enter into Archer; it is there now and will enter Goat in the next century. What kind of spirits are working from there? It is important to imagine the picture of the ancients, the centaur with bow and arrow, half human and half animal. The aim of Archer is to develop humanhood, egohood. The animal nature opposes this, and comes from that ancient nature which is connected with the whole cosmos. There is a certain polarity here that is connected with Twins. The yearning for "spiritual freedom" also belongs to Christianity. This "shepherd" humanity entered a state of contradiction. Whenever a conjunction takes place in Archer, there are decisive events taking place in history. For instance, the encyclopedia came into existence in 1751 during a Great Opposition.

Through the encyclopedia, knowledge was open to every human being; it was a step toward freedom. However, the encyclopedia not only affects that humanity who is striving for freedom, it also brings about certain traditions into the world that are without freedom. While freedom also means freedom from the bonds of ignorance, it can bring forth revolutions as well. There is a connection, in this regard, with the French Revolution in particular. The Archer represents the centaur and its mighty horse body can bring oppositions, even revolutions. Thus we have in Archer this development of the shepherds connected with such a conjunction. The centaur wanting to become a modern human being with regard to knowledge, science, technology, and all that is connected with it; but always attached to it is this mighty appendage of a horse body, which rests and then revolts, breaking out in mighty emotions, in revolutions.

The next conjunction will be in Goat, which will change many things. Goat is the picture of the ibex. Its horns reach into warmth and light, but it has a fish-tail that reaches down deeply into the Earth. This might involve revolutions in, say, the use of cosmic technology, or in cosmology. But there is the fish-part, and unless humanity realizes this, there is great danger lying in this watery element of the Earth. It poses the question of whether humanity learns to recognize the nature of humanhood, of that which has become the representative in Christ.

One has the impression that as much as modern humanity tries to reach out to cosmic forces or to improvements of all types, especially in the technological and scientific spheres, so much will we be moved

away from our real humanhood, of that which has become represented in the Christ events. It is a question of whether modern humanity will recognize this. If we don't, it may become a kind of crocodile. The Goat is sometimes represented by a crocodile. We are witnessing the activity of the birth of the spiritual world in the soul of humanity as a healing. I would like to say again that not only one part of humanity is the shepherd. We must individually have all three in us. We must learn to amalgamate the shepherd in us as well as the others. We can read where humanity stands at the present moment, especially on New Years Eve, to prepare a balance sheet of where we stand, and what the future expects from us.

[Ed. Note: At the time of the geocentric Great Conjunction in 1901 in Archer, belonging to this stream, Rudolf Steiner spoke for the first time about the true nature of the Cosmic Christ. He gave the lectures that were soon published as *Christianity as Mystical Fact*. At a somewhat earlier moment of the corresponding heliocentric Conjunction, his book *Mysticism at the Dawn of the Modern Age* was published. The Introduction is a masterpiece about freedom; therefore, we include it at the end of this publication.]