

Astronomical Letters

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

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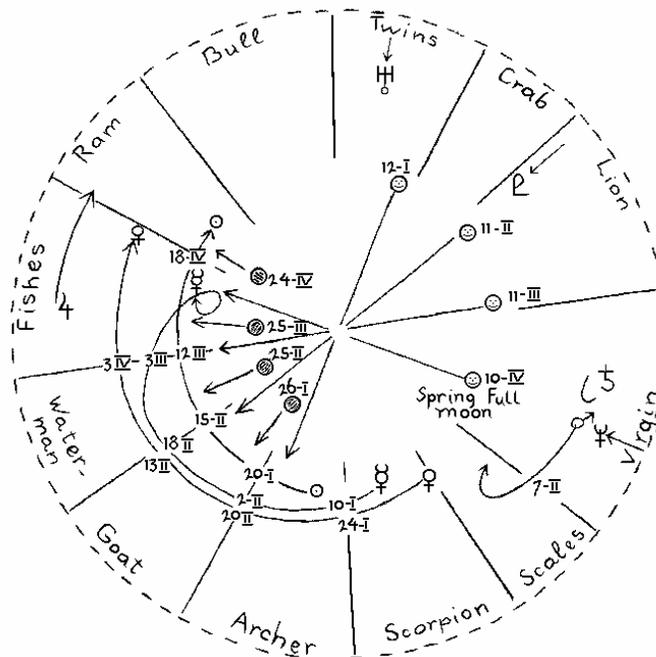
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Letter 2 - February 1952

A long time has elapsed since my last letter, and again I am behind with the Star calendar. A lot of things have happened during the Christmas time, making it rather impossible to concentrate on these communications. I hope in future to come to a point when I shall be able to send out these letters to you on time.

I have added a calendar sheet for January through April, which contains the main aspects of the planets and also those of the Moon. Don't be disturbed by the multitude of events that are indicated and which I cannot explain at present. I shall discuss the nature of all the aspects of the square, trine, opposition, conjunction, etc., in detail in future communications. You will understand that it is technically impossible to tackle it all at once.

I have also worked out a circular star-map below for the period from January 1 to April 30. This will enable you to follow the transitions of the planets and of the Sun from one constellation to another. Also the phases of the Moon are indicated, but its daily positions you can work out in connection with the aspects of the Moon. For instance, if it says in the calendar sheet for February that the Moon is in opposition to Uranus on the 21st, then you will realize that on that day the Moon is in the constellation of Archer; or that on 23 February the Moon is in conjunction with Venus, meaning that the Moon has just entered the constellation of Goat. [Ed. Note: This is the only Star-map included; the Calendars are not included. All the graphics in these letters were drawn by Willi Sucher.]



I shall now try to give you a few indications concerning the events among the planets. In order to enable you to make a real beginning with this, I shall single out one or two aspects; otherwise, things become too overwhelming, unless you have acquired an excellent mastery of the celestial symphony. I gathered that this was the difficulty with regard to my first letter. The details given there were too many and were more confusing than helpful. I realized this too late, but perhaps you received an impression of the future aims of these communications.

One of the main events in the first quarter of 1952 is the third opposition of Saturn and Jupiter on 21 February. In the first letter I spoke extensively about these oppositions in connection with certain historic events. This also, of course, holds true for the third opposition. However, today I should like to approach this event from a different angle.

You will remember from the first letter that these conjunctions and oppositions of Saturn and Jupiter in the same constellation take place according to a rhythm of roughly 60 years. For instance, the present three oppositions were preceded by another three in 1891-2, the third one of which happened in the constellations of Virgin/Fishes. Halfway between lies another rhythm of conjunctions in Virgin, for instance, a single conjunction in 1921, that will be followed by another three conjunctions of Saturn and Jupiter in Virgin in 1981.

I should now like to draw your attention to the connection between the conjunction in Virgin in 1921 and the present oppositions in Virgin/Fishes. You will remember how extremely chaotic those years were immediately after the World War I. There were catastrophes in the social and economic spheres, which were especially felt on the continent but also in other parts of the world, and the years about the time of that conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in Virgin in 1921 represented a climax. Rudolf Steiner was still alive then, and we remember the many things he said with regard to that crisis of modern humanity. We could gather from his interpretations and ideas that those events were only the long shadows, as it were, of much more radical happenings in times to come. Not many people may have taken those warnings very seriously. We know how little inclination arose at that time to accept the remedies and the constructive ideas that Steiner suggested.

Now, the second half of the 20th century has opened with the opposition of Saturn and Jupiter in Virgin/Fishes. We can consider the development from the conjunction to the opposition like the opening of a flower bud, and indeed, we cannot complain about the precision with which the destiny of humanity has proceeded, just on the background of the Saturn-Jupiter events. What happened in and around that time of 1921 was only a forecast of what would happen if the required changes did not take place, and it has become a frightening reality in our day. It looks as if our entire world is about to tumble into an abyss of social and economic catastrophes, the magnitude of which it has never experienced before.

These human problems are connected, of course, with the position of Saturn in Virgin, especially in times when it has an aspect to Jupiter or to one of the other planets. Naturally, other planets standing in Virgin can also speak a similar language, but it may then concern a different sphere of life. We can verify this to ourselves by a very simple consideration. We know that Saturn is connected with the sphere of action of the Spirits of Will (or Thrones). We can truly see gestures of the Divine Will in the movements of this planet, of that which is the innermost essence and direction of cosmic and human evolution. Of course, the human race has now come to a point where it has the freedom to accept or to disregard the call of that Divine Will. But we must not forget that disregarding the call would mean falling away from the course of divine evolution and entering a phase of universal destruction and chaos.

Furthermore, we know (see *Isis Sophia II*, Part Two) that the constellation of Virgin is the archetypal, cosmic region of the digestive sphere in the human body. Therefore, Saturn in Virgin, as the external gesture of the Will of the Divine World, is calling for a change, a transformation, even for transubstantiation of existing institutions. Something similar to cosmic "digestion" or breaking-up of seemingly well-founded conditions is demanded. Why? For reasons similar to why we can neither refuse food nor refuse to digest food that we have already eaten: It would otherwise poison and kill us. For the sake of our progress as the human race and the world, we are not permitted to hold fast to conditions and institutions that may have served well in the past. They must be constantly broken up, "digested", transformed, and renewed; otherwise, humanity would not fulfill its task in the cosmos.

You can also imagine what will happen if this call for a total transformation is not heard in our time. Just imagine that our digestive sphere is in disorder and that we refuse the medical prescription. The disease will go on, and will appear in all sorts of disguises, until reason is given a hearing or death conquers the patient. We must not forget that this present age has produced a good number of prophets of gloom who prognosticated the "Decline of the West" and similar aspects. Is this humanity on the road to prove them right?

We see the gestures of the starry universe coming to life in our earthly problems and difficulties. Certainly we, as a small group of people, can do very little to make our answers, which we may have to these humanity problems, heard in the external world. Yet, one thing we can do, which is to become more and more conscious of that which weaves and is woven spiritually around us, thereby standing above the seemingly inevitable decline. Thus there may be a handful of people who facilitate the continuity of human evolution. This is also a task, even a supreme task. In this connection, I wanted to put another matter before you today. One of the greatest difficulties of bearing the starry events in one's consciousness is the multitude of facts and the

magnitude of the events that one has to consider. I should therefore like to tell you of a method by which you can overcome some of those difficulties and can look at the cosmos as a living organism. It is the “cosmic aspect” of the Lord’s Prayer. I have sometimes spoken about it in the past and some of you may know it. Nevertheless, you may find it useful to have it in written form, although I imagine that today I can only develop the outlines. We shall speak much more about it in the future.

We repeatedly referred to Saturn as a gesture or an expression of the Divine Will, because its sphere is connected with the Spirits of Will. The Lord’s Prayer also turns to the Will of the Divine World and the suggestion is near that we are in both cases confronted with the same spiritual reality.

After long and careful considerations over years, we came to the conclusion that this is correct. You will understand that it is a very subtle matter, and we shall need a lot of effort in order not to misunderstand it. By no means do I want to present to you a cheap comparison. In reality it is a very active connection, a kind of sublimated Lord’s Prayer.

We find in cosmic space the planets that belong to our own solar system. Their impacts work upon the Earth as well as in everything that the human being is, both in a bodily sense and in our thoughts. Usually we are not aware of this fact that the cosmos extends into our own being, just as the sea expands into the land in gulfs and bays, but we can develop a consciousness of it, without feeling ourselves determined by these facts. As free individualities, we can look down to those regions of our own organization and of our earthly environment where the forces of the cosmos are at work. Then we experience, for instance, the planets like great questions, almost like queries that can come to life in our own problems, and we may feel called upon to find the appropriate answers ourselves.

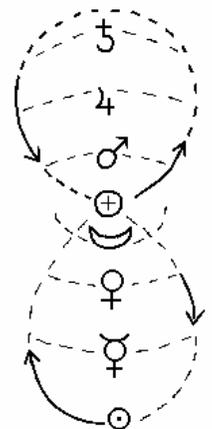
We can experience these answers, which demand great efforts from our moral imagination, as a kind of Lord’s Prayer. Of course, the fullness of this experience depends to a high degree on the power of comprehending the totality of the planetary world. This can be acquired by relentless efforts and inner practice.

We experience the planetary world in a twofold way when we distinguish inner (inferior) and outer (superior) planets. This distinction has a much deeper occult significance than one usually realizes. It is possible to see the world of the inner planets as more connected with the existence and the life of the “creature”, whereas the outer planets are much more associated with the great processes of cosmic creation, itself.

Thus we can even imagine the planets being distributed externally in the sky as indicated in the above star-map. At least we can perceive the spheres of the planets in their relationship to the Earth as being arranged in the manner suggested. We are, of course, aware that these invisible spheres are the fields of action of the spiritual hierarchies.

We turn first to the outer planets. There we listen first to the gestures and language of Mars. In which direction can we find the answers? Generally speaking, they are contained in these words of the Lord’s Prayer: “Hallowed be Thy name.” Why? It is from a multitude of aspects that we come to this viewpoint. The “name” is the external expression of the inner nature of the being. Therefore, perceiving and realizing the true nature of the physical universe is “sanctifying the name” of the Divinity. The “truth” about the nature of the objects of the physical world is connected with the sphere of Mars. We know that in the Mars sphere we find the archetypes of the physical world during the life after death. Therefore, by trying to find the answers to Mars in the sky, we are really doing something that we normally do during our sojourn in the sphere of Mars after death.

Next to Mars we become aware of the planet Jupiter. By the presence of this planet in the cosmos, we are reminded of that sphere in which the germinal beginnings of the future stage of the Earth evolution—the Jupiter condition [known as Ancient Sun]—is nursed, and Jupiter calls for our cooperation toward that future goal. We certainly cannot expect anything from Jupiter beyond what it offers and hands on to us, which is the capacity of thinking. As a capacity, we must cultivate and nurse it within the compass of our earthly environment and requirements. We do this by lifting our thoughts out of the realm of purely abstract reflection and by infusing spiritual ideas and thoughts into our daily tasks. This active, not merely receptive attitude toward Jupiter, we can experience and circumscribe by the words: “Thy Kingdom come.” The Kingdom is that future Jupiter condition whose “corporeal” foundation will be the ideas and the thoughts that Earth-humanity is thinking.



About Saturn, [which remembers Ancient Saturn], we have already spoken in this letter. We mentioned that its sphere is connected with the activity of the Spirits of Will. But here we are confronted with the same situation. It will not do if we sit down and wait for Saturn to work for us. We must learn to identify ourselves with the Will of the Father; only then will we really be free. This high aim, to which Saturn calls our attention, we may experience concentrated in the words: “Thy Will be done.” We have thus taken into our considerations the highest sphere of our planetary cosmos. The planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto must be considered from a different angle. They belong to our solar system in a different sense from that of the five planets Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus and Mercury.

From that highest sphere of Saturn, we return to the Earth. This return to the Earth is most important, for we have actually done it by seeking the answers on the Earth. In the Lord’s Prayer this is expressed in the words: “Thy Will be done on Earth, as it is in Heaven.” From the Earth we now look to the opposite side of the sky, and first of all, we find the Moon (see diagram). The Moon gives us our physical existence in material bodies. For instance, we know that it is deeply connected with our embryonic development; and in a very wide sense, it builds the vessel in which all Earth beings can sail through their earthly existence. As human beings, we can concentrate consciously on these facts. We make use of the vessel in order to achieve the higher aims of humanity. Thus our answers flow back to the Moon, concentrated in the words: “Give us this day our daily bread.” We need the bread for sustenance, but in the form in which it comes from the cosmos, through the Moon, it would be useless unless we transformed it. In this constant transformation is our answer to the gifts of the cosmos.

Beyond the sphere of the Moon is that of Venus. Without going into greater detail now, I call this sphere “Mercury” in the occult sense. In this sphere is the field of activity of the hierarchy of the Archangeli. We know that they are those spirits who work, for instance, as folk-spirits in humanity. Generally speaking they are active in all that concerns human relationships, human community life. In this sphere we accumulate karma, which accompanies us through our Earth existences and constantly demands from us rectification and redemption. We are especially asked in this age to fulfill these demands. Knowledge of karma and reincarnation is the great task of present humanity. This task, the ceaseless struggle to create the balance between individuality and community, appears concentrated and made conscious in the words: “Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.” It is the answer to the warnings and the impact of the “sphere of Mercury”, indicated by the planet that we are accustomed to calling Venus.

Then we are led further to the planet Mercury whose sphere we regard in occultism as Venus. It is the sphere of activity of the Archaï, the Spirits of Personality. We see in those great guiding spirits, the endeavor to lead us to the realization of our own personality. This process is the background of history; therefore, these spirits are also called Spirits of the Ages.

On this road toward the development of personality, we are exposed to the great temptations that we learn to recognize as the luciferic and ahrimanic dangers. These adversaries of the true human being can only be overcome by their recognition. By increasingly developing the powers of intelligent recognition and distinction, which are inherent in us, we are not led into temptation. Therefore our human and earthly answer to the admonitions of the sphere of Occult Venus can be concentrated in the words: “Lead us not into temptation.” In order not to be led into temptation, we must cultivate and practice our capacities. This part of the Lord’s Prayer does not suggest only a passive attitude, especially if we try to comprehend its cosmological implications.

Finally, we come to the Sun (see diagram above). As we know, this Sun in pre-Christian times was the great promise of Redemption and Salvation. Now, after the Mystery of Golgotha, we realize that its spiritual essence is intimately connected with the Earth. In the future of our cosmos, this Sun will again unite with the Earth, as they were as one in the past.

From the indications of spiritual science, we know that the structure and nature of the Sun is the exact opposite of that of the Earth. As much as the Earth is a place of contraction and material condensation in the universe, so much is the Sun a focus of dissolution of matter and etherization. The great cosmic Initiator of the Sun activity, the Christ, has entered the Earth existence. He will transform the Earth in time into a cosmic focus similar to that of the Sun. This process will result in the union of Sun and Earth. As humanity, we can partake in this great cosmic event, but only if we unite with Christ in the realm of the “I consciousness”. Thus also the

human race can be freed from the Evil. Therefore, we can concentrate these facts in the words: "Deliver us from evil." These words also demand a really active attitude from us, namely, the endeavor to comprehend more and more the cosmic Sun nature of Christ. Thus we continue, and we fulfill what the Sun in the sky can only point out and set into motion. We turn in an active attitude toward the Sun, but not in a mood of being determined and ruled by cosmic forces. This active attitude is the most important point in our consideration and practice of the Lord's Prayer, of which we must never lose sight.

I am, of course, absolutely aware of the possibility that these ways of considering the implications of the Lord's Prayer are exposed to the danger of being misunderstood as a kind of allegory with no practical value. Therefore, I should like to emphasize that what I told you in this letter is only the ground plan of something much bigger, which I intend to work out in time.

So far, I have spoken about the planets only in general terms. To this, we can add the individual positions of the planets in the Zodiac and their positions among themselves. This needs a tremendous amount of concentration and years of relentless practice. But only then can one fully see and appreciate the absolutely practical viewpoints of this cosmic aspect of the Lord's Prayer. Then the questions and demands of the cosmic world's speaking through the planets will become ever more articulate in a higher sense. Thus we can feel ourselves called upon to stand with both feet and with ever increasing consciousness in the historic process of humanity in order to find the answers in thinking and, if possible, also in external activity.