

*Astronomy, Astrosophy, Astrognosis*

Incomplete Notes of Lectures by Willi Sucher, Hawkwood College, 7 February 1953

Our aim is always to look at the sky phenomena with an unprejudiced viewpoint, and we have to realize that the totality of the human being is an organ for the cognition of the universe. There is an immense wealth of material by Rudolf Steiner that is the basis of research to rediscover a universe, which is a living organism of soul and spirit, as the threefold being is.

Astronomy, science of the stars; astrosophy, wisdom and life of the stars, rather than their external manifestation; and astrognosis, the knowledge of the working of the Divine world through spiritual beings, through the medium of the stars, and related to the human being as a spiritual being, are three sections that form one whole body, or conception. In astronomy we study the solar universe as an integrated organism, not a conglomeration of swiftly moving bodies casually swept together. The planets are like separate organs of the celestial body, and each is related to each. This wholeness of the solar system brings new and interesting ideas. We are not just a queer body of people playing about with odd ideas as a hobby, but modern science continually encourages us as we go on with our research.

For wireless has discovered that there is a relationship between cosmic and earthly events. A laboratory in the US has discovered that Sun spots affect our earthly wireless waves, as well as the electricity and magnetism of the Earth. Sun spots affect the reception of wireless transmissions and have their own rhythms. In photos these Sun spots appear as holes boring into the Sun's interior, and their rhythm is approximately 11 years. This rhythm contains the maximum and minimum rhythms of manifestation, size and number. At its maximum, wireless transmission is seriously disturbed, and magnetic storms occur that disturb the compasses of ships.

When it was found that the disturbances were greater than the Sun spot's maximum, the cosmos was explored to find what could be responsible. This revealed our solar system as a whole, living organism in which, if something takes place in one area, there is a crisis throughout the universe. For instance, we know that when the separate rhythms of Jupiter and Mars coincide, wireless transmissions are seriously disturbed. This obviously concerns the whole solar cosmos, something taking place between Sun, Mars, and Jupiter. It must also affect humans as well as the Earth. If Saturn should stand at right angles to these two, these disturbances become very severe on the Earth and can be greatly aggravated by Sun spots, which can then occur in connection with these events.

Scientists are really studying the health of our solar organism, which goes beyond the sphere of magnetism and electricity into a deeper sphere, the meteorology of the Earth. Magnetic storms are brought about by the ill health of the cosmos and the effects of the weather. The physiological study of the cosmos can give information about the meteorological conditions of the Earth, for it is part of the great organism. For instance, if someone is hit in the back, the injury is often extended beyond its own radius.

A meteorology based entirely on earthly facts is insufficient, for a weather forecast is often a post mortem. If we can study cosmic conditions, we will find the other 50%, the cosmic impact that affects the Earth's aura, atmosphere and sheaths. The driving impulse is from the cosmos. Last week there was a deep depression in the North Atlantic that moved swiftly across the British Isles, creating great flood and havoc. What was its cause? We can only discover this through cosmic research. A few days before this event—about 24 hours—there was the Moon eclipse, which was an obvious cause. But we must look into it further. Through research, we should find many answers in the biological and psychological conditions in the Earth and in humanity. At times there hovers over some areas a kind of invisible depression, for which there is no apparent external reason, but such things could be answered and remedied to a great extent, though it will take humanity a long time.

In the sphere of astrosophy, the whole cosmos is a rhythmic being, with longer or shorter movements of cosmic rhythms; some are shorter than one year, while others are thousands of years. This is the foundation for the study of astrosophy, for it reveals the rhythms of the life of the Earth, of humanity and of the single human being.

For instance, the rhythm of the Earth's perihelion (the shortest distance between Sun and Earth) is one of about 110,000 years. The ice ages in the past had their rhythms, and at the moment we have reached a peak of the non-glacial age. In Switzerland the glaciers are retiring rapidly, while the melting of the ice cap at the North Pole has probably affected the summers here in England with its cold air stream. Far ahead, another ice age is on the way.

The Platonic year is another rhythm—but more modest—connected with the cultural age of humanity. It can tell us what is demanded of the present age. Cosmic rhythms help us judge what must be done within the realm of humanity as a whole and its cultural life. Even our days of 24 hours are a cultural rhythm reaching into every realm, as well as the movement of the realm, both within the cosmos and human beings. The gardener knows how the plant life relies on Sun and Moon rhythms. It is the “breathing” of the cosmic rhythms that makes existence possible upon the Earth in time.

Astrognois is the manifestation of the Divine world, the world of the spirit, to which we belong as related to the Divine spark within us. We manifest ourselves through a physical body that we can see and hear. It is a body permeated by life (the opposite of the stagnation and death of minerals), which is constantly remedying the destructive impacts of the physical body. Within this is the development of consciousness—emotions, feelings, passions, psychological constitution and soul organization—which uses the body for its requirements.

Finally, there is the Spiritual Being who says, “I AM”—the ego—the one who says, “I Will”; a personality revealed by its actions and behavior as a person. These four faculties gathered together help us to fulfill our life on Earth. We are confronted with a world of building material, yet within which there is an individuality at work that is greater than its containing vehicle. This spiritual body comes from the universe of the stars, whereas the physical body comes from the building material of the Earth. All are gathered together in one harmonious organism when one descends to Earth; step by step, all are gathered together in the cosmos by the individuality desiring to incarnate. This we can trace through the four great stages, or agencies, until birth itself.

Behind it all stands a spiritual Being, the eternal Being of humanity, who conducts the process of acquisition of this cosmic building material to make an earthly habitation possible. Study the stars at the time of incarnation and not only at birth, and not with modern egotism, but during a process that takes many years. The first stage is very far back, which I will explain in greater detail.

If we can consider the setting of the stars comprising that whole time, from the moment the desire rises to incarnate, we can see the soul waking up, as if from a deep sleep, realizing itself as an integrated individuality and as part of the greater world. Each soul objectively realizes that there have been many past incarnations. This can be done with exact mathematical methods and without mysticism. One can find up to seven past incarnations through such a method.

The first realization of a soul as an independent being that has lived before is the first realization of the Self as an independent being. The second event is gathering up its soul organization, which indicates a second experience on the way into incarnation, and is the realization that it requires the capacity to materialize and build up a body, which can only be built up because Divine beings are thinking thoughts that ultimately become material manifestations. The soul may become a materialist, but even that is one part of Divine thinking! For when matter was pre-visualized, the Divine Creator had to pre-think materialization, and that a human being can specialize in this one aspect and receive it as Divine Thought.

In the third stage, we realize in detail an interval of time during which the memories of cosmic evolution in the past are impressed into the embryonic development of the physical body. Into this material are impressed mighty and gigantic pictures of the creation of the whole body. The human embryo passes through the fish stage and through the animal stage. It is a wonderful recapitulation of the development of the whole universe. Each one individually has a totally different relation to the starry world.

The fourth stage is at birth, where the soul has gathered together the ingredients for the earthly existence. However, as soon as a soul is born, it dies, for birth is an uninterrupted process of death; a dying of many deaths occurs in life before we hand all back, transformed or defiled, to the living cosmos, i.e., we have changed the potencies and returned them to the spiritual world. One can finally study the stars at death, in the hour of the great death horoscope, when one expands into the cosmos again and follows the four great stages back into the spiritual world.

At death the physical body is laid aside; the biography of life is written, and the book is closed. Then the

time comes when the soul lays aside the life that is handed back to the cosmos, and this can be studied by the excarnation horoscope with minute exactness, as I have illustrated with historical individuals. Individualized memories are handed back to the cosmos. Before, it was Cosmic Memory, now it is individual. A whole biography is written into the stars at the moment of death, and the starry world stands waiting to receive it.

If we follow the excarnation still further, we find the corresponding third stage of soul purification. Everything originates in the spiritual activity of Divine beings. There is no escaping our past, for now the soul organization is handed back all its affiliations to material existence, all its desires of food and comfort, etc.; for the soul organization must be purified before being taken back to its Divine origin, which can also be traced with great exactitude in the stars.

The fourth stage of our return corresponds to that stage on entry when the soul looked back before being “excommunicated” from the Divine world, so to speak. At this final stage of existence, we look toward the future incarnation, not to the past, recognizing in ourselves our eternal Being and preparing ourselves for this new future cosmic task, with a definite purpose fulfilled with the building material offered to us—for the architect builds according to his capacities and also according to the choice of materials.

A great amount of research has been done and is being done to confirm all this. Rudolf Steiner’s spiritual indications must in future be attained by stages to regain our human dignity from the mechanistic-animalistic status that has been increasingly fastened to us in our recent evolution. Star wisdom can be the secure background for understanding all that exists in our world and in our spiritual nature as expressed in these four stages, in our tasks and aims, and in the past of our planet, together with its cosmic geography, as well as the future goal of this planet upon which we live and work.

Goethe’s fairy tale, *The Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily*, gives an indication of this star wisdom through the ages. There a giant lives in a land separated by a river on one side, which is the material world and the world of death; on the other side is the spiritual world. The river is not easy to cross, but if we ride on the shadow of the giant when it spans the river, that shadow is our bridge. This giant is benevolent. The cosmic world is the shadow of the giant, and we must use the vessels and the materials provided if we would cross to the spiritual side with understanding. A permanent bridge is about to be built in the story, but the giant falls asleep, then awakes rather sleepily and stumbling, proceeds to trample down the people who would cross it, but quite by accident.

It is this that describes our present danger: not recognizing that our sheaths are but the surrounding house of our inner spiritual being and not the being itself. For our real inner being is the eternal ego, the individuality beyond the rhythms of time and space and within the realm of freedom. So we find that the giant is then “fixed” so that he can do no damage, and his shadow remains as a sundial that gives the time. It represents our cosmos as we should see it. It is the clock, the indication of the times. We have to move with this cosmic time, through its indication, the foundation of existence by which we must order our days and the future of humanity, within the realms of free and creative individuality.