

## *Astronomical Letters*

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

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### *Letter 5 - Christmas Day 1952*

First of all, I should like to convey to you all my very best wishes for the year 1953. Let us hope that the coming year will bring us a step nearer to the realization of those aims that led us also to the start of these communications. This year can become a very important one for us. At Easter a cycle of thirty-three years will come to a close since Rudolf Steiner gave the lectures that are published under the title, *In Search of the New Isis, the Divine Sophia*, at Christmas 1920. Those lectures have been, and still are, a most important starting point for our work.

Today I should like to give you a kind of survey of the events in the planetary world in the course of 1953. Saturn will still be in the constellation of Virgin during 1953, and it will finally enter Scales during the Holy Nights. It will be in conjunction with Neptune twice, on 17 May and on 22 July. One conjunction has already taken place on 21 November 1952. You will gather that this is a rather rare event. A previous one took place on 31 July and 1 August 1917, in the constellation of Crab. That was the time when the great social upheavals started in Russia, which finally led to the Bolshevik regime. Yet it is remarkable that shortly before that conjunction, Rudolf Steiner worked out the concept of the Threefold Commonwealth. This is a very important aspect for us, because it teaches us how to face such starry events. Rudolf Steiner certainly did realize the importance of that conjunction by looking at the social conditions into which modern humanity had drifted. However, he didn't stand passively in front of those "signs" around him, he created an illuminating and powerful Imagination of a healthy social organism. This he put against any "omens of the stars". It is a great example of the attitude that we today must acquire toward the stars. We can see in it a master demonstration of the Cosmic Cult, of which Rudolf Steiner spoke on 31 December 1922, on the eve of the burning of the First Goetheanum (see cycle, *The Spiritual Communion of Mankind*, published in 1963 with *Man and the World of Stars*).

The conjunctions in Virgin have, of course, a different quality. We may get a glimpse of the "portents" by looking into the past. When Francis Bacon of Verulam died, Neptune was in the same position as at present. Again during the French Revolution this planet had returned to this point. So we see that the implications of Neptune, also with regard to 1917, rather concern social problems. We can quite clearly discern the thread that leads from Bacon of Verulam to the French Revolution. Verulam has sometimes been called the father of modern experimental, materialistic science. The cloud of spiritual darkness that descended upon humanity from this corner, or rather which was destined to spread over modern humanity, threw also its shadows over the French Revolution. To a certain extent, the latter was the outcome of the rationalistic, spirit-forsaken development of French civilization during the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

What can we then read in those three conjunctions of 1952 and 1953? The answer is not at all easy, because it needs some courage to speak about it. I should like to ask you to regard what I am going to say as my quite personal opinion and only intended for you and nobody else.

We are, of course, aware that the true aim of Russian Bolshevism was and is the elimination of the free individuality. The leaders of that movement are convinced that it is the human individuality, in other words the spirit, which brings disturbance and chaos into the social organism. Therefore, they say, individualism must be destroyed once and for all, and instead of it a humanity has to be created that is composed only of docile, egoless members reacting like automatons—if one can still call that a humanity! This is the true face of Bolshevism. However, this social experiment did not go very well. (We must always bear in mind that certain spiritual forces are initiating these experiments.) It was too crude, many mistakes were made, and it could not find very much favor in the eyes of Western humanity.

We must not forget that the spiritual powers working behind the screen of the external events in the European East are very well aware of those facts. Those forces are very clever, and they never start an experiment without a kind of double insurance. They do not start in one part of humanity without having another trump card ready somewhere else. The Hitler experiment in Germany is a first class example. When

the Bolshevik regime took hold of Russia in 1917, that man was already prepared (initiated, if you like) who came to power in Germany by 1933.

Thus we can very well regard that conjunction of Saturn and Neptune in 1917 as an indication, even a warning that certain forces had set to work in order to eliminate the free individuality. Although they succeeded then to a certain degree, they did not achieve their final aim, which was the subjugation of the whole of humanity. However, it would be wrong to expect that they can be defeated by the failure of their human instruments. For to them, these are only stepping stones for future experiments, unless they are really checked by the spiritual consciousness of humanity.

These powers who are working against the awakening of our spiritual individuality, against the manifestation of Christ, have learnt a great deal through the social catastrophes in the past. At present, they are attempting another attack that must be taken very seriously, because they are walking on very "soft soles" and not many realize what is going on. This time they concentrate more on the West, especially North America. Reports and open discussions in one or two books show that there are trends in certain industrial circles to streamline, for instance, the masses of employees and workers according to collective standards. The single person is absolutely catalogued and analyzed. Even their most intimate life is spied upon without them knowing very much of it, and thereby they are delivered into the hands of a power that denies their individuality and tries to make an automaton of them. This is attempted entirely by economic means and not by political suppression, as in the domains where old-fashioned Marxist-Bolshevism rules. These may be primitive and isolated beginnings, but we must expect that they will be thoroughly perpetuated and spread much further.

Do we have any positive Imaginations to put against these experiments? It would certainly be a foolish ambition to attempt similar deeds as those of Rudolf Steiner in 1917, when he suggested the Threefold Commonwealth against the oncoming social decline. We must first of all realize that we are now living in a changed world. The anthroposophical movement is at present not able to reach the ears of those millions who should, ideally speaking, hear the truth. Why this is so, is a different matter that need not be discussed here. Certainly it would be wrong now to drop all efforts. We must hold on to the little ground that we have at all costs, but we must also develop something else.

At this point, I want to come back to the content of my last letter of August 1952. I explained there how we are moving toward a conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter, which will take place in 1961 between Archer and Goat. Furthermore, I described how this event is, with regard to its past, deeply connected with the working of Christian Rosenkreutz and the task of Buddha on Mars. We must therefore expect that the events in the cosmos between now and 1961 are indications of a development toward the attainment of certain faculties in the sense of the high aims of true Rosicrucianism.

These aims of Rosicrucianism are already contained in its fundamental Imagination, the Rose Cross. The black cross stands for every human being's affiliations with the destiny of earthly matter. Through the fact of being born, we are involved in the fate, the demands, the temptations of that which has fallen away from the spirit. We are experiencing death in its manifold manifestations on Earth. This cross we must take up courageously and with determination, because it is, nevertheless, the foundation of all true spiritual progress. Through a regulated meditative life, we slowly transform that cross, and then the radiant roses will blossom forth from the dead wood. The seven roses are an image of the transformation that is taking place in our whole being through our inner efforts. From their brilliancy, we can even judge how far we have succeeded or where we are still failing.

The emphasis is on the development and cultivation of our own dormant faculties. The first demand, therefore, concerns our own being and not a change in our surrounding. This is a most important point of which we must never lose sight if we want to serve Christian Rosenkreutz. We change the world by changing ourselves. And this is, I believe, the aspect that we must cultivate in view of the changed conditions in the world and in looking ahead toward those star events in 1961.

The power that we derive from our meditative life must become so strong that we are able to remain in the greatest tumult of daily life and yet maintain the supremacy of our spiritual consciousness. Through meditation, we develop something like a second nature of our being. First it will be stiff and rather immobile, but gradually we will notice that this second being in ourselves becomes independent. We become aware that we have learnt to move invisible hands, even while our physical hands are resting, to speak with an inaudible voice which,

however, will be much more powerful than audible speech. Thus we can stand in the world, working for spiritual progress from the realm of the unseen. This is a great task, and all scholars of spiritual science can aspire to it who feel responsible for the progress of humanity, even if they are not able to stand on podiums and speak to large audiences. In a certain sense, this kind of work will in the long run even be more effective than an external activity. However, it will only be possible on the foundation of an absolutely free individual decision that is born by patience and inner attention. That second, greater being in us must first have become like a natural experience; it cannot be forced.

This is what I believe we can endeavor to develop and put against the implications of the present conjunctions of Saturn with Neptune. Thus we infuse positive Imaginations into the events in the starry world, and this will create, in the long run, invisible barriers against the intentions of those evil powers who are determined to eliminate our free individuality.

Over and again you will realize that our task is not only to ask, “What do those cosmic events signify?” We must go one step further; we must develop the faculties of Imagination, Inspiration and Intuition. These will flow into the cosmic world as healing forces and prevent the stars from being entirely taken hold of by evil forces. Great is our responsibility if we know this.

We should really look at all the other events in the starry sky from this point of view. Saturn gives, as it were, the leading motive of the cosmic symphony of the whole year. If we try to have as a background the picture of the background of the events in 1961, of which we have spoken earlier, we cannot fail. However, we shall say more of that Great Conjunction in 1961 in future letters.

In the course of 1953, Jupiter is moving from the constellation of Ram to Bull. We have often pointed out in connection with Jupiter that we can experience those beings who bear the future in their womb. This planet will be in a rather favorable position. In Bull it will be opposite Scorpion, which we see rather in the light of the implications of the 6<sup>th</sup> great cycle of Ancient Sun evolution, the Eagle (see *Isis Sophia II*, Part Three).

During that cycle of Ancient Sun, the foundation of the principle in humanity of Budhi—the Life Spirit—was sown. These faculties are still dormant in us at present, but they are awakened step by step through our inner development. Once they are fully unfolded, we will not only be able to behold the spiritual world, but we will be able to be creative in the spirit ourselves. Therefore Jupiter in Bull will point out to us those faculties still dormant in our being, of which we tried to speak above, the silent working from the unseen into the visible.

Mars will be moving from Waterman to Scales during 1953. Its central focus will be a conjunction with the Sun in Twins on 8 July. About the same time, on 11 July, a partial eclipse of the Sun will take place, and furthermore, all the planets involved, Mars, Sun and Moon, will be in conjunction with Uranus during those days. Sometime before, Mars will be in conjunction with Venus just in the moment when Venus will start a loop. This is to take place on 22 March. On 27 April, Mars will be in conjunction with Jupiter, already in Bull, and during the Holy Nights of 1953-4, it will enter Scales in conjunction with Saturn.

From this last event, we conclude that the movement of Mars during 1953 is somehow strongly connected with the implications of Saturn, too. However, we see in Mars more that celestial body which indicates at first the obstacles that are put in our way on the physical plane. If we are aware of them and try to overcome them consciously and diligently, we can be strengthened all the more in our inner efforts.

The conjunction with Jupiter indicates that the obstacles will be more directed toward the obscuring of those inner faculties of which we spoke in connection with Jupiter in Bull. Here we will have to hold fast to the message of this coming year’s Easter, of which we shall speak later.

The conjunction of Mars with the Sun on 8 July, together with the following Sun eclipse and the conjunction with Uranus will demand from us a special degree of awakesness and awareness. The events in the external world will then be especially impressive. They may try to obscure our inner senses and make our ears deaf for the deeper issues of life and the present world situation. Here we must have a firm picture ready of our position between the world of the spirit and the world that we perceive with the senses. Then we will need a strong Imagination of the constellation of Twins, which we can create if we remember the cosmic implications of this constellation. First we have in Twins the picture of the beings on Ancient Moon standing between the spheres of Sun and Moon. Then there appears the picture of Ancient Sun, with beings firmly rooted in what was to become the realm of the senses and yet open like a flower to the creative Imaginations of the spiritual cosmos. Finally, we see there the stream of human existence that worked through all evolution as the

connecting link between the two worlds of the spirit and matter, the Ego. This we can combine in the great picture of the central event of Earth evolution: Christ standing between the two adversaries, holding them in check, as it is depicted, for instance, in Rudolf Steiner's great statue of the Representative of Humanity.

Thus, armed with indestructible weapons, we shall be able to go with Mars toward its conjunction with Saturn during the Holy Nights in 1953-4. Once more we shall then contemplate that great message of Saturn, of which we have spoken before, and thus we will be able to stand the test of whether we are allowed to take another step toward the realization of the "Cosmic Cult". It will then be 30 years since Rudolf Steiner has given us the "Christmas Foundation Impulse" and which will enter the last "three years" of incarnation before the cycle of thirty-three years will be completed. The movement of the Sun in 1953 will demand from us (and during the following years) a deeper realization of the great seasonal festivals. These seasonal festivals are destined to become the foundation of what Rudolf Steiner called the "Cosmic Cult" in his lectures during December 1922. These indications, which culminated in the lecture on 31 December 1922, *The Spiritual Communion of Mankind*, on the eve of the burning of the first Goetheanum, were given 30 years ago. Therefore, this impulse is entering its decisive last three years, ending at Easter 1955. From these implications can be seen the great responsibility that we have with regard to the inner realization of those indications.

A great help will be the right celebration of the Easter festival in 1953. Easter will be on 5 April, and it will then be Thirty Three Years since Christmas 1920. (The thirty-three years technically consist of only 321/3 years, just as the "three days" between Good Friday and Easter are not three days in a literal sense.)

What was "born" at Christmas 1920? From December 23-26, Rudolf Steiner gave those lectures that are published under the title *In Search of the New Isis, the Divine Sophia*. There he pointed out the urgent need for a new astronomy and cosmology. He showed the significance of such a new star wisdom, even for the realization of the Being of Christ. "It is not that we lack the Christ, but what we lack is the light of recognition of Christ, the Gnosis of Christ, which is the Isis, the Sophia of Christ." The Isis, the Sophia of Christ, is the New Star Wisdom, as Rudolf Steiner implied.

Immediately after those four lectures, Rudolf Steiner started to give the proper foundation of a new astronomy in his course, "The Relationship Between the Various Fields of Natural Science and Astronomy" (January 1-13, 1921). This cycle is a far-reaching challenge to the scientific thinking of our age, and it provides the basis for the conception of a living cosmos instead of a lifeless machine.

These impulses can become the foundation for the celebration of a real Easter festival in 1953. It will be a matter of our spiritual efforts whether they can go through their "resurrection" after their cycle of thirty-three years will have come to a close. However, we should not imagine that these events, if we make them possible, will be spectacular and revolutionary in an external sense. We cannot yet expect that the world will take notice of those grand aspects given in the so-called *Course on Astronomy*, of the archetypal lemniscatory movement in the universe, and so on. Therefore, it must and can live all the more strongly as an inner reality in a few.

The planet Mercury calls for the development of our personal initiative and our spiritual integrity. In its movements of superior conjunctions and loops, we can realize the dangers and temptations that beset our individual paths. Thus we see that the superior conjunctions, with the planet behind the Sun, rather coincide with important events in the starry world. For instance, the first superior conjunction will take place just a few days after the total eclipse of the Moon on 29 January. The following superior conjunction will almost exactly coincide with the conjunction between the Sun and Jupiter on 24-25 May. Also the loops of Mercury will be very interesting. For instance, the inferior conjunction of 25 July will happen little more than 24 hours before a total eclipse of the Moon on 26 July.

Concerning the superior conjunction of 2 February, we must stand fast and hold on to what we have initiated so far. We must not lose hope that events will move in the right direction if we are only loyal to the intentions of the spiritual world. However, we ought to realize that not the actual conjunction, but the time before will be decisive. The loop between 9 March and 2 April may offer a new dawn to things that we try to achieve, but there, too, we may encounter some kind of delay. For our part, we must not be deceived by the nature of external developments that try to distract but cannot succeed if we are awake. About the rest of the occurrences in 1953 concerning Mercury, I shall write more on another occasion.

The main feature concerning the movements of the planet Venus is its loop, mainly in the ecliptic sign of Aries. It will start moving backward on 23 March and will go straight forward again in the ecliptic after 4 May.

Then it will draw away from the Earth and gradually come to stand behind the Sun. However, the actual superior conjunction will take place only on 29-30 January 1954. I've mentioned that Venus will start its retrograde movement the day after its conjunction with Mars. Mars will then appear in Ram.

From this and other implications, we realize that we must learn to be careful and deliberate with regard to speech and action toward others. After all, Venus (the indicator of the M-Mercury sphere) demands control from us of our relationships with other people and creatures. We must attempt to clothe our words and activities in such forms that they are both effective and free from spiritual arrogance. Neither will it do to speak from a high platform nor to withdraw into sheltered seclusion—in which case we would perhaps save ourselves by such an attitude from the attacks of the adversaries, but they would work all the stronger through others. An unsentimental and unobtrusive cultivation of the idea of the Brotherhood of Humanity will be the foundation of true Christian progress. It will also be important to realize and to contemplate one's own position in the circle of human beings with whom one is connected through destiny, but we need also to consider the greater circle of humanity. Thus will we be able to advance on the road to the true "Imitatio Christi".

With best wishes, *Willi Sucher*