

COSMOLOGY COURSE

LECTURES TO MEMBERS - Willi Sucher: from 1 Oct. '54 to 1 Apr. '55 (All drawings by Willi Sucher)

Rudolf Steiner House, London, England

(Notes from lecture, unrevised by author)

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Today I would like to try to penetrate into the movement of the planets, and try to bring the star wisdom into our time. This kind of anthroposophical approach toward cosmology is beset with many dangers and also with much opposition. I should like to draw a picture today of how it happened that our present humanity has so very little connection with cosmology; and if there is a yearning for cosmology, we will find that there are very often attempts to approach this subject on the anthroposophical level that are still mixed up with the empty shells of orthodox tradition. From time to time it is quite fitting to draw a line and see where we stand in present humanity.

In his lecture on karma of September 18, 1924, Rudolf Steiner stated, "In order to understand karma we must once again find the true spiritual star wisdom, a new science of the stars. At the beginning of Michael's reign there are great difficulties in approaching a real star wisdom. Anthroposophy realizes that the start of the reign of Michael is a time which opens a gate to a new understanding of the stars. The portal is open again to investigation for that which has to be investigated." Toward the end of the lecture Steiner emphasizes that the wisdom of the stars is most essential for the science of karma: "The spiritual science of the stars is the true science of karma."

What we do here has its deep sense in Anthroposophy. There are many obstacles around and within us at the moment. It is interesting to realize that the archetype of Strader in Steiner's Mystery Plays was alive in Steiner's time. He took the character from someone known to him, whose karmic background he also investigated. He was connected with a kind of abstract Christianity and became a member of the Capuchins. Later he belonged to a more rationalistic school and was impressed by the philosopher Lessing. Rudolf Steiner discovered that this "Strader" had been previously rejected by the spiritual beings of the Moon—the Moon leaders who taught humanity during the time when the Moon was still united with the Earth; teachers who never lived in the physical but once worked through the etheric of humanity and who withdrew with the Moon when it left the Earth. These are the beings that we meet between death and rebirth in Kamaloka, who represent our roots in the past. (After passing, the time one spends in the sphere of the Moon is called Kamaloka.) This goes back to India and the Bhagavad-Gita.

When Strader entered the spiritual world these beings told him: "You must still wait. You are not yet allowed to have anything to do with knowing the stars, not only because of your last incarnation but also the previous incarnations." Until he had met the things that he had established previously, he would not be allowed to know anything of the stars or of karma. These beings normally present us with the aspect of karma in the language of the stars, which is the same thing.

Rudolf Steiner tells of a legend that was based on fact, in which he found Strader in the personality of Heinrich von Ofterdingen at the Wartburg Sängerkrieg (literally, Singers' Battle). In this legend there was a great Battle or Contest of Troubadours in Thuringia, which was a contest between a number of minstrels who fought to the death and in which the loser was beheaded. Thus it was of a very serious nature. Heinrich von Ofterdingen was a troubadour who sang the praises of his own lord, Prince Leopold of Austria, who may have been the one who kept Richard Löwenherz prisoner. Also among the contestants was [the previous incarnation of] Wolfram von Eschenbach (the writer of the *Parsifal* story) and Walter van der Vogelweide. This took place in 1206 AD. Heinrich von Ofterdingen was defeated in the Battle by Walter van der Vogelweide, but he thought the decision was unjust so he called in Klingsor of Hungary to his aid. This Klingsor was the blackest magician of his time, one who could still operate the old star wisdom and was therefore unique. He still had the capacity

to understand that there were spiritual beings behind the stars and he employed the dark beings for Heinrich von Ofterdingen.

Nowadays we know that astrology is used and is comparatively harmless. People concoct predictions, but it is all abstract because they do not take into account the great spiritual beings who rule the stars. But Klingsor had a knowledge—though an evil knowledge—of the real star wisdom, as he realized the presents of Beings. Sages once lived who knew the true wisdom, for there are tablets in Mesopotamia and elsewhere that testify to this, and they could use it for the benefit of all.

In this ancient Contest, Wolfram von Eschenbach stood against Klingsor, who then questioned him and called in the dark spirits. He proved that Eschenbach, though a great Christian minstrel of the Holy Grail, no longer had the knowledge of the ancient star wisdom and could no longer speak of Cosmic Christianity, for Christianity had become star-denuded. Eschenbach began to sing—of Transubstantiation, of the Last Supper, of the Crucifixion and Resurrection. This defeated Klingsor, who then used his last capacity and threatened to call in the devil to help. This created a draw or tie. Here we have two personalities who are representatives of two great streams in humanity. Eschenbach was strongly connected with inner Christianity, but Heinrich calls in Klingsor's black magic to help him, and because of this the star wisdom was involved. It is for this reason that Heinrich (and Strader) was rejected by the great Moon teachers, for he had yet to redeem the past. Yet Eschenbach, though Christian, had lost the great star wisdom and the background of the Cosmic region of the Christ with the Earth and, thereby, the meaning of the Earth.

This Contest came at a moment of historic importance, a moment of transition, a kind of deadlock, even in a spiritual sense. Also, before this time, the School of Chartres (the Cathedral) had flourished. Before that gate [to the spirit] was closed at the School of Chartres, there were people that were mostly connected with the Platonic stream of humanity and were still connected with the spiritual world as Christianity. They came from that stream and were still able to see the origin of humanity, the past of the Earth, of the spiritual world, and they could speak of the life after death, etc. The "Archetypal Ideas" perceived by Plato still spoke of Hierarchies working into the physical. Dante's *Divine Comedy* is the last shadow of all that originated in Brunetto Latini, who was one of the last scholars of Chartres. Then there came an interregnum; the souls of Plato left and the old star wisdom came to an end. When the School of Chartres withdrew into the spiritual world and the Aristotelians came, they didn't have the Platonic gift but expressed the spiritual truth more in thought form. Klingsor was the tail end of the demonic star powers. So Heinrich went through his life after death and reincarnated as the prototype of Strader, representing a whole stream of humanity having a past connection with this ancient star wisdom. All of these came to grief somehow, because by then the stars had become decadent. As a reaction (and even in anthroposophy) this situation may have to go through many incarnations to redeem this past. Such personalities must wait, unable to approach, as yet, this anthroposophical cosmology, being still opposed to it. We must recognize and respect such incarnations as not yet being permitted to approach it. We must verify this in ourselves, and only through a severe self-trial can one find the portal to a new star wisdom.

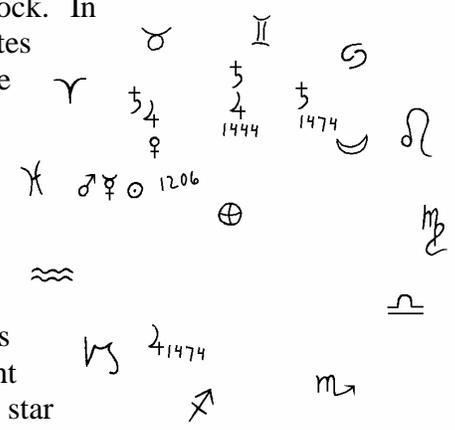
Wolfram von Eschenbach represents a whole other stream of humanity that has lost the aspect of Cosmic Christianity. His *Parsifal* speaks of the stars but without understanding the Christianity of the stars. He only repeats what he has heard elsewhere. Between death and rebirth such souls enter new incarnations, and these souls who have a deep connection with Christianity are prepared to enter this new science of the stars, yet they have a deep fear. The shock of such experiences, as Wolfram's with Klingsor's demons, lingers on and probably manifests as an unconscious fear of the visible stars; for we can have a cosmology without stars.

It is possible through the power of reasoning and thinking to relate the Zodiac to the substances and to the senses, etc. Fine work is being done intellectually in this realm in the creation of a great cosmic machine, but the stars are not yet in it, and it is not yet firmly established on a Michaelic star science. In Rudolf Steiner's *Letters to the Members VI*, Michael establishes connection between the external stars and the human world. The task, therefore, is to include the visible and external stars in all our nature schemes, and if we don't do that we will create a kind of chaos. We can say that silica is connected with Ram, but it is insufficient. We must establish it through the external stars from the direction of Ram. For instance, there exist at least six Zodiacs of substances. All on the basis of sheer reasoning, through a correct trend of thought but abstract. It is not based on a star science. It is these different conclusions that bring chaos to cosmology, and all arising out of a soul's

previous experience, such as that of Wolfram von Eschenbach. We must be able to contact the external stars and connect them with historical events. We can do that as a Michaelic star science. The danger lies in falling back into a decadent science. How can we avoid the danger of falling back into ancient ways? The criterion is true Christianity. In fact and in practice that is the test and, from my own experiences, a never-ending test as to whether we are on the right road. Because we must never forget that Klingsor's demons are still alive and in opposition to Michael in this age, we must constantly ask ourselves, "Am I on the right road?" Spiritual freedom is the very essence of true Christianity. Not just to speak of freedom, but to be free, and help others to become free; and this is a terribly difficult task. The point is that we find new vistas on which we can become free in a spiritual sense.

I would like to show you, as a matter of significance, the sky in the year of that great Contest at Wartburg—about 1206. It is most instructive to see how the planets stood then. I took the time of the vernal equinox, March 21, as the Contest would be a long drawn-out one. Klingsor had to be fetched from Hungary, for instance, and that took time.

As we can see, Saturn (51°) and Jupiter (49°) were in a Great Conjunction, which had moved into the constellation of Bull; Venus (29°) was also in Bull; and Sun (359°), Mercury (344°), and Mars (346°) were in Fishes. We have spoken about these conjunctions before, how they appear in three corners of the Zodiac, and how this Grand Triangle rotates through the Zodiac as a kind of cosmic clock. In Bull it relates to the Christ events, as they all do, but in this instance it relates to the ancient star wisdom in the stream of the Kings and of Zarathustra. We find that this conjunction goes back to the one in 14 AD, soon after the two Jesus children met in the temple, when Zarathustra united with the Luke-Nathan child. The Three Wise Men had the ancient star wisdom in purity, and they used it for the progress of humanity. The fundamental difference between white and black magic lies in how we use the magic or wisdom. If one uses it for personal purposes, it becomes evil.



This stream, coming from Ram, now enters Bull, and opposite Bull is Scorpion—darkness could also enter. We might call Klingsor the amber light for that kingly stream of star wisdom in humanity, for by then the ancient star wisdom had become so decadent that the great leaders of humanity had to renounce it. The Bull has its dark aspects, too.

After 1206 this Great Conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter moved on through Bull, and in 1444 it arrived in Twins. Twins is connected with separation or division—a severing of bonds. There was an opposition in 1474 (oppositions and conjunctions are closely related). It was at this time that the decision was made by the great leader, Christian Rosenkretz and his friends, to sacrifice the ancient star wisdom (Rudolf Steiner spoke of this in his lectures on Christian Rosenkretz). Thus this small Rosicrucian group resolved, in front of the altar and for the sake and purpose for the further progress of humanity, to sacrifice this ancient star wisdom because it had become decadent. This was sealed in a cultic ritual in the second half of the fifteenth century—1474.

The power that Klingsor used showed that the star wisdom was in danger; and it was because Heinrich von Ofterdingen experienced these evil forces, which Klingsor unleashed on his behalf against Wolfram von Eschenbach that he became so abstract in his new life as the prototype of Strader. This is something we must always bear in mind when we come together here to struggle to find a new star wisdom. There can be no going back to the past and the ancient star wisdom; we must not forget this; we must apply this. We must realize that there is a huge gulf between the ancient ways of working with the stars and what is needed in our time. There are no rules of tradition to follow; such rules would only work against us. We stand in the Age of Fishes as beggars—beggars of the spirit, and we must acknowledge that, for only if we do will we find the portal into the future.

Some people say, "I experience the stars working." Let them do so; but we must find *new* sign posts to make us free, even from tradition, in this Age of Michael. Dr. Steiner provided us with so much with which we can create this new star wisdom and which is in line with a true Christianity. If we want to follow Rudolf Steiner's indications, we have to renounce everything old and find everything anew that can be in line with Christianity.

Answers to questions

Was Strader refused entry into the Moon sphere in his former incarnation?

He was refused from having anything to do with the science of karma or science of the stars. Because he misused the star wisdom and used the demonic forces against Wolfram von Eschenbach, he then had to experience these forces after death in the Moon sphere. It was like a heavy veil of forces that prevented him from seeing the star aspects of karma.

In what way can we understand how the decadence gradually took place?

There was a fourth King—Herod. He was the beginning of the end, so to speak, for he also received the same message through the stars of the birth of the Messiah as the three other Kings. However, he set out not to reverence the Messiah but to destroy Him, and so he misused the message of the stars. The decadence in the star wisdom is inevitably allied to the decadence in mystery wisdom, because the Intelligences of the starry world, the Divine Spirit and Genius, operated through the Mystery Centers. Real star wisdom lies in this recognition of the Intelligences working through the stars and must become constant realization. A star should be regarded as the gentle hand of the Star Deity.

Does one ally the misuse of the star wisdom to the decay of the mysteries?

It is the same—that is only the outside event. You cannot imagine the mysteries without the science of the stars. A real star wisdom is the recognition of the Intelligence's working through the stars; not an answer to the question of how do the stars work, but the constant realization. If I look out into the starry world and I see a star, it is like the gentle hand of a Star Deity touching the Earth. Then we have somewhere the approach.

How does the story end?

The story (Sängerkrieg) takes place during the time of Elisabeth of Thüringen. The story concludes with St. Elizabeth eventually saving Wolfram von Eschenbach from death. She also came from Hungary, as did Klingsor. She was the *light* counterpart of the *dark* Klingsor. St. Francis died before she died, and it is said that she received the mantle (the astral body) of St. Francis—the mantle of Love.