

## COSMOLOGY COURSE

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

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(Notes from lecture, unrevised by author)

ECLIPSES ~ 10 December 1954

Tonight I should like to make a little addition to what we did during the last three evenings. I tried to get across the idea that the happenings in the sky at a certain moment are not always happening simultaneously with the things that demonstrate the situation in that moment on Earth. One has to go back or forward in time in order to find the aspect of the sky which can unlock the meaning of the present event, or at least adds to its meaning. Today I shall try to show you from a different angle. That is, from the death of a human being. Dr. Steiner pointed out that the moment of death is even more important than the moment of birth. It is striking and quite remarkable how the sky at the time of the death of a person can usually explain a tremendous amount about things which may not have been so very clear during the lifetime of that person. There, too, a later moment is much more important. Let us look at a historical example, for example, the time of death of Gladstone.

We know from Dr. Steiner that the soul does not go into the spirit world or Spirit land at once. The soul has to go through purification in the soul world, which takes about one-third the time of the life just past, before it can move on further. Then there is the tremendous moment of the ascent to the sphere of the Sun-Spirit. First we have this moment when the soul left the Earth. We can see this was a moment of great importance. In this moment the soul experiences a gigantic tableau of its past life reflected in the sky. However, the aspect of the moment when the soul enters Spiritland is still greater, still more important. That is really the time, in a sense “the” sky, of the real experience of the heavens that ultimately stands behind the death moment. In order to find this time we have to take the Moon node at the time when it reaches the place where the Sun was at death. It opens the gate of the sphere of the Moon to the sphere of the Sun. The Moon is a gateway to necessity; it is the gateway into birth on Earth. The gateway of the Sun is going into the spiritual-cosmic world. This is the way Gladstone took into the spiritual world: his Sun was in c. 58° the constellation of Bull, and the descending Moon node was in c. 110°, constellation Twins.

First, Gladstone had to go through Kamaloka. He was 90 years old, so he had to spend about 30 years in the soul world. Remember that the Moon node moves through the Zodiac in the opposite direction, so it is moving against the movement of the planets. At this time the Moon node was in Twins. Imagine that it moved a bit further toward Bull. It had a bit more to go to come into the position of where the Sun had been. The Moon node entered the position of the death Sun in Bull in 1928. Then the gate to the Sun sphere was opened, and the soul was able to ascend from the Moon sphere into the Sun sphere. The death took place in 1898, but it had its full bearing in 1928. Again, we come to that moment through the Moon node. There is a remarkable sky: Saturn had come back to the constellation of Scorpion, Mars made a loop in the constellation of Twins (even just entering Bull), and Jupiter was in the constellation of Ram. This could be compared to inspiration, or in the realm of inspiration. I don't think that he was interested in politics any longer but rather in the humanity of Europe as a whole. This was to show you how we can find the spiritual aspect of the sky through the Moon node that belongs to a definite moment and which may have happened long before or long after that moment.

The eclipse will take place on 25 December before Sunrise, but we shall not be able to see it in this part of the world. It will be an annular eclipse. The Moon will be too far away from the Sun, and therefore it will be too small to cover the Sun completely. The annular eclipse has the same effect as a total eclipse. All eclipses, and all cosmic facts for that matter, are living beings. They are beings who have their own life and their own development. They have, in a sense, their young, middle, and old age and something like a death when they pass out of existence. This is like a master example that explains just how alive the cosmos is. The last time

this eclipse appeared was in 1936 on 14 December. Thus there is a rhythm of 18 years and 11 days between each time the eclipse appears. If we follow this one back in time, we will find that it was born in the Middle Ages, when it was a very small partial eclipse. Then after an eclipse is born, it grows, becomes a total eclipse, and then it recedes again over time to a partial eclipse until it disappears and no longer comes back. Each 18 year 11 day period is known as a Saros period and there are from 68 to 72 such Saros periods in the life of an eclipse, which is about 1,226 to about 1,300 years. As human beings, we live an average life of about 72 years, and the beings of the eclipse live about 72 Saros years. During this time it passes through the Zodiac twice.

You know that an eclipse only takes place when the Sun's orbit crosses the nodes of the Moon. There is a difference between the eclipse in the ascending Moon node and that of the descending Moon node. An eclipse in the ascending node begins its life at the North Pole, and an eclipse in the descending node begins life in the South Pole. They move in what we can call a spiral, and they become complete, or come to a total eclipse, at the Equator. The last eclipse, which was in the summer of 1954, was born in the Middle Ages in about the 11<sup>th</sup> century. It started in the South Pole, crossed the Equator, and we saw it last June; therefore, it is beyond the middle age of its life. During the life of an eclipse, there are about 18 total eclipses that take place, leaving about 27 partial eclipses, which take place on either side.

Let us now take this partial eclipse in July this year in the constellation of Twins. After 18 years and 11 days, it will have moved a bit further, and so on. Thus during roughly 70 Saros years, or periods of this eclipse being, and going twice through the Zodiac, it would come back to the same position after about 33 Saros periods. You see how closely that is connected with the lifetime of the human being; it is like a shadow of the human being.

We can follow the Moon nodes and the eclipse beings in history. The eclipse on June 30 is connected with the relationship between England and France, and the one of 25 December has to do with equality. The December eclipse was on its way to incarnation in 1215. In 1774 it took place as a total eclipse on September 5. It was born in 1215, then in 1774 it was already nearing its middle age. In 1215 the Magna Carta was introduced, and we can still see the impact of this event. The one of 1774 is connected with the beginning events leading to the emergence of the United States. On 23 December 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place, the following year the boycott, and in 1776 the Declaration of Independence on July 4. I believe they belong to these points where English history and the civilization radiating from these islands brought about the very foundations of a social life that was really based on equality. Especially that which goes through the western world as the urge to equality, which was the urge that was contained in the step of the Magna Carta and was also contained in the Declaration of Human Rights, because it happened after the Boston Tea Party. It was all brought about by unhappy incidences in history, but I believe they contributed chiefly toward the shaping of the political foundations of the western world, namely, the urge to equality.

The French Revolution was probably inspired by that which took place in America some 17 years earlier. Therefore the French Revolution may not be regarded as something ultimately original. It was perhaps inspired by what had come into existence in the western world in a much more quiet way and not with that tremendous pathos as it happened in France.

One can find many more instances, and they would also fit well into the picture. We might take such thoughts into our concentrations or meditations. These are events that are connected with the shadow (with darkness), and one has to confront them in the human world. That is our real task, not to be frightened but to speak into it, to fill it, so to speak. This is really what the cosmos expects from us, of all humanity, that we help the cosmos in time—our long ages of time. It expects us to step out of the cycle of being dependent and to move toward the ages of cosmic existence and cosmic evolution when we will enter the shape of the fourth hierarchy; that is, when we are no longer dominated by cosmic forces but are able then to guide the forces of any external cosmos together with all the other hierarchies. I believe that two things are essential: to understand that eclipses are connected with darkness, with shadow beings, but also that it is our task to create positive ideas and positive feelings toward them.

From the spiritual point of view, it is something along the line of obliteration of the forces of the Sun. For example, Nordic mythology experiences the eclipse as the Fenris Wolf devouring the Sun. In an esoteric sense this means time, but we cannot proclaim this in the astronomical sense. There are not very many eclipse beings in existence, as there are just four or five eclipses taking place in a year. There are about 40 Sun eclipse beings

and the same number of Moon eclipse beings. Events cannot just take place mechanically; there must be intelligent beings behind them. Nothing can happen without cosmic intelligence.

### Answers to Questions

The obliteration of the forces of the Sun: You see in Nordic Mythology eclipses were regarded as indications of the Fenris Wolf or the sons, the descendants of the Fenris Wolf, devouring the Sun, which in a certain sense is true. In an esoteric sense, it's true, but we cannot proclaim this in an astronomical sense. We must see the things that happen in the astronomical world as symbols of something much deeper. Then we can say that a shadow-being eats up the Sun, or time.

The eclipses will continue as long as there is a Sun and Moon in the sky. Eclipse beings come into existence in intervals of 18 years 11 days, and they also cease to exist at that rate. They are quite a small family, quite a small race!

Why are they referred to as beings; is the shadow not just that of the Earth?

In an astronomical sense, it is either the shadow of the Earth on the Moon or the shadow of the Moon on the Earth. However, these astronomical facts are only expressions of esoteric events. Nothing can happen without an intelligent being setting the events into rotation. Even if a stone rolls down the slope of a hill, we cannot say that this stone started out on its own accord. A whole chain of events may have ultimately contributed to the stone rolling down the slope. Furthermore, if we go right back to the beginning, we would find in the background of that event, intelligence; comic intelligence; spiritual intelligence. Also, the so-called mechanical events that happen in the universe could not take place if there weren't intelligent beings who put them into rotation somewhere at a certain moment of evolution. Therefore, one can speak of eclipse beings.

Of what rank are these beings; are they Archai?

Yes, I am inclined to say that the Sun eclipses are connected with the Archai, and the Moon eclipses are connected with the Archangeli.

Is there a special influence streaming down at those times of eclipses?

Rudolf Steiner indicated that to be so. He said it was always known in ancient times that the beings moved in the opposite direction of the shadow. In times of Sun eclipses, the shadow of the Moon falls upon the Earth and there is a movement from the Earth along this shadow-funnel out into the cosmos. Certain demonic beings, shadow beings, darkness beings, move from the Earth out into the cosmos and create further havoc in the cosmos; whereas in the other case, when the shadow of the Earth falls upon the Moon, then beings from the Moon can move along this shadow-funnel and enter the Earth—certain demonic beings who have gone through a kind of development in the cosmos enter the Earth. It is of no use to be frightened; the best thing that we can do is to put positive thoughts out to meet it. I should not advise one to sit down during the eclipse and meditate, but rather to prepare the time of this year's Christmas eclipse with great strength. These demonic beings create havoc as long as they are not checked by human awareness.

What is the corresponding microcosmic event to the macrocosmic event of an eclipse?

The microcosmic event is all that which may appear in the human realm as darkness, some kind of soul darkness. It may be of ahrimanic but it can also be of luciferic nature. We can think of the Fenris Wolf and of Loki, because they represent the forces of darkness. Loki is the one who killed Baldur, that Sun being. They represent both the ahrimanic and luciferic characteristics, and they both bring darkness into the human soul.

Why is it important when the planets stand in a certain sign of the Zodiac?

The planet in a certain sign gives it, so to speak, its color. Planets are always standing in one of the twelve constellations and that permeates the planet with a definite aspect of the astral world. The planet alone

wouldn't be anything. The superior planets are mediators between the astral world, the sidereal world, the fixed-star world, for instance, and the Earth. If there weren't that staircase of the seven old planets, there wouldn't be any connection between the astral world and, say, the terrestrial world. It is the etheric world that weaves the interconnections.

Is the Moon a receptacle for astral rays?

All things existing on the Earth are made of two components: The one is matter—ponderable matter—and the other is the creative archetype, which is of cosmic-astral nature. These two things must come together; and it is especially this that one might call astral substance, i.e., that which comes in from the cosmos and is then densified so much in the sphere of the Moon that already a communion or amalgamation takes place.