

COSMOLOGY COURSE

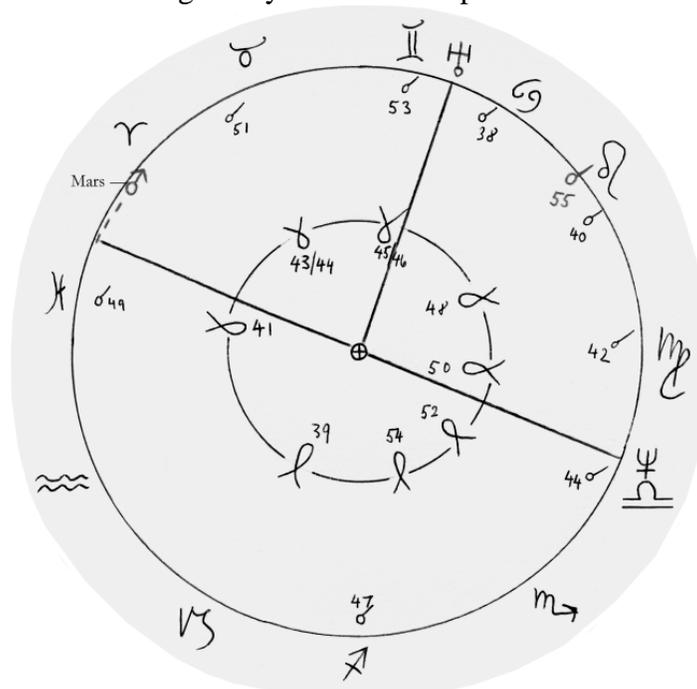
LECTURES TO MEMBERS - Willi Sucher: from 1 Oct. '54 to 1 Apr. '55 (All drawings by Willi Sucher)

Rudolf Steiner House, London, England

(Notes from lecture, unrevised by author)

Mars and the Eightfold Path ~ 25 FEBRUARY 1955

Last time we spoke about Mars and the gestures of Mars. I may just very briefly repeat what we did. We spoke of the movements of Mars in the course of this year, and during this year there will take place a conjunction of Mars with the Sun, which means that Mars is standing far out in cosmic space, more or less behind the Sun. I indicated the conjunctions (outer circle)—that is when Mars is standing behind the Sun—by drawing the little circle with the stroke  and I draw the loop  to represent an opposition of Mars with the Sun, i.e., when the Earth is between them. Now the interesting thing is to watch what Mars is doing in the course of the years. We started in the year 1938 when there was a conjunction of Mars with the Sun here in Crab. In the following year an opposition or loop took place almost opposite Crab in the transition from Archer to Goat. And so we can follow them through the years to the loop last summer in 1954.



During these occasions when Mars comes very near to the Earth, the astronomers are especially eager to observe Mars, to observe the canals and all those mysterious things on the surface of Mars. You will recall that in the course of about sixteen years we get eight conjunctions and eight loops or oppositions of Mars to the Sun, totaling sixteen. And we said that we recognize in this a kind of cosmic pattern of what appears in us as the sixteen-petalled lotus flower or chakram, as they are called in the Eastern Wisdom, and the still more interesting thing is that we actually have eight inner petals. We know the lotus flower is really a flower with, so to speak, concentric rings of petals. We have eight inner petals and eight outer petals; that is exactly how the chakram is described in occultism. The Mars chakram, which is situated in the region of the larynx, has sixteen petals: eight have been developed in the dim past and eight we must develop now. The development of eight of the petals of the sixteen-petalled lotus flower was taught by the Gautama Buddha in the eightfold path. The eightfold path is the method we must use to develop and prepare that organ in the region of the larynx, which must serve in a certain moment for supersensible perception. I should just like to indicate how Rudolf Steiner transformed and

modified the eightfold path according to the present needs of humanity. The ancient eightfold path of Buddha consisted of developing or attaining: Right Views, Right Thought, Right Speech, Right Conduct in Life, Right Means of Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mind Control, and Right Meditation. The eighth rule comprises all the others, or in a manner of speaking, it crowns the preceding seven.

Now let us see how Rudolf Steiner describes this eightfold path. He speaks of eight functions that are to be performed by the human being. I am taking it from the book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*.

The first concerns the way in which Ideas and Conceptions are acquired.

The second of these functions is concerned with the control of Resolutions.

The third concerns Speech. The student should utter no word which is devoid of sense and meaning; all talking for the sake of talking draws one away from one's path, and so on.

The fourth is the regulation of outward Action. As students, we try to adjust our actions in such a way that they harmonize with the actions of others and with the events in our environment.

The fifth function includes the Management of the whole of Life. In the Eastern fashion it is expressed as the Right Means of Livelihood. (You can see that the concepts given in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds* is much wider and much more comprehensive.) The student endeavors to live in conformity with both nature and spirit, never over-hasty but also never indolent; one should strive to be neither excessively active nor lazy, and so on.

The sixth is concerned with human Endeavor. We test our capacities and proficiency and conduct ourselves in the light of such self-knowledge; we attempt nothing that is beyond our powers but seek to omit nothing that is within our scope, and so on.

The seventh deals with the effort to learn as much from life as possible. Nothing passes before us without giving us occasion to accumulate experience which is of value for our life.

The eighth is that we must from time to time glance introspectively into ourselves, sink back into ourselves, take ourselves carefully to task, form and test the fundamental principles of our life, run over in our thoughts the sum total of our knowledge, weigh our duties, reflect upon the content and aim of our life, and so on. (This was called Meditation in the Eastern version, and it is, of course, Meditation-Contemplation.)

This is the eightfold path. It is the development of, one might say, the eight inner petals of the Mars chakram. Our task is to find the obvious macrocosmic picture of this chakram that appears in the human being. Of course we must imagine that it is not just a matter of comparing that which takes place and which is there in the human being with that which we have here and which is a picture of the movements of Mars. One thing is certain: we have descended from the cosmic world between death and rebirth, and each time we enter a life on the Earth we bring down the heritage of our experiences in the cosmos. We know that our body is built up by that which we learned and experienced in the spheres of the planets and even beyond the spheres of the planets. One can say that the planets are in us, in a sense they are present in us. In us there is Saturn, there is Jupiter, there is Mars; they are modified, but they are modified to such an extent that they have the possibility of being spiritualized. After all, what is the meaning of human beings constantly incarnating and bringing down to the Earth the heritage of their experiences in the spheres of the planets and then in the moment of death taking them back again? A human being is a means, so to speak, by which the divine world transforms that which is in the macrocosmic world, which is the universe. All the functions of human beings, even eating and digesting, are really designed to be sacrifices, to be kinds of service for the whole universe, for the whole cosmos. This is, of course, not recognized now. For the most part, human beings take in their food because they must exist. For many it doesn't matter what takes place within the sphere of digestion; and anyhow, with the present means of cognition we cannot comprehend what takes place, for instance, in the stomach, in the intestines, in the whole metabolic system. We don't know these things, and perhaps it is just as well that we don't know, for then we don't interfere with it, because it is a sacred region. It is there the great transformation of that which is out there in the cosmos takes place. It is transformed; it has the opportunity to be transformed into something spiritual. Perhaps one time in the future, humanity will recognize this—what actually takes place within the body.

Thus we must also think of the forces of Mars as having been given to us at one time. At a certain moment,

and each time when we incarnate, we bring those forces down to the Earth again. When we go back into the spiritual world after death we also bring, of course, those fruits of our life—so to speak, the fruits of that which had become our own individual Mars. We take them back to the spiritual world; and we can imagine that then comes the great moment when this fruit, our personal Mars fruit, is going to be tested, let us say, in the sphere of Mars against the expectations of the cosmic world, of those beings who live on Mars. Then it remains to be seen whether as individuals we have lived up to the expectations of the cosmos. If not, of course, we will realize it during the life between death and new birth, and from that realization the desire to incarnate will arise again in order to make it better next time. Thus Mars is implanted into the human being, and the highest manifestation of Mars, the most subtle imprint coming from the sphere of Mars, is contained in that supersensible organ, which is that spiritual organ of the sixteen-petalled chakram or lotus.

Now if we take these eight functions of the eightfold path of Buddha as they are represented in the book *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*, then we very soon become aware that it is a path toward a healthy confrontation with the external world. It's a path; it's a function; its rules give us the opportunity to face the external, physical world in a fashion that is healthy and which can build the foundation for healthy existence on this planet. All these eight rules are really very practical advice, if we read through them. They are almost common sense advice, and yet they are most important. What is contained in these eight truths? You know that we speak here of the seven celestial entities, the Sun, the Moon, and the five planets. Of course we are all very well aware that three more planets have been discovered, about which we can speak some time later, but from the viewpoint of that which is contained within the physical framework of a human being, we must speak of seven celestial entities as far as function is concerned. We can also see eight functions in this eightfold path; that is, we can see something that is also connected with the organic life of the human body.

These seven planets are of course not isolated. You know yourself if you look at the human body, that one cannot take, for instance, the liver or the heart as something which stands, so to speak, on its own ground and is quite independent from any other organ. We know perfectly well how much the liver is dependent on the circulation, and the heart is again dependent on what the lungs do, and so on. We can see how there is an intimate interrelation between the organs in the human body; and these organs in the human body are, as we know, nothing else but that which has been individualized in a corporeal sense and brought down from the spheres of the planets. The liver is nothing else but the individualized—of course corporeally individualized—Jupiter, and so on. There is an intimate interrelationship between the planets, between those seven celestial bodies, and this interrelationship reflects itself into the single planet. For instance we are speaking of Mars. In Mars are reflected the seven again; they are there, as seven reflections. Thus we can speak of, say, Saturn in the language, in the modulation of Mars. So we can also speak of the Jupiter function in the sphere of Mars, etc.

There is a certain similarity to the seven great Archangels. The seven great Archangels actually belong to the Archai, to the Spirits of Personality, although they are called Archangels. But we know that those seven in themselves, although they belong to one hierarchy, reflect in themselves again the totality of the choirs of the hierarchies, the seven or nine choirs of the hierarchies. As we have here eight conjunctions and eight loops of Mars in the course of 16 years, a kind of gigantic cosmic lotus or Mars chakram, we can now imagine, and one can work it out in all detail, that seven of the eight are connected with the planets.

Take just the first of the functions. The first is the way in which ideas and conceptions are acquired. With some imagination, we can see that is nothing else but Saturn, the reflection of Saturn in the sphere of Mars. Saturn alone would never get beyond some kind of etheric formations, never beyond that which takes place along the border between the astral sphere and the etheric sphere. In order to bring it right down to the physical, even to the material world, Saturn needs Mars; however, then Saturn appears in that sphere of Mars as a function, and that is the function or the capacity to acquire ideas and conceptions in the right fashion. We can see it quite clearly, it is a very practical rule, but at the same time it is a rule that concerns ideas and conceptions, something of a psychological nature; yet, we approach them from the physical level, from the level of physical practicability. These are the seven, and the eighth is, so to speak, the summing up, the taking together, also the function of bringing order into the seven, an inner order.

I don't want to go too much into such details tonight as, for instance, how the conjunctions and loops are connected with the seven planets and how they are then summarized in the eighth. As a matter of fact, we can start anywhere, we can start, say, in 1955 and look forward to that event which will take place on the 17th of

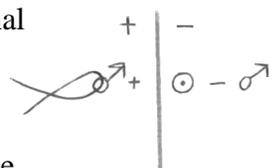
August when Mars will be beyond the Sun, behind the Sun in one line—well, if we look out toward the Sun then we can imagine near that Sun in the background there will also be Mars in a conjunction. We can start with that, and then we can, for instance, look back and say to ourselves that yes, there must also be a rhythm somewhere of seven. If we go back seven years into the past, we come to a loop in 1948 (see above diagram) that actually took place just in that same position of the Zodiac. The loop was actually almost exactly in that position in Lion where this conjunction will now take place in the course of this year.

We have already been able to find certain significant rhythms in the cosmos, such as the rhythm of 18 years and 7 months, which is the movement of the Moon node, the 12 years' rhythm is expressed in the movement of Jupiter, the 30 years' rhythm in the movement of Saturn, then we have the 27 or 28 day movement of the Moon in the course of one month, and so on. But the rhythm of seven years is a reality that you know of yourself, and you may have experienced in your own life how the rhythm of seven years is something quite dramatic and quite real in a human life. Yet, as far as I know, a rhythm of seven years is only indicated in these movements of Mars.

Now then, we can go further, and it is quite interesting to follow this up. From 1948, the next would be '49; you see we go over here (Fishes), and so on to '55. In a sense the circle is closed; only half of the circle consists of loops and the other half of conjunctions, but nevertheless the circle is closed. By the way, it is not exactly seven years, it leans already into the eighth. This in '48 took place in the beginning of the year, and this takes place in the second half of the year 1955, so there is a gap of about half a year, seven and a half. The last year of the seven already leads right into the next seven years' period. We can see this 8th in '55 is already in the next cycle, but it begins, so to speak, in the same place where our journey commenced in '48. If we investigate this Mars rhythm of seven years, we will find that the other planets alternate somewhere in these gestures.

The question is what does it mean? To answer the question we will need two things: first, the planet and then its gestures. We see now the planet Mars with its great cosmic chakram. We know that it has to do with speech because it is the spiritual organ near the larynx; in fact, Mars is connected with speech to a high degree. We also found that this planet obviously has to do with those down-to-Earth practical things that are contained, for instance, in the advice of the eightfold path. That is the planet Mars, and now we add it to the gesture of Mars.

We have spoken before about this position of Mars when it is in a conjunction behind the Sun. Now the Sun, as we know, is a place in the cosmos that is just the opposite of the Earth—the opposite in every respect. It is that point where space actually disappears and where we enter non-space, etc. The Sun is also, as perhaps you remember from how we spoke of it last year, the portal to the spiritual world, the world of the dead. If there is the non-space world, then it is quite logical that into that non-space world the souls of the dead will enter after passing over the threshold. Now we have the picture that is something like a tremendous curtain (vertical line in diagram), a border between the Earth and the Sun; here it is plus space or three-dimensional space, and this other is minus or non-space. Now what would you think if Mars goes beyond that Sun? What kind of a Mars is that? Is it a Mars that is very near something; what? Well, in any case it is not near the Earth; it is as far as possible away from the Earth. With what kind of world would that Mars be connected? We have already given the answer; it would be connected with the world of the dead, for instance. The dead live in the spheres of the planets. They would not appreciate very much this position (loop) of Mars. That reminds them too much of the earthly world. What they prefer, where they can live and breathe, where they can experience Mars in their own being is this position where Mars is standing and resting in the sphere of spiritual archetypes of physical existence. The opposite is when Mars comes so near to the Earth, and then this Mars helps and promotes the incorporation of the archetypes of the physical world into the earthly world. It is a process of incorporation; but here in this event, which we shall have to face in the summer, we have the opposite. Fundamentally it is an event that refers us to a realm where the dead live, where the beings of the spiritual world live, where the archetypes of the physical world dwell, and so on. We must enlarge on it, of course, but for now it is the one point that we must bear in mind.



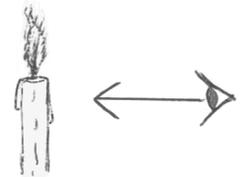
I should like to mention something else that is remarkable with regard to the events during the summer. Mars is not alone behind the Sun and out in that realm which is turned away from the Earth—the world of the spiritual archetypes, the soul world and Spirit land, as it is called in the book *Theosophy*—all the planets are

behind the Sun at this time, except perhaps Saturn, which is too far away and is down here somewhere (Scales). Here in the constellations of Crab and Lion we have all the planets standing behind the Sun: Mars, Jupiter, then also Venus and Mercury. Therefore, we are very much reminded that it is not just our own little physical world down here that comes under celestial consideration. In such a unique position of the planets is contained something like a clarion call of the cosmos: “Widen your consciousness, think of us, think of the cosmos, look at things that you experience on the Earth also from the point of view of the cosmos, from those who have passed across the threshold.”

However, so far all this is only the characteristic of Mars. What we must add to this in order to give this Mars a color or a mood, so to speak, is the constellation in which the event takes place; and that is Lion. Last time we worked out the twelve constellations in connection with the symbols, which have been used since very ancient times. We had to modify some of the symbols, but we could always recognize the original symbol. I want to give you a picture of how this can fit very well into a Christianized, spiritualized Buddhism, because we have been speaking about the eightfold path, and we have something here like a cosmic counterpart of the eightfold path of Buddha.

We can see that the Zodiac was also known in Buddhism, just as the knowledge of that which appeared in human beings as the microcosmic Mars chakram was known and also in connection with the Mars world out there in the cosmos. Thus also the connection between the human being, the world, and the twelve constellations was known, and that is contained in the twelve Nidanas of Buddhism. What are the twelve Nidanas? Buddhism speaks of the Wheel of Life, which has twelve spokes, and these are the twelve Nidanas. What is that? It is nothing else but the microcosmic conception of the Zodiac. If we read about these twelve Nidanas of Buddhism—of course it is a bit difficult because we cannot always rely on translations, but something is always shining through—we realize at once that it is nothing else but a description similar to that which we did in connection with the symbols. By the way, I want to assure you that I did not take the twelve Nidanas of Buddhism in order to work out the symbols. This is something that came later into my consciousness.

The first, for instance, is Existence, blind and without knowledge in the very beginning. We called it the beginning (Ram, philosophically connected with Idealism). Then Stirring, Formative, and Organizing: we called it a further stage in the descent down to realization, actually to manifestation (Bull, philosophically connected with Rationalism). Then Awareness which begets Organisms: that is Twins, a further step, and we have then the upper world and the lower world and streams communicating between the two (philosophically connected with Mathematism). Then the fourth of the Nidanas, which is called in Buddhism the Six Fields (Crab). The fifth is the Five Senses (Lion), and the sixth is the Mind (Virgin). I took them all in one go because they are really interrelated. What are the Six Fields? The Six Fields are really that world which we perceive through the senses; and the Five Senses is the fifth. Now let’s see how that works. Let us say here is the eye (diagram) and out there in space is a candle, which we see. The five senses is one thing; in this case the sense of sight, but the object out there, that belongs to the Six Fields. I should explain it a bit more. The human being has five senses and the Buddhist usually combines with them the mind, what we call the mind. It is very difficult to translate the concepts of Buddhism into modern language. But the Buddhist combines the mind with the five senses, and then we have six. Six Fields, the senses perceive. The organism of the senses of humanity is embedded into Six Fields. So that would be Crab, that world of the objects of sense perception. It is really the material world, and that is Crab. Incidentally, Crab is connected with Materialism in a philosophical sense. The Lion, the Five Senses, and that is connected with Sensualism (or sensism) in a philosophical sense. The Virgin, the Mind, is philosophically connected with Phenomenalism.



Thus we would find all twelve. It is interesting that in the seventh, which is Scales, we find Contact with Things—touch and philosophically connected with Realism. In the eighth, which is Scorpion, it is Sensation; that which creeps, so to speak, into human beings and takes us into the physical world and takes us out, so to speak—it is almost temptation and is philosophically connected with Dynamism. In the ninth, First of Individualized Being, that would be Archer (philosophically connected with Monadism). It cannot be mistaken; the twelve Nidanas are, so to speak, the microcosmic reflection in the human world of the twelve great constellations of the Zodiac. So we are somewhere on solid ground when we are speaking of that which

concerns Lion. The Lion must give us the fundamental motive and mood of that event which takes place in summer during this year of '55. Last time we spoke about Lion, and we said the symbol is something like, coming from the periphery and establishing this sort of center here, a somewhat emancipated and self-contained being . That is certainly the one thing that works in humanity and which leads us to that world where we stand and live with our five senses. That is the fifth of the Nidanās of Buddhism.

We have not received all of this from the cosmos in order to sit on it and have a good rest. We have received it in order to evolve it and to contribute to evolution. It is the parable of the talents in the New Testament. We are not given the talents in order to bury them so that thieves and others don't take them, but we are supposed to use those talents and to increase them; and woe if we don't do it. Then even that which has been given to us is taken away from us. Therefore it will not do merely to sit down and say, "Yes, all right, Lion is obviously that which comes from the periphery and establishes itself in that center, in the heart." It may well be that we are called upon, and especially if we tread on a path of occult development, to return with all that which we have developed in the isolation of Lion and take something back to that periphery as a message. That perhaps may be the task.

You see, dear friends, what I am really driving at is this: It will not do to ask, "What does it mean?" We won't get anywhere if we ask, "What does this conjunction of Mars mean?" We can get, of course, hundreds of answers. There are many almanacs in the world that tell us all the things connected with this conjunction of Mars with the Sun. Also there are pretensions to give prognosis of the weather during such times and all that, but it just won't do. Usually we find ourselves deceived. It leaves us empty. It takes away something of our cosmic dignity, because our cosmic dignity is to "do" something in such a moment, to contribute something to the world in such a moment, even if it is in a very small way. It need not be just in that moment. I do think that such influences are most powerful when we are working toward them. The working up to such a conjunction is the time when we must develop thoughts and ideas that can be fruitful for the cosmos. What are these? What does it mean, going up to such a conjunction? How can we do that? It is only words if we say, "All right, we go from that which we feel and which we have developed in ourselves as our own being, we go out to the periphery again." What does it mean?

The Lion is also connected with the five senses. To put it into a nutshell, I should say what is needed in such a moment as this is that we are aware and exercise, meditate, so to speak, about this idea of trying to establish, control, and chiefly to use the five senses—say the sense of sight or the sense of hearing—in full consciousness and that awareness, so that we do not see the world and hear the world for our own purposes. I believe it is still a common notion that the world is there for the human being and not the other way round. However, more and more the time will come—and I believe the shadow, or rather, the light of those future times is already falling into the present—that what we see and hear in the world must not only be for us but must be practiced and retained and even done, as it were, for those who are beyond the threshold, living among the dead and also for the hierarchies of the spiritual world. Because they have no eyes, they have no ears, they do not know what happens in this world to the degree to which we experience it in the world of the senses. They do not know it, and they are waiting for the human being to tell them what is happening in this world. In this present moment—and I mean moment in a wider sense, in a historic sense—the human being enters more and more a kind of agonizing loneliness. Human beings can live very close to each other, and yet they can be terribly lonely. This is due to many factors connected with human life, but one of them is that we must learn again to live for others. It will be needed, that we pay great attention to the feeding of the spiritual world by that which we experience in this world.

Dear friends, there is in these days so much reason for complaint, for bitterness, for anxiety, even for fear of the things to come, and there are so few among human beings to whom one can speak, to whom one can communicate these anxieties, but there is one possibility, and that is to communicate them to those beings beyond the threshold. Then something wonderful will happen, because we shall lose all those anxieties and fears and what not; they will just leave because we shall then realize that beyond the threshold to the spiritual world, they certainly are eager to hear, in a spiritual sense, what the human being experiences in the physical world. However, there they have different aspects, more worldwide aspects, more cosmic aspects than those taking place on the Earth. Thus in that kind of cooperation, which can grow, there can enter into existence a kind of comfort of which most human beings do not even dream at present—a kind of direct communion with

the spiritual world. Such events are, of course, something like foci in the distance. This conjunction occurs in only a few months, but nevertheless it is a focus. We must imagine that the road to that end has stages, but once one sees the focus, so to speak, even if only in the distance, one can know what the stages contain, what the stages really demand and how one must preserve, in a sense, on one hand and distribute on the other hand one's efforts in order to get there.

I should like just to mention that Mars is in Ram at present, where it entered a few days ago. Just a few days earlier, when it was a bit further back, it was in opposition to another planet, which does not belong to the seven that we mentioned before. It is one of the newly discovered planets, the planet Neptune (see diagram I). At the same time Uranus was also up here—another one of those newly discovered planets. If we had, so to speak, used a cosmic ruler as big as the cosmos, we could have drawn such a geometrical form in the cosmos. In astrology it is known as a square. We cannot spend very much time on this, but try to work it out for yourself. We have experienced what took place during the last few days; we have read and heard about the catastrophes taking place all over the Northern Hemisphere and floods in the Southern Hemisphere. These nature catastrophes all round the globe are related to this. Such catastrophes are only possible because there is a vacuum created in the human world. Something gives way and creates a vacuum, and into this vacuum there streams wild forces of nature that create havoc. These catastrophes are reminders of what is really demanded from that inner development of which we spoke.

Thus it will come just about that time, a bit earlier, that Mars will move up here into this position and will come into conjunction with Uranus; then we will again have the square. The interplay of these planets back and forth is aggravating a situation that we should fill with positive forces in order to counteract it. Try to work it out. Really look at this as if we would look at a piece of clay, as something which we can mold, something that expects something from us, which expects the fruits of an inner development from us to fill that vacuum. I believe these are the things that we must face in this age. I don't think it is of very much use any longer to speak of or to look out for the answer to what the things mean, for the meaning lies in us. Even if we fail, and with regard to many of these events in the cosmos we shall fail, because we have not even taken the very first step on the path toward them; still, we must learn how to do this. I believe this is what a new cosmology really demands from us. In a fortnight we shall meet again and carry on with our work here.

Answers to Questions:

Would you speak about the square aspect of Uranus and Neptune?

We can trace the deterioration of the weather back two years when Uranus and Neptune first came into a square relationship. These two planets form a combination of two great spiritual forces. They represent, as one aspect, Lucifer and Ahriman. Neptune has been remarkably connected with events in the last three years, and Uranus is in the constellation of Twins, which also represents these two opposing forces. We must transform this into a Trinity; we must fill the "gap" or vacuum with the Third element—as in the great statue by Rudolf Steiner, where Christ holds the balance by stepping between the two. If this does not take place a vacuum will occur in the human soul where the two "others" can make mischief. It is this which lives in that square; for all heavenly events express spiritual facts.

Will it help to read to the dead?

Yes! One way would be to read to the dead. We have to work not only for ourselves but also for the dead. Each one can find their individual approach. One can enhance the stature of humanity to a degree unknown hitherto; for we must remember how closely the powers of Mars enter both our daily life and our speech.