

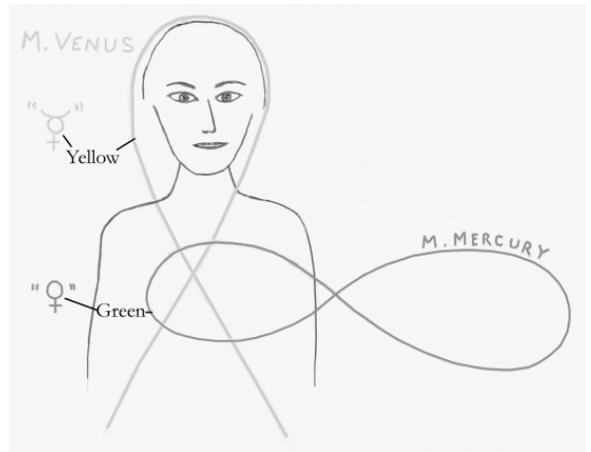
COSMOLOGY COURSE

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)

MERCURY (Occult Venus) in Relationship with VENUS (Occult Mercury) ~ 25 MARCH 1955

Today we shall conclude the discussion of the seven planets with the description of the planet which is called Mercury in modern astronomy. We perhaps ought to try to comprehend this whole problem of the exchange of Mercury and Venus; and I should say it is a very difficult problem, very far reaching. But I believe I can give you a few points that may make it easier to, first, realize the reason for the exchange, and then also how this whole complex can be brought into line with modern conceptions, as well as certain conceptions that we find in so-called astrology and so on.

When we spoke about Venus, or what we called occult Mercury, or the Mercury of the Mysteries, I pointed out that occult Mercury is working in a lemniscate which is in the horizontal. Perhaps we should make a diagram of this. We have here the human being (drawing at right), and the lemniscate of occult Mercury would be here and reach out into the world. (We will call this M. Mercury for Mercury of the Mysteries [green] and the yellow M. Venus.) One half—the one loop of the lemniscate—would be within the human being and especially connected with the rhythmic system—actually with that which is the physiological basis for feeling, and it would reach out into the world. However, imagine that it is not just a simple lemniscate. It's rather a lemniscate that can expand in all directions, because we have many connections with the external world and with other human beings especially. The other half of the lemniscate reaches out toward that object or person to whom we are talking, for instance, or with whom we have a certain connection. Now even this is a very primitive point of view, because this lemniscate should really be imagined as not spatial, but rather as foci of dynamic connections.



We certainly see that one focus of this lemniscate, of this whole world of our connections and relationships to the external world, is centered here in the rhythmic system, but it also works at the same time up into the head and down into the limb system. For instance, in the head it would continue to radiate something of that breathing quality with which it is connected here in the rhythmic system; and thereby breathing in the realm of the senses would come about. Then we can really speak of a breathing activity in the realm of the senses, and that would be how occult Mercury works up toward the head of the human being. This is what we mean if we imagine this lemniscate that is centered in the rhythmic system of the human being.

Now then, occult Mercury works in this green lemniscate, which is oriented in the horizontal direction, and occult Venus would then work in this yellow lemniscate in a vertical direction. You see I didn't add the lower half of the yellow lemniscate, but you will understand that it really belongs to it. This would be the Venus of the Mysteries.

This lemniscate of occult Venus stands upright, and the two foci are almost drawn into the human organization. It is certainly there in the functions of the physical body but goes far beyond the functions in the physical body. It could also work in the ether body and the astral body. We can see at once what occult Venus does in the human being, how it is incorporated, so to speak, into the human organization. We see in the upper half that it is connected with all that which concerns the intellect and the activity of the brain, of the head altogether; this means intelligence in the widest sense, rather than just intellect. The intellect is only a kind of

shadowy reflection of what the background of that activity is. Think of what was at one time cosmic intelligence reaching into the human being and creating in our organization the thinking. It brought about the thinking that was quite passive, in a sense, because the thoughts of the divine world, the cosmic intelligence, flowed into the human being—one couldn't stop it. The human being experienced that cosmic intelligence in mighty visions, in imaginations, but it was something that entered human beings from the external world.

Then later on, this intelligence separated from the cosmic intelligence and became human intelligence. That was chiefly—not entirely but chiefly—the time of the Greco-Roman civilization. At that time intelligence, which once was a cosmic intelligence, became a human intelligence; it was a human being's own intelligence. Gradually it separated from the cosmic intelligence. That is all contained primarily in the *Michael Letters* of Rudolf Steiner (Letters to the Members), though also in many other lecture cycles. This tragedy, so to speak, of humanity cutting itself away from cosmic intelligence and coming to rest entirely in its own intelligence was then taken hold of by Ahriman, as we know. Now we have the struggle of humanity to reach out again to cosmic intelligence. Michael became the guardian of that cosmic intelligence, and he holds it out to us; he holds it and guards it above us, so to speak, and it is our responsibility to reach out and to take it again. This is the great battle between the forces of Michael and the forces of the dragon, of Ahriman. Michael wants to make it possible to open our being again to the cosmic intelligence, whereas Ahriman wants to close us further away and to bind us in a kind of robot-like intelligence, to bind us to the Earth. That is the one side of the loop of occult Venus.

The other side, as we see, goes right down into the limb system and into the metabolic system of the human being. There it is connected and working in those mysterious depths that we usually call the will, the realm which is completely submerged in unconsciousness. We don't know what is happening in that realm of the will. We don't know what is happening if we lift our arm. We certainly make the decision here in the realm of intelligence, in the head, to lift the arm, but then we do not know what is happening from that idea of lifting the arm right into the movement of the arm. These are mysteries of tremendous profundity. Apart from that, there are the mysteries of metabolism, the mysterious transformation of the substances that we take, for instance, into our organism as food and which are completely broken up and transformed. One knows very little about that transformation, which is fortunate because human beings of this age who live entirely in our modern, intellectual pragmatism want to make use of everything instantly; they want to commercialize it, and that would bring terrible disturbances into that realm of the unconscious will organization of the human being. That is the other polarity of occult Venus. For instance, it is really the Venusberg that, for instance, is described in the *Tannhäuser* of Richard Wagner, and also in other instances.

What happened when the two planets were exchanged? What happened then? The initiates came to the conclusion that this sphere down here had to be veiled, or closed, and made unapproachable for the growing intellect of the human race. If the modern intellect, which is based entirely on the realization of the self, would get hold of the mysteries down there in the depth of the will and limb organization of humanity, similar cataclysms would happen, such as those which happened toward the end of Atlantis, perhaps much more serious. We know from descriptions of Dr. Steiner that ancient Atlantis went down in cataclysms which were caused by the misuse of occult forces. Human beings had not yet attained full ego-consciousness, and thus they were more directed, so to speak, by the adverse forces from the outside; nevertheless, those occult powers were misused, and there is a still greater danger nowadays that those forces of the sleeping will nature would create terrible destruction, if they were taken hold of by modern intellectualism. Thus there was the need at a certain time—I could not even tell you when it happened; it may have happened very long ago before Christ—when the hierarchies came to the conclusion that this mysterious realm had to be closed.

How did they close that realm? It was a matter of eliminating, so to speak, in the consciousness of the human race this lower half of the lemniscate. How could one do that? First of all, one no longer spoke of lemniscates, or to put it differently, the fact that these lemniscates work is because the spheres are working one into the other. Thus there are always two spheres working together. For instance, with regard to the lemniscate of occult Mercury, there is one sphere that is definitely the sphere of the individual, and the other sphere which comes from the external world, is reaching into it. Now these two spheres meet, or interpenetrate, and thereby these lemniscates come into existence. Of course they are invisible lemniscates, and the same refers to all the lemniscates, or spheres.

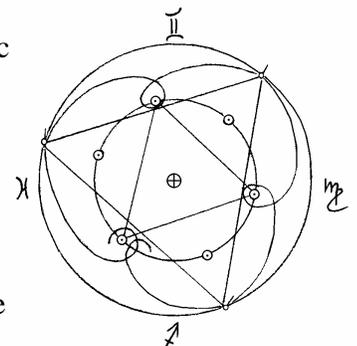
Therefore, first of all the spheres were forgotten, and that we can find very clearly in history, as it happened during the Greek civilization. There were certain astronomers in Greek times, the successors of the School of Pythagoras, who still spoke of the spheres of the planets. Then Ptolemy, who lived about 100 years after Christ, no longer spoke of the spheres of the planets; it had become unimportant. Now these things do not happen by chance. Of course they are connected with that development of the human intellect, but there is also guidance behind these happenings. The guidance was that, first of all, one forgot about the spiritual spheres—the regions or realms of the spiritual hierarchies—and all that was left was the planet which we see in the sky. Secondly, one forgot about these polarities in the human being, as there was no longer any need even to think of lemniscates in the human being. Then it was an easy matter to forget about that will-pole of occult Venus as it works in the human being.

This deed of the hierarchies made humanity forget about it, because in forgetting about it, it was possible to close the door to the mysteries of that deep realm in human beings themselves. However, then something had to be done about these two planets; it wouldn't do then to have Venus, occult Mercury here—one no longer spoke of the Mercury of the Mysteries. There was no need for it, and one simply shifted—you can see that is the whole thing—one shifted the planets up. And what happens then if we do that? Well, if we do that, we shift occult Mercury up to the head, and we then have here a planet Mercury, and then we shift occult Venus up, that will-pole of Venus (lower loop), and we have the planet Venus here (chest). So you see, we miss out on one of the three functions of that temple which the human body is. We can do that and it does not even hurt the qualities of the planets. One may think that if these planets were changed, then all that which traditional astrology says about the planets must be wrong. It is not wrong, because that Venus here (see first drawing and planets at left, after the shift), which is now called Venus in the sky, really is the planet that stands behind Mercury of the Mysteries. It describes by its movements the sphere of occult Mercury. It is still connected, even in the descriptions which we find in some astrological books, with that sphere of relationship and contact with the external world.

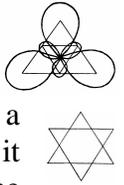
If we study the character of that so-called Venus in the traditional books, then we will find that it only describes, not the will nature of the human being, but that which is feeling. The world of feeling is described here, the sense for beauty in the human being and especially in connection with other human beings. It was called the planet of love, but of course that is only one aspect of the connection in the realm of feeling with the external world, fellow human beings, and so on. And also Mercury up here, if we study the description of Mercury as it has come down through the ages—through the last 2,000 years—in traditional books about star lore, we will find that Mercury is entirely an affair of intellectual capacities in the human being. Well, there we are, it is only the other half of that which was once upon a time called the Mystery Venus. Thus, there is no need to exchange qualitatively, but what has been achieved through this exchange is the closing of this realm down there in the deep, in the sleeping will nature of the human being.

We will now have to speak about this occult Venus, whose sphere is described by the planet, which we find in modern almanacs and in modern books about astronomy, called Mercury. What does it do? Well, we have described so far what it does in the human being: intelligence and will and the interaction between the two poles. Of course we have entered an age when we must know these things again, such as the fact of this exchange, which has taken place sometime in the past, and therefore I would think that Rudolf Steiner also spoke about this exchange. We must learn to know the truth, because that which had been closed temporarily will be opened, in as much as a human being must learn to employ moral forces to create a moral individualist. To the degree in which one will develop forces of individual morality, to that degree will one be sent, as it were, into that realm of the will nature.

What does this planet do in the sky? If we have just a rough sketch of the Zodiac (top right), just to orientate ourselves, we can observe that the planet, which we will simply call occult Venus, describes a figure around the Earth in the course of a year that resembles a hexagon. For instance, this year we have had a loop of occult Venus about in this position (Goat), when the planet was in front of the Sun in an inferior conjunction. When we say loop, we mean a retrograde movement; that is, the planet, as seen from the point of view of the Earth, comes to a stop, goes backwards, and then after a time goes on again. This loop will be



followed by a superior conjunction toward the end of April in the constellation of Ram. Then the Sun will be here and the planet out here behind the Sun. This will be followed by a loop here in Gemini, with the Sun here and the planet again in front of it. Then it goes out again, and in the constellation of Crab it will again be behind the Sun. The next loop would be in Virgin, and then a superior conjunction in Scorpion. After that it will come back to within a few degrees from where it began. Now, what we have in the superior conjunctions is almost an equilateral triangle, and also the loops form another triangle. If we now consider distances, the loops would stand as the inner triangle in this figure (middle); but if we don't consider distances, then it is simply a hexagon (bottom).



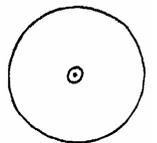
Now you remember when we talked about occult Mercury we saw a pentagram or pentagon, and you will remember that we saw a pattern in it of a certain Mercury activity in the human being. That was the activity and presence of the ten-petalled chakram in the human being. Here we also have a chakram in the cosmos around the Earth created in the course of the year. Think of the Earth standing in the center, then we would have three petals here, and apart from that we would have the bigger petals here (see above drawing). So we have a six-petalled lotus, and this is again related to the six-petalled lotus in the human being. What does the six-petalled lotus do? What does it concern in the human being?

We need the development of the six-petalled lotus in order to have, at a certain stage of our inner development, intercourse with beings of higher worlds. Only if this chakram is developed properly can we have an experience of the beings of the hierarchies and of spiritual beings in the cosmos. Now in order to do that, in order to develop this six-petalled chakram, we must establish an absolute equilibrium with regard to our threefold being. When we saw the diagram before with the upright, or vertical lemniscate, you may have thought that there is already contained in this lemniscate a kind of threefoldness of the human being: in the rhythmic system, in the crossing over of the lemniscate, and then the other half of the lemniscate in the limb nature of the human being. This threefold being must be brought into an absolute equilibrium, for only then can we advance along the road to a knowledge of higher worlds.

Rudolf Steiner does not say very much about the development of the six-petalled lotus, but again you will realize that three of the petals have been developed in very ancient times, whereas three of them must be developed now. The functions of the body, the inclinations and passions of the soul, and thoughts and ideas of the spirit must be tuned to perfect unison. An equilibrium must be established, especially with regard to that which the initiates had to close for a time, namely, that realm of the will. Unless an individual can establish absolute unison, as Dr. Steiner says, and establish absolute equilibrium between the three regions of the body, soul, and spirit—thinking, feeling, and willing—the individual will not attain entrance on the path of higher perception. We would get into terrible confusion if we became a victim of spiritual powers that work in the unseen and which want to draw the human being away from any approach to the spiritual world.

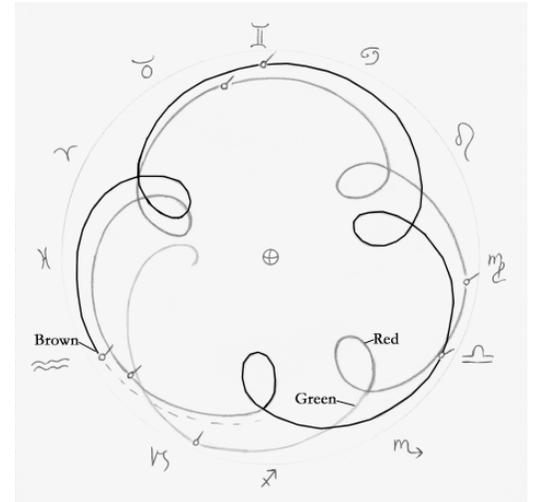
This six-petalled chakram has been re-instituted, even sanctified, during the events in Palestine, which took place about 2,000 years ago. It came up when we spoke about the ten-petalled chakram, meaning the movements of occult Mercury, when we also referred back to the time of Christ. I tried to show how during the three years, or round about the three years, five great events took place through which Christ brought down cosmic forces that He united with the Earth and which are present on the Earth. Christ is the Master of those forces on the Earth. Through this incorporation of the spirit of occult Mercury into the Earth, it is possible that we can go on and can develop, for instance, the ten-petalled lotus. I described to you the five events that took place. The first is connected with the temptations, the second with the beheading of St. John the Baptist, etc.

Let us now see what occult Venus did during those three years. We must first establish a viewpoint that such a movement from out of a loop into a superior conjunction and into a loop again is really a cycle of occult Venus. Venus is going around the Sun. It would then simply be a circular movement (top right), if the Sun were to remain stationary. However, imagine a Sun that continues to move, and then quite naturally we get such a movement of exactly what we see here (bottom right). A loop is created by the continued moving on of the Sun, causing the orbit of the planet to stretch apart, so to speak, and we would call this a cycle of the planet. During the Three Years, there were seven such cycles that took place. The so-called Three Years were not really three full years; they were only about two and a third years. In one year we have three such cycles, so in two years we have six, and the last third would constitute the seventh. Therefore, seven such



cycles took place during the life of Christ in the body of Jesus, and those cycles are closely associated with the seven signs in the Gospel of St. John. We hear in the Gospel of St. John of seven signs: the wedding at Cana, the healing of the son of a nobleman of Capernaum, the healing of the ill man at the pool of Bethesda, the feeding of the five thousand, the walking on the sea, the healing of the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus. As we see, this occult Venus never moves very far away from the Sun; so if the Sun is here at Easter in about this position, we can be sure that occult Venus is not very far from it. Therefore one can judge—it is relatively easy to judge on account of those three events: wedding, feeding, and raising of Lazarus—how the connection of those three cycles fits with those three events. The others are in between. Now let us see what took place there. Certainly we would think that it must have had a connection with that establishment of the equilibrium between body, soul, and spirit. That is, in the descriptions of these deeds or signs, there must be an element contained within them that would contribute or which would heal, so to speak, the threefoldness of the human being. This we can detect if we really read and study those signs or those deeds.

We spoke once, rather far back, about the distinction between the ecliptic signs and the constellations, and how at present the constellation of Fishes stands behind the sign of Aries. If we go back in time to see when they coincided, we would find that they coincided at the time of Christ. That first cycle (brown in drawing) was the time after the Baptism, and it may have taken place about the time of Christmas. It started about the time of the return of Christ from the desert, and it may have coincided with a superior conjunction of occult Venus in Waterman. Then we have a loop taking place at the time of Easter (Passover) in Ram. In that cycle we read about the wedding at Cana. It was the transformation of water into wine. We have here a gesture of collecting, so to speak, cosmic forces from Waterman and bringing them down into the preparation of the Passover festival through Ram. If we simply think of the imagination



of Waterman—the man with the ambrosia who pours divine water, that fructifying life-creating water of the cosmos, out into cosmic space—if we only think of that, then we are already near the background of that deed or sign of Christ. Christ collected forces from the cosmos, by which He was then able to bring the cosmic water, the life-strengthening water of Waterman, down into the Earth. This was so powerful that it could now transform the water into wine. What does it mean the transformation of water into wine? Water is certainly a life-giving element, but the wine in ancient times was actually introduced into humanity in order to bring the ego of a human being to birth; the alcohol gave the ego a shock, so to speak. Now the water takes the place of the alcohol with the birth of the “I AM”, the Christ in the human soul. This is brought during the loop in Ram (the new beginning), which was the time shortly before the Passover festival. In the Gospel of St. John we read that the wedding at Cana took place just a few days before Easter.

Then we have the next element, which is the healing of the son of a nobleman of Capernaum. That was occult Venus coming out of this loop, having a superior conjunction in Twins, and going into another loop here in Lion. Then we have the third event which culminates in a superior conjunction in Scales followed by a loop in Archer. That is the healing of that man who was ill, as it says in the Gospel, for 38 years. Here we have a perfect description of how the equilibrium of the body—the threefold body of the physical body, the ethic body, and the astral body—is established by Christ, by bringing down to the Earth the cosmic forces of occult Venus. The transformation of the water for the wine is the bringing down of the power of strengthening the ego forces in the physical body, of creating, so to speak, a place for the ego in the physical body. That is inherent in this sign.

The second is connected with illness of a child; we can imagine that it is connected with the healing of the ether body. Of course the ether body needs no healing, but it needed a correction in order to be able to carry, so to speak, the ego—the I. The seven signs are really preparations which had to be made in order to make a human being able to receive the I AM, the higher ego.

Then in the third sign, there we hear of the man who was ill for 38 years, which is clearly a reference to astral forces, because 38 years really refers to the cycles of the Moon node. You may remember that some time

back we spoke about the Moon node and said the rhythm, or the return of the Moon node, takes place within a time of eighteen years and seven months. The Moon node is connected with astral forces in the cosmos and with certain forces coming to fruition in the astral body. That man was ill for twice that time of about 19 years, that is 38 years, and then he was healed by Christ. We will find, if we read the chapter which tells of this healing, that all the details point to the fact that there had to be an equilibrium established between cosmic astral forces and the astral body of human beings on Earth, so that they could come into a position where they could receive the power of the I AM also into the astral body.

Then we come into the next loop—red in the drawing. Again we have a superior conjunction in Waterman, a bit further back because this hexagon, or that cosmic chakram of occult Venus, rotates back a few degrees each time. These chakrams also rotate in the human astral body once the human being has developed its inner capacities—i.e., once we have reached a certain stage on the occult path. Out of this Waterman, Christ again fetched down cosmic forces that have to do with Waterman as the food for the five thousand. The Waterman is actually connected with the food, the cosmic food that, for instance, in Greek times was called nectar and ambrosia. It is both the liquid and the solid food. Now this time it was the bread, the cosmic bread which was brought down to the Earth. This event, which we know from the descriptions of Dr. Steiner in one of the lecture cycles on the Gospels, was not an event that took place on the physical plane but which took place in the etheric realm. It was a feeding of the souls of those who live now during the fifth age of the post-Atlantean epoch. They were fed in that feeding of the five thousand. It was clearly a feeding of souls, a preparation of souls who, as seen from that time, had to live in the future. It concerned the provision for the soul-being of humanity in order to make that soul-being of the future, the soul-being of the consciousness soul, able to receive the impulse of the I AM into its being.

Furthermore, we hear in the Gospel of St. John of the event which took place immediately afterwards, and that is the walking on the sea. Now that is, of course, immediately afterwards, and it would have fallen into this same cycle, but nevertheless it is connected with the following cycle of occult Venus. Occult Venus came out of this loop and moved into a conjunction here in Bull and descended into another loop in Crab. That is the walking on the sea. Now we could read it in connection with Bull as an expression of unruly astral forces, which can be something unruly and even violent in the astral realm; but now we see here the healing of that realm. What really happens? We hear of the apostles sitting in a boat. Christ is not with them, they struggle to get across the sea, but the wind is against them, building up piles fearful waves; they can't move on, and they fear that they will drown. Then at a certain time during the night, Christ came across the sea, and they were afraid because Christ did not appear in the flesh. He appeared, so to speak, in a higher form, like a tremendous light. Still, they took Christ into the boat, and the sea became calm at once. Now what does it mean? It is just a description of those violent astral cosmic forces. In order to calm them down, the apostles must take into their boat, meaning their "self", the higher Being of Christ, the higher I AM. In order to tame and to transform the astral body, namely, that of which we heard in connection with the man who had been ill for 38 years, they must take the higher ego into their being, into their boat. It really means that we have now entered the realm of the spirit with regard to the signs. The spirit of a human being, or that which Dr. Steiner refers to as the Spirit-Self, is the transformed astral body. The Spirit-Self must be permeated by the power of Christ, by the power of the I AM of the world, and only then can the violence that can be in the untamed astral nature be tamed and transformed into the first stage of the approach of the spiritual world. Spirit-Self means really, that we realize ourselves through the Spirit-Self as a member of the spiritual world, i.e., when we realize the spiritual world as far as it is connected with us.

This is followed by the next cycle, which is coming out of this loop in Crab, going into superior conjunction in Virgin—you see, that dropped back considerably—and it comes down into a loop in Scorpion. Now that is connected with the sixth sign of the Gospel of St. John, which is the healing of the man who was born blind. Well, again, I should advise you to read the story. What does it mean really? It really means the awakening of the inner sense, the development of the inner capacity of distinguishing the beings in the spiritual world. In the Spirit-Self, we certainly enter the spiritual world, but we do not yet distinguish the individual beings in that spiritual world. In order to distinguish individual beings we must develop inspiration. Developing inspiration really means entering the spiritual world and recognizing individual beings in that spiritual world. The man born blind—and it is quite clear from the description—was awakened in his own being so that he could perceive

the I AM of the world behind Whom stand all the hierarchies of the spiritual world. He was prepared to receive in his Life-Spirit the power, the capacity to perceive the Christ, the I AM of the world. He was blind from that before he was prepared to see.

Now we come to the last cycle (green in the drawing). It culminated in a superior conjunction in the constellation of Goat, and this was followed by a loop in Fishes. That is the last sign of the Gospel of St. John, the raising of Lazarus. Again Christ took concentrated forces from the constellation of Goat and brought them down into this deed that must have happened sometime before Easter. Now Goat is known in all ancient mythology as the Gateway to the Gods, i.e., it is the Gate into the spiritual world. Think of that wonderful picture of Lazarus when he was raised, standing in the doorway of the grave, which was hewn into the rock. He stands in the door; he had gone across the threshold and had come back into the physical world—he had gone through an initiation. Now this is an event by which Christ established the possibility that the impulse of the I AM could be received in the highest principle of the human being, namely, into the Atma, into Spirit-Man, because we find that Lazarus connected with the writer of the Gospel of St. John and also the Revelation of St. John the Divine. What does he describe? He really describes the Spirit-Man in Revelation. It is the events in the past of the Earth and also the future of the Earth, leading as far as the future embodiment of the Earth. It is the description of the higher being of a human being, the higher cosmic human being of that which was present in Christ. When the writer of Revelation writes about evolution, in reality he writes about Christ of Whom he speaks already in the first chapter, of He Who speaks of Himself as the Alpha and the Omega, namely, that which comprises the whole evolution of the world. That is Spirit-Man; it is the highest principle that will only be fully developed for the whole of humanity, on Vulcan. However, if it is developed now, it is the realization of the Cosmic Human, of that One Who comprises, so to speak, the whole of that solar universe, the twelve constellations of the Zodiac, and Who contains space and time in its being—namely, that which happens in space and also in the time of earthly evolution, even pre-earthly evolution.

Thus these are the seven manifestations of the cosmic forces of occult Venus through Christ. Christ has implanted them into the Earth; and through this implantation into the sphere of the Earth, we can use those forces for our own inner development. We can develop, for instance, the six-petalled chakram—that is, establish the equilibrium between body, soul, and spirit. It was established by Christ, and whoever partakes in the Mystery of Golgotha, in a spiritual sense, can partake in these forces that were brought down to the Earth by Christ, as a strengthening of that which in us are forces of occult Venus.