

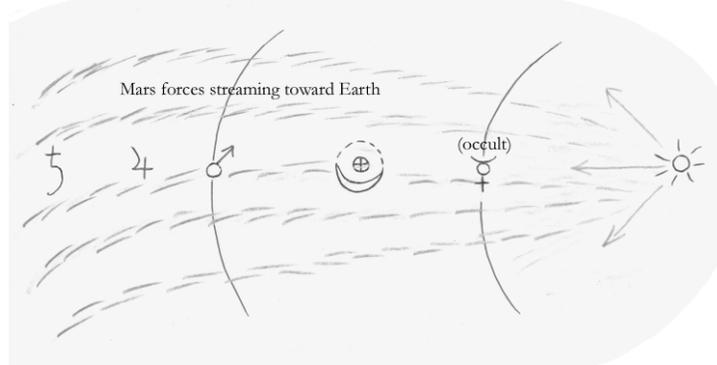
## COSMOLOGY COURSE

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)

### OCCULT MERCURY - Astronomical Venus ~ 11 MARCH 1955



Today we want to speak about the planet that we find in the ephemeris called Venus. First of all I should like to explain this strange journey. You remember we started with Saturn, then we went on to the Sun and to the Moon, then to Mars, and now to that planet which is called in astronomy, Venus. Right in the beginning I indicated that this is the order of the days of the week. Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday—which is really Mars-day—but then comes Mercury-day. Here we are already up against a certain difficulty, but I hope we can overcome it today. Last time we spoke about Mars. Let us have the Earth here in the cup of the Moon (diagram), which moves around the Earth, and let us say the Sun is here. Now, we would have on the opposite side, away from the Sun, the outer planets: Saturn, Jupiter, and Mars. Quite generally speaking, we put Mars in connection with the capacity of confronting the external world.

I must mention only one connection of Mars with the metals that we find in the Earth, and that is iron; for then we have at once a whole world which describes precisely the character and nature of Mars. What is iron? Of all the metals in the Earth, iron is present in the highest percentage and considered the most useful. The percentage of iron in the Earth compared with all the other metals is really remarkable. Iron, as we know, is the foundation of our present civilization. Much of our life is built on iron. Think of these chairs, for instance, on which we sit, or the windows here, the radiators; if we go down to the road, the many cars, the busses, etc. Our entire civilization is really built on iron, and we could not do very much without it. Our whole civilization would have quite a different countenance if iron did not exist. One tries to supplant iron to a certain degree nowadays by all those artificial substances like plastic materials, but of course we can only go to a certain extent, for we could not make an engine of plastic material.

So there we are. We are in a civilization in which we are surrounded and completely founded on iron, and this is the expression for the whole world of wisdom that is buried and even inherent in all Earth existence. Iron and the floor of iron on which we stand is, in a sense, the first half of the Earth evolution. This iron civilization has come to a certain culmination at present in this Age of Iron, where everything is based on exploitation of what is inherent in nature, what has been buried, so to speak, in the substances of the Earth as the divine wisdom of the past embodiment of the Earth. This civilization is quite ruthless in exploiting not only iron but also at the same time exploiting the intelligence of human beings. All that we do at present is entirely directed toward the execution of the possibilities which are given through human intelligence. That is the other side or another fraction of that divine wisdom which is spread out in all nature—all that in which there is little, if any, consideration of, say, another human being or of taking into account the existence of another human being or the animals or plants that live in nature. Mars is that which rests in the interior of the Earth, where as what comes in as, say, good behavior, consideration and the like, comes from an entirely different sphere. That is the

world of Mars, whose forces stream into the Earth from its night side and finally materialize and condense into that which we find as a material Earth. Mars here near the Earth is turned away from the Sun. So we can really say that this is the one half of the Earth evolution. Mars of course changes its position in the course of time, but this is the position when it comes nearest to the Earth. In such a moment of its course, it actually makes a loop; this is what we see it performing now in the sky.

There is a planet on this other side of the Earth (where I draw occult Mercury), and in modern astronomy it is called Venus. It also can be as it is here, quite near the Earth, where it also makes a loop. This we call an inferior conjunction. It can also be behind the Sun, and then we call it a superior conjunction. The quality in each case is different. (The same refers to Mars. Mars can also be on the other side of the Sun, and that is then a conjunction with the Sun, whereas this—in the diagram—is an opposition.) This planet is called Venus in astronomy, but I will refer to it as occult Mercury. I should like to point out that we should bear in mind that this is an occult expression. If we call it occult Mercury, then in this moment we mean it in an esoteric sense. I should much more prefer to give it a different name altogether. In fact, altogether the planets should have different names; the old names are hardly suitable any longer. In the course of time we must also find new names, new designations for the constellations of the Zodiac and all the other constellations. This will come in time. Anyhow, for the present we shall call the planet Venus, occult Mercury.

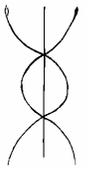
Why are we doing this? Well, of course we know that Rudolf Steiner indicated that the names of the two planets Mercury and Venus have been exchanged in order to hide certain mysteries and in order to prevent an ancient humanity, which was rapidly descending into materialism, from misusing the forces of those planets. By calling this planet Venus, in modern astronomy, and the other one nearer to the Sun, Mercury, we can really close certain mysteries. At a certain moment in the past, certain mysteries were considered to be dangerous for a humanity that was rapidly descending, therefore certain things were closed; the veil was drawn, so to speak, in front of those planets. As we go along I may have an opportunity to explain it a bit more.

This planet occult Mercury, as we see here, in the above diagram, is in a sense the opposite of Mars. The Mars sphere is the night side of the Earth as we see. Of course all points on the surface of the Earth have a nighttime within 24 hours, but of all those points, only those points which are turned away from the Sun have night. We have Mars here on the night side of the planet Earth, and that is where those materializing Mars forces come in, whereas in daytime they don't come in. Also the plants really only grow in the night; all materializing processes take place during the night in nature. On the other side, what do we have there? Remember, long ago, right in the beginning, we spoke of the Sun as an empty space, as actually a non-spatial entity in the cosmos, which exerts a sucking activity on the surroundings, reaching right out into the periphery of the solar universe? Now then, this Sun would of course suck in zodiacal substance toward its surface, and this zodiacal substance would descend in three great steps: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars. And in Mars, where we have also the archetypes of all physical objects, there would take place something like a fall-out of cosmic astral substance, of zodiacal substance into matter, which we then find on the Earth.

However, we can also imagine that these streams of cosmic substance can bypass the Earth. They do not condense into Earth substance (for instance, here where there is no Earth), but instead they would go on toward the Sun. We could then imagine that in the neighborhood of the Sun—actually reaching far out, perhaps almost as far from the Sun as the Earth or at least the sphere or orbit of the Earth—we would have a kind of congestion of zodiacal substance. We can then also imagine that this zodiacal substance is dissolved in a certain way. That would account for the face of the Sun that we see in the sky and experience as the source of light, warmth, and also many other things of which we are usually not aware. Here in the Mars side of the Earth, we have the iron impact of the cosmos, the crystallization; on this side, where we said occult Mercury would be nearest the Earth, quite a different activity in the cosmos sets in. A kind of dissolving activity already sets in there, an activity that would even dissolve space. Space of course would come into existence by the Sun shining out into that which streams in. We have the twofold activity of the Sun, just as all the planets have a twofold activity. One is the concentrated activity of the drawing in of astral, sidereal substance, and the other is that which is shining into it—thus space is created. Then on this occult Mercury, or day side of the Earth, dissolution would already set in. Therefore here we have dissolution, just the opposite of the left side in the diagram. So this occult Mercury must have the opposite effect on the Earth than Mars has on the other side. What can that mean? It brings into that hard materialized, crystallized world an impulse of spiritualization, because that is what really

takes place as we go toward the Sun.

For us the Sun is the symbol of spiritualization in the cosmos. The Sun is the gateway through which the dead enter, where they go when they die; their aim is the Sun. Of course they must wait; they must first go through various stages of purification: first through the sphere of the Moon, then the sphere of occult Mercury, and then the sphere of occult Venus, and only then can they enter that gate of the Sun. Therefore, here on the right side of the Earth are stages of preparation for the dissolution—dissolution of course in an external sense; seen from a spiritual aspect it is a gradual preparation for the spiritualization of matter. Thus we can say, that as much as we have on this side, where Mars is standing, the iron materializing impact of the cosmos, so much have we on the other side as spiritualizing in occult Mercury—really a healing impact, the establishment of the equilibrium. Therefore occult Mercury is very much connected with healing too. This symbol for healing is not exactly the same—the caduceus with two interwoven serpents—but it is somewhere near the symbol of occult Mercury (at right). Now then, occult Mercury is the cosmic antidote against the workings of Mars, and that is quite real. It is quite a real element, something that one can find in history, for instance. In the East, in India, the name for Mercury is Buddha. Mercury-Buddha brought us the eightfold path, which we spoke about in connection with Mars.

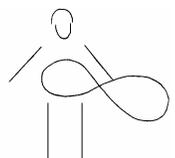


What is the eightfold path? The eightfold path is the purification of the senses. All eight of the rules are mainly common sense. They want to help human beings to purify their senses, to face the world, to confront the world in such a fashion that they do not suffer from any illusions, that they do not lose their way, do not lose the proper perspective in all that is life. It is really a teaching concerning the cultivation of the senses, a path to make the senses absolutely pure, crystal pure, so that the external world can shine unobstructed into the human being, into the soul of the human being. Gautama Buddha, as we know, no longer had to incarnate when he had completed his buddhahood. He remained in the spiritual world and was deeply connected with the Mystery of Golgotha, which we know from the indications of Rudolf Steiner; and then toward the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, he took on that great task of which Rudolf Steiner speaks, that of the Christianization of Mars. That means the spiritualization or the gradual transformation of that materializing impact of Mars, because this Mars impact cannot go on forever; otherwise the Earth would never attain its goal in the future. The constant materialization would make it impossible for humanity on this planet to keep pace with evolution, to consciously evolve toward that which is implied in the Christ impulse.

We can see now how this iron civilization in which we live makes it impossible for a great majority of humanity to consider spiritual aims. This Mars impulse has the tendency to draw the human being into its organism and to make the human being into a machine, or at least the appendage of the machine. However, occult Mercury is the counter-impulse, the antidote. Of course this Christianization of Mars will take a long time. We know that Rudolf Steiner indicated that Buddha performed a deed on Mars, which was something similar to the Mystery of Golgotha. As we also know, even though the Mystery of Golgotha took place on the Earth about 2,000 years ago, we are still very much in the beginning with regard to Christianity; and so the Christianization, the transformation of Mars, which has been going on only for about 300 years, is still in its very first beginnings. Still, one can notice already the effect of the mission of Buddha on Mars.

This is occult Mercury. How does occult Mercury work in the human being? As much as Mars is connected with the wisdom, it is a wisdom that has become quite cold, which has moved far away from its origin in the divinity, occult Mercury is connected with love and compassion and that which is contained in the mission and in the teaching of Buddha. In Gautama Buddha the representative of the planet occult Mercury was present. Even if we only take the eightfold path, we can recognize that all eight exercises suggested there concern relationship, namely, that which works between human beings; and, in fact, not only between human beings but also between human beings and the beings in the kingdoms of nature and also among the kingdoms of nature themselves.

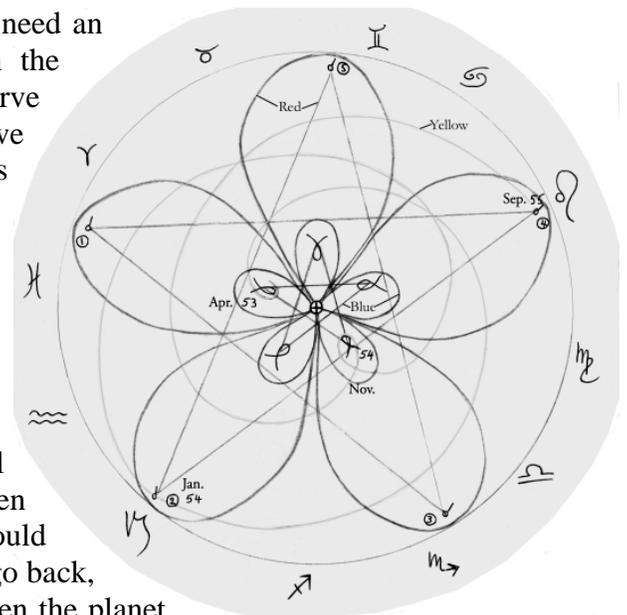
Now imagine that this is really a lemniscate, this relationship which we have to another human being or to humanity or to the kingdoms of nature. We stand in one part, in the one half of the lemniscate. The other half of the lemniscate reaches out, streams out into the world, and that is where we must establish harmony. That is the highest expression of occult Mercury. So if we have the human being here (drawing), then we would have to imagine a lemniscate that goes out into the world, a lemniscate that somehow has its center here, especially in the rhythmic system of the



human being. We will then understand that occult Mercury also works in the breathing, in all that which concerns the middle part, the rhythmic system, where we have actually a kind of buffer, a kind of interposition between two one-sided systems in the human being, namely, the head and the limbs. Something is placed in between that does not let the other two clash and prevents them from going into extremes. Of course sometimes they do go into extremes, but not to such an extent that a harmonious proportion cannot always be brought back.

I should now like to describe something of the nature of this occult Mercury that can be quite a considerable foundation and help for the inner life. You remember when we spoke about Mars we could see in the gestures and movements of Mars—the loops and conjunctions—something like a gigantic cosmic chakram, namely, a sixteen-petalled lotus, which corresponds to the sixteen-petalled lotus in the human being. Of course to a certain extent one must always distinguish between the two. That sixteen-petalled lotus in the human being is here in the region of the larynx, and that organ must be developed if one wants to attain higher knowledge, knowledge of the higher worlds. This is not the only supersensible, sense organ that we must develop—there are others. Rudolf Steiner speaks in the book, *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds* of other chakrams, for instance the two-petalled chakram here between the eyes, which is connected with Jupiter, the sixteen-petalled here in the neighborhood of the larynx, then the twelve-petalled chakram is more in the neighborhood of the heart. The others are ten petals, six petals, and four petals. Now the planet occult Mercury is connected with the ten-petalled lotus. It is in a sense the cosmic archetype. We have those organs simply through the fact that when we descended, we took the essence of those planets into our own being; and as much as we make them our own, we develop and individualize that which is out there in the cosmos. Just as with Mars, we can create and develop the ten petals of the occult Mercury lotus; and also as with Mars, half of the petals were developed in very ancient times, but the other five must be developed now. Of course these chakrams are there in any case in every human being, whether developed or not. And so it is with all the other chakrams, that half of the petals still have to be developed.

Now let us see how that is with occult Mercury. Here we need an indication of the Zodiac (drawing). We have the Earth in the center—that is our standpoint from which we observe everything—and now just to indicate the constellations. If we follow the movements of the planet occult Mercury, which is called in modern astronomy Venus, then we can detect a wonderful pattern. Rhythmically, every nine/ten months, it comes into a position either behind the Sun or in front of the Sun. For instance, last November we could have seen Venus making a loop here in Scales. It made a loop here in 1954, then it went through the Zodiac, and now on the 1<sup>st</sup> of September of this year ('55) it will be in a superior conjunction here in Lion. Therefore, within ten months we have these events, the central events of the planet. If we add the path of the Sun, it would then be here behind occult Mercury (Nov. '54), and here the Sun would be in front (Sep. '55). We can follow it up. For instance, if we go back, we would come to a point in the beginning of Jan. '54, and then the planet was here in a superior conjunction. If we go further back we would come to Apr. '53, and then the planet made a loop here, and so on—I shall just complete it. What it really comes to is that we have two such star figures. In all these points there would be loops (blue) in the course of eight years. So going back from '55 to '47 we would find that at all five points, which are more or less equally distant in the Zodiac, we would find these loops. But at the same time, during the eight years we would find superior conjunctions in the same positions as the places of the loops; so there we have another pentagram star (red). One pentagram is smaller, because the planet is then nearer the Earth, and the other one is much bigger and of majestic proportions in the cosmos, because the planet is then much further away from the Earth behind the Sun.



We can now work it out differently (of course this looks a bit abstract). We can now say these are really petals of a flower, and here we have another five in the inner pentagram. We get a ten-petalled chakram in the cosmos. Now as we go through the cosmic world, descending down to the Earth before birth, we take

something of the nature of that occult Mercury into our own being; it lives in us, in our entire organism, this activity of occult Mercury. But the jewel, so to speak, which we receive there, that is this organ called the ten-petalled chakram. Once we have it, it is our own. It may not have very much to do with the cosmic chakram at first, but it is in each one of us. Five of the petals were developed in very ancient times, but the other five must be developed by each individual human being. As soon as an individual starts to develop them, such a person finds, so to speak, the origin again, only the difference is that it is then one's own. Such an individual can then establish a connection with occult Mercury in the cosmos, and that does happen if that ten-petalled lotus flower is developed. Then, however, it is individualized; then an ego lives in it. Whereas in the cosmos, when it is connected with occult Mercury, there are cosmic intelligences connected with it. Therefore, the great progress, which means something tremendous for the whole universe, is that those who have scarcely as yet, in terms of history, attained the power of the ego, of the 'I' really, such individuals are then able to verify and to realize in themselves occult Mercury out there in the cosmos.

As we know, Dr. Steiner has spoken about the exercises that are necessary in order to develop the chakrams in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*. (You remember we spoke about the eightfold path, which is nothing else but the development of the sixteen-petalled chakram.) If you read these five exercises connected with the ten-petalled lotus, you become aware that they really concern breathing, namely, breathing in a much more intimate sense than we usually understand it, i.e., breathing in the sense of establishing a harmonious relationship to the external world. Now let's hear what Dr. Steiner says. He indicates that deeply hidden characteristics in other souls can be perceived by this organ, but "their truth depends on the immunity from the above-mentioned illusions." The difficulty or danger is that when this organ is undeveloped in human beings, they suffer from the illusion that they are in a special kind of communication with the external world. In that which works into the senses—we use these, really, in order to perceive—there is the danger that we suffer from delusions, and we do not see properly or hear properly, especially when we are preoccupied, or when not giving another our full, undivided attention. Well, dear friends, I don't make any exception of myself; I catch myself ever so often in not having perceived properly, for instance, not having listened properly. Moreover, if we take a hundred people who have witnessed an accident, we will get a hundred different opinions, a hundred different statements. Thus it is a very serious thing, which is working havoc in our present civilization.

We must obtain immunity from those illusions, and one can roughly distinguish this in the description of Rudolf Steiner's five points that are to be taken into account: (1) "It is necessary that the student should control and dominate everything that seeks to influence him from outside." Such students must control that which comes from outside as impressions. (2) We must avoid all mechanical listening and gazing, but we must also be able to practice the power of hearing nothing and seeing nothing, even in the greatest disturbance, if we do not will to hear or see. We should be able to close our senses to the world of maya and illusion at will and withdraw into the spiritual world within. (3) We should equally well be able, when observing, to observe with our senses so intently that we are strictly accurate in our conclusions and free of all personal coloring or illusion. Only then are we really active and alive in sense observation, spiritual reality, and our thinking processes. It is difficult because our present civilization is making a mass attack on our senses, of which we should be increasingly aware. We should be able to close our senses, if necessary, and also keep all external impressions in hand and under control. (4) Here Dr. Steiner gives us an exercise concerning thought: that we should single out one thought and then link all other thoughts to it in an orderly, coherent, and disciplined manner; that is, we produced thoughts voluntarily and not haphazardly or without volition. All such exercises should only be practiced at intervals that we ourselves choose to be suitable. Such regular, if intermittent, disciplines can gradually transform our whole approach and inward life. We really begin to mold and transform creatively our own higher being. Otherwise thoughts just drift in and carry us away with them into all different directions. That must be overcome. We must have full control over the trend of our thoughts. (5) The fifth concerns antipathy. We know how deeply rooted antipathy is in the human being. For my own part, I can only say that spiders are simply not my friends! However, we can begin to study a spider until we realize what a wonderful thing it is, and in this manner establish a conscious relationship with objects of the external world, rather than maintain a blind antipathy or equally blind sympathy to them. This is a very rough and a very sketchy description of the five exercises in connection with the ten-petalled lotus. Of course you realize that there is much more behind it, but at least you have here some indications of what is suggested in *Knowledge of the*

### *Higher Worlds.*

Now I want to describe to you the cosmic ten-petalled lotus. These loops and conjunctions take place in the same positions. For instance in '51 there was a loop here, where in '55 there will be a superior conjunction, because in half of the eight years there will be loops in each place and in half of the eight years there will be conjunctions in each place. In eight years, in '63, there will be another superior conjunction, but halfway before that—in four years from now, in '59—there will be a loop here. They will always take place in the same positions, but only at one certain time, because this whole “star” moves very, very slowly counterclockwise through the Zodiac. For instance, this one (#1) has already moved out of Ram and has moved into Fishes. In other words, what really happens is that on September 1, 1955, there will be this conjunction here (#4). Eight years later there will be another conjunction, but it will then be just a few degrees further back, perhaps one or two degrees further back. In the course of time this adds up, and in 1200 years the whole star here—the double star or this cosmic chakram—rotates against the movement of the planets through the entire Zodiac in almost exactly 1200 years. It actually needs about 100 years to move from one constellation into the preceding one.

We can see now that this is obviously connected with time, and whenever we have such a cosmic rhythm connected with time, we can ask, “How is it connected with history?” Thus we come, for instance, right back into the time of Christ, and there we find this ten-petalled chakram also, only the corners are in different positions. Therefore, we can imagine that this chakram had a deep inner connection with and received something like a new impulse coming from the Christ events, from those historic events that took place about 2,000 years ago, which was a whole other world! I do not dare start on that now, as the time is rather late already, but I may just give a few indications of how we can read the present position of the ten-petalled cosmic lotus.

As we go through life, it happens ever so often in our relationships with other human beings that we make mistakes with regard to our judgment of another person. Someone does something that we judge from a completely mistaken angle, and these judgments need to be taken in hand. This we must avoid, and we can avoid it if we develop forces that are connected with this cosmic ten-petalled chakram. The events that gave us this possibility were brought down to the Earth and developed by Jesus at the Gates of the Essenes and Christ during the Temptation in the Desert. In both of these events the two adversaries were seen as extremes that the Christ was able to balance. Those events are remembered in April '53. That had a profound influence. In fact, through the Temptation, something was implanted in the Earth which did not only concern Christ but all of humanity. We must develop these new capacities in order to prevent such deceptions in the realm of personal relationships.

The second one would be following, and that would be this superior conjunction in January 1954. It is this particular petal of this chakram that we must use in order to consciously create the balance of forces in the whole of humanity. That is something of which we are usually not aware, and it is also very difficult to hold. If we experience a weakness anywhere in life, we may be sure that it is counterbalanced somewhere else. This influence was given new strength at the time of the beheading of John the Baptist, the raising of the youth of Nain, and also other things recorded in the Gospels. It is really the establishment of being aware of the balance. For example, it may happen that certain people have an idea, say, on the foundation of purely philosophical grounds. We can be quite sure that somewhere in the world there is another human being who develops the same idea but in a different realm. Whether in the economic realm, art, or public affairs, there is always this equilibrium of these forces in the world that we must establish.

Then we come to this loop in November '54. This corner reminds us to concentrate all our endeavors on discovering our single destiny and its relationship with world destiny. This is a capacity that is a great gift in the single person, but it must be developed consciously. It is true that human destiny looks a mess to us at present, especially individually, but every individual destiny is linked with world destiny and, thereby, also with the destinies of the gods. I think that you see that such exercises and such capacities can establish quite different connections between the different peoples in the world and would bring order into the human community. This conjunction relates to the healing of the daughter of the Syro-Phoenician woman during the time of Christ.

Now with the fourth we come to September 1955, which is the background of that which took place in '51. Well, that is another capacity which we must attain in the course of time if we truly want to be able to breathe healthily in this world. What does that mean? That is to develop the capacity of coming to know and trust that

in order to come to fruitful results in life, we must first go through death in order to experience or establish resurrection. We are all called upon to bring about resurrection in some sphere. It may be quite inconspicuous in the destiny of the individual human being, but we are constantly called upon to raise what we do to a higher level, so that it can become common property of all humanity. Yet, in order to make it a fruitful activity in the world we must first have the courage to go through death. We do not only experience death at the end of our earthly life, but we experience it on various levels throughout our lives. You know what I mean, how it often looks as if everything is breaking down and being buried underneath the debris of past efforts, attempts, and endeavors. It is at that time when one must have the courage to stand upright in all the chaos. If one can only achieve that—of course it can be frightfully difficult. If a situation becomes so desperate that there seems to be no way out, but if one can then hold on and can establish, at least for moments, inner peace and inner strength; then one can open the door to the greater reality and can break through to resurrection. This event goes back to the Last Supper, Golgotha, and the Resurrection.

There is an inner sequence as we can already see. The fifth will be this loop in Twins in 1956. Of course we should be aware that there is a difference in character between the superior conjunctions and the loops (inferior conjunctions). I should say it is the conjunctions that concern more the human being, whereas contained in the loops there is something that was given to one in the past. Now this fifth petal, if developed, becomes the capacity to see or realize the spark of the divine in human beings. We know that we are called upon to develop that which is divine in ourselves, and we can be certain that in every human being there is that spark of the divine. Of course very often it is covered by the all-too-human elements; but in every human being there is a spark of that divine, of that which can also then say, as St. Paul said, “Not I, but Christ in me.” That capacity, which must be acquired again consciously in our age, is connected with this vision of St. Paul at the Gates of Damascus, the Damascus experience.

If we can only sanctify and lift up these five petals of this cosmic chakram to a new level of realization through these Christ Events, by concentration on these exercises, we will recognize what Rudolf Steiner sought to reveal to us in *Knowledge of Higher Worlds*. This is truly a message that we can read in the event which we shall have an opportunity to experience in the beginning of September of this year. The solution is in the realization of the fact that resurrection can only come through death, that is, practice of this great truth that has entered humanity through the events which took place about 2,000 years ago.