

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)

SATURN-2 ~ 22 October 1954

We spoke last time about Saturn, which entered the constellation of Scales at Michaelmas, and we spoke about the transition from the Father to the Son. Saturn is a planet that leads into the past, but one can also see in it the future. The position of Saturn at birth shows the past incarnation, and just as in a reflection, one can read the past in it. In that reflection there is a vacuum, so to speak, into which the future shines.

We are moving, in the sense, to the autumn of evolution, autumn of the Earth; that is, in the sense of world karma, one can speak of autumn. A picture is given to us by John the Divine in the Book of Revelation: There is a woman in heaven clothed with the Sun and the Moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown with 12 stars. She was giving birth to a son. There was a dragon who swept one-third of the stars down to the Earth and was waiting to devour the child. We can see in this the world of the physical stars, the world of modern science.

Who is the woman? In the lectures on the Apocalypse by Dr. Steiner, the time is given when that will actually take place on Earth. We are currently in the fifth cultural age and the sixth and seventh cultural ages will follow. Only after these ages will the event of the “woman in heaven” take place. She is the vision of what the soul will become after death. After death we unite with the soul of the universe. We must imagine that in that future time there will no longer be a physical Earth, and that the Moon and Sun will have united with the Earth. The Earth will then be of a different consistency. By then we must have learned to live as we do after death, as we will be permanently in this condition. This is the meaning of the teachings that great individualities such as Christian Rosenkretz have brought as a preparation for the coming of the new events. This is a great warning to learn to stand erect in that sphere after death. One may think that death is a state of darkness, of nothing; but this idea must be overcome. The vision of the “woman” must become a reality to us.

Apart from this picture, there is something else. Underneath the constellation of Virgin is the constellation of the dragon, the Hydra. This Hydra is the monster that Hercules killed by dipping his arrows into the blood of the dragon, which made them poisonous. Eventually this blood of the dragon killed Hercules himself. The Hydra is connected with the blood and with consciousness. We have the picture of the Virgin standing on the Moon and upon the Hydra. Next to the Virgin is Crater the cup (the wine-bearer), which is also connected with the blood.

We have to create our own imaginations, and we must learn to look at the planets just as we might look at a clock in which we do certain things at certain times. Saturn is a time indicator, and going back in history we find that Saturn in Scales shows an apocalyptic character. For instance, Mani died in February in the year 276 when Saturn was in Scales. He was the founder of Manicheism in Asia Minor, who taught the seeking of a living knowledge within the interplay between the spiritual in all material things. He was a great leader of humanity, but he and his followers were persecuted, and he met with a horrible death. Rudolf Steiner said that Mani and Manicheism will come to the foreground when the Moon has reunited with the Earth. The reality of the Apocalypse is of great significance.

In the late Middle Ages, there were also important people who died when Saturn was in Scales: Copernicus, as we know, was the individual who introduced the Copernican world conception of the planets revolving around the central Sun. He was one who was concerned with the one-third part of the stars that were thrown down to Earth by the dragon. Tycho Brahe was also a great individuality who died when Saturn was in Scales. In a former incarnation he was Julian the Apostate, who wanted to introduce the Persian Mysteries into Europe, and in the 9th century he was incarnated as Herzeleide, the mother of Parsifal. In a mighty effort, Tycho Brahe

wanted to counteract Copernicus; he wanted to make the Earth the center of the universe. In later years he became a wanderer and finally found refuge in Prague, where he met Kepler. As Julian, he wanted the ancient mysteries to be preserved, and as Tycho, he wanted to save cosmic knowledge. In Prague he worked with Kepler, urging him to further his own world conception. However, after Tycho Brahe's death, Kepler worked further into the Copernican world conception. When Kepler died, Saturn was also in Scales. First there was Copernicus, then there was Tycho who wanted to save, or foster the spiritual side, and then there was Kepler who went back to the Copernican view.

When Faraday and many other scientists died, Saturn was in Scales. Saturn in Scales is somehow connected with the senses. This also culminates in Rudolf Steiner, for when he died Saturn was also in Scales.

After death there is the tableau of the etheric body, which generally remains intact about three days, then it disperses into the stars. One can imagine the life forces slowly spiraling out from the Earth and continuing on through the spheres. One can read in the position of Saturn, the dramatic moment in Rudolf Steiner's life when he was living in experiences that were for him of inner reality. Many of those who lived with him could not accept a spiritual world as real; even Hermann Grimm could not accept it. The question in Rudolf Steiner arose as to whether he should remain silent; however, he broke through—he spoke. This is the spiritual essence if the “Child of the Woman in Heaven”, which can work into the future. There are mighty imprints in Scales, and these impulses do not disappear. Others who descend into incarnation take up these impulses with them and develop them further. For example, Leonardo da Vinci, whose Saturn at birth was in the sign of Libra, had the idea of flying machines; and years later there were several who brought down these dramatic events that had been born in Scales. So far it seems to have only worked in a destructive way.

Gottfried Hermann Schubert was another very great personality who was born when Saturn was in Scales. We must learn to look at each single individual and work with it in an inner exercise of concentration and imagination.

Answers to Questions

The Zodiac is like a backbone, and the constellations outside the Zodiac are like illustrations of the Zodiac.

The essence of forces are saved in the activity of thinking. The plants are created from archetypes. What is the difference between archetypes and what is now new? What does the transition of old and new mean? The creation so far, was a creation out of obedience. In the “new” creation, we have the possibility to say “no”, it is the possibility of deviation. Lucifer and Ahriman create out of obedience (see Prologue of Goethe's Faust below). We now have the capacity to deny the possibility to identify ourselves, out of freedom and love, with the divine world. The new creation will be a creation born out of love and freedom. This is something entirely new. We need not accept the spiritual world; we can reject it.

Saturn in Scales is a kind of backbone. In one way Saturn works in the senses and in another way in the skeleton. Saturn, being the oldest planet, knows into which direction the development of the world has to go. The direction of heaven to Earth is the direction of the skeleton; thus Saturn brings back into line the destiny of humanity.

The virtue of Saturn, in a philosophical sense, is gnosis.

I mentioned Copernicus, Tycho Brahe, Kepler, and (in the background) Rudolf Steiner: Why do they all have Saturn in Scales? What has cosmology to do with Saturn in Scales?

PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN

The LORD ~ The HEAVENLY HOSTS

Afterwards MEPHISTOPHELES

The THREE ARCHANGELS come forward.

Raphael. The Sun intones, in ancient tourney

With brother-spheres, a rival song,

Fulfilling its predestined journey,

With march of thunder moves along.

Its aspect gives the angels power,

Though none can ever solve its ways;

The lofty works beyond us tower,
Sublime as on the first of days.

Gabriel. And swift beyond where knowledge ranges,
Earth's splendor whirls in circling flight;
A paradise of brightness changes
To awful shuddering depths of night.
The sea foams up, widespread and surging
Against the rocks' deep-sunken base,
And rock and sea sweep onward, merging
In rushing spheres' eternal race.

Michael. And rival tempests roar and shatter,
From sea to land, from land to sea,
And, raging, form a circling fetter
Of deep, effective energy.
There flames destruction, flashing, searing,
Before the crashing thunder's way;
Yet, Lord, Thy angels are revering
The gentle progress of Thy day.

The Three. Its aspect gives the angels power,
Since none can solve Thee nor Thy ways;
And all Thy works beyond us tower,
Sublime as on the first of days.

Mephistopheles. Since you, O Lord, once more draw near
And ask how all is getting on, and you
Were ever well content to see me here,
You see me also midst your retinue.
Forgive, fine speeches I can never make,
Though all the circle look on me with scorn;
Pathos from me would make your sides with laughter shake,
Had you not laughter long ago forsworn.
Of suns and worlds I've naught to say worth mention.
How men torment them claims my whole attention.
Earth's little god retains his same old stamp and ways
And is as singular as on the first of days.
A little better would he live, poor wight,
Had you not given him that gleam of heavenly light.
He calls it Reason, only to pollute
Its use by being brutaler than any brute.
It seems to me, if you'll allow, Your Grace,
He's like a grasshopper, that long-legged race
That's made to fly and flying spring
And in the grass to sing the same old thing.
If in the grass he always were reposing!
But in each filthy heap he keeps on nosing.

The Lord. You've nothing more to say to me?
You come but to complain unendingly?
Is never aught right to your mind?

Mephistopheles. No, Lord! All is still downright bad, I find.
Man in his wretched days makes me lament him;
I am myself reluctant to torment him.

The Lord. Do you know Faust?

Mephistopheles. The Doctor?

The Lord. Yes, my servant!

Mephistopheles. He!
Forsooth, he serves you most peculiarly.

Unearthly are the fool's drink and his food;
The ferment drives him forth afar.
Though half aware of his insensate mood,
He asks of heaven every fairest star
And of the earth each highest zest,
And all things near and all things far
Can not appease his deeply troubled breast.

The Lord. Although he serves me now confusedly,
I soon shall lead him forth where all is clear.
The gardener knows, when verdant grows the tree,
That bloom and fruit will deck the coming year.

Mephistopheles. What will you wager? Him you yet shall lose,
If you will give me your permission
To lead him gently on the path I choose.

The Lord. As long as on the earth he shall survive,
So long you'll meet no prohibition.
Man errs as long as he doth strive.

Mephistopheles. My thanks for that, for with the dead I've never got
Myself entangled of my own volition.
I like full, fresh cheeks best of all the lot.
I'm not at home when corpses seek my house;
I feel about it as a cat does with a mouse.

The Lord. 'Tis well! So be it granted you today!
Divert this spirit from its primal source
And if you can lay hold on him, you may
Conduct him downward on your course,
And stand abashed when you are forced to say:
A good man, though his striving be obscure,
Remains aware that there is one right way.

Mephistopheles. All right! But long it won't endure!
I have no fear about my bet, be sure!
When I attain my aim, do not protest,
But let me triumph with a swelling breast.
Dust shall he eat, and that with zest,
As did the famous snake, my near relation,

The Lord. In that too you may play your part quite free;
Your kind I never did detest.
Of all the spirits of negation
The wag weighs least of all on me.
Mankind's activity can languish all too easily,
A man soon loves unhampered rest;
Hence, gladly I give him a comrade such as you,
Who stirs and works and must, as devil, do.
But ye, real sons of God, lift up your voice,
In living, profuse beauty to rejoice!
May that which grows, that lives and works forever,
Engird you with Love's gracious bonds, and aught
That ever may appear, to float and waver,
Make steadfast in enduring thought!

Heaven closes, the ARCHANGELS disperse.

Mephistopheles [alone]. I like to see the Old Man not infrequently,
And I forbear to break with Him or be uncivil;
It's very pretty in so great a Lord as He
To talk so like a man even with the Devil.