

## Articles by Willi O. Sucher

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### *The Thirty-Three Years' Rhythm*

By Willi Sucher

All celestial bodies move according to certain rhythms. This has given rise to world conceptions which regard the cosmos as rolling on like a huge machine. It is very often forgotten that all cosmic movement must have originated in the intentions and deeds of some kind of cosmic Intelligence.

If, for instance, we speak of the revolution of a planet, we must acknowledge that this rhythmic movement can only exist because an intelligent being of cosmic magnitude had once upon a time made that planet move in its orbit with a definite speed. It can be considered to be an expression of that heavenly being's intelligent capacities. Furthermore, we can infer by merely thinking logically, that a planet's orbit and velocity can be changed if the Intelligence standing behind it alters its own capacity and intention. It can also happen that another cosmic Intelligence takes over.

From Copernican astronomy we know that the Earth is moving round the Sun in the course of 365¼ days, and we call the time interval needed for the completion of this movement "one year". We cannot imagine that our planet would perform this rhythm unless a cosmic Intelligence had made the Earth move in this fashion long ago. This is as far as an astronomy that is founded on mere visual experience and a thinking derived therefrom can go. Spiritual Science, however, can take further steps with regard to the recognition of the inspiring Intelligences of celestial bodies; for instance, such as that of the Earth.

As a planet our Earth can be regarded as a close relative of the Sun. It is to this relationship that we should look to find the intelligent origin of the properties of our planet: orbit, velocity, and so on. One can even say that the Earth was founded by spiritual beings connected with the Sun.

We can well imagine that this bond between Sun and Earth will not always remain the same, but that another setting of cosmic Intelligence might take hold of the Earth and gradually change its character, expressible in terms of orbit, speed, etc. As a matter of fact, Spiritual Science has revealed that such a take-over occurred, in a cosmic sense, about two thousand years ago in the course of the Events of Golgotha. The Being of Christ, who had hitherto dwelled upon the Sun as the leading Intelligence of that creative, central focus of our whole solar system, then united Himself with the planet Earth. We can therefore imagine that an entirely new setting of Divine impulses and intentions combined with our planet at that time.

Such events can alter the nature of a planet even with regard to its "external" astronomical properties. Of course, it must take a certain time until a celestial body responds to the cosmic Intelligence of its new spiritual Guide. We should therefore expect that the Earth did not at once manifest the spiritual impulse which had entered it in the course of the Christ Events. This will take its time, and meanwhile the Impulse will work more strongly in the realm of Intelligence, for instance, in human intelligence and spiritual capacity. An expression of this manifestation of the Christ-Impulse can be found as a new rhythm of time in human history and biography. This is the 33-years' rhythm. Among many other effects, which the Christ Impulse will have on the Earth, this entity of time will permeate more and more the whole planet and one day in the future it may manifest itself also in the planet's astronomical rhythms.

The life of Christ Jesus lasted 33 years, from the birth of Jesus to the Death on Golgotha and the Resurrection. The Nativity took place at the close of the year 1 BC. (We cannot and need not enter into here the historical controversy concerning the year of the Nativity.) The Death on Golgotha occurred on Good Friday, April 3, AD 33, according to the results of Spiritual research. Therefore 32½ years elapsed between both events. When Jesus was born, the bodily vehicle of Christ had appeared after age-long preparations in the Spiritual world. The Impulse had entered the crucial stage of corporeal reality. At the time of the Mystery of Golgotha,

Christ had achieved the absolute Incarnation: His union with the planet Earth. This He had done for the sake of the continuation of its evolution and that of its inhabitants.

This historic rhythm from cosmic Initiative to the all-important and far-reaching fact of the Resurrection was the beginning of a new cosmic rhythm. If it were established as an interval of planetary revolution under present circumstances, it would exceed the movement of Saturn through the Zodiac. The latter takes just under 30 years to return to the same position in the fixed-star sky. This gives us an idea of the magnitude and possible significance of the Christ Impulse for the whole solar universe. It is not only this time rhythm that will more and more become important for the life of the Earth and its inhabitants. Each single event in the life of Christ Jesus will impress itself on our planet and will work as creative archetype of evolution in a historical and in a biographical sense. The pictures that are related in the gospels seem sometimes to be so very simple and without problems. This is true to a certain extent, the Christ Impulse is very near the human heart; but besides the simplicity, it also contains the most supreme and universal aspects of spiritual evolution.

The manifestation of the Thirty Three Years' rhythm has already become obvious in the life of humanity. Many historical developments and the biographies of numberless people unmistakably reveal this fact. An impulse may enter humanity or a single human being at a certain time, and we witness that it very often takes this impulse 33 years to find its realization, to move, as it were, from its birth to its resurrection.

It is, however, not only the initial and the ending stages of this humanity-road of 33 years that have become the guiding pattern of evolution. The intermediate points also are of great significance. For instance, such a humanity-impulse may be at a certain time "12 years old" and one may then notice that it goes through experiences and developments which can only be compared with the story of the 12-years-old Jesus in the temple (St. Luke II). It would be of great benefit to humanity if some attention was devoted to these facts. A situation may be hopeless at a certain moment, but judgment on the foundation of the 33 years' rhythm may give the consoling assurance that a crisis at a certain moment is the unavoidable pre-condition for further progress.

The time when an impulse is 30 years old is an especially crucial point on the road to its fulfillment. In the archetypal 33 years of Christ Jesus this was the time of Baptism, for Jesus "was about 30 years old" when he went down to the Jordan, to the place where John the Baptist baptized (Luke III). It was the moment when the bodily sheaths were mature enough to serve as the vehicle of the cosmic Christ, in which He dwelled for "three years". Rudolf Steiner has described the cosmic significance of this event for the whole future evolution of the Earth. If spiritual impulses grow and mature according to the 33-years' cycle, then the point of 30 years must mean a decisive stage for them. It signifies a moment in which an impulse must prove itself to be mature enough to be accepted by the Sun Spirit, Who united with the Earth during the events on Golgotha.

The Anthroposophical Movement is at present faced with such a situation. At Christmas 1953/4 it was 30 years since Rudolf Steiner had given it a new impulse during the "Christmas Foundation Meeting" in 1923/4. This impulse put a picture of worldwide significance before the earnestly seeking anthroposophist as the content of meditation and exercise: the vision of the Three Holy Kings working in the head organization of the human being, of the Shepherds in the heart of the human being, moving towards union in their common aim, seeking the birth of the Eternal Spirit of Christ in the human soul. Here are the roots of all real spiritual "Imitation of Christ", the transformation into reality of soul of that which once stood before the Child Jesus as the historic figures of Kings and Shepherds.

This impulse has since gone through a different life, full of disappointments. Some people may even be inclined to think that it "died" at certain stages of its career. However, we are convinced that those "deaths" were necessary preconditions for its later evolution. An impulse can never die if it is a true spiritual impulse. It can go through a temporary eclipse, but it will "resurrect" sooner or later.

The Spirit Deed of the "Christmas Foundation" entered its crucial stage of the "Three Years" during last Christmas. From now on it can become effective in a special sense in every human soul. The co-operative spiritual union of the streams of "Kings" and "Shepherds" will become possible to such an extent that the inner purpose of the Christ-permeated Earth in the universe will reveal itself to all souls of good will.

The impulse will move toward its own Golgotha and Resurrection. No being on Earth will be able to stop it. But it would be a vain hope if we expected things to happen in any case. The impulse can only "resurrect" in the soul of those who partake in the original institution by relentless efforts of meditation and exercise. It will not happen "of its own accord". Thus the responsibility rests with each single pupil of Rudolf Steiner.