The Drama of the Universe
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The diagrams are not included.

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PART ONE - CHAPTER II

The Mythology of the First Group

The constellation of Ram and, to a lesser degree, also those of Fishes and Bull speak of the great battles of the divine dynasty of Zeus against their predecessors the Titans. It was a fight for supremacy in which the followers of Zeus were ultimately victorious. Thus the horned Ram is an image of Jupiter (Zeus) Ammon, who once had to flee to Egypt in this disguise after one of his initial defeats in the war against the Titans.

Zeus is the father of the ancient Greece that inaugurated on European soil, from the southeast via Crete, the civilization of a philosophical way of conducting life and of a full use of the senses. One might think of the expression of devotion to the world revealing itself through the senses, which is manifest in Greek architecture and sculpture. This was, at least, the world for which the ancient Greek yearned. How different is the language of eastern and ancient Egyptian architecture. On the other hand, an objective existence of a world beyond the senses, for instance life after death, was certainly not a foreign idea and experience to the Greek mind. Still,
Hades, the realm of the Shades, was in their world conception a place of gloom and desolation. In this sense, Zeus with ram’s horns was the prototype of a humanity that experienced the dawn of an entirely new age of self-experience through the body, and particularly of the new facilities to use the brain, at least more than before. That humanity didn’t favor much, the “other world” aspects of existence. It was on the road to develop personality and independence.

The aspect of Ram as a new beginning and as the central focus of events of inauguration was also emphasized in Nordic mythology. There the Zodiac was experienced as the realm of Asgard, where the Gods had their dwellings. The Ram was Gladshelm (world of joyfulness) where Odin, the creator of the world in a sense similar to Zeus, had his castle. There was also the Idafield, where all the great and festive events of Asgard took place.

The Fishes speaks also of a phase of the struggle of the Olympian Gods for supremacy. Once upon a time they were surprised by their opponents. In order to escape they had to assume the strangest disguises. Venus and her son Cupid, for instance, were barely able to transform themselves into fishes. These two fishes, so the Greeks said, are those we see in the constellation of the same name.

In Nordic mythology Fishes are recognized as Sokkvaber, the dwelling of Saga, where Odin and saga used to drink from golden cups. Saga was the Goddess who inspired the memories of bygone ages and cycles of existence. Saga is, in Nordic tradition, also the chronicle of great heroes or remarkable kings and of whole generations. Here Fishes is the living presence of the past, the mother-soil and the wisdom necessary for any new creation.

The Bull in Greece was the background of the story of Zeus who solidified and strengthened his cultural intentions. In the disguise of a bull, he kidnapped Europa and took her from her father’s realm of Phoenicia to Crete. This myth reveals the side of Zeus that inaugurated European civilization, via Crete, by taking up the threads of the earlier civilization of Phoenicia. The latter was supposed to stand under the influence of Bull, whereas Greece under that of Ram. So Zeus had to assume Taurus-likeness in order to be able to pick up what he could use for his own venture, so to speak.

All these aspects are still further emphasized by the constellations above and below that part of the Zodiac. There is Perseus, the great Sun-hero, a son of Zeus and one of the twelve founders of Greek civilization. His winged sandals bore him through the air. He was carried by the inspiring new impulse in humanity to rely more than before on experience by the senses. He had also proven that this is a practical way of conducting life, because he had eliminated a monster by using it. This was Medusa, a hang-over from a bygone age. She had terrified all living beings by her capacity to transform anything into stone that looked upon her face. Perseus would have become a statue too had he not used his wits. He approached her by walking backwards and observing only her image in the polished surface of his shield. Thus he cut off her head without being harmed himself. The new capacity enabled humanity to stand back from the object in thinking and to “reflect” on it. Thus we learned to preserve our personal integrity, which is expressed in the myth.

Carrying the head of Medusa in his hand, Perseus arrived at the scene as it is actually portrayed in the sky. He found Andromeda chained to a rock. Her mother, the Queen Cassiopeia of Ethiopia, had angered the God of the Ocean. In revenge he had sent a monster, Cetus the Whale, to ravage the land. An oracle had to be asked for advice, and the answer was that Andromeda, the daughter of the royal couple, must be sacrificed in order to free the country. She was chained to a rock at the shore. That is how we see her standing in the sky, with outstretched arms. The monster approached in the moment of Perseus’ arrival on the scene. We find this Cetus below the constellation of Fishes. It was a sister-monster of Medusa, remnants of long bygone ages, who should have descended into their graves long before. They terrorized human souls as nightmares, terrifying people in their sleep. Perseus, with day-quick perception, realized the situation and killed this monster by the destructive power of its own kin, confronting it with the head of Medusa and changing it into a huge rock. Thus he freed Andromeda.

Here we find in dramatic demonstration, a particular aspect of the great battle indicated by the first corner of the Zodiac pentagon, the inauguration of the new against the resistance of the old.

The Mythology of the Second Group

The mythology of the constellations of Twins, with Bull and Crab as bystanders, lead us deeply into the destiny of any humanity that goes forward with a new impulse.

The group of Twins was associated in Greek mythology with the fate of Castor and Pollux, the twin brothers
of divine descent. Castor was mortal, Pollux of immortal nature. Castor’s death left Pollux disconsolate. Arrangements had to be made by Zeus to let the two stay together by permitting them to live alternately in the realm of the Shades and in the land of the living. We are reminded, thereby, of the fundamental polarity under which we live in the world and also of the great law that rules all existing things. Through our body we experience death, decay, and constant change. On the other hand there lives in us at least a spark, even if only as a question, of awareness of an invisible, spiritual world beyond the limitations of the body. The problem arises for us of whether we might or might not find ourselves in that realm of the invisible after death. This is the Twin-dynamics: We have received the idea—the impulse—and the fire of intelligence coming from Ram, we embody it into perishable matter, and thus we are left with the question of whether that fire in us does not belong to an imperishable world.

Humanity has been followed, even haunted, by these problems through the ages. The great pre-Christian religions tried to answer these questions in manifold ways. They were the consolation of humanity and had their origin in the great ancient temple communities. The priest became the mediator for the individual between the two worlds. The priest-king had the task to arrange the social life of the community so that people could maintain their integrity amidst the problems of duality.

This aspect of human life is indicated in the constellation of Bull, as far as it belongs to the second group of five in the Zodiac. Those priest-king civilizations with their social standards came chiefly into existence during the millennia before the advent of Greek civilization. We have already mentioned that they were inspired by the cosmic Bull principle. Many Bull cults existed in Asia Minor. We are also reminded, for instance, of the Apis cult in ancient Egypt. In the valley of Mesopotamia, these aspects can be followed up right back to the city civilizations of ancient Sumeria. We also remember that the Israelites once adopted such practices on their 40 years’ journey through the desert. At a time when their leader, Moses, was absent, they inaugurated the cult of the “golden calf”. On the return of Moses, this was considered to be a very grave relapse and as a sign of complete ignorance of their real task. They were supposed to follow the inspiration of the cosmic Ram principle with which they had been entrusted by the ritual of the Passover Lamb.

One can comprehend these aspects of ancient oriental civilization only by studying the significance that those ages still attached to the precession of the equinoxes (see section - Earth). In the course of these rhythms, the Sun appeared in different constellations of the Zodiac at the beginning of spring. These equinoxes, particularly that of spring, were considered to exert an inspiring influence on the development of humanity’s evolution, varying according to the positions of those points at a certain time.

The vernal equinox was indeed orientated toward Bull up to the second millennium BC. About that time, and earlier, were the most flourishing periods of the Egyptian and Mesopotamian temple guided civilizations, which were inspired by the Bull principle. At the time of the Exodus of the Israelites, the vernal point had already advanced to Ram, therefore, the call to follow the Ram impulse. Simultaneously, the Bull tradition was still carried on, because the law of inertia is also at work in the development of civilizations.

The association of Bull with those ancient civilizations guided by priesthood and the mysteries is also expressed by the assistant constellations in that region. There is, for instance, the Auriga with the fixed-star Capella, above Bull.

It is well known that a number of Egyptian (and also Greek) temples were orientated with their long axes toward the setting-point of Capella on the horizon. The Egyptian temples were generally built along such axes as led first through avenues flanked by sphinxes or similar effigies, then through courtyards and halls into the inner parts, and finally ending in the Holy of Holies. As this had no source of external light, some stars could be seen, even in daytime, by looking back through that passage. Similarly, we can see stars in daylight if we look up a chimney. A number of those temples, for instance at Karnak and Memphis, were built so that the light of Capella shone at setting time into the innermost “cella” or “capella”. They were dedicated to the God Ptah, because he had a mythological connection with the fixed-star Capella, probably with the whole constellation of the Auriga.

Ptah was the Lord of the arts and of the “artists”. He was experienced as the creative and formative divine power in nature and in the universe, as well as in the work of humanity in “art”. In order to understand, and particularly to attain the creative capacity arising in and through humanity, one had to be “initiated” in ancient time. It was not yet as it is in modern times where we expect to find the intelligence we need for our work in our own resources.

The aspirant had to go through a long and strenuous preparation in the temples, guided by the priests and the
temple-sages. After long years of such a schooling, the aspirant was brought into a condition in which he stood face to face with the deity to whom the temple was dedicated. In that intelligence, far above his own, he realized the origin of the creative capacities in himself. Only then was he considered able to fulfill a particular task in life satisfactorily. The inspiration of that higher being was to be his guide.

This was the highest that could be attained in the temples. Only selected individuals were admitted to the preparation and ultimately to the initiation. Those who were not permitted in the innermost mysteries were, nevertheless, able to participate in the blessings radiating from the temples as the religious ceremonies and the mythological teachings. These assured them, in pictorial form and experience, of the existence of that invisible divine world.

Thus the background of Capella-Auriga confirms the character of the dynamics of Bull. In the Ptah-Capella Mysteries, particularly those capacities were cultivated in a man that enabled him to work actively in public life as an “artist”. Other mysteries had different tasks. The concept “artist”, however, must not be understood in the narrow modern sense. Certainly it concerned, for instance, the profession of the architect and others. The Greek mythology of the Auriga is indicative in this connection. It was obviously associated with Erechtheus, the son of Hephaistos, the Divine Smith, or with the father himself. The Greeks suggested that he was the inventor of the quadriga, the chariot drawn by four horses. In ancient Babylon the Capella seems to have been regarded as the star of the God Marduk, in India as the heart of Brahma.

Although the constellation of the Auriga reveals the intimate background of Bull or Taurus-priest civilizations, it is still only the facade, as it were, of the temples. We get a glimpse of what was taught and experienced in the depths of the mysteries by the mythology of Orion, whose effigy stands below Bull. In Greek mythology Orion was the victim of a tragic fate. The Moon-goddess, Diana, became enamored with him, but her brother, Apollo, did not approve of this. The myth says that when she followed the great hunter Orion on his nightly expeditions through dense forests the sky remained Moonless. Apollo, the Sun-God, disliked that intensely. He contrived to kill Orion and made Diana the unsuspecting tool of his treachery. She killed the hunter with her bow from a great distance, not knowing that it was her lover at whom she had aimed. This reminds us of the fate of Baldur in Nordic mythology, who was unwittingly killed by the blind Hodur at the instigation of the spiteful Loki. We shall see presently that this story is not irrelevant.

The motive of the God who was killed by his adversary repeats itself in connection with the constellation of Orion in all ancient mythologies. In the Babylonian orbit of civilization he was killed by his opponent, and Ishtar could bring him back from the domain of the Shades only after very exacting trials. Similarly, the death of the God and his resurrection after three days was celebrated in the Adonis Mysteries of Asia Minor. Osiris, the husband of Isis, was killed in Egypt by his own brother, Set. Isis collected his remains and buried them in places which, at later times, temples dedicated to Osiris were erected. All these stories are associated with the constellation of Orion (see: P. Lum’s, *The Stars in our Heaven*, Thames and Hudson, London; Mary Proctor’s, *Legends of the Stars*, London, 1935; G. P. Serviss’ *Astronomy with the Naked Eye*, London 1908). The equivalent in Nordic mythology was the fate of Baldur, already mentioned, though he seems to have been associated more with the neighboring constellation of Twins, which was his castle Breidablak.

Thus Orion was mythically associated with memories of an ancient humanity that was supposed to have been in direct contact with the divinity. Then the God was killed, which means that he vanished from the vision of humanity. Only after very long and strenuous trials could the God still be reached in the realm of the Dead. This was possible in initiation and the initiates were therefore called Sons of the Widow, the mourning Goddess Isis, or Ishtar, who had led them in their preparatory training. Thus Orion presents another interpretation of the Taurus-priest civilization and of the mysteries. The innermost essence was the death of the God and his being buried in the Earth. His body was present in all nature, just in that world in which humanity had learned to experience through their senses to which they had been led by the Ram Impulse. However, in order to find the God himself the candidate of the mysteries had literally to go through an experience that was the equivalent of death. One of the final stages of his initiation was, in many mysteries, a three-day state of deathlike sleep in which he was supposed to contact the divine world.

The Crab or Cancer, the assistant of Twins on the eastern side, was clearly associated with this whole complex of mythologies. This constellation was connected with the fate of the God Dionysos. One of the representations of Crab shows two asses which feed from a crib. Furthermore, the myth portrays Dionysos and Bacchus as riding on asses. Indeed, Dionysos is shown on old pictures riding on this animal to the underworld (see Alfred Jeremias’ *Das Alte Testament*, Leipzig). Dionysos was particularly venerated in the Orphic
Mysteries. The myth says that he was killed by the opponents of the Olympian Gods, the Titans. They tore up his body and devoured it. Zeus then destroyed the Titans with his thunderbolts, and from the ashes the human race was molded. Thus all human beings carry in themselves a trace of the being of Dionysos. These were the foundations of Orphism. (We know that according to the legend Orpheus, too, was torn to pieces.) The God was sacrificed, or sacrificed himself, and was ritualistically eaten by the congregation. In each one who partook in this communion, a spark of the divine was thus present. Its highest manifestation is the ego waking up in the soul of humanity. The God was, therefore, torn up and lived on in the multitude of human egos.

This spark of the divine, which had been sacrificed to the individual, was supposed to become our guarantee of reunion with the divine world, whose vision had vanished from us. At first the ego was just the power which had separated us from the divine. Therein was contained our great sin of tearing up and eating the God. Yet it was expected that the purifying power of the divine spark would kindle the will and free decision in us to seek again the communion with the spirit. Thus the ego-power, Dionysos the God who had been torn to pieces, became first the agent of the “great divorce” but then the gateway to a possible identification with the divine on the highest level of freedom. This is the dynamic character of Crab or Cancer in a metaphorical presentation.

Thus the impact of the Bull-Twins-Crab group shapes itself into one consistent entity. In Twins we find the world of the great duality, starting from the seeming contrast between spirit and matter, in which humanity is also involved. To bridge the agonizing gulf, religion with the mysteries in the background is given to us. This is the priest-mediator assistance of the Taurus civilization that was supposed to make life, in spite of the unavoidable divorce, bearable and fruitful. Cancer-Crab pronounces the road to self-efficiency by the cultivation of the power of the ego, which, however, must risk the danger of atomization of human society by a caricature of individualism. Thus Cancer is also a bridge, as is Bull, but in another sense. It is interesting that Crab was recognized as Himinbjorg (the celestial mountain) in Nordic mythology, the dwelling of Heimdal, who needed no sleep and was therefore appointed guardian of the gate to Asgard. The castle of Heimdal was at the end of the Bifrost Bridge leading from Midgard, the middle world, to the realm of the Gods. Thus the motive of Cancer as the bridge is clearly expressed here.

We said earlier that the center of this whole group of constellations is in Twins. Actually it is just above the fixed-star Sirius in the Greater Dog. Sirius or Sothis was regarded as the star of Isis. Thus we come back to the mythological Osiris-Isis complex from another angle. Isis was the leader and guardian of humanity who had to live under those earthly conditions that prevailed after Osiris had vanished from our vision. She gave practical advice on how to live this existence. Her star, Sirius, was an important means, for instance, for arranging the calendar. The beginning of the year was celebrated when Sirius rose before the Sun. From inscriptions at the temple of Denderah, we know that the rising Sirius was shining on the Egyptian New Year’s dawn into the “cella” of her temple. This was also the day when the rising of the waters of the Nile commenced and brought new life to the parched soil of Egypt. Hence her temple, too, seems to have been constructed so that the rising-point of Sirius was in line with the passage to its inner chambers.

After Osiris had been killed, he became Lord of the realm of the Dead. Isis gave birth to his son Horus. He avenged the treacherous murder of his father by destroying Set. Therefore, Horus is that power in us that, by cultivation of our inner resources and by control and catharsis through the ego, regains the lost contact with the divine world. Thereby we overcome the opponent of our Father, namely, those tendencies and inclinations in ourselves causing the loss of the Presence of Osiris.

This suggests that the Initiate met in Horus that which awakened in him the awareness of his greater self, that which does not die (Pollux of the Greek myth). Normally that was experienced only after death, when he was standing in front of Osiris and when his soul was weighed, according to Egyptian conceptions. As an Initiate, he was supposed to have had this experience already during the earthly life so that one would be enabled to act in life from knowledge of truth and in fulfillment of the divine Will. This he could not do as an individual. Many had to help together, the Brotherhood of the Initiates in humanity.

Thus, those who bridged the gulf of exclusion and isolation, indicated in Twins as the great Law, also overcame the loneliness separating themselves from their brethren. (This is a transmutation of the “horizontal” Twin dynamics, as it were, the side-by-side of brethren). This aspect is also indicated in the heavens. Descending along a line starting in the center of Twins and moving past Sirius-Sothis, we come to the fixed-star Canopus. It was called the Pilot of the Argo or Ship, that big constellation in the Southern Hemisphere that we do not see in most northern latitudes. Thus those who entered between the two mighty pillars of Orion-Osiris and Sothis-Isis, who fulfilled the requests of the two guardians, found themselves in the company of the crew of
the Argo and learned from the pilot the capacity of navigating the seas of existence. They became members of the Brotherhood of the Wise, to whom the leadership and guidance to genuine progress was entrusted.

As a matter of fact, the Argo was at certain times visible in Egypt as a full rigged ship navigated by its pilot Canopus. It must have been an inspiring sight when she skimmed along the southern horizon. There also existed temples that were orientated toward the rising and setting of Canopus.

In many mythological traditions, this constellation was associated with the picture of a ship. In Hindu tradition it was called Argha. In Greece it was the ship that carried the Argonauts of the Jason expedition. Among them were nearly all the great heroes of whom we know. There is even a suggestion that some of them could not possibly have been present in the body but had already passed over to the other shore of existence. Their aim was to recover the Golden Fleece that had been lost and which was considered to be the symbol of Greek cultural aspirations. It was another symbolic picture of Ram qualities. We are, therefore, led to assume that the Argonauts were the Brotherhood of the inaugurators and leaders of Greek civilization, whether they were actually in the body or not. It was the Brotherhood of whom those who had gone through the stages of initiation found themselves a member.