Isis Sophia I – INTRODUCING ASTROSOPHY
By WILLI O. SUCHER
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The diagrams are not included.

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FIRST LETTER - April 1944
Structure of the Solar Universe

It is the intention of these astronomical letters to elaborate the relationship between the starry universe and the Earth. The human being as the main representative of the Earth will be chiefly the subject of consideration, but also the other kingdoms of nature will be considered. Of course, it is altogether a vast field, and we in our age are limited in our knowledge. Yet, thanks to the key knowledge that was given by Rudolf Steiner, it has been possible during more than twenty years of quiet and persistent work to gather many facts about those relationships. Taken together, these facts are already forming an organism that is still in its early childhood but may become the seeds for further and more elaborated investigations in the coming centuries and millenniums.

First we will have to establish through these letters a clear insight into the structure of our solar universe and its relationships to the starry worlds beyond our own universe. Then we shall have to speak about the constellations that we perceive in the sky. Mainly we will have to consider the constellations of the Zodiac, and we will have to find out their spiritual nature as it is connected with the evolution of Earth and humanity. After that, the world of the planets—the moving stars—will be considered. This will be done mainly in connection with the human being’s life after death and before birth. We will also have to take into account the relationship between the planets and the life of nature, as far as science has been able to prove this fact. In connection with humanity, the problem of necessity or fate and the realm of human freedom will then arise. In the end we shall have to inform ourselves about the relationship between the stars and humanity as a whole and also about the future evolution of the planet on which we live.

The question arises, by what name should we call the kind of knowledge for which we intend to search in these letters? To call it astronomy wouldn’t be correct, because the mathematical facts of the starry world will be dealt with only as much as this is necessary. Neither can it be called astrology, because it will not become a
foundation for horoscopic practices in the sense of astrology as it is performed today. We need to study the
spiritual background of the relationship between the stars and the Earth with its inhabitants. We may call it
astrophy. What is astrophy?

Movement is the essence of the world of the stars. Everything is moving in the sphere surrounding the Earth.
We enter a gigantic world of rhythms when we look into the manifoldness of the starry heaven.

There is the rhythm of day and night. The whole firmament seems to be revolving around its heavenly axis
within 24 hours. This is one of the fundamental movements in the universe that creates the change of day and
night. We are taught by modern astronomy that this revolution is brought about by the daily rotation of the Earth
around its axis. Only the observers on Earth perceive it reversed, as if the firmament were rotating.

Then we can observe the rhythms of the Moon, the change of the phases from New Moon to Full Moon and
back to New Moon. We know by observation that this rhythm takes place roughly within a month.

If we go farther out into the universe, we will find longer rhythms; those of Venus and Mercury. There is the
rhythm of the Sun; the time in which it takes to move through the Zodiac. We call this rhythm a year. Again we
are told by modern astronomy that this movement of the Sun during one year is an illusionary one. It is the Earth
that moves around the Sun during one year, and we on Earth perceive the Sun in different parts of the sky during
this circular movement of our globe. Still farther on we find the rhythms of the so-called superior planets: Mars,
Jupiter, Saturn, and the lately discovered planets such as Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. Here we find rhythms that
extend over tens, even hundreds of years.

We can also find changes in the structure of our universe that go on in long rhythmical intervals besides this.
They comprise whole ages of human and earthly evolution, thousands and even tens of thousands of years. And
we know that the fixed stars are also moving, although these movements would, for the most part, only become
visible to the naked eye in intervals of time that are beyond the grasp of ordinary human time conception.

Hence movement is the foundation of the world of the stars. We can look at this world of movement in
different ways. We can regard it as a gigantic mechanism. The facts, which we find in the universal movements,
do indeed inspire this idea. We can calculate the movements, and we can even pre-calculate the rhythms of the
stars. The discoveries of Pluto and Neptune were achieved by the application of pure mechanical laws to our
universe. And yet, the idea of a universe as a mechanism comes to grief at a certain point. We can compare it
with a rotating motor. The movements of the motor—its behavior—can be calculated. Every detail can be
explained by mechanical laws. But it would not move an inch, not even a single screw of it would exist, if the
human mind had not invented it. The efforts of the inventors in the realm of mechanics have created each single
detail of the motor. The human mind is the true origin of the motor and without it the motor would not exist.

How is it in our universe? This mechanism of innumerable movements exists, but who has created it and
put it into rotation? A mechanism cannot create itself; otherwise it is no longer a mechanism. There must have
been something like a gigantic planning mind or even a congregation of such minds, before any universe could
have been created.

From this we are led to another outlook. Just as the motor is an expression of the capacities of the human
mind, even perhaps of its weaknesses, so our universe can be regarded as the expression of a world of inner life;
if not soul life.

We see the human being moving. All the movements of the limbs can be explained in terms of physical and
mechanical laws. Still, there is always a reason why a human being moves his limbs. He has intentions to do
something or to go somewhere. There is an inner life; a soul life behind the visible movements of the body; a
life that gives reason and justification to these movements.

So we may look at the single star. We calculate its movements, rhythms, and many things connected with its
general condition and its relationships with other stars. But then we must go one step farther and find the inner
cause of its particular behavior. We must find the soul life of the star that has created it and has its expression in
the so-called mechanical laws.

We will probably not find, within its own realm of inner life, reasons for the movements of the single star.
We must perhaps search in the realm of the community of stars. In the communities of humanity, the single
being has his or her own world of soul qualities causing movement and activity. Still, the actions of the single
being come into contact with those of other human beings. Moreover, these actions make sense only when they
are related to the whole community life. In fact the common ideals of the community are the measure of the
activity of the single being.
In the same way, each star has its own world of soul movement, which causes its visible movements, making it a useful and creative member of the universe. Further, it is also related to its fellow stars. Seen from the Sun as the center of our universe or even seen from the Earth, the planets sometimes meet in a certain way, or they may separate and go into opposition to each other, and so on. All these activities are related to the whole solar system and to the Sun, especially, as its center. Thus the single planet must take part in the common aim of the whole solar universe.

To learn to know—from course starting with the simple facts—the soul world of the single star, the social life of their communities, their common ideals and goals—this is astrosophy. We are not only searching for the soul world of the stars that is the manifestation of their beings and activities within a limited time, but we will also have to gain some knowledge about their spiritual life. Only then can we understand their full being. Their spiritual life would be: their history (their biographies, so to speak), their struggles and achievements, and their destiny (in regard to the future).

Why Astrosophy?

The question may arise: Why should we as human beings on Earth strive for such a knowledge of the stars as has been outlined? The world of the stars may form an interesting subject of study, but aren’t the stars too far away to be able to affect our life on the Earth?

Our planet is a part of the whole star community, and just as the activity of the Moon influences the rhythm of the tides, we can also find that the organism of the Earth is influenced by all the stars of the celestial community. This may be found through different kinds of observation. We as human beings live on this star-influenced Earth; therefore, whether we like it or not, we take part in the life of the whole universe.

As earthly people, we have the natural tendency to submerge into the world of our human horizon. In the main this horizon comprises very little of the great universe. It may be only the world of our small personal wishes, wants, or ambitions. It may also be a philosophy or religion that may unite us with different groups of humanity, or again, it may separate us from the rest of humanity. It may also consist of the part we may play in the life of the nation or race into which we are born. We know that very often—one might even say always—these differentiations lead to the quarrels and wars. If we only live within the small horizon of our human world, then the danger arises of a narrowness of outlook toward life. This narrowness of our soul life may easily lead to the misjudgment of our own affairs within the framework of the whole universe.

However, if we are able, at least from time to time, to confront ourselves with the world of the stars; with their soul life; their spiritual life; we may grow in our being beyond the world of our own problems and comparatively small and unimportant matters. We may then be able to put ourselves consciously and more appropriately into the stream of evolution of our whole universe. If only we would sometimes do this, we could enter a world of grand cosmic ideals and spiritual goals that would not divide humanity into groups of religious or philosophical beliefs, race, theories, and the like. The stars would teach us that the ties binding the human being to the realms of life, as for instance: family, nation, race, or even a certain religion, are justified as long as the boundaries of these realms are not overstepped and do not overrule other spheres of human life.

The appropriate place for the philosophy of idealism in our human world, as well as that of realism, or even materialism, would then be discovered. In the universe all these life conceptions and life attitudes are kept in correct and peaceful order within the soul life of the starry world. It is only we human beings who very often suffer from narrowness and shortsightedness, and who cannot find the correct order in our own soul world. This disorder is then reflected in the quarrels and wars amongst humanity.

The stars, if we look at them deeply and unveil their mysteries, can unite humanity. They shine on all people. All the phenomena in the universe of the stars concern all humanity in the same undifferentiated way. There is no distinction like the distinctions brought about on Earth through the necessity of living under certain social or geographical conditions. In the course of time the whole surface of the Earth and, with it, humanity receives the light and the teaching of all the stars.

Thus the gateway is opened to the world of true peace and freedom, or freehood. [Freehood: the state or quality of being free.] The world of true peace because this is where we can learn to know the intentions and evolutionary goals of the Gods. The application of this knowledge to our daily life, step by step, can bring us true peace; the world of true freehood because it frees us from the fetters of our small and narrow earthly matters and problems. Therefore astrosophy, as a new wisdom of the stars, will even in the future become a necessity within the realm of the spiritual culture of humanity.
The Structure of our Solar System

Before we start to find out the details of the soul and spiritual world that are manifest in the cosmos, we must create a certain knowledge of the physical structure of our solar universe and its connection with the worlds in the depths of the celestial space. We must form clear concepts about the rhythms of the stars and their arrangement or order in space. This means the elaboration of a certain amount of astronomical knowledge. Of course we cannot extend it too far, because it is, in fact, a very vast field of complicated mathematical facts and other details. We can only do it as far as it is necessary to create a common understanding or language about the cosmic facts, with which we shall have to deal later.

If we look up to the firmament of the stars, we can distinguish between two kinds of heavenly bodies. First, there appear the so-called fixed stars. They are called fixed stars because they appear to always keep the same positions and distances among themselves. There is, for instance, the well-known constellation of the Great Bear or Plough. Four fixed stars form the body of the Bear and three others the tail. We can look at this constellation night after night for years. It will not happen that suddenly one night we would discover that one of the four stars that form the body of the Bear has moved away from its relative position. Thus many groups of fixed stars form constellations, and the single stars do not move away from their relative positions. The same stars, for instance, always form the constellations of Cassiopeia, Orion, and many others. But, in fact, the fixed stars are moving, too. After thousands of years, the stars that form the familiar image of the Great Bear will no longer be in the same positions, and in a far future one will no longer perceive the outlines of the Great Bear as we do today. However, these movements are very slow. They are beyond the grasp of the human eye and also beyond human time conception; therefore, we justly call them “fixed” stars.

We also perceive the moving stars—the planets—which belong to our solar system. A very good example to use for observation is the Moon. We may perceive it during a clear night in the realm of those fixed stars that form the constellation of Bull. If we look at it two or three days later, we may find it in the constellation of Twins. So it must have moved in the meantime from Bull to Twins. Our Moon is not the only moving star; there are several others. Altogether we may count eight (other) major planets in our solar system besides the Moon, which are:

- Mercury
- Mars
- Uranus - discovered in 1781 AD
- Venus
- Jupiter
- Neptune - discovered in 1846 AD
- Earth
- Saturn
- Pluto - discovered in 1930 AD

Another distinction between fixed and moving stars, according to modern astronomy, is that the fixed stars have their own light. They are, so to speak, suns like our Sun and produce their own light. The moving stars or planets, which belong to our solar system, have no light of their own. They only reflect the light that they receive from the Sun in the center.

Besides the fixed stars and planets, most of which are visible only during the night, there is the Sun, which we see during the daytime. The light of the Sun is so overwhelmingly strong that we cannot see the other stars as long as the Sun is shining; therefore, it is difficult to find its relative position to the fixed-star constellations. Still, by certain astronomical means, we can learn that the Sun, too, like the planets is moving, and it completes a circle during one year. However, modern astronomy tells us that it is not the Sun that moves. The Earth revolves around the Sun that holds the center of the circle of the Earth’s orbit. Through this movement of the Earth, which is completed in one year, we see the Sun’s disc always in different cosmic directions. This creates for us the illusion of the Sun’s movement along the circle of the ecliptic or Zodiac.

We can now distinguish between three main features in the structure of our solar system: there is the Sun in the center, around this Sun the planets are circling, and the orbits of the planets are in approximately the same plane while their centers are roughly in the Sun. Therefore, we would have to imagine our solar system being in the shape of a lens or huge disc with concentric rings as the orbits of the planets.

This huge disc has its circumference in the orbit of the outermost planet. This circumference, as a circle, has a relative connection with certain of the fixed stars. Seen in perspective, so to speak, from the center of the disc, it passes in front of a certain number of fixed stars. Those fixed stars form a kind of ribbon or ring around our solar universe. This circular ribbon beyond the circumference of the planetary system in which we live is what we call the fixed-star Zodiac. It is formed by twelve of the constellations that we see in the starry sky. These are the three components of our solar universe:
1) The Sun, as roughly the center of the disc.
2) The orbits of the planets at different distances from the central Sun.
3) The circumference of the disc, beyond which appear the twelve constellations of the Zodiac.

We can still make another distinction within the disc. The Earth, on which we live, moves along the third orbit from the center. The orbits of Mercury and Venus are within the orbit of the Earth. They are called inferior planets. As their orbits are smaller than that of the Earth, they circle around the Sun in a much shorter time than the Earth. Mercury completes a full circle around the Sun in about 88 days. Venus does the same in about 225 days, because it is already farther away from the Sun and the orbit is bigger. The Earth completes its circle around the Sun in about 365 days. Around the Earth, in a comparatively small distance, we have to imagine the orbit of the Moon. It circles around the Earth in about 27 days.

Those planets that have their orbits outside the circle described by the orbit of the Earth are called superior planets. The distances of these orbits from the Sun are relatively much bigger than the Earth’s orbit from the Sun; therefore, these planets need a much longer time to circle the Sun along their paths. Mars needs about 687 days to complete its circle. Jupiter completes its circle in about 12 years. Saturn needs about 30 years. Uranus takes about 84 years for the same movement. Neptune is still farther away from the Sun, therefore, its orbit is very big, and the planet needs about 164 years to go around. Pluto needs still more time, about 250 years. For our researches it will be very important to differentiate between inferior and superior planets.

The twelve constellations of fixed stars, which form the ribbon of the Zodiac beyond the outer circumference of the disc of our solar system, are:

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<tr>
<th>Ram or Latin:</th>
<th>Aries</th>
<th>Scales or Latin:</th>
<th>Libra</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bull</td>
<td>Taurus</td>
<td>Scorpion</td>
<td>Scorpio</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twins</td>
<td>Gemini</td>
<td>Archer</td>
<td>Sagittarius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Crab</td>
<td>Cancer</td>
<td>Goat (Ibex)</td>
<td>Capricorn</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lion</td>
<td>Leo</td>
<td>Waterman</td>
<td>Aquarius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Virgin</td>
<td>Virgo</td>
<td>Fishes</td>
<td>Pisces</td>
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