

THE SPIRITUAL INDIVIDUALITIES OF THE PLANETS

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[From a shorthand report, unrevised by the lecturer.]

I want to add to what has previously been said some explanation of certain deeper foundations of world-mysteries of which in modern civilisation all knowledge has been lost. To realise the loss we need think only of the modern conception of the planetary system: that it originated in some kind of rotating, primeval nebula, from which the various planetary bodies were dispersed. The speculations derived from this picture have led merely to the idea that there are no fundamental differences between these heavenly bodies, and this is the prevailing attitude towards them.

If the whole planetary system is comprised in the picture of a rotating nebula, out of which the heavenly bodies gradually separated, what essential difference is there between, for example, the Moon and Saturn? It is of course true that very important researches carried out during the 19th century into earthly substances — particularly the minerals — have been able to say a great deal about the material composition of the heavenly bodies, and have worked out a certain kind of physics and chemistry for them. This has made it possible for ordinary text-books to give specific details about Venus, Saturn, the Moon, and so on. But all this amounts to no more than making an image of — let us say — the physical organism of man, leaving out of account altogether the fact that he is a being of soul and spirit. With the help of Initiation-science we must again learn to realise that our planetary system, too, is permeated with soul and spirit. And today I want to speak of the “individualities” and the individual characters of the several planets.

We will think, to begin with, of the planet nearest the Earth, the planet with whose history the Earth's history — though only in a certain sense — is bound up, and which once played an entirely different part in earthly life from the part it plays today. You know from my book *Occult Science — an Outline* [[New translation](#) by George and Mary Adams, 1963. Rudolf Steiner Press, London.] that there was once a cosmic age — relatively speaking not in a very remote past — when the Moon was still united with the Earth. The Moon then separated from the Earth and now circles around it.

When we speak of the Moon as a physical body in the heavens, its physical nature is only the external, the most external, revelation of the Spiritual behind it. To those who have knowledge of both its outer and its inner nature, the Moon in our universe presents itself to begin with as a gathering of spiritual Beings living in great seclusion. Outwardly, the Moon acts as a mirror of the universe; the fact that it reflects the light of the Sun is evident to the most superficial observation. So we can say: What comes from the Moon is the light of the Sun which has shone upon it and is then reflected. First and foremost, then, the Moon is a mirror of the Sun's light. Now, as you all know, we see what is outside or in front of a mirror but we do *not* see what is behind it.

The Moon is not the mirror of the Sun's light only, for it reflects everything that radiates upon it — the radiations of the solar light being, of course, by far the strongest. All the heavenly bodies in the universe send their rays towards the Moon, and the Moon — as a mirror of the universe — then radiates them back in every direction.



It can be said, therefore, that the universe is before us in a twofold aspect. It reveals itself in the environment of the Earth and is radiated back by the Moon. The Sun's rays work with tremendous power in themselves and also in their reflection from the Moon. But every other radiation in cosmic space is also reflected by the Moon. There is the manifested universe and there is also its reflection from the Moon.

Anyone capable of observing the mirror-pictures thrown back by the Moon in all directions would have the whole universe before him in reflection. Only that which is *within* the Moon — that and that alone remains, if I may so express it, the Moon's secret; it remains hidden, just as what is behind a mirror remains hidden. What is behind the outer surface of the Moon, in the innermost sphere of the Moon, is significant above all in its *spiritual* aspect.

The spiritual Beings peopling this innermost sphere of the Moon are Beings who shut themselves off in strict seclusion from the rest of the universe. They live in their Moon “fortress”. And only someone who, by developing certain qualities connected with the human heart, succeeds in relating himself to the Sun's light in such a way that he does not see the reflection from the Moon — only for such a man does the Moon become as it were inwardly transparent and he can penetrate into this Moon fortress of the universe. He then makes the significant discovery that through the utterances, through the teachings, of those Beings who have withdrawn into seclusion in this Moon fortress, certain secrets can be revealed that were once in the possession of the most advanced spirits on the Earth but have long since been lost.

The farther we go back in the evolution of the Earth, the less do we find the abstract truths that are the pride of present-day humanity. More and more we find *pictures*, truths expressed in pictures. We wrestle our way through the deeply significant truths still preserved as a last echo of oriental wisdom in the Vedas and the Vedanta philosophy; we press on to the primal revelations hidden behind the myths and sagas, and we realise with wonder and awe that a glorious wisdom was once possessed by men who received it without intellectual effort as grace from the spiritual worlds. And finally we come to all that was once taught to primeval humanity on Earth by the Beings who have now withdrawn into the Moon fortress in the universe, after leaving the Earth together with the Moon. A certain memory was preserved of what these Beings had once revealed to the peoples of a remote past — to men whose nature was quite different from human nature as it is today.

If we succeed in fathoming this mystery — I will call it the Moon-mystery of the universe — we realise that these Beings who have now entrenched themselves in the Moon fortress were once the great Teachers of earthly humanity; but all consciousness of the realities, of spirit and soul hidden in this fortress has been lost. What is still transmitted to the Earth from the heavens

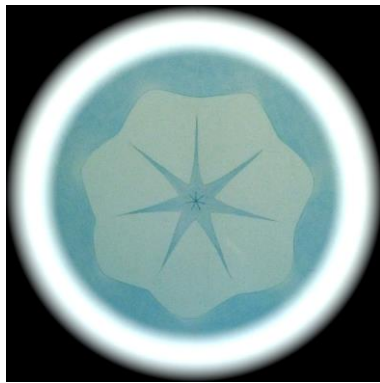
represents only what the outer surface, the walls, as it were, of the Moon fortress radiate back from the rest of the universe.

This Moon-mystery was one of the deepest secrets in the ancient Mysteries, for it is the primal wisdom that the Moon enshrines within itself. What the Moon is able to reflect from the whole universe forms the sum-total of the forces which sustain the animal world of the Earth, especially the forces that are connected with the sexual nature of animals; these forces also sustain the animal element in man and are connected with his sexual nature in its physical aspect. So the lower nature of man is a product of what radiates from the Moon, while the highest wisdom once possessed by the Earth lies concealed within the Moon fortress.

In this way one comes gradually to a knowledge of the “individuality” of the Moon, to knowledge of what the Moon is in reality, whereas all other knowledge is only like information we could glean about a human being from a pasteboard image of him displayed in some exhibition. Such an image would tell us nothing whatever about the man's *individuality*. Equally it is not possible for a science that refuses any approach towards initiation to know anything about the individuality of the Moon.

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We turn now to Saturn. In earlier times Saturn was regarded as the outermost planet of our system, Uranus



and Neptune having been added much later. We will leave them out of consideration now and think of Saturn as a kind of antithesis to the Moon. The nature of Saturn is such that he receives many diverse impulses from the universe but allows none of them to stream back — at all events not to the Earth. Saturn too, of course, is irradiated by the Sun, but what he reflects of the solar rays has no significance for earthly life. Saturn is an entirely self-engrossed heavenly body in our planetary system, raying his *own* being into the universe. When we contemplate Saturn, he tells us always what *he* is. Whereas the Moon — contemplated in its external aspect — tells us about everything *else* in the universe, Saturn tells us nothing at all about the impulses he receives from the universe. He speaks only of himself, tells us only what he himself is. And *what* he is reveals itself gradually as a kind of memory of the planetary system.

Saturn presents himself to us as the heavenly individuality who has steadfastly participated in whatever has come to pass in our planetary system and has faithfully preserved it in his cosmic memory. He is silent about the cosmic Present. He receives the things of the cosmic Present into himself and works upon them in his life of spirit and soul. True, the hosts of Beings indwelling Saturn lend their attention to the outer universe, but mutely and silently they receive the happenings in the universe into the realm of soul, and they speak only of *past* cosmic events. That is why Saturn is like a kaleidoscopic memory of our planetary system. As a faithful informant concerning what has come to pass in the planetary system, he holds its secrets of this kind within himself.

Whereas in endeavouring to fathom the mysteries of the universe we should turn to the Moon in vain, whereas we must win the confidence of the Moon Beings if we are to learn anything from them about cosmic mysteries, this is not necessary with Saturn. With Saturn, all that is necessary is to be open to receive the spiritual. And then, to the eyes of spirit and soul, Saturn becomes a living historian of the planetary system. Nor does he withhold the stories he can tell of what has come to pass in the planetary system. In this respect Saturn is the exact opposite of the Moon. Saturn speaks unceasingly of the past of the planetary system with such inner warmth and zest that intimate acquaintance with what he says can be dangerous. For the devotion with which he tells of past happenings in the universe arouses in us an overwhelming love for the cosmic past. Saturn is the constant tempter of those who listen to his secrets; he tempts them to give little heed to earthly affairs of today and to immerse themselves in what the Earth once was. Above all, Saturn speaks graphically about what the Earth was before it became Earth, and for this reason he is the planet who makes the past unendingly dear to us. Those who have a particular inclination towards Saturn in earthly existence are people who like to be gazing always into the past, who are opposed to progress, who ever and again want to bring back the past. These indications give some idea of the individuality, the individual character, of Saturn.

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Jupiter is a planet with a different character. Jupiter is the Thinker in our planetary system, and thinking is the activity cultivated by all the Beings in his cosmic domain. Creative thoughts received from the universe radiate to us from Jupiter. Jupiter contains, in the form of thoughts, all the formative forces for the different orders of cosmic Beings. Whereas Saturn tells of the



past, Jupiter gives a living portrayal of what is connected with him in the cosmic present. But what Jupiter reveals to the eye of spirit must be grasped with thoughtful intelligence. If a man does not himself make efforts to develop his capacities of thinking, he cannot, even if he is clairvoyant, approach the mysteries of Jupiter, for they are revealed in the form of thoughts and can be approached only through a genuine activity of thinking. Jupiter is the Thinker in our universe.

When efforts to bring clarity of thought to bear upon some weighty problem of existence are unsuccessful because of physical, etheric, and especially astral hindrances, the Jupiter Beings come to the help of mankind. A man who has tried hard to apply clear thinking to some problem but cannot get to the root of it, will find, if he is patient and works inwardly at it, that the Jupiter powers will actually help him during the night. And many a one who has found a better solution for some problem during the night, as though out of dream, than during the previous day, would have to admit, if he knew the truth, that it is the Jupiter powers who imbue human thinking with mobility and vigour.

Saturn, then, is the preserver of the Memory of our universe; Jupiter is the Thinker in our universe. To Jupiter man owes all the impulses he is able to receive from the spiritual present in the universe. To Saturn he owes all the impulses of soul and spirit he can receive from the cosmic past.

It was out of a certain intuition that such great veneration was paid to Jupiter in the days of ancient Greece, when the human spirit lived so intensely in the present.

A stimulus to the whole development of the human being is given also through the part played by Jupiter in the cycle of the year. You all know that as far as his apparent movement is concerned, Saturn moves slowly, very slowly, round his orbit, taking some 30 years. Jupiter moves faster, taking about 12 years. Because of this quicker movement Jupiter is able to bring satisfaction to man's need for wisdom. And when, at the cosmic hour of destiny in the life of a human being, a certain relationship is established between Jupiter and Saturn, there flash into human destiny those wonderful moments of illumination when many things concerning the past are revealed through thinking.

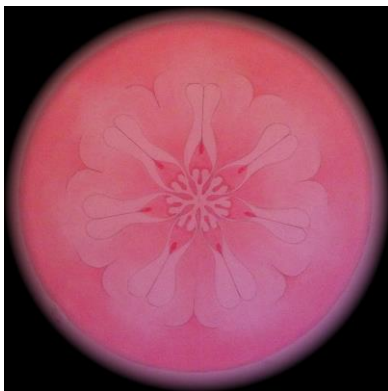
If we look in history for occasions in the time of the Renaissance — particularly during its last period — when there was a great renewal of ancient impulses, we shall find that this was directly connected with a certain relationship between Jupiter and Saturn.

But, as already said, Jupiter is in a certain respect impenetrable and his revelations remain in the unconscious if a man does not bring to them clear and active light-filled thoughts of his own. And that is why in ancient times, when active thinking was still at a very early state of development, the progress of humanity was in truth always dependent upon the relation between Jupiter and Saturn. When Jupiter and Saturn together formed a certain constellation, many things were revealed to our ancestors in those days. Modern man has to depend more upon receiving the memory of Saturn and the wisdom of Jupiter separately in the course of his spiritual development.

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We now come to Mars. It is difficult to find appropriate expressions for these things, but Mars may be called the great “Talker” in the planetary system. Unlike Jupiter, who withholds his wisdom in the form of thoughts.

Mars is constantly blurting out to the souls in his sphere whatever in the cosmos is accessible to him — which is not everything. Mars is the most talkative planet in our system, and he is particularly active when human beings talk in sleep or in dream. Mars has a great longing to be always talking, and whenever some quality in human nature enables him to make a man loquacious, he stimulates this tendency.

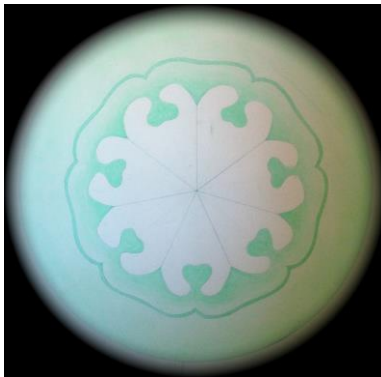


Mars does little thinking. He has few thinkers, but many talkers, in his sphere. The Mars Spirits are always on the watch for what arises here or there in the universe and then they talk about it with great zest and fervour. Mars is the planetary individuality who in the course of the evolution of humanity instigates human beings in manifold ways to make statements about the mysteries of the cosmos. Mars has his good and his less good sides — he has his Genius and his Demon. His Genius works in such a way that men receive from the universe the impulses for speech; the influence of his Demon results in

speech being misused in many and various ways. In a certain sense Mars may be called the Agitator in our universe. He is always out to *persuade*, whereas Jupiter wants only to *convince*.

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The planet Venus is again different. In a certain way — how shall I put it? — Venus wards off the universe. She is difficult to approach; she does not want to know anything about the universe. Her attitude is that if she were to expose herself to the external universe, she would lose her virginal nature. She is deeply shocked when any impression from the external universe attempts to approach her. She has no desire for the universe and rejects every would-be partner. It is very difficult to express these things, because the circumstances and conditions have to be described in terms of earthly language. On the other hand, Venus is highly responsive to everything that comes from the Earth. The Earth is, so to speak, her lover. Whereas the Moon reflects the whole surrounding universe, Venus reflects nothing at all of the universe, wants to know nothing of it. But she lovingly reflects whatever comes from the Earth. If with the eyes of soul we are able to glimpse the mysteries of Venus, the whole Earth with its secrets of the life of soul is there before us once again.



The truth is that human beings on Earth can do nothing in the secrecy of their souls without it being reflected back again by Venus. Venus gazes deeply into the hearts of human beings, for that is what interests her, that is what she will allow to approach her. Thus the most intimate experiences of earthly life are reflected again from Venus, in a mysterious and wonderful way. In the reflection she transforms everything, just as a dream transforms the happenings of physical existence. Venus transforms the occurrences of earthly life into dream-pictures. In reality, therefore, the whole sphere of Venus is a world of dream. The secrets of men in their earthly existence are transformed by Venus into dream-pictures of infinite diversity. She has a very great deal to do with poets, although they are not aware of it.

I said before that Venus wards off the rest of the universe. She does not, however, repel everything in the same way. In her heart, Venus repels what approaches her from the universe but *not* what comes from the Earth. As I said before, she declines every would-be suitor, but for all that she listens attentively to the utterances of Mars. She transforms and illumines her dreamlike experiences of earthly things with what is communicated to her from the universe through Mars.

All these things have their physical side as well. Impulses go out from these sources into what is done and what comes into existence in the world. Venus receives into herself everything that comes from the Earth and she listens always to Mars — but without any desire that he shall be aware of having her attention. And from this process — only of course the Sun is there to regulate it — spring the forces which underlie the organs connected with the formation of human speech.

If we want to understand the impulses in the universe connected with the formation of human speech, we must turn our gaze to this strange life that weaves between Venus and Mars. When destiny wills it, the relationship of Venus to Mars is therefore a factor of great significance in the development of the speech or language of a people. A language is deepened, imbued with the quality of soul, when, for example, Venus is square to Mars. On the other hand a language tends to become superficial, poor in qualities of soul, when Venus and Mars are in conjunction, and this in turn has an influence upon the people or nation concerned. Such are the impulses which originate in the universe and then work into the earthly world.

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We come next to Mercury. In contrast to the other planets. Mercury is not interested in things of a physical, material nature as such, but in whatever is capable of *co-ordination*.

Mercury is the domain of the Masters of co-ordinative thinking; Jupiter, the habitation of the Masters of wisdom-filled thinking.

When a human being comes down from pre-earthly life into earthly existence, it is the Moon impulse that provides the forces for his physical existence. Venus provides the forces for the basic qualities of heart and temperament. But Mercury provides the forces for capacities of intellect and reason, especially of intellect. The Masters of the forces of co-ordinative knowledge and mental activity have their habitation in Mercury.



There is a remarkable connection between these planets and the life and being of man. The Moon, which enshrines the Beings living in strict seclusion, and reflects only what is first radiated to it from the universe, builds and fashions the outer form, the body of man. It is therefore by the Moon that the forces of heredity are incorporated in his bodily constitution. The Moon is the cosmic citadel of those spiritual Beings who, in complete seclusion, muse upon what is transmitted in the stream of heredity flowing from generation to generation by way of the physical.

It is because the Moon Beings remain so firmly entrenched in their fortress that modern scientists know nothing essential about heredity. From a deeper insight, and in terms of cosmic language, it could be said that when at the present time heredity is discussed in one or another domain of science, the latter is “Moon-forsaken” and “Mars-bewitched”. For science speaks under the influence of the demonic Mars-forces and has not even begun to approach the real mysteries of heredity.

Venus and Mercury bring into the human being the karmic element that is connected more with the life of soul and spirit and comes to expression in his qualities of heart and in his temperament. On the other hand. Mars, and especially Jupiter and Saturn when a man has a right relationship with them, act as *liberating* factors. They wrest man away from what is determined by destiny and make him into a free being.

Biblical words in a somewhat changed form might be used as follows. Saturn, the faithful custodian of cosmic memory, said: Let us make man free in the realm of his own memory.

Thereupon the influence of Saturn was forced into the unconscious; man's memory became his own possession and therewith he acquired the sure foundation of his personal freedom.

The inner will-impulse contained in acts of free thinking is due to grace vouchsafed by Jupiter. It would be in Jupiter's power to rule over and control all the thoughts of men. He is the one in whom we find the thoughts of the whole universe if we are capable of gaining access to them. But Jupiter too has withdrawn, leaving men to think as free beings.

The element of freedom in speech is due to the fact that Mars too has been gracious. Because Mars was obliged as it were to acquiesce in the resolution made by the other outer planets and could not exercise any greater coercion, man is free, in a certain respect, in the realm of speech too — not entirely, but in a certain respect free.

From another point of view therefore. Mars, Jupiter and Saturn may also be called the liberating planets; they give man freedom. On the other hand, Venus, Mercury and the Moon may be called the destiny-determining planets.

In the midst of all these deeds and impulses of the planetary individualities stands the Sun, creating harmony between the liberating and the destiny-determining planets. The Sun is the individuality in whom the element of necessity in destiny and the element of human freedom interweave in a most wonderful way. And no-one can understand what is contained in the flaming brilliance of the Sun unless he is able to behold this interweaving life of destiny and freedom in the light which spreads out into the universe and concentrates again in the solar warmth.

Nor can we grasp anything essential about the nature of the Sun as long as we take in only what the physicists know of it. We can grasp the nature of the Sun only when we know something of its nature of spirit and soul. In that realm it is the power which imbues with warmth the element of necessity in destiny, resolves destiny into freedom in its flame, and if freedom is misused, condenses it once more into its own active substance. The Sun is as it were the flame in which freedom becomes a luminous reality in the universe; and at the same time the Sun is the substance in which, as condensed ashes, misused freedom is moulded into destiny — until destiny itself can become luminous and pass over into the flame of freedom.-

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