

## Articles by Willi O. Sucher

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### *The Modern Mystic and Science Review*

Article by Willi Sucher, July 1938

#### THE HOROSCOPE OF DEATH AND THE LIFE AFTER DEATH

In our preceding studies we have regarded the horoscope of death as a kind of epitome of the earthly life which at the moment of death came to an end. It is a picture of that fruit of a one's earthly life which now goes forth with one into the greater universe to go on working there. It is as though humanity were engaged upon the painting of a mighty cupola; so did the horoscopes of death of individuals and of historic characters throughout long periods of time reveal the human being's active relation to the starry heavens.

We shall also need to see this fact in the light of the soul's after-death experience. As was already indicated, the horoscope of death looks out in two directions, not only toward the earthly life which is now past but also toward the future, i.e. , in the first place, toward the after-death existence of the soul in spiritual worlds.

It was explained in relation to the horoscope of birth how the human soul comes down into this earthly life in distinct stages recognizable to Spiritual Science. Seen in a larger view, the human individuality undergoes three stages of development when entering upon the way to a new incarnation. We described them as the passages through the Saturn, Sun, and Moon spheres respectively. We showed how the passages through the Sun- and Moon-spheres are reflected in the horoscope or constellation of cosmic thought (the constellation of a one's philosophy or world-conception) and in the prenatal constellation beginning about the time of conception and lasting until birth. In like manner, it should be possible to follow the soul of a human being upon its way through spiritual worlds after death.

It was the cosmic facts connected with the Moon which became our guiding line in finding one's prenatal relations with the cosmos. Thus the prenatal horoscope was determined by the Moon's relation to the ascendant of birth; the constellation of cosmic thought by the Moon's position at the moment of birth in relation to the lunar node. In effect, given the moment of birth, certain directions in the cosmos could be worked out. In these directions we saw a picture of the soul's way of entry to the Earth and of its passage through the prenatal spheres. The position of the Moon at birth was especially important; we described it as locating the direction of the soul's entry from the Sun- into the Moon-sphere.

So, in the horoscope of death we should also be able to find a "direction", an astronomical reality, a picture of the way in which this human soul went forth into the cosmos. We have already mentioned the direction toward the East in the moment of death, how the soul goes out into the eternal East. This direction, however, only leads us from the Earth- into the Moon-sphere. To reach the Sun- and Saturn-spheres, the soul must receive yet another "cosmic direction" just as it did upon the downward journey before birth. But now there is an all-important difference: whereas it was the Moon that gave the direction of the soul's entry through birth, it is the Sun at the moment of death that determines the direction of departure into higher spheres. This will throw light on many other things.

Wherever the Sun is in the Zodiac at the moment of a human being's death is the cosmic direction, the direction of the exit into the higher spheres of Sun and Saturn. If we know how to read the resulting cosmic writing, we shall gain some idea of the spiritual mood into which the soul of the dead now finds its way.

Raphael for example, whom we already mentioned, died 6 April, 1520. About that time the Sun was entering Aries. Aries, therefore, was the direction in which the soul of Raphael went forth into the cosmic spaces. We have in this a picture tending to express which of the cosmic spiritual spheres this individuality would seek his home in after death. Now the very symbol ♈ indicates an opening out, an upward breathing of praise and joy, an expansion; as indeed, Aries always has to do with our receiving of, our openness to spiritual forces. Out of this fact alone, the Sun in Aries at the death of Raphael, we can gain some feeling of what the spiritual environment of this great individuality would be during the life after death, the more so if we bear in mind how he had lived his earthly life, devoted in all his art to the creative ideas and impulses of spiritual worlds. We find the same in the case of other human beings too, of whom we feel how they would be living in a

sphere of creative ideas after death, filled with real life and being in the spirit. The Sun was in Aries, for example, at the death of Byron on 19 April, 1824. Also in Schiller's case, 9 May, 1805, the Sun was passing out of Aries into Taurus, so that the cosmic picture is transformed a little here in the direction of Taurus. Schiller's is an ideal world, rather more hard and fast, more strongly outlined, while Byron's has a somewhat lighter touch of beautiful mobility.

Ever so much can thus be discovered about the life after death. Harkening more deeply, we shall become aware of how in this connection there is revealed the fundamental mood, the fundamental attunement of soul or, we might say, the basic character of the astral body of such an individuality, made manifest in the cosmic judgment. It is indeed not unlike what it was at the constellation of cosmic thought, only in the opposite direction. We see the judgment of the cosmos upon that life and being which, as the first fruits of its soul, the human being carries outward now into the cosmos.

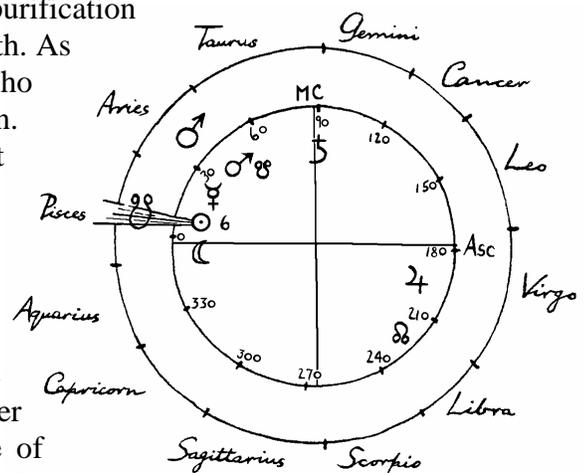
If, for example, on 20 November, 1910 (Gregorian calendar), at the moment of Tolstoi's death, the Sun is entering into the constellation of Scorpio, we shall recognize in this a picture of the inner form of Tolstoi's soul, seen in the judgment of the cosmos, the particular cosmic sphere which draws this soul unto itself. If we then look at the often dual and divided aspect of Tolstoi's being, entering vigorously at one moment into the life of the senses and then again retiring into inner solitude of soul yet always restless and dynamic in his striving, we shall recognize the inner kinship of this human soul with Scorpio in after-death existence.

This aspect, the place of the Sun in the Zodiac at the moment of death, is only one among several which are important. We have already spoken of how one experiences in the first few days after death a great tableau of one's past earthly life, seeing the essential points of one's earthly destiny as in a mighty picture. This is the first stage of the pathway after death; it lasts only a few days, namely, till the etheric body is dissolved into the cosmos.

The human soul will then have laid aside the physical and the etheric body. The only veil the inner spiritual individuality still bears with it is the astral—the body of the soul. Now in this astral body all human cravings, passions, and inclinations in all kinds and degrees, which the soul harbored or gave birth to during earthly life, are still living. Before one can rise to higher spheres of the spiritual world, this aura of the soul must be cleansed and purified. One must pass through the time of purification or purgatory, of which all religions based upon spiritual insight tell. It was to this aspect that Dante gave poetic form in his *Divine Comedy*.

During this time, the fire of purgatory as it is called, the human soul undergoes once more all the experiences of the past earthly life yet in an inverse form. In its true moral aspect we experience all the good that we did to others. We feel the real effect of our deeds in the souls of other fellow-beings. Likewise we experience the effects of our evil deeds in the souls of others to whom we did anything of wrong. Nay, the inversion goes even farther than this for it is in inverse order—from the last events before death, backward in time until birth—that the soul experiences all the events of the past life in their moral aspect. Moreover, this time of purification, as Spiritual Science shows, lasts about a third of the length of the past earthly life. Thus if the human being lived to the age of 60, the passage through this cosmic sphere will take about 20 years. Then will the soul be so far purified as to be able to rise to higher regions of the spiritual world.

This length of time which the soul spends in the sphere of purification will be found indicated in a quite real way in the horoscope of death. As an example we will take the horoscope of death of Beethoven, who died in Vienna on 26 March, 1827 at half past five in the afternoon. The inner circle in Figure I shows what the constellations were at this moment. Particularly striking is the position of Saturn in the meridian. It is as though the heavy hand of Saturn were to weigh down upon the scene. In effect, Beethoven's life was not a very happy one; he was profoundly lonely and bore a heavy load of destiny upon his shoulders. His sufferings, his loneliness especially, were due to his ear-trouble, leading at last to entire deafness. It was precisely this loss of hearing which stood under Saturn's influence. The first signs of ear-disease, which in spite of every effort could never be arrested, appeared in the year 1798. In that year,



Saturn was approximately at the same place in the Zodiac as in the constellation of death. We have, therefore, to deal with a past transit of Saturn in the sense explained in earlier articles, and this is all the more impressively brought out by the position of Saturn in the meridian at death.

Deafness was indeed a heavy blow of fate for Beethoven, for it increasingly prevented him from exercising his profession as a musician, yet mightily he wrestled his way through these difficulties. Under the compelling force of his fate, he rose to even greater heights as a composer; one whose works were subsequently destined to have the deepest influence upon humanity—as indeed they still have to this day. This applies most of all to the *Ninth Symphony* which he described as the most mature work of his spirit. The *Ninth Symphony* was composed at the time when Saturn was in Aries, i.e., in the very place where Mars was in the horoscope of death. It is, therefore, related to Mars in Aries.

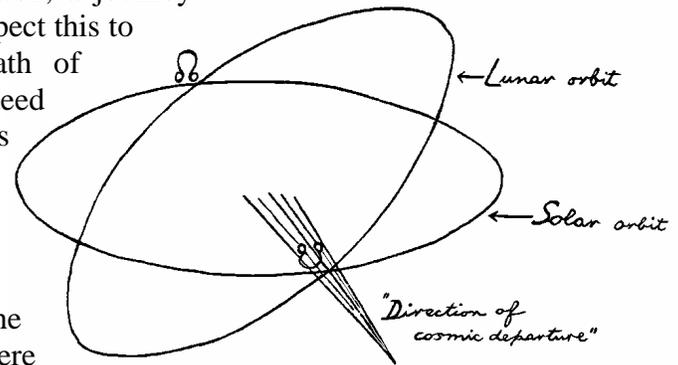
This much has been said to make the horoscope more real and vivid. What interests us, however, in our present context is the position of the Sun, which at the moment of Beethoven's death was in six degrees of the sign of Aries, or the actual constellation of Pisces. Therefore, as explained above, this would be the cosmic direction of departure of Beethoven's soul. but this is still not all. We must also take into account the relation to this cosmic direction of the lunar node which at Beethoven's death was in sixteen degrees of the sign of Scorpio. This refers to the ascending node; the descending node, being opposite, was in the sign of Taurus. We know that the lunar nodes move backward through the Zodiac. Two years after Beethoven's death the descending node in its backward course came into six degrees of the sign of Aries, i.e., to the place in the heavens where the Sun stood at death. But we must follow the lunar node for a whole revolution further—18 years and 7 months. This brings us to 22 December, 1847. On this day the descending node is again at the place occupied by the Sun in the horoscope of death.

We have now reached what we were seeking. In the first place, 20 years have passed since Beethoven's death in 1827. Beethoven lived to the age of 57, as he had been born in 1770. Remembering that the soul after death, to begin with, goes through the sphere of purification, a journey lasting about a third as long as the life on Earth, we shall expect this to have taken about 19 or 20 years in the life-after-death of Beethoven. Thus in the real cosmic happenings we have indeed something that answers to the inner way of experience of this human soul, inasmuch as 20 years after his death, approximately at the end of the time of purification, the lunar node returns to the place in the heavens where the Sun was at the moment of death.

It may be asked: What is it that justifies our relating the soul's after-death experience—the passing through the “sphere of purification”—to these particular cosmic happenings? To give an answer to this question, we will call to mind once more the significance of the lunar nodes described in an earlier article (Figure 2).

The nodes are the points of intersection of the Sun's and of the Moon's orbits. These are the points where the Sun- and the Moon-sphere come into contact—where they join hands, as it were. For we regard the paths or orbits of the Sun and Moon as marking the outermost lines of demarcation of the solar and lunar spheres—the several equators, so to speak, of these celestial spheres. The Moon-sphere rotates within the Sun-sphere so that the points of intersection wander round, the rhythm being 18 years and 7 months for a complete revolution. Then it comes about that the lunar node returns again and again to the essential place described above, which marks the cosmic direction of the soul's departure from the Earth. For Beethoven this happened, as we said, in the year 1847, for then the node returned to six degrees of Aries, the place the Sun was in at his death.

Now we can also express this cosmic fact in a still more concrete way. For the soul spends the time of purification within the Moon-sphere. It is there that the lower nature must be purified and laid aside. Not till this stage of after-death existence is over (once more, as Spiritual Science shows, it takes a third as long as the past earthly life) can the soul enter the higher sphere, that of the Sun. This is the moment when, through the lunar node, the Sun- and the Moon-sphere are in contact precisely in the individual direction of the soul's departure.



The same connection could be shown in many other instances. Unless there have been some organic idiosyncrasies, we shall always be able to trace this approximate third of the length of the earthly life in connection with the horoscope of death, pointing to the spiritual connection which has been described.

Very significant is the constellation of the planets at the moment thus indicated, i.e., at the moment of exit from the Moon- into the Sun-sphere. In Beethoven's case, Mars is again at the same place in the year 1847 as at the moment of death, in the constellation of Aries. Mars has been lifted, as it were, on to a higher level, signifying the passage of the soul from the Moon- into the Sun-sphere. We may conclude that this is a point of particular significance which the cosmos wishes especially to emphasize. As we said before, this Mars in Aries belongs to the time of Beethoven's life when his great masterpiece the *Ninth Symphony* was created. Now that the soul is admitted to higher spheres, it lights up once again in cosmic judgment, it is the spiritual horizon, the cosmic and creative background of this great work of art which is here lighting up in the sphere of Aries—of Idealism (as was explained in an earlier article). It is as though in the Thinking of the cosmos, the spiritual archetype would now appear. Fired with inner will, it is the world of ideas and ideals which was the hidden reality in this, the greatest work of the composer's genius. Only after death does the *Ninth Symphony* receive its cosmic meaning, maturing in the soul of Beethoven to gigantic stature. During his earthly life Beethoven experienced an ideal—nay, a whole world of human ideals—and brought it down into the strong reality of his music. Now, as the purest and most essential element of his being, he is allowed to give it to the Gods in heaven. For as he enters the sphere of the Sun, he is returning into the bosom of the Gods, and with the fruits of his earthly work he may now enrich even the archetypal, cosmic sphere from which it came, the sphere of Idealism in the divine and cosmic thinking.

Herein we have at least a hint, an indication of the experiences of the human soul during the life after death.

These things are not at all easy to set forth in outward words; they want to be experienced far more in the inner silence.