

Articles by Willi O. Sucher

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The Modern Mystic and Science Review

Article by Willi Sucher, December 1937

THE GATEWAY OF THE MOON-1

What we have achieved in the course of these studies has, in fact, been none other than to penetrate into the spiritual background of the ascendant of birth. For as we saw in working out the prenatal horoscope of Richard Wagner, the ascendant at birth, or the descendant as the case may be, indicates the place at which the Moon stood at the beginning of all those prenatal events in the cosmos which we have been considering.

We now must also be able to look at the whole matter from the other side in order to perceive what is important spiritually. Shortly before birth the human soul undergoes the final phases of descent into the earthly world. It clothes itself with the three bodies or vehicles. This is the essential fact of the passage through the Moon-sphere immediately before the actual entry into the Earth-sphere. To begin with, there is the pure soul and spirit of the human being, the essential ego having already clothed itself in a body of soul-forces, generally called the astral body. Then at a definite moment the soul seeks connection with the physical germ provided by the parents. Conception then takes place. About this time the human soul—being as yet only partly in connection with the embryo—forms for itself an etheric body from the surrounding cosmic ether, as modern supersensible research reveals. All these events are very much related to the Moon. The soul must wait until the moment when the Moon is at a particular place in the Zodiac, answering to the inner requirements of the soul itself. Only then can it enter upon its way into the Earth-sphere, gathering to itself the etheric body which it needs. This moment coincides with the beginning of the prenatal constellation—in Richard Wagner's case 15 August, 1812. Thence there unfolds the whole course of the prenatal events among the stars, dominated by ten Moon circles through the Zodiac. It is a cosmic archetypal picture of the etheric body which is now taking hold of the physical embryo, forming it through and through, making it the bearer of a life-history that is to unfold in time.

Again and again we must lay stress upon the fact that the point from which the Moon begins in this progressive prenatal horoscope becomes the ascendant or descendant at the moment of birth. Take Wagner's case once more. On 15 August, 1812 the Moon stood at the beginning of the constellation of Scorpio ♏, about one degree in the sign of Sagittarius ♐. At the moment of birth this point is in the descendant—the place where the Western horizon meets the Zodiac. The opposite point, the constellation of Taurus, is therefore in the ascendant at birth. Now in astrology the highest importance is attributed to the ascendant. In estimating the horoscope of a human being, ever so much is made to depend upon it. In doing so, a host of rules are applied; rules that have grown more and more voluminous in course of time. Often one has recourse to the quite external, empirical data, but then is no longer really able to see through into the underlying spiritual facts and of the human being's connection with the cosmos. Little more is left than a sum in arithmetic which is more likely to depress than to uplift one.

Above all, we must bear in mind that the essential home of astrology is in the East, and that it originated in a period of time when an instinctive, dreamlike clairvoyance still existed which, within certain limits, is even still to be met in the East. This dreamlike power of perception, in its prime, certainly needed no compendia of rules to help it in unraveling the cosmic script when looking up into the starlit heavens. Mysteriously, to the humanity of old, the stars made known their cosmic truths.

The gateway to this kind of knowledge is for the most part closed to Western humanity. We must go other ways to penetrate into the spiritual world again. Wrestling our way through all the discipline of scientific thought, we must at long last make our way to the realities of the spiritual world that are behind the outward facts and phenomena.

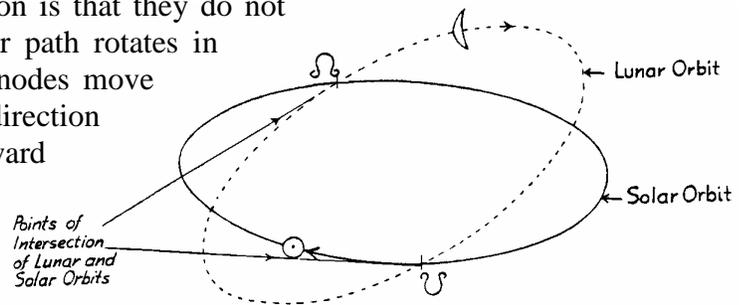
We have tried here to go at least a little step along this path. In so doing we have seen that behind the ascendant or descendant at birth is where the Moon stood at the beginning of the prenatal horoscope, and that thenceforward the very rich and manifold picture of the prenatal lunar cycles, which in their turn were a

reflection-in-advance of the whole stream of one's life and destiny in time, was unfolded. Thus the whole range and conception of the ascendant of birth becomes filled with a qualitative reality, having its origin in the great universe; a widely extended plastic picture of a person's spiritual affinities that we can now learn to consciously understand. It is quite true that some of our descriptions were hardly more than a bare sketch or outline, but in the further course it will be possible to supplement them, so to round off the picture and make it more real.

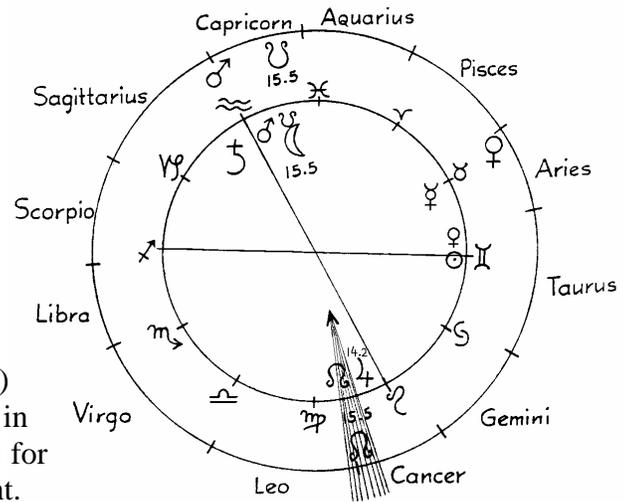
Now, just as we can penetrate to the spiritual essence of the ascendant of birth in this way, it will also be possible with regard to the other components of the horoscope of birth. The position of the Moon in the heavens at the moment of birth is a key, nay more, a gateway to the secrets of our very soul-nature. That this is so, was already indicated in our first article, and it will now be explained in greater detail. Let us then call to mind once more Richard Wagner's horoscope of birth.

The Moon is in the constellation of Capricorn, or in 15.5° of the sign of ♑. To understand what the Moon in this position signifies, we must in a certain sense go through the gateway of the Moon. We do so by considering the relation of the lunar node to the Moon at birth. The lunar node, quite abstractly speaking, is the point of intersection of the solar and the lunar orbits. There are, therefore, two nodes in opposite positions in the heavens: an ascending node, generally represented by the sign, ♈ and a descending node, with the sign ♎. The solar and the lunar orbits are not, in effect, in the same but in different planes, enclosing a certain angle. Thus there arise the two opposite points of intersection.

The peculiarity of these two points of intersection is that they do not stand still but slowly move. The plane of the lunar path rotates in relation to the plane of the solar path; so the two nodes move around. They move around the Zodiac in a contrary direction to the rotation of the planets, i.e., from Aries backward through Pisces, Aquarius, etc. A complete revolution of a lunar node takes place in 18 years and 7 months; after this time, therefore, the node—the ascending node, for example—is once again in the same position in the Zodiac as it was before. The ascending node is, thereby, the mathematical point that (at any given time and again after 18 years and 7 months) the lunar orbit rises above the solar orbit, while at the opposite point the descending node sinks below it. We shall have more to say in the sequel concerning this fact, behind which a very significant spiritual reality lies concealed.



In Richard Wagner's case, the Moon at birth stood at 15.5° of the sign of ♑. At the same time the descending node stood at 14 degrees 12 minutes of the same sign of ♑. Since the node travels backward through the Zodiac, we see that it must have been at 15.5° of ♑ (the position of the Moon at the time of birth) shortly before birth, namely about the end of April, 1813. There was at this time a definite constellation in the heavens of great importance for Richard Wagner. Venus came into the constellation of Aries while Mars, approaching the sphere of Capricorn, was at the same time in quadratic (square) to Venus. In the above drawing, this constellation is recorded in the outer circle. Mars and Venus were of especial significance for Wagner's life—we can leave out the other planets for the moment.

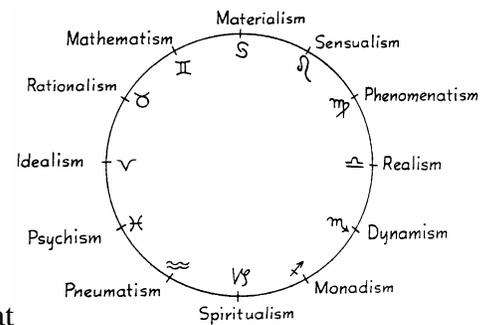


The question now is: What can this constellation tell us about the human being? We have already indicated that it has to do with the forming of our world-conception, our philosophy of life. In the spiritual symbols of the Zodiac and of the planetary world, we have to look for their relation to the manifold philosophies that are possible to humanity on Earth. Rudolf Steiner did this in his remarkable lecture-cycle, *Human and Cosmic Thought*, wherein he discovered the following relations:

The twelve tendencies indicated here may be called the different kinds of philosophy or shades of philosophic outlook. But there are also seven philosophic moods—qualities of feeling—connected with the seven planets: Gnosis = Saturn, Logicism = Jupiter, Voluntarism = Mars, Empiricism = Sun, Mysticism = Venus, Transcendentalism = Mercury, Occultism = Moon.

It is possible, for example, for a human being in an earthly life to develop Spiritualism very strongly in the Gnostic mood. (Spiritualism, needless to say, in the philosophic sense of the word, not in the sense of modern Spiritism!) In cosmic terms we shall then say that Saturn for this human being is in Capricorn. Such will then be this person's spiritual nativity, as against the nativity of ordinary astrology.

In Rudolf Steiner's descriptions it was not directly indicated, nor was it recognizable to begin with, whether this constellation of the cosmic philosophy had any relation at all to the actual horoscope of birth. All that revealed itself at first sight was that the horoscopes of birth seemed in no way to indicate such a connection. Moreover, Rudolf Steiner had expressly stated that this constellation of the cosmic philosophy might happen at some time before birth or even after birth. It was only after long empirical investigations that the truth emerged, namely that this spiritual nativity is connected not only with the actual events in the external cosmos but also with the individual's horoscope of birth, connected in the way we have now indicated in the example of Richard Wagner. This discovery, taken together with all the facts of the prenatal constellation, leads us at last to a harmonious and total picture of the connections of the human being as a whole with the universe. In the horoscope of birth we have the cosmic counterpart of one's entry into the physical world. In the prenatal horoscope or prenatal constellation we have a cosmic picture of the etheric organization; the entire way in which it takes hold of the physical and forms it. However, while in the constellation of the cosmic philosophy we are given a picture of the astral, the psychological or psychic-bodily structure, which finds expression most of all in the innate tendency and direction of one's philosophy. In this form of astrology we also have a way of access to the threefold in its real supersensible essence, bodily nature of a human being: the physical, etheric, and astral bodies as known to occultism.



When the lunar node (it may be the ascending or the descending node) is at the place in the Zodiac where the Moon is at birth, this is precisely the moment when the philosophic constellation is present in the heavens. It may be before or after birth, within a probable range of 18 years and 7 months. In Richard Wagner's case it was very near to birth; only a month before birth the descending lunar node was at the place where the Moon itself was at the moment of birth. Then the spiritual nativity of Richard Wagner was portrayed in the heavens. It might well have been that we should have had to look for this spiritual nativity at the moment when the ascending node went through the place where the Moon stood at birth. This would have been approximately nine years and three months before or after the moment we have actually fixed on—the end of April 1813. We see, therefore, that variations are possible—in this instance three—and that we must be well acquainted with a person's psychology and spiritual character in order to choose rightly among the possible alternatives. Herein there is indeed an element of liberation. This spiritual horoscope cannot be merely calculated; a quality of freedom still prevails. The way is opened out into a kind of astrology in which it will no longer be possible to look for the connections of people with the cosmos by dint of mere calculation; it will be necessary to develop a sensitive inner feeling for the deeper character of the person concerned.

In Richard Wagner's case, in the constellation of the cosmic philosophy we have Venus in Aries and Mars passing from Sagittarius to Capricorn. The philosophic tendency thus indicated would therefore be: Idealism in the mood of Mysticism, Spiritualism in the mood of Voluntarism. (Experience with these constellations has shown that for the philosophic moods the actual constellations rather than the signs of the ecliptic are important.) The two aspects are not unrelated; they are in quadrant (square) to one another. In judging horoscopes of birth, square is rather known as a hindering, disturbing factor, but in the processes we are dealing with here the conditions are reversed. In the spiritual horoscope the bad aspects are good, while the good are often hindering. This too was indicated by Rudolf Steiner and experience confirms it.

In a beautifully clear way, the above aspects are revealed in Wagner's spiritual creation in the whole tendency of his world-conception. Already at an early stage he begins to take the mythological themes of Norse

and Germanic legend. There is a divination of this even in *Tannhaeuser*. With an astounding growth of inner mystical experience he advances along this line. Often the dramatic poems are there for a long time beforehand; only much later the music that belongs to them is added. So he advances—to indicate it only very briefly—through the experience of the *Siegfried* myth in the *Ring of the Nibelungs*; through the death-in-love in *Tristan and Isolde*, having its roots in the Celtic spiritual sphere; to the highest, the experience of salvation in *Parsifal*. Experiencing in an inner, mystic way his own destiny of life, there arises in his soul the drama of the *Flying Dutchman*, seeking his home and his salvation. In the *Siegfried* drama we have a picture of the battle of the awakening “I” consciousness with threatening powers of darkness. In *Parsifal* we have the unfolding—dimly felt as belonging to a more distant future—of the will-to-healing which lies hidden in the depths of his own being. In mystic depths, Wagner discovers the formative and creative cosmic powers of the universe, even as they are at work in his own destiny; the archetypal ideas reaching even down into the life of the individual. He fashions them into his works of art. In his creations there lives the essence of Mysticism (intimately related as it is to Mythology), colored by Idealism. So in the form of cosmic ideas he portrays the universal powers working themselves out in personal and historic destinies.

Herein we also gain an access to the other aspect, the constellation of Mars in Capricorn—Voluntarism in Spiritualism. It lay in the whole character of Wagner's soul and spirit and entered into all his work that he felt the universal process as an entity of will, living and moving in a spiritual sphere and undergoing transmutation in the realms of spiritual hierarchies. Though he also had difficulties to contend with, so that this picture of the world grew to no more than a dominant feeling in his soul, still it was living in him and it represents the fundamental mood of his artistic life-work.

It is, of course, very difficult when speaking of philosophic tendencies and world-conceptions in this regard to formulate things easily and tersely. For the conception of Idealism or of Spiritualism, for example, must be taken from pure philosophy, not from the many popular variations or conventional meanings. There is a very great difference between what is commonly called Idealism in daily life and Idealism philosophically understood. In the above mentioned lecture-cycle, *Human and Cosmic Thought*, these purely philosophic concepts are worked out and represented, above all, in their sequence (their evolution one out of another) following the dynamic course of the Zodiac. It is not possible to describe all this in detail here.

From the little that has been said about the constellation of the cosmic philosophy, it will already be recognized what a tremendous significance this spiritual horoscope must have for us. For, in effect, it represents the dominant soul-spiritual motives and motifs which in a high degree will govern our whole course and character of life. Indeed in some respects it is even more important than the horoscope of birth.