

# Articles by Willi O. Sucher

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## *The Modern Mystic and Science Review*

Article by Willi Sucher, February 1938

### THE HOROSCOPE OF DEATH

Our study of the horoscope of birth and of the wider perspectives that are connected with it was brought to a certain conclusion in the last articles. We now go on to deal with quite another aspect of our relation to the world of stars. It is the horoscope—the constellation in the Heavens—at the moment of death.

The casting of a horoscope of death is something altogether new in astrology and might even seem, to begin with, as an idle venture; for what is commonly expected of astrology is a prognosis, a forecasting of things about to happen in the future. Only the horoscope of birth, occurring as it does at the beginning of one's earthly life, would appear useful to this end, whereas the horoscope of death—that is of the end of life—obviously cannot help us in forecasting the events of this life. Yet from this horoscope another and far greater prospect can be unfolded. There opens out from it the perspective of the life and evolution of the soul in after-death existence.

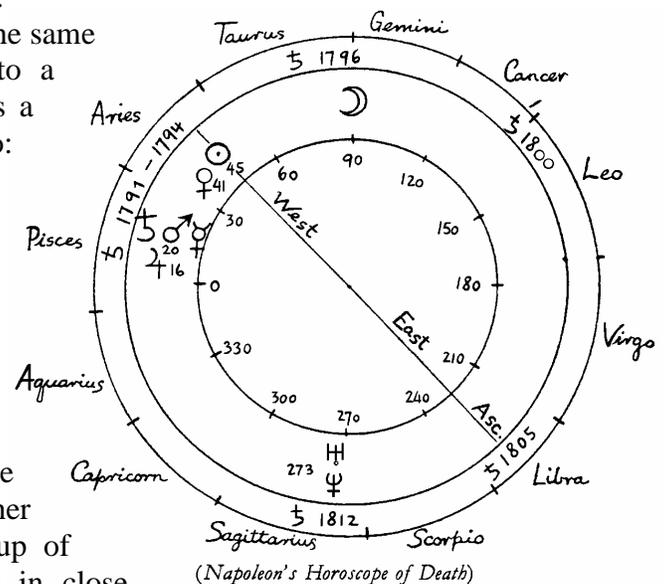
This is the positive value of the horoscope of death. The picture in the heavens at the moment of death is like a focusing point wherein the entire earthly life that has been brought to a close is gathered up on the one hand (even as in the fruit the inner essence of a plant lies concealed), while on the other hand this constellation is like a picture of a new beginning; namely, the passage of the soul through cosmic spiritual worlds after death, toward a future life on Earth.

Therefore, study of the horoscope of death has nothing to offer to those selfish motives which so frequently inspire interest in horoscopes of birth. Yet it can lead us to perceive and recognize the spiritual fruits of an earthly life that is now past. It gathers up, as in a great cosmic picture, all that one has made of oneself during an earthly life and that will now work on decisively, forming one's future. The horoscope of death is like a piece of cosmic education for people on Earth. It shows how human work on Earth, being already of the past, appears in its cosmic aspect—or as we might also put it, how it appears in the judgment of the Gods. It teaches us how we might deal most fruitfully with our life's problems while on Earth. Thus, even for our reading of the horoscope of birth, we shall do well to take very seriously the horoscope of death. This will emerge most clearly in the sequel.

To begin with, we will develop in all detail the death constellations of historic personages. Most interesting, for example, is the picture in the heavens at the time of Napoleon's death. We are told that he died in the evening of 5 May, 1821 just as the Sun was setting in the sea.

In setting up a horoscope of death we have to deal with the same mathematical and astronomical conditions which apply to a horoscope of birth. Moreover, taking the cosmic picture as a whole, we have to envisage three distinct elements here too: first is the given fact of the earthly space, whereby one aspect of the picture is precisely fixed; second are the planets, with all their definite positions in relation to this earthly aspect, either below the horizon or above it in the Eastern or in the Western hemisphere of the heavens; third is the relation of both the planets and of the earthly space to the Zodiac.

The constellation of Napoleon's death presents a most striking picture. The Sun, having just gone down, is in the Western hemisphere. Close to the Sun is Venus. Still farther down beneath the Western horizon there is a larger group of planets in the constellation of Pisces, for there we see in close



conjunction Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, and Mercury. The Moon is passing from Taurus to Gemini. Lastly, in Sagittarius there is a conjunction—truly of world-historic significance—of the two more recently discovered planets Uranus and Neptune. In this conjunction we see a cosmic event of historic import which is of rare occurrence, if only because of the very slow apparent movement of these distant planets. The next conjunction of Uranus and Neptune will not take place until the end of the present century.

This, then, is what is given to us, purely by the phenomena in the heavens. All the planets except Uranus and Neptune are in the Western hemisphere, in the descendant, in their relation to the earthly space. Added to this there is the peculiar congestion of planets in Aries and Pisces. To begin with, we have no more than these phenomena to work with, for in sharp contrast to the astrology of birth there are no traditional experiences or rules to help us.

To what, then, do the phenomena themselves relate? Let us first turn our attention to all that is determined by the East-and-West relation of the earthly space to the cosmos. Beneath the horizon in the West we see a regular barricade of planets. It gives the impression almost of a clenched fist. Herein we see a picture of Napoleon's extraordinary character, appearing so like a comet to his day and generation, utterly unexpected, incalculable in his effects. Clenched and congested power goes down beneath the Western horizon; it is like a weary falling-back in the evening of a day which has brought many dire and difficult events.

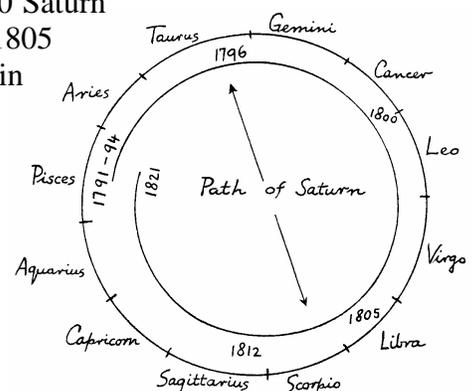
As at birth, so too at death, these directions in space have a still deeper meaning. The ascendant of birth is a picture of the human being's entry from the lunar into the earthly sphere. So too at death, the easterly direction may be said to be a picture of one's departure into the lunar sphere, away from the Earth. In occult brotherhoods to this day, when souls have gone through the Gate of Death, they speak of them as having gone "to the eternal East". The easterly direction shows the human being's future pathway into the life after death and vice-versa, the westerly direction would indicate what is now past.

If this be so, then for Napoleon the direction of his entry into the Moon-sphere after death is toward Libra. In the picture of the Balance we have an indication of his character as a man who is perpetually oscillating between the powers of Light and those of Darkness, and who indeed cannot be understood at all as an ordinary earthly man. Quite other conditions of balance or equilibrium are prevailing in him than in the normal human soul on Earth.

Over against this, the past is indicated in the West, namely, what he is leaving behind him. Here then we have the remarkable congestion of many planets. To sum it up in a single picture, we may perhaps see it as follows: he goes out into the sign of the Balance, Libra, seeking the balance for his own being, for at his back there is the heavy burden manifested in the Western heavens, the cosmic realization of all the dire and terrible results of his path of violence across the stage of Western history, falling back as a heavy load of guilt upon his shoulders.

It might seem, at first, as though this way of looking at the constellations of death were rather subjective. Yet many years of work with this type of horoscope have revealed the presence of still deeper relationships which at long last confirm what has been said. This confirmation is due, above all, to the cosmic script of Saturn—the passage of Saturn through the Zodiac.

Let us consider once again the congestion of planets in Pisces in Napoleon's horoscope of death. This is assuredly a most important feature. We shall find that about 30 years before, about 1791-4, Saturn occupied the places in the Zodiac which at the moment of death are occupied by this whole group of planets. For Saturn takes about 30 years to go around the Zodiac. Moreover, we shall find the following data: in the year 1796 Saturn was in the place where the Moon is in the horoscope of death. Then about 1800 Saturn was at the culminating point of the Zodiac, in the constellation of Leo; in 1805 it passed through Libra, the ascendant of the hour of death; and finally in 1812 it was in Sagittarius where Uranus and Neptune had their conjunction in 1821. These are the transits of Saturn—transits in past time. It is the opposite of what it is in the horoscope of birth, where we go forward in time as we study the transits of Saturn or other planets through the essential points of the horoscope. These past transits of Saturn—transits referred to the moment of death—will lead to quite individual data for every human life. We thus arrive at the following picture:



If we now compare Napoleon's biography with the panorama in time to which these past transits of Saturn have led us, we shall discover that in Saturn's writing in the heavens the most important stations of his life are indeed comprised. At the moment of death the planets find their way to all the places in the heavens where Saturn stood at the outstanding events of the man's life.

A mighty picture of cosmic time is thus made manifest in the constellations of the moment of death. Like the wide-open pages of a *Meat Chronicle*, the stars contain the life-story of the person who has just passed through the Gate of Death.

Let us now regard Napoleon's horoscope of death from this point of view. In the drawing of the horoscope above the past transits of Saturn and their sequence in time are indicated within the outermost circle. To begin with we have the transits past the essential positions in Pisces and Aries, in the years 1791-4. It is the time of the chaotic conditions of the French Revolution. The mighty social impulse which was the driving force in the background of these events suffered a grievous setback, in the way that often happens. Out of the chaos a single man worked his way up into a position of absolute power. It was Napoleon who rose from small beginnings and in the year 1796—the time of Saturn's transit past the place of the Moon at death—was already in command of the Italian campaign. The victory he achieved there was an important stage in his phenomenal ascent. Saturn inscribes it upon the mighty cosmic background of Taurus. At the turn of the century, we have Saturn's passage through the culminating point of the Zodiac—Leo, the picture of strength and power. Napoleon was now at the height of his continental power from his enforced election as First Consul of the Republic in 1799, to his coronation as Emperor and the crushing defeat of Prussia and Austria in 1804. After this, Saturn comes to places in the heavens which are beneath the Eastern horizon in the horoscope of death; a decline sets in beginning with the unhappy issue of the Russian campaign of 1812. This is connected with Saturn's transit past the Uranus-Neptune conjunction in the horoscope of death. Powers of destiny enter in here and bring about the downfall of this absolutist spirit who reached out over an entire continent with his thirst for power. In this conjunction of Uranus and Neptune, profound spiritual relationships are revealed as to the meteor-like rise of this strange being who, with all his destructive impetus, nevertheless brought many impulses involuntarily for good into the evolution of the Western world, stinging and stirring into active life many dormant forces both in individuals and nations—forces that had to be awakened at that time.

Finally we see Saturn return to its starting point in Pisces and, in connection with this, Napoleon's lingering illness and death upon the lonely island. To repeat once more what was already indicated, the constellations in the Western sky in this horoscope of death lead us again to the starting-point, the time of the French Revolution. The impulse toward a better social life became transformed into its very opposite, into the dominion of sheer violence. As Saturn returns again to Pisces—having gone once around the Zodiac—this man's life is extinguished and on the painful bed of sickness there ends a path of destiny seeking to realize gigantic and ambitious plans, yet strewn with countless instances of human woe and suffering. Think, for example, of the great Army's retreat from the interior of Russia! These things fall back as heavy guilt upon the being of Napoleon. This guilt stands greatly written in the position of the planets in the Western sky at the moment of his death. For there we see the starting-point of his career of which we might imagine, that had he continued the true spiritual impulses that underlay the French Revolution in its beginnings, he could have taken a less guilt-laden path.

So the horoscope of death is revealed as a summing up of the earthly life that is now past. There stands before us an awe-inspiring cosmic tableau, wherein the most important moments of the human being's life are inscribed. But there is also another thing connected with this. Spiritual investigation tells—and people who have returned to life after having been in imminent danger of death by drowning or in other ways, confirm—that in the first period after death the human soul experiences a mighty memory-tableau of the past earthly life, wherein all the important points of this life are contained as in a picture. This is none other than the human ether-body, freed from its functions within the physical and now revealing itself in its true character as a body-of-time—for so we had to call it in our studies of the prenatal horoscope. The ether-body now becomes a tableau in time, containing all the memories of life. It is with this member of the human being that the horoscope of death is most intimately related.

Moreover, it is Saturn who now paints this cosmic picture. Saturn, indeed, has to do most with the recording of history; it is the cosmic chronicler, recording all that happens in the life of individuals and of humanity.

Saturn also recorded what happened in the fateful times of the French Revolution (1792-4), Napoleon's emergence, and the unfolding of his life in the succeeding years. All this was silently and impartially recorded by the planet Saturn in the great cosmic chronicle. Saturn would have made different entries and at different places in the cosmos if this had been given by Napoleon's path of life on Earth. The primary thing is human action, which—in the *way* we work and act—is decidedly within the sphere of moral freedom. Yet if we have once made our decisions and conduct our life accordingly, then we have created for ourselves a destiny which works into the future. So too will Saturn make its entries, working with might of destiny in such a way that the person's death takes place when the planets are at the places in the Zodiac wherein the outstanding events of the life have been recorded by Saturn. Thus, in the years of the French Revolution, Napoleon underwent certain inner decisions which became important for the rest of his earthly life. Saturn recorded them in the constellation of Pisces. This became so important for Napoleon's further destiny that his death had to ensue at a moment when certain planets stood in Pisces, as indeed was the case in his horoscope of death.

Thus the earthly life of a human being is twice reflected in cosmic memory. On the one hand it appears in the etheric body or body-of-formative forces. Memory, which is held fast there, is liberated in the moment of death to become the great tableau-experience of the entire life. But in the great cosmos too, at this moment, there is a memory-tableau of the past earthly life. It is a deeply significant connection. The cosmos waits for the record of the earthly lives which we will bring to it. The cosmos waits for what will flow to it through human ether-bodies—a spiritual memory pervaded by earthly facts and experiences. For the fact is that very soon after death the human ether-body is dissolved entirely into the cosmos; therefore, the constellation of the stars at the moment of death adapts itself to the tableau that is there in the ether-body of the dying person, and death takes place at such a moment that the two are in harmony with one-another. The horoscope of death is, so to speak, a negative, a mold, a hollow form, answering to the conditions in the individual's etheric body and well adapted to receive them. For its further existence, the cosmos needs this etheric substance coming to it from humanity on Earth. Our further study will reveal these spiritual facts in a yet fuller light.