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The Modern Mystic and Science Review

Article by Willi Sucher, July 1937

ASTROLOGY I - PRENATAL ASTROLOGY

There are some people alive today who are able to appreciate the starry heavens in a peculiarly personal, inward, and intimate way. When in moments of solitude and stillness they look up to the twinkling multitude, there is at times the accompanying feeling that the heavens might reveal their penetrative tones and secret harmonies whose personal correspondences are to be found only in the depths of the soul. Those who can sense these cosmic overtones are a gradually decreasing number; such harmonies are part of a stream that belongs to a past increasingly difficult of contact the more modern science takes possession of the Earth.

In the 16th century, Nostradamus possessed powers of perception which to us are almost incomprehensible. To him the sky was a script in which he read time-embracing prophecies of the destinies of peoples and generations yet to come; prophecies that continued to be fulfilled up to the time of the French Revolution. There appeared to be stored in him all the star-lore of the ancient Chaldeans, Egyptians, and Greeks.

The priests in the Mystery Temples unveiled the history—past and future—of the world and of humanity by their knowledge of the stars. Only a small part of their immense wisdom lay in knowledge of the connection between humanity and the world of stars as portrayed by the ordinary birth-chart. They noted, for instance, the position of the Moon, whether it was waxing or waning, in what sign of the Zodiac it stood, further indices of the destiny of the Earth, and the character and capabilities of the subject. With the decay of the ancient mysteries, the ability of the old initiates correspondingly deteriorated; it has been lost in a maze of records, formulae, and rules that, in the course of transit through the centuries, can no longer be understood. Only the remnants of the wisdom possessed by the ancients, in its once magnificent fullness, is recognizable in modern astrology.

The immediate source of the inspiration drawn on by the ancient Initiates is of necessity closed to us. Natural science has become the direction of the search for knowledge during the last four centuries—a direction that also sets limits to the amount of knowledge attainable by the method. There is no correspondence between modern astronomy and the wisdom of the ancients. Modern scientific teachings change rapidly, yet the underlying spirit that imbues them—a sincere inner quest for knowledge—is that with which we must approach astrology if we would recapture the ancient wisdom. For the impulse which urges science is a natural and discerning love of the Earth. It is true that because of it the heavens have been lost, but they can be regained when science infuses into its researches knowledge of the Spirit.

In embryology, a science of significance in connection with astrology, great strides have been made. The origin and growth of both animal and human embryo has been the subject of much laborious research. True, much remains in darkness especially about early stages of embryonic development—a period of primary importance and of far-reaching effects on the human being after birth. Indeed, the question arises whether the actual time of birth (regarded by the ancients as fundamental to their star-wisdom) is not, after all, of only secondary importance. In studying the influence of heavenly bodies on human beings, one may wonder whether the time of conception and succeeding embryonic stages are not of greater significance than the constellation at birth. Birth only means that the young life has attained its separate existence; it is released from the mother.

When we comprehend what has been left to us by tradition, we shall see that the ancient star-sages were well aware of prenatal events in their more cosmic-spiritual aspect. The almost mythical records from Egyptian times speak of the hermetic star-wisdom and refer to Thoth or Hermes, the legendary founder of the ancient Egyptian culture. Through the clairvoyant consciousness, which in those times humanity still possessed, this wisdom shed light on the horoscope of birth, particularly in the relation of the Sun, Moon and Earth. From an understanding of those relationships, they were able to deduce the real beginning of embryonic development and to appreciate the particular aspects which were being woven by the cosmos into the new human organism

just coming into existence. Understood in the light of this knowledge, the constellation of birth opens up for us a key to the spiritual nature and powers of the universe which form and mold the real being we bring with us through the gate of birth into earthly existence.

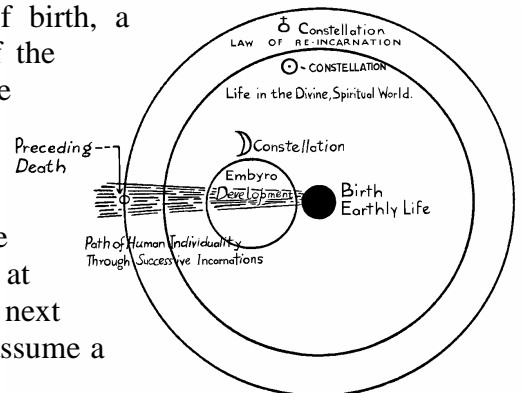
The constellation of stars at the moment of birth illumines the human being from three aspects: the Moon, Sun, and Saturn, revealing deep spiritual connections in their relation to the Earth. At the moment of birth, the Moon is either visible above or invisible below the horizon; its relation to the Sun is either waxing or waning. With these facts as a basis, it is possible in each individual case to go back to the time of conception. In this way we are led to a certain constellation lying approximately 273 days prior to actual birth—though this period varies in individual cases. (Technical details accompanied by examples will be given in a later article.) The physiological aspect of birth is still very much of a mystery, but those interested in astrology will probably agree that the constellation at the moment of conception, for the purposes of our present study, is probably of great significance. Under its influence a new life is beginning to take form. Whoever is familiar with the development of the embryo will also agree that the precise moment of conception is vital, so it will be worth our while to study cosmic conditions prevailing at the time. From that moment it will be necessary to study the flowing cosmic life for the next nine months, to observe the path of the Sun through the signs of the Zodiac together with those of the planets and their retrogressions and so on, all coinciding (approximately) to ten revolutions of the Moon around the Earth.

These Lunar revolutions are of the utmost importance. They are precursors of the subsequent rhythmical epochs of the Earth-life to come—the whole cosmic process is pictured in them. But besides gaining an insight into the earthly life of the new human being, we shall have a picture of its destiny in which are indicated its potentialities, hindrances, and the conditions which will prevail at varying periods of its life. Even tendencies to illness and health will be disclosed. Prenatal cosmic phenomena portray the creative element in the human being, the so-called etheric body, which throughout the Earth-life accompanies the physical body bringing about its development and changes and guards it against its tendency to decay. All this has very much to do with the Moon, for the Moon translates the cosmic, spiritual nucleus into events in time. This fact could well be termed the Moon Mystery of the human being.

We are able to go further still. Our connection with the Moon enables us to understand the finer qualities of the organism, including all there is concerning heredity. We have particular and important relationships with the Sun, not only in its objective sense as a fiery, heavenly body but in the sense that it is a solar entity expressing itself in an appointed orbit. We know that the apparent path of the Sun is a very important cosmic reality. The Sun-sphere leads us to a [spiritual] constellation which, though it has a mathematical relationship to the birth constellation, is very largely independent of it in point of time. It can, in fact, appear either before or after birth, but greater details of this will be given in future articles. This constellation has a deep correspondence with the soul and the essential nature of being; it reveals the fundamental outlook on the world. It has already been shown that every possible world-conception and philosophy can be related to one or other of the signs of the Zodiac. (See *Human and Cosmic Thought* by Rudolf Steiner.) Idealism, as a philosophy can be related to Aries, the logical outlook with Jupiter, and so on. If then, one is an idealist but tends toward a logical expression of it, it can be said that one has Jupiter in Aries as a spiritual horoscope in contradistinction to the mathematical precision of the ordinary horoscope of birth.

In order to determine this spiritual constellation it was necessary to study actual lives. It became apparent that it could be deduced with mathematical accuracy from the constellation of birth. Proceeding from certain facts and mathematical conditions relating to Saturn at the time of birth, a constellation can be found which tells us much about the passing of the human individuality through previous incarnations. This aspect of the heavens stands in almost timeless sublimity above the horoscope.

The diagram here will help to make the cosmic relationships more clear, and from it we shall try to work out exact details. In the first place, we have the acknowledged fact of reincarnation of the individuality plunging ever and again into epochs of Earth-evolution at particular times suited to its development. Each soul is preparing for its next Earth life during the periods between incarnations; therefore, we may assume a



certain direction through all successive incarnations, indicated in the diagram by the lines going toward birth. After entry through the gate of birth, nothing remains in the consciousness to remind the human being of its sojourn in more spiritual worlds. Yet there is a way to penetrate the veil of the stellar constellation ruling at the time of birth, the rending of which tells of the immense preparation that was undergone to make this earthly life possible. This is indicated in the three circles of the diagram.

All this can be found in the mathematical relationships of the constellation of birth. To begin with, light is shed on the prenatal cosmic influences which correspond to the embryonic development. There is also reflected in this constellation expressive pictures of the bodily nature in its widest sense, the destiny that has found concrete expression in the form of the body. The innermost circle in the diagram, the Moon Mystery of the human being, indicates this.

Furthermore, we are given an insight into the life of the human soul in the realms of Divine Spiritual Beings. This is reflected in the Sun constellation. A person's philosophy—the “last echo of one's former union with the world of the Gods”—is revealed in it. A philosophy that is, so to speak, the inheritance of the Thoughts of the Gods—second circle in the diagram. Finally, from far cosmic distances, there streams into the birth-constellation from a constellation related to the Saturn-sphere—outer circle—the influences of past Earth-lives.

Quite another aspect of the human being's relationship to the stars reveals itself in the constellation at the moment of death. Steiner very well understood this reality and has pointed out that the “horoscope of death” is of great importance to the individual who has passed again into the spiritual world. He further asserts that the contemplation of the horoscope brings to those still living on Earth a beautiful and selfless understanding of the existence of those who have passed on. Contemplation of the horoscope of birth, on the other hand, is too often an expression of human egoism.

Birth and death may be likened to the rhythm of breathing. When entering into life on Earth, we take in, as in a mighty breath, the ingredients of the cosmos and of the Earth in order to form our own organism from them. At death we breathe out our being again into the surrounding spheres, our physical body is seized by the decaying powers of Earth, and our super-physical being is given back again to cosmic spiritual spaces. Between these two poles of in-breathing at birth and out-breathing at death, there is an earthly life which changes and evolves the substances from the Earth and from the cosmos—changes them right down into our physical organism. As a result of past destiny, we wrestle and strive with what we have brought with us; that is our task. In order to rise above the waves of outward events and demands, the human “I” must work in the finer spheres of the temperament and inclinations. The human being's tendency toward a certain philosophy of life is an inheritance, so to speak, from the gods, but the hard facts of earthly life impel us to widen and deepen our philosophy, to change and develop our point of view, and to infuse into it a quality of all-embracing universality. The ensuing developments influence our bodily nature through illness and the like; we become other than we were. The fruits from all these strivings and transformations become visible in the constellation of the stars at the moment of death.

Spiritual science says that, after death, the newly released soul experiences its past life all at once as in a picture that passes before it. Many people who have been very near death and only just saved at the last moment have told how their whole lives, concentrated in their most important points, have stood before them as great memory-pictures. Something like this results from a study of the death-horoscope. In it are inscribed the most significant events in the life of the individual who has passed on.

As the birth-constellation, in the way described, points backward into the pre-physical existence of the human being, so does the death-constellation point forward into the existence of the soul after death. The death-constellation also has an important connection with the prenatal cosmic events—those that took place during the development of the embryo—as well as pointing to an event that is related to the constellation of the Sun-sphere about the time of birth referred to above. Just as this latter constellation in the Sun-sphere is a symbol of the dismissal of the soul from the lap of the gods, so in the constellation after death is mirrored the return of the soul into the sphere of the gods after divesting itself of the last remains of Earth existence. Indeed, it is often only long after death that earthly strivings arrive at fruition. In this constellation, which may appear many years after death but which arises with mathematical consistency from the positions of the stars at the time of death, all that is pure and ripe enough to be woven into future forms of Earth destiny is raised into cosmic heights.