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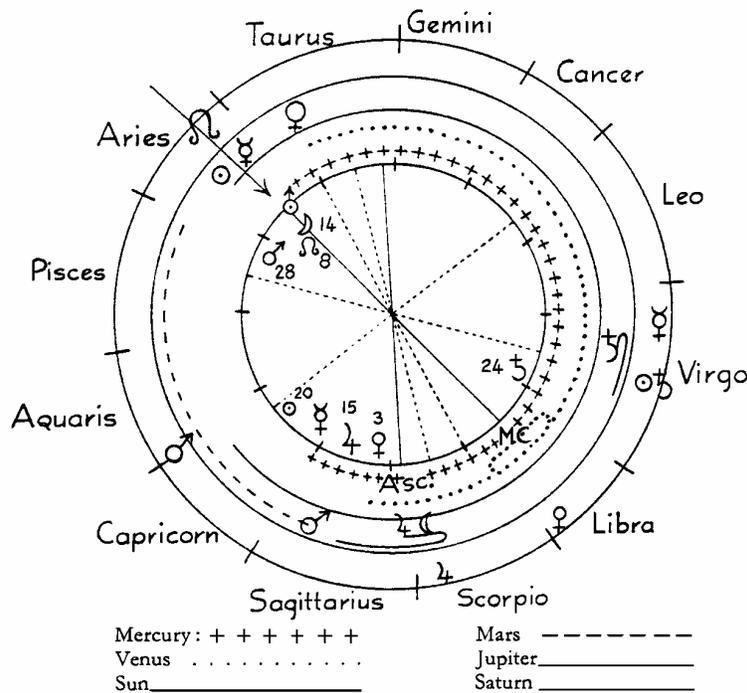
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The Modern Mystic and Science Review

Article by Willi Sucher, December 1937

THE RIDDLE OF EMANUEL SWEDENBORG

Deep riddles arise for us when we try to understand the life of Swedenborg. Here is an individuality who, up to a certain point in his life, exhibited outstanding capacities in natural science and technics; the scientific world is occupied even today with the outcome of some of his work. Then, to all appearances with absolute suddenness, there came a great change over his soul. He became a theologian, he told of his experiences of a super-sensible world and grew to be, for many people, the founder of a new religious outlook. For this reason it will be interesting to try to gain an understanding of his life and character as mirrored in the constellations in the heavens.



SWEDENBORG

Birth: 29 January, 1688- Julian Calendar (inner circle).

Beginning of the prenatal epoch: 20 April, 1687 (middle circle).

(Prenatal constellations indicated between the middle and inner circles.)

Constellation of cosmic philosophy: 27 September, 1687 (outermost circle).

Swedenborg was born in Stockholm on 29 January, 1688 (Julian calendar). At the University of Upsala he studied Philosophy, Philology, Mathematics, and Natural Science, which shows what a versatile and universal man he was. From journeys he made in England, Holland, France, and Germany in the years 1710-14, he learned much about the world. In 1716 he became Assessor of the Royal Board of Mining in Stockholm and in the following years accomplished a very great deal in technical and engineering matters. He achieved his well-known feat of engineering during the siege of a Swedish town in the year 1718, when he transported a number of ships across land for the distance of about fourteen English miles. It was especially in Natural Science, however, that he was a shining light of his time, and even today societies of Swedish professors are editing the prolific scientific writings which originated in this period of his life.

Then, about the year 1745, he brought out a work, *De cultu et amore Del (On the Worship and Love of God)*, which already indicated that he was departing from the purely scientific sphere. It is during this time that one of his illuminations is referred. He saw with spiritual sight into a supersensible world. In a wealth of theological writings he told of his supersensible experiences, and his followers founded something like a new Christian church built on the Seer's writings and revelations.

Swedenborg died in London at the age of 82, after having completed his best and most comprehensive work and having foretold the day of his death some weeks beforehand.

It is particularly interesting to see how this “break” in Swedenborg's life is mirrored in his prenatal horoscope. It is in this horoscope, as we have seen, that the etheric organization is reflected, and these events of Swedenborg's life must in some way be pictured in it. The year already mentioned as the year of Swedenborg's illumination—1743—was the 55th year of his life; therefore, we must refer to the end of the 8th Moon-cycle, reckoning from the beginning of the prenatal horoscope on 20 April, 1687, according to the Julian calendar ($8 \times 7 = 56$). At this time an exact conjunction took place between Jupiter and Mercury in the constellation of Sagittarius— 1°♐ and about 12°♊ , Mars was in Aquarius (♋) and the Sun in Scorpio (♏), while Venus was retrogressive in Libra (♎).

The position of Venus is particularly important, being retrogressive, and—as may be seen from the diagram—the loop of retrogression was before the Sun in the constellation of Libra. It is with this fact that the “break” in Swedenborg's life, culminating in the illumination of the year 1743, is especially connected. We are led to the same conclusion when we regard the horoscope from a more physiological aspect. Here, where we have to consider above all a cardinal situation in his life, the retrogression of Venus in Libra affords a highly penetrative picture. It is as though the spiritual essence of Libra were to speak directly through the Venus sphere; an element of decision is here at work. Something like the two scales of a balance seem to be living in this picture in which Swedenborg's dual nature—even like a Janus head—comes to expression. On one side of the scales there rests the cosmic destiny of Venus inasmuch as it has journeyed since the beginning of the prenatal epoch from the constellation of Taurus; on the other scale is Venus as it journeys on toward Sagittarius, arriving there at the time of birth. Venus coming from Taurus gives us a picture of the rationalistic, scientific, and practical man, while Venus passing into Sagittarius portrays the soul so strongly oriented toward religion, the striving soul, rising to a knowledge of the Spirit. The fulcrum lies in the constellation of Libra, and here indeed Venus passes through its zero-point, through a kind of nothingness, an empty void, into which the other side of Swedenborg's own being—the Theosophist—enters with sudden power. For, in effect, the influence of Venus being retrogressive is at this moment dampened and weakened.

There is another aspect of the question however. If we look at the horoscope of birth (inner circle of the diagram), we notice at once the position of the Moon. It is in conjunction with Uranus and also near to the lunar node and to Mars. Here there must be a key to certain secrets, and if we go back to the moment when the lunar node was where the Moon is at birth, we find something most remarkable. As indicated in the article [The Gateway of the Moon](#), it is the so-called constellation of the cosmic philosophy which we encounter on going back to this point of time. This constellation, from a certain point of view, gives us a picture of the astral body. The date of it is 27 September, 1687. Thus it occurs for Swedenborg during the period of the prenatal horoscope, about the end of the 6th prenatal lunar cycle. This, then, should be connected with the 42nd year of his life. Admittedly, that is some time before the events described, which reached their climax in the 55th year, but we may easily imagine that the change which was to come about was already being prepared in this 42nd year in the depths of Swedenborg's soul.

Be that as it may, the constellation of cosmic philosophy which appears at this moment is most enlightening (outer circle in the diagram). Mars is just passing from Capricorn to Aquarius and at the same time a conjunction is taking place in Virgo between the Sun and Saturn. Voluntarism (Mars) is passing over from Spiritualism into Pneumatism. This points to a spiritually minded philosophy of life which is able to look toward an active world of spiritual hierarchies—a world of heavenly angelic beings. Connected with this constellation is the conjunction of Sun and Saturn in Virgo. Here Phenomenalism is indicated in connection with the Gnostic element of Saturn. Swedenborg's spiritual world-conception is nothing abstract or “in the air.” It is founded on a real knowledge of supersensible phenomena, although here too, certain inner difficulties are indicated in connection with the passing of the Sun before Saturn. Swedenborg recognizes the reality of the

supersensible, but has difficulty in breaking through to it owing to a certain peculiarity of his own being. This is the secret indicated in the conjunction of Moon with Uranus at birth, which in itself points very decidedly toward Occultism.

Looking still deeper, we find in the contrast between the Sun-Saturn conjunction and the position of Mars in Capricorn-Aquarius a deeper reason for the apparent duality of Swedenborg's character. Between the two constellations there is a trigonal (120°) aspect. In the spiritual horoscope the working of the aspects is reversed, and so a trigonal aspect creates difficulties. In the Sun-Saturn position in Virgo we see the natural scientist expressed (Gnosis in Phenomenalism), also the technical and mathematical empiricist (Sun—Empiricism), while in the Mars position we have the Swedenborg of later years, turning toward the Spirit. Swedenborg was not yet able outwardly to unite Natural Science and Spiritual Science. The “break” came in between these two. Yet inwardly the two points of view supported one another all the same, for through his love of nature, filled as it was with knowledge, Swedenborg planted the seed in his soul for those powers by which he was then enabled, in the way peculiar to him, to perceive the many details of a spiritual world.

This article is intended only to give a certain part of Swedenborg's whole horoscope, namely that which bears upon the peculiar dual aspect of his character.