



THE ASTROLOGER'S VISION

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Introduction

Throughout history, a number of individuals, including the Upanishadic rishis, Heraclitus, Lao Tze, the Buddha, and Jesus of Nazareth, have been graced with a “mystical experience,” a divine revelation that the phenomenal reality, including one’s body and soul, is a manifestation of an eternal Divine Mind. The authorship and governorship of the phenomenal universe by the Divine Mind is therefore not merely a matter of religious belief; rather it is a direct and certain knowledge provided through divine Grace to a few chosen souls and which manifests as a direct “mystical experience” of the magnificent Intelligence, the transcendent Mind, that underlies the world and our personal consciousness.

This revealed knowledge is no doubt the greatest and most beneficial knowledge possible of attainment, and one aspect of this direct knowledge is the clear realization that this divine universe is an integrated and coordinated unit, in which “all things move together of one accord; [that] assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.”

We may extrapolate from this direct knowledge of the integral unity of the universe that, included in that integral unity is an invisible coordination between the movements of the heavenly bodies of our solar system and the events in the lives of men and women on earth. And over the centuries a great deal of evidence has been accumulated to corroborate and support this theory—a theory that has been given the name of “astrology.” And today, the practical use of astrological information is a proven and invaluable tool for understanding and adapting to the manifest patterns of change experienced in the world and in one’s personal consciousness. And so, I am sharing some of my writings on the subject of astrology for those who may be able to benefit from it. What I wish to offer is a mystical philosophy that includes an understanding of the principles of astrology, or cosmic synchrony.

The realization of the divine Mind, the eternal Self, is to be regarded as of paramount importance to comprehending one’s spiritual nature; but the knowledge of the karmic forces forming and influencing one’s personal inner and outer life-experiences in the spatio-temporal world is also important and useful. It is my own mystical experience of the eternal Self which taught me that “all things move together of one accord; that assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain,” and it is this very

principle of cosmological synchrony that accounts for the science of astrology and its usefulness as a tool for the knowledge of the personal self.

It is just this understanding of cosmological synchrony that allows us to see that every thought, activity, or experience occurring within the solar system is dependent upon and coordinated with even the smallest alteration in the angular relationships between each of the planets of the solar system, upon the transient organization of the entire universe, and ultimately upon the one eternal Mind in whom all this panoply of change occurs. This constant evolution of the cosmic panoply must be seen as a superficial play upon the divine Mind, understanding that the “assenting” Mind, the one Consciousness, or Divine Identity, remains one and unchanging despite the universal kaleidoscope of mental and physical movement and the changing stellar relationships that are continually evolving in space-time.

We live in a consciously coordinated universe. It is one integral Unit. In such a universe each soul is born at the exact moment the universe has prepared for it throughout the unfolding of time. But by what means do the positions of the planets of the solar system at the time and place of a soul’s earthly embodiment relate to the character and actions of that individual soul? It is not possible to answer this question except by recognizing that ‘we live in a consciously coordinated universe. It is one integral Unit.’ In other words, there is a synchronistic accord invisible to the human eye by which all things in the universe are coordinated and interconnected, just as all the functions of a human body are synchronized and coordinated to the health and benefit of the whole body.

Philosophers of ancient Greece believed in this truth; the very meaning of their word, *cosmos*, referred to ‘an orderly, harmonious, systematic universe’ of which human souls were an integral and interrelated part. Today, this notion is regarded as antiquated, and the current popular trend is to regard the existence of humanity as a meaningless accident in a purposeless and indifferent universe. But the reader will quickly discover that the ideas and principles described in this collection of essays diverge radically from the popular conceptions accepted in our current society.

In a secular society such as ours there is bound to exist much ignorance and mythology surrounding the esoteric subject of astrology. This spiritual ignorance often occurs among those with a leaning toward a secular scientific orientation. One of the widespread myths concerning astrology

that arises from this ignorance is the myth that astrologers believe that the changing positions of the Sun, Moon, and planets *determine* or *cause* the fate of human beings on earth—apparently by some mysterious invisible rays of influence. If this belief is held by any astrologers, they are certainly in a very small minority. A modern astrologer is much more likely to believe that one's own karma, recorded within one's own psyche or soul, is the only force or influence that is impinging on one's life and decisions; the positions of the planets merely represent corresponding conditions in a universe whose elements are integrally related and unified in a common noumenal reality. In other words, it is you, and not the planets, who is responsible for what you are and what you become. We must not imagine that the planetary environment is the *cause* of events in our psyche and in our physical lives; it is merely a reflection, a readable symbol, of those influences, written large into the cosmos, and telling of an integrated cosmic synchrony.

But, regardless of what we call it, the critics of the notion of a spiritually interconnected universe, in their ignorance of the spiritual reality, and their confidence in the imagined materialist view, are firmly convinced that there is not the slightest rational basis for believing that there is any connection at all between the lives of the inhabitants of earth and the positions of the Sun, Moon, and planets of our solar system; and they seem at this stage to be developmentally incapable of comprehending the cosmos as an integrated Mind or Psyche. One such critic, well learned in the Advaita Vedanta tradition, has publicly stated that he believes “that one’s personality/destiny is affected or revealed more by the passing of a truck in the street outside than by a planet in the outer reaches of the solar system”.

So, it is necessary to provide some answers to these doubters and detractors. and in the following chapters some answers will be provided:

The first chapter of this little booklet, "The Self, The Soul, And The Planets," explains the complementarity of the soul and the eternal Self. They are not two separate entities; but rather it is God, the one divine Self, who takes on the attributes of each incarnated soul and appears as that individual soul. At the deepest level of consciousness, it exists as the Self; at the phenomenal level, it is the individual soul with all the characteristics acquired in its many births, as it evolves from lifetime to lifetime toward recognition and manifestation of its true, eternal, Self.

The second chapter, “The Science of The Soul,” offers a perspective on the integral synchrony of the cosmos, wherein the planets do not *cause* or *determine* effects among the people on earth, but whose positional patterns reflect or symbolize the physical and psychological conditions on earth simply because they are two synchronous events occurring in a common integral cosmic Psyche.

The third chapter, "The Soul And Karma," attempts to explain the representation in the natal chart of characteristics formed by each individual's actions (*karma*) and their effect on the individual soul.

The fourth chapter, “The Soul And Free Will” establishes the lack of any compelling motivational force in one’s life other than one’s own determining will. Even the recorded experiences of the past which hold such a grip on us from lifetime to lifetime may be overcome and thwarted by our own determined will, since that will has sprung from a universal and divine Will.

The fifth chapter, “Eternal Freedom,” establishes the nonduality of the individual soul and the eternal Self and their common freedom. It is the very freedom of God that is our legacy as a soul incarnated on earth and defines our own sovereign responsibility for our ongoing destinies.

The sixth chapter, “The Celestial Dynamics of Grace,” taken from my spiritual autobiography, *The Supreme Self*, leads the reader to the inescapable conclusion that every occurrence in one’s life—even spiritual realization—is reflected, or revealed, in its planetary complement.

The seventh chapter, “As Above, So Below,” presents for the curious student an array of the charts of a number of famous people, revealing the diversity of soul-characteristics and their associated planetary relationships.

And the eighth chapter recounts the February-March 2022 airing of “The Changing of The Gods” on the internet.

I hope this little collection of essays provides you with a framework by which to comprehend your own spiritual Self and the spiritually based universe, and to understand the role of astrology, or “cosmosynchrony,” in both.

ONE: THE SELF, THE SOUL, AND THE PLANETS

The Judeo-Christian tradition has a long theological legacy of belief in the existence of individual souls. Though the notion of individual souls was scarcely mentioned in the Old Testament of the Bible, the existence of souls was established by the Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle, and was incorporated into the teachings of the early Christians, and later amplified upon by Medieval Church figures, such as Saint Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. René Descartes in the 17th century put his own distinct stamp on the notion of soul, and—in the minds of many—completely exhausted the subject. Thereafter, the notion of the soul was seldom spoken of; but it is enjoying a resurgence of interest today in some academic circles.¹

The ancient scriptures of Hinduism also contain references to souls, but some Nondualists, including Buddhists and Advaita Vedantins, deny the existence of individual souls, asserting that one's sense of 'I', is truly the one Divine Mind or eternal Identity, but is falsely interpreted by the human consciousness as an independent soul. Jews, Christians and Muslims explain their particular personal traits as characteristics of their individual souls; but Yogis and Buddhists have realized and described their spiritual identity as nothing less than the highest spiritual Reality, the divine Mind, the absolute Self. Who is correct? Both have evidence on their side! But can they both be true? Yes, they can be, and they are. The Divine Mind, or absolute Self, and the soul both exist; but they simply exist on different levels, or planes, of consciousness.

We are told that the characteristics of our soul are the results of our actions (karma) in previous incarnations. These characteristics are portrayed in the patterns of the planets of the solar system at the moment of our birth. The planets of our solar system tell of the tendencies and propensities of our individual personalities, our souls; but the Consciousness of which that soul is made, its non-individualized essence, is the Divine Mind, or Self. Though on our journey toward self-knowledge, we may come to know the various elements of our self-made soul, brought into being by our karma, we must go further within to know the one divine Self who exists at the heart of our being, and who constitutes the one Divinity within us all. That one divine Self appears in the guise of every soul, with its associated tendencies and proclivities, symbolized in the varied patterns of the planets in our solar system. In truth, all souls are the one divine Self, clad in a myriad of soul-qualities.

Our individual soul and the Divine Self are not two; there is only the one divine Self, appearing in many forms, and as the many varied souls. And yet, since most of us exist on a lower level of consciousness, we do not experience ourselves as the divine all-pervading Self; instead, we experience ourselves as individual souls with distinctly unique attributes, and we deal with others as individuals with unique attributes—though in fact, there is only the one Divinity living and acting in the world as individual souls. Look more deeply into the truth! Lift the veil! See God in each other! There is no one here but God—appearing as you and as all in this world. This is the highest knowledge and the highest attainment. Identify with the attributeless Self and become free of the limiting soul attributes. Once you've known your divine Identity, those soul-attributes may or may not continue. No matter. Know that you are free. Know that you are the one Divine Reality.

On the physical level, we see each other solely as physical bodies; on a subtler spiritual level—let us call it the ‘astral’ level—souls may be seen and experienced. But at the highest, or deepest, spiritual level, there are no souls; there is only the divine Mind, the One, wherein all the various levels of manifestation—including the material and the astral—are merely potential. This ultimate reality has been called Brahman, the One, the Godhead, the Self, the Void, the Tao, and many other names; it is realized by enlightened sages as the highest Truth, the sole source and origin of all the manifest planes of existence, and everyone’s ultimate identity.

But understand – there is no contradiction between the soul and the divine Self. The Self simply manifests as a soul associated with a body in the manifested plane. Many, including myself, have seen disembodied souls on the astral level; and many, including myself, have experienced the universal Spirit, the divine Self, as their ultimate identity. The soul and the Absolute are not mutually exclusive. He is all, and all is He; He also transcends all. Brahman, the Godhead, the one Spirit, is the ultimate Reality and Source of all that exists and constitutes the ultimate knowledge to be attained. But each of us is an individual soul at a grosser level of consciousness, just as we are manifested—at a yet grosser level—in this phenomenal world as a *material* body.

Realization of the Self does not put an end to one’s soul or one’s physical body, just as, in other cases, knowing or recognizing the whole does not negate or destroy the constituents within that whole. We, as souls, live

within Him, even while being aware of our oneness with Him; and we partake of that vision by His loving Grace. So, let us put away our arguments, and acknowledge that we are both the divine Self and an individual soul. These two are complementary aspects of our own and the cosmic reality.

NOTES:

1. See Stewart Goetz and Charles Taliafero, *A Brief History of The Soul*, West Sussex, U.K., John Wiley & Sons, 2011; and Mark C. Baker and Stewart Goetz (eds.), *The Soul Hypothesis*, N.Y., N.Y., The Continuum International Publishing Group, 2011.

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TWO: THE SCIENCE OF THE SOUL¹

It has been well established that the eternal Self, or God, is the ultimate Identity of everyone; but we have to ask, ‘what is it that makes “distinct individual souls” of each of us?’ Why does one person have a passion for music and another for physics? Why does this one become an architect, and the other becomes a writer of fiction; this one a neurobiologist and this other a stock-broker? These are questions about the individual soul-characteristics with which each of us is born. We cannot deny that such differences exist among human beings, even though we are united as one at the Source. One person is born with every advantage; another is born infirm and in very limited circumstances. How do we account for such differences? Clearly, each individual is endowed with his or her own unique characteristics, qualities, virtues and vices by which each is set apart from the others. These may extend to physical characteristics, but they belong primarily to an interior reality, which we have traditionally termed ‘the soul’.

For those who have experienced the one eternal Self, the previous identification with a separate and distinct individual self is seen to have been produced by our erroneous conviction that we are a distinct ‘I’ embodied in a distinct body. Having known the eternal Self to be one and transcendent, we tend to explain our previous sense of self as merely a limited ‘reflection’ or ‘contraction’ of the Divine Consciousness and pass over the whole subject of ‘soul’ as though it were identical in all respects with the one Divine Self, ignoring the distinctiveness of individual souls.

But many questions continue to arise: How do we account for the strong individual characteristics which we each possess? What of individual free will, and the culpability of the individual? What about each person’s individual karma? And if there is such a thing as karma, mustn’t each of our karmic choices attach to some kind of separate reincarnating entity? So many questions! And, while we repeatedly encounter the barriers to knowing the answers to these questions, still we cannot cease from seeking answers. For the overarching desire to *know* is one of the most evident characteristics of being human! And, just as surely, that inherent desire is a Divinely implanted one, leading us, slowly but surely, toward the clarity of a Divine understanding.

Certainly, the *physical* characteristics of our bodies are encoded in our DNA, and these physical characteristics are passed along from one generation to the next. But the genetic makeup of our DNA pertains only to our *physical* lineage, and has no rulership over, nor any relation to, our soul characteristics. By “soul characteristics”, I mean those subjective proclivities that constitute our ambitions, our life-purposes, our primary interests, our passion, the direction of our focus in life. These proclivities arise and persist within us as individuals in a manner wholly unrelated to our physical lineages or ancestry. Some would claim that such proclivities arise accidentally in the course of one’s early learning experiences; but to others, these proclivities appear to be imprinted within the very fabric of our souls. But how and why?

Is it merely a random accident that determines one’s path in this life, or is there an evolutionary continuity, a carrying forward of the interests and talents, the virtues and vices, the karma of past good and bad deeds, from one incarnation to the next? If there is not such a continuity, we live but once, under positive or negative circumstances, purely by accident; and there is no *ongoing* personal consequence to any of our actions. If there is no retention of soul-identity across lifetimes, then personal evolution halts at the end of this current life, and no trace remains of the hard-won qualities of the soul, and there is no consequence for atrocities committed. In this case, life is, as Shakespeare characterized it, “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.”

Fortunately, there is some evidence that order does prevail and has always prevailed in God’s universe. From the earliest times, this order has been observed and noted by men who gazed, intrigued, at the lights in the heavens passing in their predictable course overhead. And perhaps by revelation, perhaps by an extraordinary leap of inference, some Chaldean ancestor thought to compare the characteristics of his own soul with the pattern of the planets in effect at his birth and discovered there an unlikely correspondence. In subsequent times, other early star-gazers continued his study, and no doubt regarded this correlation of soul-qualities and planetary positions as “the science of the soul,” but we have come to refer to it as “Astrology.”

The synchronous relationship between the Sun, moon, and planets and the human psyche, or soul, may readily appear to be an implausible if not impossible relationship if we regard it as occurring in a classic

(Newtonian) mechanical universe. But this interconnecting relationship between the planetary environment and the soul appears in an entirely new light when it is seen to operate in a universe of Spirit, in a universe imaged in the Mind of God. And though astrology has been continually practiced for more than four thousand years, it has been, and probably shall always continue to be, practiced and understood by only a very small group of people. This is because the development of the intuitive faculty required for its comprehension and practice is confined to but an advanced few.

To the many, a belief in the effectiveness of astrology is considered to be the epitome of ignorance. Those who feel this way cringe at the very suggestion of a connection between the planetary environment of the solar system and those living within that environment, citing the absence of empirical evidence for such a claim. However, the claims of Astrology begin to seem plausible when one is able to examine the astrological correspondences in one's own natal chart or in the charts of well-known individuals with certain marked characteristics. An examination of our own astrological chart or the astrological charts of various famous people can help us to understand the seemingly inexplicable correlation that exists between the planets of the solar system and the lives of humans living on the planet Earth.

And yet, anyone with an inquisitive and critical intellect must ask, 'How could such a correspondence be possible?' By what possible means could the positions of the Sun, moon and planets at the moment of an individual's birth constitute the psychological framework of that individual? And how could the angular relationships of the continuing movements of those planets to their positions at birth have the slightest effect on that individual's evolution and development?

These are questions that have been asked of the defenders of astrology for the last two millennia; and the lack of any verifiable (or even unverifiable) theories to account for the correlations purported by astrologers to exist between planetary patterns and human character, psychology, and behavior is the primary reason cited by skeptics for their rejection of the claims of Astrology. No electromagnetic-type fields of force have been discovered to account for it; no observable 'planetary rays' seem to be present; no viable theory of universal sympathy or synchronicity has even been put forward. How then account for either a

causal or an acausal synchrony between the angular positions of the Sun, moon and planets and the minds and bodies of human beings living on earth?

Most astrologers admit they haven't a clue as to how the planets and human consciousness are connected. 'We see the effects of this correspondence,' they say, 'but we do not understand the mode of its efficacy.' And they point out that the same is true of so many phenomena—like the force of gravity, and the weak, strong and electromagnetic forces. Certainly, we know they exist and operate, but no one knows *how* they work or why. We know that gravity exists by observing its effects, though we don't fully understand the mechanism behind it or how to reconcile it with our quantum theories of the microcosm.

Likewise, we see the effects of molecular formation in the objects around us and in ourselves; but we don't really understand why the elementary particles form out of the initial burst of light-energy, or where the force comes from that causes them to bind together into molecules and from thence into larger living structures. Indeed, what is it that constitutes the life-force of sentient beings? How does it originate? And how does it operate? And what of that most fundamental phenomenon: light? It is a complete mystery. The ambiguous wave-particle duality of light, shown by many different experiments in the scientist's lab, reveals the indefinability of light at the quantum level. We know it is, but we don't know *what* it is or *how* it works.

The observed correlation of the positions of the Sun, moon and planets in the solar system with the lives and psyches of the inhabitants of Earth fits right in with all those other unsolved mysteries. We see and experience the connection, though we can't explain the why or how of it. Clearly, the subjective and objective data accumulated tells us that such a correspondence exists. Yet, the critics tell us that astrology *cannot* work in the material and mechanistic universe which science has presented this universe to be. 'In a universe such as contemporary science describes,' they say, 'astrology cannot possibly be explained!' And, of course, they are right. Therefore, either something is wrong with the astrological idea of correspondences between planets and people, or there is something wrong with the model of the universe which contemporary science portrays. Perhaps the answer to how astrology works must be sought in

an entirely different framework of understanding from the usual empirical cause-effect framework in which most of us operate.

Let us look then for some alternative answers from one of our foremost thinkers on the subject of astrology: the author of the watershed classic, *Cosmos And Psyche*, Richard Tarnas. In that book, Tarnas suggests that astrology, from its earliest beginnings, is based on a worldview which he refers to as a “primal” one, a mindset that sees the inner and outer worlds as co-constituents of an all-embracing world-Soul (*anima mundi*) that permeates both cosmos and psyche. In this “primal” worldview,

The human psyche is embedded with a world psyche in which it complexly participates and by which it is continuously defined. The workings of that *anima mundi*, [world soul] in all its flux and diversity, are articulated through a language that is mythic and numinous. Because the world is understood as speaking a symbolic language, direct communication of meaning and purpose from world to human can occur. The many particulars of the empirical world are all endowed with symbolic, archetypal significance, and that significance flows between inner and outer, between self and world. In this relatively undifferentiated state of consciousness, human beings perceive themselves as directly—emotionally, mystically, consequentially—participating in and communicating with the interior life of the natural world and cosmos.²

This “primal” mindset is contrasted with the “modern” mindset, influenced as it is by the methods and conclusions of the empirical sciences, which assumes a distinct separation between subject and object, between self and world, allowing for no breach of this cognized barrier. The demands of this empirical mindset have taught us to see the world objectively, divorced from human subjectivity, and this perceptive framework has effectively erected a mental defensive barrier against the “primal” worldview. In the primal (or mystical) worldview, all in the universe is one organic and interrelated whole, and each separate element fits into that whole as an integral component. All things do indeed move together of one accord; not a sparrow falls, nor a grain of sand is moved by the currents on the ocean’s floor that is not coordinated with all else in a continuum of Divine

interaction. All is contained in the Mind of God, as images contained in a dream are contained and coordinated in the mind of a dreamer.

We, who are but insubstantial images in that Mind imagine in our turn that we are, and all about us is, substantial, real, a solid edifice of reality that we can cling to and hang our hats on. But even this body which we label “I” is but a fleeting shadow, a flickering image on a passing screen in the Mind of the One whose bodies all these truly are. We exist in a dream-world, a projection of a dancing spray of light-beams upon an infinite expanse of Thought.

In our accustomed “modern” view of a universe of material effects from material causes, all separately isolated from one another, the seemingly dead planets circling the Sun have no bearing whatever on the minds of men on earth. In such a world of independently moving subjects and independently moving objects, how could there possibly be a correlation between the two? Impossible! Inconceivable! But—suppose a world all magically interconnected, a world intimately pervaded by a unified Consciousness whose single will governs all—why then, the possibility of a coordination, or synchrony, between the planets of the solar system and its inhabitants no longer seems so dubious.

In the Indian religious tradition, this phenomenal world is referred to as *Maya*. *Maya* is the Thought production of the Divine Mind. It is a play of light and energy; this light-energy forms the substance of *Maya*. We must grasp it as a Whole, without attempting to reduce it to elementals or causal relationships. Within it there are cohesive forces, but these too are irreducible to separable elements, just as it is impossible to define the elements or cohesive forces within our own dreams or fantasies. There are no individual elements or forces; the universe, like a dream, is a Whole, and operates as a Whole. Under the spell of *Maya*, we are deluded into believing that we are our bodies and are independent entities separate and distinct from the world of our experience.

It is only through an occasional glimpse of clarity that we become awakened to the truth that we live within the one Spirit, one world-Soul, and that this body and all nature is His; that it is an illusory world made of projected light, thought, and images in which all things are united and joined in the one all-pervading Spirit. In the delusive world of *Maya*, where all appears solid and permanent, the planets moving in the heavens appear to be only

inert objects, disconnected from our lives and minds. But, in the revealed world of the living Spirit, there is an active force that interconnects the heavens and the earth and all that exists in one Consciousness, deliberate and entire, guiding and directing every soul and everything in this universe by Its power.

Now, astrologers must possess something of this primal worldview in order to accept and account for the interplay between cosmos and psyche, between world and self, in the universal consciousness that is the *anima mundi*. And it is here, at the most fundamental level, that we discover the great divide between the “primal” and “modern” worldviews, as well as between those who are able to accept and embrace astrological principles and those who are not. It has been pointed out to me by Christopher Warnock, a well-known astrologer, that this division exists even among astrologers in the choices they make regarding their use of either the Tropical or the Sidereal Zodiacs. The atheist view is reflected in the use of the Sidereal Zodiac (which is based on the actual physical positions of the Constellations) by astrologers who regard only the material universe as empirically real and worthy of consideration; and the use of the Tropical Zodiac is reflective of the worldview of astrologers who recognize the spiritual unity of the universe as the only valid perspective. Here is an excellent summary of this dichotomy by Christopher Warnock, Esq. from his website, “Renaissance Astrology”:

“**T**he sole advantage of the Constellational Zodiac, since it is irregular, disordered, outside the traditional elemental, quadruplicity and essential dignity systems as well as untried as an astrological system, is that it corresponds to the material/physical stars. However, this one advantage is so compelling to moderns that they almost instantly are ready to discard the Tropical Zodiac. Why is this? The answer lies in the difference between the traditional [what Tarnas calls the “primal” view] and modern world views.

“**A** world view is basically given to one by one's society and is one's conscious philosophy and unconscious views about the nature of reality. In essence it is your reality! World view is so ingrained and automatic that it is difficult for many to accept that anyone could have a different one. After all, reality is reality, isn't

it? For our purposes, the key tenet of the modern world view is that nothing truly exists except matter and energy. For moderns even when dealing with spiritual issues, their unconscious assumptions are always pushing towards atheistic materialism. When it comes to astrology, the automatic assumption is that the influence of the stars and planets must, of necessity, be exerted by matter or energy, i.e., some sort of field or rays, emanating from the stars and planets themselves. Given this, the complete focus on the actual physical position of the material stars and constellations is entirely understandable. If one is an atheistic/materialist, then the Constellational Zodiac is inescapable as the only logical and rational choice. Alternatively, if one automatically accepts the Constellational Zodiac, if it seems instinctively correct, then one is, at least unconsciously, an atheistic/materialist because whatever one's conscious beliefs may be, one is applying in practice, an atheistic/materialist view of the nature of reality.

“However, ancient and traditional astrologers did not have the modern world view. While there was of course, much individual variation and change over time, the traditional world view saw reality as containing both the material and the spiritual. Matter was, in fact, less perfect than the spiritual and imperfectly accepted the form of the Divine/Platonic Ideas which were what was truly real. Material things were created, changed their form and then passed away, while the spiritual was eternal. The irregularity of the Constellational Zodiac shows its essential imperfection while the regularity of the Tropical Zodiac was a much better reflection of the spiritual realities that underlay material existence. The ancient astrologers used their astrology to look through matter to see the hidden true spiritual patterns of reality. The incredible accuracy of traditional astrological prediction is evidence that their view was correct. Seen from the traditional world view that saw the Cosmos as one great unified being bound together by chains of spiritual correspondence and sympathy, the use of the regular Tropical Zodiac, and the ordered astrological system of which it is an integral part, is entirely logical and rational.

“To accept the Constellational Zodiac simply on the basis of its correspondence to the material/physical stars is to accept the primacy of the physical. Yet astrology itself is based on spiritual causality. There is not the slightest bit of evidence that gravity, light waves, magnetism, string theory or any other form of material or energetic causality supports astrology. If astrology works, it can only work through spiritual causality. Using a material/energetic methodology to discredit the Tropical Zodiac, makes no sense, because a materialistic/energetic methodology discredits all of astrology.”³

From the “traditional/primal” perspective, to look for *empirical* proofs for astrological “influences” is irrelevant and beside the point. The connection between planetary positions and human psychology is neither physical nor mental; it is a consonance taking place within the one Spirit—a Spirit or Soul that is both immanent and transcendent, that resides in the individual’s innermost being, and yet is all-pervasive, that acts not only as the Providence and guiding Logos of all things and all beings, but as the very Self of those beings.⁴ For those of us to whom experience has taught the truth of such notions, the rationale for astrology is thus rendered adequate; and for those to whom such notions are nonsense, Astrology must also appear to be nonsense.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. This chapter, as well as the following chapter, is adapted from material appearing in a previously published book: Swami Abhayananda, *The Divine Universe*, New York, iUniverse, 2008.
2. Richard Tarnas, *Cosmos And Psyche*, N.Y., Viking, 2006; p. 17.
3. This passage is excerpted with permission from the website of Christopher Warnock, Esq., “Renaissance Astrology” (<https://www.renaissanceastrology.com/zodiacworldview.html>).
4. Mystical experience reveals that in the Absolute Spirit, the divine Self (*Atman*), there is no individual soul (*jiva*). The one Spirit is seen to be undivided; it is common to everyone and everything. For many, this revelation rules out the existence of a separate and independent ‘soul’ with

distinct characteristics peculiar to each individual. Where then does this notion of an individual ‘soul’ come from? And if such a thing exists, how can it be accounted for? It’s true that the individual ‘soul’ does not exist in an absolute sense; but it does exist in the phenomenal universe as an inherent quality of embodiment. The tendencies and habits (*karma*) that constitute an individual soul are the qualities previously established on a subtle, psychic, level, and which become the characteristics reincarnated in a new birth. And because all things move together of one accord, this set of characteristics is reflected in the planetary arrangement existing at that individual’s birth.

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THREE: THE SOUL AND KARMA

Karma is a word derived from the Hindu religious scriptures; it is a Sanskrit word, meaning “actions” or “the result of actions.” The early Greek philosophers were familiar with this idea as well, and called it, *adrastreia*, “she from whom none can escape”. *Adrastreia* was a common epithet of the goddess, Rhea Cybele, in her attribute as the Mother who punishes or rectifies human injustice. Both the Greeks and Romans identified her with Nemesis, or just retribution. Among the ancient Greek philosophers as well as in the Hindu tradition, the belief in the effects of one’s *karma*—the results of one’s actions—was integrally associated with and reliant upon a belief in the reincarnation or re-embodiment of the soul. Not only the Greeks, but some Jewish sects during the time of Jesus, and Jesus himself, as well as the Hindus, and the Buddhists, saw the soul’s progress toward enlightenment as a journey extending beyond one single life, and believed that this journey extended through many lifetimes and had cumulative causal effects from each life to the next.¹ According to this belief, the current state of our lives is the result of our actions, our *karma*, in our previous life. The sum of all those decisions and actions throughout our lives has resulted in our current life situation. According to this understanding, our lives are what we ourselves have made them. It may also be assumed that our present karma determines what we are to become in a subsequent lifetime. As Heraclitus said, “Character is destiny.”

Our actions are not always under our own rational determination, however. They may, in fact, be influenced by impulses that seem to arise out of the blue. We are all familiar with the struggle that often arises within us between a strong commitment to a personal ideal and a mental impulse to act in a way contrary to that ideal. This is familiar to all of us as “the temptation to sin”. And, all too often, we read on the front pages of our newspapers of celebrities or politicians who have famously lost that struggle and fallen from grace. But what, we must wonder, is the origin of this pervasive struggle, this wrenching conflict that we frequently experience within ourselves?

In some ancient cultures, a semi-divine alter-ego to God was suggested as the culprit—an invisible, but persuasive daemon variously known as “the devil”, “Satan”, or the fallen angel, “Lucifer”, whose purpose was to mislead the well-intentioned from their intended paths by whispering his fiendish suggestions into their inner ears. This fanciful daemon appeared in the

mythologies of many ancient religious cultures of the Middle East, such as the Zoroastrians, the Manichaeans, and the early Jews. In fact, this mythology seems to have been popular among the Jews at the time of Jesus, who taught that such daemons sometimes inhabited unwary individuals, and this legacy of daemonic possession passed into some branches of Christianity, where it remains to this day.

A dissimilar tradition arose in the Vedic culture in the Indian sub-continent of South Asia, which attributed this inner struggle not to a daemonic presence that contended with our divine conscience for our ear and allegiance, but rather to the presence within us of tendencies resulting from habits of the past stored within our minds or souls, much as physical characteristics are stored and contained in the codes of our inherited DNA. These tendencies, in the form of subtle desires, were called *vasanas*. It was also recognized that there were subtle “impressions” on our souls of the actions (*karma*) performed in both past and present lifetimes, which appeared as deeply ingrained habits influencing our current thoughts and activities; these were called *samskaras*.

Today, the science of evolutionary biology lends credence to the possibility of the existence within all of us of memories, impressions, going back even to pre-human states—impressions that originate in our mental and physical actions, and affect our neuronal ‘wiring,’ including parts of our brains that may even be considered remnants of a reptilian evolutionary stage. Such impressions may be unique to our species, race, or regional origins, or may relate to specific experientially reinforced characteristics or traits unique to us as individuals. It has been suggested that these self-created and long-established impressions or tendencies (*vasanas* and *samskaras*) may be responsible for the “temptations” that sometimes pull at us from within, and not the whispered suggestions from some wily and invisible daemon from without.

Astrology claims a link between these karmic ‘impressions’ and the planetary patterns accompanying each new nativity on earth. In other words, astrologers assert that the positions and angular relationships between the planets of the solar system reflect or symbolize the positive and negative impressions or qualities of the soul born under those planetary configurations. For astrologers, a study of the map of the heavens accompanying the birth of millions of individuals has tended to uphold this conviction, though to the great majority of the uninitiated, the whole

proposition that the planets act as symbols of the characteristics of the individual psyche seems so farfetched that they won't even examine the evidence.

To me, it is abundantly evident that we create our own *vasanas* and *samskaras* by our subtle choices, and hence we create our own karma. Likewise, by our own choices, we purify our minds (souls) of the negative or harmful impressions and create new karma. But I don't see how this can be proven. Even if it is granted that the natal map (horoscope) accurately describes the characteristics of the soul born at that place and time, what prevents us from concluding that each of us is simply a result of the fortuitous timing and placement of our birth, with no previous karmic factors involved? In other words, might we not be simply the effects and artifacts of the planetary patterns in effect at our birth, leaving out any causal factors carried over from a previous incarnation?

It seems quite reasonable to accept this simpler hypothesis rather than the more complex one; but this simpler hypothesis implies a causal link between the planetary pattern at our birth and our soul-characteristics and makes us victims rather than fashioners of our individual fates. If we are nothing more than the effect of the transient planetary conditions present at our birth, then the arbitrary timing and placement on earth of our nativity determines whether we end up as a hopeless basket case or a prince of fortune, a schizophrenic in a mental ward or a wizened sage. If such is the case, we are not bearers of a soul evolved over lifetimes, but merely one-time manifestations of cosmic energies. We are not the result of past efforts and experiences; but merely a serendipitous stamp of the planetary pattern existing in the sky at the time and place of our birth. If this is the case, there is no reward for accumulated merit, no punishment attending wrong-doing, and all is mere accident and chance, a game of cosmic Russian roulette. Can we accept such a scheme? Would we wish to live in a world so unjustly framed?

We seem inclined by our very nature to believe, however, not only in a physical Cosmos ruled by cause and effect, but in a universal Psyche or Soul ruled by the same principle of *adrasteia*, whereby we reap just what we have sown. But it must be admitted that, while we have mountains of evidence to show that the planetary patterns accompanying human births appear to have a direct correlation with the soul characteristics of each human being, there is no empirical evidence for the existence or reincarnation of souls or for the

retention from one life to another of the karmic impressions of a past incarnation. This is not to say that there is no circumstantial or anecdotal evidence for metempsychosis or for the retention of past-life soul characteristics. It is simply a matter, I suppose, of what one wishes to regard as evidence that is compelling enough.

Personally, I find the notion of the reincarnation of the soul through multiple incarnations rationally appealing and worthy of acceptance—insofar as its purpose is not merely the obtaining of lifetimes of experience, but is for the evolution or purification of the soul, bringing it into likeness with the Divinity, and making it worthy to see and know itself as the one deathless Reality, the divine Self of all. There have been many examples of persons who have reported possessing memories of past life-experiences, but these reports are merely anecdotal. And I am conscious of the fact that this evolutionary scheme does not appeal to everyone, and that this and all the other metaphysical schemes are highly speculative and not immediately apparent or confirmable.

There is, of course, an alternative scheme taught in the Abrahamic religions, in which there is no transmigration of souls, but rather a one-time embodiment and then an eternity of reward or punishment based on one's behavior in that one embodiment. But this, as well as the conception of the transmigration of souls, is but a projection of the human mind, one of many imaginative schemes, with no conclusive evidence for any of them. We are blind as to the afterlife, and we are only able to guess at what the truth may be. We get an occasional glimpse, but not enough to know with certainty what to expect after passing from this current body. And yet, we forage on, prepared for all eventualities by holding on as best we can to the one certainty, the one great Light, the enduring Center, the Divine Self. For this much has been shown by direct experience to be true: that the one all-pervading Mind is the only reality, blissful forever, appearing as each and every one of us individual beings evolving through our paces on this spinning earth, within this revolving planetary circus, in our own bright corner of the universe.

NOTE:

1. See the article, “Reincarnation In The Bible” by Kevin R. Williams, B.Sc., at “Near-Death Experiences And The Afterlife” (<https://www.near-death.com>).

FOUR: THE SOUL AND FREE WILL

Some of the keenest intellects of a few early civilizations recognized the correlation between the changing positions and patterns of the planets in our solar system and the changing mental and physical conditions of life on earth. As they learned by observation of the distinct nature of the effects associated with each planet, they ascribed to each a specific kind of influence, considering each of the heavenly bodies, including the sun and moon, to be embodiments of divine powers, or “gods”. These gods were both benevolent and mischievous, bestowing both blessings and calamities upon earth and her inhabitants. Each had its own personality and characteristics and dealt with men on earth in ways compatible with their separate natures.

Today, of course, these beliefs are regarded by many as mere primitive superstitions, having no basis in fact whatsoever. But let us not be so hasty in our judgment of these early mythologizers. Over the centuries, the correlations between planetary patterns and specific psychological and physical effects on Earth have continued to be chronicled by observers of the heavenly dynamics, and much evidence has been accumulated to show a factual basis for these planetary myths of correspondence. Today, the notion of “gods” is frowned upon; instead, we like to call those various distinct energies associated with the planets “archetypes”, after Carl Jung, who utilized the term (originally coined by Plato) to speak of those intangible influences. This may also prove in time to be an inadequate term; but for now, we shall speak of the power of the gods as “archetypes”.

For a long time now, this study of the correspondence of the archetypal energies associated with the planets and the patterns of mental and physical changes on earth has gone by the name of *astrology*. It is fashionable among those “learned” in the universities to regard this study as having no scientific basis and as being merely a throwback to superstition and ignorance, appealing only to the indiscriminate and gullible masses. But we should remember the words of the great astrologer, Ptolemy, who warned, “It is a common practice with the vulgar to slander everything which is difficult of attainment.”¹ How, then, shall we define these *archetypes*? Here is what Richard Tarnas, philosopher, astrologer, and author of the highly regarded affirmation of astrological principles, *Cosmos and Psyche*, says:

Archetypes can be understood and described in many ways, and in fact much of the history of Western thought from Plato and Aristotle onward has been concerned with this very question. But for our present purposes, we can define an archetype as a universal principle or force that affects—impels, structures, permeates—the human psyche and human behavior on many levels ... Moreover, archetypes seem to work from both within and without, for they can express themselves as impulses and images from the interior psyche, yet also as events and situations in the external world.

Jung thought of archetypes as the basic constituents of the human psyche, shared cross-culturally by all human beings, and he regarded them as universal expressions of a collective unconscious. Much earlier, the Platonic tradition considered archetypes to be not only psychological but also cosmic and objective, as primordial forms of a Universal Mind that transcended the human psyche. Astrology would appear to support the Platonic view as well as the Jungian, since it gives evidence that Jungian archetypes are not only visible in human psychology, in human experience and behavior, but are also linked to the macrocosm itself—to the planets and their movements in the heavens. Astrology thus supports the ancient idea of an *anima mundi*, or world soul, in which the human psyche participates. From this perspective, what Jung called the collective unconscious can be viewed as being ultimately embedded within the cosmos itself.

The basic principle of astrology is that the planets have a fundamental cosmically based connection to specific archetypal forces or principles which influence human existence, and that the patterns formed by the planets in the heavens bear a meaningful correspondence to the patterns of human affairs on the Earth. In terms of individuals, the positions of the planets at the time and place of a person's birth are regarded as corresponding to the basic archetypal patterns of that person's life and character.¹

According to this interpretation, the natal chart represents the psychological make-up or orientation of the individual at birth; and the ongoing

progressions and transits reflect the changing modes of thought and experience occurring throughout one's present life. The position of the transiting planets therefore represents a sort of evolving map of the intricately changing network of our mental experience. But there must inevitably arise the question of *how* and by what means are the changing positions of the planets synchronously related to the human psyche. The changing aspects of transiting planets to the positions of planets existing at birth can clearly have no effect on a person unless those natal planetary positions are an integral part of the makeup of an individual's personal psyche. It seems that the position of the planets at birth is somehow *imprinted* on that soul and is in a way synonymous with the characteristics of that particular individual's psyche; so that, the transiting aspects to the planetary positions of the natal chart are relating to something integral to the individual. They are relating to the living psyche of the individual, which in turn is synonymous with the planetary arrangement existing at his/her birth.

If this interpretation of "planetary correspondences" is correct, then every individual born bears within him- or herself the imprint and structure of the planetary arrangement existing at that very moment and is in fact an *embodiment* of that planetary arrangement. And the movements of the planets, along with their changing relations to one another during the course of the life of the individual, are intimately correlated with the unfolding life and psyche of that individual. It is not that one is considered to be causing the other; they are regarded instead as merely correlated events in the universal unfoldment. They are merely two synchronous mirror images of the activity of the Divine Mind. Here, again, Richard Tarnas, on why astrology works:

It seems unlikely to me that the planets send out some kind of physical emanations that causally influence events in human life in a mechanistic way. The range of coincidences between planetary positions and human existence is just too vast, too experientially complex, too aesthetically subtle and endlessly creative to be explained by physical factors alone. I believe that a more plausible and comprehensive explanation is that the universe is informed and pervaded by a fundamental holistic patterning which extends through every level, so that a constant synchronicity or meaningful correlation exists between astronomical events and human events. This is represented in the basic esoteric axiom, "as above, so below," which reflects a

universe all of whose parts are integrated into an intelligible whole.²

In dealing with astrological “influences” one needs, therefore, to take a universal all-inclusive perspective, and to recognize the truth of the fundamental dictum that “all things move together of one accord.” From this perspective, the universe is the manifestation of the one Intelligence, the *Nous* or *Logos*; all is one integral life in which every entity and every action is interrelated, functioning as coordinated aspects of the universal expression. In such a view, the planets are merely “signs,” indicators of prevailing influences or energies currently operating, and have no causal function. This view also asserts a marvelously complex and exquisite perfection in the unfolding of the universe, and underscores the existence of a Divine Intelligence in operation down through each member, upholding, activating, and supporting all. The individualized soul, the result of its previously created karma, comes into the world at exactly the moment that the planetary arrangement mirrors the qualities of its being. What a truly extraordinary wonder of Divine creative perfection!

But should we gather, then, that we are wholly governed by these planetary energies (archetypes), that there is a cosmic determinism at work here that is inescapable? Should we believe that our sense of individual freedom is merely an illusion, and that we must unwittingly and unerringly follow the cosmic fiat as inscribed in the movements of the stars? And, perhaps most importantly, if there is, instead, a means by which each individual soul possesses a free and undetermined will, quite beyond the “meaningful correspondence” that exists between astronomical and human events, what is the explanation for such a free will?

The soul, or psyche, of each individual, though embodying the cosmic arrangement at the moment of its birth and constituting the specific tenor and structure of the life of the individual, has at its core the eternal Consciousness which is the principle and primary element of its being, constituting its permanent Ground and Self, beyond all projected energies resulting from any temporary arrangements of the cosmic array. Therefore, the cosmic arrangement at the moment of our birth into this universe may constitute our temporal identity; but the One who projects this universe, and in whose Mind we exist, constitutes our eternal Identity. This eternal Identity remains throughout our existence, and is unaffected by any transient

conditions, such as the planetary patterns of relationship appearing within the manifest universe.

The Neoplatonist conception, as put forward by Plotinus (205-270 C.E.), as well as the Vedantic conception, put forth in the Upanishads, satisfactorily explains this eternal Principle of freedom. The Divine Mind (*Nous* or *Brahma*), which is the active element of the Divine Consciousness, projects a coordinated Dream-world of immense vastness and complexity (the manifested *Cosmos* or *Maya*). Yet the source and heart of all existence, the substratum of Divine Consciousness, the Ground of the Soul (*the One* or *Brahman*), remains constant. It is independent of and unaffected by this surface play of universal phenomena; for the world of physical and mental phenomena is but an appearance, a kind of superimposition, on this substratum of Divine Consciousness. For most of us, the mind's continuous display of this superimposition of both physical and psychological states synchronous with the positions and angular relationships of the planets is extremely persuasive, becoming the primary basis of our psychologically perceived reality. But, through deep meditation or deliberate recollection, we are able to maintain identity with the Conscious substratum of Being, and able to view the ongoing parade of transient physical and mental conditions and images related to existing planetary energies as but the superimposed activities of that Conscious substratum.

Therefore, when we consider the correlation of planetary events and human events, we are *not* dealing with a straightforward cause-effect relationship. This is because we humans are of a two-fold nature; we are, in essence, identical with the divine Consciousness, our Divine Self, which assures us of a free will; and we are only secondarily products of the creative Power (*Nous* or *Brahma*) which begets the material body-mind complex along with its accompanying karmic tendencies. The winds of all the influences of all the planets may blow, but the Divine Self may yet remain unmoved, withholding and denying her consent to the influential powers; or better, she may use the influences of those planetary powers to her own Divine purposes, rather than to the merely pleasurable mental, physical and emotional activities to which they tend to incline. Conversely, if an individual's sense of the Divine Self is weak, the individual's will may be swayed by the mental and physical influences impinging on her and surrender to their power. But, with a determined dependence on and identification with the Divine Self, the individual will does have the free and final word on the course of the life it rules.

We are a combination, a duality, of identities: we are the Divine Self (*the One, Brahman*), and we are also distinctly individual souls by virtue of our embodiment in a Mind-projected universe. Our essence, the one Divine Consciousness, is the only true ‘I’ in all the universe and beyond; It is everyone’s eternal Identity. But, by His mysterious Power of illusion (Maya), the Spirit born into this world as Soul takes on a limited set of characteristics as well, which constitutes one’s limited temporal identity, otherwise known as the *jiva*, or individualized soul. According to that soul’s previous mental tendencies, and in synchrony with the evolving motions of the planets and celestial bodies as they relate to the place on Earth where that soul takes birth, the characteristics of each soul are made manifest. The astrological interpretations of the planetary positions at one’s birth can therefore provide helpful indications of the soul characteristics of each person born.

The astrological natal chart is an authentic diagram of the individualized soul, but it says nothing of the Divine Identity, or Self, underlying the manifestation of that soul. The ‘soul’ is in essence the Divine as it appears within the dream-fabric of *Cosmos/Maya*. It partakes of both the Divine and the illusory—just as in a dream, we partake of both our true conscious selves and an illusory self. The analogy is exceedingly apt, as in both instances, we retain our fundamental reality, while operating in an illusory ‘imaged’ reality. The individual soul (or *astral* body), as portrayed in the astrological chart, is, to a great degree, who we are; and we operate in this life from the past karmic tendencies embodied in that natal chart. However, at a more fundamental level, we are identical with the Divine Self, which comprises our freedom to will and act from a level of consciousness beyond our soul properties and characteristics. The past karmic tendencies are very powerful in their influence; and they can lead us astray, unless we are able to identify with the Divine Self and turn those inherent tendencies to Divine purposes.

A recent example will suffice to illustrate this dual identity: A young man, a college student, named Seung-Hui Cho, went on a recent rampage, killing thirty-two of his classmates at a Virginia College. The young man’s natal chart shows the difficult karmic limitation suggested by the Sun’s square aspect to a close conjunction between Mars and Pluto. A predictably volatile and violent aspect indeed! Also, at the time of his birth, Jupiter was in exact conjunction with Neptune. Such natives have a tendency, if there are other conflicting factors, to “lose contact with reality and live in a world of private fantasy”. This natal chart describes the soul characteristics under which this

young man took birth. They were not conditions which were imposed from without; they were conditions previously forged in his own soul, and they describe the embedded tendencies (as depicted in the natal chart) which constituted the framework of his recent life.

But underneath this projected framework there stood the divine Consciousness, the free Will of the Self. Would he identify with that higher Soul Essence and be triumphant in overruling the limiting structure of his accumulated tendencies, or would the tendencies win out? We now know the terrible answer to that question. But we must acknowledge that, despite the overwhelming strength of the negative tendencies embodied in this soul, at his core, he was free to refuse assent to their promptings. The negative soul tendencies won out. They proved too deeply entrenched, too overwhelmingly reinforced in this present life, to be overcome; but we must never doubt that, in his essential Being, he was free to choose. “The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.”³

It is important to have a clear understanding not only of one’s Divine Ground and to identify with one’s eternal Freedom, but one should also have a complete understanding of the makeup of one’s soul as indicated by the planetary pattern existing at birth, as well as of the nature and occurrence of the various changing planetary conditions as they manifest daily in our lives. An awareness of the archetypal energies currently prevailing in one’s life gives an extraordinary advantage in the timing and utilization of those specific energies for the enfolding of one’s potential to manifest and express the freedom of the Divine Will. As Richard Tarnas explains,

Astrology can serve to greatly increase personal freedom... Partly this is because awareness of the basic archetypal structures and patterns of meaning in one’s birth chart allows one to bring considerably more consciousness to the task of fulfilling one’s deepest potential, one’s authentic nature. But [also because] the more deeply we understand the archetypal forces that affect our lives, the freer we can be in dealing with them. If we are altogether unconscious of these potent forces, we are like puppets of the archetypes; we then act according to unconscious motivations without any possibility of our being intelligent agents interacting with these forces. To the exact extent that we are conscious of the archetypes, we can respond with greater autonomy and Self-awareness.⁴

The soul is essentially identical with the transcendent Source of all, and is supremely, absolutely, free. In its transcendent aspect, it is always free, immutable and unaffected by the bodily conditions or worldly circumstances of individuals; however, when the soul identifies with the conditional, it is bound; it is subject to being carried along in the floodwaters of the archetypal forces of Nature. Only when it knows and identifies with the Divine Self, does it realize and manifest its true freedom. According to this understanding, a man is free insofar as he is cognizant of his essential identity with the Highest and bound when he departs from the knowledge and awareness of his Divinity, identifying with the body/mind complex. He then succumbs to the rule of earthly necessity and is moved willy-nilly by the causative forces inherent in Nature. He has the power, as the Divine Self, to will freely, unencumbered, uncomelled by circumstance; and, for that reason is responsible for his individual actions. All souls are linked by inclusion to the one Soul, and by extension to the Divine Mind; but only he who is cognizant, aware, of his Divine Identity, is truly free.

NOTES:

1. Richard Tarnas, Ph.D., *An Introduction to Archetypal Astrological Analysis*, pp. 2-3.
2. Richard Tarnas, Ph.D., *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4
3. William Shakespeare, *Julius Ceasar*
4. Richard Tarnas, Ph.D., *An Introduction to Archetypal Astrological Analysis*, pp. 2-3.

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FIVE: ETERNAL FREEDOM

Now that we have firmly established that you possess in your very nature the capability of willing freely, let's take a look at that free will from a more expanded perspective: This world, and all that is in it—indeed this entire universe—exists in the Mind of God. This far-flung cosmos is a Mind-born image constituted of Thought. It is made of the Consciousness of the one Divine Self. It is that very Consciousness that we partake of as we become aware of our own existence. That Consciousness, manifest as us, is the inner sense of 'I am' that constitutes our awareness, our identity. The immense drama taking place as this universe, therefore, is, in many respects, like a dream. God is the Dreamer; we are the characters in the dream. Yes, indeed, we are able to will freely in this dream, as we are essentially identical with the Dreamer, partaking of His utter freedom.

To understand this better, let's look at our own dreams: In our dreams, our dream characters exist as images in our own minds, borrowing their awareness from the consciousness in which they live and move and have their being. Though they experience a freedom of movement and choice, it is the freedom of the dreaming mind (our minds) that is the foundation of that sense of freedom. Theirs is but an imagined freedom; they are in fact entirely governed by our own subconscious willing. When we awake, the dream characters vanish, and we alone remain. Similarly, we, in this phenomenal reality, experience a freedom of movement and choice, but it is the freedom of the One in whom we exist that is the foundation of that sense of freedom. When God withdraws this dreamlike universe of phenomena back into His own Consciousness, we vanish, and He alone remains. In our dreams, it is always only ourselves who truly exist; the dreams are but images playing in our own minds. Likewise, in this phenomenal universe, it is always only God, the eternal Self, who truly exists; the universal phenomena are but images playing in His own Mind. It is He who is the only Existential when the universe is imaged forth, and He is the only Existential when the universal image is extinguished. He is always the only one who exists.

And so, the free will that we experience during our brief imaginary existence is really His freedom of will. There is really no separate 'I' to claim possession of such a will, and there never was. The only 'I' was His all along. And all along, the freedom that we claimed was, and shall always be, His. The bottom line is, yes, we have free will! But we exist in Him, and

what we think is ours is truly His. ‘I’ and ‘Him’ are ultimately not two; and so, there is no contradiction here. Be free and know that you and He are one!

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SIX: THE CELESTIAL DYNAMICS OF GRACE

(from *The Supreme Self*, 1984)

Nearly ten years had passed since my experience of enlightenment in the Santa Cruz mountains, when I began to be interested in the peculiar claims of astrology and came to have an understanding of the “celestial dynamics,” not only of my own personal characteristics, but of all the ordinary and extraordinary day-to-day transient conditions of the mind, the body, and the soul. There were, no doubt, some “celestial influences” accompanying that dawning interest in astrological correspondences, but all I knew was that I had become fascinated with the clearly meaningful connections between my own natal planetary positions and my personal characteristics and fluctuating mental states; and as I eagerly consumed what literature I found on the subject, I became more and more convinced of the validity of the astrological principle of correspondence between the planetary positions and the varying conditions of my psyche.

According to the principles of astrology, one can discover the secrets of a soul’s unique characteristics (the psychology of a personality) by drawing a map of the heavens as it appeared at the exact moment and place of birth, which serves as a sort of blueprint of that particular soul. But how, when, and in what sequence the events of the person’s adventure on earth will take place is told in the *progressions* of the planets (one day in the ephemeris represents one year in the life), and by the daily *transits* (actual transitory positions) of the Sun, moon and planets as they pass through and relate to the natal map.

All of the planets move (transit) through the twelve signs of the zodiac which comprise the 360° of the ecliptic; some slowly, some more rapidly. The Sun moves approximately one degree per day, and the moon one degree approximately every two hours. The outer planets take weeks or months to move through a degree. But always the overall architecture of this “atom” which we call the solar system is altering its design moment by moment. And we, who are within the confines of this “atom” are continually experiencing the changes in our own energy-patterns according to, and corresponding with, the changes in the angles from which the various planets and stars relate to us.

This implies, of course, that *everything* that happens to us in our lives will be accompanied by a planetary arrangement, which, in its relationship to the

positions of the planets at the moment of our birth, will symbolize that event. One day, it occurred to me that, if these principles were true, there would have to have been a configuration in the progressed and transiting positions of the planets on the night of my “mystical experience” that was significantly extraordinary. In other words, that Divine experience which we refer to as “*grace*” must also have been signified in the planetary patterns in effect for me on that very night.

This was a mind-boggling concept that was to stand many of my most cherished presumptions on their heads. In order to explain why this should be so, let me take a moment to describe some of those presumptions regarding that mysterious thing called “*grace*,” which is, from the standpoint of its recipient, a new and radical change in consciousness, and, subsequently, in the personality, which arises seemingly from out of nowhere:

From the moment my soul first awakened with “spiritual” understanding, and the love and desire for God first entered my heart, I had attributed that awakening to God’s grace. And there was no question in my mind that my later, “mystical,” experience was the gift of grace, for there was absolutely no denying the fact that this experience had been *given* to me. I had not earned it; I had practiced no technique, no method; by no means could I be said to have produced it. There was no other word to describe this gift other than “*grace*.”

Traditionally, grace—the grace of God—was thought of as the freely-given intercession of God to a humbled soul, lifting it momentarily to mergence in the universal Consciousness. In this experience, the false, but insistent, illusion of a separate soul-identity, or ego, is dissolved, and the Divine Intelligence, which is the infinite and eternal Self of all, is revealed. How could the illusory, individual ‘self’ imagine that it had accomplished this feat? Let those who think they can accomplish it do so. When the Self is realized, that separate self is no longer even there! The eternal Self appears only at its demise. And it has not the ability to slay itself; it is only the divine revelation of God that, in an instant, dissolves that tenacious illusory ego. It is grace.

Listen to what that enlightened 15th-century monk, Thomas á Kempis, had to say about grace:

When spiritual comfort is sent to you of God, take it meekly and give thanks humbly for it. But know for certain that it is of the great goodness of God that it is sent to you, and not of your deserving. And see that you are not lifted up therefore unto pride, nor that you joy much thereof, nor presume vainly therein, but rather that you be the more meek for so noble a gift, and the more watchful and fearful in all your works; for that time will pass away, and the time of temptation will shortly follow after. When comfort is withdrawn, despair not therefore, but meekly and patiently await the visitation of God, for He is able and of sufficient power to give you more grace and more spiritual comfort than you had first.

Such alteration of grace is no new thing, and no strange thing to those who have had experience in the way of God; for in all great saints and in all lovers of God similar alteration has often been found.

... If almighty God has done thus with holy saints, it is not for us, weak and feeble persons, to despair, though we sometimes have fervor of spirit, and are sometimes left cold and void of devotion. *The Spirit comes and goes according to His pleasure*, and therefore Job said: "Lord Thou [dost] graciously visit Thy lover in the morning, that is to say, in the time of comfort; and suddenly Thou [dost] prove him in withdrawing such comforts from him."

...He who knows the comforts that come through the gift of grace and knows also how sharp and painful the absenting of grace is, shall not dare think that any goodness comes of himself; but he shall openly confess that of himself he is very poor and naked of all virtue. ¹

What Thomas said conformed to my own experience. The fervor of devotion was not always the same; it came and went, apparently according to its own pleasure. Likewise, the clarity of understanding was sometimes absent, and at other times inspiration seemed to flood my mind with the wisdom of God. One day I might be filled with love and fervor; another day I might be dry or lethargic, or physically energetic, or contemplative. One

day I might be bubbling with creative energy; another day I would be dry as a bone. There was no telling what kind of inner state each day would bring.

The experience of union, or Unity, had come to me only once. Why on that day, at that time? I could only explain it, as Thomas á Kempis did, as God's inexplicable grace. But now I was beginning to understand something of the celestial dynamics of grace, i.e., the principles of astrological correspondence. And so, I drew up a chart for that night of November 18, 1966.

What a revelation it was when I beheld that chart! The correspondence was undeniable. Here before my eyes was clear and unequivocal proof of the "science" of astral correspondences. Any impartial astrologer viewing the progressions and transits to my natal chart which occurred on that evening would have to acknowledge that this was indeed a night of destiny, an undeniably magical night of mystical vision, a once-in-a-lifetime night of incredible potential for the meeting with God. The extraordinary emphasis on the planetary position of Neptune (known as the planet of mystical experience) at that particular time is eloquently conclusive.

If—as many people think—there is really no correlation between the planets and the human psyche, then what an extraordinarily grand coincidence it was, what a marvelous accident of nature, that at the same moment that I was experiencing the Godhead, the planets were proclaiming it in the heavens! I think any reasonable person with even a little astrological acumen, on viewing the "influences" in effect for me that night, would have to acknowledge that the significant planetary picture at the time of my "enlightenment experience" does, in fact, seem to provide evidence of the validity of the contents of that experience, confirming that all things do indeed "move together of one accord," that nothing happens that is not ordained to happen, that the universe is one coordinated Whole.

But, along with the excitement of discovery and validation which I felt on viewing this chart, there was a nagging question that left me baffled and confused: If this "mystical experience" was described in the heavens since the beginning of time, and therefore entirely predestined, where was "grace"? Where was the freely-given gift of God that I had experienced as occurring at just that moment? If everything was strictly predetermined, where was grace and free will and the possibility of spiritual endeavor?

Where was choice or merit or virtue? Where was blame or culpability? And where was the hope or possibility of “spiritual experience” for those in who’s astrological forecast the prerequisite planetary conditions were *not* present? If God’s universe is merely the mechanistic unfolding of an undeviating script, then are we all merely mechanical pawns, and our trials and triumphs, our perseverings and defeats, merely dramatic plot-twists in a story that’s already written, typeset and published?

It is important to emphasize at this time that the planets, in themselves, do not have the power to *cause* either good or ill-fortune, though many (including myself) habitually speak of “planetary influences” as though they were *independent causes* determining our fate. In ancient times, of course, as planetary configurations were seen to correspond to definite kinds of psychological and behavioral effects, the naive supposed that planets were therefore independent forces, responsible for the destiny of man. Each planet was fitted out with its own individual personality and was assumed to have independent power to affect events on earth. This was the basis for the myths of the “gods.”

The great Roman mystic, Plotinus, writing in the 3rd century C.E. on the subject of *Are The Stars Causes?* noted that a belief in the independent power of the planets is “tenable only by minds ignorant of the [true] nature of a Universe which has a ruling Principle and a First Cause operative downward through every member.”² He explained:

Each [planetary] entity takes its origin from one Principle and, therefore, while executing its own function, works in with every other member of that All. ... And there is nothing undesigned, nothing of chance, in all the process: all is one scheme of differentiation, starting from the First Cause and working itself out in a continuous progression of effects.³

This perfectly unfolding progression of effects from the one all-ruling Cause is clearly seen by all who have been graced with “the vision of God.” It is that “vision” which is the experiential basis for the assertion that “all things move together of one accord”; that “assent is given throughout the universe to every falling grain.” Still, the question of *how* the transiting “planetary influences” operate; i.e., by what process Neptune or any other planet transmits to individual souls its effects, is a legitimate one. And the matter of how *progressions* operate (which are not even present-time events, but

“symbols” of planetary events already past) is even more perplexing. These questions cannot be answered by present-day knowledge, but many astrologers guess that something like the following is the case:

As the planets of the solar system change their angles to one another and thus rearrange the structural design of the entire system and its relationship to the design at one’s nativity, there is a corresponding change in the pattern of conscious energy (*Shakti*) which makes up our psychic and phenomenal reality. The energy-pattern (produced by the angular positions of the Sun, Moon and planets), which exists at the time of an individual’s birth, corresponds to the conscious energy-pattern, or aggregation of qualities, of that individual soul. And the subsequent alterations of the planetary positions after that moment spell out in decipherable terms his or her destiny.

It seems to me, however, that the search for a *cause-effect* relationship between the transits and progressions of planets and the lives of individual souls on earth is indicative of humanity’s long-standing mistaken view of reality. Plotinus saw in the 2nd century what is true eternally—that there is *one* Cause, and all else is Its effects. The planets do not focus beneficent or malevolent rays or forces in our direction; they do not put forth any fields of influence that impinge on us at all. In short, they are not *causes* at all, but merely *signs* of the activity of the one Cause, which is God, revealed to those who can read them.

I believe it is very important to understand that, although the planets *signal* psychic and physical events experienced on earth, they are not themselves responsible; they are not the *cause* but are only coincident effects synchronous with the effects perceived upon earthly life. In short, the “influences” of the planets are really the influences of the unbroken Whole, manifesting locally as specific patterns of relationships. The planets do not determine our fate; they merely reveal it. Our lives are determined by the One in whom the planets move. This is a view consistent with the view of Plotinus, and I believe it will be consistent with the enlightened understanding of the future.

The evolution of the soul occurs over many lifetimes, with its summit being the full openness to self-surrender in the Love of God, and the subsequent realization of its supreme Identity. And because the evolution of the universe reflects the evolution of each soul, the stellar and planetary

positions, which signal that soul's enlightenment, will coincide perfectly with that moment in the soul's evolutionary summit. And the question of whether it is the soul's evolutionary struggle or the planetary alignments, which brings about enlightenment must be answered, "Neither." They are coordinated events in the unfolding of God's cosmic drama; both events are simultaneous effects of the one Cause, occurring in Himself in the ordered unfoldment of His will. All is one coordinated whole, and all that occurs within it is a manifestation of His grace.

The complexity of such a universe—a universe in which the destiny of each succeeding manifestation of a soul on earth is in synchronization with the ongoing motions of planetary bodies—is indeed beyond our present ability to conceive or visualize. Nonetheless, we must acknowledge that it is impossible to separate the birth of any individual from the cosmic conditions in which it occurs. For the universe is an integral Whole, and every event in it is in interlocking agreement with every other; not even the tiniest, most seemingly insignificant, event may be considered as an isolated phenomenon.

Within this Whole, where "all things move together of one accord," the division of small-scale events into categories of *cause* and *effect* is imaginary and has no real meaning. For it is the Lord, God, *Shiva*, Self—call Him what you will—who, by means of His Power of Will (*Shakti*), is the sole Cause of the entire manifested array of the cosmos and therefore of every single event which takes place within it. This truth is seen clearly and unmistakably in the unitive experience of the mystic.

Here are the charts drawn up for the time and place of my mystical experience: The first chart, chart A, is the chart of the *transiting* planetary arrangement in effect at the time of my "experience of unity." The lines connecting those planets in *opposition* (180°) *trine* (120°), and *sextile* (60°) aspects to each other show the angular relationships between these transiting planets. This, in itself, is a remarkable configuration. But to fully appreciate the significance of this transiting planetary arrangement, it must be seen in relationship to the positions of the planets at my birth as well as the *progressed* chart.

Chart B is a composite chart, showing the positions of the planets in my natal chart and my progressed chart, shown in consecutive wheels. In the center wheel, my *natal* chart, calculated for 6:01 P.M., August 14, 1938, at

Indianapolis, Indiana; and in the outer wheel, the chart for the progressed planets at 9:00 P.M., November 18, 1966, at Santa Cruz, California.

In Chart C, one can see the natal chart and the transiting chart for the same time and place pictured in consecutive wheels. (See next pages.)

CHART A

Stan TroutTrans.

Nov 18 1966 9:00 PM PST
 Santa Cruz California
 38N00 121W53
 Nov 19 1966 05:00:00 GMT
 Tropical Placidus True Node

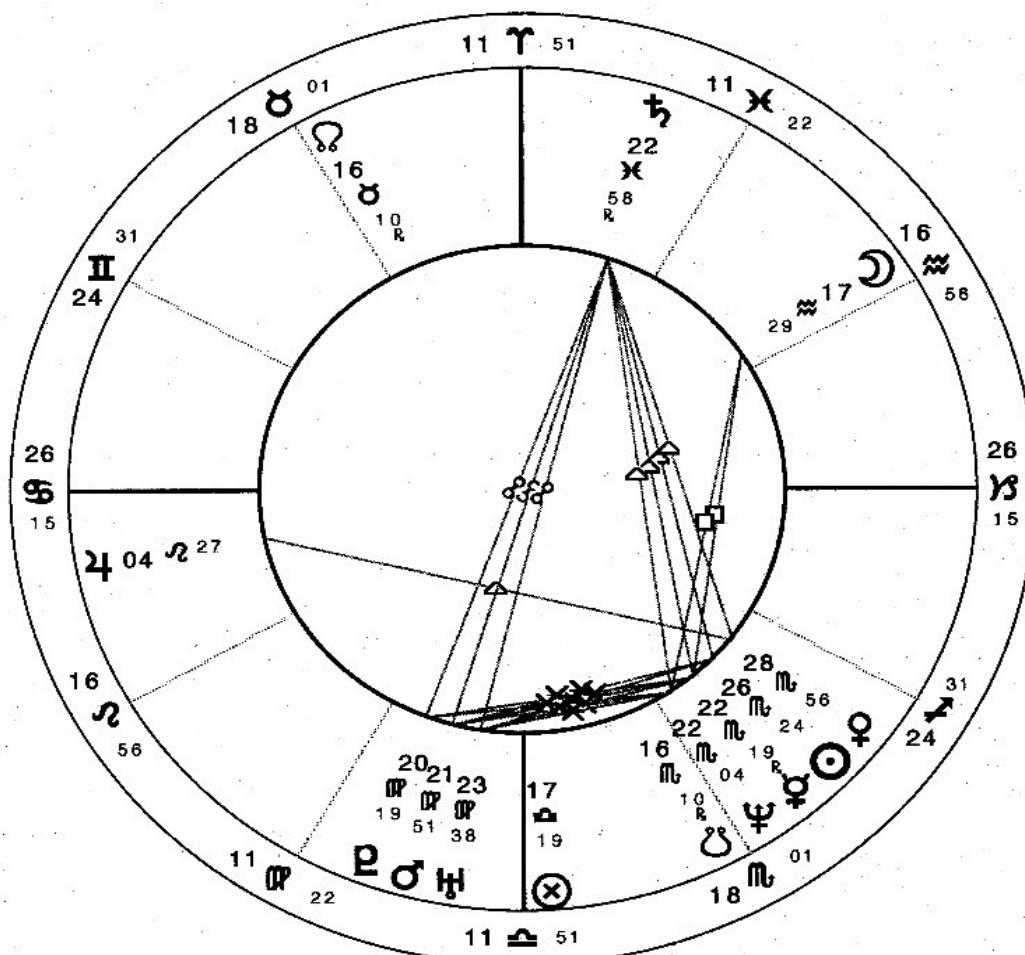


Chart B

Inner Chart
Stan Trout

Sunday, August 14, 1938 6:01:00 PM
 Indianapolis, Indiana
 Time Zone: 06:00 (CST)
 Longitude: 086° W 09' 29"
 Latitude: 39° N 46' 06"

House Cusps based on chart of Stan Trout

Outer Chart
Trout_Stan Prg to 11/18/1966

Sunday, September 11, 1938
 2ndary Prog, Solar Arc MC
 Santa Cruz, California

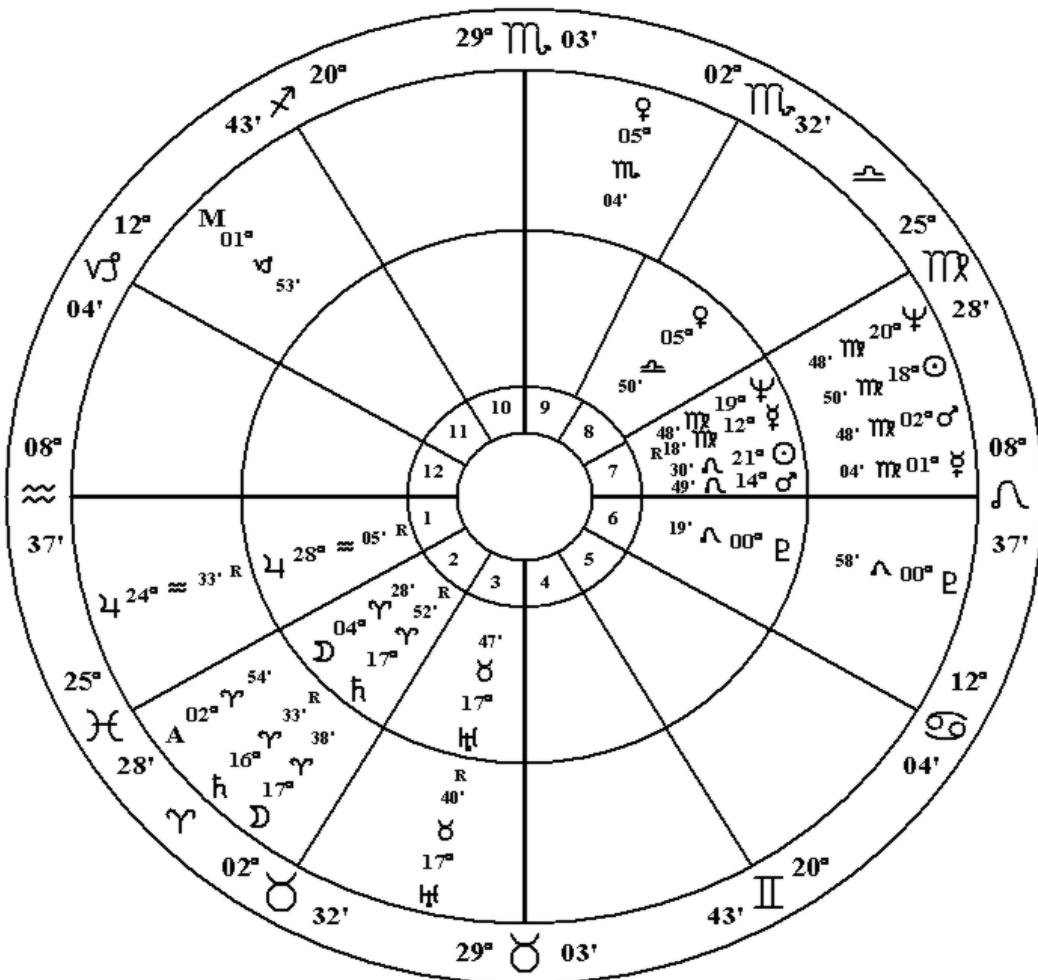


Chart C

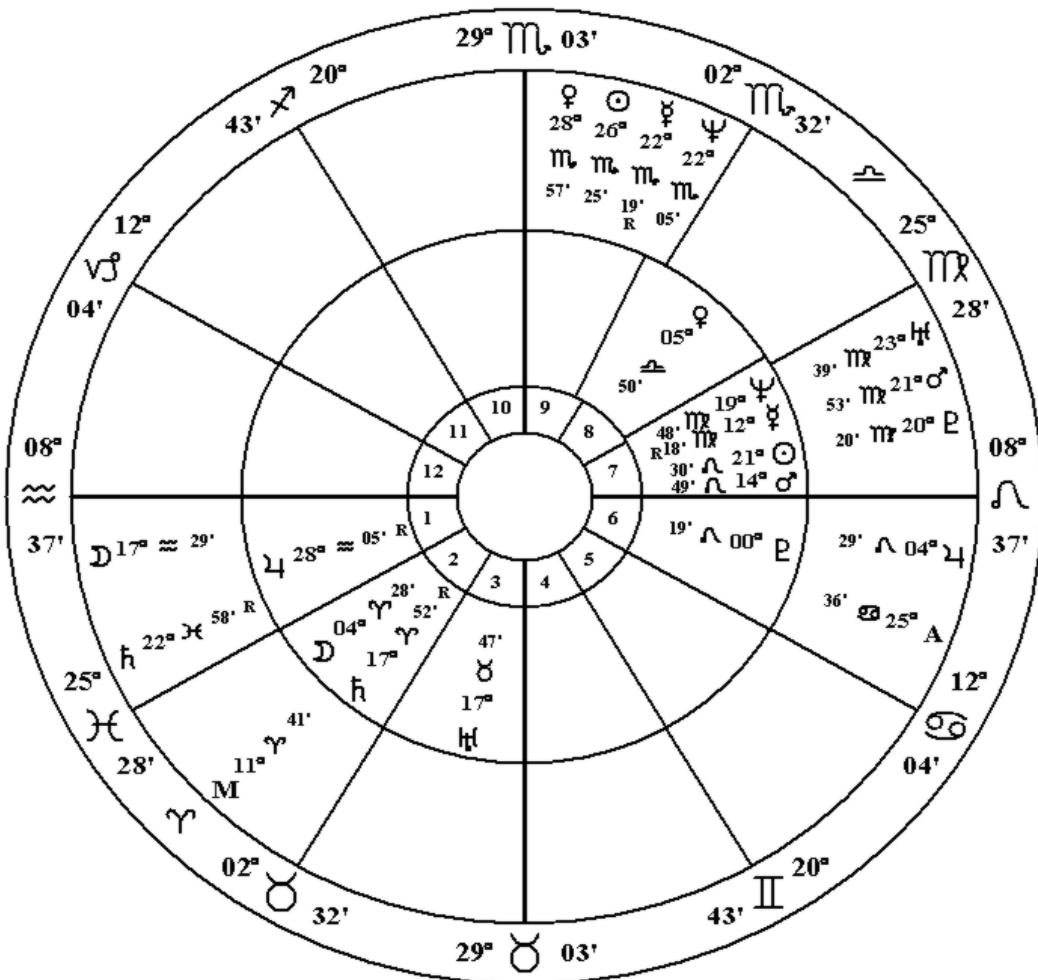
Inner Chart
Stan Trout

Sunday, August 14, 1938 6:01:00 PM
Indianapolis, Indiana
Time Zone: 06:00 (CST)
Longitude: 086° W 09' 29"
Latitude: 39° N 46' 06"

House Cusps based on chart of Stan Trout

Outer Chart
Stan Trout

Friday, November 18, 1966 9:00:00 PM
Santa Cruz, California
Time Zone: 08:00 (PST)
Longitude: 122° W 01' 47"
Latitude: 36° N 58' 27"



Natal Aspects:

- Sun conjunct Mars
- Sun trine Saturn
- Sun square Uranus
- Mercury trine Uranus
- Mercury conjunct Neptune
- Mars square Uranus
- Saturn semisextile Uranus
- Uranus trine Neptune

Progressed Aspects (to natal planets):

- Moon conjunct Saturn (exact)
- Moon semisextile Uranus (exact)
- Sun conjunct Neptune (exact)

Transiting Aspects (to natal planets):

- Moon sextile Saturn (exact)
- Moon square Uranus (exact)
- Sun conjunct Midheaven
- Mercury square Sun (exact)
- Mercury conjunct North Node (exact)
- Venus conjunct Midheaven (exact)
- Venus square Jupiter (exact)
- Mars conjunct Neptune
- Jupiter trine Moon (exact)
- Uranus conjunct Neptune
- Neptune conjunct North Node (exact)
- Neptune square Sun (exact)
- Pluto conjunct Neptune (exact)

Note: planets within 1° aspect are considered to be exact.

In examining the composite of charts in Chart B, the first thing that stands out to the trained eye is the highly significant progression of both the Sun and the Moon (middle wheel) to exact conjunctions with natal planets (center wheel). The Moon's progression to an exact conjunction to my natal Saturn is a conjunction which occurs only once every twenty-eight to thirty years; while the Sun's progression to the natal position of Neptune occurs in one's chart only if one's natal Sun position is within 60° or so, clockwise, of Neptune's position—and then, only once in a lifetime. The likelihood of both the Sun and Moon forming progressed conjunctions to (major) natal planets simultaneously is obviously very remote, and when it *does* occur, is highly significant of an extraordinary event.

Neptune, to which the progressed Sun is conjoined, figures quite prominently in my natal chart, as it forms there a conjunction to Mercury and a trine to Uranus. In my early deliberations about my own chart, I had come to look on it as a representation of a certain mental receptivity to poetic inspiration. But Neptune represents much more than that; with beneficial aspects from other planets it can represent an access to the very subtlest of spiritual realms. One astrologer, Robert Hand, who is a recognized authority on astrological symbols, says about Neptune:

Neptune symbolizes the truth and divinity perceived by mystics. (*Keep in mind that the planet is an agent or a representation of an energy, not the source of the energy.*) At the highest level, Neptune represents Nirvana, where all individuality is merged into an infinite oneness of being and consciousness.⁴

In Chart C, you will notice that the massive conjunction of transiting Mars-Uranus-Pluto (outer wheel) is precisely over my natal Neptune, along with the progressed Sun, and that the conjunction of transiting Mercury-Neptune is precisely over my natal North Node of the Moon. There were, on that night of November 18, 1966, two exact conjunctions of *progressed* planets to natal planets, and ten exact aspects of *transiting* planets to natal positions, five of which were conjunctions. The concentration of energy over my natal Neptune position was clearly intense—intense enough for even a thick-headed person like myself to catch a glimpse of God.

If it could be shown that, in all cases, the mystical experience of Unity coincided with progressed solar and/or lunar aspects to Neptune in the charts

of all the experiencers, we would be in possession of a neatly consistent formula for anticipating mystical experience. However, that does not seem always to be the case. When one examines the charts of known mystics of the past progressed to the date of their transcendent experience, one encounters a very inconsistent collection of varied influences, although aspects to the natal Neptune position do seem to figure strongly.

For example, in the chart of Sri Aurobindo (born August 15, 1872), at the time of his reported enlightenment (January 15, 1908) the progressed moon is exactly conjunct his natal Neptune, and the progressed Sun is exactly quincunx Neptune's position. In the chart of Sri Ramakrishna (born February 18, 1836), progressed to the date of his first *samadhi* at the age of twenty-nine (February 1, 1865), the progressed moon is exactly sextile his natal Neptune's position, while there are no major aspects from the progressed Sun. And in the progressed chart of Sri Ramana Maharshi (born December 30, 1879), who became enlightened at the age of sixteen (September 15, 1896), the progressed moon is 3° past a conjunction with natal Jupiter, and the progressed Sun makes only one aspect: a trine to natal Pluto. Even with so brief a sampling, it is clear that there is a wide range of variation in the progressed solar and lunar aspects occurring at the time of enlightenment.

Strangely enough, the one modern mystic whose progressed aspects at the time of his enlightenment most closely resemble the planetary aspects present in my own enlightenment chart is someone who was personally known to me—Swami Muktananda of Ganeshpuri. Swami Muktananda's natal horoscope reveals him to have been an immensely powerful personality, but it only hints at the tremendous personal power he came to possess through the legacy of *shaktipat* transmitted to him by his guru, Nityananda, and through his lifelong retention of that power. He was totally unique in his masterful attainment, and his life of sharing his spiritual realizations was also amazing and unique; but *his experience of the Self was the common experience of all the enlightened.*

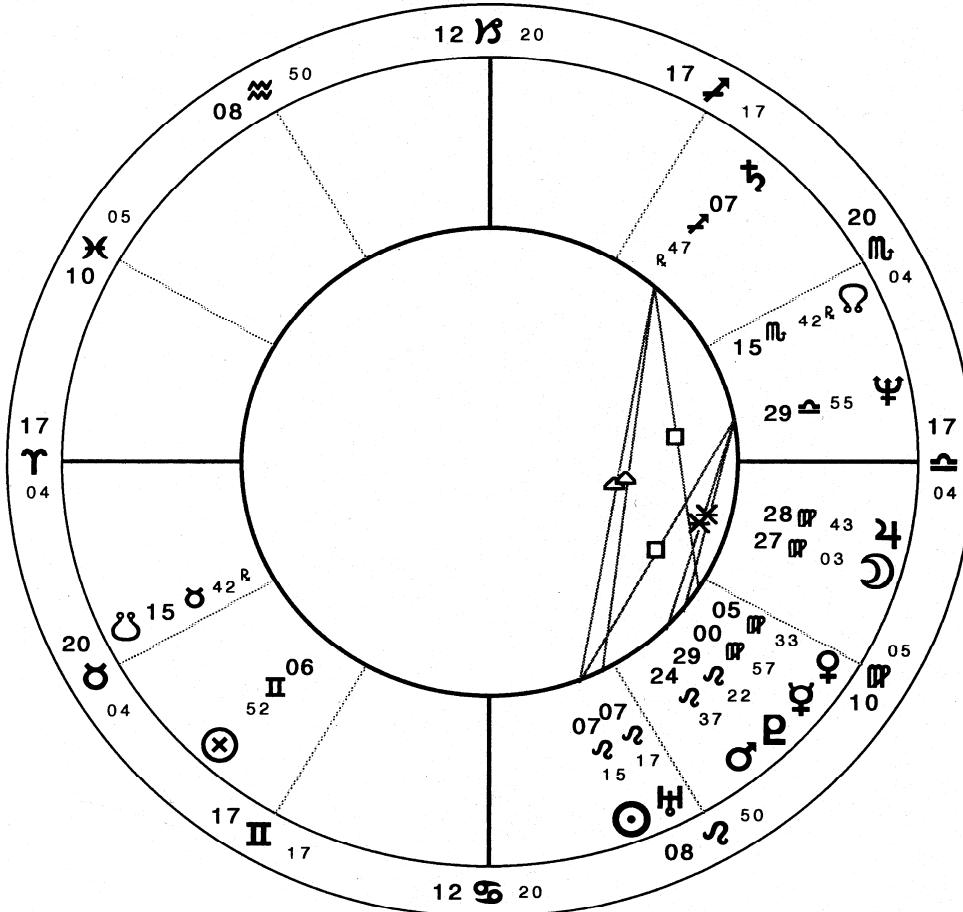
While our paths to enlightenment, our visions, our circumstances, personalities and destinies (as symbolized in our individual horoscopes) were very different, the enlightenment experience which revealed the eternal Self to Muktananda was identical (by definition) with that which I experienced. What's more, the planetary signifiers of enlightenment were nearly identical in both our cases.

Despite the unique elements of Muktananda's *sadhana*, which differed considerably from my own experience, both of our actual enlightenment experiences, though nearly ten years apart, coincided with a strong aspect of the progressed moon to one of the outer natal planets, at the same time that *the progressed Sun was forming an exact conjunction with the natal position of Neptune*. There was also, at the time, an extraordinary and significant array of transiting planets in the heavens in both cases. Here (on the next page) is Chart D, showing the positions of the transiting planets on the day of Muktananda's enlightenment (determined to be July 30, 1957):

Chart D

S. M. Transit 7-30-57

Jul 30 1957 11:00 PM INT
 Yeola India
 19N00 72E50
 Jul 30 1957 17:30:00 GMT
 Tropical Placidus True Node



And here is a composite chart, Chart E, for the time of Muktananda's enlightenment (the inner wheel is his natal chart (May 16, 1908, at Mangalore, India; 6:00 AM INT); the outer wheel is the *progressed* chart for July 30, 1957.

Chart E

Inner Chart

Swami Muktananda

Saturday, May 16, 1908 6:00:00 AM

Mangalore, India

Time Zone: -05:30 (IST)

Longitude: 074° E 53'

Latitude: 12° N 52'

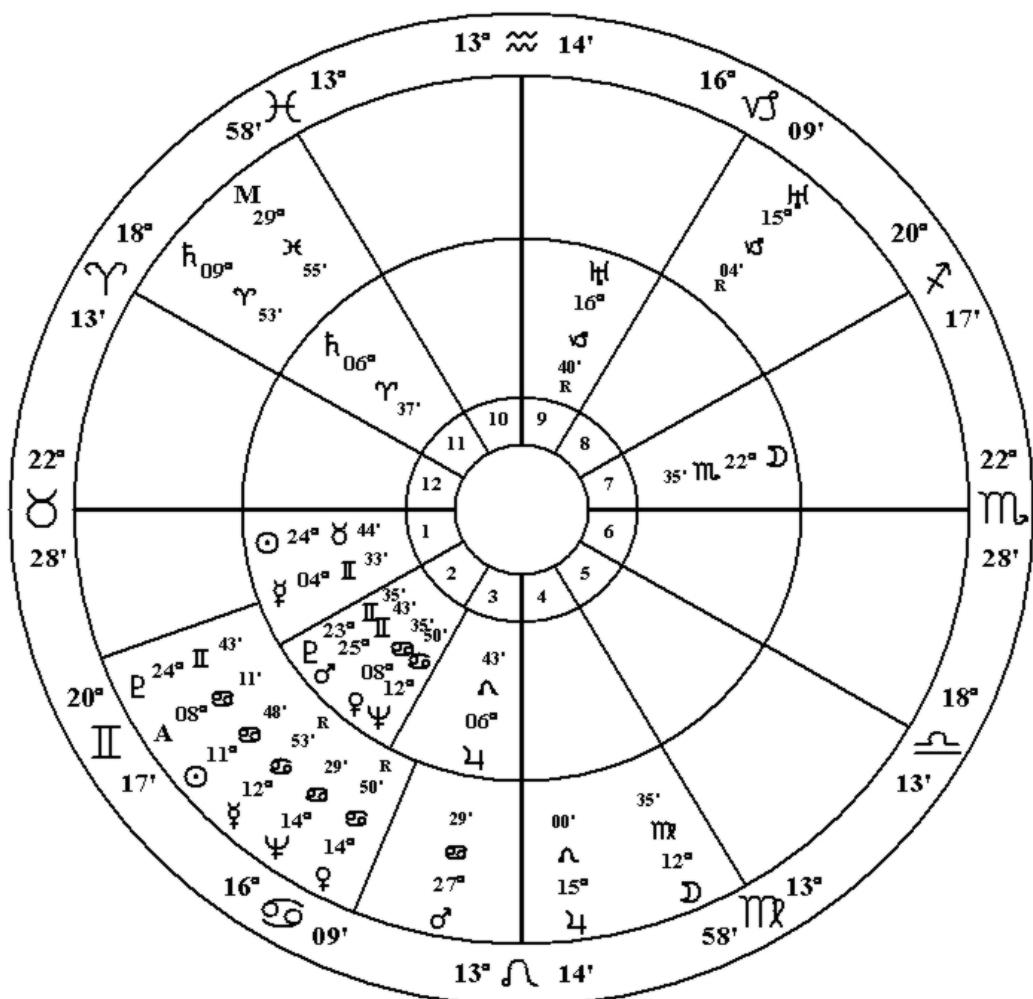
House Cusps based on chart of Swami Muktananda

Muktananda_Swami Prg to 7/30/1957

Saturday, July 04, 1908

2ndary Prog, Solar Arc MC

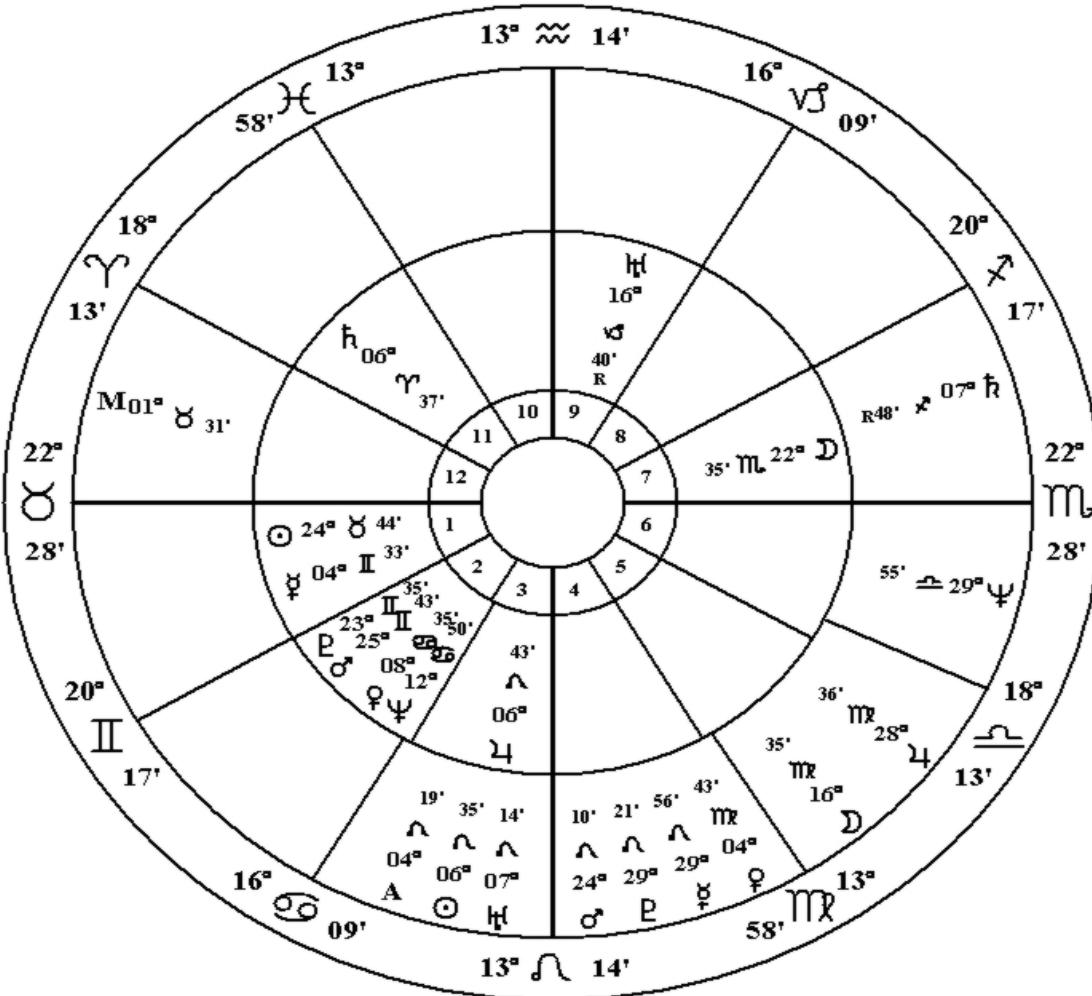
Yeola, India



In Chart F the inner wheel is his natal chart, and the outer wheel represents the *transiting* positions of the planets on that day, July 30, 1957:

Chart F

Inner Chart	House Cusps based on chart of Swami Muktananda	Outer Chart
Swami Muktananda		Swami Muktananda
Saturday, May 16, 1908 6:00:00 AM		Tuesday, July 30, 1957 6:00:00 AM
Mangalore, India		Yeola, India
Time Zone: -05:30 (IST)		Time Zone: -05:30 (IST)
Longitude: 074° E 53'		Longitude: 074° E 29'
Latitude: 12° N 52'		Latitude: 20° N 02'



Natal Aspects:

Sun conjunct Ascendant
 Sun opposite moon
 Mercury sextile Jupiter
 Venus conjunct Neptune
 Venus square Saturn
 Mars conjunct Pluto
 Jupiter trine Saturn (exact)
 Uranus opposite Neptune

Progressed Aspects (to natal planets):

Sun-Mercury conjunct Neptune (exact)
 Moon sextile Neptune (exact)
 Jupiter quincunx Uranus

Transiting Aspects (to natal planets):

Sun-Uranus conjunct Jupiter
 Sun-Uranus trine Saturn
 Moon-Jupiter trine Sun (moon exact)
 Mars-Pluto square Sun
 Saturn trine Jupiter
 Saturn trine Saturn

Note: Planets within 1° aspect are considered to be exact.

In Muktananda's *natal* chart, notice the powerful stellium of planets in the 2nd House, along with the Sun-moon opposition closely conjunct the 1st-7th House cusps. Mars conjunct Pluto, and Venus conjunct Neptune give some indication of his spiritual evolution and the great forcefulness of his personal energy. Jupiter in the 3rd House shows his learning and speaking ability, and Uranus on the 9th House cusp relates both to his advanced philosophical views and his amazingly broad travels.

The *progressed* chart shows the progressed Sun and Mercury in exact conjunction with his natal Neptune, and the progressed Moon in exact sextile to natal Neptune. In addition to these highly significant aspects, Jupiter is progressed to an exact quincunx to natal Uranus.

The *transiting* aspects are equally notable: a transiting Sun-Uranus conjunction is conjunct natal Jupiter, forming a trine aspect to natal Saturn,

while transiting Saturn is forming a grand trine with natal Saturn and Jupiter. A transiting Moon-Jupiter conjunction is trining the natal Sun, while transiting Mars, Pluto, and Mercury are in close square to that natal Sun position. All in all, it is a remarkable set of circumstances, signaling a remarkable occurrence. Clearly, it is *as* uniquely powerful a set of progressed and transiting aspects as those which occurred in relation to my own chart in November of 1966.

It is my opinion that this discovery of the correlation of celestial dynamics and mystical experience is a breakthrough in knowledge comparable to those brought about by Copernicus and Galileo and has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of “spiritual” experience. However, it requires so bold a departure from traditional ways of thinking that it is unlikely to have a great influence on the understanding of any but the most discerning. In fact, many so-called “spiritual teachers” will find this information embarrassing and will reject it, for it makes a folly of their contention that it is practices and techniques which bring about Self-realization. For without God’s celestial grace, without the timing of God’s heavenly motions unfolding in one’s life, no illumination will come.

The present-day understanding of how astrology ‘works’ is as far from a comprehensive resolution as is the science of microphysics. It was a mystery to the ancients, and it is a mystery today (although the concept of the immediate interconnectedness of everything within “the unbroken Whole” put forward by the physicist, David Bohm, hints at the way ahead). And while “the science” of the astrology of enlightenment is in its infancy today, I am hopeful that the data that is here provided will point the way to greater exploration and understanding of the relation of astronomical phenomena to mystical experience in the years to come.

NOTES:

1. Abhayananda, S., *Thomas á Kempis*, 1992; pp. 74-75, 78
2. Plotinus, *Enneads*, II:3:6
3. *Ibid.*, II:3:7
4. Hand, Robert, *Astrological Symbols*, Rockfort, Mass., Para Research, Inc., 1980.

SEVEN: AS ABOVE, SO BELOW¹

An experienced astrologer, familiar with the language of astrological symbolism, can look at the natal horoscopic chart of Isaac Newton and easily discern the primary features of the soul who bore that name, and recognize in these features the historical man; or he may look at the chart of Ralph W. Emerson and discern the soul tendencies impelling that kindly figure, and recognize, as by an interior photograph, the very blueprint of the man's soul. And likewise, with every notable character with whom we are familiar: to those conversant with the language, each birth chart is a faultless portrait of the man or woman thus represented. The charts are faultlessly accurate portraits because they represent the cosmic factors involved in the makeup of those souls in the space-time moment of their embodiment. They stand, indeed, as illustrative proof of the interconnection of the soul's qualities and the heavenly environment which accompanies its incarnation.

We are able to see the concentration of genius in the chart of Einstein; we can see the concentration of harmony in the chart of Beethoven; the concentration of madness in the chart of Manson, the concentration of artistry in the chart of Sinatra, the concentration of poetry in the chart of Swinburne, the concentration of Spirit in the chart of the contemporary saint, Amma Mata Amritanandamayi. And we must ask, 'Were all these manifestations of God's life brought to light instantaneously *solely* by the happenstance of the architecture of the heavens at the moment of their birth?' If we answer "yes" to this question, we have rejected the evolution (reincarnation) of the soul, self-effort, karma, and the efficacy of the individual will, and relegated our personhood to the fiat of the stars. No; that cannot be. We must recognize that all souls pass through lengthy preparations and development in previous incarnations, and bear in their present incarnation the results of that development and are called to take their place upon the world's stage in correspondence with the mirroring spectacle of the heaven's design.

Those souls whose purpose sets them apart, whose aims are strong and focused upon the accomplishment of their destined role, are brought to birth in concert with the starry pattern that portrays their gathered wealth of wit or wisdom or vision or art. All come into life at the intended moment, in concert with the perfect unfolding of the universal array in the Divine Mind and at the behest of the one all-encompassing Soul, which is its manifest activity. "All things move together of one accord; assent is given throughout

the universe to every falling grain.” The positions and angular relationships of the planets, the necessity of the times, and the appearance of the souls of the great and small, all live and move and exist, entwined together, by that one assent, and of that one accord.

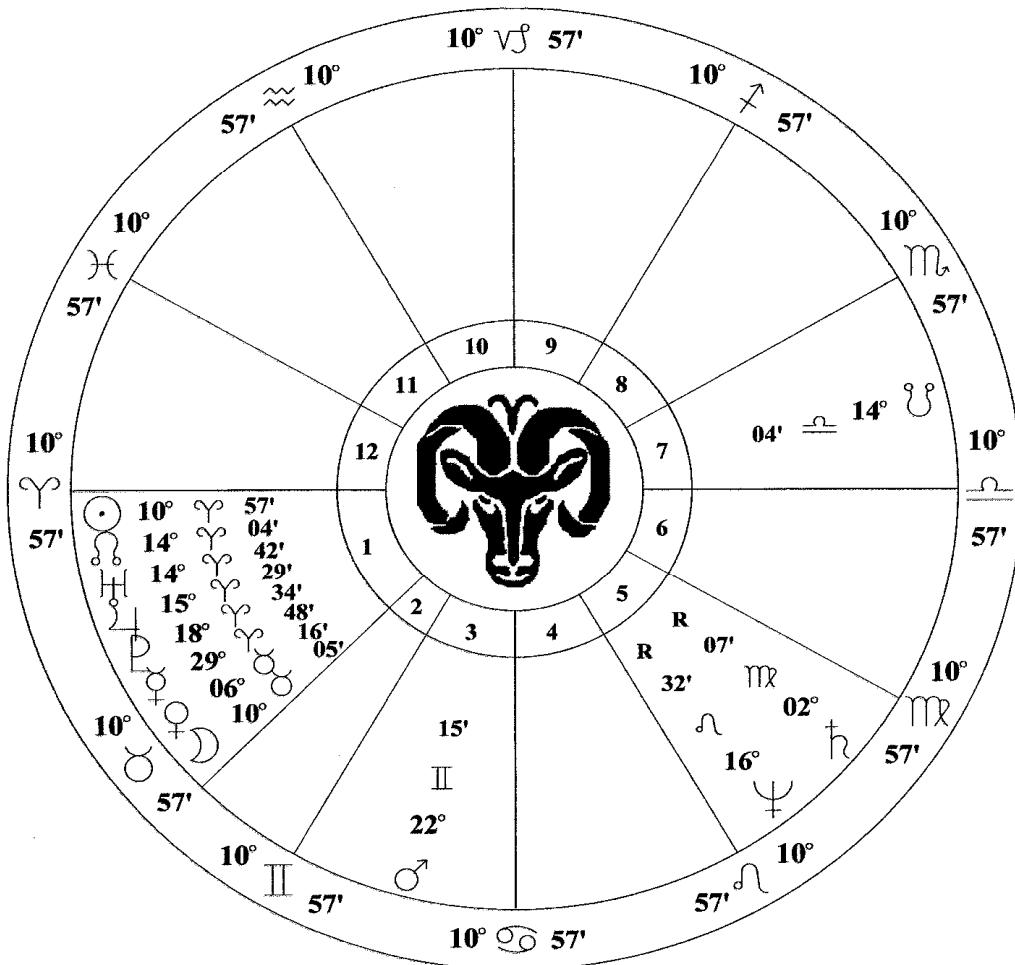
Here, then, let me present to you the planetary pictures at the birth of some well-known historical figures in chronological order. I believe the cumulative effect of these examples will enable you to perceive and comprehend some of the wonders of the incomprehensible Soul and its creative diversity:²

First, the soul of ‘the father of modern philosophy,’ the great French philosopher/scientist, **René Descartes**:

One cannot help noticing at first glance that this is an extraordinary chart. Firstly, The Sun, North Node, Uranus, Jupiter, and Pluto are conjunct in Aries; followed by Mercury, Venus, and the Moon conjunct in Taurus. The first multi-conjunction is in trine aspect to Neptune, and the second multi-conjunction is trine to Saturn; and the Jupiter-Pluto conjunction is sextile to Mars. How appropriate that the man responsible for *Cogito ergo sum*, “I think, therefore I am”, was born with many of his soul-characteristics in the astrological “I am” sign of Aries.

Rene Descartes
 Sunday, March 31, 1596 12:00:00 PM
 Philosopher, Mathematician
 Descartes, France
 Time Zone: -00:02:48 (LT)
 Longitude: 000° E 42'
 Latitude: 46° N 58'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

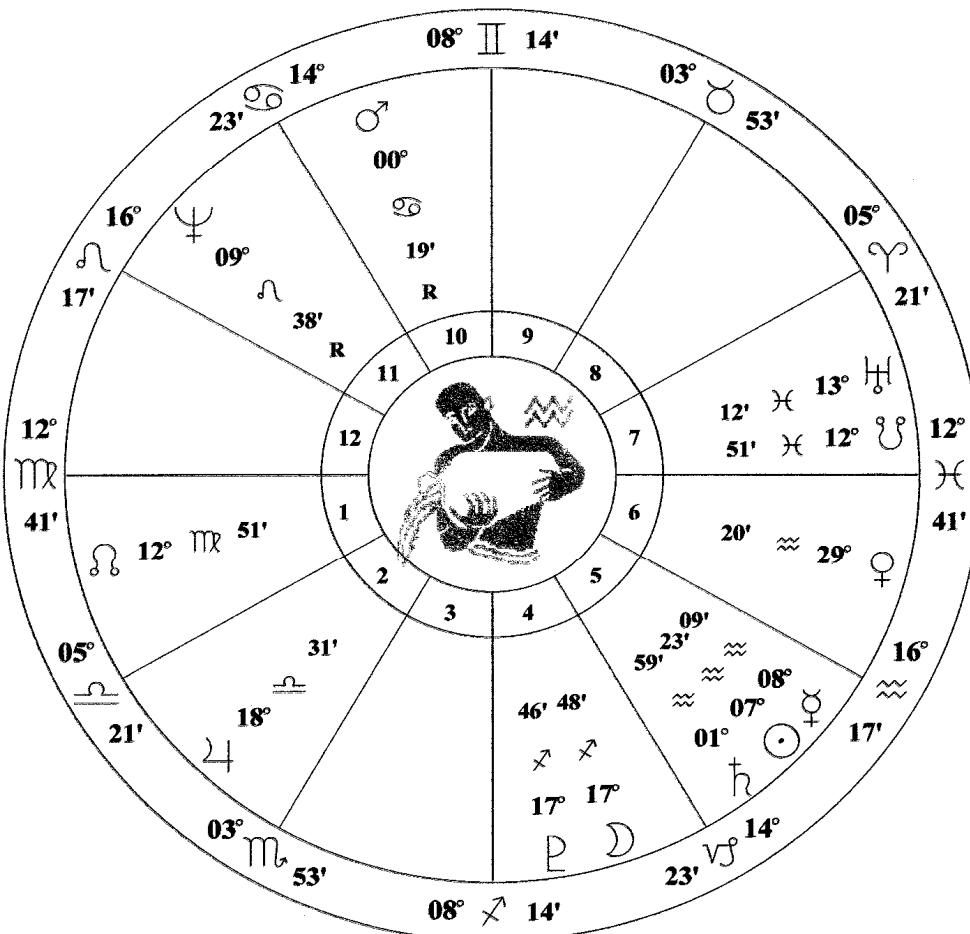


The next chart is that of famed musician, **Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart**:

Here, again, a strongly emphatic chart; the major planetary aspects include: The Sun, Mercury, and Saturn conjunct in Aquarius opposing Neptune; The Moon exactly conjunct Pluto and sextile Jupiter; Venus trine Mars; and Uranus conjunct the South Node.

Wolfgang Mozart
 Tuesday, January 27, 1756 8:00:00 PM
 Musician; Composer
 Salzburg, Austria
 Time Zone: -00:52:08 (LT)
 Longitude: 013° E 02'
 Latitude: 47° N 48'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

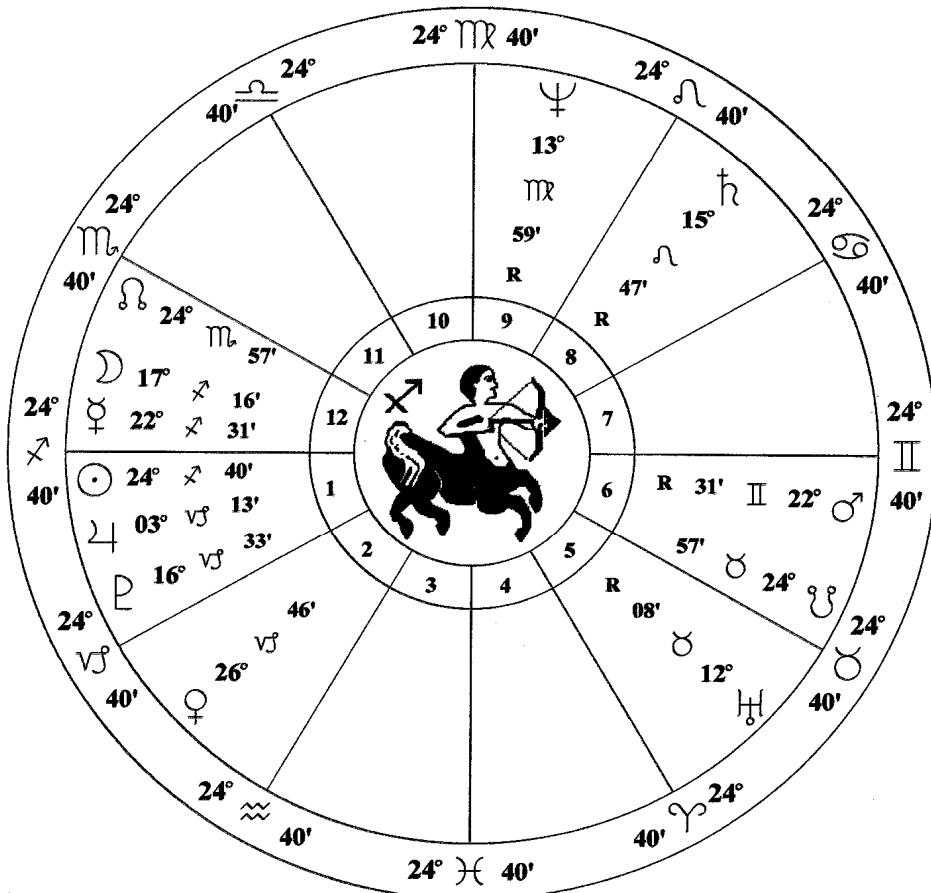


Next, another famed musician, **Ludwig van Beethoven**:

Beethoven's chart is equally grand, containing the following major aspects: The Sun, Moon, and Mercury conjunct in Sagittarius; The Moon and Mercury are forming a trine to Saturn, and squaring Neptune; Mars is conjunct the South Node; but most spectacular is the Grand Trine between Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, only one of which was discovered during his lifetime: Uranus was discovered by Herschel in 1781, but of Neptune and Pluto Beethoven knew nothing. Neptune was not discovered until 1846, and Pluto in 1930.

Ludwig van Beethoven
 Sunday, December 16, 1770 12:00:00 PM
 Musician; Composer
 Bonn, Germany
 Time Zone: -00:28:20 (LT)
 Longitude: 007° E 05'
 Latitude: 50° N 44'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



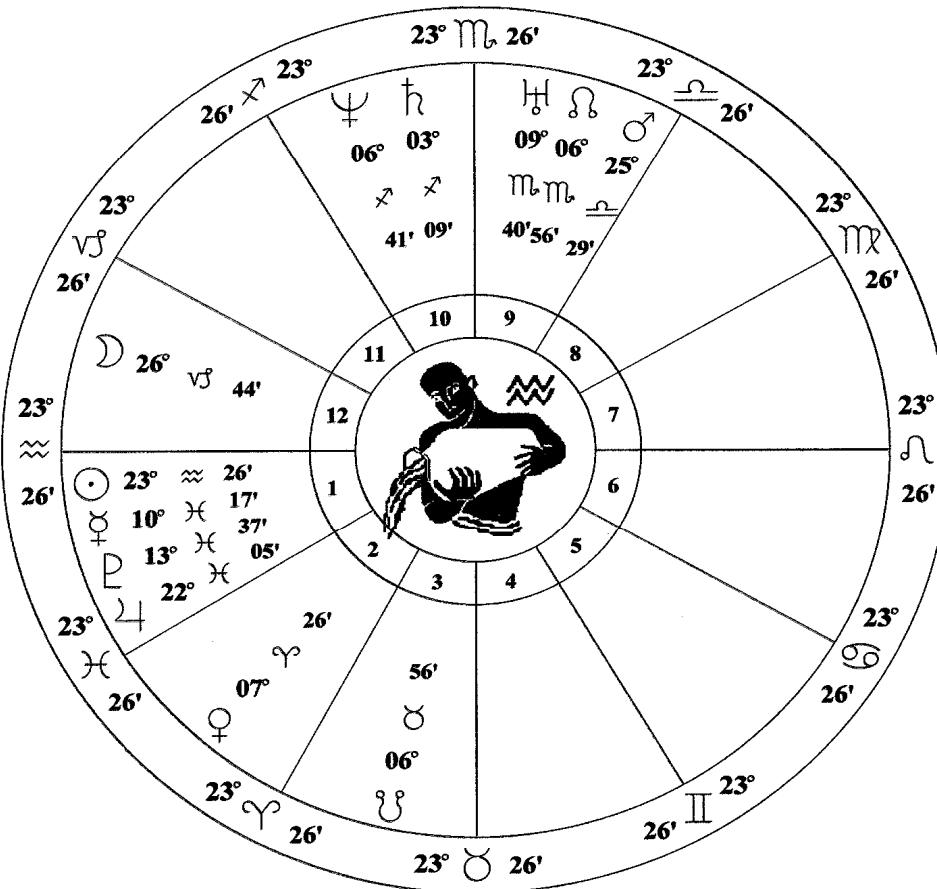
Next, we have the father of the theory of biological evolution, **Charles Darwin**:

Charles Darwin was obviously destined for great accomplishments; among the planetary aspects in his chart are: The Sun in trine aspect to Mars; The Moon in square aspect to Mars and sextile Jupiter; Mercury conjunct Pluto in trine to Uranus; Saturn and Neptune conjunct, and forming a trine aspect to Venus;

And Uranus conjunct the North Node.

Charles Darwin
 Sunday, February 12, 1809 12:00:00 PM
 Naturalist
 Shrewsbury, England
 Time Zone: 00:11 (LT)
 Longitude: 002° W 45'
 Latitude: 52° N 43'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

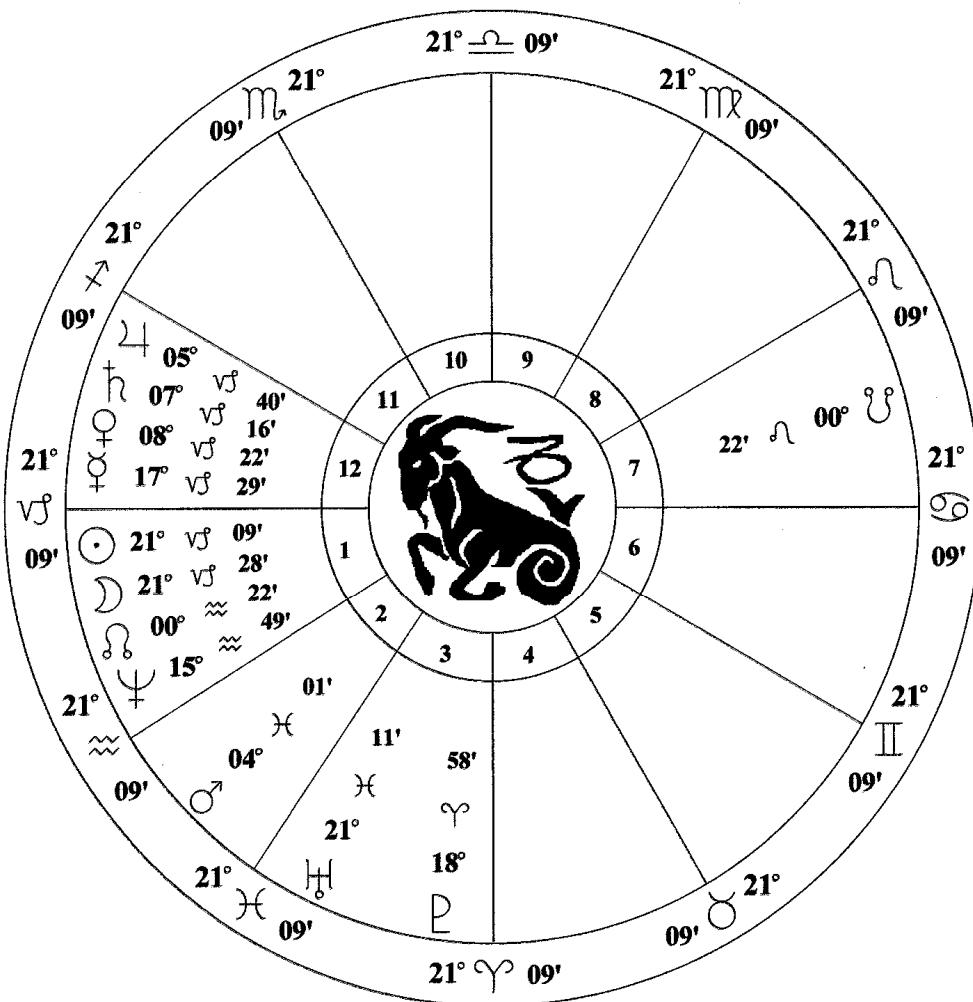


Next, we have the chart of the eminent American psychologist, **William James**:

James' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun, Moon, and Mercury are conjunct, forming a sextile aspect to Uranus, and squaring Pluto; Venus, Jupiter, and Saturn are conjunct; and all three form a sextile to Mars.

William James
 Tuesday, January 11, 1842 12:00:00 PM
 Philosopher; Psychologist
 New York, New York
 Time Zone: 04:56:02 (LT)
 Longitude: 074° W 00' 23"
 Latitude: 40° N 42' 51"

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

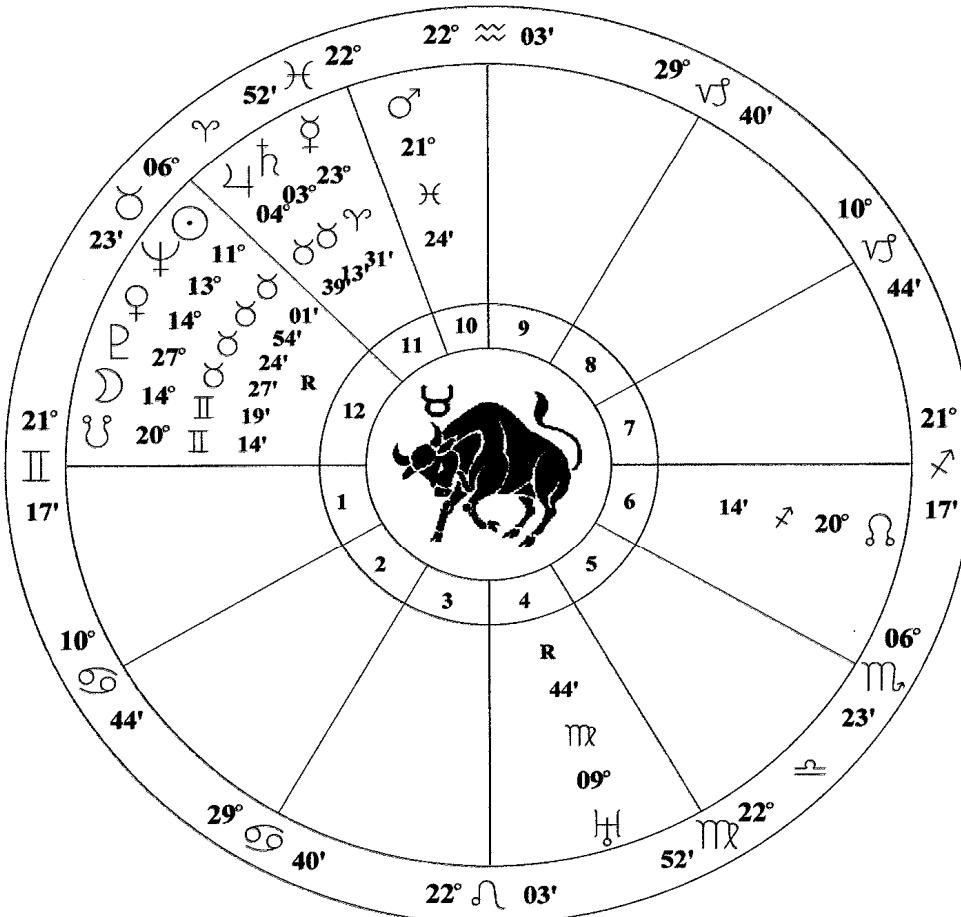


Next, the chart of the priest-paleontologist, **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**:

Teilhard de Chardin's is an extraordinarily focused chart, with: A conjunction of the Sun, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Neptune all forming a trine aspect to Uranus. Notice, also, that the Moon, Mercury, Mars, and Pluto make no aspects to other planets.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin
 Sunday, May 01, 1881 7:00:00 AM
 Jesuit priest; Author
 Orcines, France
 Time Zone: -00:12 (LT)
 Longitude: 003° E 05'
 Latitude: 45° N 47'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

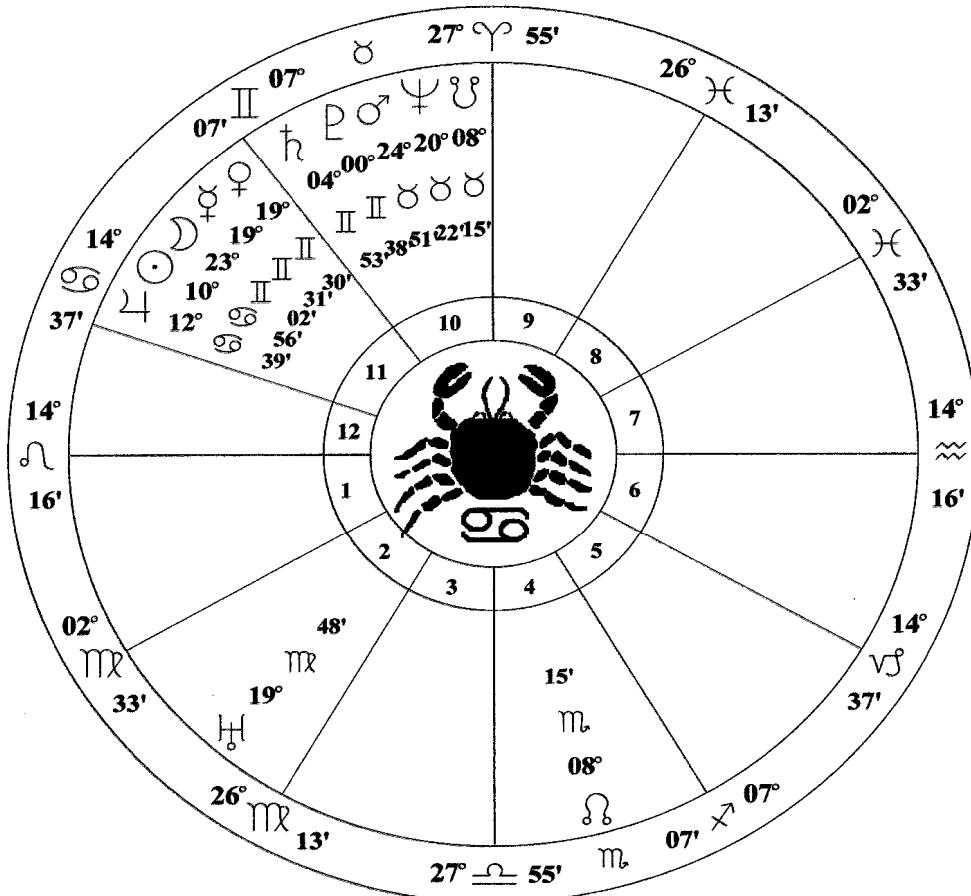


Another highly focused chart is that of storyteller extraordinaire, **Franz Kafka**:

Kafka's chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Jupiter; The Moon, Mercury, and Venus are conjunct and all in square aspect to Uranus; the Mars-Neptune conjunction is trining Uranus; and Saturn is conjunct Pluto.

Franz Kafka
 Tuesday, July 03, 1883 7:00:00 AM
 Author
 Prague, Czechoslovakia
 Time Zone: -00:57:43 (LT)
 Longitude: 014° E 26'
 Latitude: 50° N 05'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

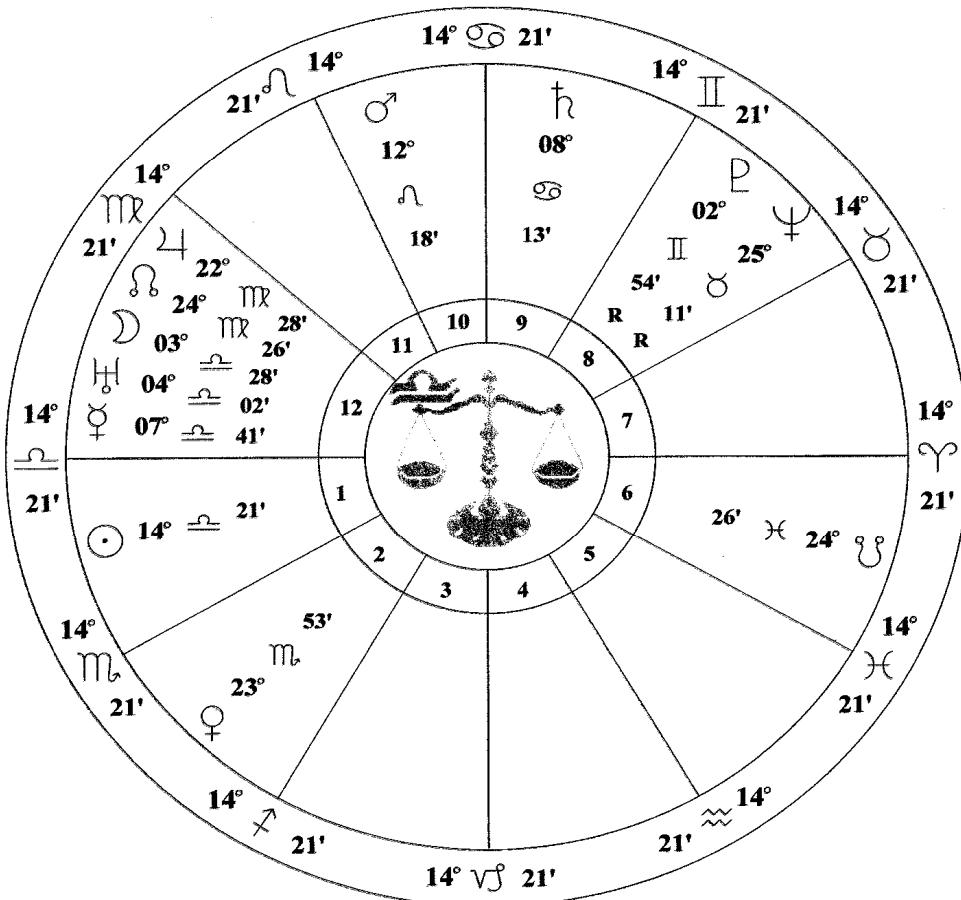


Our next chart is that of legendary physicist, **Neils Bohr**:

Bohr's chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Mercury and sextile to Mars; The Moon is conjunct Mercury and square to Saturn; Jupiter is conjunct the North Node, trine to Neptune and sextile Venus; and Venus is in opposition to Neptune.

Neils Bohr
 Wednesday, October 07, 1885 12:00:00 PM
 Physicist
 Copenhagen, Denmark
 Time Zone: -00:50:20 (LT)
 Longitude: 012° E 35'
 Latitude: 55° N 40'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

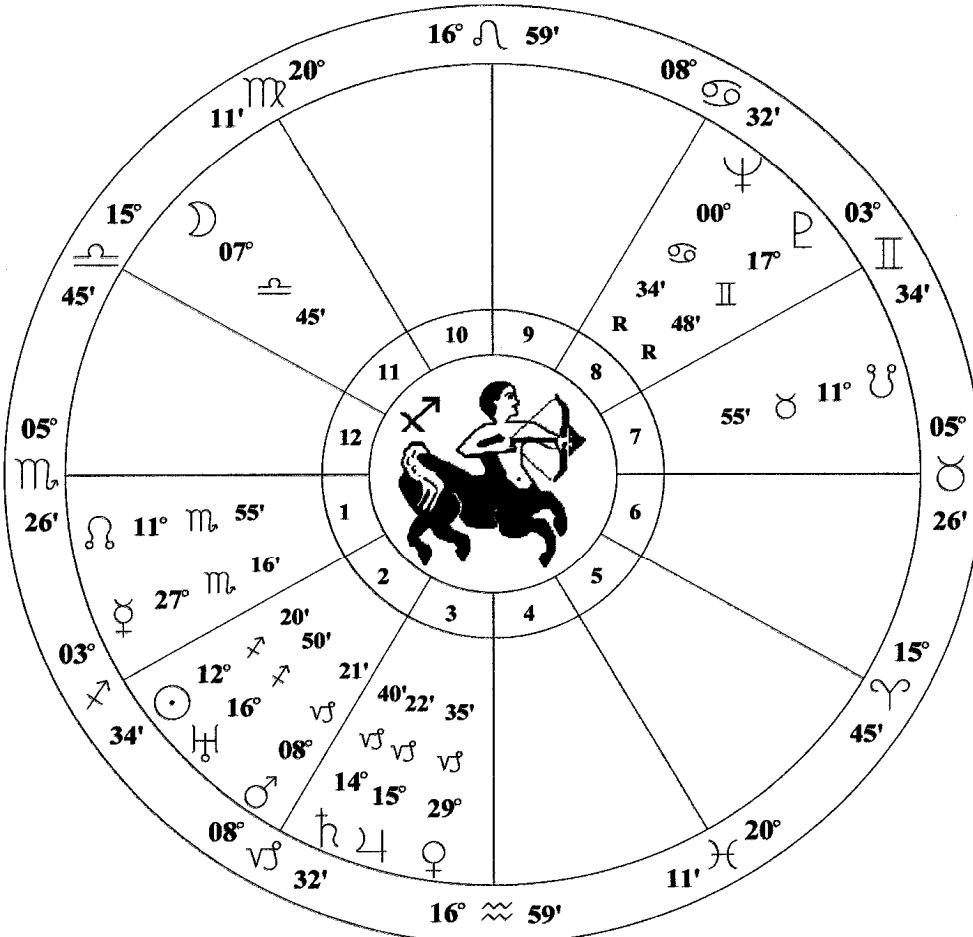


Next, we'll look at the chart of Bohr's co-revolutionary in physics, **Werner Heisenberg**:

Heisenberg's chart contains these major planetary aspects: The Sun is conjunct Uranus, both of which are opposed by Pluto; The Moon is in square aspect to Mars; Mercury is sextile Venus; and Jupiter is conjunct Saturn.

Werner Heisenberg
 Thursday, December 05, 1901 4:45:00 AM
 Physicist
 Wurzburg, Germany
 Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
 Longitude: 009° E 56'
 Latitude: 49° N 48'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

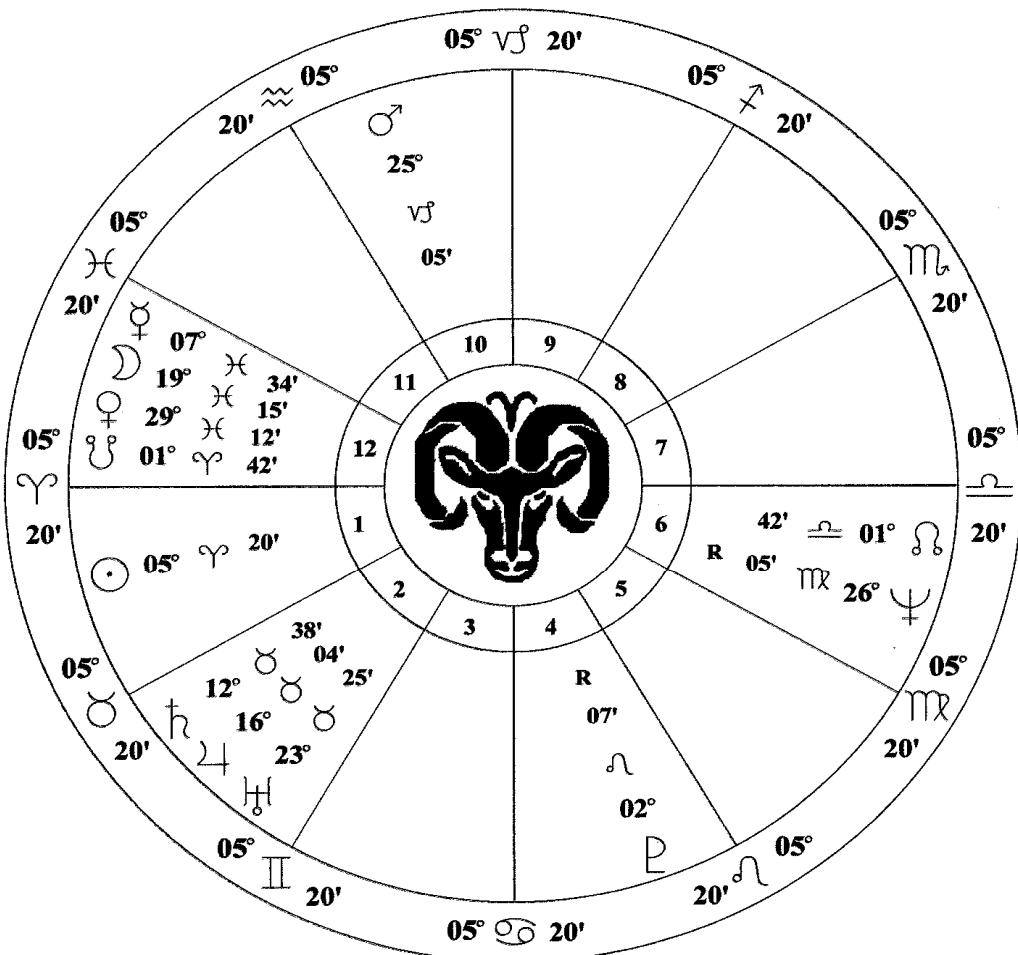


Next, as we reach contemporary times, let us have a look at the chart of evolutionary biologist and atheist theorizer, **Richard Dawkins**:

Richard Dawkins' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is trine Pluto; The Moon is sextile Jupiter and Uranus; Jupiter is conjunct Saturn and Uranus; Venus is opposing Neptune; Mars is trine Neptune; and Neptune is conjunct the North Node.

Richard Dawkins
 Wednesday, March 26, 1941 12:00:00 PM
 Science author, ethologist
 Nairobi, Kenya
 Time Zone: -02:45 (BEAUT)
 Longitude: 036° E 49'
 Latitude: 01° S 17'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



The next chart is that of renowned physicist and author, **Stephen Hawking**:

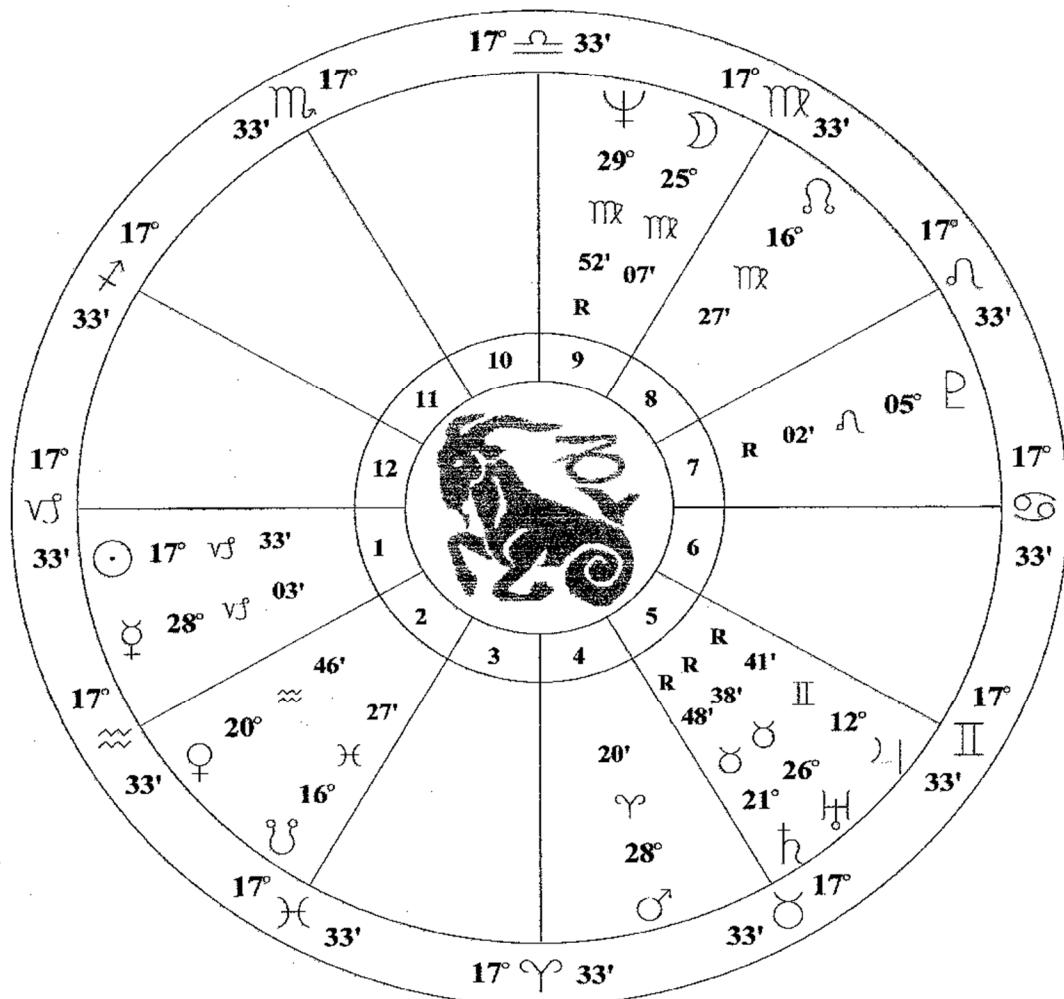
Hawking's chart shows the following aspects:

The Sun is trine Saturn, trine the North Node;

The moon is conjunct Neptune, trine Mercury, and trine Saturn and Uranus; Mercury is square to Mars and forms a grand trine with the Moon-Neptune conjunction and the Saturn-Uranus conjunction; and Venus is squaring the Saturn-Uranus conjunction.

Stephen Hawking
 Thursday, January 08, 1942 12:00:00 PM
 Physicist; Astronomer
 Oxford, United Kingdom
 Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
 Longitude: 001° W 15'
 Latitude: 51° N 46'

Noon Solar Chart Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

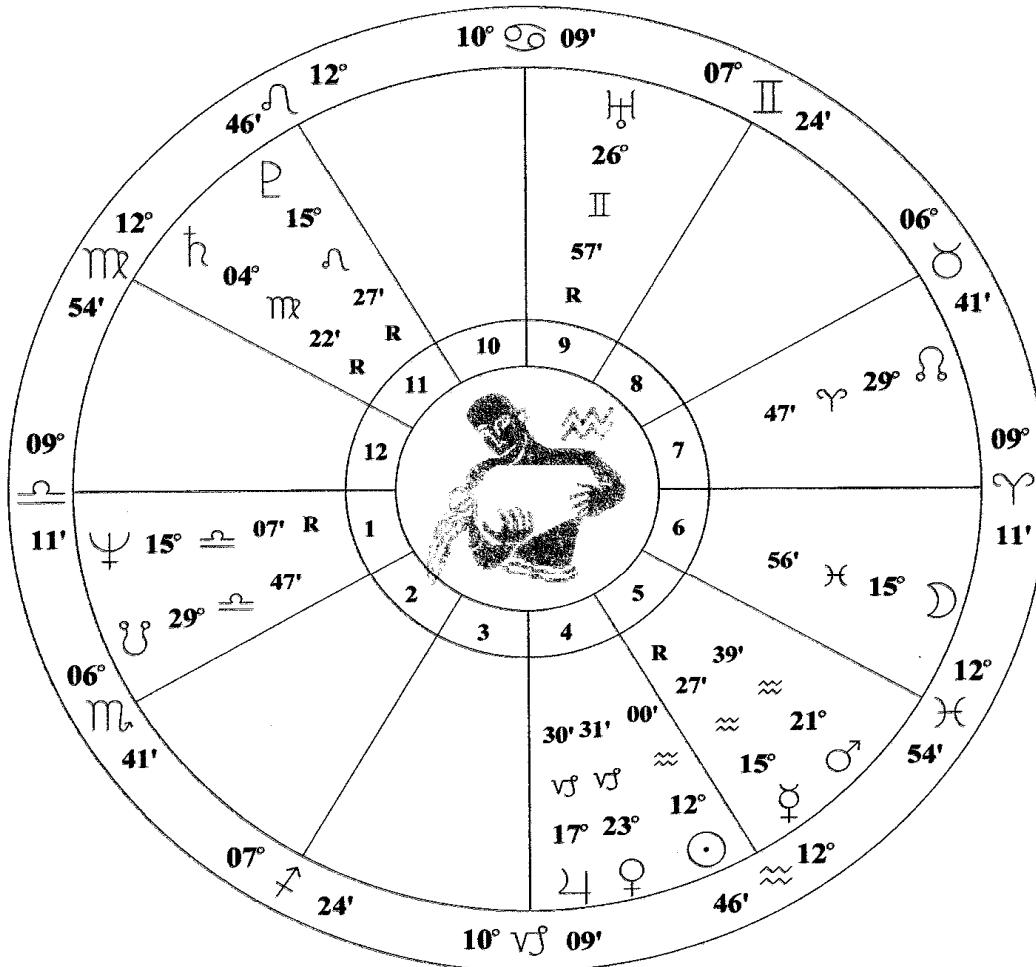


The following chart is that of the mystic-philosopher, **Ken Wilber**:

The following major planetary aspects appear in Wilber's birthchart: The Sun is conjunct Mercury, and the two are forming a trine aspect to Neptune and opposing Pluto; The Moon is sextile Jupiter and trine Pluto; Mercury is conjunct Mars; Venus is conjunct Jupiter; and Neptune is sextile Pluto.

Ken Wilber
 Monday, January 31, 1949 10:30:00 PM
 Mystic philosophy psychology
 Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
 Time Zone: 06:00 (CST)
 Longitude: 097° W 30' 58"
 Latitude: 35° N 28' 03"

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

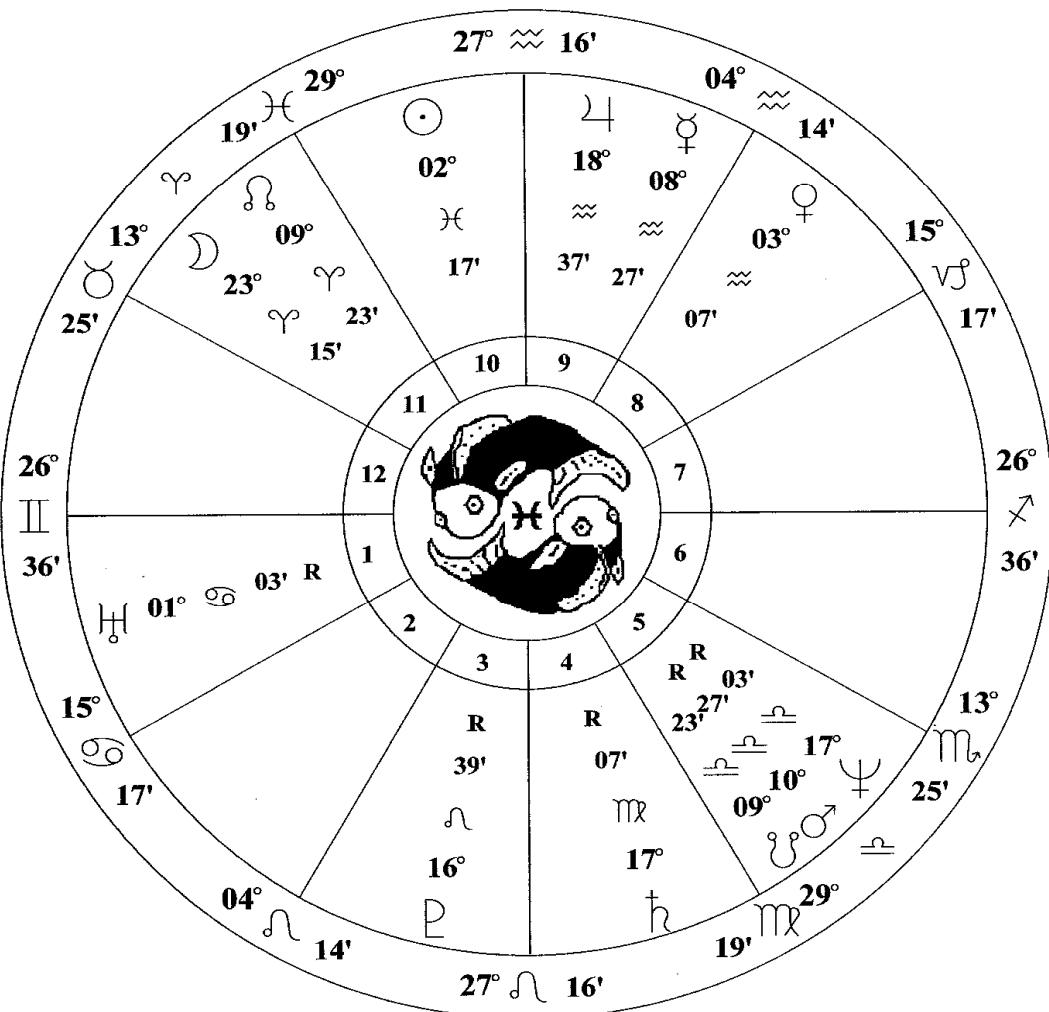


The next chart is that of astrologer and cultural historian, **Richard Tarnas**:

Richard Tarnas' chart contains the following major planetary aspects: The Sun is trine Uranus; The Moon is sextile Jupiter, trine Pluto, and opposing Neptune; Mercury is conjunct Venus in trine aspect to Mars; Mars is conjunct the South Node; Jupiter trines Neptune and opposes Pluto; and Neptune is sextile Pluto.

Richard Tarnas
 Tuesday, February 21, 1950 12:30:00 PM
 Geneva, Switzerland
 Time Zone: -01:00 (CET)
 Longitude: 006° E 09'
 Latitude: 46° N 12'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



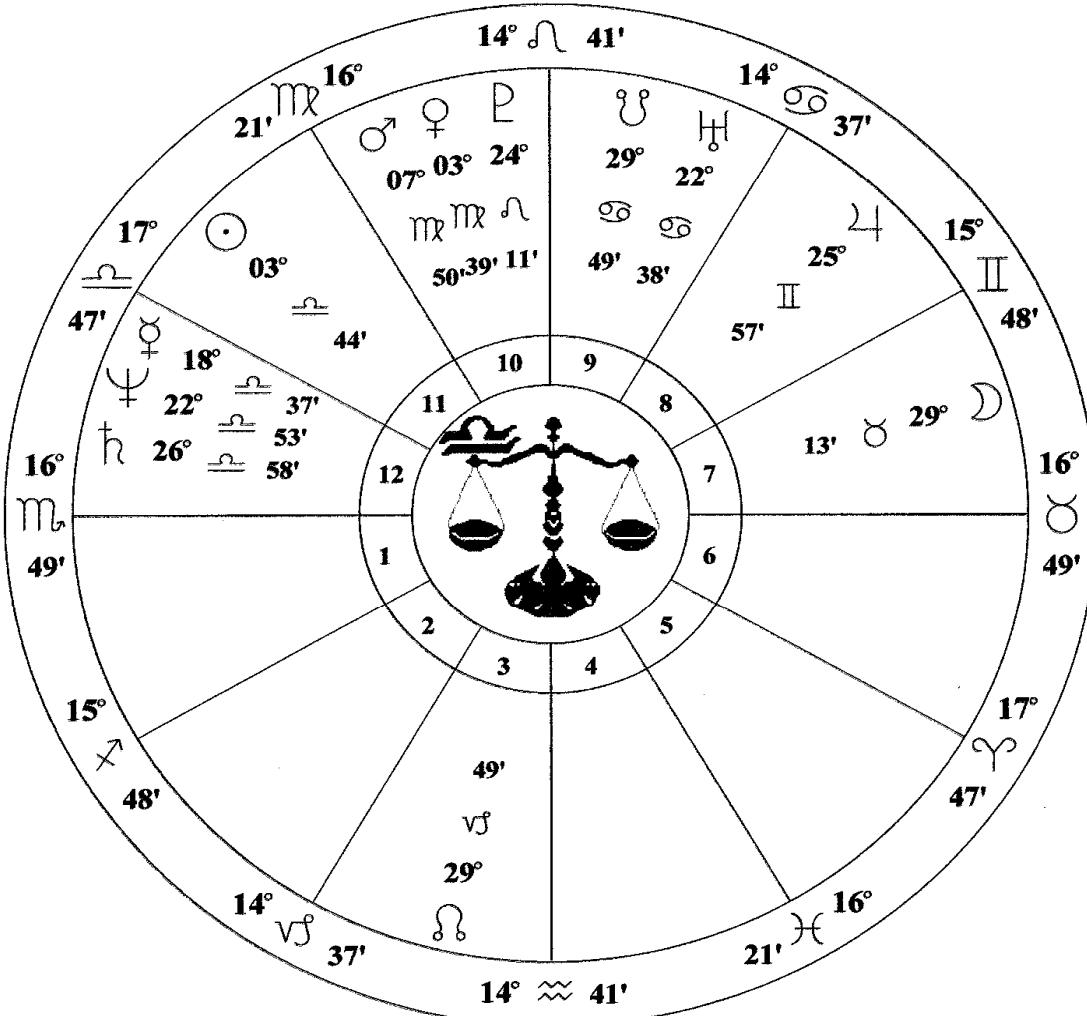
Next, is the chart of the charismatic spiritual leader, **Mata Amritanandamayi**:

The chart of this highly esteemed female saint contains the following major planetary aspects:

The Moon is trine to the Sun, and square to Pluto; Mercury is conjunct Neptune, trine Jupiter, and square Uranus; Venus is conjunct Mars; Saturn is conjunct Neptune, sextile Pluto, trine Jupiter, and square Uranus.

Mata Amritanandamayi
 Sunday, September 27, 1953 9:10:00 AM
 Indian Saint; AKA Ammachi
 Vallickavu, India
 Time Zone: -05:30 (IST)
 Longitude: 076° E 31'
 Latitude: 09° N 10'

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes

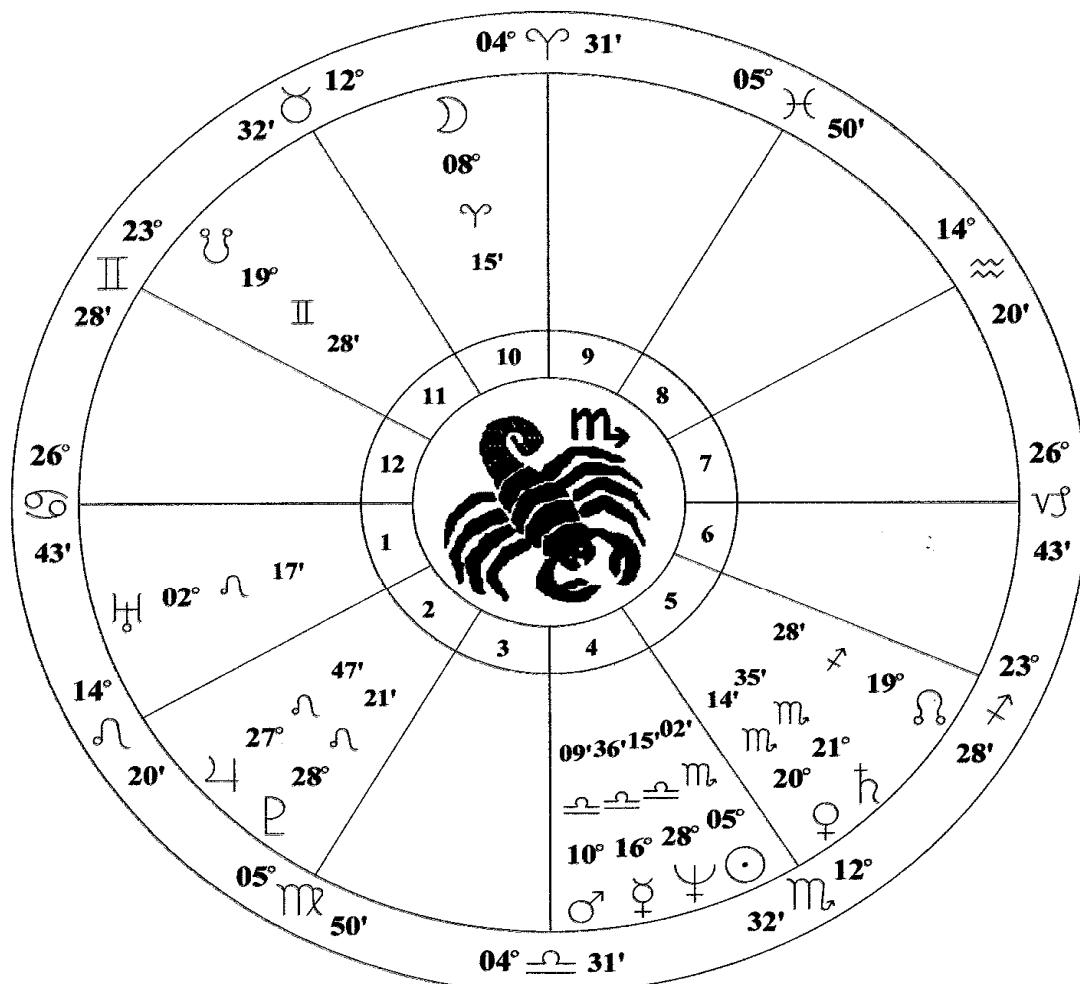


And now for the last of our eminent representative's birth-charts: Here is the chart of software entrepreneur and philanthropist, **Bill Gates**:

And here are the major planetary aspects that appear in his chart: The Sun is conjunct Neptune, and square Uranus; The Moon is opposing Mars, and trine to Uranus; Mercury is conjunct Mars; Venus is conjunct Saturn; and Jupiter is conjunct Pluto.

Bill Gates
 Friday, October 28, 1955 10:00:00 PM
 Software entrepreneur
 Bremerton, Washington
 Time Zone: 08:00 (PST)
 Longitude: 122° W 38' 54"
 Latitude: 47° N 35' 12"

Placidus Houses
 Tropical Zodiac
 Mean Nodes



As in all of the other charts, I leave it for the reader to make his or her own in-depth interpretations; but in light of our knowledge of the lives and contributions of these very creative men and women, their charts speak volumes regarding the many harmonious as well as conflicting elements that make up their psyches. Above all, these charts provide abundant evidence of the soul qualities contained at birth in these individuals whose varied talents and proclivities have been revealed in the activities of their lives. The qualities of the soul come first; then come the actions that reveal those soul-qualities. As Heraclitus observed, “character is destiny”.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. All of the charts reproduced here were generated by the Astrol Deluxe Report Writer software by John Halloran, at www.halloran.com, and are used by permission.
2. In this article, I have made little use of the Astrological signs; nor do I utilize or seriously regard the House cusps in any way. My primary interest is in the aspects (angular relationships) made by the planets in the natal planetary maps. It should be clear, therefore, that so long as I am consistent in my use of a particular Zodiacal format, the choice of Tropical or Sidereal is totally irrelevant; since one may translate back and forth between the two systems, and the aspects remain the same.

For those unfamiliar with the distinction between the Tropical Zodiac and the Sidereal Zodiac, the following clarification is offered: Both Zodiacs are synonymous with the apparent path of the Sun (remember, it is the Earth that changes position, not the Sun; but the Sun appears from the Earth's vantage point to move through 360° in the course of one year). The *Tropical* Zodiac begins with 0° Aries at the point of the Vernal Equinox, the beginning of Spring; it is a season-based system. The *Sidereal* Zodiac is based on the Sun's apparent path through the actual positions of the star-constellations in the heavenly background; so that, 0° Aries is based on the apparent conjunction of the Sun with a Fixed Star in the constellation of the Ram, designated Aries by the Greeks over two thousand years ago.

At the time that it was so designated, around 2600 years ago, the Vernal Equinox coincided with the beginning of the constellation Aries; but since that time, due to the slight wobble in the Earth's orbit, producing what is

called “the precession of the Equinoxes”, the Vernal Equinox no longer coincides with the constellation of Aries, but has slipped backward into the constellation of Pisces. In fact, today the Tropical Zodiac is about 24° off of the Sidereal (star-based) Zodiac. When it comes to making interpretations based on sign positions, this is a crucial difference; and advocates of the Sidereal system (used in the *Jyotish* system of Vedic Astrologers in India and elsewhere) often make much of the authenticity of a star-based Astrology as opposed to a solar seasonally based system such as the Tropical Zodiac. But all this, as I mentioned, is quite irrelevant if, like me, you are only considering the effectiveness of the aspects produced by the natal planets and lights, which remain the same regardless of the Zodiac system. (Also, regarding the dispute between the astrologers who use the Tropical system and those who use the Sidereal system, see the quotes of Christopher Warnock, Esq., in Chapter Two: “The Science of The Soul” (page 15) in this Article.)

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8. “The Changing of The Gods”

On February 22, 2022, a ten-part video debuted online with great fanfare. It was a free presentation publicized to an audience of people with some familiarity with and interest in the astrological writings of Richard Tarnas, the famous astrologer, cultural historian, professor of philosophy and depth psychologist. The video series was called “The Changing of The Gods,” and was based on Tarnas’ monumental ground-breaking book, published in 2006, entitled *Cosmos And Psyche*. Based on thirty years of research, *Cosmos And Psyche* was the first book by a widely respected scholar to demonstrate the connection between planetary movements and the archetypal patterns of human experience.

The video series, “The Changing of The Gods,” playing over ten evenings, and featuring Richard Tarnas and Rick Levine among others, faithfully and vividly portrayed the vision of *Cosmos And Psyche*, telling the story of the tumultuous periods of human history in the context of the hard astrological aspects between Uranus and Pluto. It was a very thorough and artful presentation, I thought. But when the ninth episode ended on the question, “Do we live in a cosmos saturated with consciousness?” I thought that this should have been posed, not as a question, but as the overwhelming conclusion: that we live in a universe not only saturated with consciousness, but a universe created, pervaded and sustained by a universal Consciousness that we must acknowledge as the Divine, as God.

A full metaphysical philosophy of the cosmos was never provided in this series, or even discussed, though in the tenth episode, and also in an additional eleventh question and answer episode, Richard Tarnas made clear his own conviction that there exists an *anima mundi*, or world-soul, that permeates the entire physical universe. It should be noted that Richard Tarnas and his associates did not have the advantage of mystical revelation; they are simply highly educated academic scholars. And ordinarily, academic scholars who are scientifically oriented are notoriously shy about using the word, “God,” or about even suggesting a supernatural or spiritual causality in their writings or public statements. And so, the producers and participants of “The Changing of The Gods” who live under the influences of those same academic restraints, are to be congratulated on their courageous work in publicly sharing Richard Tarnas’ excellent vision of a

consciously unified universe. Surely, the release of this video-series to a wide general public must be acknowledged as an epoch-making event.

In closing, let me say that the study of astrology, the knowledge of the correlation between the motions of the planets and the events in the inner and outer lives of human beings on earth, is a wondrous knowledge indeed, as it provides not only a tried and true means of investigating the depth and breadth of one's own individualized soul as well as of whole societies, but, on an even broader scale, it provides a conclusive confirmation of the immanent presence of God operating throughout the cosmos. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the study and practice of astrology is not to be thought of as the end of one's spiritual journey; rather, it is but a signpost along one's way toward the God-revealed knowledge of one's own divine Identity, the incomparable bliss of knowing one's own eternal Self.

* * *