

***The 8th House
and Business
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When we consider that the main preoccupation of most people today, particularly in the United States, is to take care of some kind of business and that business problems are constantly confronting us, it is quite strange that the astrologer has no very definite place to look for which matters in an ordinary birth-chart. Yet it seems strange only if we realize that astrology is still largely based upon the ancient traditions of societies and cultures for which business had not the same nearly all-absorbing significance it has for us today.

Of course, the astrologer can refer to the second house of a chart for whatever concerns money, wealth, possessions. He thinks of the sixth and tenth houses when he deals with your job or profession. These matters — money, possessions, job, profession — have been established in the consciousness of mankind for millennia. Their ancient astrological fields of reference were, and to some extent remain, adequately covered by the usual symbolism of the second, sixth and tenth houses. But business is something else, even though it includes in most cases factors related to money, job and profession. Business is an activity that deals with the exchange of goods and of values, of money and of services. But what makes business really business is the exchange — or, rather, the interchange, the commerce (viz., the co-mingling of people, groups, organizations, nations, etc.)

You can think of business at any and all levels of human activity. You can be told, "This is your business; take care of it" in relation to anything. The thing is not the basic factor in the situation — it is what you do to it, with it or for it. What matters essentially is the fact you have to meet it, to enter into relationship with it, to engage your being (or some phase of your being and activities) with it — in the sense that gears must engage with each other if the wheels are to turn or some work is to be done.

Business, in other words, is simply the result or product of relationships. This at once shows us what is the real astrological field for all business matters — the eighth house. It is the eighth house because that house is the one to succeed the seventh, which represents the essential manner in which a person engages in relationships with other persons — and, as well, with objects, goods, values and the outer world in general.

The old concepts concerning the houses suffer from a too narrow and descriptive classification of meaning. Each house is usually given a few meanings, as if these meanings were not too closely related to those of the other houses; students memorize these meanings and repeat them, being most often totally unaware of the why of these descriptive meanings.

Yet what is essential is not the few traditional definitions, but a thorough grasp of the significance of the sequence of the houses. The whole wheel of the twelve houses is to be seen as the entire field of man's experiences on the Earth. This entire field divides itself according to certain principles, the understanding of which establishes without any shade of doubt the essential meaning of each house.

The difficulty has been that astrologers have been and are still quasi-hypnotized by the importance of the zodiacal signs. The current belief is still, in most cases, that the cusps of

the houses are points in the zodiac, that the zodiac is the primary factor. In my opinion, this is not the most valid attitude to take, particularly in our day and age. The zodiac is susceptible to an immense variety of changes; it may mean the zodiac of **signs** or the zodiac of **constellations**. The constellations may be defined in many ways; their outlines, names and characteristics have been altered many times.

But a house remains in any case the two-dimensional projection of a 30-degree section of the space that surrounds the place of birth. Just plain space. Into that space we can project stars, signs of the zodiac or whatever we wish. The wheel of the twelve houses in itself represents simply twelve directions of space, twelve zones of human activity or fields of human experience. Its two basic coordinates are the horizontal (man lying on the ground) and the vertical (man standing erect and consciously facing the world as a positive factor).

The first house points to the eastern horizon, to the symbolic dawn of any activity — thus, to the moment of birth or rebirth. The ascendant is the first point or source of individual selfhood; there a person finds his true individuality, by which I mean his or her essential uniqueness of destiny, that which makes him or her different from others — or, at least, distinct from others. The first house does not refer to the body as such, for the body is fundamentally an inherited compound of cells and of traits of human nature specialized by a set of genes. It refers to those individual characters which show forth through the structure of a particular body, which differentiate the individual.

The seventh house, which points to the western horizon, is the complementary polarity of individual selfhood: that is, the necessity to be related to others and the way the individual goes about being related — thus, his loves and his hates, the general pattern of his marriages or partnerships, of wars and divorces, etc. Any more-or-less-permanent relationship implies some kind of contract, contractual obligation, engagement, characteristic attitude in sharing or fighting. From these, concrete results must come, whether positive or negative. All these results should be referred to the eighth house.

Just as the second house follows the first, so the eighth follows the seventh. What does this "follows" mean? It means two things which must be clearly distinguished if the meanings attributed to the houses are to make sense. **(1)** The second house reveals what will substantiate and make concrete the characteristic individuality of the person (or situation) represented by the first house (and its ascendant). **(2)** The second house shows also how the individualized activities of the person (first house) will affect and transform the body and the community in which he is born.

As the same thing can be said of the sequence between the seventh and eighth houses, it is best to consider at the outset what the second house actually and practically means in relation to the first; it will become easier, afterward, to realize the way in which the meaning of the eighth house should be derived from that of the seventh.

First, then, the second house refers to whatever will enable the individuality of the person to actualize and demonstrate itself. This means wealth and possessions at the level

of social activity; thus, a man reveals himself by means of what he owns and by the use he makes of it. But the first thing an individual self owns (i.e., operates through) is his body and all the faculties or inborn gifts contain in a latent state in his genes, his psychic inheritance, etc. Any power latent in a man's nature (or in the past of his individual soul's treasury) refers to the second house. It is his inner wealth; and he can either use it as a good trustee or abuse and waste it as a profligate.

No individual is born in a vacuum; therefore, what you do with your possessions (inner and outer) must react on your community; your community in turn reacts to that, with assistance and encouragement or with hindrances and condemnation. Hence, the second house limits the operation of the individual self seeking to assert itself at any cost. More accurately perhaps, it defines this operation. If your society sharply opposes in some direction your individualistic eagerness to be yourself, you have to accept this as a "so far and no further" factor in your life or use much of your energy to fight it.

The Seventh and Eighth Houses

When we come to the seventh house, we have to deal not with your unique, different self, but with the need this self has to relate itself to the world and to other individuals. The two are, of course, two sides of the same coin. An Aries-type individual (one with an Aries ascendant) will relate himself to others in a Libra type of way. If he has Mars in the first house, his somewhat aggressive eagerness to project himself outwardly will manifest itself most noticeably in the way he meets people and seeks to be intimately related to them.

As you seek to be related on a (relatively) permanent basis, some sort of contract or agreement is necessary, whether it be a verbal or a fully legal one. Some kind of sharing process or give-and-take is decided upon jointly — and a declaration of war is a give-and-take as much as a trade agreement on a most friendly basis. The next question is: How will the give-and-take work out? This means also: What kind of business will be the outcome?

Any kind of business involves a kind of worked-out relationship or legal contract. Our present society is a business society because human beings are incessantly entering upon a multiplicity of contracts. Every printed dollar bill is a contract — a symbol of trust and sharing in one another's welfare. Our whole life is based on credit — which means "I believe in you" (credo). The belief is a seventh-house matter; but what happens to the credit operation or the installment buying or to your savings in a bank and the oil stock you have bought — are all eighth-house matters. There is nothing mysterious or occult about the eighth house! To say so is to get caught in the old medieval astrological ghosts. There are, nevertheless, consequences of human relatedness which are not clearly visible to our five senses — these, in a sense, are occult.

When the dictator rouses a populace by emotional slogans and establishes the peculiar kind of relationship between the crowd and himself so well demonstrated by Hitler and others, the outcome of this relationship is occult in the sense that he draws into the field of

the relationship highly charged and destructive forces or powers for evil. This drawing in is an eighth-house matter.

This is why all rituals in which human beings join in order to build up thought forms of power — whether of love or of hatred — and to attract into these thought forms psychic or cosmic energies find their field of activity in the eighth house. Even in the classical idea that the eighth house refers to legacies and inheritance, we see the result of a contract. It may be a last will or the simple operation of the social law that makes the nearest of kin the heir. This, however, is subject to the prior free will of the person who has passed away. He might have disinherited you; or because he liked you, he may have placed you in his will.

In contrast, no one can deliberately change the genes pattern his seed imparts. Thus, this genetic inheritance is a second-house matter; you are born not so much with it as in the midst of it. There is nothing you can do about it; no conscious relationship is involved — unless you believe in a certain kind of personal reincarnation and "karma" and the ability of the soul to select its parents . . . a very questionable assumption in all but very rare instances.

But business is your business! You have not only the right, but also the duty to choose the kind of relationship you enter into and particularly to respond to the demands of the relationship in a way that is your own. It may be a constructive or a destructive way: kindness or selfishness, understanding love or impatient stubbornness and jealous possessiveness. The keynote here should be right relationship (seventh house), from which would be derived a constructive inspiring ritual of business or of effective partnership at one level or another (eighth house).

The words right, ritual, rite come from the Sanskrit term *rita*, which means correct procedure, activity according to truth. All kinds of business, from daily milk deliveries and banking operations to the stock market transactions and national elections, are rituals. They constitute the workings out of social relatedness.

There is not one hour of the day in which you are not occupied with eighth-house concerns. We are today as much caught in incessant rituals (unacknowledged as they be) as the men and women of old Brahmanical India whose every act was a religious ritual controlled or blessed by Brahmans acting as custodians of a (supposedly) cosmic law, the violation of which would bring dire results.

Should We Conform or Be Transformed?

Ritual, however, has another aspect. It requires conformity and indeed very often compulsion. Any contract, to be valid, must conform to custom or at least not try to violate the laws of the land. Once you have engaged yourself, you are caught; the gears are engaged and the wheels must turn — this is the real meaning of "karma." The wheels' motion and speed are determined by the gears. You can break the cycle only by a determined change of gears — and it is often a grinding and noisy operation! You may even break the gears, and then everything stops.

The moment you enter into a relationship which, by its very permanency (relative as it may be), can produce transforming results in you and the other parties to the relationship, society (and, in a broader sense, the Universe) is involved; and society demands that you conform. Every community knows instinctively that any change in its basic patterns (its Saturnian "bony structure," allegorically speaking) can only take place through spreading circles of human relationship. If I think a revolutionary thought, society does not mind — at least, it has no way to detect it as yet! But if I join hands, brains or hearts with other people on the basis of this thought (or belief) which I consider to be my own truth (first house), then a transforming energy will be released — perhaps in time a revolutionary upheaval.

Society can allow a certain amount of individual variation from its norm; but it is deeply concerned by nonconformity in relationship. If people meet in a nonconforming manner, the business which this relationship will engender — the type of energy released, the psychic or mental progeny of the relationship — can disturb the community ritual of interchange of values, of goods, of services. A movement like the Cooperative Movement brings a different incentive or attitude to business. It becomes, thus, dangerous for the status quo. Any non-"normal" use of the energy produced by relationship (by love as well as trading) disturbs precedents — and all business must depend upon precedents for its stability.

In the second and eighth houses, the problem of stability has a paramount importance. In the second house, what is at stake is the stability of human nature — the genetic norm, the ancestral tradition, etc. The individual mutations have to be kept within bounds. The individual cannot be allowed to be too unusual a specimen of the human race; he cannot make too glaring or productive a use of his uniqueness as an individual, either at the physiological or the psychological level. It is such a principle which, at the biological level, the release of atomic radiations on a large scale would critically disturb. Individuals who would be born in too great numbers with extraordinary occult powers of faculties would likewise disturb the stability of human nature.

In the eighth house, what is at stake is the stability of the patterns of society. What we call a society is a vast, intricate interplay of human relationships — some productive, others destructive (anabolic and catabolic, biologically speaking). A society starts at the seventh-house level. A society is actually not made up of individuals, but rather of relationships between people. The realm of pure individuality transcends altogether the realm of society.

A community is a field of human relationships, just as the government is a guiding field differentiated into offices — or a stable church is a hierarchical field of priestly offices. The individual personalities affect and act upon the offices they hold; but personalities pass and go, while the offices — the church, the hierarchy — remain. They resist change; they impose conformity on the office holders, with only a safe limit of possible modifications allowed to the individual.

We see this process operating today very strongly in the United States — in business as well as in politics, in schools or colleges as well. It operates in science also, as an implied conformity to undemonstrable postulates or even to a certain kind of approach in research.

Some great genius may introduce new theories; but the over-all development of the knowledge is held within rather strict intellectual boundaries.

This general conformity is inherent in all eighth-house matters. It is basic in all rituals; every word, action, gesture must be rigidly defined by a tradition or revelation and adhered to under serious psychic penalties. It is implied in all business practices; it becomes the foundation of the law — the "common law," the nature of social processes according to a norm, a Constitution, a Sacred Book. All these become standards or paragons of human relationship; they constitute the ethical foundation of society, the substance of righteousness.

Death or Regeneration

It is because of this that the eighth house is also spoken of as the house of death. The norm kills the too eccentric (ex-centric) individual. The routine of the working out of a partnership often absorbs the uniqueness of each of its partners. In the give-and-take, the taking destroys the originality of the giving: the two, or the many, begin to act as one, to look alike. The relationship may destroy the individualities of the related persons.

Yet this eighth-house death can also mean regeneration, though this last term does not adequately express what takes place when the individual — having passed through the crises and the purifying fire of true sharing — re-emerges with a deeper and wider consciousness of his destiny in the world. Individuality (first house-ascendant), when it is based only on a sense of how different and unique one is, is only in fact egocentricity. But the true individual is far more than the ego! Individuality blossoms out only when it discovers its function and place in society, in the Universe. It can only learn to be a participant in the work of the world through selfless relationship, through love, through sharing — that is, through the seventh-house crucible of human interchange.

If this crisis is faced in total relatedness; if "the other" is accepted without reservations — then there is a kind of seventh-house baptism. Some higher power enters the soul that dared to be totally immersed in the waters of relatedness. Then the temptation follows at the threshold of the symbolical eighth house. "Now that you have power, what will you do with it?" asks the tester. This power of spirit is the divine inheritance which every one can draw from; but he must qualify through the trials of pure motivation.

In the ordinary run of human existence, the energy born of seventh-house relationships is at once translated in terms of **(1)** bread or wealth, **(2)** ego glorification, and **(3)** power over people. Only a godlike individual can repudiate and transcend this threefold temptation; therefore eighth-house experiences have usually been painted in somber and tragic colors. Business leads to profit; and the profit motive is seen by the ego as the main reason for partnership — one marries for money, and one goes into business to gain wealth.

This is traditional; this is eighth-house conformity. As a result, the tiny spark of individuality and the hesitant will to self-transformation or the romantic ideal of transfiguration through love are soon absorbed by the rituals of the so-called mature life.

In the ninth house, the businessman learns how to obey or circumvent the law. In the tenth house, he reaches the Board of Directors status. In the eleventh, he plays golf with the "right people" at the socially respectable club. In the twelfth, he builds up a philanthropic or cultural foundation to perpetuate his ego while evading income tax. All is well.

The testing ground is the eighth house. It makes one a dedicated, transfigured individual with a destiny of world transformation, within whatever sphere of influence may be his by spiritual birthright (whether small or vast does not matter) — or else a successful man of business solidifying a step further the particular rituals of a particular society or culture or just one among the millions who simply conform without success or failure, spiritually or commercially. The problems and tests of the eighth house are daily ones. They refer to the small decisions one must make as one goes about the business of living, at home or in the office. These decisions are obviously not to be made, if astrological advice is sought, only on the basis of eighth-house indications; but in the eighth, we have the basic frame of reference for all that pertains to business, to the processes of effectual partnership, to the working out of all contracts and all breaking of contracts — this at the psychological and conjugal levels as much as in the commercial world.

Practically all wealth, all social power, all forms of psychosomatic vitality are the outcome of some kind of relationship. In the eighth house, all human relationships reveal their true quality and the real motives for the relationship. "By their fruits, you shall know them." And there are many, many kinds of fruits.