

The Fourth Degree Scorpio What Does It Portend? by Dane Rudhyar

On March 8, around noon in America, Mars' zodiacal longitude ceases to increase; the period of the red planet's retrograde motion begins. It lasts until May 26; and on April 24th, at 7:04 A.M. Eastern Standard Time, a total lunar eclipse occurs on the same fourth degree of Scorpio which marked the stationary position of Mars on the 8th of March. On this April 24, a widespread group of students of esoteric doctrines along theosophical lines will celebrate what they consider to be the birthday of Gautama the Buddha at the Full Moon of May 1967, which links the Sun in Taurus to the Moon in Scorpio. This is, according to the group (which has adherents all over the globe), the Wesak Full Moon, and a high point in the cycle of the year; at that time, it is claimed that great spiritual forces are released which affect — or seek to affect — the whole of humanity.

Last year, this Wesak Full Moon was widely celebrated on May 4, which witnessed also a lunar eclipse — a partial one. This year, the eclipse is total and will be visible mainly throughout the Pacific Ocean, but also in our western states and as far as India. There were lunar eclipses in Scorpio in 1957 and 1958 and on April 23, 1948. There were also lunar eclipses in May, 1938, and May, 1939, when Hitler's Germany was progressively preparing for World War II; Mars had just completed its retrograde period (June 23 to August 24, 1939) when the Nazis invaded Poland, after having signed a treaty with Soviet Russia.

There was a lunar eclipse on Scorpio in May, 1920, a year after the ill-fated peace conference in Versailles. Mars was stationary retrograde at 9° Scorpio on March 15 of that year and becoming direct again on June 2 — a situation analogous to the one we will witness this year. On March 19, 1920, the U.S. Senate refused to ratify the Versailles Treaty. President Wilson had been stricken ill on the preceding September 25. In June, 1920, Harding was nominated candidate for the Republican Party. This was indeed a sad period for our country. It witnessed a bitter disappointment relative to the end of that war which had been supposedly waged "to end all wars;" a sense of futility mixed with a revolt against old-fashioned morality and sexual restraints; and the morally destructive and senseless adoption of Prohibition which led to the universal disregard for law.

The combination of a lunar eclipse in Scorpio and a Mars retrograde period in the same sign has to do with the 46-year cycle of Mars and with the fact that 2 1/2 cycles of the Moon's nodes equal close to 46 years. In the spring of 1873, there was also a lunar eclipse in Scorpio and Mars retrograde in the same sign; and that year, 1873, was marked by a commercial crisis and a financial panic in September.

In 1920, the lunar eclipse came near the Moon's North Node, while the present one and that of 1873 occurred near the South Node. This difference may be quite significant, though it should probably not be overstressed. Theoretically, a South Node lunar eclipse tends to have a more negative effect upon the mood of the general public; the crisis of the year 1873 is probably a good example of this. There were no lunar eclipses in 1966 and only one in 1965. So this May, 1967, lunar eclipse may conceivably assume a special importance. The fact that it is taking place on a degree emphasized by the previous stationary retrograde position of Mars could be construed as stressing a particular situation related to the fourth degree of Scorpio. There were no such exact degree correlations in the cases of the previous lunar eclipses mentioned.

What then could be related to the fourth degree of Scorpio? Neptune was crossing it in November and December of 1957, in April-May and September-October of 1958. Uranus will be there in the late fall of 1975 and during 1976; and it crossed it in 1891-1892. Pluto will reach it in 1984-1985. (Remember Orwell's book **1984** — a coincidence?)

I have found the Sabian Symbols for the 360 degrees of the zodiac (available in my books, **The Astrology of Personality** [and **An Astrological Mandala**], as well as in Marc Jones' **The Sabian Symbols in Astrology**) most significant in a vast number of individual and national charts; so there may be some valuable indications in considering the basic symbol given for the fourth degree of Scorpio: **a youth holding a lighted candle**. The symbol evokes the picture of a young acolyte during a church service and can, thus, be considered to refer to the first contact of an adolescent with a type of activity dedicated to the upholding of a spiritual ideal with which all humanity is (at least potentially) concerned. Should we see in this a possible reference to the rather extraordinary yearning of so many late teen-agers and post-graduate students for some sort of "mystic" awareness transcending the deadly routine and conformism of our increasingly commercialized and "technocratized" society?

That such a youthful and immature yearning may often take not too constructive and rational forms is, of course, to be expected — the more so the greater and more insidious the pressures of our hypocritical "Great Society" which exists in empty words far more than in truly significant deeds — especially where civil rights and so-called freedom of choice are concerned. What matters actually is not the negative escapism implied in various types of behavior, but rather the positive feeling of rebellion against a society hypnotized by material productivity at all cost, successful suburban living, and a holier-than-thou feeling toward the rest of humanity (which assuredly suggests a Sagittarian ascendant for the **birth-chart of the American people** on July 4, 1776).

We may indeed be coming very near to a great turning point in our American society — and in the historical evolution of mankind as a whole. It might be that this year 1967 (which numerologically adds up to 23, a number of karmic acceptance and compassionate self-sacrifice) is destined to be at least a significant prelude to what is likely to occur, in one way

or another, around 1989-1990 or after. The tensions which have been building up through 1965-1966 — years of crucial dilemmas and inability to take a deeply transforming action — are perhaps going to be released after or during the retrograde period of Mars.

We do not have to expect tremendous or catastrophic events calling for big headlines — though such are certainly not impossible. What is likely, in any case, is that the feeling of the inherent wrongness of the world situation and the loss of confidence in the validity of the basic structures of our technological and "dis-humanized society" will reach a still more intense pitch and grip a real majority of people almost everywhere. The undignified protest of the public against Prohibition in 1920 may be repeated if laws for a stricter control of so-called psychedelic drugs and pornographic literature are passed.

This does not mean that the escapist and often psychologically destructive trends of the last ten or more years are to be countenanced. They are appalling; but also they are **symptoms**, not causes. We simply do not dare to face the causes and to accept the fact that our Western civilization — with its unwholesome reliance on intellectuality and technology and its dilly-dallying with the karmic results of commercial greed and colonialism — must be basically transformed if it is to escape the fate of the old Roman Empire. The modern barbarians are within as well as, or more than, without; and the fact that computers and automated machinery are replacing the slaves of twenty centuries ago does not make the situation better, spiritually and morally. What slavery in any form morally destroys are the masters, even more than the slaves. We can today be destroyed by the type of mentality which makes possible our computerized technology, whose influence is spreading insidiously to all realms of human existence, our approach to sex included.

Scorpio has been called the "accursed sign" by non-thinkers who mistook symptoms for causes, as so many of our modern doctors do. Scorpio represents instead the area of consciousness and human activity in which men long to commune, beyond all artificialities of set cultural and ethical traditions, with other human beings in a total ego-surrendering experience of unity. Scorpio is the deep **return to the roots** of the life that had surged upward toward intellectual skies and egocentrically splendid flowerings. Scorpio is the return to a realization of the **natural rhythms of power** within each of us, that rhythm which individualizes us in the very moment it reveals to us our unity with all that is human and our essential participation in the "work of the world."

Traditionally speaking, Mars in Scorpio is in a condition of maximum strength. Actually, this year, what is emphasized by Mars' motion is not the sign Scorpio but rather the 25th degree of Libra — for on that degree, Mars will oppose the Sun; and over this degree, it will pass three times. In the Sabian Symbols, this degree is depicted by: **A falling gold leaf teaches life to a rebellious schoolboy** — or, in the original notes from which Marc Jones derived the later development of the symbol, "*information in the symbol of an autumn leaf.*" What is this "information" a gold autumnal leaf conveys to our consciousness? Could it be the realization that all existence is cyclic and that the glory of any culture and society must end — perhaps end in extraordinary beauty and significance, but perhaps also in wet decay

or dried-up brown? Yet this end has within itself the potency of new beginnings, for within the decaying humus, there are seeds, inconspicuous, yet in which immortal life is a promise of rebirth.

The great Persian prophet **Baha'u'llah** — whom the members of the Bahai Faith, with centers in nearly all countries of the globe, regard as the "Divine Manifestation" and root power of the new Aquarian Age (and even of a still vaster cycle) — was born exactly at sunrise on November 12, 1817. On that day last November, 1966, a solar eclipse fell very close to Venus and Neptune and in sextile to Uranus and Pluto. As I write these pages, this eclipse and our congressional elections are yet to take place. The eclipse occurs at 19°47' Scorpio, which is the degree of the Sun and the ascendant in Baha'u'llah's birth-chart — which is also the South Node of the planet Mars. There was a solar eclipse on the 17th degree of Scorpio three days before his birth.

The Sabian Symbol for the 20th degree of Scorpio pictures **a woman drawing two dark curtains aside**. It is a symbol of daring and penetration into the mysteries of life. Perhaps the November, 1966, solar eclipse reveals the background of what might take place in late April, 1967, under the influence of the Wesak Full Moon, consecrated to that great personage, Gautama the Buddha, who also dared to pierce through the veils of Brahminical ritualism and to reveal to us the supreme mind and wisdom which crystallized cultures and social institutions always seek to hide, especially in their autumnal period of slow disintegration.

Be that as it may, we find ourselves in a period which holds great possibilities of renewal for those who have the Scorpio courage to commune with the root power that beats at the vital core of all human lives. The retrograde period of Mars this spring should be considered a significant time for repotentialization — I might even say revirginalization. In the old alchemical-occult symbolism, the salmon fighting its way upstream to spawn in fresh water represents the supreme effort of man's consciousness seeking to renew itself and indeed recreate itself at the source of existence, where the tone of the true individual self can be heard. This "return to source" is an excellent symbol for retrograde Mars; it represents power seeking to recover its pristine purity.

Alas, few men ever succeed, during such periods of Mars retrogressions, to achieve such a recovery in depth of the "state of innocence" — as mystics would say. Where such an endeavor is unsuccessful, and especially where it is not even attempted, we often have to expect as a result, after Mars again turns direct, some explosive release of energy. This would mean the very end of May, around the Full Moon opposing the Sun in early Gemini. Yet such a result is certainly not inevitable. The stage may have been set last November for important events, whether or not we were aware of it.

We must have faith as well as vision; courage as well as understanding. We must not fear the challenge brought to us by Scorpio, for through this challenge, we may for the first time experience what it means to be totally committed to the tomorrow of mankind.