

THE PLANETS and Their Symbols

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PART ONE

The Sun and Moon

In traditional astrology the Sun and the Moon are not actually considered as planets, but as the "lights" — the Light of the Day and the Light of the Night. They symbolize the two fundamental aspects of that universal Power which ancient philosopher-mystics saw as the dynamic warp and woof of the material world.

In the beginning was the Word, St. John's Gospel tells us. This "beginning" is represented in most systems of symbolism by the dot at the center of the circle. This dot is the "First Point," the Point of Emergence, the Creative Source, the **Alpha** of the great cosmic cycle of existence, the Undying Root, the "Son" who is sent by the forever hidden Father, the Germ of the Universe, etc. In astrology, as well as in astronomy, this dot within the circle represents the Sun.



The circle without the dot symbolizes space **before** any manifestation of existence occurs — not, however, infinite and boundless space, but rather as an already limited potentiality, as a virgin field within the boundaries of which a universe will take place. The figure zero in arithmetical symbolism is not **absolute** nothingness; it represents a stage in which, while there is as yet "nothing," the potentiality of a defined type of existence is nevertheless present — it is present, we might say, as thought in the Mind of God.

This divine Idea or Plan becomes "in the beginning" a creative Act — "Let there be light" — which dynamites and fecundates the virgin field of space.

Then "life" starts operating; and its infinitely varied operations are cyclic — that is, they obey certain definite rhythms. The sequence of birth, growth, maturity, disintegration, death and rebirth occurs at all levels of existence and in an infinite variety of forms.

It is this sequence which the lunation cycle, from New Moon to New Moon, represents in astrology; for the Moon is the most ancient symbol of the basic rhythm of life everywhere on earth. It is pictured as the Moon's crescent, because, in this form the Moon stands for the earliest period of the life cycle, when the vital forces and the energy of growth the strongest in all living-organisms.



When the Moon is in conjunction with the Sun, it is known as "dark of the Moon." The Moon is absorbed, hidden in its embrace with the Sun, and the creative Spirit fecundates dark space. Then as the Moon emerges from the radiance of the sunset in Western skies, the thin crescent becomes visible, and with it for awhile the barely visible totality of the lunar disc — the virgin field impregnated by the Sun's light and power. As the lunar crescent

grows in light, the ashen face of the Moon — remembrance, as it were, of the moment of fecundation — disappears; we witness the gradual increase of the Moon, symbol of the growth of the young organism into a fully mature and flowering expression of life in which the potentialities of existence imparted to the virgin space by the creative solar act becomes fully actualized. This is the Full Moon phase, after which the process of gradual withdrawal of the life energies begins.

Toward the end of it we can see in the East before sunrise the inverted crescent of the Moon — or rather, one ought to, say, the Moon's "descrescent." In astrology this phase has been called the "Balsamic Moon," a term whose origin is not too clear, but is probably alchemical. The life cycle has reached the seed stage; the seed falls into the damp soil of autumn to undergo a mysterious process of incubation or hibernation which will end with a new call to life by the power of the Sun and germination come springtime.

The Sun is, for all that lives on the earth's surface, the one radiant source of power, the fountainhead of the many forms of energy — light, heat, electricity, etc. The Sun in a birth-chart likewise represents the power which sustains all the activities of the body and their psychic counterparts and overtones. It is, to use an analogy, the fuel on which the engine of personality runs — and most evidently the nature of such a fuel (whether it be wood, steam, gasoline, electricity, or atom power) dictates the characteristics, the type of materials used and the structure of the engine. A person powered by an Aries type of Sun force is likewise different from one whose vital energies stem from a Virgo type of solar energy.

Every person tends normally to use the type of energy which is most readily available and most natural to him. From this one can deduce many basic traits of character, and also the nature of the experiences which the individual will attract and seek, because these experiences demand just that type of power to meet them successfully; indeed he "resonates" to that kind of opportunity and they attract each other, for everything in our lives is basically a matter of attunement of force.

The Sun in a person's birth-chart also refers to the essential purpose of his life and to the inner power seeking its fulfillment the true "will," in contrast to the ego will or ambition of the person.

The Moon is fundamentally the **capacity of adaptation to the environment** — the inner and psychic, as well as the outer, physical and social environment. If it refers also to the mind, according to some astrologers, it is because mind is at first the capacity of adjustment to the challenges of daily living so that the child might make the best of them. It is the cunning of primitive men, as well as children plotting family intrigue.

Negatively the Moon refers to moods — that is, to our passive subservience to modifications of our psychic or physical environment. Our natal Moon indicates the most basic character of our feeling responses to people and to surroundings, if we consider its place in zodiacal signs and natal houses.

Most important of all is the Moon's relationship to the Sun - that is, the phase of the ever-changing soli-lunar relationship, all the aspects of which constitute the lunation cycle of some thirty days duration — for life without light would be impossible. That the disc of the Sun and that of the Full Moon are practically of the same visual size — the nearness of the Moon compensating for its really much smaller size — is one of the most remarkable coincidences. For man the attraction of light and life have the same power; yet he must choose which one will dominate his consciousness, and the degree to which he does so is an important factor in his ultimate character.

PART TWO

Venus and Mars

Venus and Mars are the planets closest to the earth; they refer to what is most personal and primordial in the make-up and the behavior of a human being, to the most intimate factors in the life of an individual.

Venus moves inside of the earth's orbit, Mars outside of it; and this fact alone tells what meaning they have in astrology. Indeed the basic meanings attributed to each of the planets in our solar system is neither a matter of chance nor the result of millennial observations by astrologers and empirical tests; these meanings are deduced essentially from the place the planets occupy in the solar system and in relation to the earth.

Thus, because Mars is the first planet **outside** the earth's orbit, it represents fundamentally **outgoing activity** and the organic and psychological instrumentalities which make such an activity possible (for instance, at the physical level, a man's muscles, his adrenal glands releasing quick energy for action).

In contrast to Mars, Venus — the first planet inside the earth's orbit — refers to man's ability to bring into the field of his consciousness and inner life the results of his experiences, and thus to pass a feeling judgment — pleasurable or painful, elating or depressing, good or bad — upon these experiences which Mars made possible.



The symbolic characters traditionally used to represent Mars and Venus can best be understood if we relate them to the one for our planet, **Earth**. In many medieval paintings we find God (or even the emperor, as a divine ruler), holding in his hand a globe surmounted by a cross. This is the earth, as the home of Man, whom God created in His image and likeness.

According to a persistent and widespread occult tradition, the planet Venus is the spiritual twin of the earth. It was from Venus that some eleven millions years ago a host of spiritual beings came upon our planet to give to animal-like human beings the divine "seed" of self-conscious intelligence and moral responsibility. The Greek myth of Prometheus is an abridged version of the same event.

It is also said that wheat, perhaps corn and bees (and probably ants also, as everything has its shadow aspect) were brought along in some manner from Venus. Even the Hebrew Bible has its version of this "descent" upon the earth of quasi-divine beings when it speaks (Genesis 5) of the coming of the Sons of God who took as wives the daughters of men. Whether this be fact or myth (but what is the source of myth?) the astrological (and astronomical) sign for the earth is that of Venus **inverted** — and we should remember the old saying that "the Devil is God inverted." Here on earth the — cross dominates the circle or globe; **on Venus it is the circle which stands over the cross**. What does this mean?



When one looks through a small telescope or gunsight often a cross made of two fine threads (the web spun by the black widow spider-makes the best) helps us **to focus** our observations or aim This most ancient symbol, the even-armed cross, is not only a Christian image — its meaning reaches into the very depth of existence, and especially of human existence, for man is that being in whom all powers and faculties **can** reach a clear and

sharp focus. The value of our modern science and its rigorous type of logical thinking is that it is a discipline of thought which makes possible the most precise focusing of our attention — our discrimination and, in general, our mental faculties.

This indeed is the function of earth life and of incarnated man — to be precise, accurate and sharply discriminative in conditions in which an either-or judgment (an intellectual-rational or a moral yes-or-no judgment) is imperative. But man can go too far — and perhaps has gone too far — along this road leading to the sharpest possible focusing of his mind and energies, and our modern scientific civilization, based on the "specialist," may yet prove how disastrous this "too far" can be.

Venus, on other hand, refers to a realm of existence in which a whole view of life dominates the opposite earth trend toward the sharply focused analysis of a multitude of details. The circle is a symbol of wholeness, of infinite possibility. The Venus symbol tells us that in that Venus realm "with God everything is possible," because the consciousness of the whole is ever present.

The Divine is also ever present. Yet it is present in close association with the "human" (i.e. the cross). It is a consciousness of wholeness emerging from the many crosses of existence. You start with the cross, the crisis, the tragedy, then you rise to the total vision, the **conscious** fulfillment or plenitude of being.

On earth man starts from an unconscious fullness, of which the Garden of Eden is the Biblical symbol, then he has to emerge from this Edenic childlike unconsciousness in which he passively reflects the Divine Image — and the emergence occurs through crises, through conflicts, through "sin" (the "negative way" which leads man to light out of sheer horror in the realm of darkness).

About the 6th century B.C. humanity experienced a rebirth in mind. A new mind began to operate, whether in the Asia of the Buddha or the Europe of Pythagoras and the Greek classical era. This was an -emergence from a more naive, earthbound consciousness of life energies and sex power. It led to the Cross on Gethsemane and to European rationalism. It is only now that the Venusian type of mind is beginning really to operate in humanity — the sense of the whole, intuitive thinking, and the emergence of a **global** society.



In the astrological glyph for the planet Mars there is also a circle and — if the figure is correctly drawn — an arrow pointing up to outer space at a 45-degree angle above the horizontal. The 45-degree angle is very significant in that it marks a direction of maximum intensity in electromagnetic fields. The circle here represents the biopsychic field of man's personality, and when internal pressure builds up to an explosive point it is released in a "Martian" outgoing. What we have therefore in the Mars symbol is a picture of simple, spontaneous release of energy.

One can relate it to the symbol for Sagittarius, but in this hieroglyph we see a release which stems not from a circle but actually from a cross, whose vertical arm has been bent by a dynamic urge to expansion. It is probable that the direction of the arrow is not at a 45 degree angle to the horizontal, but rather at a 60 degree angle — which would make it coincide with the direction represented by the cusps of the Third and Ninth Houses of a birth-chart And the sign Sagittarius has much to do with the Ninth House of the horoscope.

PART THREE

Jupiter and Saturn

With these two planets we reach the realm of social activity and of the "social sense" in individual human beings. The spontaneous self-centered outgoings of Mars more often than not lead to self-undoing, or at least to the scattering of the energies of the personality along a multitude of unrelated and perhaps anarchistic (non-ordered) ways. This explosive condition is symbolized in the solar system by the band of tiny asteroids which occurs between Mars and Jupiter.

Beyond this area of self-scattering activity we find the largest planet of the solar system, Jupiter, with its many satellites, which perhaps were asteroids captured by the powerful gravitational field of astrology's "Great Benefic." Jupiter is, however, by no means always a highly beneficent or fortunate influence, unless the person whose chart being studied is a gregarious conformist — that is, unless the social sense of that person dominates his consciousness of being an "individual," autonomous and self-sufficient.

Jupiter represents essentially the realization in a human being that alone he is normally unable to meet the harsh challenges of life on an earth teeming with potential enemies and dangers, but that by cooperating with his fellow men he can handle successfully the problems of existence.

"In union there is strength," is Jupiter's motto; and union here has a very extensive meaning. From union an organized society comes forth; from union also, at a more psychological level, is born the religious sense, and all forms of culture and art, all social institutions — and first of all, language and the various kinds of symbols and myths on which religion, culture and political states were founded.

This union must become stabilized if it is to be effectual. It is not enough for men to want to live and work together; it is also necessary that each person be consciousness, not only of his place and function in the communal whole, but aware as well of the places and functions of his fellow men, and not merely aware of these places and functions, but willing (or compelled) to accept and respect them. This is where Saturn comes in. It guarantees to every person sole and exclusive rights to his particular place and function in nature. This Saturnian guarantee takes the form of "law and order", in the community, of state institutions, courts of justice, police forces, etc.

In the individual person Saturn represents the ego considered as a "social construct" — that is, as a definite and individual pattern of behavior, feeling and thinking - which the human being builds through childhood and adolescence in order to cope **in his own way** with the pressures and everyday challenges of his immediate physical and social environment. This is the basis of we call the person's character.

The ego pattern of one's character may be rigid or flexible, heavy, and dark, or translucent to spiritual forces from space, but it must be there if the individual is not to be a more or less helpless medium, changed by any passing current or superficial contact. Thus it is quite senseless to speak of Saturn basically as the "Great Malefic." It becomes a malefic power only if it leads to psychological or social rigidity, if it dominates ruthlessly or stupidly a consciousness frightened by a sense of insecurity and neurotic loneliness, perhaps as the result of personal shocks, social tragedy, or utter lack of parental love in childhood or early adolescence.

Jupiter and Saturn are polar opposites; the former expands, the latter contracts, in order to consolidate. The graphic symbols used for these two planets reveal clearly this polarity, and the area of life where the planets' actions most basically are felt. It is the area of adjustment to everyday life and of organic and psychological growth represented by the Moon. The symbols of the planets are formed by a cross and a lunar crescent reduced a line.

Jupiter ♃ + : 4 ___ Saturn ♄ + : 5



In Jupiter's symbol the lunar crescent or curved line is attached to the horizontal and spreads above it, suggesting a counterclockwise motion. **In Saturn's symbol** the curved line is attached to the bottom of the vertical line of the cross, and it suggests a clockwise action. The Jupiter hieroglyph resembles closer the number 4, while Saturn's is like the number 5. All of these points are very significant and could be analyzed in great detail along cosmic, occult and numerological lines.

The cross represents here the individual person, and the lunar crescent the life energy of bio-psychological growth. Jupiter's symbol represents life coming "down" into the concrete experience, seeking expansion through a multitude of contacts and sensations. This is also the deepest meaning of the number 4, which represents the basic vibration of the earth and of mankind as a species of life.

The "normal" human operates along this mass vibration of the planet, a planet whose main function is to **provide a field for the utmost focalization of spiritual energies**. For this social consciousness is necessary, because society — with its particularized, institutionalized cultures and its rationalistic languages (required for clear thinking) — alone can provide a human person with all he needs for becoming a focused expression of the Universal Mind, or of "God."

Saturn assists Jupiter in steadying the conditions of this great spiritual experiment, humanity. The deity of time sees to it that the original impulse of the experiment is never forgotten; thus his conservatism, his clock-mindedness, his insistence on accuracy and integrity.

But Saturn does more. As it isolates the individual from (or within) the social mass, Saturn demands that the individual person be strictly and purely what he or she is by birthright. The symbol for that planet is like number 5 because Man, the individual, is a five-pointed star — a pentagram. As such he emerges from the mass vibration of humanity, the 4, with an immense potentiality for growth.

As a Jupiterian being, man may be the representative of a divine power — that cosmic power which beats through and sustains the whole earth and mankind; he may be priest-hierophant, or king by divine right. He leads the collectivity, yet is actually molded by the needs and degree of consciousness of this collectivity. He is an officiant in the great ritual of our planet's and of mankind's eonic evolution.

In its highest aspect, by contrast, Saturn refers to the adept, the man who has emerged totally from the mass vibration of humanity and who is "a law unto himself" because he is — now, purely and fully, his self. He is beyond caste and conformity. He stands in the light of the God within him. He is the "I am that I am." But, as every power in the universe is twofold, positive and negative, the Saturn individual can also be the dark adept, masterful in the way of destruction, utterly rigid in his superlative ego, utterly isolated and self-condemned to an eventual spiritual disintegration, to the death of the soul.

Jupiter also has his negative aspect. He is the ambitious high priest or fascist dictator who uses the blind devotion of the faithful to glorify himself and the religious-political office which he has identified himself. He is the powerful man of business and finance who manipulates a worldwide industrial and commercial empire, keeping people in either crude or subtle forms of subjection. He is the propaganda man with no respect for truth, who gorges himself with food, power or lust — beneficent and generous only in such spectacular ways as serve his purpose and immortalize socially his name.

The realm where Jupiter and Saturn operate does not go beyond the limits of the earth's consciousness. The planet Saturn defines the outer boundaries of the Sun-centered system. What occurs beyond Saturn is an intermediary zone within which great tensions between the solar system and the galaxy operate on a cosmic scale.

PART FOUR

Uranus and Neptune

The most basic fact of existence is that any organized system or unit of existence is at the same time contained within a greater whole, and the container of smaller wholes. A living cell for instance, contains many molecules, but it is also only one among myriads other cells constituting a living organism.

A human being, in turn, contains billions of cells, but he is only one living organism within the earth's total being which includes trillions of other organisms. Likewise what we call our Sun is only one of the billions of stars contained in the great spiral nebula which we know as the galaxy in turn rules over a system of planets.

These planets fall into two categories: those within Saturn's orbit (Saturn included), and those outside of this orbit. The first group constitutes the solar system per se. Saturn, with its highly symbolic ring, is traditionally Lord of the Boundaries. Every living organism, or any well-organized system of activity (be it a business firm or a national state), must have concrete boundaries. Yet its influence, and indeed its total being, does not stop altogether at these boundaries. It extends into a relatively transcendent zone, which in the case of a human being we may call its "aura."

The nature of such an aura is best understood if we see it as an expression of **the state of relationship** in which the living organism is related to the larger whole in the existence and the activities of which it participates. The aura is thus a zone of exchange; within it we find the complex radiations which the organism emanates and which constitute projection of its vibratory state of health, of feeling and mind. We find also what comes to the organism from his environment, whether it be to bring him what it requires for its subsistence and further growth, or take away, purify or transmute negative products and waste materials. It is to the "aura" of the solar system, considered as a strictly defined and self-sufficient cosmic entity, that Uranus, Neptune and Pluto belong. They represent three characteristic modes of interaction between this solar system and the greater whole in which it is operating, the galaxy. They are **in** the space field surrounding the solar system, but not **of** it. They do not belong to our system because they are the "agents of the galaxy." They are witnesses to and servants of this immense cosmic existence.

As the solar system exists within the galactic space, the substance of the galaxy pervades the entire solar system, and as well every cell of our human bodies and every earthly molecule — somewhat as sea water pervades every fish living therein, or as the air's oxygen pervades every human cell. But these "agents of the galaxy" have their headquarters outside of the specific Saturnian boundaries of our solar system.

As far as man is concerned, their base of operation is outside of his skin-bounded physical organism. A man, I repeat, is in constant relationship with his social and planetary environment, for he is a participant (however insignificant his participation may be) in the total life of humanity and of the planet earth. I, as a person, act within humanity and the earth — and humanity and the earth act, not only upon, but also within me. No one can escape from such an interaction as long as he breathes air, eats food and excretes waste materials. There are analogical processes in the realm of mind as well, for we inhale elements from the collective mentality of our people, and every thought of ours leaves us to make an impact upon the vast reservoir of the mind of humanity.

Uranus, Neptune and Pluto represent the forces which bring humanity messages from the beyond. Not only messages, but powerful suggestions and perhaps commands. And by "the beyond" I do not mean anything miraculous or mystical but simply the vast realm of the galaxy.

In multitude of ways, most of which may seem very strange and disturbing to "normal" citizens of an ego-centered technology worshipping society, the forces acting in humanity which Uranus, and Neptune represent compel us sharply or insidiously to become aware of facts, concepts and ideas which upset our tradition-based status quo. We have to be aware

of these when we reach a point at which the manner of our participation in the activities of the greater whole of which we are parts **is scheduled to change**. The great clock of evolution sounds the "Move head!" — and move ahead we must. Some do move ahead; others stumble in fright and drop away from the mainstream of life.

Uranus rings the bell, or flashes the command. We may not hear or see it. We may think this is just one of those changes of scenery which give spice to our dull existence. We rush onward, head over heels, and become utterly confused or bewildered by peculiar circumstances, and even more perhaps by our unexpected reactions. We have never behaved or felt that way before, we think. But the ego-self that thinks thus does not realize, or does not **want** to realize, that what the Uranus-dictated situation demands is this ego's abdication or radical transformation.

The ego of the present-day average man — and indeed of most intellectual people — constitutes **a particular way of participating** in the great drama of human evolution on this planet, indeed a particular way of serving the purpose of humanity. There are other ways, which required a type of psycho-mental organization more inclusive, wider in scope, more spiritual in dynamics than the type which today we label "ego."

Uranus gives us at least intimations of the nature of these ways. We see them exemplified in geniuses in all fields of human activity — religious, artistic, scientific, political, etc. The lives of these men are geared to the vast wheel of the evolution of Man — not to the small wheel geared to a greedy, inert, materialistic and precedent haunted ego.

Neptune complements Uranus by dissolving everything that Uranus has shattered or let loose. Neptune is the Great Solvent of the Alchemist, and also the Great Confuser. It fuses together traditionally separate and exclusivistic types of peoples, of cultures, of individuals and racial behaviors, of class feelings. It levels down prominences that long stood on dogmatic pedestals and foundations of prejudice. Neptune is the sea. Everything returns to the sea, as autumnal leaves return to the soil. Out of new combinations virgin substance will use in time to serve the purpose of a new and wider mode of existence.



The astrological symbol for Neptune, refers to the trident of the Greek god who had dominion over the sea. Deeper still it suggests the operation of a threefold Divine Power dominating the individual in crisis. In some countries the symbol for Neptune displays a circle instead of a cross, in which case we are referred to the most positive aspect of Neptune — that is, Neptune as the creator of forms of organization which are all inclusive, which encompass all because they are born of total compassion. Neptune, for instance, inspires all true forms of social cooperation and federation. It shows the way to an eventual global integration of humanity dynamized by love and perfect mutuality in all relationships — a sort of spiritual United Nations.



The symbol for Uranus is literally the letter **H**, initial of the name of the man who discovered the planet Herschel. But in its proper form the sign should be drawn as above, which is the symbol for the earth with two vertical bars added. It is a symbol of "initiation," for on either side of the candidate in ancient initiations two sponsors always stood just as Moses and Elijah stood on each side Jesus at the great spiritual event of the Transfiguration.

The keyword of Uranus is **transcendence**, which literally means to take a step beyond where you are. The keyword for Neptune is **solution**, which can mean the disappearance of old problems, but also could bring about a condition in which everything an individual or a civilization depended upon is being cleared away because it had become a hindrance to progress.

PART FIVE

Mercury and Pluto

In Greek mythology the god Hermes (the Roman Mercury) was shown carrying a caduceus — a symbolic object representing a rod around which two serpents are intertwined. This Mercury symbol has been appropriated by the medical profession, which uses it as its emblem because Mercury had a good deal to do with healing processes and indeed with many other things. The Greek god was in part the errand boy for the great ruler of the sky, Zeus-Jupiter. Mercury was also unpredictable and full of mischief. In astrological symbolism it represents the mind, and particularly the intellectual processes and the memory function.

What is "mind"? To this question many answers have been given, and an early book by the American philosopher, Charles Morris, is entitled **Six Theories of the Mind**. Basic theories they are, yet they do not entirely cover the field of the human mind, and still less satisfactory are they in their brief mention of the superhuman planetary, cosmic or divine mind. Mercury's symbol, the caduceus, gives us a very significant answer, for it represented for the initiated thinker of antiquity three currents of energy which are said to be linked with man's spinal column. One of these currents is straight and passes directly through the center of the vertebrae, from the coccyx to the lower part of the cranium — in India known as **Sushumna**. The other two currents winding like serpent convolutions around the first were called **Ida** and **Pingala**.

These three currents were expressions of the basic relationship between the pelvic sacral region (man's "seat of power") and the hind brain, center of the instinctual life energies of the human body. The hind brain region contains especially the hypothalamus, a large complex of nerves which apparently control the pituitary body — the endocrine gland which in turn controls all other endocrine glands, thus the basic functions of the body.

Hindu yoga (particularly Hatha yoga which deals with body postures, breath control and the cleansing of the entire organism) is essentially a technique for inducing a controlled activation of these above mentioned spinal currents of energy. It aims at withdrawing from the trunk of the body and its vital organs the vital force (**prana**) which these organs use in their normal functioning — then the yogi raises and condenses it in the central region of the brain.

This is not the place to discuss the complex yogic process which, traditionally, must only be attempted under the watchful eyes of a clairvoyant teacher (guru). I spoke of it only as a basis for the statement that "mind" is essentially a transformation and transmutation of the vital energies of the physical organism of man. His transformation takes place in the course of the natural and normal present-day process of human evolution according to a twofold rhythm represented by the **Ida** and **Pingala** currents in constant and cyclic interrelationship. But the transformation can apparently be accelerated under the conscious control of the human will, and the energy locked in, or latent within the base of the spine (coccyx region), can be made to ascend in a straight line through the activated and fiery **Sushumna** current. This induces certain high and transcendent states of consciousness, the highest of which is called **samadhi**, or spiritual illumination, or again "liberation."

The caduceus of the god Mercury tells all this and more to the initiated, and the graphic symbol used in astrology to represent the planet nearest to the Sun, source of all energies, is evidently an abstract condensation of the caduceus — even though it may also be interpreted in different but related ways. One may say, for instance that this Mercury symbol, is constituted by the symbol for Taurus, the zodiacal sign of productivity, surmounting a cross. This would suggest that mind Mercury arises as the productive force (Taurus) born of existential crises (the cross).



One could also see in the Mercury symbol the glyph of the planet Venus with a suggested lunar crescent above it, or perhaps it is not really a lunar crescent but simply an extension of the Venusian circle extending and opening itself up to a downflow from the sky. Indeed the pituitary body, which is found back of the center of the eyebrows, has often been spoken of as the "third eye," and is supposed to be "ruled" by the Moon and, in a sense, to be like a cup ready to receive the "living waters" of the descending spirit.

All these possible interpretations constitute somewhat different ways of referring to the development of the mind, for this development represents, symbolically speaking, the extraction of the quintessence of truly vital and value-revealing personal experiences — a quintessence represented by Venus. Venus is fundamentally the capacity in man to give meaning and value to personal experiences. Mercury takes this meaning and value, records them in the brain tapes of memory, relates them to other records, classifies, abstracts and generalizes, and as a result a mind unfolds its latent powers.

Out of the Venus flower and fruit the Mercury seed is born. And the seed is "immortal" — that is, it does not decay with the rest of the plant at the close of the year's cycle, and it contains at its throbbing, core the potentiality of a new life-cycle. The seed is **the agent** of the whole biological species; only within this seed can mutation occur.

The seed is the agent of an entire species. This statement is profoundly important, and it gives us the clue to the relationship between Mercury and Pluto. These two planets have some unusual characteristics in common, mainly their elongated orbits. They both essentially refer to the mind, but while Mercury is mind within an individual person, Pluto is basically the mind of the human species — and more than this, the mind of the planet earth. This is so because the function of humanity is **to extract consciousness** out of earthly experiences of trillions of living persons and of thousands of cultures born, maturing and decaying on all continents during many, many millennia.

As we already saw, Pluto is really a servant of the galaxy while Mercury, so close to the Sun, is the messenger of Jupiter as this largest of all planets relates itself to the Sun. The closest and most remote of the known planets, Mercury and Pluto, provide an interesting and significant fact, in that the mind and its foundation, the nervous systems, are in a sense the factors most closely involved in man's awareness of reality. It is the brain that sees, not the eyes. They merely register and pass on coded information.

At the opposite end of the mind process we may come to realize that, while each man has a Mercury mind in order to become personally aware of his environment and his place in the world, there is actually but one Pluto mind — that is, the mind of humanity, or planetary mind. Each individual person unconsciously tunes in to this vast collective mind. He does so through the "carrier wave" of the specific culture of the society within which he was born and within which he operates — through the particular language, archetypal symbols and social-religious biases of his culture.

The individual Mercury mind receives, unconsciously most of the time, and also transmits to the collective mind of its race, nation, culture. There is a constant interplay between the individual and the collective, and this interplay is the very substance of any man's mind — **both** conscious and unconscious.



When Pluto was discovered in 1930, several astrological symbols for it were presented. By far the most significant was the one made popular for many years by the Paul Clancy Publications, with the closed circle and open cup of the Mercury symbol transposed, so the circle lay above within the cup's brim. But the astronomers clung to a symbol blending the first two letters of the name Pluto, which "happened" to be the initials of the astronomer whose calculations led to the recent discovery of the planet — Percival Lowell. The first-mentioned symbol suggested the planetary character of the Pluto mind by the circle, floating above the open cup. Out of individual tragedies and out of the very death of all cultures — but freed from them — we can witness the global reality of the mind, in which we all, thinking men and women, to whatever degree, "live, move and have our being."