

# The Solar System in Man

## by Dane Rudhyar

**Much has been written about the planets used in astrology; but, unfortunately, each planet has often been considered as an entity in itself** radiating some sort of "influence" upon the Earth and all beings on its surface. The approach is not unlike that of old-time students of anatomy who considered each organ of the human body as an entity in itself only vaguely related to the whole organism. Such an analytical approach is still followed, even in medicine. The doctor, using very complex methods of analysis and tests, studies the heart of his patient, or his lungs, or his eyes as if each were a separate entity. If he is an ophthalmologist (eye doctor), he may tell the patient suffering from the inflammation of some eye membrane or from incipient glaucoma that the eyes are sensitive to his general condition of health; having said that, he dismisses everything except the eyes.

The same applies to other organs—for instance, to the pancreas in cases of diabetes. The doctor is a "specialist." Hopefully, if in an exceptional hospital one deals with many specialists, each looking at one organ, a doctor – or tomorrow a computer – may somehow add up all these analytical data and a total picture of the patient's organism may emerge. But the whole is not merely the sum of its parts.

The situation in astrology is very similar. There was one astrologer whose specialty was Pluto; another emphasized Uranus, or the Moon, or progressions, or perhaps solar returns. Such individual preferences or specialized studies, statistical or not, are understandable; but the real issue reaches much deeper than the special interest of this or that practitioner. **The issue is whether astrology should deal with planets as single entities and sources of energies or with the solar system as a whole** – i.e., as an "organism" as a cosmically organized system of interdependent activities.

This is a fundamental issue, you cannot really understand the behavior of any organ of the human body unless you see it as a specialized field of cellular activity through which a basic organic function is performed. This function is depending on other functions for its operation; it is usually balanced by another function having an opposite or contrasting character. The healthy operation of every function always depends on the delicate interplay between all the functions of the body — and not only of the body, but also of the psychic and mental levels of activity.

This is so evident that one should hardly have to speak of it; yet, in practice, this evidence is rarely considered as a basic factor in either medical diagnosis or astrological birth-chart interpretation. It certainly is not given the place it should have in textbooks on astrology; and **nearly all astrologers are haunted by the archaic concept according to which a planet is like a god who "does something to you"** and whose doings can be characterized as fortunate or unfortunate. Yet would it make any sense to say that the liver is good and the large intestine or kidneys bad?

It is said now that astrology is the study of the "cosmic environment" of the Earth and of man; thus, the term "cosmology" has lately been used as a scientific substitute. But it is not enough to speak of the solar system as our cosmic environment. The word environment does not readily tell the whole story even though today we are beginning to realize that the biosphere – man's environment on the Earth surface – is made up of interdependent life species and is deeply affected by the state of the air, soil, ocean, rivers, etc.

The fact is that very few people do consider the Earth globe an organism because they still implicitly believe in the old religious tradition according to which man does not really belong to this planet but was sent there by God to gain certain kinds of experiences or learn some lessons – and man was given *carte blanche* to do with everything in Nature as he pleased.

Likewise, most people today cannot think of the solar system as an "organism," even though it clearly is an organized system of activities structured by cosmic principles of ordered motion.

### **The Harmony of the Spheres**

Cosmic forces are active in and through the whole solar system. Interplanetary space, we now know, is not "empty." Powerful forces interplay within it; currents of energy circulate through it. If astrology means anything at all, this meaning is based on the assumption that the human organism and the entire biosphere organically operate in resonance to the rhythm of these currents. The solar system has been considered a vast "cosmic clock" to which the little "cosmic clocks" inside plants, animals, and men are attuned. The inner organic clocks of a man somehow become set at the moment of birth, and the positions of the planets – the several "hands" of the "solar-system clock" – enable us to tell the way in which this organic clock has been set. Knowing this, we can deduce how the most basic functions in a man's total organism will operate during his individual life.

**A planet by itself does not do anything to anybody.** It simply indicates how a particular function of the human organism (body and psyche) operates in relation to the other functions. These functions constitute a kind of hierarchy, the most fundamental one being probably the heart function, yet a function related to that of certain brain centers and glands. The astrologer's problem is, and always has been, that of identifying the functions – or basic types of activities – whose rhythms are attuned to the rhythms of each of the planets.

This is what Pythagoras meant by the study of the "harmony of the spheres"; and interestingly enough, the ancient concepts of this great mind who lived 25 centuries ago are now being revived, of course in new terms, by the most progressive physicists, mathematicians, and astronomers of the day. Likewise, the renowned occultist, alchemist, and physician Paracelsus wrote some five centuries ago:

To understand correctly the meaning of the worlds alchemy and astrology, it is necessary to understand and realize the intimate relationship and the identity of the Microcosm and Macrocosm and their mutual interaction. All the powers of the universe are potentially contained in man and man's physical body, and all his organs are nothing else but products and representatives of the power of Nature . . . If I have "manna" in my constitution, I can attract "manna" from heaven. "Saturn" is not only in the sky, but also deep in the earth and in the ocean. What is "Venus" but the "Artemisia" that grows in your garden? What is "iron" but "Mars"? That is to say, Venus and Artemisia are both products of the same essence, and Mars and iron are the both the manifestations of the same cause. What is the human body but a constellation of the same powers that formed the stars in the sky? He who knows what iron is knows the attributes of Mars. He who knows Mars knows the qualities of iron. What would become of your heart if there were no Sun in the Universe? What would be the use of your "vasa spermatica" if there were no Venus? (from Franz Hartmann, **Paracelsus**, pp. 287-288)

What all this means is that man is, at his own level, an organized system of activities, just as the solar system is, and that these two systems exist in a "harmonic" kind of relationship. **It is not only that man resonates to the rhythm of the solar system, for the reverse is also true.** Man's action and reactions can also introduce elements of discord in the solar system. It is a two-way attunement. In this sense, in however small measure it may be, every man is responsible to, or at least involved in, the welfare of the solar system. A birth-chart is, therefore, a two-dimensional picture of the solar system seen from the point of view of a particular locality on the surface of the Earth at a particular time. As such, it is also a kind of blueprint of a three-dimensional human organism. But John Smith's organism can also be thought of as mankind – or human nature – looked at from the point

of view of a particular set of parental and social circumstances. Every newborn emerging from the mother's womb is a particular and to a degree unique example of the potentialities contained in human nature. The basic potentiality is that this baby organism will learn to talk, to think, and to become and "individual," self-reliant and expressing whatever is exactly meant by an individual soul.

Each planet in the chart represents one basic set of functional potentialities inherent in human nature – just as every planet in the solar system represents one "tone" in the cosmic chord of the solar system, the Sun being the "fundamental tone" or "tonic" of that cosmic chord. In the following, I shall attempt to define in relatively new way the functional potentiality represented by each planet.

### **The Planets as Organic Functions**

**THE SUN:** As most but probably not all of the energies circulating through the solar system originate in the Sun and life on Earth depends primarily, if not exclusively, on the solar radiations, the Sun in a birth-chart represents the power of organic and psycho-spiritual sustainment. The type of energy which most basically sustains you and, therefore, on which you mainly depend (and *should* depend) in your most primordial organic activity is defined by the position of the Sun by zodiacal sign and natal house at birth. The degree on which the Sun is located is also very important, for the symbol for this degree should reveal the nature of those experiences through which an individual can best realize the essential purpose of his existence. The problem, however, is what system of symbolism should be considered most valid. Personally, I find that only the Sabian Symbols answer the main requirement of such a set of 360-degree symbols; and this requirement is an inner structural consistency so that all degrees are seen as sequential phases of a cyclic process of unfoldment. I should add that the formulation and interpretation of these Sabian Symbols is still far from truly adequate. Attempts to characterize the meaning of each degree by analytical and statistical procedures seem to me futile and based on a wrong concept of astrology.

**THE MOON:** From the archaic point of view, the Moon is the "Light of the night." During the night, man sleeps and recovers from the activities of the day. The Moon can, therefore, be seen as the recuperative functions. If one considers dreams as very significant factors, especially at the psychological level, the Moon can be interpreted as a power of inspiration and even revelation. It connects us with the beyond through often imprecise and confusing images or warnings. If the Moon is seen as the one satellite of the Earth, possibly defining by its revolution the outermost boundaries of the Earth's "aura" (or astral body), then it represents more specifically the point of sensitiveness to change and opportunities for growth. It tells us, in our birth-chart, the type of energy and of experiences which will enable us best to adjust to the requirements of any life situation; thus, it symbolizes our natural capacity for adaptation to our environment.

**MERCURY:** Biologically speaking, this planet represents the electric potential in the human body and the way in which it operates through the nervous system. It is that which carries messages from the senses to the brain and from the volitional centers to the organs of actions. It, therefore, links the outer and inner realms of human existence. Without this Mercury function, the Moon capacity of adaptation to the environment could not operate. At the psychological level, Mercury associates sensations, images, ideas, concepts, and values. As it connects repetitive events, it is the foundation for what we call "memory," which in turn is the basis of all thinking processes. The Mercury function is, thus, involved in all mental-activity. Its potentiality of remarkable development characterizes the human species. One should be careful, however, not to associate the mind as a whole with Mercury. The Mercury function makes possible the operation of the mind in the human organism; it is not the mind.

**VENUS:** On the basis of the information provided by the Mercury function, the organism-as-a-whole gives what is happening, or has happened, a "value." Venus is the holistic planet par excellence. It gathers up all that reaches the consciousness and evaluates the situation as a whole, judging it pleasant or dangerous, exalting and potentially fulfilling or debilitating and frustrating. On the basis of this judgment of value, the organism-as-a-whole, and in more evolved and consciousness man the ego and the will center, reacts or positively responds to this situation. Venus does not really refer to "love"; and it should not always be considered "favorable," except perhaps in horary astrology. If it can be said to refer in the body to some of the procreative organs (ovaries and testicles), it is because every living organism instinctively seeks to reproduce itself; and where there are two sexes, reproduction based upon and glamorized by the power of attraction we call love. At the psycho-spiritual level, this love function operates as the drive toward union of complementary polarities, a union necessary to bring some valuable contribution to society. Or else Venus refers to the love rapturously sung by mystics seeking to reach the "unitive state" – i.e., perfect union with God.

**MARS:** On the basis of what the Venus function has judged to be valuable or dangerous, the Mars function operates as motion toward or away from an experience. Mars "rules" all muscles, all that by using which the organism acts. At the human level, Mars is the capacity for creative self-projection, for taking an initiative which may transform the environment. The ascetic yogi uses this Mars function in subduing his instinctual drives. More generally, speaking, where Mars is placed in the birth-chart tells us how we can be most spontaneous or more active. This spontaneity may be blocked by Saturn or transcendentalized by Neptune; and when Mars is retrograde, this capacity for self-projection may be at least partially affected by some deep complex which sends the spontaneous desire to act back to the Venus function for reassurance or reinterpretation. "Is my doing this *really* worthwhile or safe?"

Mars need not mean "aggressiveness" in the usual sense of the word. It has this meaning in our society because we extol competition and violence; and this is a result of a culture which is based on repression, puritanism, and only at best on the desire to transcend biological drives in order to reach spiritual union.

**JUPITER:** Jupiter is the great alchemist who metabolizes everything that the body or the ego-mind has absorbed, "assimilating" it. It seeks to make of every part a thoroughly integrated and soundly functioning contributor to the welfare of the whole. The keyword of the Jupiter function is "together." It is, thus, the social function in all its forms. Mankind has made use of this potentiality of social integration in a remarkable way; but so have the bees and the ants, except that man tries hard to transcendentalize this Jupiter function, while the bees and ants have succumbed to Saturnian rigidity. Jupiter is the capacity to expand and to utilize resources most efficiently for the sake of the whole. It is the managerial function; and all organized religions are expressions of the Jupiterian drive for fellowship and large-scale integration.

**SATURN:** This function both works with and also opposes the Jupiterian function. It limits but also focuses. It defines but in so doing allows for the transfer of knowledge. It binds the individual to a particular place, set of relationships, or way of life; but it also makes him feel secure. By stressing what is different and unique in an individual, the Saturn function builds an ego which eventually may separate, alienate, and also freeze all possibilities of spontaneous and warm responses to experience; yet it can give a sense of individual responsibility and the ability to stand alone and to resist shocks.

Where Saturn is located in a chart, there the organism (and the mind) tend to feel most vulnerable and insecure; therefore, there also the individual has the opportunity to assert

himself in his most characteristic and significant manner – provided he has endurance and inner stability, two constructive aspects of the Saturn function.

**URANUS:** This is the planet of transformation, the foe of all Saturnian crystallization, and also the challenger of the normal drive for security and comfort and of all types of "establishment." Where Uranus is located, one can expect crises – and the way of crises is most often the typical human way of growth. Ego, tradition, and all kinds of institutionalizing usually will only surrender after radical crises. The problem is always how genuine and permanent the surrender – and what comes next.

**NEPTUNE:** Neptune symbolizes the "universal solvent" of the alchemists, that which dissolves all that remains of the structures erected by Jupiter and Saturn after Uranus has shaken them loose. Neptune refers to that through which the lesser mind is able to merge into a vaster consciousness and a more inclusive sense of reality. Neptune's location in a person's chart indicates the manner in which some basic conflicts can be resolved and participation in a greater community can be achieved. At that point in the chart, the individual may be oversensitive and vulnerable to glamour – not because of his organic weakness, but because of a too idealistic or future-oriented nature.

**PLUTO:** This planet represents whatever in an individual life tends to reduce everything to its most fundamental nature. The power it symbolizes ruthlessly destroys all superficialities, shams, or hypocrisies and lays the mind bare. Yet the position of Pluto in a natal house in most cases indicates the field of experience in which the individual can make his greatest contribution to society. At this point, the individual can reach rock bottom and on the rock build the foundation of his personality. What Uranus shakes, Pluto will pulverize. Together with Neptune, it may produce a maelstrom that will engulf the past; but the ultimate depth can often prove to be the gates to never-before-envisioned heights. What Pluto above all demands of the soul is courage – and humility. Pride may reach momentary exaltation in a Plutonian situation; but it inevitably will be broken, and humiliation will be experienced by the one who had no humility.