

***The Spiritual Value  
of Astrology***  
**by Dane Rudhyar**

**One of the main problems facing astrologers** in their attempts to make astrology officially recognized as a legitimate and wholesome pursuit is not only the recent vulgarization of some of its most general and questionable aspects, but the vagueness and ambiguity of the way in which the very substance and purpose of astrology are defined. It is probable that most people, if asked what astrology is, would say — in one way or another — that astrology deals with the influences of the Sun, the Moon, the planets and the stars upon human beings, and indeed upon all living organisms and such social "organisms" as nations, business firms, etc. They would add that the purpose of astrology is to ascertain the basic character and the future development of such persons and organizations in terms of definite expectable events. Very likely a great majority of astrologers would claim that astrology is a "science" which has been built through the ages through a long series of observations revealing that there is a definite and reliable parallelism between certain celestial phenomena or cyclic occurrences and more or less exactly defined and characteristic events in the lives of human beings and nations. Such general statements may seem sufficient to many minds. They sound "scientific"; and, if accepted, the only basic problem seems to be that of finding out scientifically whether there is **actually** such a reliable parallelism between celestial occurrences of a cyclic nature (i.e. occurrences which can be expected in the future as well as proven to have occurred in the past), and to clearly definable events affecting living organism and especially human beings in the Earth's biosphere. It is thus a problem regarding the research and statistical analysis of reliable "case histories," etc.

The above-mentioned statements however cannot satisfy the true philosopher and certainly not the humanistic philosopher and psychologist. They raise too many unsolved problems. There is the problem concerning the nature and significance of such a parallelism, granted that it can be proven as a scientific dependable fact; and there is the grave question of how "proofs" are to be defined. The psychological value and effect on human beings of astrological predictions, the moral responsibility of the person making the predictions are also issues which should never be left unrecognized.

Moreover the astrologer does not only make predictions; he outlines the character and tendencies of other persons. If this can **reliably and unfailingly** be done, then astrology is no longer a merely predictive science, it enters the psychological field. But how and why should it be able to do so? All kinds of questions come to the mind — some of a practical nature, other philosophic and indeed metaphysical. There may be mysterious forces in galactic space which even more mysteriously become focused by Sun, Moon, planets as they pass through certain regions of that space. But there is no scientifically known **causal relationship** between Mars in Scorpio and a certain trait of character in a man or a physiological condition in his body. Besides, the position of Mars in a zodiacal sign, or in a house, of the birth-chart is only one of many factors which the astrologer takes into account. Also, when he looks at a chart and finds Mars in Scorpio, does he think of a bladder or sexual organs, or of a **total person** who includes not only many organs but as well a psychic, and who moreover is part of a specific geographical, social and cultural environment? Is he thinking analytically of mere symptoms, or of the total health and the consciousness and feelings of a relatively unique individual? Has he really any way of determining **at what level** the so-called influence of a planet or of an aspect may produce an "event" in the life of this "individual-in-his-environment?"

If the astrologer is really concerned about **a particular individual person** and if he has any right to claim that the state of the celestial bodies at birth and throughout his life "influences" the person, the only philosophical way in which this claim can make sense is if there is **a definite relationship** between this person-as-a-whole and the universe-as-a-whole. To speak of a "definite relationship" between a particular individual and the whole universe is quite different from speaking of a parallelism between two sets of events, celestial and terrestrial. Such a parallelism may sound scientific, but it does not justify the practice of astrology from a "personalistic" point of view — and even less in terms of any

kind of "spiritual" approach to the problems of individual existence.

An event in itself has no meaning in a personal human sense. An apple falls upon the head of a man sleeping under an apple tree. This has no meaning — unless the man is Newton. A man leaves his wife for another girl. This too has no abstract specific meaning for the persons involved. It may free the husband or the wife, or both, from an empty situation; the shock may be the one thing that will make of the wife a mature individual — or it may destroy her sanity. An event has meaning **only** when seen within a definite "frame of reference," i.e., in terms of **a whole situation** which includes whatever is affected by the event; and in a sense, it includes the entire universe.

When a person comes to an astrologer, asking him to solve a problem of vital importance, what the astrologer actually does — especially if he makes a "horary" chart — to try to find out how his client's situation is related to the entire universe at that time of the client's life. In the same sense, the study of the birth-chart of a newborn baby is an attempt to discover what is the potential relationship between this newborn and the universe in which he was born and will grow to maturity. This birth constitutes a "situation," and not merely an "event" for a situation includes not only an event or group of events, but the relationship of this event to its total environment, psychical as well as physical. The birth of the baby — we must add — altered ever so little the relationship between mankind's situation on this Earth and the universe-as-a-whole.

The pattern made by planets (including Sun and Moon) and stars represents, at least symbolically, the state of the universe at birth time — and the cross of horizon and meridian defines the situation as it is related to the newborn, i.e., his "orientation" to the universe. Orientation means relationship. As you orient yourself within your total environment, so are you related in an individual manner to this environment.

Astrology therefore is, or should be, a method through the use of which a person can determine his basic ("cosmic") relationship to the universe-as-a-whole. It is, even more generally, a technique of interpretation by which **any situation-as-a-whole can be related to the universe-as-a-whole**, and, what is more, **significantly related**. It is a means to discover consciously the meaning of any situation and of the way in which the basic factors in this situation (our birth included) are operating — the meaning of our existence as an individual person.

The reason for seeking in astrology a means to discover such a meaning is that the social and interpersonal environment in which the situation developed tends most often to distort or cloud up this meaning. **Astrology raises the solution of problems from the social to the cosmic level**. And this is why it appeals so much today to young people who, having rebelled against all social values are seeking super-social, "natural", or "spiritual" answers. If one is really able to understand what such an approach to astrology implies, the entire study of astrological charts takes on a new meaning; and much of what is taught today — and has been taught in the past — becomes quite obsolete. It also removes astrology from the field of empirical sciences and integrates it to a kind of philosophy-psychology whose purpose it is to discover the meaning of existence, and of the relationship between man and the universe.

The concepts of a personal God, and of an impersonal super-cosmic or intra-cosmic Absolute, represent two ways of solving the problem of the meaning of existence. The former makes astrology quite superfluous, for the solution of all existential problems is "union with God" — or at least the ability to hold a "dialogue" with God, the absolute and never-failing Guide and Comforter. If, however, the universe is understood to exist through the cyclic interplay of cosmic Principles and of an "infinite Ocean of energy" astrology can be considered as a "celestial Language".

One can relate it also to music, and Pythagoras and many ancient astrologers spoke of the Music of the Spheres. Very recently a well-known chemist and writer, Donald Hatch Andrews wrote in his book **The Symphony of Life**: "The universe is composed not of matter but of music." All cyclic motions in the universe can be seen as partial but interrelated elements in

an immense Harmony; and any human situation acquires its essential meaning when related to the ever-unfolding process of universal existence which in its totality everlastingly proclaims in dynamic terms the message of this Harmony.

This is why I have stated and re-stated that a person's birth-chart represents his or her "celestial Name"; for, while the family and personal name of a human being are expressions of social, religious and group values and thus indicate **only** the social-personal character of the Individual (which conditioned his "ego"), the birth-chart constitutes a **mandala** (or **mantram**) which indicates in the language of universal cycles what the "cosmic" nature of the individual actually is. The birth-chart is the celestial Signature of the individual; i.e. what the individual really Is (as an Earth-born organism, a "whole person") In relation to the universe-as-a-whole. It is the musical score of his life's symphony.

It is for this reason that **nothing** in a birth-chart can be called "bad" or "unfortunate." The planets can be compared to the **vowels** of the language of the sky; aspects constitute soft or harsh **consonants**. The astrological chart is a word, a "logos." Can we call the black spaces in a woodblock "bad" and the white spaces "good," or vice versa? Both are necessary to define the form, or gestalt, of the whole. To use ethical terms of good-and-evil in astrology is entirely to miss its essential character.

The fact that this has been done for centuries and possibly (but not at all certainly) for several millennia, does not invalidate this statement. It simply means that astrology has to emerge from its pre-natal state, a state which was attuned to the ethical nature of societies developing during the Age of Conflicts — characterized in old India as the Age of caste-domination and also as the Age of "sex-and-hand power"; but we are now at the threshold of what I have called the Age of Plenitude. During this Age of Plenitude man should develop in the fullness of his polyphonic nature in a state of attunement to the great rhythm of the cosmos.

Astrology is simply an as yet uncertain and confused attempt to lead mankind to this state of **attunement in a conscious and objective way**. It is a way which depends essentially on the realization of Form, and therefore on a "holistic" approach to existence and to all existential situations. Our Western civilization is being lost in the desert waste-lands of analytical thinking and atomism, haunted by the urge, as Einstein said, "to know more and more about less and lose," and enslaved to the concept of quantity and statistical average. But already some of the most progressive scientists are thinking along the opposite road, the way of synthesis and holism. And this is the way of the spirit; for spirit can only operate in that which is whole. Indeed spirit to the principle of integration and wholeness in operation — whereas it is the intellect which forever divides, analyses and measures in terms of discrete quantities.

I have been asked to write on the spiritual value of astrology. Spirituality need not have anything to do with religion. We do not need a "religion of the stars"; the Ancients had it, who considered planets and stars as the bodies of cosmic gods, and zodiacal constellations as 12 Hierarchies of creative Powers within a "Formative World" from which all living structures and minerals were derived. In a sense, the picture of the universe they presented was far more inspiring than the one outlined by astronomers who still think in terms of incredibly vast empty spaces within which masses of matter whirl at fantastic speed, meaninglessly, driven by thermodynamic laws and chance encounters. Nevertheless we need not deify the unknown and entitize cyclic process of transformation. We need only realize that every person is the whole universe focused at a particular time and at a particular point of space.

Indeed the whole universe is focused in every human being according to a time-space formula, or "seed pattern" — one's birth-chart. We are all made of the same substance-energy; but each man is ever so slightly different from all the keyword. Every existent is a whole — an organized, structured system of interrelated activities. And spirit is the integrating, the interrelating power. There can be no spiritual meaning in astrology, or anywhere, except through the realization of this integrating power, which I have called

simply ONE in order to avoid any emotional-devotional and religious implications.\* Such a realization, however, is not attained by seeking to escape from form and dualistic existence into illusory nirvanas, but by developing the ability to understand and to meet every situation and every living entity as a whole fulfilling its essential function in the universe, by virtue of its time-space birth-formula — its true selfhood.

Astrology can be a means to foster the development of such a holistic faculty. It is a symbolic language; yet, like most ancient sacred languages, its words-symbols and its syntax are derived from the very principles that inhere in the great rhythms of universal Harmony. This Harmony is within us. Actually, we should be able to experience inwardly, and some individuals undoubtedly can do so. But this is a **subjective** way which very few indeed can follow, so full of illusory shapes and subtle attractions it is. Astrology offers to us an **objective** way, the cosmic way — the way of spirit embodied in Forms, the way of the Sky.

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\*cf. My book **The Planetarization of Consciousness**.