

## A More In Depth Look at the Individual Planets:

### The Planets

Looking up into the sky the people of the ancient world observed the passage of the Sun, Moon and stars through the seasons. The evidence left by our distant ancestors' leaves us with little doubt that the skies inspired, informed and provided them with guidance. The patterns and starry pictures that comprise the constellations gave rise to stories, myth and allegorical lessons, which continue to enthrall humans to this day. Over time the parallels between earthly happening and celestial movement were noted and gave rise to the earliest form of omen based astrology.

As the ancients gazed upon the clear night skies free from the light pollution of today, they would have noticed certain "stars" that didn't behave like the others, but deviated from the seasonally fixed cosmic patterns. These became known as the "wandering stars". Regularly these celestial wanderers would appear to go backwards, disappearing for months at a time, and eventually reappearing as if on cue, on the predicted day. Their movements and cycles were observed, noted and eventually connected to events on the Earth. These "wandering stars" became known as the planets and came to be considered crucial to celestial observation and became one of the most important factors in astrological divination, both from a philosophical and from a practical standpoint.

Five planets were observed, identified and their cycles noted: Venus, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter and Saturn. The greatest bodies in the sky are of course the Sun and Moon. Their size and ability to give light gave them meaning separate to the other cosmic bodies, be they fixed or wandering stars. The luminaries or lights, as the Sun and Moon came to be called, were treated differently astrologically to the planets. The Lights were symbols of the divine and each ruled for one half of the time. The Sun naturally ruled the day and was associated with extrovert masculine energy, while the Moon ruled the night and was associated with the receptive feminine energy.

In the last few centuries many "new" planets and celestial bodies have been discovered (and continue to be), the most famous of these being **Uranus, Neptune and Pluto**. These new cosmic bodies are invisible to the naked eye and therefore do not appear in the classical cosmology of the planets. It is not to say that Uranus, Neptune, Pluto and others do not have astrological significance, but rather that their significance is not of the same order as that of the two lights and five classical planets. The three so-called outer or transpersonal planets can exert very powerful effect on a chart in a similar manner as the fixed stars, but they enhance rather than define.

These new planets may not figure in traditional astrology but, as citizens of the modern era we cannot ignore these powerful players, we must find room for them within the system that is our inheritance. The trouble is that too often in our modern astrology these glamorous newcomers are given priority over their visible elders, to the detriment of astrology as a whole. There is a place for Uranus, Neptune and Pluto in astrology, but it is not at the head of the line, but rather behind the lights and visible planets. These newcomers add detail and powerful energy to our astrology, but it is important to understand the context in which this exists. The context can only be judged and defined through the seven classical planets; that are the five wandering stars and the two lights.

## A More In Depth Look at the Individual Planets:

### Saturn

Starting at the first planet of the Chaldean order, the first planetary gate through which the Soul must pass on its journey into incarnation is Saturn's. Encountering Saturn the soul takes on structure and authority as well as the limitations of the physical body, matter and time. Even as modern astrologers we are well aware of the association of Saturn with restriction and limitation. The reason for this becomes obvious when we consider that Saturn exists at the outmost edge of our visible solar system, and defines its limits. Saturn is the border between our known world and the Divine unchanging sphere of the fixed stars.

Saturn is of a melancholic temperament; he is stern, serious and authoritative. The basic qualities that make up Saturn's temperament are cold and dry to the extreme. Cold constricts and dry limits movement. He is a masculine and diurnal or day planet. Saturn is considered to be a day planet because his extreme cold nature needs the warmth of the Sun to function in a more balanced manner, therefore though he may like and feel at home in the cold darkness of night he functions better in the light of the day.

The dryness of Saturn allows for the hardening of matter in order to "make" the body and to make manifest and give physical form to all life. It is the discipline and structure of Saturn that allows life to exist and ideas to be made manifest. Saturn's distance from the Sun accounts for its cold nature and the extreme dryness of Saturn is what gives him his reputation as a malefic planet. The absence of warmth and moisture is antagonistic to life and growth. Yet it is the dryness and cold of Saturn that allows matter to crystallise and take physical form. From a human psychological perspective it is only when we engage with the discipline and structure of Saturn that we accomplish anything.

Another of Saturn's gifts to the soul, are the tears of grief. This is why Saturn is the planet most associated with melancholic moods and in its extreme form depression. Hidden deep in Saturn's strictness and authority lays the impossible longing for the return to the divine. The grief of Saturn is the knowing that one must pass through incarnated life, with its pain and joys and that one's authority is fleeting and illusionary. The ruins of the past, the laws of old, and the desolation of yesterday are all part of Saturn's cold and dry rule.

Saturn's reputation as the great malefic could be accounted for by his demand of hard work and his associations with death and the inevitable end to all beginnings. Interestingly he is also associated with births, to which death is always a close possibility. Saturn's association is also illustrated by the fact that the birthing process is called "labour", for it is indeed hard work to give birth and hard work is Saturn's territory.

In traditional thought, Saturn was associated with the hardest, heaviest and oldest things. It was associated with old age (from 70 to 99 years old) and the seventh age of man, the age of resignation. Saturn was and is still associated with the metal lead, the heaviest and most poisonous of all the metals. Saturn was said to rule the bones, teeth and skin of the body, that which defines the structure and limits of the physical body. All boundaries are under the rule of Saturn. At the borders of our travels

we encounter Saturn in the form of immigration and border authority which demands that we present our documents, our right to passage, or we can go no further.

## **Jupiter**

At the gates of Jupiter the soul gains the desire to rule, to give and receive honour as well as the impulse for wealth and the power to act. Jupiter's generous gifts are tempered by his propensity to envy and exaggeration. As the biggest planet in the solar system even the ancients saw Jupiter as a planet of expansion and growth. Jupiter was considered to be the God of Rain and associated with fertility. This life affirming reputation was due to Jupiter's sanguine; hot and moist nature.

Jupiter's nature made him pleasant and generous. Heat moves out and moisture connects, so this was a socially pleasant character. His reputation as the great benefic stems from these life giving qualities; heat, which encourages growth up and outwards and moist which joins things together. Like when the rain falls and penetrates the warm earth making it the perfect environment in which a seed can germinate. As a result of his benefic reputation Jupiter has become associated with money, wealth and material comfort in modern times, but it is fertility on all levels which is his greatest asset.

Jupiter was associated with aristocracy, great honour, justice and abundance, bringing all good things to life. While Saturn brought restrictions, Jupiter brought bountiful gifts of plenty and riches which helps to explain his reputation as a positive point in the chart. Anything that touches Jupiter was said to be blessed. A good aspect to Jupiter could allay many a fears.

While Saturn had authority over the letter of the law, Jupiter ruled over the spirit of the law. In fact all areas of life that connect the individual with spirit in the broadest sense of the term; religion, philosophy, scholarship and the pursuit of greater understanding, were ruled by Jupiter. This urge to align with higher powers can also be one of Jupiter's downfalls, if the higher power he seeks is that of worldly position of wealth and power.

Jupiter is associated with the metal tin, which may seem a common sort of metal for so noble a planet, but it needs to be remembered that tin is one of the most important metals in the creation of alloyed metals; like Jupiter's sanguine nature, tin brings other metals together. It is free from any sort of toxins as can be attested to by its use in the storage of food (tin cans) and the making of toys (tin soldiers). Jupiter was associated with both the colour purple and deep sky blue. Jupiter rules the largest organ in the body, the liver. In traditional medicine the function of the liver was understood to be the most important to health.

The sixth age of man, the age of reflection (58-69 years) is Jupiter's age. This is the age when ideally we reach the pinnacle of our professional life; we are at the top of the game and have accumulated the rewards of our hard work and have attained the wisdom of life experience. Jupiter is about the rich bounties of life that can to be enjoyed and shared. The downside to Jupiter is his tendency to overdo things, to expand beyond safe constraints, to enjoy to excess and share what is not yet owned. Jupiter needs the boundaries of Saturn to rein him in.

## **Mars**

At the gates of Mars the soul receives bold spirit as well as impulsive and reckless daring. Here the soul also acquires discernment and is given the ability to cut through the dross, but with these new found gifts also comes the propensity for aggression and cruelty.

Mars is choleric, a very hot and dry planet who gained his reputation as the lesser malefic by scorching and burning. The energetic focus of Mars comes about through the heat which expands outwards and the dry which focuses and defines the direction of this expansion. This hot focus makes Mars prone to strife and quarrels for which the expression “hot head” is a perfect description. Mars is one of the most instinctual and reactionary of the planets. His reputation as the lesser malefic is due to this uncontrolled response, he is quick to anger and quick to draw his sword.

Mars is a masculine, but nocturnal planet, the coolness of the night tempering his extreme heat. Just like the warmth of the day improves Saturn extreme cold, Mars can behave better in the moist darkness of the night for then his burning nature is less harmful and destructive than in the heat of the day.

Mars rules all that cuts, is sharp and is hot. A well behaved Mars defends and protects as his sharply directed heat gives him the natural ability to sever the excess and cut away the toxic in life. This is why Mars is associated with physicians and medicine in general, but surgery in particular. Mars has an association with blood and the colour red which seems obvious, but it is important to remember that he only rules blood when it is outside the body, as in blood spilt by the sword. The sword being a perfect Mars symbol; the tool of the warrior, its sharp focal point gave him the ability to defend, protect and cut away the threatening influence from the innocent. On the other hand it could simply be used to kill in an uncontrolled rage.

Mars rules iron, which is easily corrupted, turning a rusty red when it does so. It is from iron that the martial weapons of war are generally made. Mars has a natural correspondence with the military, combat and all contests. Modern day sport is a mostly benign expression of Mars, while modern warfare is one of the more destructive forms he can take. His most noble expression is as spiritual warrior and defender of the innocent; his worst is as the violent aggressor.

Mars rules the testicles and the gall bladder. Mars is associated with the fifth age of man, the age of ambition (43 – 57 years). This is the age when we have established ourselves and acquired the tools we need to go after what we want to achieve. This is the age of greatest competition for the top job and our desire to defend our turf can be at their highest.

## **Sun**

In the sphere of the Sun the soul acquires vision and the sense of perception. With these gifts comes pride and in the extreme, arrogance. The Sun is a hot and dry planet whose nature is modified by the sign and season it finds its self in. The spring Sun (Aries, Taurus and Gemini) is more moist, the autumn Sun (Libra, Scorpio and Sagittarius) is cooler and drier, while the winter Sun (Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces) is more cold. Only the summer Sun (Cancer, Leo and Virgo) carries the hot, dry qualities in their entirety.

The Sun is naturally choleric, masculine and diurnal, being the ruling light of the day. The Sun generally bestows a benefic influence from afar, but can harm when too near. Unlike Mars that burns, the Sun

being the supreme planet and symbol of the divine in our cosmos, provides light and vision; the Sun enlightens, though we may be blinded if we get too near.

The Sun is associated with royalty, divine spirit and leadership. This is clearly illustrated by the fact that the other planet's speed, strength and therefore their ability to act is affected by their position and relationship to the Sun. Generally planets that rise before the Sun, in an oriental position have more benefic strength than those who are occidental to the Sun, setting after him. The speed and retrograde motion of the other planets are entirely due to their relationship with the Sun. The Sun also has the power to obliterate by combustion or illuminate the other planets.

Pride is one the Sun's gift, but arrogance is the downside of this. The Sun can bestow brilliance and recognition, but with this comes the danger of ego. It is the Sun that represents and symbolises divine spirit in all individuals and promises a direct connection to the God.

The Sun was said to be the ruler of the heart, the central organ of the body and provider of the vital spirit that enlivens all living organisms. The Sun also rules the eyes, in particular the right eye of men and the left eye of women. As the primary light it is appropriate that the Sun ruled the main organ of sight, which brings the light into the soul/body.

The Sun has dominion over the metal gold as this is the only metal that in its pure form is incorruptible and his colour includes all shades of yellow and gold. The Sun is associated with the fourth age of man, the age of virility (23 to 42 years). This is the time in which we desire to express our individuality and establish our place in the world. This is when we define our purpose and want to be seen. It is interesting to note that our modern solarcentric obsession with youth has imprisoned us to this solar age from which it is unfashionable to grow older. This is clearly illustrated by our most solar citizens, the celebrities (star) who go to great length to remain forever 23 to 42.

## Venus

Venus the next planetary sphere through which the soul passes, offers the gift of love and the impulse for passion. Beauty, luxury and the arts are also gifts of Venus, as is her negative expression, lust. Venus is always moist, some writers say she is hot (Ptolemy) whilst others say she is cold (Al Biruni, Lilly) the accepted compromise is that she is cold when occidental, warm when oriental. In fact Venus was assigned very different characteristic depending on her position as either an evening or a morning star. Venus, as a hot/moist morning star was called Lucifer, the bringer of light and was more aggressive and warrior-like than her more placid counterpart, the cool/moist evening star Hesperus.

Venus is temperate, nocturnal, and feminine. The lesser benefic, she promotes growth and fertility to a lesser degree than Jupiter. Venus has always been seen as the Goddess of love and it is her moist nature that most captures the desire nature of Venus. Moisture allows for things to conciliate, to come together, to intertwine, bind and flow as one. Whether warm or cold Venus is always moist and her principle motivation is to fulfil her desire to attract and combine with others, whether they are animate or inanimate. An out of balance Venus can manifest as materialistic, promiscuous, lustful and vain.

Venus's strong association with beauty is likely to owe a lot to her physical appearance in the skies at the turning of the day. As the brightest object in the cosmos outside of the Sun and Moon her

appearance in the dawn or twilight hours is enthralling. Her prominence in the sky is evidenced by the fact that her cycles were recorded as far back as five thousand years.

Venus rules the kidneys and the female sexual organs. She is said to help regulate and balance the waters in the body. Venus's desire for balance, harmony and beauty associates her with all creative, artistic pursuits. Music, dance, art and theatre of all sorts owe their allegiance to the planet of beauty and love. Venus rules the metal copper as well as all pastel colours. It is interesting that the combination of the two benefic metals; tin and copper gives us bronze, one of the most useful alloys and one used extensively by artist in the making of their sculptures. Venus is associated with the third age of man, appropriately the age of the lover, from 15 to 22 years old. This is the age in which we are most focused on discovering our passions and sensuality through the eye of a lover.

## **Mercury**

At Mercury's gate the soul is given the analytical faculty of the mind and language with which to communicate; as well, the soul acquires the ability for evil plotting, a yearning for money and greed. Mercury being the most changeable of the planets, he is the hardest of all to pin down. He is androgynous, taking on the quality of whichever planet whose company he keeps. When in front of the Sun, in an oriental position and being warmed by the Sun's light, Mercury is considered to be a diurnal planet, but when he is in an occidental position, rising after the Sun, he joins the nocturnal sect. Though he was generally seen as more of a cold and dry planet, when oriental he took on more heat and moisture.

The main characteristics of Mercury are his dexterity, speed and communication skills. In traditional astrology the mind was seen to be ruled by a combination of the Moon and Mercury. Mercury channelled and communicated ideas and information; functioning like a go-between bringing together the bits of information, inspiration and ideas gathered by the Moon. Mercury was also the trickster, a notion that is clearly illustrated by the danger posed by purely logical thinking devoid of inspiration, leading us into strife; or by the seduction of the "silver tongued" conman. Without benefic support and influence, Mercury is prone to malefic expression and it would be unwise to trust him.

In medical astrology Mercury is related to the nervous system and brain and is said to rule diseases of the mind. In modern terms psychological disorders have a great deal to do with the function of Mercury in the chart. Mercury rules the second age of man (between the age of 5 to 14 years). This is the age of the scholar when we learn all that is necessary for independent life. This is also the age of childhood and early schooling. Mercury's playful nature is evident in all children, as is his changeable quality. Not only do children grow and change before our eyes, but their mood can change in an instant.

Mercury was the ruler of astrology and other divinatory arts, and a key component of alchemy. His rulership over his namesake metal quicksilver, known to us as mercury, seems appropriate enough when we realise that of all the planets Mercury is the oddest and most eccentric of the planets and quicksilver (mercury) as a liquid metal, is the most eccentric of the metals. Quicksilver like Saturn's metal lead is an extremely toxic metal. Used in a myriad of ways and for a variety of purposes, quicksilver was the key ingredient in the alchemical process. The colour associated with Mercury is silvery grey, though he maybe just as rightly associated with all the colours of the rainbow.

## The Moon

The final sphere that the soul passes through is that of the Moon, which imparts to the soul its body and the ability to change and grow. This is where the soul acquires hunger and its pains. Gluttony is one of the Moons not so pleasant offerings. Like the Sun the Moon is associated with light and vision, but this is a reflected light.

Hunger, food and nourishment are some of the Moon's most profound associations. It was understood that as the soul finally passed through the lunar gates all the other planetary gifts it had received were corrupted. At the lunar gates the soul entered the world of forgetfulness, generation and cycles. The Moon's monthly renewal symbolises the endless cycle of life and death to which human life is bound. Upon entering this world the soul forgets its origins and embraces the illusions of matter. The soul in the body feels the urge to reunite with divine spirit, but only recognises this as a hunger which is never satisfied. To nourish the body is to nourish the soul for human life must be mastered in order to find our way back to spirit.

The Moon is associated with the 1<sup>st</sup> age of man, the age of the infant. This is the age when we learn to use our senses and to discover the world of sensation. We are all body and it may be why the Moon is so often associated with the physical body. The infant lives in a world of senses without reason. Emotions are seen as lunar principle because emotions are in fact movements or physical feeling in the body. Mercury may give our emotions reasons for being, but it is the Moon that feels them.

Specifically the Moon rules the stomach, breast and like the other light in the planetary cosmos he also has rulership over the eyes. But this time the Moon rules the right eye of women and the left eye of men. The Moon rules the metal silver, next to gold it is one of the purest metal. Silver has the ability to, like a mirror reflect the light of the golden solar spirit.