

## STARS OF EASTER

As we prepare for Easter week, let us take a look at the current stellar activity (see above) so that we might have some pictures to carry into this time of the year. The chart above shows the full circle of the zodiac around the Earth with current planet positions. The symbols for the constellations are the new symbols developed by Willi Sucher, which deepen and modernize the traditional symbols. The smaller inner circle shows the tropical zodiac as used in traditional astrology, where the sign of Aries begins at the Vernal Point of Spring Equinox. The outer circle shows the actual fixed star constellations of the zodiac as we actually experience them in the heavens now. I have not included Pluto at 298° or Uranus at 43° on this chart.

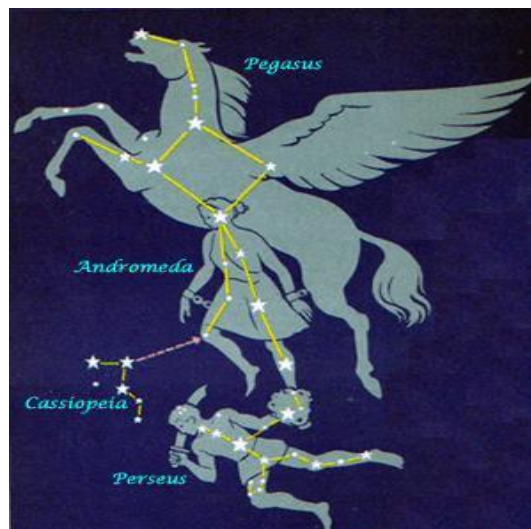
We have been going through a period where all but one of the planets (Uranus) has been traveling through the “dark” or lower zodiac, which stretches from Scorpio through Pisces. These stars are the stars of winter when the manifest light of the Sun is least present but when we can take into our thoughts the Christic events of the incarnation in the cycle of the year, Advent through Easter, which speak to us of the spiritual or unmanifest Sun and the transformational deeds for the Earth. This dark zodiac is composed of the constellations that make up the lower human form, which we can think of as that realm in which live the greatest challenges of transformation in the more unconscious/instinctual realm of our being. We only need to think back to 2020 when the outer planets Saturn and Jupiter,

which carry the higher vision of our human past and future, were traversing the stars of Sagittarius, both encountering the deepest and most challenging will sphere of Pluto. We saw in the pandemic an encompassing breakdown of societal forms and functions and an assault on the bodily nature and the ego of the human being. This culminated in the Great Conjunction at winter solstice, 2020. This Great Conjunction has posed the questions and challenges thematically for the next 20. This complex and multi-dimensional question from these stars both remembers and renews the great annunciation of the birth into the world of the true human being and calls on us to take up this birthing impulse anew to realize the true image of the human being. This Great Conjunction took place, after this year long encounters with Pluto in Sagittarius, just in the stars of Capricorn, telling us that this “becoming” of our true humanity would involve a time of catharsis hopefully leading us to our initiation into a vision for our future and the new forms needed for its realization.

Coming to the present, we can see three particular meetings of planets that set the tone and the call for this Passion/Easter season. The Sun has now ascended above the celestial equator, crossing the equinox point (March 20<sup>th</sup>) and is joined by Mercury beyond the Sun in superior conjunction (exact on April 3). This occurs in the stars of Pisces, the constellation representing our current Piscean Age and the tasks of our Age, which Rudolf Steiner once described as “humanity learning to stand on its own two feet”. Pisces is connected in the human form to the hands and feet, with how we engage and work with the Earth. Pisces as you can see in the symbol itself, is deeply connected with the horizontal relationship of the human being with the world. The Pisces/Virgo equinox axis is the horizontal axis of the great cross of the world. Whereas the vertical axis of Sagittarius/Gemini is connected with challenges and tasks around our egoity and selfhood, our sense of identity, the horizontal axis brings us more to questions and challenges around our relationships on a horizontal level, of the heart and hands. It calls us to an “I and Thou” experience on the horizontal level, meaning not in hierarchy, above and below, but in community, side by side, hand in hand. If we think of these relationships in the “I and Thou”, we can consecrate (make sacred) them, creating an I/Thou relationship to our fellow humans, to our Earth, and to the beings of the Divine world. It is a call to brother/sisterhood in its highest sense. This configuration asks us, out of our higher Sun ego, to actively work to bring the healing cosmic intelligence of Mercury into our relationships in all domains of life. It is a Michaelic call.

Additionally, this particular conjunction of Mercury and Sun brings a special message from the stars. It occurs exactly in line with a specific star in a constellation above the zodiacal constellation of Pisces. In astrophysics, one must not only take into account the relations of the planetary spheres to the zodiacal stars, but also very often include the constellations that stand above and below the zodiac, which can enhance and elaborate the zodiacal imagination. This week, Mercury and Sun come into conjunction (meaning the same longitudinal degree) as this special star, Alpheratz. Alpheratz comes from the Arabic name meaning the “navel of the horse”, or in Latin, the “umbilicum of the horse”. So, what does this star Alpheratz offer us? What is the nature of the realm of being of this star? It is the one star which shares two constellations. It is the star in the forehead (think Jupiter chakra between the eyes) of Andromeda as well as the belly or “umbilicum” of Pegasus, the Winged Intelligence. See the image below. Andromeda and Pegasus are part of the great story told in the constellations stretching above the zodiac from Taurus all the way down to Aquarius. It is the story of Perseus/Michael with his sword and shield, bearing the head of Medusa, with her hair of serpents and her eyes that turn all beings to stone. He comes upon the beautiful Andromeda, representing the human soul, chained to the rock of matter, about to be devoured by the large sea monster Cetus, arising out of the depths of the surging sea of the instinctual unconscious realm. Her mother and father, King Cepheus and Cassiopeia constellations are above. Perseus turns Cetus to stone by directing the Medusa eyes upon it. Thus, he frees Andromeda from being chained to the rock and devoured. In the heavens then we see the imagination of Pegasus, the Winged Intelligence, arising from the forehead of the rescued Andromeda. This is a wonderful imagination provided by the Greeks with profound meaning about the journey of the human ego and the evolution of intelligence. This week the Sun and Mercury meet in line with this star

offering us a cosmic imagination to bring the new spiritual thinking out of our Sun I AM actively into our world today. As we look at the sunsets this week, perhaps we can imagine this configuration going into the night sky and its call inspiring us in our sleep as we expand out into the cosmos.



To add another supporting imagination on a higher octave, we can turn to Jupiter and Neptune during this Easter season. They are now, and have been since mid-March, in the orb of conjunction, coming into exact conjunction during Holy Week. This is taking place just into the stars of Pisces, with Jupiter transitioning into astronomical Pisces this week. Here we can consider on a humanity-wide scale a similar question and challenge posed by the planetary spheres to humanity. Again, we have this brother/sister Piscean impulse being addressed with Jupiter, who Steiner once called the Great Thought King. Jupiter is the sphere of activity of the beings called the Spirits of Wisdom, or the Kyriotetes. They bear the highest creative living cosmic wisdom which wants to realize itself in human thought. It is the chakra of the so called "third eye" in the human forehead (think umbilicum of Pegasus arising from the forehead of Andromeda). Willi Sucher once called the new Jupiter thinking, "clair-thinking" as it is not the old clairvoyance of the past but a new "seeing" born out of uniting our thinking with cosmic thought/wisdom. Jupiter conjunct Neptune is a real picture of the challenge of our times. (For more detail on Neptune, visit my videos on the outer planets.) Neptune on the one hand awaits the transformative soul activity leading to Inspiration, but it works very much in the world today in the Ahrimanic world conception, the mechanization and deadening of the soul brought about by our materialistic world conceptions. So, this conjunction can become for us a call from the Jupiter beings to meet the Ahrimanic activity arising in so many ways in the world today, with the true spiritual thinking and wisdom of Jupiter. It is this activity which lays the geology of our future world incarnation, the Future Jupiter evolutionary cycle.

Finally, let us again follow Venus and Mars, which I wrote about in my last two-part article on their conjunction with Pluto during what is an unusually long conjunction period for these two planetary bodies. It began in early February and continues even now as they begin to move apart, but are still in the orb of conjunction. We spoke about their exact conjunction together with Pluto and its relation to the disruption of the world in the invasion of Ukraine as two world views collide. Now these two planets conjunct Saturn in the stars of Capricorn. It is a continuation of this Mars and Venus dynamic written about previously, but now meeting with this great planetary sphere which bears World Karma. Saturn carries the memory and consequences of the past which must be resolved and reckoned with to insure the Divine Plan of evolution. It reminds us from where we have come and where we are to go as part of the great evolutionary plan of the Father. Steiner describes how some of the great leaders in humanity carry their intentions and tasks from this sphere to bring important impulses into evolution. So now we

have Mars and Venus “conferencing” with Saturn, with the Will of Worlds. How will humanity meet this dynamism of opposition that they carry? What decisions and choices will be made in this face off which brings what is necessary for our evolutionary plan? Saturn is often depicted as the grim reaper, come to reap what has been sown. World karma can involve the pain of reckoning in order to re-attune to our true path forward.

When I contemplate this configuration, as well as the others for this Easter week, of course many questions arise around the deeper forces at work in the current war between the West and you could say the East. Why this suffering and human tragedy in Ukraine? Suffering and becoming are often intimately united. This is catharsis. So, one can both feel deeply for the suffering while at the same time seek the deeper questions of becoming in world evolution which underlie the war. Can we move beyond the outer dualism and the misguided actions of world governments and leaders to see what is emerging? It is easy to think of Mars and Venus conjunct Saturn in this context in simplistic ways. This article cannot go into the complexities at play in the history of East/West relations that have laid the causes for this current misguided conflict. It would be inaccurate to simply say, Mars, the god of war is battling Venus the impulse for love and harmony in humanity. Or that the West carries the Venus impulse for freedom and a united humanity against the old Mars forms of Romanism and the aggression of Russia. In fact, one could even look at it as the opposite. For in fact Mars represents the evolution of object consciousness and the separation that has led us to individualism and a sense of personal freedom. Yet this separation has also brought us materialism in all its manifestations, economically, socially, scientifically, even to secularism and the “death of God” in the West. In the East you can see the “old” or shadow Venus forces of Lucifer, but perhaps hidden, also the new Venus seeds being laid. These old forces include the rejection of individualism, particularly in its materialistic/economic form of the West, in favor of the sense of nation/folk with a spiritual and political leader who guides the people as one “community”. Hidden in the rhetoric is this question of individual and community. One of the major objections articulated by a leading current philosopher, Alexandr Dugin, who is the leading thinker behind the Russian state perspective now, is the soul and spiritual emptiness in the West and the rejection by Russia of infection by this soulless materialism. Yet of course, the Russian solution to defend its integrity against Western assault is this tragic invasion and the suffering inflicted on Ukraine. In all of this from our astrosophical view, we can ask, where is the true Venus impulse that wants to come into our humanity? What is that impulse? Is it the “middle way”? It is not the old Luciferic hierarchical spirituality of the Mysteries continuing into present forms which Dugin actually represents. It is not the old blood/folk bonds of nation and “people” with its denial of the individual. We must dig deep to find the middle path which unites the progress of Mars into individuality and freedom with the future new Christian mysteries of Venus, which want to lead us into the tasks of the 6<sup>th</sup> Age, the Slav Age and beyond. In all things now we must seek the new which wants to come into humanity. These new mysteries are what anthroposophy brings for humanity, which is the realization of the truth of Christ in our humanity. It is that which makes possible true individual freedom and true shared community out of the understanding and creation in our own being of the not I but Christ in me. Rudolf Steiner describes the evolved humanity of the 6<sup>th</sup> Slav Age as being unable to experience happiness if a fellow human is suffering. Are we moving in this direction? We are in the catharsis that is manifesting on different fronts in the world today with the death of the old so the new can emerge. But the emptiness of that death will be filled with even darker forces if the new spiritual image of our humanness is not brought forth and the power and light of resurrection are not realized. The stars of Easter can offer us real hope and confidence that the spiritual world is ever present to aid us.

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