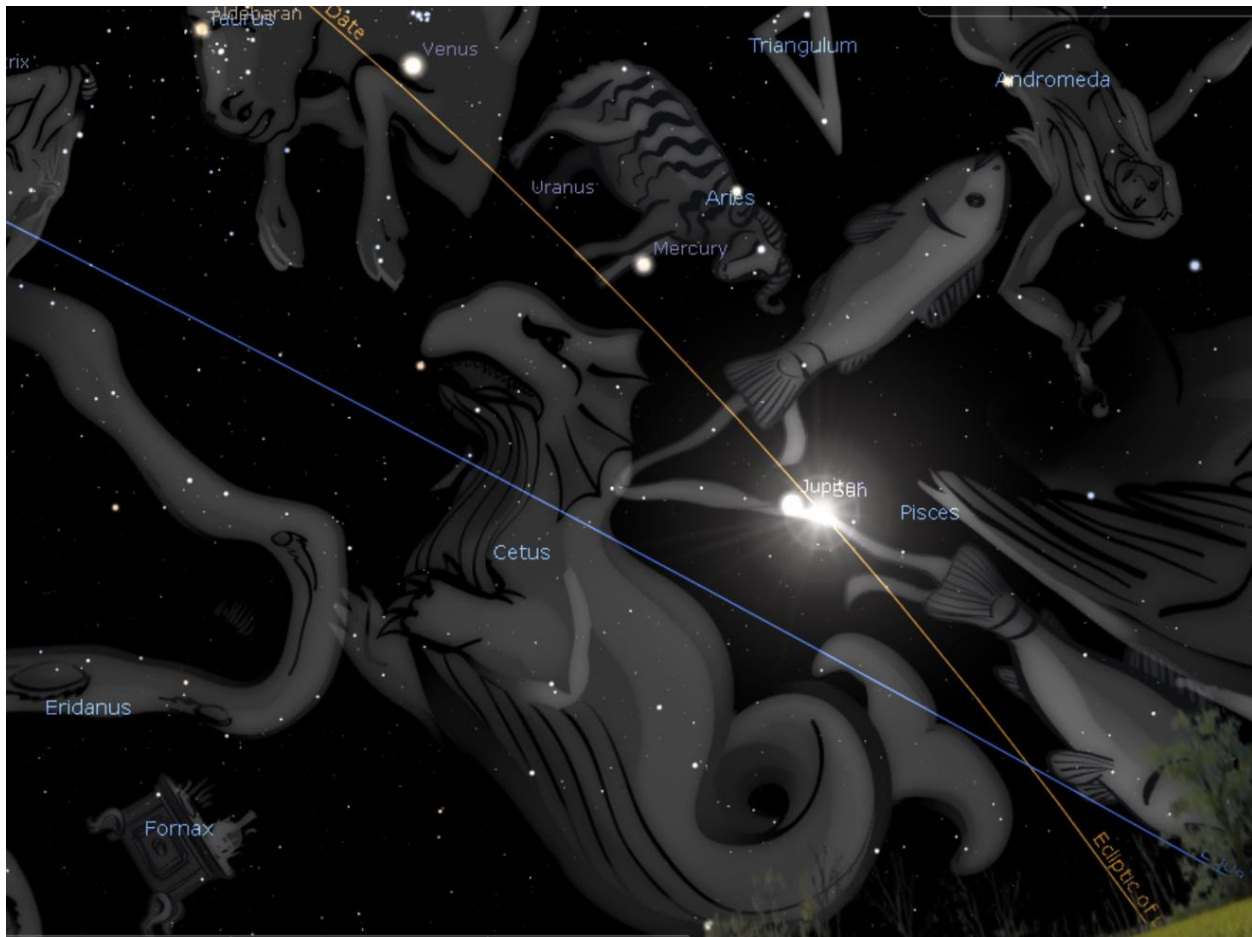


# EASTER 2023

## JUPITER AND THE VERNAL POINT



In the above image of the Easter stars, we have worlds of cosmic words. How can we hear and understand them? And more importantly, how can we answer them? Above the little patch of green earth on the western horizon before sunset in the bottom right corner, we notice the stars of Pisces with the orange line of the ecliptic path intersecting the blue line of the celestial equator, which is our Earth equatorial plane projected out into the distant cosmos and the Sun's path, marking the Vernal Point. Moving along the ecliptic path upward we come to the Sun meeting Jupiter at Easter, and above towards the right corner, stands the star Alpheratz, just above Andromeda's head. One can see the wing of Pegasus sweeping just above one of the two Fishes. Between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday, the Sun will pass directly in longitudinal conjunction below this star Alpheratz and for the whole of Holy Week we can say that Jupiter and Sun are passing below Alpheratz as they come into conjunction. Following the ecliptic path along, we can see in Aries, first Mercury and then Uranus. Further along we see Venus in the Bull and just out of the image stepping into the Twins is Mars. In the few days before Palm Sunday, before the Sun got too close to Jupiter, one could go out immediately after sunset and look at this line up of planets within about a 50 degree segment of the zodiac (though Uranus would not be visible to the naked eye and Mercury was too much in the Sun's light to really see). There is so much here to contemplate over the Holy Week approaching Easter this year! However, this year I am drawn to the vernal point and to Jupiter particularly. In fact, I have been somewhat obsessed with Jupiter and the vernal point since last spring! Jupiter has been passing over the vernal point and then back again in retrograde and then crossing again in direct motion during the past year. I plan to write more about my Jupiter obsession in a future article but will begin with some thoughts here. My previous article on February 28<sup>th</sup> (see Current Articles on the website) was also about Jupiter meeting Venus in Pisces near Alpheratz. In that article I went into more depth about this star as the star of the new winged intelligence of the Jupiter chakra, or third eye -- the "new sight" which is coming into humanity. It is coming whether we are prepared or not. A new clairvoyance and a new awareness of our universal humanity will more and

more awaken. Important for this Easter season is the coming together of the Sun with Jupiter under this Jupiter chakra star, Alpheratz. What a picture for Easter week! Jupiter bears the great vision and ideals for the future of humanity. Steiner calls Jupiter the “cosmic thinker” and of course the next great evolutionary cycle is called Future Jupiter. Willi Sucher refers to Jupiter as the new “clair-thinking”, meaning the unfolding of a living spiritual wisdom through our transformed thinking. This now joins the Sun, the cosmic picture of the “I AM”, in Pisces, which is deeply connected with the tasks of our age of the consciousness soul and with our horizontal relationships with the Earth and with our shared humanity, hand in hand. The Pisces/Virgo axis on our great world cross at spring and autumn carry this task for humanity of the bringing together of wisdom (Virgo) and love (Pisces). This configuration this Easter week stands as an archetype for the foundation of the new human being and the resurrection force given to all of humanity. We have in the heavens this image, I believe, of the real help from the divine world in uniting our new thinking (Jupiter and Alpheratz) with our true heart “I” in love for our shared humanity (Sun) through our will in deeds of sacrifice and service to the Earth and our fellow humans (Pisces). The challenge is that it not be snatched up by the adversarial forces and further serve materialistic impulses in a techno one-world vision. The impulse of brother/sisterhood that can awaken in Pisces can instead become an enhanced polarization and division which we see of course all around us now, destroying the needed awareness of our shared spiritual humanity. Easter is the beginning of the cycle of the year of the new human. May this beginning for 2023 be a foundation stone impulse for the coming year and our renewed commitment to work towards the goals this starry configuration offers to us.

We have two cycles which are related but different, which we can follow in the rhythms that make up our yearly cycle of life on Earth. Both are founded on the vernal point. One is created by the manifest Sun which we see in the heavens and which we experience with our senses and is the source of our experience of Nature. The other rhythm, one could say, is created by the spiritual or unmanifest Sun, the true Easter Sun, which does not reveal itself to our sense experience. The first is a four or eightfold rhythm and the other a sevenfold rhythm. Four and eight are the numbers of space, the manifest world in which we live our earthly life. Seven is the number of time and the life world in which we also live, not with our physical senses but with a finer sensibility which can become conscious. The one cycle is the cycle of the natural human being and the other is the cycle of what we can call the new human being, the emerging spiritual human. Both of course interpenetrate and support each other. Both are of great value for our evolving.

If we take a moment to really think about the vernal point, it can provoke a sense of awe. It is a powerful world shaping single point in the cosmos that brings heaven and earth together in time. It structures and defines small cycles as well as macro evolutionary cycles in relation to the Sun and the Zodiac – this one little point can become a portal to the mysteries of evolution.

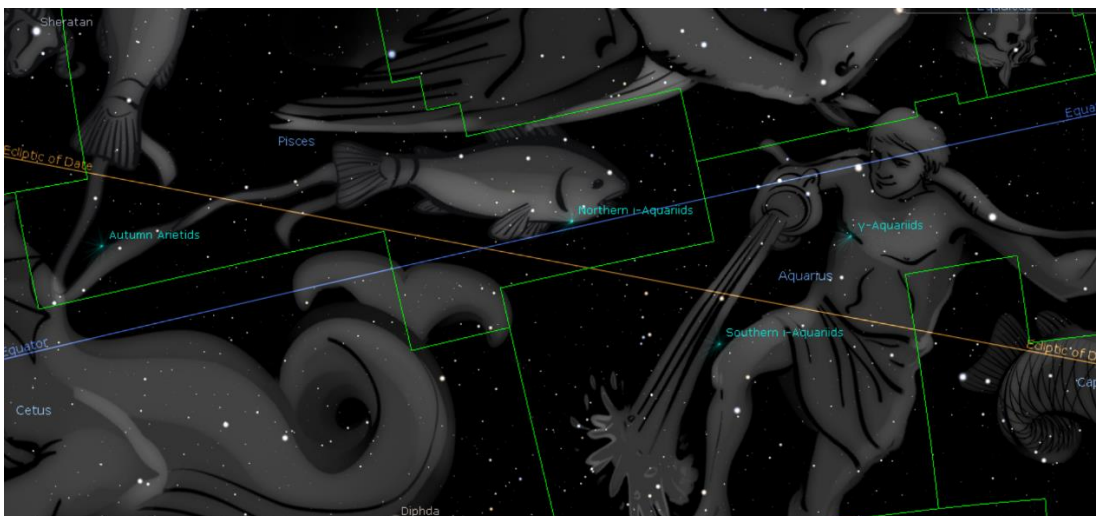
In ancient times long before the time of Christ, the four/eight rhythm was the guide. The cycle of four is reflected in the great world cross of solstices and equinoxes. The eight rhythm is when the cross-quarter points are added to this cross. These cross quarter festivals represent the mid-points between solstices and equinoxes and they are deeply tied to ancient festivals, for example the Celtic festivals of Lughnasgh on August 1<sup>st</sup>; Samhain on November 1<sup>st</sup>; Imbolc on February 2<sup>nd</sup> and Beltane on May 1<sup>st</sup>. Many of you will recognize modern festivals associated with these dates as well, such as Halloween, Candlemas, May Day, but that is for another article. All of these festivals carried deeply significant spiritual meaning for earlier humanity. In those times nature and the Sun were integrated into human consciousness in a quite different way than now because they were not separated from their spiritual realities. The Sun was the representation of the cosmic ego force. Nature was the language of divine being expressing itself in all its variety and seasonality. Here I wish to point out that I am referring to northern and more western ancient history, as it is my historical heritage. I am not immersed and knowledgeable in other historical narratives from more tropical or southern regions so cannot speak of them.

Since the event of the first Easter, a new rhythm has been established globally as a cycle for the new human who is becoming. This is not a four/eight-rhythm associated with the outer world of space, but rather a seven-rhythm leading into the unmanifest realm of time, the new dimension of the life world, or to use an anthroposophical term, the etheric realm. Friedrich Rittelmeyer, a founding priest of the Movement for Religious Renewal, once asked Rudolf Steiner how one could come to an experience of the Christ in this etheric realm. Steiner answered, “by living with the cycle of the year”. This would, I think, include the renewal of the nature festivals out of the Christ force in us, which are very near to and associated with the new festivals, except for three of the seven. These three must also become part of living with

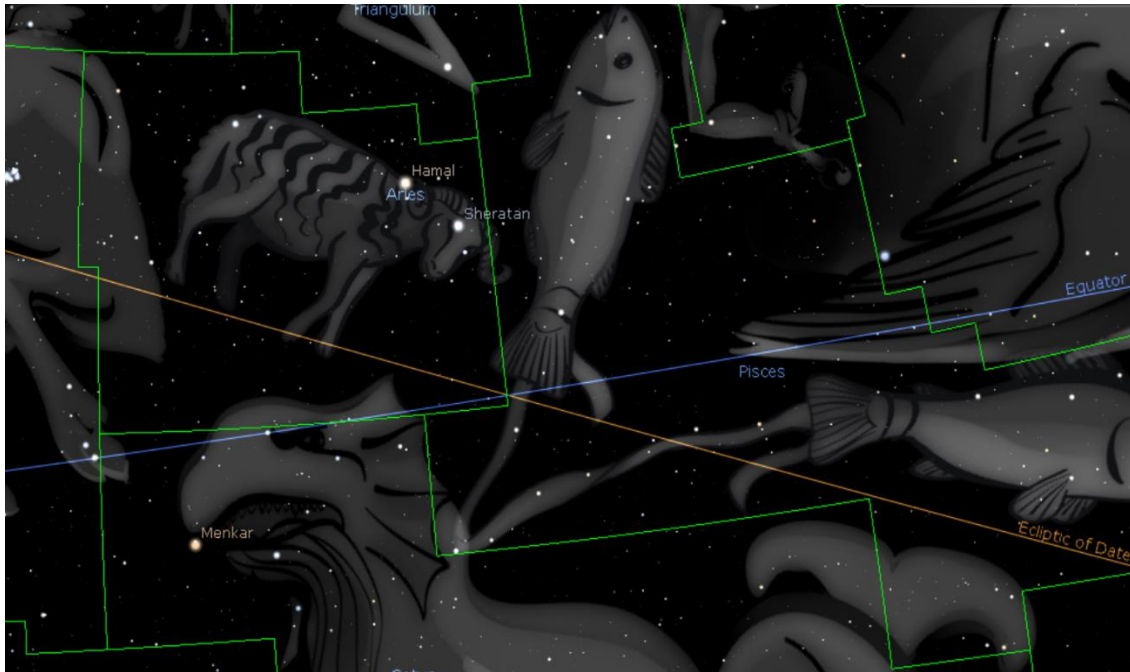
the cycle of the year for the new human. We have the four: St. John's Day near summer solstice on June 24<sup>th</sup>; Michael's Day on September 29<sup>th</sup> near autumn equinox; Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup>, near winter solstice; and our current festival, Easter, at least within a range of time close to spring equinox, though it can vary substantially, but never be before equinox. The additional three to complete the new cycle of the year are Epiphany, January 6<sup>th</sup> and two which are also variable dates because they are based on the Easter dating, a fixed number of days after Easter. They are Ascension, 40 days after Easter and Pentecost, 50 days after Easter. These three new festivals then are added to the four.

The vernal point signifies a major shift for the Earth soul. For a quick review, astronomically the vernal point is determined by the intersection of the Earth's equatorial plane and the plane of the Sun's path, the ecliptic plane, along which lies the zodiac. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, the Sun in its annual journey stands at this point, marking the transition from the lower half to the upper half of the sky. If one can picture this, it can become a real threshold experience. The Sun passes into its ascending phase above the equatorial plane in the North. It represents a shift in nature, in the life realm, which we all witness in spring. It also marks a transition in the soul of the Earth Being which begins a process of expansion, like one rising from out of the grave of the Earth, and expanding out to the starry periphery, which culminates at the summer solstice with full exhalation and expansion. In the ancient festivals, at this culmination of the external light and warmth in summer, humans then experienced momentarily, in the festivals and rituals, their "I" in the heights of the stars. So Spring, this Sun crossing at the Vernal equinox in the four and eightfold natural cycle, was a significant transition point. With Easter the vernal point is also central, but in a different and enhanced way. Easter is the only festival that changes each year. It is not on a fixed date. This should not be under appreciated. It is based on the rule of: the first Sunday, after the first Full Moon, after the Spring Equinox. There is a threefold element to come together in time. If one pictures it, it occurs when the Sun is now in its ascending time above the vernal point and because it is after the Full Moon the Moon is below the autumn equinox descending into the lower sky realm. It is also on the Sun Day. Here, in a cosmic picture, is the transition from the old lunar reflecting Jahve spirituality, which is descending like the Full Moon after the equinox, to the new sun ascending spirituality. The new holy day starts at dawn compared to the earlier lunar holy day starting at sunset.

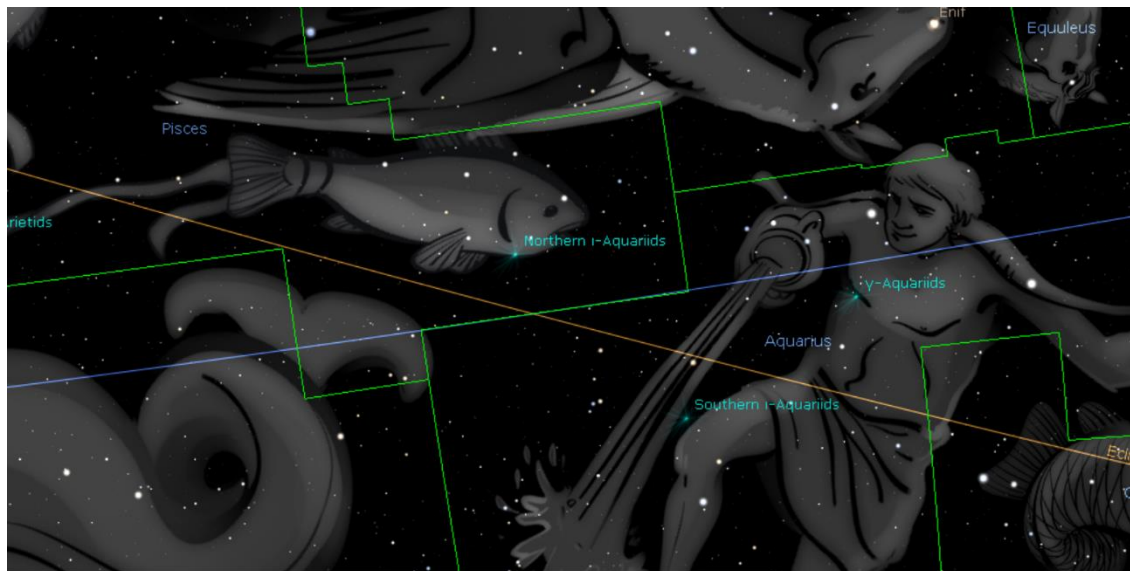
In addition to the significance of the vernal point in the cycle of the year, Rudolf Steiner points out its significance as the key to the great evolutionary cultural shifts in human consciousness over millennia. Perhaps you are all aware that this vernal point is not fixed but moves slowly around the zodiac. This is due to the fact that our Earth has a kind of slow wobble on its axis which causes the intersection of the equatorial plane and the ecliptic plane to slowly move backwards along the zodiac at a rate of 1 degree ever 72 years. That means it takes roughly 2,160 years to pass through one 30-degree constellation. It thus takes about 26,000 years to make one full wobble, causing one full vernal point revolution through the entire zodiac. That's a slow wobble! This great cosmic cycle is called the Platonic Year, or the Cosmic Day. At the time of the original Easter, in the Greco/Roman cultural age which started in 747 BC, the vernal point was in the stars of Aries. From this comes the foundation for the tropical zodiac with Aries beginning at the vernal point. But that point has been moving back along the zodiac for 2000 years since then and is now well into the stars of Pisces, almost to the end of Pisces. So now at spring, on March 21<sup>st</sup>, the Sun is not rising in Aries as it did at the time of Christ but in Pisces. The image below shows the current VP intersection point in the stars of Fishes.



This can give us insights into the changing tasks of the Easter event and the vernal point in different eras of human evolution. Rudolf Steiner gives the date of 1413 as about the time of the start of the Piscean or 5<sup>th</sup> Cultural Age in which we now live, which will last until the Aquarian or 6<sup>th</sup> Cultural Age. However, there is an interesting blip on the screen here. If we measure astronomically the movement of the vernal point along the backdrop of the zodiac as defined in modern times, we find that the vernal point entered the constellation of Aries in about 1700 or 1800 BC. This is about 1100 years before 747 BC. Also, if we look astronomically, the vernal point entered the stars of Pisces in roughly 60 BC, which then means that from a strictly modern astronomical perspective it was just transitioning out of Aries in 33 AD at the time of Christ. 60 BC is about 1500 years before the start of the fifth cultural age which began according to Steiner in 1413 AD.



The next age after the Piscean Age is the Aquarian Age, the 6<sup>th</sup> Cultural Age, which according to Steiner begins in about 3500 AD. However, astronomically the vernal point will enter Aquarius around 2500 to 2600 AD, (see intersection point below) with some disagreement among various sources due to this slow precession and the division point between constellations. In this sense could one say the Aquarian Age is in the pre-dawning stage currently.



How can we perhaps understand all of this? First there are a few caveats to consider. It is important not to get too mechanistic and precise in dating since the vernal point moves only 1 degree every 72 years. We must remember that we now live in the time of calculation at the pinnacle of a scientific materialism. The images above that you see are based on the current divisions between the constellations determined in 1930 by astronomers. These constellations are not all equal 30-degree lengths along the ecliptic. With this we already run into challenges in calculating cultural periods of 2160 years which is based on a 30-degree constellation, though that is the general length for most of them. We must realize that consciousness has changed in how we measure. We have progressed into a time of precise calculation and will move out of the calculable in the future. This then raises the question of whether a new age begins when the vernal point moves into the astronomical constellation as determined in our times. Or do we look more qualitatively at the spiritual reality of a constellational influence in relation to the vernal point; a reality that we have now lost. Also, as you can see in the above image for example, in reality the waters of Aquarius overlap into the Fishes. So the strict boundary of where one ends and the other begins pictorially or imaginatively cannot be so precise. In this sense does the distinction between the astronomical and cultural ages make some sense. Perhaps the "spiritual source" of what informs the consciousness in a cultural age comes from the central region of the constellation after the vernal point has traversed well into that constellation astronomically. For example, as shown above, the vernal point will cross into the constellation of Aquarius around 2500 to 2600 AD which is over a thousand years before the start of the cultural Aquarian Age in about 3500 AD. Thus, in one sense we can look to the astronomical reality as well as the cultural reality of an age. So, how in our times can we understand this?

I think one clue can come from looking back into evolutionary cycles as well as looking at the human biography cycle. In both there is a kind of recapitulation of a past cycle in a new way as the foundation for the new cycle or new life that is to unfold. For example, Steiner speaks of the three first cycles of Earth evolution as a kind of recapitulation of the three previous evolutionary incarnations of our existence with the true start of the tasks of the current Earth evolution ego development beginning in Atlantean times, in about the middle of our evolutionary epoch. Likewise, we know that when a person incarnates, the first part of their life, up to about age 30-35 after the first Saturn return, is a kind of recapitulation, in a transmuted way, of previous earth incarnations. Only at about this later age does the true new work and tasks of this incarnation unfold. So, perhaps we can imagine that the gap between the astronomical ages and the cultural ages are a kind of preparatory period of transition with the seeds of the new age already emerging, but the fullness of that particular age not beginning until the later date. In this sense do I think that we are indeed even now culminating the 5<sup>th</sup> Piscean Age of the Consciousness Soul and already laying the foundations of the 6<sup>th</sup> Aquarian Age of the Spiritual Soul. We are in a pre-dawn of the Aquarian Age, which astronomically will commence in only a few hundred years.

We are obviously in immensely changing times. Add to this the thought that evolution is quite possibly accelerating due to the strength of the working of the Ahrimanic in our current materialistic world consciousness. Perhaps we are starting to see already the transition, the seed forces of the 6<sup>th</sup> Aquarian Age emerging. In this sense can we take up the call of Jupiter now in Pisces under Alpheratz at this Easter time. Something new was inaugurated with the Great Conjunction of 2020 and particularly its relationship to Pluto which will continue to unfold with many other planetary events approaching, particularly in relation to the outer planets, in the coming years. These will all in some ways be connected to this Jupiter call towards the future consciousness which is needed to truly meet what is to come.

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