

A Tribute to Dr. Elisabeth Vreede Death date August 31st



Gender equality was practiced already in anthroposophy at the start of the 20th century where women held many of the leadership positions in the Anthroposophical Society. Dr. Elisabeth Vreede was one of these thought leaders. On August 31st, the anniversary of her death, I wish to acknowledge her Rosicrucian work towards the evolution of spiritual consciousness in a new star wisdom. Following the insights of Rudolf Steiner, she began the genealogy of the new star wisdom, which was carried forward with her and following her by Willi Sucher. In this article I will share selections from her biography as well as a brief look at her death chart from the heliocentric perspective as developed by Willi Sucher. A more complete biography of Dr. Vreede is on my website (<https://www.astrosophy.com/drelisabethvreede>) as well as in the book by Peter Selg, *Elisabeth Vreede: Adversity, Resilience and Spiritual Science* (Steinerbooks).

Dr. Vreede was born in The Hague, Holland on 16 July 1879, (the year of the start of the new Micha-el Age) to a wealthy family. Even as a child she had an interest in astronomy and mathematics and went on to study at the University of Leyden in mathematics, astronomy, Sanskrit, and philosophy (especially Hegel). Her first meeting with Rudolf Steiner took place at the Theosophical Congress in London in 1903. Her parents were theosophists and she as well

was a member of the Theosophical Society. Her recollection of her first encounter with a Steiner lecture is striking to me, as it seems to go against what many think about Steiner's lecture style based on the serious posed photos we are all familiar with. She reported his *"countenance full of fire, the most intense attention, and controlled will."* *She did not like the extraordinary forcefulness that was connected with Steiner's lecture, the "power of temperament... It was as if he wanted to communicate to the world the strength and significance of his mission in every sentence; from the black hair flying around his small head to the remarkably animated gestures of his hands and arms, and with the immensely emphatic nature of his words he appeared to make himself into the physical embodiment of what he had to say."* (Vreede quote from Peter Selg biography)

From 1910, she lived in Berlin, worked on her dissertation, and assisted Rudolf Steiner in occasional administrative assistance as part of the group around Steiner in these early years in Berlin. In April 1914, she moved to Dornach to help in the building of the first Goetheanum. During the War years (1916/17) she left Dornach to work with a friend who was a Quaker peace activist looking after prisoners of war. Around 1918, Dr. Vreede began to construct the library and archive at the Goetheanum. Using her own funds, she purchased the expensive lecture transcripts as soon as they were typed from notes. In 1924, Steiner appointed her to head the Mathematical-Astronomical Section of the School of Spiritual Science of the recently reestablished Anthroposophical Society, and she belonged to the board of directors of the general Anthroposophical Society from 1925 to 1935 when she was expelled, along with Dr. Ita Wegman, from the Society during the tragic split that erupted.

Rudolf Steiner saw Dr. Vreede as part of the Platonic stream and indicated that she had incarnated before her time in order to meet him on the Earth and be part of the founding of anthroposophy. In his biography, Peter Selg, points out frequently her "outsider" status within the movement. It was as if she did not really belong to the karmic interrelationships within the Society, but stood always on the outside. It is reputed that Rudolf Steiner indicated that of all those in his circle, Dr. Vreede understood his work most deeply.

In 1928 she invited Willi Sucher to come to Dornach and collaborated with him in working out the death astrograms of historical personalities, which was part of his substantial historic research, as well as other astrosophical research. This began a long and fruitful collaboration between Willi and Dr. Vreede lasting for many years. She published his first articles in the Astrological Letters which she was also writing. In 1938, Willi Sucher and his wife were able to escape Nazi Germany with papers to travel to the UK leaving everything behind. They never returned. It was in this year that Willi had one more opportunity to meet with Dr. Vreede at a conference in North Wales. This was to be their last meeting, as Dr. Vreede died during the war, in 1943, at Ita Wegman clinic in Ascona, Switzerland at Lake Maggiore. Willi describes how they climbed up the hill behind the ancient site of Penmaenmawr, where the conference was held, to two druid stone circles. Here they took their leave of each other knowing that with the clouds of war it would at best be a long time before they could meet again on Earth.

On this death date of Dr. Vreede, I am reminded of the eureka moment in Willi's life that started him on the path of astrosophy. In 1927 he came across a letter by Dr. Vreede in which she referred to Steiner's indication that the death chart was of greater significance for a biography than the birth chart. This struck Willi then, as he says, "like a lightning bolt". "This is it! This is something positive!" Thus began his astrosophical research working on the death chart of Tolstoy which he sent off to Dr. Vreede in Dornach. So began their working relationship.

Let us take a brief look at the chart of the day of Dr. Vreede's crossing over into the life after death, August, 31st 1943. **Why is this important, even more important than the birth chart?**

In the journey of the human soul and spirit in the life after death, the fruits of life are handed over so to speak in the various planetary spheres where they can be received. The content of one's life offers something to the world of the stars, something which can serve human and cosmic evolution and which may be left for further work in future lives. So, as the birth chart can help one understand the intentions from the spiritual life to be realized and redeemed in the current incarnation, it is more about the individual biographical earth life. Whereas the death chart has more to do with what we offer to the spiritual world as help towards humanity's evolutionary goals. In this way the death chart lacks the natural egoism of the birth chart and looks more towards each individual as a participant in the greater context of world evolution. The work of Willi Sucher in following the path of the ascending human after death is complex and multi-faceted, but one perspective is to view the planets on the day of death from the heliocentric perspective. This can be further understood by comparing it to the planets at birth. But why the heliocentric perspective? As Willi describes in his development of the heliocentric perspective, in this point of view the Earth is one of a family of spheres working together in the solar cosmos for evolution, as opposed to the geocentric in which the Earth and earthly life are the center of focus. So, with the heliocentric we can better perceive how one's deeds in life fit in or contribute to the larger cosmic divine plan. It is less personal than the geocentric.

As Willi writes in Practical Approach I:

We have experienced that both views are of value in the interpretation of cosmic events and that one supports the other. In the heliocentric picture we gain the perspective of the relationship of the planets to their own spheres, by their positions and movements with regard to their own nodes and lines of apsides, as well as to those of the other planets. Thus our conviction has grown that, together with the "breathing" rhythms that we see in the geocentric approach as they are indicated, for instance, by the loops and conjunctions with the Sun, we can again break through to a realistic and yet spiritual conception of the spheres of the planets. In other words, we can apply the geocentric aspect in all those concerns that intend to find the realization of cosmic events in matters of Earth life, both with regard to Earth space and time. The heliocentric approach will lead us to perceive how these events are related to the life of the solar universe, dynamically and spiritually.

For readers of Willi Sucher's work you will recognize the focus he put on the heliocentric charts and the complexity involved in understanding them. A basic primer introduction to the heliocentric is included in my astrosophy course online and in the book online. For this article I will present three images from the death chart that indicate the fruits of the work of Dr. Vreede.

The first is the planet Saturn, which is the sphere for research into karma as it records and holds the karmic past of each of us and the world. Where Saturn is located at death makes a profound statement about the fundamental karmic thread of that life and what was offered to this sphere of world karma and the great plan of the Father. Dr. Vreede's Saturn stood at death in line with two planetary sphere elements, the ascending node of Venus and the Perihelion of Mercury in the stars of Taurus. These two elements (all elements move very slowly through the zodiac over thousands of years) approached each other and came into alignment exactly in 1879, the start of the Micha-el Age. It is too much to go in depth here, but this indicates a new kind of meeting of the sphere of Venus and Mercury and the activity of Micha-el in his new task of serving the Christ and the battle to restore intelligence to its spiritual nature. Vreede's Saturn in this line at death would indicate her profound connection to and work for the Micha-el School as a fundamental karmic thread and deed of her incarnation. A true Michaelite, she even chose to enter earth life with her birth in the year of the start of the new Micha-el age.

Secondly, the Earth and Venus are conjunct in the Perihelion of Mars at her death, in the stars of Aquarius. The sphere of Mars is historically connected, particularly in our age, to the development of the sciences, specifically in our time the development of the natural sciences and the materialistic development of technologies and scientific discoveries. Yet it also wants to be transformed now into a spiritual science, reaping what the scientific method has done for thinking but applying the mathematical/scientific thinking to gain spiritual knowledge. The fact that the Earth is in the Perihelion of Mars points to this earthly work with the sciences, yet it is conjunct Venus, which is the sphere of the new Christic mysteries, which anthroposophy is. So, this conjunction of Earth and Venus in the Perihelion of Mars would speak to the transformative work in the earthly realm to heal the Mars sphere of materialistic science, to raise it to a spiritual science.

Thirdly, we again have the sphere of Venus activated at her death with Jupiter and Pluto near conjunct in the Perihelion of Venus in the stars of Cancer. This speaks to the potentiality of bringing higher cosmic wisdom (new thinking, Jupiter) deep into the will sphere (Pluto) in service of the sphere of Venus (the new Christian mysteries of anthroposophy). A profoundly healing impulse in the Venus sphere to which the higher wisdom of Jupiter, the vision for our future, is shone into and enlightens the most transformative and powerful forces of the will.

Much more could be gone into in depth with this death chart, but perhaps one can get an idea...and for me it is a powerful picture...of an individuality working out of anthroposophy in deeply transformative ways. In all three examples, the Sphere of Venus is engaged: the planet Venus joins the Earth in the Mars perhelion; Jupiter and Pluto meet in the Venus sphere in the

perihelion; the great recorder of karma, Saturn, stands in the Venus sphere (the ascending node) which is aligned with the Mercury sphere (perihelion) carrying the Micha-el impulse. So, in each of these, one could take a deeper look into how these configurations particularly in relation to the Venus sphere reveal her life task to help bring in the new mysteries through anthroposophy, particularly through her scientific works. It also reveals where her deeds were received into the cosmic world of being for the future and raises the questions of how in her return to Earth these gifts and fruits will be taken up in new ways to further the work of the Christic renewal of the Earth.

On this death day of Dr. Elisabeth Vreede, these thoughts are offered in tribute to her work and commitment to anthroposophy and her founding impulses towards astrosophy. May she return to take up her tasks soon.

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