

Practical Astrology for Witches and Pagans

Using the Planets and the Stars for Effective Spellwork, Rituals, and Magickal Work

Ivo Dominguez Jr.

Practical Astrology for Witches and Pagans

Using the Planets and the Stars for Effective Spellwork, Rituals, and Magickal Work

Ivo Dominguez, Jr.

First published in 2016 by Weiser Books, an imprint of

Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC
With offices at:
665 Third Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94107
www.redwheelweiser.com

Copyright © 2016 by Ivo Dominguez, Jr.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from Red Wheel/Weiser. Reviewers may quote brief passages.

ISBN: 978-1-57863-575-7

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data available upon request

Cover design by Jim Warner
Typeset in Warnock Pro
Cover photograph © Lincoln Harrison Photography. Cole Bay, Freycinet National Park, Tasmania, Australia. Additional rights required if sold.
www.lincolnharrison.com

Printed in Canada

MG

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials Z39.48-1992 (R1997).

www.redwheelweiser.com

www.redwheelweiser.com/newsletter

Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to my beloved James Conrad Welch, to James Eric Dickinson, Michael Glen Smith, and to all my kith and kin in the Assembly of the Sacred Wheel. A special thanks to T. Thorn Coyle who requested that I write this book more than once. And a thousand blessings to Ellen Riordan, my first teacher of Astrology.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 2: The Worldview of Astrology

Chapter 3: The Core Concepts of Astrology

Chapter 4: The Planets

Chapter 5: The Signs

Chapter 6: The Houses

Chapter 7: The Aspects

Chapter 8: Using the Glyphs for Magick

Chapter 9: The Astrology of Time

Chapter 10: Choosing the When

Chapter 11: Adapting to the When

Chapter 12: The Astrology of the Aura

Chapter 13: The Astrology of Spirit Work

Chapter 14: Spiritual Evolution

Chapter 15: The Magick Squares

Chapter 16: The Great Year

Chapter 17: Next Steps

Appendix A: Planet and Sign Correspondences

Appendix B: House Angles and Hemispheres

Appendix C: The Magick Squares for the Seven Elder Planets

Appendix D: Rulerships and Essential Dignities

Appendix E: The Signs and the Body

Appendix F: The Three Gates of the Moon

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It has often been said that the West lacks a sacred language with the subtle and specific spiritual vocabulary of a language such as Sanskrit. We actually do have such a language, a rich symbolic language, and it is Astrology. More often than not, people think of Astrology as a tool for divination or the exploration of one's personality. Astrology is considerably more than that. It is a sacred science, a highly descriptive symbolic language, a technology that can be applied to all aspects of Magick, and much more. Unfortunately, most books on Astrology are written either for the specific needs of astrologers or as entertainment for the masses. Moreover, the vast majority of astrologers are not involved in Magick or Witchcraft and as such have little awareness of our uses for Astrology. I had the good fortune of taking an interest in Astrology in the early 1980s, not long after I had put my feet on the path to become a witch. I am thankful that I had access to teachers of both Astrology and Witchcraft so that my evolution as a practitioner included an organic synthesis of these disciplines. Over the years, I have had many friends and students ask me to write a book about Astrology for magickal practitioners. This book is my response to their request, and an effort to share the gift that I was given so many years ago by my teachers.

People are often daunted at the prospect of learning enough Astrology for it to actually be useful in their magickal practices. It is true that Astrology is a huge field of study and it could take several lifetimes to achieve mastery. The same can be said of Mathematics, but many people are able to learn enough math so they can function in their day-to-day life and manage their finances. My intention with this book is to teach the core concepts of Astrology so that Witches and Pagans would then be able to truly apply Astrology to their practices. The use of jargon cannot be avoided in any technical field, but I have kept the use of jargon to a minimum and have defined the terms that I've used in this book. When I learned Astrology, I was required to learn how to do the calculations to cast a chart by hand, and then take the numbers and transcribe them onto the chart. Because most of the people reading this book want to be able to use Astrology for spiritual purposes, not necessarily become astrologers, there will be very little math in this book.

I remember when I was in high school, there was a three-ring-bound manual on human anatomy that contained within it a section made of clear acetate sheets printed with the different systems in the body. By flipping the sheets, you could remove one layer at a time, starting with the skin and ending with an opaque sheet that had the bones printed upon it. Looking at all of it at once was quite a visual jumble, but looking at one sheet at a time or a handful of sheets at a time made it easy to learn anatomy. The same principle applies to learning Astrology, except there are more sheets than there were in my human anatomy manual. Each chapter builds upon the next and provides a systematic introduction to the basic building blocks of Astrology. Material in each of the chapters references other chapters in the book as a way of encouraging you to see the connections between all the pieces. Some of the information is repeated more than once, and this is intentional as repetition is an important part of learning. Moreover, this is a book you will want to read several times in order to fully absorb the ideas and the techniques. Writing a book like this one is much like taking a beloved but lengthy novel and turning it into a movie. Much must end up on the cutting room floor if it is to remain a manageable length. For those of you who have studied Astrology, you may find that some concepts and techniques that you hold especially dear have been omitted. At the end of the book, there are suggestions on what areas of study should be pursued next.

I strongly encourage you to keep a journal as you read and make notes of any questions that occur to you; most of them will be answered as you continue reading. If you have books on herbs, crystals, spell work, and so on that make references to astrological correspondences and correlations, you may wish to have these next you as you read. This way, as astrological concepts are covered in the book, you may look at materials you have already read with new insights and understanding. Too often, references to astrological concepts in tables of correlations and correspondences, the choice of symbols or colors for an altar, the recipes for incense, and the rest are nothing more than rote transmissions without any understanding of the underlying principles. It is my hope that after reading this book you will be able to look at your reference books that provide correspondences for herbs, oils, crystals, and so on and understand how and why there is a Planet or a Sign associated with them. Additionally, you should be able to look at recipes or magickal formulae and begin to understand them as a combination of energetic ingredients as described by their Planets. Using Astrology as a tool you will be able to create new recipes, rituals, and spells based on the knowledge that the physical ingredients are representations and anchors for particular types of energy.

If you don't already have an astrological calendar or datebook, plan on getting one because many of the techniques presented will only be useful if you can look up the current astrological conditions. You may also wish to search online, find a few websites that provide free astrological charts, and bookmark them. If you have a smart phone, a variety of apps are available that may be helpful as well. It will also be useful to have a copy of your birth chart. If you do not already have one, you will need your date of birth, time of birth, and location of birth to have a chart cast. I also suggest having an assortment of colored pencils, markers, and paper as there is no better way to learn how to write the glyphs, the symbols of Astrology, than by doodling them again and again and again. It is not that much different than a child learning to write.

CHAPTER 2

THE WORLDVIEW OF ASTROLOGY

A Brief History

There are several ancient and well-developed systems of Astrology; however, it is Western Tropical Astrology that is the most fully integrated into the magickal systems that Witches and Pagans work with, so we will be focusing on it in this book. Western Astrology has roots as deep as those of any other system in use today. Sometime around 500 BCE we saw the development of the twelvefold zodiac with 30° Signs among the Chaldeans. The Four Elements system that is so broadly used in both Magick and Astrology was categorized and refined by Empedocles sometime around 450 BCE. The great foundational blocks for what we call Western Astrology were actually set in the Hellenistic period in Greece. I will point out that though the writings are in Greek, many of the astrologers were Egyptians, Babylonians, and Semites. It is interesting to note that around 200 BCE there was an explosion of creativity in important esoteric disciplines. The invention of what we call Astrology occurred at roughly the same time as the core of Hermetic ideas were being written down, and shortly thereafter Astrology was transmitted to India via the Middle East. In India, Astrology evolved in a different direction, but its origin is still clear. Depending upon which scholars you trust, this is also the same time period that gave birth to the earliest forms of what we would recognize as the Qabala. You may ask yourself why is this history lesson important? I am including it because history shows us how deeply intertwined Astrology is with the systems of thought and theory that undergird almost all magickal practices in the West. Moreover, Astrology is one of the few sacred sciences that has been in continuous and unbroken development since ancient times.

Astrology and Astronomy share similar terms and language, which can lead to some confusion. The same can be said for Alchemy and Chemistry. The modern mundane sciences arose from the older sacred sciences, but the differences between them are caused by more than centuries of development in different directions. Although both sorts of science study the natural world, the sacred sciences focus upon the subtle and the unseen whereas the mundane sciences focus upon the dense and the tangible. The rift between the two has been growing for centuries, but perhaps some of the mundane sciences will

grow closer to the sacred sciences as they approach deeper mysteries.

How Astrology Is a Sacred Science

Scientific method can be thought of as the set of techniques for the investigation of phenomena, the acquisition of knowledge, the creation and testing of theories, the sharing of those results, and ongoing reexamination of all of these things using a rigorous protocol. Science is based on empirical and measurable evidence (as defined by the capabilities of its time period) and has at its core the tenet that the universe will reveal itself through reasoning and observation. Indeed, science and sacred science were one and the same but over time they began to drift apart, with the so-called Age of Enlightenment in Europe being the great schism between the two. The single biggest difference between the mundane sciences and the sacred sciences is that in the sacred sciences the basis for evidence and observation is different. Intuition and inner experiences are considered as observations and sources of data within the sacred sciences. One of the things that remains similar is that there is still a process of investigation and of testing for these less tangible observations. In Astrology, additions to what is considered to be accepted knowledge is not instantaneous nor simply taken as a given because a noted astrologer had an epiphany. It is a sacred science because it takes many observations that are then tested, and then found to be consistent with repetition by multiple practitioners. Also, anything that is new that is coming into Astrology must not disrupt the existing accepted practices and theories unless they provide a more comprehensive perspective that proves its worth.

A good example from the mundane sciences is the shift in understanding from Newtonian physics to Einstein's physics to Quantum physics. The addition of the new theories and additional accepted facts do not do damage to the system as a whole because each of these things applies to specific frameworks. The mundane sciences are constantly, though slowly, changing the boundaries of what is considered to be known. Although we will primarily work magic using these Seven Elder Planets, let me use Uranus, one of the Outer Planets discovered after the advent of telescopes, as an example of how sacred science deals with new observations. Uranus was discovered in 1781 by Frederick William Herschel and was a shock to the scientific community as it was the first Planet discovered that could not be seen with the naked eye and more than doubled the size of the Solar System due to its distance from the Sun. The name for the Planet was changed twice before finally it became set as Uranus.

Astrologers did not pull out their crystal balls nor consult an oracle to

determine what Uranus meant in their charts. Instead, over the course of years and decades Uranus was added to charts, both current and historical, to observe what had occurred when it was in particular positions. Over the course of many debates, with many published articles and books, a consensus was reached on what impact Uranus had in the chart. It is this process of investigation that makes Astrology a sacred science. Even a century after its discovery, astrologers were still debating the finer points, such as which Sign was ruled, if any, by Uranus. In Zadkiel's *Text Book of Astrology* (1879), he states:

> *Some modern authors have assigned Aquarius to Uranus, thus either robbing Saturn of his "day house" or forcing upon him a partner. However until experience teaches us in what signs Uranus and Neptune are most powerful, I must decline to endorse so hasty an attempt to provide for one of the "houseless wanderers."*

About 20 years after Zadkiel's book, the tide had turned and Aquarius was accepted by most astrologers as the Sign ruled by Uranus.

The process used in Astrology to expand the base of accepted knowledge also includes tools that lie outside the toolbox of the scientific method. Today we identify Uranus with reform, revolution, abrupt change, idealism, electricity, higher mind, and more. In herbalism and natural philosophy, and also in Astrology, there is a proposition called the doctrine of signatures that dates at least as far back as Dioscorides, was championed by Paracelsus, and further developed by Jakob Böhme. The gist of the doctrine is that the outward attributes of a mineral, plant, or animal when viewed by a trained and sensitive observer reveals its inward attributes and its connection and place in the web of universal powers. For example, Boneset (*Eupatorium perfoliatum*) is a plant whose stems seem to perforate or go through its leaves. Because the plant appears to be self-splinting, it is used in the healing of broken bones, fevers that cause bone and body aches, and as a tonic in recovery from lengthy illnesses. When we look at the astrological signature of the discovery of Uranus from our vantage point in history, there was much going on in the world that showed its attributes. In the years surrounding the discovery of Uranus, we see the French Revolution, the Constitutional Convention in the United States, the invention of electric battery, the eruption of several volcanoes, the rush of innovation in the exploration of the skies that was lighter than air balloons, the birth of poet Lord Byron, the creation of an early version of the periodic table of elements, and many more things occurred today we would clearly say have the signature of Uranus.

This astrological version of the doctrine of signatures also applies when we

look at Neptune and Pluto. The existence of Neptune was first predicted through mathematical calculations, then observed and officially discovered in 1846. Neptune is the Planet whose power is associated with psychism, visions, spiritual pursuits, and oneness with the universe. There really is poetic beauty in that it was *seen* through calculations before it was seen with eyes. In the years surrounding its discovery we see the rise of Spiritualism and the founding of groups such as the Theosophical Society and the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn. Pluto is the Planet whose power is associated with Pluto was discovered in 1930 at the Lowell Observatory. In the years surrounding Pluto's discovery the first cyclotron particle accelerator is created, the theory that Earth's magnetic field is generated deep in its molten core is proposed, Fermi achieves the world's first nuclear fission, and the seeds of World War II are planted and grow. If you find this sort of research interesting, you'll be even more enthralled when later in your studies you explore how as the Planets move through the Signs, especially the outer ones, they herald the temperament and behavior of generations.

As Above, So Below

> *Heaven above, heaven below; stars above, stars below; All that is above, thus also below; understand this and be blessed*
>
> *—Prodromus Coptus Sive Aegyptiacus by Athanasius Kircher (1636)*

One of the best known sacramental phrases of Hermeticism, “As above, so below” is also very much of the core of the worldview of Astrology. This in turn is associated with the principle that everything that exists in the universe is interconnected and makes up one great whole. Even though it is a standard practice to speak of astrological events as having an impact upon our lives and our world, this isn't the most accurate way to describe what is actually occurring. The relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm is reciprocal. It is not so much that the heavens affect us as it is that they are large enough so that we can read what is written there, rather than what is written in a script too small upon the fine fabric of the reality. One of the benefits of making Astrology a part of your practice if you are a witch or a magician is that helps to train our subtle senses to also read those microcosmic patterns.

The Way of Art

Although Astrology is a sacred science and as such is a mental undertaking with many rules and procedures, it is also an art requiring the intuition and the

way of beauty to reveal its richness. It is the way of art that guides astrologers, or practitioners using Astrology in their Magick, to know which of many details actually matter and to bring harmony to the flood of data. This is certainly evident when an astrologer is doing a reading and is also the muse that harnesses the power of Astrology into the design of a spell or ritual. The imaginative and intuitive part of Astrology's world-view is best experienced through imagery rather than rational exposition. The following passage may be read as a mythic story to describe one facet among the many that make up the jewel of Astrology. You may wish to use it as a guided visualization to more deeply internalize the experience. Either find a friend or associate to read it to you or make a recording of your own voice. Read the pathworking slowly and note that where you see "♦♦♦" it indicates a pause. Remember that if you have a computer, a smart phone, or even a portable recorder you already have the tools to make a recording of this pathworking that is good enough for this purpose.

The Celestial Temple

Place your hands upon your brow. Take three deep breaths and intone the sound "Ihh" (like the "i" sound in the word "trip") while imaging that your entire body is bathed in indigo-colored light. Place your body in a comfortable position and close your eyes. Breathe deeply and slowly.

If you have any pressing concerns or worries, set them aside. Tell your troubles that you will return to them later but for now you wish to lay your burdens down. Attend to the sounds around you and any distractions you have noted, then dismiss them one by one. Clench your fists tightly for a count of 3 and then release them. Let all your tension seep away from your body leaving through your hands.

Close your eyes and see a pearly gray swirling in front of you as if you were inches away from a gauzy curtain ruffled by a breeze. You feel a tingle on your face like static electricity. ♦♦♦

Step through the swirling gray. ♦♦♦

You are floating in a dark vastness that ripples with more than the three dimensions of ordinary life. You are hovering in the place that holds and surrounds all of space and time. You see it as a velvety darkness sprinkled with sparks in brilliant gem-tone colors. You hear sounds so large, yet so soft, that you feel them as vibrations deep in your core and as bright warmth playing across your surface. As your senses become more accustomed and more attuned to this realm, you become aware of ever-changing vistas of overlapping, interpenetrating fields of filigrees and turning whirlpools of a texture like silk

and smoke. Embossed atop the darkness you see a spiraling web strung with spangles reminding you of the finest of a spider's art dusted with the changeable perfection of individual snowflakes. You gaze upon an eternity of flux and fixity of cycles where order leads to chaos and chaos to order again. ♦♦♦

After a time, your attention is drawn to a small sphere with colors shifting across its surface like those that flow across the surface of a soap bubble in the sun. The more you focus upon it, the larger it becomes. You do not know if it is actually getting larger, or if you are flying toward it, or it toward you. You are now so close, or it's so large, that you no longer see the velvety darkness. You only see the shifting and turning of colors through every hue and every tone. It is as if rainbows had caught fire and burned dark and bright and renewed themselves from their own ashes. You feel a tremendous magnetic pull and are drawn through the veil of rainbow fire.

You have grown. You feel as if your hands could part clouds and oceans. No longer in the vastness that was vast beyond understanding, you find that you are in a miniature universe bounded by a crystalline sphere. Circling around the dance composed of circles, ellipses, loops, and spirals, you see globes of brilliance. You call it brilliance because no colors adequately name what you can see, yet each globe has a unique brilliance. When you look closely into each globe of brilliance, you see intricate patterns that fold and unfold in an unending array. Each globe pulses with lights and patterns like alphabets with no beginning and no ending. And yet, each twirling, spinning, dancing, sphere carries meanings and messages distinct from every other. These globes of splendor vary in size and in brightness, with one shining brighter than all. From the wisdom within you, you recognize these globes are the energy bodies of the Planets of our solar system. You look to the center of the enormous crystalline sphere within which the globes of light turn in their stately dances. There in the center you see a disc-like island bounded by a ribbon of rolling blue that seems to be both sea and sky. In the center of the island you see a great temple with one great tower.

You feel a tremendous magnetic pull and are drawn down, and down, and down until you stand before the gates of the Celestial Temple. Look upon the carvings that surround the gate, take a breath, and enter into the Temple. Soft breezes brush across your face, and from breath to breath you smell the salt of the sea, the jasmine of summer, the musk of the forest, and more. Each breath you take carries the story of different times and places. You step deeper into the Celestial Temple and see emblems of the Four Elements throughout the richly ornamented walls. The floor is made of polished agates arranged in concentric

circles pierced by rays of lighter stones.

You follow the rings and the rays toward the center. You pass between two pillars of onyx and alabaster, and discover that you are now in the great tower of the Celestial Temple. You look upward to the high dome of the tower and see that the dome is made of 12 colossal stained glass windows that meet like the petals. Each window shows the symbols, scenes, and themes related to one of the 12 Signs of the Zodiac. Your gaze moves from Sign to Sign until you've come full circle, and you notice that the imagery of the windows has changed as you were looking. Take a moment to take in this wonder. You also observe that the dome of the Signs is slowly turning although the Temple is still. You walk further in to the center of the Tower so that you can look straight up and see this marvel more clearly.

From this vantage point you can see that the globes of brilliance, the Planets, are shining through the living stained glass of the Signs. The dome of the Signs is turning and the Planets are moving in their elaborate dances of circles, ellipses, and loops. The brilliance of the Planets is passing through the windows of the Signs and that brilliance is colored and refracted into shafts that descend to the floor of the Celestial Temple. You look down at the mosaic floor and see that you are standing in the center of a pattern of a circle divided into 12 segments. Within each segment you see symbols for varying combinations of the Elements, Modalities, and Polarities. The shafts of light streaming down from above move across the mandala of the floor. As the kaleidoscopic illumination cast by the wheels within wheels of the heavens glints upon the agates of the mosaic, fleeting geometries form and dissolve. From where you stand, you turn in place to fully perceive this beauty that springs from order and constant change. There are moments as you look that evoke music that only the mind can hear, feelings that reach from the depths of the body to the heights of your spirit, a discernment of things beyond the telling of all the words you own, and all too much to anchor in memory.

You shut your eyes and you breathe deeply and slowly. You resolve to grasp and to keep a moment of the flow of creation in motion. For the briefest instant you blink your eyes open and seize the vision. With eyes still shut and the pattern glowing in your mind's eye, you slowly take twelve steps forward toward the black and white pillars that guard the Tower of the Celestial Temple. You take four steps more. You take three steps more, and you reach out your hands to feel for the pillars. You feel the solidity of stone against your hands, and you open your eyes.

You see a pearly gray swirling in front of you as if you were inches away

from a gauzy curtain ruffled by a breeze. You feel a tingle on your face like static electricity.

⬩⬩⬩ Step through the swirling gray. ⬩⬩⬩

And you are in the here and the now. You are in your body. You are in the here and the now.

Open your eyes slowly. Wiggle your toes and fingers. Breathe deeply. Say your name aloud three times.

CHAPTER 3

THE CORE CONCEPTS OF ASTROLOGY

The goal of this chapter is to provide you with the core concepts of Astrology so you can make use of the techniques shared later in the book. Even if you are already well versed in Astrology, I encourage you to read this chapter carefully as there are specific nuances and perspectives that relate to its use in Magick that are not part of standard instruction in the principles of Astrology. In fact, some of the standard model of Astrology that is used for mundane purposes is somewhat out of alignment with its use in Magick. For those that are already knowledgeable, there may be a need for some relearning. For those that are new to the sacred science of Astrology, do not worry if you have tried to learn this before and found it confusing or difficult. The material will be presented with a bare minimum of mathematics and an abundance of metaphors and analogies that will allow you to grab the essence of the discipline. You will not be able to do your birth chart after reading this chapter, but you will be prepared to make use of the ideas and techniques presented in the remainder of the book.

Because you're reading this book, it is a fairly safe bet that you have some concept of there being multiple planes of reality and multiple worlds. The most common pattern in Western magickal traditions is that of the Earth plane being the densest and then some number of planes rising up or surrounding us that are described as being less dense or of higher vibration. When we look at an astrological chart, what we are actually looking at is a map that is an attempt to summarize and to flatten those multiple planes into an understandable diagram. An astrological chart is a sort of magickal cartogram that displays data in a simplified and abstracted manner. Returning to the analogy of the Celestial Temple from the previous chapter, let's examine the three primary layers that are condensed into a chart. Think of the Planets as being the top level and as sources of light, emanations of particular qualities. Think of the 12 Signs of the Zodiac as being the next layer down from the Planets. Think of the layer of the Signs as being a mandala made of 12 sections of ornate stained glass, each made of carefully arranged colors and shapes that represent the qualities of the Signs. Now imagine the floor of the Celestial Temple with a mosaic that depicts a circle divided into 12 wedges, the 12 Houses. The light of the Planets passes through the panes of the 12 Signs, and creates a pattern upon the mosaic of the

temple floor. When we look at the pattern on the floor of the Celestial Temple, we are looking at an astrological chart. Depending upon the positions of the lights around the Celestial Temple, their intensity, and the slant of the lights, different patterns and, different charts are produced.

If we think of Astrology as also being a magickal language, then you can image that a chart is a like a long poem or a richly packed short story. Each line is filled with depths of meaning and more becomes revealed with each reading. If you are a lover of words, then I ask that you think about the following comparisons as you work your way through this book. Planets can be thought of as acting like nouns. The Signs can be thought of as the equivalent of adjectives and adverbs. The Aspects between the Planets can be thought of as verbs. The Houses provide structure for the phrases and clauses. There are other parts of speech and other parts of astrological charts, but for the sake of not bogging down the learning process by getting too many details at once, let's keep it to just these few things in your initial contemplation of the language of Astrology.

You will have to memorize the alphabet of Astrology. By that I mean that you will need to at the very least commit to memory the glyphs for the Planets, Signs, and the Aspects as they are presented. As is often true in the learning of a new language, at first you will be translating the Astrology into your native language. After a time, you will look at astrological information and simply read it and understand without pausing to translate it. At that point you'll begin to become aware of “words” that exist in Astrology that do not exist in your native language. That is when you will become aware of just how much your thought process is expanded by the addition of new vocabulary. Once you are fluent in Astrology, skills from any other divinatory system that you know can be brought to bear on reading astrological information. For example, if you have experience using the Tarot as a divinatory system, then you may contemplate an astrological chart as if it were a spread. Once you have grasped and internalized the meanings of the fundamental building blocks of Astrology you will not simply see squiggles, glyphs, and numbers when you look at a chart; instead, you'll see images, situations, tensions, and resolutions. If you are a good tarot reader, you do more than simply repeat the assigned meanings for the cards in their locations. Your intuition and imagination allow you to see a story built up from the images.

When I first started my astrological studies in the 1980s, I had to learn how to construct a chart the hard way. This meant a goodly amount of time spent with my ephemeris, books of tables, a pocket calculator, pencils, paper, and drafting tools. It took a significant amount of work to convert the birth time,

date, and latitude and longitude of a birthplace into a useful chart. If you intend to become an astrologer, there is great value in learning how to do it from scratch. However, for most of the magickal purposes you may have in mind, this is unnecessary. Almost all the information you need can be found in readily available astrological calendars, online chart calculators, and software that you can install on your computer to do the math and charting for you, if you so desire. Moreover, as you'll discover later, there are quite a number of very practical magickal techniques that do not require the use of a chart at all.

Should you find yourself inspired to pursue the study of Astrology beyond what is needed to augment your magickal practices, I'd like to offer you a few suggestions. Be kind to yourself and have reasonable expectations for your rate of progress. I've mentioned several times that Astrology is like a language. Even people who have a natural gift for acquiring languages require time and practice to become truly proficient. Also, the discipline of Astrology is vast, a vastness that comes from centuries upon centuries of experimentation and refinement. I've encountered many people who, in the thrill of discovery, continue to collect tools and techniques without having first mastered the basic tools. I have known excellent carpenters who could produce beautiful furniture with the simplest of tools, and hobbyists who could do much less despite having a whole shop full of specialized saws, bits, and routers. Be patient and don't berate yourself for not being a quick study; there is no such thing as that when it comes to Astrology. The good news is that remarkable things can be accomplished with just the essentials provided in this book.

The Planets

Before delving into the Planets, I'd like to point out that although the names of the Planets are also the names of Gods and Goddesses, it is an error to limit your understanding of the Planets by giving too much emphasis to the qualities ascribed to their divine namesakes. The Planets also correlate to the spheres on the Tree of Life (Qabala) and have other attributes that are only taught in an astrological context. The Planets are also associated in different magickal systems with a variety of beings, such as intelligences, spirits, angels, archangels, and more. Each Planet is a container for an incredibly wide array of characteristics and qualities. As I mentioned earlier, Astrology can be likened to a language. The Planets serve the lexical role of nouns. So if you recall your days in grammar class, you'll be able to remember that a noun is a person, place, thing, or idea.

The word “planet” is derived from ancient Greek and means “wandering

star.” Unlike the fixed stars in the night sky whose relationship to each other seems not to change, the Planets are those lights that are seen to move over time. This is not the definition used in astronomy. For example, in Astrology, the Moon is considered a Planet because of its apparent motion. As you may know, in 2006 astronomers demoted Pluto from the status of Planet to dwarf Planet. In Astrology, Pluto remains a Planet because it moves through our sky and has been verified to have specific effects in astrological charts. Some of you may be asking, what about the asteroids and the other dwarf Planets? Many astrologers are using some of the asteroids and dwarf Planets in their charts. I certainly do. I say *some* of the asteroids and dwarf Planets because many of them are so recently discovered that there has not been enough time to fully determine what they mean. For the scope of this book, the chapter on the Planets will focus on the basic set that is used in magickal practices, although there will be some passing reference to the asteroids and the dwarf Planets.

The Planets are states of being and sources of particular sorts of power. In Western esotericism, the Planets when attributed to the spheres on the Tree of Life (sephiroth of the Qabala) can be referred to as the mundane chakras. This is an interesting phrase that can be interpreted in many different ways. Imagine for a moment that our solar system is like the body of an immense celestial being. Within this celestial being the Planets are like its subtle centers that take the universal flux which contains all things, and condense and focus that energy and that essence into specific patterns and qualities. In the human energy field, the subtle bodies, the chakras are also particularized energetic centers. In Astrology, the Planets also represent different parts and functionalities within the human self and psyche. Although much of modern Astrology is anthropocentric, all of its concepts are also applicable to the whole of the manifest world and all its life. This more universal application becomes very important in matters of Magick and ritual where we see the Planets and Signs correlated to minerals, herbs, metals, and more.

The Signs

The 12 Signs of the zodiac are not the constellations. The Signs are 30° segments that mark the journey of the Sun through the changes of the Wheel of the Year. The two solstices and the two equinoxes are the anchors that set the order and the placement of the Signs, and create a quartered circle in astrological charts. Then, if you divide each quarter into three pieces, you have the twelvefold structure of the Signs. Sailors in open waters far from land use the stars as surrogate landmarks. Relative to the short spans of human lives, the

stars seem to be fixed points. When the science of Astrology was being formulated, the collections of stars that we name as constellations were used as navigational points in the deep of the sky. In fact, because of the slow wobble in Earth's rotation, the stars do move about 1° every 72 years. As such the constellations that we see in the night sky do not match up with the Signs of the zodiac. I have lost count of the number of times that I've encountered the assertion that Astrology cannot be valid because the Signs do not line up with the constellations. In Astrology, the Signs are not about those distant stars; the Signs depict the journey of the Sun through its 12 stations. As such, the cycle always begins with the northern Spring Equinox marking the beginning of Aries and proceeds from there.

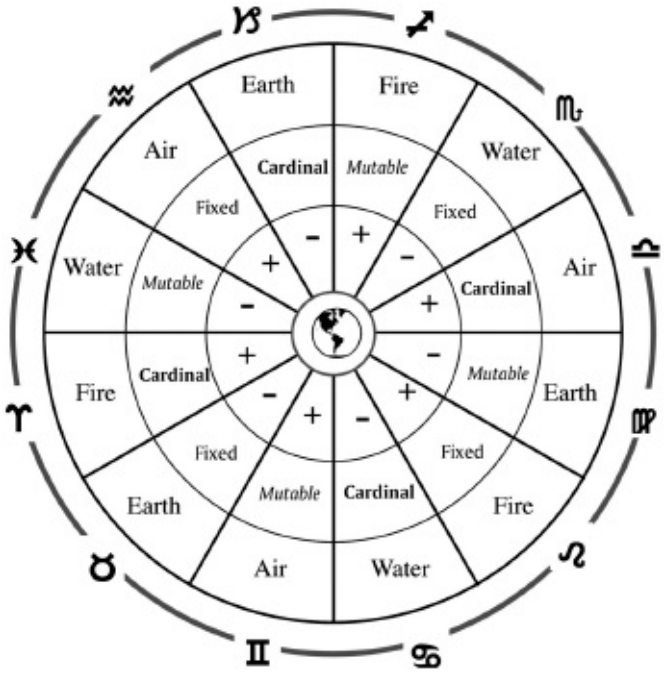
Before going any further I should explain that the Zodiac is actually an ecliptic coordinate system. In other words, if you take the apparent motion of the Sun across the sky and widen that line by 8° north and south so that it becomes like a ribbon that circles the skies of Earth, you have the path of the Zodiac. The vernal equinox is the origin point for the degrees of longitude in Astrology within this coordinate system. This ribbon, this band in the heavens, is where we see the motion of the Sun, Moon, and the Planets that can be seen with the naked eye. The Zodiac is the road of the Sun, not the stars. My first teacher of Astrology, Ellen Riordan, taught me the Signs as a dance. She lit a candle in the center of the room and then proceeded to do 12 different styles of motions as she circled around the flame, dancing the dance of the Earth's relationship to the Sun. I wish I had recorded a video of her dance.

If you follow one of the numerous paths of Witchcraft or Paganism, then the idea of the changes of the seasons marking changes in the energy of the world is very familiar. Many traditions make use of the change of the seasons as markers for their holy days, although the number of holidays varies from tradition to tradition. By extension, then, you can understand the 12 Signs as a twelvefold Wheel of the Year. In the chapter “The Astrology of Time,” we'll explore how the various wheels within wheels of cyclical time relate to each other.

The 12 Signs can be thought of as the 12 styles of human wisdom and human folly. You could also say that they are 12 modes of human consciousness. If you wish to think of the Signs as vibrations, then you can think of them as named colors or as notes in a musical scale. Although it is true that both colors and notes are part of an unbroken continuum, there is great value in naming specific colors and specific notes. Astrologers and magickal practitioners have been working with and elaborating on the meaning of the Signs for many, many

generations. It is a well-known tenet in many systems of Magick that when people apply thought, emotion, and imagination in a consistent and coherent manner, that over time a thought-form is developed. Taking this magickal perspective into consideration, it is also clear that in addition to the qualities that are inherent to the Signs, there are also highly developed thought-forms attached to each of the Signs. In the chapter devoted to the Signs, I will describe the attributes of each of the Signs in some detail.

Many things in Astrology are changeable, but the structure of relationships between the 12 Signs does not change. The natural order of the Signs starts with Aries and ends with Pisces, and the flow of the Signs is counterclockwise. Each of the Signs has a unique combination of an Element, a Modality, and the Polarity. Many secrets and mysteries are encoded into this patterned sequence. If a person had a deep understanding of the meaning of the Elements, Modalities, and the Polarities but had never been taught anything about the 12 Signs, they would be able to make educated guesses about the nature of each of the 12 Signs with a bit of contemplation on each unique combination (see figure). The Signs can be thought of as the equivalent of adjectives and adverbs because they modify or color the power of a Planet through a unique combination of an Element, a Modality, and a Polarity.

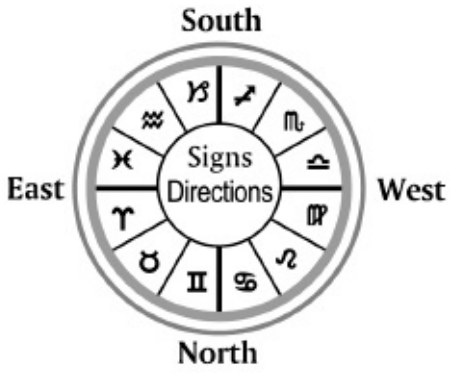


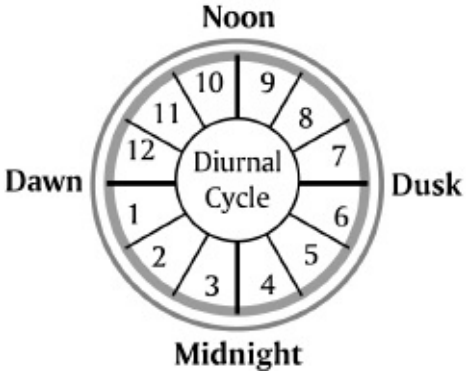
The Houses and the Ascendant

When you look at an astrological chart, the 12 Houses are actually the most

prominent feature. The 12 wedges that make up the wheel of a chart are in fact the 12 Houses, not the Signs. When you take the light of the Planets as mediated by the Signs and project them onto a precise time and in particular place, they fall into the Houses. The way we normally measure time is through hours, minutes, and seconds. The way we plot locations is through degrees, minutes, and seconds of longitude and latitude. If you look at an old-fashioned clock with hands and the numbers 1 through 12 and then you look at an astrological chart, it is fairly clear that they have an ancestor or two in common. The term horoscope comes from the Greek *horoskopos* which means “look of the hour” or “marker of the hour.” The term “horoscope” is often used loosely today to refer to a chart or to a forecast, but it originally meant the marker for the beginning of a House system. The reason astrologers need to know as exactly as possible the time for constructing a chart is that the placement of the Planets and Signs into the Houses can only occur if you know their starting point. Imagine again the face of a clock, except this is a special clock: Instead of hands that mark the hours, minutes, and seconds, there is a hand for each of the Planets. By the way, this special clock also marks their location in degrees.

Most astrological charts are drawn with a vertical line in the horizontal line that is darker or in some other manner highlight four directions. The point of the top of the chart represents the South, and the bottom represents the North. The left side of the chart represents the East, and the right side, the West (see figure). This may give you a moment's pause if you are accustomed to the standard used in most maps and also in diagrams for circles used in Magick. Once you understand the rationale for flipping the directions, it will be easy to both remember and to understand the default orientation and astrological charts. At any given time or place it may be night or day, but the chart has to show the entirety of the celestial sphere, both above and below. If you were born at night or if the chart is being constructed is for an event at night, then the Sun will be below the horizontal line in the chart. If you were born during the day or if the chart is being constructed for an event during the day, then the Sun will be above the horizon line. When someone speaks about the Rising Sign (the Ascendant), they are referring to whichever Sign is on the far left point of a horizontal line that represents the Eastern horizon. The Rising Sign literally is the Sign that is rising and is the anchor of the Houses.





When we look at charts later in the book you will notice that despite the fact that the Signs are all exactly 30° size, the Houses can vary in size. Depending upon the time of the year and how far north or south you are, the length of the day and the length of the night can have considerable variation. Remember, the chart is a condensation of several planes of action and is also a projection onto a flat surface. The 12 Houses still have to add up to the 360° of a circle; the top half of the chart represents day and the bottom half represents night. The calculations in constructing the chart adjust the sizes of the Houses to reflect the season and the location. There are many competing House systems for accomplishing this end that you may wish to research if you pursue studies in Astrology. For the purposes of this book, the charts used in illustrations will be using the Koch House system.

The 12 Houses are actually what happens when the 12 Signs come all the way down to Earth. Each of the 12 Signs can be said to have a particular temperament, a style of working in the world, and enthusiasm and aptitude for particular activities. In Astrology we say that each House is ruled by one of the Signs. In your mind's eye, see these 12 celestial beings that are the Signs taking aptitude tests before diving down into the workplace that we call Earth. The result of those aptitude tests would give a variety of jobs or tasks to which that Sign is especially well suited. Those jobs, tasks, and endeavors revealed in the

aptitude tests are the themes of the 12 Houses. The 12 Houses represent different arenas of life, tangible ways in which energy is expressed or received, the parts of the human body ruled by its corresponding Sign, and a myriad of other concrete expressions of the essence of the Signs (see figure).



The Aspects

The Aspects in a chart show how the Planets are interacting with each other. Traditionally, some Aspects are referred to as harmonious and some as inharmonious, although you shouldn't equate those terms with good and bad. Some modern astrologers will refer to Aspects as being either supportive or challenging. Context and choice are everything, and sometimes help isn't helpful and a challenge is a boon. The Aspects describe the state of being and/or the action between the Planets, and that is why they can be likened to being the verbs in the language of Astrology. Usually, Planets that are in aspect to each other have lines drawn between them in a chart, often with a small glyph denoting the Aspect attached to the line. Planets are said to be in aspect to each other when they are a specific distance apart from each other as measured in degrees. The different named Aspects denote a number of degrees apart that relates to a geometric figure. It is useful to think of Aspects in Astrology as a form of sacred geometry with a bit of the music of the spheres thrown in.

Mathematics and music are profoundly intertwined with each other, as has been expounded upon at length by Hermetic teachers such as Pythagoras. If you know how to play piano, or at the very least have played around on the keys, you know that certain notes sound pleasing together and others do not. With a bit of thought and observation it is not long until you discover notes that are certain distances apart consistently produce either harmonious or inharmonious results. Now, the heavens are not a piano with discrete keys tuned to separate notes, and the emanations from the Planets passing through the Signs produce waveforms much more complex than vibrating piano strings; however, the same general principles apply, and when they are the correct interval apart, the correct number of degrees apart, they tune into a geometric relationship that results in a harmonious or an inharmonious exchange.

Conclusion

In the chapters that follow, I will continue to elaborate upon these basic building blocks of Astrology so you'll be able to understand and to apply these principles in your magickal practice. In order for you to properly absorb the essentials of Astrology, I'll feed you pieces of information in small chunks. I will also periodically repeat information with a few added details to assist you in integrating the material into your working knowledge. You will find it useful to reread earlier portions of this book if you proceed into the more advanced work toward the end. Appendices at the end of the book include a variety of tables of correspondences that I believe you'll find beneficial.

CHAPTER 4

THE PLANETS

The following paragraphs are starting points to contemplate what the Planets represent. In fact, an entire book could be written on any of the Planets, and indeed, such books are common in the literature of Astrology. In addition to categorizing the Planets as the Elder Planets and the modern Planets, we can also categorize them by which level of the Self they most readily impact. The Sun, Moon, Mercury, Venus, and Mars are thought of as the personal Planets because their influence on the personality of individuals is easily seen. The Planets Jupiter and Saturn are thought of as the social Planets because their influence is most apparent in the families and the communities that surround individuals, and in the learned societal patterns they internalize. The Outer Planets, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto, are both transpersonal and cultural as they affect deeper parts of individuals and also change the qualities of generations and epochs.

The Planets function at all the levels of reality that we experience from the most ethereal to the most mundane. They also express, mediate, and structure the relationships between Spirit, Soul, and Matter throughout these levels, or planes, of existence. In fact, the glyphs of the Planets are actually symbolic representations of the interactions of Spirit, Soul, and Matter. People in different magickal systems and paths use different terms with different connotations and nuances to describe spiritual matters. For the sake of clarity, and in this book, let us define the terms “Spirit,” “Soul,” and “Matter.” “Spirit” is the eternal essence that comes from and is made of the stuff of Divinity itself. “Soul” exists within the frame of space-time and is shaped by and bounded by a container, a vehicle of incarnation. In the case of individual persons, this vehicle is the physical body with all its attendant subtle bodies. In the case of a collective entity—for example, group soul—the boundaries that are present take longer to perceive. “Matter” is soul made solid. Another way of saying this is pattern, structure, and form are active in matter while Soul and Spirit are present but subsumed. The three can also be seen as one thing. Just as water can easily be a vapor, a liquid, and a solid, so too can the primal Divinity express phase changes as it exists in different planes and conditions.



Sun

The glyph of the Sun is a circle with a point in the center. Both the circle and the point represent different kinds of infinity. The point is at the same time dimensionless and contains infinite dimensions. The circle consists of an infinite number of points in the same relationship to the central point. The glyph of the Sun resonates with the ideas of the macrocosm and the microcosm, of spirit concentrating itself into manifestation, and of the aphorism that everything is at the center of its own universe.

The Sun is the source of purpose and power for all things great and small within our solar system. The Sun is the voice, the face, and the emissary for the Source of all things, of the universe, within the frame of time that we live. The Sun in the chart of a person, a collective entity such as a nation, or a particular event reveals by its Sign and its House placement the style of expression and the circumstances of how that purpose and power is manifested. To the degree that choices and actions are in accord to the Sun, more vitality becomes available. Conversely, when a person, a collective entity such as a nation, or a particular event runs counter to the natural flow of the Sun there is a reduction in the availability of power. It is the light of the Sun that feeds the life of the Earth. It is the Sun's cycles of day and night and the passage of the seasons organizes how life moves through its stations. The Sun is the purest expression of the power of integration, and as such contains the essence of individuality. As Aleister Crowley said in *The Book of the Law*, “Every man and every woman is a star.” The Sun is a star, and in a chart it also shows us how true will and higher will express themselves in the manifest realm. The Sun is assigned to the sphere of Tiphereth in the Qabala.



Moon

The glyph of the Moon is a crescent, a figure composed of two semicircles. Whereas a circle represents spirit, the semicircle represents soul in the pictographic code of the astrological glyphs. The Moon's glyph is the vessel of the soul, both for its development and its journey in the Moon boat. Of all the astrological glyphs, the Moon's glyph most strongly resembles its counterpart in the skies. The two sharp points created by the intersection of the two semicircles remind us of the pulsing rhythm of the Moon. The horns of the Moon remind us of the waxing and waning, of being present in day and night, and punctuated moments of duality that resolved back into the curves of the crescent.

The Moon is the vessel of our life and contains within it the storehouse of the images, the emotions, and the memories that make up the experience of life. The Moon is connected to instinct, how we react before we have time to think with our conscious minds. The Moon is the author, the editor, of the story of our life. When you look back upon your life you do not remember it as raw security camera footage. You remember your life as a story. This story is a summation, a distillation, of your experiences with plots and subplots and chapters. The position of the Moon in a particular Sign and House determines the style and the genre of your life story. The Moon is also the lower reflection of the powers of the Sun, and as such is associated with the unconscious, the subconscious, and those parts of the psyche that live in the land of dream.

In Magick, the Moon is associated with the astral plane and therefore the sphere of Yesod in the Tree of Life. It is the realm closest to physical manifestation and the plane where most magickal work is done. The Moon collects all the influences and then turns earthwards to create the ebb and flow of the tides of life, both physical and subtle.



Mercury

The glyph of Mercury consists of the circle that represents Spirit, the semicircle that represents the Soul, and the cross that represents Matter. Soul is above, Spirit is in the middle, and Matter is below in the glyph of Mercury. This triplicity reminds us of Hermes Trismegistus (thrice-great Hermes), and Mercury is indeed thoughts, ideas, communication, and is the conduit and the

herald between the layers of self and the planes of being.

The position of Mercury in a particular Sign and House shows us how the stream of consciousness is articulated into words, images, and ideas. It is the way in which we synthesize, categorize, separate, and divide the world into themes and things that can be named. Mercury is never more than 28° from the Sun, sometimes in the same Sign as the Sun, and sometimes in the Sign before or after that of the Sun. This is more than simply a matter of celestial mechanics; it is an indicator of the fact that waking consciousness can only be a certain distance away from the source of *being* which is the Sun. Mercury through the power of thought expresses a blending of the capabilities inherent in the Sun and the Moon. Just as Mercury shows us how we create the internal dialogue of consciousness, it also shows us how we communicate with others.

Mercury is associated with the sphere of Hod in the tree of life, which is the sphere of thought and all systems of notation and knowledge. It is also connected to Hermes, Thoth, and other divinities that act as messengers and psychopomps. Just as heralds have their badge office that allows them to safely move through places where others would be barred, and to communicate safely with powers that are potentially dangerous, so too in Magick do we find the Planet Mercury a useful intermediary in numerous operations. Mercury is neutral and can be said to be all polarities and no polarities at once.



Venus

The glyph of Venus is composed of the circle of Spirit with the cross of Matter below it. Before continuing, I'd like to clarify that the cross of Matter is not so much the cross of Christianity as it is the Four Elements, the quartered circle of Malkuth, and the crossroads. The glyph of Venus shows us how the power of Spirit, as shown by the Sun, can be converted to a form where it may be used on the Earth plane. Conversely, it also shows us how that which is created in the Earth plane rises up to Spirit. It is also said that the glyph of Venus represents a looking glass.

Although the name of the Goddess Venus would imply that Venus is the Planet of love, it is more accurately our sense of beauty and our aesthetics. Venus through its placement in a Sign and a House describes our sensibilities,

sense of harmony, our values, and how we assigned meaning to things. Venus is also abundance as the act of love with our bodies, a paintbrush, or the planting of the seed are all a part of the universe seeing itself and offering its beloved the gifts of love. English is a rather impoverished language when it comes to describing the different types of love. If you wish to understand more about Venus, then explore all the different concepts of love. The placement of Venus in a chart tells us the style and the tempo of falling in and out of love, and the ways of attachment and detachment.

Netzach is the sphere on the Tree of Life that is associated with Venus. One of the images associated with Netzach is the splitting of white light into the colors of the rainbow. This tells us something about the capacity for Venus to perceive beauty and, by perceiving it, to make it visible. I should also point out that beauty isn't necessarily pretty. A storm with towering clouds of purple, the sunlight turned a pale yellow-green, exploding and crashing with thunder and lightning is surely beautiful, although certainly not pretty, which is a small word for such majesty.



Mars

The glyph for Mars breaks the pattern that we have followed so far. There is the circle that represents Spirit, but neither the semicircle of Soul nor the cross of Matter seem to be present. And then we take a closer look and see that the cross of Matter has lost its static symmetry and become pointed in one direction. Moreover, the direction is not simply up or down but at an angle that sets a trajectory for drive and passion. The glyph of Mars shows us all the possibilities of spirit that are implicit becoming explicit through directed will.

Once again, I would caution that although the Planet is named after a God of war, Mars is not about war. It is the Planet whose focus is assertion which if improperly expressed can lead to aggression and conflict that escalates to the level of war, but that is not its primary function. Mars through its placement by Sign and by House show us how and where we direct our energy and drive. Mars is how we harness force and shape it to our will. Mars also is the indicator for what excites us, what generates enthusiasm, and what we will pursue, woo, or fight for in our lives or in a situation. When the energy of Mars is blocked,

the pressure of the power builds and can lead to frustration or an ill-directed eruption of that energy.

Geburah is the sphere on the Tree of Life that is associated with Mars, and as such it shows us that when guided by the Higher Self, by our true will, Mars is strength in action; and when it is unbalanced it is cruelty and unnecessary destruction. Mars is power, plain and simple, and as such can be beneficial or malefic. The use of Mars in Magick requires great care and precision.



Jupiter

The glyph for the Planet Jupiter consists of the semicircle of Soul and the cross of Matter. The semicircle reminds us of the crescent of the Moon and is placed off center from the cross of Matter. This tells us that the creative and generative powers of the Soul and of the Moon are made manifest in the physical world in an orderly fashion. The glyph for Jupiter also echoes the visual logic of the glyphs for Venus and Mars in how impulses from higher planes are made manifest. Jupiter's glyph resembles the number 4, and significantly, the fourth sphere on the Tree of Life, Chesed, is correlated to Jupiter.

The power of Jupiter is expansive, creative, and merciful because it is the expression of Soul in the material world. Jupiter sees all the possibilities that can be and tries to bring them into being. This is why it is most commonly associated with good fortune, luck, and grace in Astrology. Jupiter's location in a Sign and a House indicates how vision, artistry, and enthusiasm will be used to improve the circumstances of specific arenas of life. Jupiter also shows us our relationship to trust, hope, and the management of risk. It is associated with religion, philosophy, and the laws of society as all these things are efforts, whether successful or not, to improve the lot of the world. Jupiter is one of the social Planets because the full expression of its functions require the contexts of societies, not simply relationships.

As noted earlier, in the Qabala, Jupiter is associated with the sphere of Chesed. This is the sphere of seeing the big picture, having the vision of a prophet, and understanding how life unfolds through the cycles of time. In Astrology, when Jupiter is functioning at its highest levels it expresses this wisdom and helpfulness as the knowledge of opportunities. When it is

imbalanced Jupiter leads to excess and poor boundaries.



Saturn

The glyph for Saturn is composed of the cross this Matter surmounted over the crescent of Soul. In some variations of the glyphs it is a full cross, and in others it is shrunken to a tau cross. Either way, it represents the challenge and the struggle of the Soul to rise through the form constraints and limitations of the Earth plane. In this glyph, Matter calls the dance and Soul must find a way to express itself within the boundaries of the steps. The Saturn glyph closely resembles an inverted form of the glyphs of Jupiter. This tells a great deal about the relationship between these two Planets.

Saturn is the great lawgiver and the great teacher of what is possible and pragmatic. Saturn is all the laws of physics and all the temporary but real limits of our societies. Saturn is that which we fear and shrink from, that which if bravely faced results in evolution. Saturn can be harsh, but without the structures that Saturn rules, little would be accomplished. Like Jupiter, Saturn is one of the social Planets. Saturn represents all the structures within our societies, both those that we embrace and those that we struggle against. Traditionally, in Astrology Saturn is seen as the great malefic, but it can also be beneficial when understood on its terms. A brick wall may not seem friendly if you slam into it, but if that brick wall is a part of your home, it is a necessary boundary and structure that also provides security. Saturn's continuing refrain is that we must accommodate ourselves to the limits of the physical plane and the limits of our bodies.

Binah is the sphere on the tree of life that is related to Saturn. Binah is where structure and the concept of time first come into being in the order of creation of the universe described by the Qabala. It is also known as the sorrowful mother because with form and time comes limitation and, ultimately, death. Saturn, like Binah, is true understanding of the nature of things, and with that understanding comes the way to let light express itself in matter and return to the Source of all things.



Uranus

With Uranus we step beyond the seven Elder Planets that the ancients knew, and with it we find a glyph that is as unique as the Planet that it describes. The most common glyph for Uranus resembles the letter “H” pierced by a straight line ending in a small circle. It should be no shock that the Planet most associated with individuality should be marked with the monogram “H” after one of its discoverers, William Herschel. Some astrologers represent the “H” part of the glyph as two semicircle crescents connected by a line. And indeed, there is a lesser-known alternative glyph for Uranus that I will share as well. As a memory tool, I often tell fledgling astrologers to look for the starship *Enterprise* in a chart if they are looking for Uranus because the glyph does seem to be a stick figure approximation of the *Enterprise*. The circle of Spirit is at the base of the glyph and is below an array of lines that can be seen as subtle Matter. Here we see the cross of matter expanded to imply how form and pattern express on the higher planes. Here we also see Spirit compressed into a smaller circle, representing the divine spark within. This is also the pattern that shows higher thought being brought down into the divine spark, which we sometimes call the Higher Self. A lesser-known glyph for Uranus is actually composed of the circle and the dot of the Sun glyph combined with an upward-pointing arrow like that in the glyph for Mars. I will leave it to you to puzzle out this more esoteric version of the Uranus glyph. Interestingly enough, one of the older versions of the glyph for Mars that is no longer in use is actually exactly the same as the glyph for Venus turned upside down. This certainly has some resonance with all the variants of the Uranus glyph.

Uranus is revolution more so than it is evolution. It seeks to break the bounds of the known and create something new and unique. It is also higher thought that leaps to an answer that does not have immediately apparent causality or logic. In a chart, the location of Uranus by Sign and House shows us how and where we rebel, innovate, and tear down the structures of the past. Uranus has electric qualities; it is the lightning flash that can illuminate or destroy. Uranus is one of the transpersonal, or cultural, Planets that deeply shapes both individuals and societies. When we look at differences between generations and

other cultural constructs that span time, we find that the positions of the Outer Planets speak to most of the characteristics that are shown.

There is still debate about which sphere on the Tree of Life to assign to Uranus. The traditional writings are not terribly helpful because they were written before the Outer Planets were either discovered or understood. The assignment I use correlates Uranus most closely to the sphere of Chokmah, that is, wisdom and the outrush of universal impetus.



Neptune

The glyph of Neptune is easily identified as a trident, which brings to mind the ocean, although in this case it is the great ocean that is the deep sky. It is sometimes drawn as two semicircle crescents mirroring one another with the cross of matter extending through it. Regardless of the variations, it represents the chalice of the Soul. It can be seen as the vessel that contains that which is descending from above. Or it can be seen as matter rising up and transcending the limits of the Soul.

Neptune is both delusion and true vision. Just as the oceans of Earth touch all the land, so does the subtle fluid, the Ether that Neptune describes, touch all things in the Universe. Neptune is also the Higher Heart, compassion, and mystical experience. Through the Neptunian lens of higher consciousness we see that nothing is solid and nothing is as it would first appear. Neptune is also the universal solvent that does not break down boundaries the way that Uranus does; instead, they are dissolved and held in solution, thus present but held in abeyance. Neptune is the place-holder for that which we call essence. Depending upon its Sign and House, Neptune shows the way to bliss and enlightenment, or to escapism and self-deceit.

The sphere of Kether on the Tree of Life is the one that I believe most strongly correlates to Neptune. Kether is the first sphere and contains within it the essence of all the spheres below it. It is also diffuse and boundless until it becomes differentiated in the spheres that are its emanations.



Pluto

The glyph of Pluto contains the cross of Matter, the semicircle of Soul, and the circle of Spirit. For some it brings to mind a transformed Mercury glyph, with the circle raised and the semicircle lowered to touch the cross of matter. This order is a compressed visual representation of the planes of reality. This glyph also has the appearance of a scepter that speaks to the power Pluto wields.

Pluto is deep, profound, and radical transformation. It is death, rebirth, decay, regeneration, and the dirty and messy but beautiful process of evolution. Pluto is the key to the underworld and also the personal underworld that is the unconscious and the subconscious. Pluto's Sign and House indicate how and where the most intense transformations will occur. Pluto's placement also shows us where we are willing to suffer to grow. You cannot bargain nor reconcile with Pluto, but you can release your resistance to change, which makes the experience more manageable. Like being born or passing into death, it is easier to adapt to the flow of the experience rather than try to prevent it. On the average Pluto spends about 21 years in a Sign, although this can vary from 12 to 31 years. It takes Pluto a little bit over 248 years to complete one journey around the Zodiac. It is one of the transpersonal and cultural Planets, and because of the length of time it spends in each Sign, it shows us deep changes that often reverberate for centuries.

I believe that Pluto is most strongly correlated with the sphere on the Tree of Life that isn't strictly there. The sphere of Daath is in the Abyss that separates the three upper spheres, the Supernals, from the remainder of the Tree. Its name is knowledge, which is something that both exists and does not exist. In the same way that we associate Pluto with the underworld, I believe it is sensible to associate it with the Abyss.

Exercise

Now that we've gone through some of the characteristics of the Planets, I suggest you take some time to page through a book on magickal herbalism, crystals, or whatever else interests you that also contains astrological correlations. Pick two or three of these and take some time to contemplate how

these particular physical objects express their correlated Planet's energy. Is it in their appearance, their aroma, their effect on the body, their intended uses? If you have recipes for oils or incense blends you have created, look at the list of ingredients and analyze them based upon their Planets. Is there something that you would add or subtract having seen them expressed as Planets? This is the sort of process that leads toward integrating the use of Astrology with your practices.

CHAPTER 5

THE SIGNS

The first part of this chapter will give you an overview of the essential qualities and characteristics of the Signs, and the second part a more magickal perspective on what the Signs represent. I have never seen a chart with only one Sign present. It is normal for several Signs to be present, and sometimes almost all of them. It is fairly common for people that who are learning Astrology to focus attention on their own Sun Sign or the Signs of their friends and family. Please make an effort to learn about all the Signs because the entire Zodiac is present in every chart whether or not any given Sign has a Planet or not in it. At first glance, it would seem that the Planets are generally more useful in magickal applications as they are identified as sources of power. This is true, but Planets are always in Signs, so a nuanced understanding of the Signs is needed in order to best apply the Planetary powers. Moreover, the Signs are one plane lower than the Planets, and thus closer to the Earth plane, and as such more detailed and differentiated. This level of detail is also useful in planning Magick with specific outcomes. It is easiest to talk about the Signs and learn about their attributes by starting with how they express as temperaments and personality traits. For humans, the starting point is always humanity, but we should move past the starting point. As you become more knowledgeable about the Signs, look for how their patterns are expressed in other living things such as plants and animals. Then the next step is to see how the Signs are expressed in personal situations, politics, art movements, generational differences, and other composite manifestations. The next elaboration of the meaning of the Signs is in the system of the 12 Houses of a chart because they are a more concrete articulation of the activities that the Signs rule.

Modalities

Although it is relatively safe to assume that if you are reading this book, that you have some understanding of the concept of the Four Elements as used in Magick, it's probable that you have had less exposure to the Modalities. The Cardinal Modality is the outpouring of energy that is creation coming into being; it is pure impetus, and desire for the world. In its highest expression it is the divine will to create. The Fixed Modality is the ordering of energy that is

homeostatic balance, completion, and dynamic preservation. In its highest expression it is the divine will to nurture. The Mutable Modality is the transformation of energy that is flexibility, change, death, and rebirth. In its highest expression it is the divine will to evolve. The Modalities have transcendent qualities as well as immanent qualities that become visible through the behavior of the Elements. They exist separate from each other, but they also arise from each other. You may think of the Modalities as operating both above and below the Elements, and as the context and environment within which the Elements exist. If you find mythic comparisons to be useful, then consider the following ideas. The Cardinal Modality is like Brahma, the creator; the Fixed Modality is like Vishnu, the preserver; and the Mutable Modality is like Shiva, the destroyer. The Cardinal Modality is like the Maiden, who is bold and full of invention; the Fixed Modality is like the Mother, who is striving to maintain the balance of life; and the Mutable Modality is like the Crone, who is preparing the way for endings and beginnings.

Polarities

In addition to having an elemental assignment and a modality, the Signs also have a polarity of either positive or negative. The Fire and Air Signs are all of a positive polarity, and the Water and Earth Signs are all of a negative polarity. I should point out that positive and negative should not be equated with good and bad, nor are they active and receptive. Traditionally, in Astrology, the positive polarity is viewed as male and the negative polarity as female, but I believe this perspective creates more confusion than clarity. Think of “positive” as the power of pushing, and also of going out to get that which is desired. The positive polarity has a tendency to be outward directed with extroverted behaviors. Think of “negative” as the power of pulling, and of attracting those things that are desired to come to you. The negative polarity has a tendency to be inward directed with introverted behaviors. When applied to the Signs, how polarity behaves is greatly modified by both the Element and the Modality of any given.

The Three Elemental Sets and Phases of the Self

The course of the Zodiac shows us each possible combination of the Elements with the Modalities. The 12 Signs of the Zodiac can also be thought of as three sets of the Four Elements. The first four Signs, Aries, Taurus, Gemini, and Cancer, represent the Elements in their most primal state with a focus on the Lower Self, the Nephesch, and the Body. The second set of four Signs, Leo,

Virgo, Libra, and Scorpio, represent the Elements in relationship to how they express in life with a focus on the Middle Self, the Ruach, and the Mind. The final set of four Signs, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces, represent the Elements becoming more spiritualized with a focus on the Higher Self, the Neschamah, and the Spirit.

The First Elemental Set



Aries

Energy signature: Cardinal, Fire, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Mars

Esoteric Element: Fire of Fire

The glyph for Aries is often said to represent the horns of the ram. This is true, but as it is the Sign of the beginning of the astrological wheel, it also represents the leaves of the fresh sprout rising in the spring. Using the conventions that we used in describing the glyphs for the Planets, you may also see it as two semicircles arising from a point or line. As such, it is an emblem for the power of the Soul professing itself in the material world.

Aries has an energetic signature of Cardinal Fire of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature, this energetic seed, would take root and sprout in the manifest world. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Aries it expresses itself with fervor, courage, passion, and desire to explore and to pioneer whatever is set before it. Aries jumps into action because it is the pure expression of the power to be.



Taurus

Energy signature: Fixed, Earth, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Venus

Esoteric Element: Air of Earth

The glyph for Taurus is a circle surmounted by a semicircle that brings to mind the face of a cow or a bull. This Earth Sign has the circle of Spirit and the crescent of Soul, but no representation of Earth in its glyph. There is a general principle in Astrology that when something is missing it will either be truly absent or it will be present in abundance because it's absence summons what is missing. In the case of Taurus, the first Earth Sign in the Zodiac, the absence of any part of the cross of matter ends up being translated as seeing Spirit and Soul as present in all that is the material world.

Taurus has an energetic signature of Fixed Earth of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature can solidify and take form in the manifest world. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Taurus it expresses itself with persistence, the finding of value in the material world, and in finding the spiritual through the pursuit of sensual. Taurus is practical, determined, has great stamina, and is willing to wait. Taurus collects and maintains because it is the pure expression of the power to have.



Gemini

Energy signature: Mutable, Air, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Mercury

Esoteric Element: Water of Air

The glyph for Gemini can be drawn two different ways, which is very fitting for the Sign of the Twins. It can be two slightly flattened semicircles, one pointing upward and one downward, joined by two parallel vertical lines. It can also be two horizontal parallel lines joined by two parallel vertical lines. In either case, the emphasis is on the idea of finding parallels and connections. The mirror

symmetry of the glyph also suggests the capacity to find analogies between all things. The glyph evokes the concept of the Self understanding itself through reflection, and through seeing itself in relationship to the outer world.

Gemini has an energetic signature of Mutable Air of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature explores the world through the gathering of experiences that are refined by thought. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Gemini it expresses itself with an inquisitive zeal to know, to explore, and to share the discoveries. Gemini is quick and curious because it is the pure expression of the power to think.



Cancer

Energy signature: Cardinal, Water, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Moon

Esoteric Element: Fire of Water

Cancer's glyph consists of two semicircles that each end in a smaller circle and nestle against each other. For some, this looks like an embrace. Others see the nurturing breast of the Mother, and with a bit of imagination you can see a stylized crab as well. It is the Soul inspired by Spirit, feeling empathy for the other Souls and Spirits that are in relationship to it. The glyph also gives the impression of enclosure and the protection of that which is valued, love.

Cancer has an energetic signature of Cardinal Water of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature draws to itself the things it needs from the world and holds close the treasure of love. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Cancer, it expresses itself with a desire to nurture, preserve, and protect. Cancer is deep and sensitive because it is the pure expression of the power to feel.

The Second Elemental Set



Leo

Energy signature: Fixed, Fire, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Sun

Esoteric Element: Air of Fire

Leo's glyph resembles a lion's mane with its two smaller semicircles flanking a larger rising curve. In this glyph the self-expression of the Soul is seen as the primary goal of the work of the world. The extended central semicircle that rises above the others shows us Leo's need and capacity to become the center of things.

Leo has an energetic signature of Fixed Fire of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature moves through the world sharing its warmth, showing the way, and seeking eyes to catch its light. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Leo, it expresses itself with a desire to lead, to play, and to revel in life. Leo is confident and regal because it is the pure expression of the power to will.



Virgo

Energy signature: Mutable, Earth, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Mercury

Esoteric Element: Water of Earth

The glyph for Virgo is a series of elongated semicircles that end with a loop that crosses back upon itself. The impression given is that the expression of the Soul arises from that small intersection that is the cross of Matter. It can also be interpreted as the expression of the Soul being constrained by the rules of

Matter.

Virgo has an energetic signature of Mutable Earth of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature sifts through the matter of the world to study it and to refine it. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Virgo, it expresses itself as both a judge and an alchemist. Virgo seeks to find or to create purity and wholesome order. Virgo is discerning and healing because it is the pure expression of the power to analyze.



Libra

Energy signature: Cardinal, Air, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Venus

Esoteric Element: Fire of Air

Libra's glyph is a horizontal line above which is a second parallel line with a center that rises up to form a semicircle. It is easy to see the symbol as representing the scales of balance. Libra in the natural order of the Zodiac is at the descendent, and as such you can also imagine that the glyph is a representation of the Sun as it sets upon the horizon. In this glyph, the cross of Matter has been harmonized by the semicircle of Soul.

Libra has an energetic signature of Cardinal Air of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature flows through the world like breath in a flute seeking the tones of music. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Libra, it expresses itself through art, negotiation, and harmonious arrangements. Libra is cooperative and sensitive to aesthetics because it is the pure expression of the power to balance.



Scorpio

Energy signature: Fixed, Water, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Pluto (old previous ruler Mars)

Esoteric Element: Air of Water

In Scorpio's glyph we see a repetition of the series of elongated semicircles that we saw in the glyph for Virgo, but rather than folding in upon itself it rises upward and ends with an arrow point. Here too we have an emphasis on what the Soul creates, but it is directed outward. It is easy to see this rising arrow as both the scorpion's stinger and a tip of the hat to Mars, Scorpio's old ruler.

Scorpio has an energetic signature of Fixed Water of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature crashes like a tide against the shore and dives deep into the abyss. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Scorpio, it expresses itself through mystery, transformation, and rebirth. Scorpio is passion rooted in depth because it is the pure expression of the power to desire.

The Third Elemental Set



Sagittarius

Energy signature: Mutable, Fire, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Jupiter

Esoteric Element: Water of Fire

The bow and arrow of the centaur archer is easily seen in the glyph for Sagittarius. It is also the cross of Matter tilted and aimed to rise toward Spirit. Here the limits and forms of Matter are used to empower the journey back toward Spirit.

Sagittarius has an energetic signature of Mutable Fire of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature is like a flame dancing through the world, cycling from a small spark to pillar of fire and back. When

the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Sagittarius, it expresses itself through seeking wisdom and a cause to espouse. It is interesting to note that the arrow in the constellation of Sagittarius points toward the center of our galaxy. The arrow is metaphorically aimed at the Sun beyond the Sun, the Source of all things. Sagittarius is the quest and the arrow's flight of aspiration because it is the pure expression of the power to see.



Capricorn

Energy signature: Cardinal, Earth, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Saturn

Esoteric Element: Fire of Earth

There are so many variations of the glyph for Capricorn that I often tell new students of Astrology if it is a tangled glyph they don't recognize, it is probably Capricorn. Most variants contain a circle or a loop that reminds us of the circle of Spirit, a place where the lines cross, and a variety of zigs and zags of lines and curves. The one constant is that the glyph is a representation of the journey of Spirit down into the depths of Matter, of the development of the Soul, and the return to Spirit.

Capricorn has an energetic signature of Cardinal Earth of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature wrests from the world the building blocks needed to rise. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Capricorn, it expresses itself through seeking wisdom and a way to use its power. Capricorn is cunning and ambitious because it is the pure expression of the power to utilize.



Aquarius

Energy signature: Fixed, Air, Positive Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Uranus (old ruler Saturn)

Esoteric Element: Air of Air

The glyph for Aquarius is two horizontal and parallel jagged wavy lines. The zigzag lines seem to imply a synchronized motion. They can be seen as representing the flow of water or the flow of electricity, or if we focus on the space between the lines, they can also be thought of as a conduit.

Aquarius has an energetic signature of Fixed Air of positive polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature pushes the boundaries of thought forward and works to make concepts into reality. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Aquarius, it expresses its individuality through rebellion, revolution, and reform. Aquarius is visionary and idealistic because it is the pure expression of the power to know.



Pisces

Energy signature: Mutable, Water, Negative Polarity

Planetary Ruler: Neptune (old ruler Jupiter)

Esoteric Element: Water of Water

The glyph for Pisces is two semicircles facing outward, left and right, and connected by a horizontal line to their centers. It can be understood as two fish that are both separate and connected. It is also Soul seeing that it is connected to all other Souls, even if they are also separate. I also see it as two droplets of water being drawn together until they touch and merge. It can also be described as two bows, with one arrow aimed at unity.

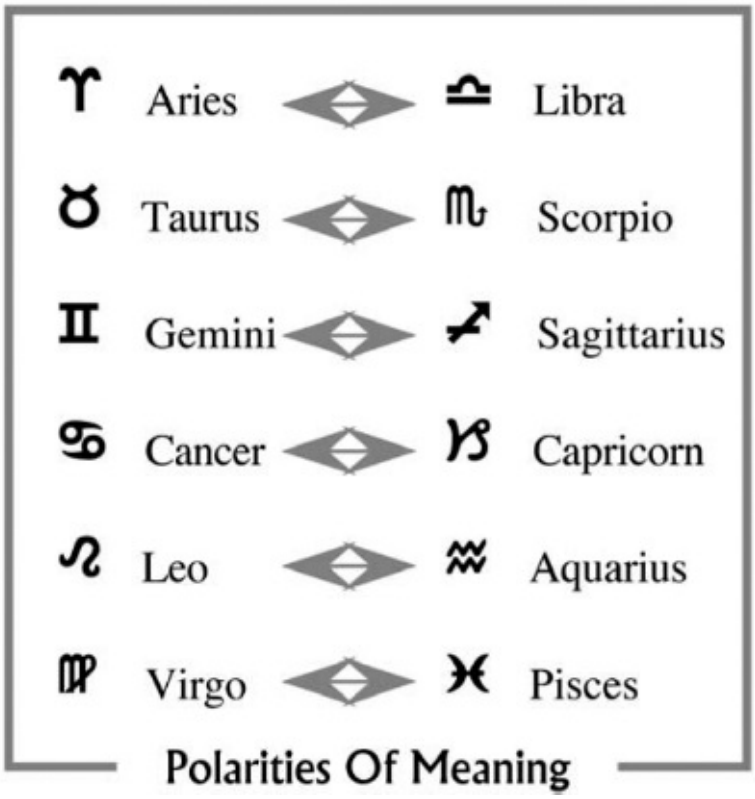
Pisces has an energetic signature of Mutable Water of negative polarity. Take a moment to imagine how this energetic signature shifts and changes and tries to draw all things into itself. When the power of a Planet passes through the pattern that is Pisces, it expresses its individuality through intuition, empathy,

and the desire for unification. Pisces is compassionate and mystical because it is the pure expression of the power to believe.

The Signs as Six Continua

The 12 Signs can also be conceptualized as six continua or six thematic polarities. Each Sign has its opposite directly across the wheel of the Zodiac, and its opposite will always be of the same Modality and Polarity. Signs opposite to each other are always pairings of Fire-Air or Water-Earth, and by the necessity of geometry are always in different phases of the Self. So the six are: Aries-Libra, Taurus-Scorpio, Gemini-Sagittarius, Cancer-Capricorn, Leo-Aquarius, Virgo-Pisces.

By definition, the ends of a continuum look very different from each other but by many small steps, with almost no perceptible differences, they morph into each other. Polarities, at their root, are not two things but are actually one whole with two distinct faces; the North and the South poles of the magnet are different aspects of the one thing that we call magnetism. In studying the Signs, you may wish to generate lists of characteristics that opposite Signs share in order to discover the themes that connect them. For example, if we look at Taurus and Scorpio, we see that they are both strongly connected to ideas related to possessions and to boundaries. Taurus focuses on personal resources and personal boundaries whereas Scorpio focuses on what is shared and how boundaries are dissolved when we merge. The Signs show us the extremes when their themes are taken to their furthest separation. One of the great teachings that reaches across the lines of traditions is that to grow and evolve we must bring the many polarities within us into balance. Using the six thematic polarities of the Signs as a tool for exploring the polarities within can provide a great deal of detail to explore parts of the self that would otherwise remain intangible.



The Signs and the Human Group Soul

In the Western Magickal Tradition, also known as the Western Mystery Tradition, one of the fundamental concepts related to the practice of Magick is the thought-form. The Western concept of the thought-form is similar to but not identical to the Tibetan concept of the *tulpa*, and there is some debate as to whether the concept arose in both the East and the West or whether the Western magickal tradition borrows from Tibetan mysticism. Our stream of consciousness exists in more than one plane of being as a result of our ethereal anatomy. In other words, each layer of the aura has its own type of consciousness. So our continuous flow of consciousness is not simply just a stream of words and images and emotions, but also shifting shapes and forms of varying color and vibration shaped in accordance to the nature of each layer of the aura, each layer of our subtle bodies. Most of these thought-forms are as fleeting and ephemeral as the swirls and bubbles on the top of a rushing stream that briefly enter then exit existence. However, with sufficient focus, coherence, duration of effort, and investment of energy then our consciousness can create thought-forms that have durability. For the most part this type of thought-form has its primary anchor in the Astral plane. Like calls to like, and what constitutes a location in the Astral plane is greatly determined by similarity of

form and synchronicity. What this means is that when many people over the course of many years focus on the nature of the Signs, these durable thought-forms have a tendency to merge together much like two droplets of water brought so close together that surface tension merges them into one greater drop. So each Sign also has a highly developed thought-form associated with it that can be called upon in magickal work, in addition to that which arises from qualities inherent to the Sign itself.

As I stated earlier, the 12 Signs can be thought of as the 12 styles of human wisdom and human folly. You could also say that the Signs are the 12 basic modes of human consciousness. I, as well as may other people coming from diverse perspectives, accept and affirm the idea of the existence of a group mind and a group soul that connects all human beings. The Western Magickal Tradition uses the terminology “group mind” or “group soul,” but there are similar or corollary concepts in other systems. Rupert Sheldrake's version of this is morphic resonance and morphogenetic fields. David Bohm and Karl Pribam speak of holonomic brain theory and the holographic nature of reality. Pierre Teilhard de Chardin's noosphere and omega point also provide a vantage point from which to study the idea of directed evolution of the many sparks back into one brilliance. The 12 Signs can also be thought of as group minds within the larger group mind that is the summation of humanity. The thought-forms we have created as an outcome of the myriad of people who have invested their consciousness in contemplating the Signs are so developed that they can acts as vessels, vehicles, for the parts of the human group mind and/or group soul that correspond to their functions and attributes. My personal assessment is that the thought-forms of the Signs have reached the level of richness that is needed to qualify as Goddess-forms and God-forms. For the sake of clarity, a God-form or Goddess-form is a culturally created and highly elaborated thought-form that is used as a vessel, an interface, by God/dess/es. I believe in the existence of separate and real Divinities with unique identities. I also believe that their true forms are extremely difficult to grasp, even with well-developed subtle senses. Like the invisible man who in order to be seen slips into some clothing, think of Goddess-forms and God-forms as garments tailored by humans to be worn by the Great Ones so that we may interact with them more clearly. By the way, even when the Goddess-forms and God-forms are not actively ensouled they still hold the distilled essence, information, and energy of the being that corresponds to them.

For quite a number of years now, I have had considerable success in calling upon the 12 Signs as Goddess-forms and God-forms. The Signs when addressed

in this fashion respond much the way that God/dess/es, Archangels, and so on do in rituals and meditations. My recommendation to you is that after studying the Signs, adapt whatever your current practices may be to include the invocation and the evocation of the Signs. Some of the methods that I have developed specifically for working with the Signs are in Chapter 14. Although there are some myths and God/dess/es that are historically associated with the Signs, they are not good guides to the Goddess-forms and God-forms of the Signs. In fact, too much focus on the associated names and myths will limit your understanding of the Signs as they are much larger in scope than these correspondences.

The Signs as Story Cycles

Many magickal frames of reference such as the Qabala, the Tarot, and the Wheel of the Year are encoded with stories, the most common ones being variations on creation myths, the cycles of nature, and the stages of human development. The order of the Signs in their standard sequence in the Zodiac also is rich with story cycles. The order of the Signs tells the story of the creation of the universe through the Elements and the Modalities. As we move through the permutations of the Elements and Modalities and their associated sub-elements, we are also moving through the developmental stages of Spirit's journey into Matter and back again that is woven throughout all of Astrology's symbolism. The first Sign is Aries, which is Cardinal Fire, the Fire of Fire, which is the first impulse, the *primum movens*, the flash of the big bang, the momentum of birth. We should consider for a moment that the Zodiac is a circle and the Sign before Aries is the last Sign of the sequence, Pisces. What is truly amazing is that Pisces is Mutable Water, the Water of Water, so you have the union of the primal waters and the primal fires forming the end and the beginning. There are two other Water and Fire death/rebirth boundaries in the Zodiac. If you recall there are three Elemental sets of the Signs that correspond to the Primal/Lower Self, the Personal/Middle Self, and the Universal/Higher Self. The three places where Water and Fire meet are their boundaries. At Cancer and Leo we have the meeting of the Fire of Water and the Air of Fire where the challenge is the balancing of Fire. At Scorpio and Sagittarius we have the meeting of the Air of Water and the Water of Fire where the challenge is the balancing of Water.

A Journey

Let me offer you a highly simplified journey through the Signs.

Aries is the eternal child of promise, that is the first spark that is separate from the Source of all. Aries discovers selfhood through a headlong rush into the universe that is new and fresh because it is seen as new through the eyes of Aries. As Aries matures, the quest is for true identity.

Taurus comes after Aries's fiery arc and lands to deeply root itself in the Earth. Taurus now uses the senses to closely examine the qualities of physical existence, and that is how Taurus explores the world. As Taurus matures, the quest is for personal meaning and worth.

Gemini takes flight, exchanging roots for winged sandals, to discover all that can be thought about and talked about. With Gemini's enthusiasm for cataloging the world also comes a great desire to share all their discoveries. As Gemini matures, the quest is for finding their other self and with it a center around which their facts and ideas can revolve.

Cancer completes the Elemental quartet started by Aries, diving down into the waters of emotion. Cancer wishes to feel every emotion and yet seeks the safety of being both protected and protecting those whom they love. The challenge is to learn the gentle side of parenting including becoming a parent to their own soul. As Cancer matures, the quest is to find fulfillment through family whether that be family of blood or family choice or both.

Leo begins the second Elemental set and lights the flame of centeredness that calls forth individuality and the search for personal wholeness. This flame in turn calls forth the need to express the will. Leo explores the world through the light of self-knowledge and expresses self-mastery through its relationship to others. As Leo matures, the quest is to achieve a world that is enriched by their light.

Virgo wants to find all that is pure and wholesome on the Earth plane so that they can find service that is significant. In Virgo, the Element of Earth is ever changing, with the subtle being separated from the coarse, then becoming mingled again so that the process of purification can evolve. As Virgo matures the quest is to achieve personal wholeness at the same time that personality refinement continues.

Libra is the beginning of the second half of the Zodiac. As its opposite, Aries, began the work of the self, Libra is the beginning of focus on others and of learning to bring balance to relationships with other beings. Here the power of Air to carry words, thoughts, and visions is used to determine what is needed to create harmony. As Libra matures, the quest is to breathe cosmic order, beauty, into the world.

Scorpio is the deep water so filled with the magnetic power of attraction that

it wishes to merge with other waters, but to do so it must find serenity. In Scorpio, Fixed Water pushes against boundaries, discovering secrets and mysteries, experiencing death and rebirth in the process of merging with others. As Scorpio matures, the quest is to learn to love themselves in order to love others, with trust earned from experience to experience.

Sagittarius is the Fire that changes; it is a small flame, the multitude of the flaming stars, gazing at the brilliance at the center. Sagittarius sees the divine spark in each being, sees how they act in concert, and revels in this dance of life. Seeing all shapes that Fire takes, Sagittarius tries to discover what shapes the Fire. As Sagittarius matures, the quest is the search for knowledge that in turn transforms into wisdom.

Capricorn is the will of Earth to arise from the depths and to build the world in the image of what it envisions. Capricorn is keenly aware of the challenges of matter—time, limits, and inertia—and through these finds dharma. Here the great choice is to commit or not to commit to the struggle needed to rise up. As Capricorn matures, the quest for certainity and merit becomes tempered with faith that they will reach again the top of the mountain.

Aquarius is Fixed Air, so it is ideas, abstractions, that seek to come into physical reality for the benefit of the group, the community. After the focus of Capricorn on the practical and the real, Aquarius is drawn to the ideal and the stimulation of potential inherent in the world. As Aquarius matures, the quest is to find the balance of being unique while serving the common good; will and higher will strive to find their proper place.

Pisces completes the cycle as it is Mutable Water, the Water of Water that dissolves separation to discover unity. Pisces changes shape as it flows through all the forms of the world and what appears to be intuition is actually moments of oneness. As Pisces matures, it gains the capacity to distinguish illusion from vision and escapism from transcendence.

Negative Characteristics of the Signs

Some of you may have noticed that I have not delved into the dysfunctional or imbalanced characteristics of the Signs. I think it is more valuable to become grounded in the positive potentials inherent in each of the Signs before exploring the ways that wisdom can become folly. For what are probably very good reasons from an evolutionary perspective, humans have a tendency to remember difficult and painful things more easily. As a counterbalance to this tendency, try to focus more time upon the healthy and productive patterns within the Signs. There will be a fair amount of exploration in Chapter 15 on

spiritual evolution that will look at both the virtues and vices of the Signs. If you feel compelled to start thinking about the negative characteristics of the Signs, then begin with contemplations on how an overreliance or excess of any style of action can lead to trouble.

CHAPTER 6

THE HOUSES

The Houses are the most physical and tangible manifestation of the patterns of the Signs and the powers of the Planets. When you look at a specific chart, it shows us through the framework of the 12 Houses where and how the astrological forces will most strongly impact a person's life, and organization or a collective entity's circumstances, or the influences at play at a particular time and place. Everything you know about the Signs will give you insight into the nature of the Houses. There is an abundance of material available on the Houses for use in Astrology that is focused upon prediction or personal development. I will place a greater focus on what the Houses mean when used for magickal purposes, and some of the material presented here is based upon my own years of experimentation. See the diagram for a quick reminder on some essentials.



Let me give you an example of how knowledge of the Houses can be used

for magickal purposes. If you create a chart for a particularly important ritual, such as an initiation, the arrangement of how the Planets and the Signs overlay onto the 12 Houses can give you insight into how that initiation will affect the individual for whom it was performed. As we will discover later in the book, sometimes just changing the time of a ritual by a few hours can greatly change how it will play out. In part, this is because the quicker moving Planets may change Signs or Aspects, but more frequently, it is about shifting where they fall in the House system. Because we cannot always wait the days, weeks, or months to find the perfect arrangement of Planets, we can improve what we have to work with by selecting the optimal arrangement in the Houses.

Introduction to the Houses

The direction of the Houses is counterclockwise around the wheel of a chart. The lines that divide the Houses are called “cusps.” The meanings of the 12 Houses spring from their associated Signs in their natural order in the Zodiac, but the Sign or Signs that are actually in any given House in a chart rarely match this archetypal order. This is often a matter of confusion for newcomers to Astrology. Let me clarify this with a comparison to the Tarot. The cards in the Tarot are numbered in addition to having layers of meaning and multiple correspondences. In order to do a reading the cards are dealt out into a spread. One very common spread is the 10-card Celtic Cross spread. Each position in a tarot spread represents a particular type of information, such as the second card being the challenges and obstacles and the tenth the outcome of the current course over time. The cards are numbered and the positions are numbered. The cards whose number is 2 do not need to land in the second position, anymore than Aries in the heavens needs to land in the first House of an actual chart just because Aries is the first Sign (see figure).

Another puzzle for neophytes is a common discrepancy between the size of the Houses and the size of the Signs. Signs are always 30° in size, but Houses can dramatically vary in size. If you remember from the story of the Celestial Temple, Astrology can be understood as operating on multiple planes. The Houses are closer to the physical world than the Signs, and the closer we get to the physical, things become more detailed but further from their idealized form. Let me use a real-world example that echoes the discrepancy between the sizes of the Signs and Houses. If I look at the hands of my old analog pocket watch, I see the pattern of the 12 hours in one glance. There is also a traditional association that on the clockface 12 means noon or midnight, and 6 means dawn or dusk. If I go outside at 6 p.m. and find that it is not dusk, should I

conclude that either my clock or nature is broken? Neither is broken, they both operate within their own frames of reference. The Signs are anchored to the journey of the Earth through the year as it goes round the Sun, whereas the Houses are anchored to the rotation of the Earth through the cycle of day and night.

The First House: The House of Aries

Magickal Associations

First House is associated with the lower subtle bodies and in particular the etheric, which is the densest one that is closest to the physical plane. The Sign on the cusp of this House, which in this case will be one and the same as the Ascendant, determines the basic qualities of the human energy field that is most responsible for active magickal work. This is also the House of what is often referred to as the magickal personality, or the magickal persona. For those that are unfamiliar with the term “magickal personality,” this is much more than simply shifting into ritual headspace or donning the robe for ritual. The magickal personality is a construct that is developed through your magickal and spiritual practices to serve as an interface between different parts of the Self, as a vehicle to contain you as you move through different planes, and as a womb and a cocoon for your personal evolution.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of a person's basic outlook on life, which in turn gives rise to the personality. The basic parts of a person's character, physique, and mode of personal initiative are described by the contents of this House.

The Second House: The House of Taurus

Magickal Associations

The second House is associated with the inherent talents and power a person has at their disposal. It is not an indication of what they will achieve, but rather it is what comes most naturally to them. The Sign on the cusp of this House determines the type and style of raw magickal power the person can wield.

Mundane Associations

This is the House associated with all physical possessions, including worldly goods and the physical body itself. It also shows us the way the person relates to prosperity and to the desire to accumulate and maintain resources.

The Third House: The House of Gemini

Magickal Associations

The third House is associated with the communicative and receptive magickal talents, such as telepathy, and the use of the voice for summoning, chanting, and similar tasks. The Sign on the cusp of this House shows us the relative ease or difficulty the person has in using these abilities. This House also is an indicator for a person's capacity to sense or discern the magickal atmosphere of a place; whether a place is wholesome, unclean, energized, muted, and so on.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of communications and the environment in which an individual lives and works. It is often associated with siblings, coworkers, and neighbors as well. It is also an indicator for a person's capacity to pick up practical skills.

The Fourth House: The House of Cancer

Magickal Associations

The fourth House is connected to our ancestors, the systems and traditions that resonate most strongly within us, magickal legacies, and initiatory lineages. These connections may be through blood, affinity, or through the transformative power of a true initiation into a tradition. The Sign on the cusp of this House gives us a sense of the characteristics that are held in common by those systems where we feel at home.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of heredity, our parents, our deepest psychological roots, and our early childhood conditioning. It is also associated with home and hearth, and the places where we feel nurtured and protected.

The Fifth House: The House of Leo

Magickal Associations

The fifth House is related to our magickal creativity and our capacity to express ourselves in ritual. It is also our animal magnetism, our charisma, and our capacity to act as a focal point for energies and essences. The Sign on the cusp of this House shows us which styles and mediums are best suited to our skills. How we can act in the role of a priestess or priest is clarified by this House.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of our outward expressions of the Self into the world. These expressions can be our biological children, artistic creations, hobbies, and other pleasurable pursuits. Here too we find our style of romance and courtship.

The Sixth House: The House of Virgo

Magickal Associations

The sixth House is related to spiritual and magickal oaths and duties. It is also the key to understanding how to maintain a proper balance between the mundane and pragmatic portions of life and our spiritual pursuits. It shows us some part of the tasks that must be accomplished due to karma, geas, wyrd, destiny, or whichever framework you prefer to describe your contract with the universe. The Sign on the cusp of this House gives us an indication of how we approach these matters.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of work, health, and duties in all the mundane arenas of life. It is also what we do to help or to hinder our health. The sixth House is also the House of habits and routines.

The Seventh House: The House of Libra

Magickal Associations

The seventh House is associated with your magickal working partners, your capacity for divine embodiment, mediumship, channeling, and your personal nemesis. It is also the way in which you relate to your tutelary goddesses and gods. Any magickal operation that involves placing yourself in harmony or balance with another being is in the purview of the seventh House. The Sign on the cusp of this House gives us clues about how to best create a cooperative flow.

Mundane Associations

This is the House of all one-on-one partnerships, whether they be of a negative or a positive nature. Matters related to spouses, business partners, close friends, and enemies are described by the conditions of the seventh House.

The Eighth House: The House of Scorpio

Magickal Associations

The eighth House is where we find shadow work; deep integration; transformative process; and the cycles of birth, death, and rebirth. All processes that involve the extraction and refinement of essences are here as well. It also shows us how we interact with group minds and group souls. The Sign on the cusp of this House indicates the type of transformative experience that occurs most frequently.

Mundane Associations

The eighth House is the House of shared resources, and has often been referred to as the House of sex, death, and taxes. It is all those things that are communal or merged, whether they be our money, our bodies, or our souls.

The Ninth House: The House of Sagittarius

Magickal Associations

The ninth House is associated with the higher mind, prophecy, and our relationship to religion. This is also the House that most often shows us the nature of our crises of faith and our sense of purpose and direction. The Sign on the cusp of this House shows the nature of the journey we take in search of understanding the larger spiritual questions.

Mundane Associations

The ninth House is connected to higher education, mind expansion, interest in other cultures, travel, and the search for meaning. It is how we persuade and how we are persuaded.

The Tenth House: The House of Capricorn

Magickal Associations

The tenth House is where we find what must be attained if the goals of an incarnation are to be fulfilled. Each has a part to play in the growing, the mending, the tending of the world; the tenth House shows us the nature of that role. The Sign on the cusp of this House tells the nature of the labors, triumphs, and obstacles to attainment.

Mundane Associations

The tenth House is connected to prestige, honor, careers, and what will be remembered as a person's contribution to the world. It is also public standing

and worldly attainment.

The Eleventh House: The House of Aquarius

Magickal Associations

The eleventh House is related to working groups, such as lodges and covens, and their associated egregores. It is connected to the belief structures and ideologies of Traditions. Here we also find indications on what is needed to refine and improve the teachings in the practices that we receive from groups. The Sign on the cusp of this House shows us how we ground our spirituality in real structures and real communities in the manifest world.

Mundane Associations

The eleventh House shows us our communal hopes and wishes as expressed through groups, networks, business connections, and charitable efforts. It is also the collection of people that we associate with in the different arenas of our lives.

The Twelfth House: The House of Pisces

Magickal Associations

The twelfth House is the beginning and the end and as such it is strongly connected to the Higher Self, the Holy Guardian Angel, and the Divine beings that touch our lives. It is a deep vision of the Source of all things and is the golden thread that sews all our parts together. The Sign on the cusp of this House describes how the unseen causes impacts upon our lives.

Mundane Associations

The twelfth House is all that happens behind the scenes, secrets, large institutions, and our deep psychology. It is also the House of sacrifice to causes, whether they be worthy or not.

Three Special Cusps

As I stated earlier, the Signs can be thought of as three sets of the Four Elements, and the meaning of the Houses interlocks with the Signs. I refer to the boundaries between these Elemental sets as The Three Veils. When astrological charts have activity on or near these special cusps, particular spiritual issues are activated. Each of these boundaries can be thought of as the focal point for a birth, a death, or transformation. This is true whether we are

speaking about the natal chart for an individual, a group, or a situation. It is also true when it is an existing chart that is affected by transiting Planets in the heavens. We will touch upon transits in a very basic way later.

The Twelfth and First Houses

The twelfth and the first House are where Mutable Water and Cardinal Fire meet, the two most primal Elements in their purest form. Here we see the union of Fire and Water as the meeting that brings forth new beginnings. It can also be seen as the bringing together of the whole journey of the zodiac for a reunion of all the levels and parts of the Self.

The Fourth and Fifth Houses

The fourth and the fifth Houses are where Cardinal Water and Fixed Fire meet. It is also important to note that these are the Houses associated with Cancer and Leo, whose ruling Planets are the Moon and the Sun. This veil, this cusp, is where the Fire of Water and the Air of Fire meet as well. The task here is to bring about a proper balancing between all polarities.

The Eighth and Ninth Houses

The eighth and the ninth Houses are where Fixed Water and Mutable Fire come together. The Signs associated with these Houses are Scorpio and Sagittarius that are, in turn, the Air of Water and the Water of Fire. At this veil, this cusp, Scorpio's stinger points downward into the depths while Sagittarius's arrow aims toward the heavens. The work here is to find the balance of Water, to find the balance between the heights and depths of thought, emotion, and spirit.

CHAPTER 7

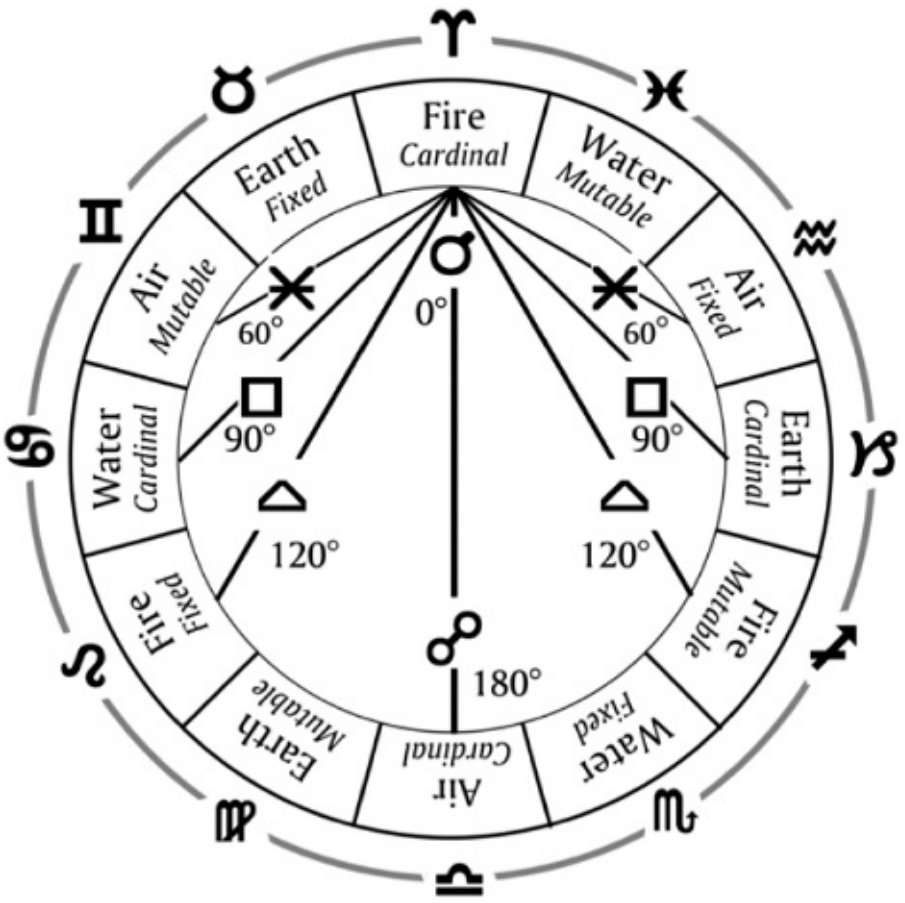
THE ASPECTS

The word “aspect” is derived from the Latin word that means “to regard, to view.” In a sense, the Planets can only see each other when they are in particular geometric relationships to each other, but they do more than simply view each other. When Planets are in Aspect to each other, they are in a dynamic and energetic relationship to each other. This is why I liken the Aspects to verbs when thinking of Astrology as a symbolic language. Aspects are measured as the angular distance in degrees and minutes between Planets in a chart. As a reminder, each Sign is 30 degrees and the location of Planets is identified as a particular degree of a particular Sign. For example, you could have Mars at 15 degrees Taurus in a chart. You could also have Jupiter at 15 degrees Scorpio in the same chart. Both these Planets are at the 15th degree but they are not in the same place; they are actually on opposite sides of the chart from each other. If we were to count the degrees in all the Signs between them, it would be 180 degrees, and this is what we mean by angular distance.

In Astrology, the major Aspects are all multiples of 30 degrees and as such divide evenly into the 360 degrees of the circle. When viewed in a properly constructed chart, Aspects form angles that one could measure with a protractor. The names for the Aspects will remind you of geometry. However, the Planets are not geometric points. They are spheres, and they have an area of influence that extends beyond their surface. This means there is a certain amount of leeway, of wiggle room, when it comes to how exact an Aspect must be to be in effect. Most modern architecture is based on the rectangular room with perpendicular walls. I've been involved in the construction or renovation of quite a few buildings over the course of my life. There are many rooms I've walked into that feel like proper rectangles with perpendicular walls. But when it comes time to put in a new floor or crown molding it becomes apparent none of the walls are actually at 90° to each other. Of course, I have also walked into rooms where the angles have drifted far enough away from 90° angles that I instantly know I am not working with a rectangle. In Astrology, this deviation from the ideal number of degrees, the amount of wiggle room, is called the orb. So for example, the Aspect that is called the square is defined as two Planets separated by 90° of angular distance. If two Planets were actually 94° apart,

then there would be an orb of 4°. How much orb is allowable depends on both the Planets and the Aspect involved. The more exact the Aspect, the stronger its impact. Imagine you are holding two magnets, one in each hand. If you bring the two magnets closer together, at some point you will feel them tug at each other, and when they are close enough it may become difficult to keep them apart. Imagine now that one of the magnets is much larger than the other. If you were to repeat this experiment, you would find that you can feel the pull between the magnets sooner. The Sun and the Moon are like the large magnets in this thought experiment; they have a much larger allowable orb because their field of influence is so much larger.

Some Aspects are considered favorable and some are considered unfavorable, or they can also be thought of as being supportive or challenging. There are also Aspects that are favorable or unfavorable depending upon which combination of Planets are in Aspect to each other. The trine, which is a separation of 120°, is considered the most favorable; and the square, which is a separation of 90°, is considered to be the most difficult by most astrologers. These assignments of whether or not a particular Aspect is benefic or malefic is not arbitrary but arises from the underlying structure of the order of the Elements in the Zodiac. In the case of the trine, the separation of 120° results in Planets that are in different Modalities but are of the same Element. A natural sympathy in cooperation occurs because of this Elemental resonance. There is a natural sympathy in cooperation that occurs because of this Elemental resonance. In the case of the square, the separation of 90° results in Planets that are in the same Modality but are in different Elements. The figure below shows some of the major Aspects plotted onto the Zodiac. It is an illustration of how the Elements and Modalities relate to the degrees of separation that are the Aspects. The wheel of the Zodiac has been rotated to place Aries at the top in order to make it easier to see these patterns. After reading this chapter you may wish to come back to this figure and study it more closely.



The Major Aspects

The Conjunction: 0° ☌

In this Aspect there is an intensification and a blending of the energies of the Planets involved. This is a neutral Aspect, and whether or not it is favorable or unfavorable depends on which combination of Planets are being brought together. A conjunction can bring unity and focus, or it can blur the boundaries between the functions of the Planets involved.

The Sextile: 60° ⚹

When Planets are 60° apart, they are sextile to each other. This is a favorable aspect that encourages harmony and communication between the Planets. For the most part, sextiles connect Planets that are in Signs with the same Polarity. Another way of saying this is that sextiles link Fire Signs to Air Signs or Water Signs to Earth Signs. To gain the full benefit that a sextile provides, effort and

willpower are required. This Aspect opens the door, but does not deliver the goods.

The Square: 90° 

This is when Planets are 90° (three Signs) apart and are in the same Modality but different Elements. The square is considered to be the most challenging of the Aspects, but it also can provide the greatest impetus for growth. Squares can be either obstacles and stress, or the building blocks for your dreams. The hardships and tests of the Squares provoke the circumstances that can lead to achievement and the betterment of the Self.

The Trine: 120° 

When Planets are 120° (four Signs) apart, they are in the same Element, but different Modalities. There is ease and grace in the flow of energy between Planets that are trine to each other. This is considered to be the most harmonious and supportive of all the Aspects. This Aspect often indicates talents or gifts that are innate or inherent. There can be too much of a good thing, and if there is a lack of enough hard Aspects in a chart, there may not be strength of character to make good use of these gifts.

The Opposition: 180° 

The Planets are 180° (six Signs) apart and directly opposite from each other on the wheel of the zodiac. The opposition is a difficult Aspect that often feels like a tug-of-war with great effort is expended, but little progress is made. It can also produce a wavering back and forth between the two Planets that are in opposition to each other that can result in extreme and unbalanced actions. If the opposition can be brought into balance, then it acts like a true polarity that generates energy rather than dissipates it.

For most of the purposes and applications that you are likely to encounter in your initial forays into the use of Astrology in Magick, the major Aspects are more than enough. Make an effort to understand and use these first before adding additional Aspects to your repertoire. When you are ready, add a few of the minor Aspects, and in time, you can add more of the minor aspects beyond the ones that I'm sharing here. I do caution you against using too many of the tools of Astrology at once, as it becomes difficult to keep them all clear and to

bring them into synthesis.

The Minor Aspects

The Semisextile: 30° 

The semisextile is a minor Aspect that brings a low level of positive connection between the Planets in this interaction. It can bring awareness of circumstances and may suggest a next step, but it does not impel the next step.

The Quintile: 72° 

The quintile is an Aspect at 72°, which is the angle of the points in a pentacle and has esoteric resonance with the golden ratio. It is a subtle Aspect that helps bring forth the subtle and inner meaning of the Planets that are quintile. It can bring spiritual awareness.

The Quincunx (Inconjunct): 150° 

The quincunx, or inconjunct (both terms are in common usage), is 150° of separation, which means the Planets normally are of different Elements and Modalities. The Planets connected by this Aspect have a hard time seeing each other, let alone working together. Without making significant adjustments, the Planets in this Aspect tend to be compartmentalized or underutilized.

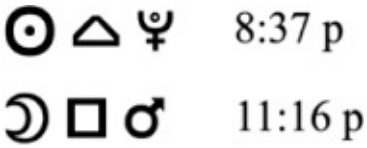
If you are an astrologer, or have done fairly extensive studies in Astrology, you might be disappointed that I'm not proceeding with several more of the minor Aspects such as semisquares, noviles, septiles, sesquisquare, and more. Although it is certainly true that the minor aspects can be very revealing when doing in-depth work with charts of individuals, they rarely have much use in the application of Astrology in ritual or contemplative work. If this book has sparked your interest in Astrology, then I hope you continue to add to your knowledge as needed.

How to Read Aspects

Reading Aspects is very much like learning to read. The first lessons are very simple, but without those first steps the world of literature remains outside the grasp of the student. I will introduce more details in subsequent chapters that will build upon what you find here.

In a Calendar

It is likely that you already own an astrological calendar, and if you don't, then it would be a good idea to get one. Almost all astrological calendars list the astrological events that occur on any given day, of which the Aspects are often the most prominent. Generally, the Aspects given in an astrological calendar do not indicate which Signs the Planets are in during that Aspect, although with a bit of effort you can look that information up in the ephemeris that is usually included at the beginning or the end of the calendar. The normal protocol for listing Aspects is that the faster-moving Planet comes first, then the glyph for the Aspect, and then the slower moving Planet of that pair.



Usually, you will find a time next to each of the Aspects listed. When purchasing an astrological calendar, try to buy the edition that is for your time zone or as close to your time zone as you can find. You will also need to read all the small print in the calendar that tells you how it handles daylight savings time. The time for an Aspect indicates when the Aspect is exact, hence at its peak of action. When an Aspect is moving toward becoming exact, it is said to be applying, or waxing. Those of you who are accustomed to working with the Moon in your Magick are very familiar with the concept of waxing and waning. This also applies to Aspects in magickal operations. When an Aspect has passed its peak and is moving away from being exact, is said to be separating, or waning. In most circumstances, you will want to use an Aspect when it is waxing and as close as it is reasonable to the time when it is exact.

The Aspects that appear in an astrological calendar are the ones that are occurring in the heavens at that time and therefore have an impact on everyone on Earth. Of course, the nature of that impact is dependent upon individual charts, especially if they are at the right degree to generate an Aspect by transit. There will be a little bit about transits later in this chapter and more in later chapters.

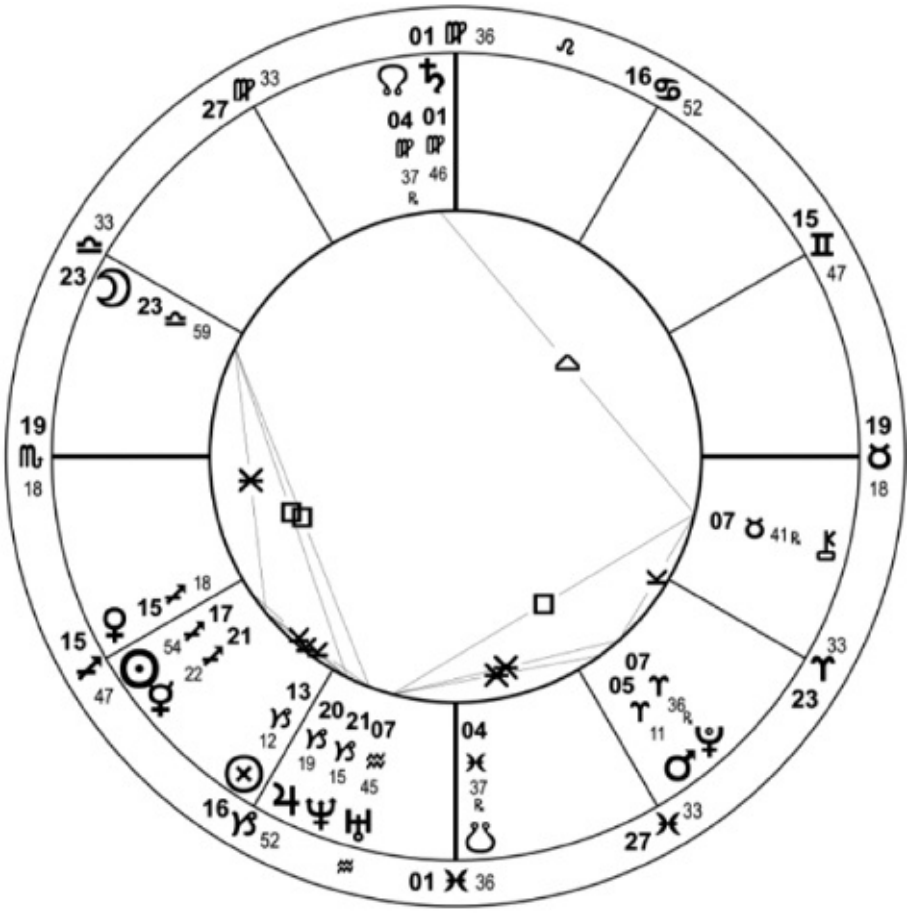
In a Chart

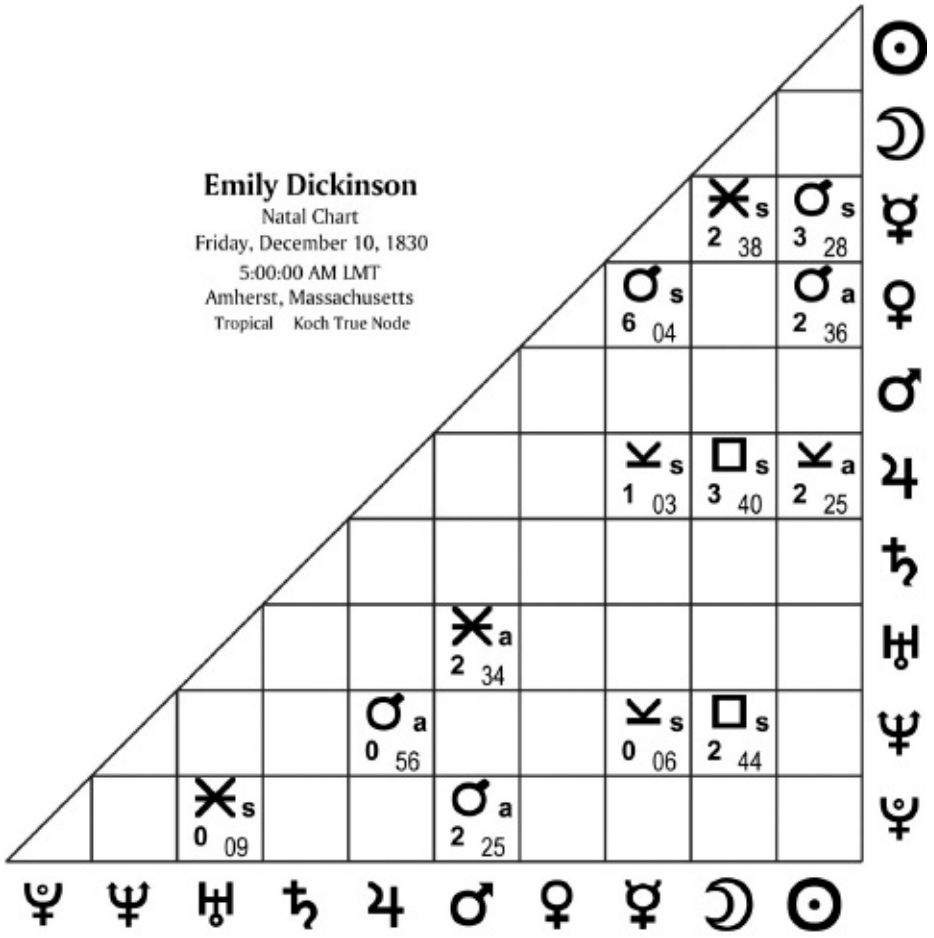
With the advent of computer software, mobile apps, and websites that can create astrological charts in seconds, even a beginner can have access to charts when they need them and for almost any purpose. Unfortunately, there are so

many different styles that charts cast for the same time and place can look radically different from each other even though the information displayed is almost identical. Orient yourself to a chart by looking for the basics: find the Planets; look for how and where the degrees and minutes are displayed; check to see which Signs are on the cusps of which Houses; then look for the Aspects. One popular method to display the aspects in a chart uses lines to connect the Planets, with glyphs to denote the Aspects on the lines. I've provided a chart for Emily Dickinson as an example. One of the benefits of looking at a chart is that you can quickly see not only the Aspects, but also which Signs the Planets are in. If the numbers of the two Planets that are in aspect to each other are the same, then the Aspect is exact. If the numbers are not the same, then subtracting the degrees and minutes of each Planet will show you the orb of the Aspect. In Emily Dickinson's chart the Moon and Neptune square each other and the square is 2 degrees and 44 minutes from being exact.

Emily Dickinson

Natal Chart
Friday, December 10, 1830
5:00:00 AM LMT
Amherst, Massachusetts
Tropical Koch True Node



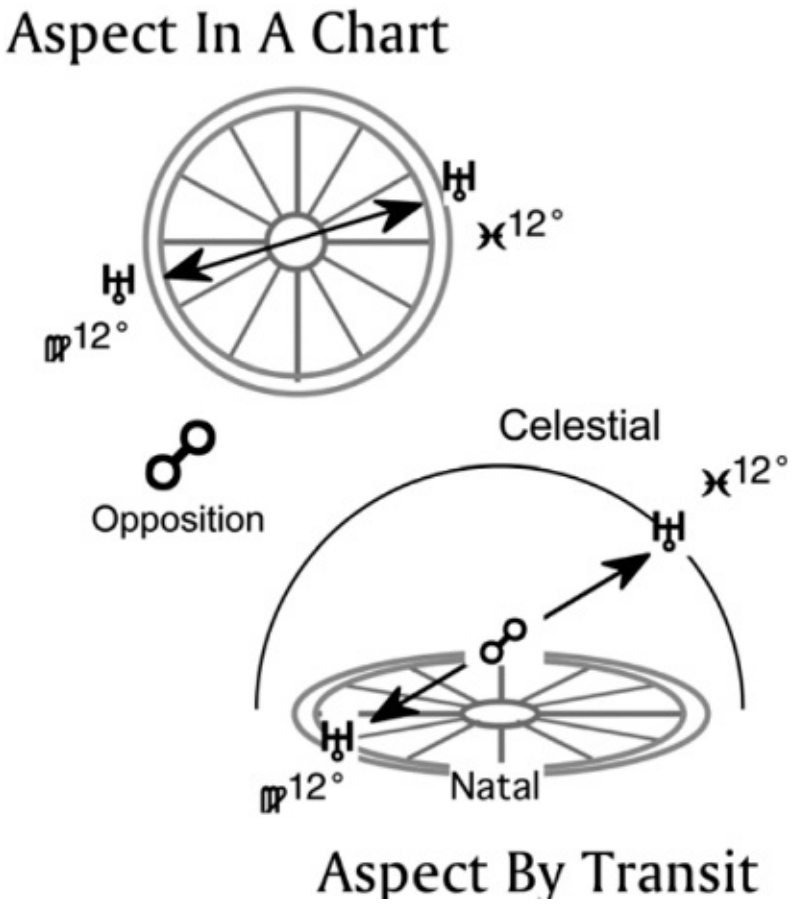


Most charting systems also include figures that provide the Aspects in a tabular format. There are often tables with other sorts of information as well that will become more useful to you over time. The better grade of Astrology software will generally allow you to display whether the Aspects are applying (waxing) or separating (waning) and show you how many degrees and minutes from exact (orb) the Aspect is for the time of the chart. As you can see in Emily Dickinson's chart, the square between the Moon and Neptune is separating.

By Transit

When we are looking at the chart, the Aspects we see are the ones that were in play for the time of that particular chart. The Planets are always in motion, so their positions are always changing. The birth chart for an individual, a group, or an event such as a ritual can be likened to a depiction of a pattern that holds true over time. When the Planets in the heavens are in positions that form Aspects to the Planets in a chart, circumstances arise that are described by these Aspects between the natal Planets and the Planets in the heavens. This is called

a transiting Planet. Transits tend to show us external circumstances and situations that arise as the Planets transit, or move, through a chart. Transits are also more applicable to situations and circumstances that affect multiple individuals.



You may have heard of astrological progressions, which is completely different technique than transits. Please do not confuse the two. Astrological progressions tend to be primarily focused on psychological and developmental changes in an individual. I do not discuss progressions in this book because they have limited usage in magickal applications.

Returns

A planetary return is a special kind of transit in which the transiting Planet has returned to the same position that it was at the moment of a person's birth. In other words, the Planet in the heavens is conjunct the same Planet that is in the birth chart. This means the Planet in the heavens has made one full circuit around the Zodiac and thus has completed one complete cycle. This also means

the Planet in the person's natal chart has been exposed by transit to all the possible Aspects made throughout the Signs. Returns tend to be benchmarks for significant life changes and truthfully should be thought of as rites of passage and as a type of initiation. In fact, there is great value in ritualizing the experience of a return. For example, from an astrological perspective, the Saturn return is when one truly becomes an adult. As such in my tradition (Assembly of the Sacred Wheel) the third degree, which for us is the rank of High Priestess or High Priest, is not attained until after the Saturn return in addition to all the requisite work. The Outer Planets move so slowly that unless you have exceptional longevity, you may not experience a return. However, a half return can be very significant. When Uranus in the heavens is exactly opposite its place in a birth chart, strong and sudden changes occur in most people's lives. This is called the Uranus opposition. More information on the planetary returns will be shared in the chapter on the uses of Astrology for spiritual evolution.

CHAPTER 8

USING THE GLYPHS FOR MAGICK

The use of magickal alphabets is pretty much universal in all systems that recognize the use of symbols of power. Many Witches and Pagans are familiar with the use of the Norse runes, the Theban script, and perhaps even the Hebrew alphabet for the working of Magick. The glyphs of Astrology are greatly underutilized as a magickal alphabet despite the fact that they are incredibly versatile and powerful. I think one of the reasons the glyphs are neglected is that they are a little bit too popular. It is very easy to find astrological jewelry worn as a fashion accessory rather than as a meaningful tool. It is also easy to find cartoonish depictions of wizards and such with the glyphs embroidered upon their cloaks or hats. Familiarity sometimes breeds disregard, and magickal practitioners sometimes make the error of believing that only the most obscure of symbols can be powerful. Whether or not something is magickally efficacious is to a great degree determined by what is occurring inside the practitioner.

The Four Elements with their many associated colors, tools, and symbols are the foundation of many sorts of practical Magick. The Four Elements are a way to name, and to therefore invoke, specific powers. Think of the Planets as also being categories of power. With just one short leap of logic, you can begin to see how the Planets can be thought of as an extended range of Elements. In fact, the Planets provide a more nuanced selection of options when trying to select the right energy and essence for specific applications. Those of you that have had some exposure to the use of Astrology in Magick may have the impression that you cannot use the power of the Planets without knowing whether or not they are in a good position in the heavens. It is certainly true that there are times when it is easier or harder to apply the power of the Planets to any given purpose, but the Planets are always present. In the next chapter you'll receive guidelines for how to judge the suitability of specific times for particular purposes. Nonetheless, the Planets are like the Elements in that they also exist within you and around you at all times. Their powers can be accessed at any time if you have the knowledge, imagination, and the discipline to do so.

It is best to start using the glyphs in their simplest form. In herbalism, remedies that consist of a single ingredient are called simples. When I'm

teaching herbalism, I often recommend working with single-ingredient recipes for remedies, incense, and the like as a starting point. The fledgling herbalist gets a better sense of the unique qualities of an herb when it is used in isolation. Following this idea, I recommend using just one planetary glyph at a time in your initial foray into the use of astrological glyphs in Magick. If you do this, you'll gain a deeper appreciation of the qualities of the Planets, and you will have time to awaken the Planets within yourself so that you can better summon and direct their forces.

Simples

Here's an example of a quick and easy way that I've used the planetary glyphs for Magick. I have a passion for books, and I am drawn like a moth to a flame whenever I see sales of remaindered books. You've seen those sales that pop up in the unused spaces of shopping centers that are row upon row of tables covered in unsorted books at ridiculously low prices. Even at low prices, there are only so many books that I can buy and carry home. There are some books that I instantly grab and clutch to my chest, and many more that are in the undecided category as I continue from row to row. Rather than try to carry all the books in the undecided category, as I find them I scribe them with the glyph of Saturn. In other words, I draw down and draw up the energy of Saturn, and using my finger I draw the glyph of Saturn in energy upon the book. Saturn is heavy, Saturn is obscured, and in most cases, the book remains on the table until I decide to retrieve it. Because I am an ethical practitioner, after I have picked up the books that I have decided to purchase I go back and remove the glyphs from the ones I do not purchase. Otherwise, those books might remain hidden and unsold upon those tables.



Sometimes before important meetings and speaking engagements I will scribe the glyph for Mercury on my throat in proximity to my larynx, my throat chakra. Before doing some tasks requiring precision and quickness in my

hands, I've also scribed the glyph for Mercury into the palms of my hands. As you've gathered, not only can the glyphs be used on objects, but they can also be used upon yourself. The possibilities are only limited by your imagination and your skill. This seems so simple that at times I have difficulty convincing people that it works. Sir Arthur C. Clarke's third law states, “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.” With honor and respect to the erudite author and futurist, I'd like to offer the following variation on his third law: Any sufficiently advanced sacred science can be used with an ease resembling technology to produce Magick.



The Steps for Using Simples

Let me describe the basic technique for using the astrological glyphs for such simple and effective Magick.

The first step is to draw it down from the heavens. Close your eyes and move inward into your inner landscape, the astral within. Then look upward and see the Planet whose glyph you are about to scribe. How you see it will depend upon your sensibilities. Perhaps you'll see it as a sphere of light glowing with colors you associate with the Planet. Or perhaps it will appear as a giant glowing glyph. Or again, it may be as sharp and crisp as a photo from the Hubble Space Telescope. Perhaps it will be a fanciful image, as if borrowed from an impressionist painting. The critical part here is that it should appear to you as you would see it with your astral sight, your inner sight, not just as a bright dot in a normal night sky. Then, when you can see it clearly, draw the energy down into your core, your center. You may visualize this drawing down in whatever manner suits your personal style. Building upon the pattern of the planetary attunement exercise, place the object or tool upon an altar that is adorned with the appropriate glyph, colors, and related symbols of a given Planet. Use the technique of drawing down the planetary power from above, below, and within to pour this energy through the object to cleanse it. Then

repeat this process, but pour the energy into the object to charge it, and bind it in place with the planetary glyph.

The second step is to draw it up from the Earth below you. Once again, from the vantage point of your inner landscape, look downward into the Earth and see it pulsing with the light of the pranic and elemental forces that course through the Ley lines, that swirl through the vortices, that enliven the aura of the Earth. Find a stream of light that is the same as the light of the Planet that you are about to work with. Then, when you can see it clearly, draw that energy up into your core, your center. You may visualize this drawing up in whatever manner suits your personal style. The next day change the altar to match the Planet of the day until you have completed a full seven-day cycle with all seven Planets.

The third step is to collect and blend the energy of the Planet above and the energy of the Planet below in your personal center. This step awakens the Planet within yourself. The previous work and study that you have done to internalize an understanding of the nature of the Planet guides this action. As above, below, and center blend you should envision the color of the energy being the color that you associate with that specific Planet for the task at hand. For example, in the Saturn glyph and books working I used a dull, leaden gray color. For quick and precise speech with Mercury, I used the bright orange I associate with the sphere of Hod.

The fourth step is to scribe an empowered glyph on the target of the working. This can be done with your finger, a crystal, a wand, an athame, and so on. This step works best if there is actual physical contact with the target of the working. It can be done from short distances with practice. You should envision the glyph blazing brightly in its appropriate color, and then see it absorbed by the target. When you are well practiced, you can also accomplish this scribing with visualization alone. I will caution you that you always get better effects when physical motion and contact are involved. Do not be overly concerned about how you scribe the glyph. If we were scribing invoking and banishing pentacles, or any of a number of other magickal figures, there is a specific order in which each stroke is made. What matters here is that you draw the glyph accurately and crisply. Over time you will develop your own preferred style of scribing the glyphs.

The fifth step is optional, the dismissal of the glyph. In a fairly short span of time, longer or shorter depending upon a variety of conditions, the charge that you imparted with the planetary glyph will ground out or fade out on its own. However, there may be times when you will wish to make it go away quickly,

as was the case in my first example. To dismiss the glyph, focus on the target and bring the glyph that was absorbed back to the surface. See the glyph lose its color and become more and more transparent until it has faded away to nothing. If possible, do this while touching the target to assist in the draining of the energy.

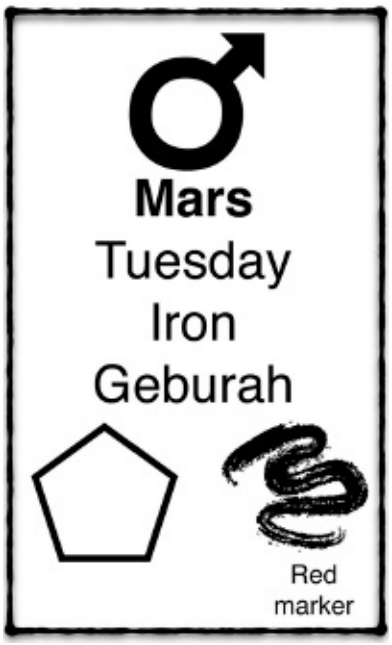
Before proceeding further, you may want to take a look back at Chapter 5, "The Planets," and also look at the appendices at the end of the book. I encourage you to try some of this simple glyph Magick before continuing to read. If you keep a magickal journal or diary, make a note of your results. I'll ask you to repeat this magickal experiment after you finish reading this chapter as well.

Planetary Attunement

A good portion of your effectiveness in the use of the astrological glyphs for practical Magick will depend upon how well you have attuned yourself to those energies. In order to summon the powers from above, below, and within, you need to be able to readily and easily identify how they subjectively feel to you. The following is an exercise that can help you to refine and deepen your connection to the planetary forces. As you are aware, the Seven Elder Planets are correlated to the seven days in the week. The planetary attunement exercise requires that you do a simple meditation every day for seven days. Ideally, you would do this exercise once a month for several months. It is actually better if you do not do the exercise two weeks in a row. You will experience better results if you take two weeks off from the exercise to observe how your connection to the planetary energies has changed. This in and of itself is a different sort of exercise, one that is more reflective than active.

To refresh your memory, please take a quick look at the diagram that shows the basic correspondences that are needed for this exercise. Although this exercise can be done without any physical props, I strongly recommend that you take the time to create a card for each of the Planets. These cards can be made from 3x5 index cards that you color with markers, pencils, crayons, or other materials. If you're feeling less artistic, you can create the cards on your computer and print them out in color. It is important that you invest some amount of your energy in the creation of these cards as that is one of the first steps in tuning into the energy of the Planets. Each card should have the glyph for the Planet, the name of the day of the week, the geometric shape associated with the Planet, and some amount of color correlated to a Planet. Feel free to follow your own artistic inspiration in adding any additional flourishes that

make sense to you. I've included a figure to give you a basic idea of what one of these cards would look like.



It does not matter which day of the week you begin this exercise so long as you follow through for the full seven days. Say that you were to begin this exercise on a Monday. As soon as possible after waking up, ideally as close to dawn as possible, you would take the card for the Moon and meditate upon it. Trace the glyph of the Moon with your eyes and your finger. Silently or out loud name everything you see in the card. Then close your eyes and see the card in your mind's eye. This can all be accomplished in about five minutes. If you have more time to contemplate and meditate, please do so. It is more important that you are consistent than it is to take more time. On a very busy day you can compress this into two minutes. It is better to skimp than to skip a day. Over the course of the day try to become aware of everything and anything that reminds you of the power of the Moon and the things that it rules. If you have time, repeat the process in the evening before retiring for sleep.

Repeat the process until you have completed one cycle of the seven days that are ruled by the Seven Elder Planets. This is the bare-bones version of this exercise. It has been stripped down to its simplest form because I really want you to do it, and I am trying to minimize any obstacles that you might have. That said, if you have the time, the energy, and the interest, you may wish to set up an altar with the card each day. Perhaps you will investigate the resins and herbs associated with each of the planetary powers and burn them as incense on

their day. Perhaps you'll put herbs or stones or other objects upon the altar that correlate to the planetary power. If you have time for one more step, after seeing the card in your mind's eye, scribe the glyph for the Planet in the air and in the palm of your hand. Some of you keep magickal journals or diaries, and making a notation of your experience of the planetary powers each day would be very worthwhile. I know many people are adverse to keeping a magickal journal or diary, or just taking notes, but please try to do so for at least a few repetitions of this exercise. After you have completed this exercise at least once, you may wish to experiment again with the simples, the single planetary glyph workings. You should find greater ease and greater potency in your efforts, and please take notes on the differences in both the experiences and the results.

As a side note, I like to point out that there are many systems that will use seven-day candles or seven-day rituals to achieve practical ends. Whenever you see this seven-day pattern, you should be aware that the Seven Elder Planets are in play whether or not they were specifically invoked or mentioned. I have found that I've been able to augment the power of almost any seven-day ritual pattern by explicitly invoking the Seven Elder Planets. In the next chapter, where we explore the Astrology of time, you'll see how deeply interconnected this seven-day pattern is to the Qabala and to a magickal system known as the government of hours.

Other Uses for the Planetary Glyphs

Think on your current magickal practices, techniques, and methods, and do some cataloging and some brainstorming to see how to integrate these new tools into your current set. As an example, if you make spell jars, mojo bags, and the like, then consider the inclusion of a slip of paper with a charged glyph as an addition to these workings. If you do candle Magick, consider carving or scribing the glyphs onto candles. For that matter, consider scribing the glyph over the flame of the candle as well. It is widely accepted practice to use the Four Elements in the purification and charging of objects or tools before their use. If it is a particularly important object or tool, I will often use the Seven Elder Planets for both purification and charging as well as the Four Elements. Building upon the pattern of the planetary attunement exercise, place the object or tool upon an altar that is adorned with the appropriate glyph, colors, and related symbols of a given Planet. Using the technique of drawing down the planetary power from above, below, and within, pour this energy through the object to cleanse it. Then repeat this process but pour the energy into the object to charge it, and bind it in place with the planetary glyph. The next day, change

the altar to match the Planet of the day, and continue until you have completed a full seven-day cycle with all seven Planets. Alternatively, you can create an altar that has representations of all Seven Elder Planets and simply change which glyphs you use each day. As always, if you would like to also add incenses, herbal washes, or other correlated items to the work, it would be of great benefit.



Bind Glyphs

After you have worked with the glyphs for the Planets long enough to feel some comfort and ease doing so, you can begin to combine the glyphs of multiple Planets. If we were discussing herbalism, this would be remedies that require recipes rather than a single herb. Or the most direct comparison comes from work with the Norse runes wherein you find examples of runes overlapped upon each other to create bind runes. Whether it's herbs, runes, or glyphs, when you combine different energies and essences the result is synergistic and not simply a summation of the parts. For the sake of clarity, I'll refer to these combined and/or overlapped astrological glyphs as bind glyphs. Let's say you need to make a verbal pitch for a plan that you created as part of your job or for a community group, and you want to be sure that you are both eloquent and charming. This figure is of a bind glyph of Mercury and Jupiter which could be used for this particular situation. Take a moment to think about why Mercury and Jupiter provide the needed energies and essences.

Using the Glyphs of the Signs

It often takes longer to absorb the meanings of the 12 Signs to the point that you can use their glyphs readily for quick practical Magick. However, it is relatively easy to incorporate them into ritual Magick. You'll discover in Chapters 11 and 12 that the Signs can provide guidance on how to make any ritual or practice flow more easily. Also in Chapter 15 you will be introduced to a ritual that relies upon the glyphs of the Signs. Many systems and traditions use the four quarters, the Four Elements, as part of their creation of sacred space. The method that most commonly springs to mind is that of casting a circle with calls at each of the four directions. The glyphs of the Signs can be added to circle casting on the basis of their Element or their direction, but not both (see figure). The cardinal modality Signs in Astrology are associated with the four directions (cardinal directions), so you could add the scribing of their glyphs at the four directions in addition to your normal pattern of circle casting. You can include reference to the appropriate Signs in your quarter calls as well. Using the Signs in this fashion helps to emphasize the relationship of the circle to the wheel of the seasons. This is especially useful in celebrations of the solstices and equinoxes, as those are the points where the circle of Magick and the circle of the zodiac mesh fully. If you would like to add another layer of depth and presence to the Elements, then you could use the three Signs that relate to a specific Element at each quarter. For example, for the East/Air I would use the glyphs for Gemini, Libra, and Aquarius, and invoke them in my calls along with whatever else suits the circumstance.

This is just a start to get your imagination in motion on the many ways that you can use the glyphs of Astrology in your work. Other ways of using the glyphs will be introduced in subsequent chapters and as their use in specific contexts arises. Please remember that the glyphs for the Planets in the Signs are the basic alphabet of Astrology, and you should really commit them to memory if you have not done so already. Create or buy flashcards if that would be helpful to you. Or simply have pen and paper handy and doodle whenever you can until the glyphs are just as natural to your hand and eye as the English alphabet.

CHAPTER 9

THE ASTROLOGY OF TIME

Among its many uses, Astrology is also a sacred science that deals with time in all its forms and orders of scale. Astrology deals with both the linear time of daily life, time as the eternal encompassing now, and all the combinations and permutations in between. Aside from the direct benefits that come of learning to employ Astrology for all its standard uses, for those that are magickally inclined it will broaden and deepen your understanding of how time works on multiple planes of reality. Moreover, it will illustrate how actions that occur in different frames of time affect each other.

Astrology and Qabala are profoundly intertwined, and their histories are so long that it is hard to unravel their mutual influences. It is not hard to see how Astrology and Qabala describe the nature of time in similar ways. The Qabala, the Tree of Life, is a summation of the forces and patterns that make up the microcosm, the mesocosm, and the macrocosm. It is the diagram that depicts the entirety of manifest creation. The Hermetic Qabala that began its development in the mid-thirteenth century CE is the core of the Western Magickal Tradition from which many paths spring. It is the grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric that prepares the student for the subject of the Great Work. In other words, I strongly encourage you to study the Hermetic Qabala. What follows should make sense even if you have little or no knowledge of the Qabala.

In the Tree of Life, there are spheres numbered 1 through 10 that are the stations from unitary reality to the Earth plane. Right now we will focus on the seven lower spheres that are also known as the seven heavens and have the Elder Planets assigned to them as well. I'm providing a diagram of the Tree of Life with the spheres labeled with their names, their number, and their corresponding Planet. The assignments for the Elder Planets are traditional, the assignments for the Outer Planets are a matter of debate, and the ones shown are the ones that I reason to be the most accurate. In this diagram there is also an oval that represents Daath, which is not so much a sphere as it is the transition between the supernal level of reality and the lower levels that we can more easily grasp. My planetary assignment for Daath is Pluto.

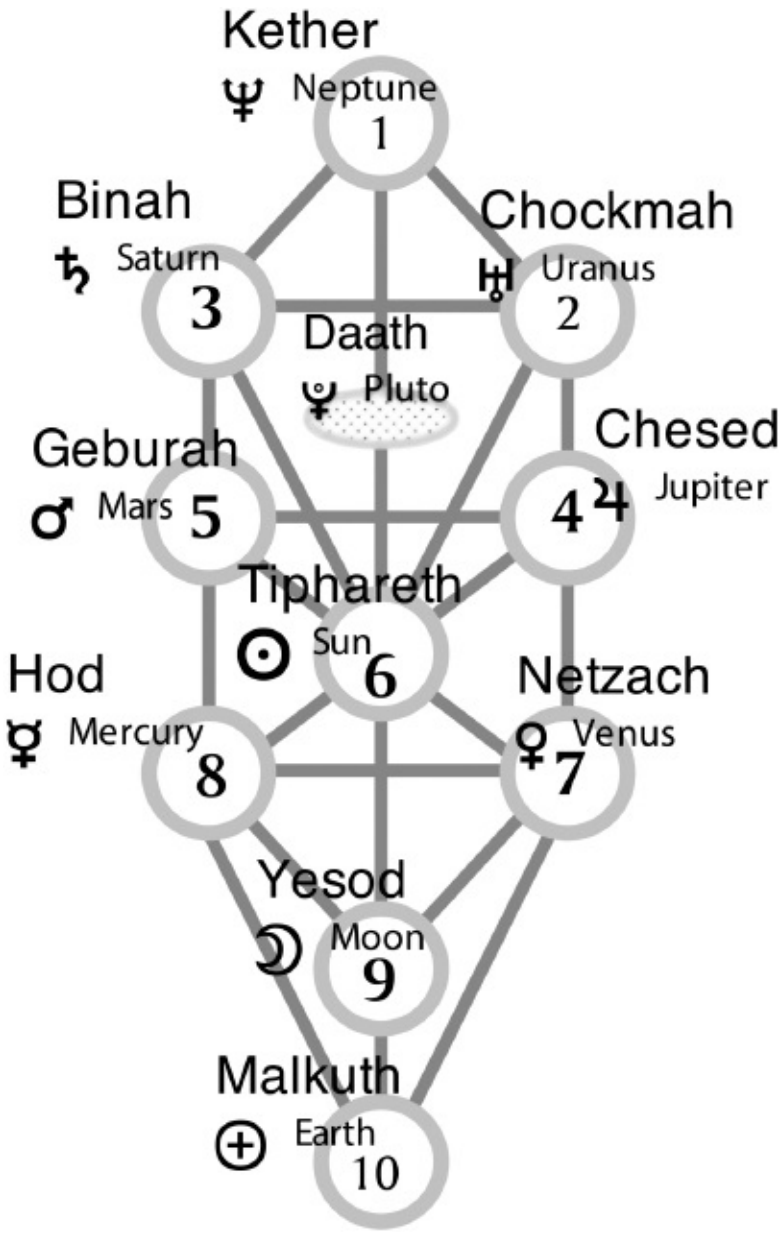
Binah, the third sphere, is associated with Saturn and the number 3. Binah is where form as a concept first comes into existence and nonlinear time (eternity)

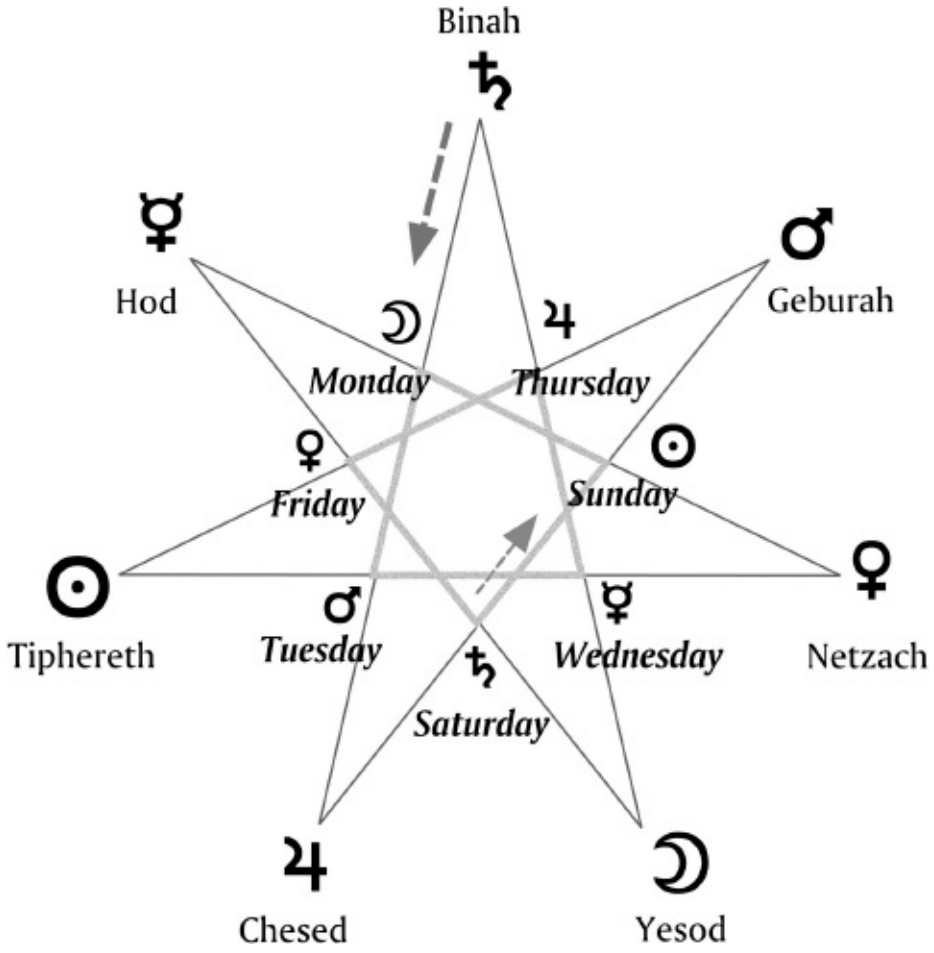
comes into being. It is at the fourth sphere, Chesed, associated with Jupiter, that linear time and three-dimensional form comes into being. Astrology is based on a twelvefold division of the circle that is a multiplication of the threefold pattern of the Modalities and the fourfold pattern of the Elements. As such it is a hybrid of both the threefold pattern that is eternity and the fourfold pattern that is linear time.

The order of the spheres in the Tree of Life tells the story of the changes of states that describe the creation of the universe. The power descending from the first sphere, Kether, down to the tenth sphere, Malkuth, is called the lightning flash. This flash exists both in eternity and in linear time so that it is both the creation of the universe and its constant re-creation. If we focus on the part of the flash that begins with the first forms of time and eternity and ends just before the Earth plane, we see the Planets in the Chaldean order. This is the order of the Elder Planets according to their relative speed in the Zodiac: Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon.

The Star of Time and Eternity

Each day of the week is correlated to one of the Elder Planets, and in fact, in almost all of the languages that are used in the West it is easy to see that the names for the days are derived from the Planets. In languages that are descended from or strongly influenced by Greek or Latin there is absolutely no question about which Planet rules which day. In English the days for the week are a mixture of Latin names for the Planets and Germanic names for Gods and Goddesses that correlate to the Planets. The days and Planets are: Monday/Moon, Tuesday/Mars, Wednesday/Mercury, Thursday/Jupiter, Friday/Venus, Saturday/Saturn, Sunday/Sun. You will note that the order of the Planets correlated to that of the days do not match the order of the flash and the Chaldean order. This is not a mistake or a lack of coherence in these systems. The days are squarely in linear time whereas the flash is closer to the eternal frame of time. There is a figure called the Star of Time and Eternity shows how these two frameworks dovetail (see figure). If you draw a unicursal seven-pointed star, place Saturn (Binah) at the top, follow the stroke down to the bottom left point, and continue placing the Planets in the order of the flash, you will have drawn the Star of Eternity. If you look at the core of this star, you will see a second seven-pointed star. Now reflect the Planets in the outer star into the inner star, point to point. You now have Saturn (Binah) at the bottom, and if you follow the stroke up and to the right, you will see the Planets in the order of the days. This inner star is the Star of Time.


Kether
♆ Neptune
1
Binah
♄ Saturn
3
Chockmah
♅ Uranus
2
Daath
♇ Pluto
Geburah
♂ Mars
5
Chesed
4 ♃ Jupiter
Tiphareth
☉ Sun
6
Hod
☿ Mercury
8
Netzach
♀ Venus
7
Yesod
☽ Moon
9
Malkuth
⊕ Earth
10



Quite a great deal can be learned from contemplating the Star of Time and Eternity. As an example, think about how Saturn (Binah) is at the highest and lowest position in this system, being both the abstract concept of form and the densest matter. How do the qualities of a particular type of time modify the expression of the spheres of the Qabala or their assigned Planets? The Star of Time and and Eternity is also the root of a very useful system for working with the Planets that is called the government of hours, or the planetary hours.

The Government of Hours

Each day of the week is ruled by its corresponding Planet. This means workings that relate to a Planet's attributes are easier to accomplish when they are done on the Planet's day. Additionally, each hour of the day and night are ruled by a Planet. You can choose to either double the quantity of a particular Planet's energy that is available for working by selecting the hour that corresponds to the same Planet, or you can choose a different planetary hour to add a second Planet's energy. The planetary hours are not based on hours as measured by a

clock. Instead, sunrise and sunset mark the boundaries between day and night, and there are always 12 hours of day and 12 hours of night. This means with the exception of the equinoxes when the length of day and night is the same, the number of minutes in a planetary hour will either be more or less than 60 minutes. If you look below this paragraph you'll find two tables that provide the order for the planetary hours during the day and night. I've highlighted the hour for Saturn in each day to make it easier to see how the planetary hours are derived. The order of the Planets assigned to the days is that of the Star of Time. If you look down the column for each day, you will find that the order of the planetary hours follows the flash, which is the order in the Star of Eternity. Take a moment to look at these two tables and see how these two orders are relate to each other.

The planetary hours, like an astrological chart, are specific to a date, time, and location. It is not difficult to find the times for sunrise and sunset, and the math is relatively simple although somewhat tedious. Thankfully, there are numerous online planetary hour calculators that you can use, and if you have a smart phone, there are apps available that will not only calculate the hours for you but also look up the times for sunrise and sunset based on your current location. If you're in a situation where you do not have access to the information needed to calculate the hours but you know what day of the week it is, there are a few planetary hours that are easy to select. Sunrise of each day starts with the hour of the Planet that rules the day, and the hour just before sunset is ruled by the Planet of the previous day. So for example, on a Monday the first hour is ruled by the Moon, and the hour before sunset is ruled by the Sun.

The Hours Of The Days And Their Rulerships

Hour	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Starts Sunrise	Sun ☉	Moon ☽	Mars ♂	Mercury ☿	Jupiter ♃	Venus ♀	Saturn ♄
2	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
3	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
4	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
5	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
6	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
7	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
8	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
9	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
10	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
11	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
12 Ends Sunset	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus

The Hours Of The Nights And Their Rulerships

Hour	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Starts Sunset	Jupiter ♃	Venus ♀	Saturn ♄	Sun ☉	Moon ☽	Mars ♂	Mercury ☿
2	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
3	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
4	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
5	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars
6	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun
7	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus
8	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury
9	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon
10	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn
11	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars	Mercury	Jupiter
12 Ends Sunrise	Mercury	Jupiter	Venus	Saturn	Sun	Moon	Mars

If you need to calculate you own planetary hours, look up the times for sunrise and sunset at your location, and determine the number of minutes between them. Divide the number of minutes by 12, and that is the length of the planetary hours that day. If you need the hours for the night then you begin with sunset and the next day's sunrise and repeat the calculations. Refer to the tables I've provided, or if you can remember the Chaldean order (the flash), you have all you need to reconstruct the tables.

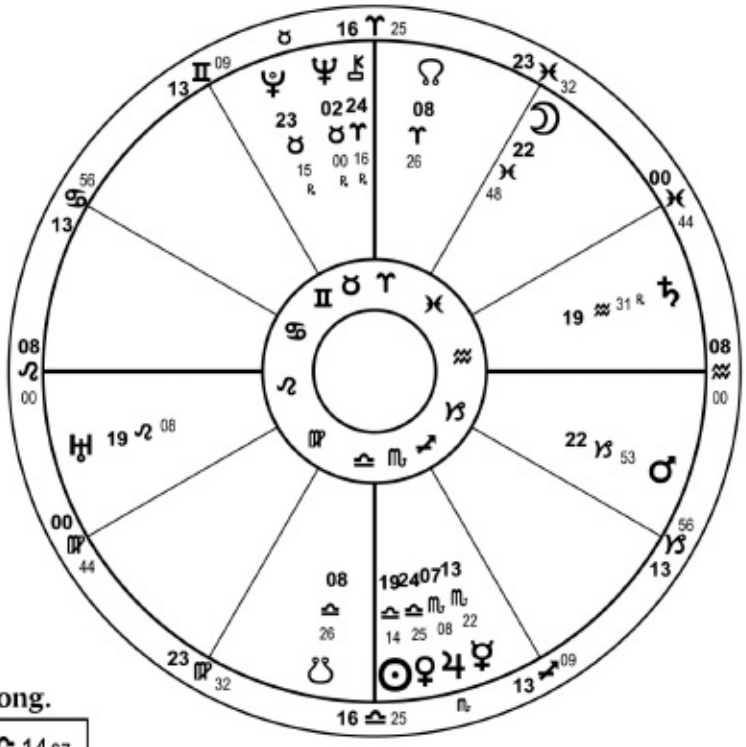
To be clear, the planetary hours are separate and distinct from planetary

aspects as they operate on different principles. However, you can choose to do a working using planetary aspects that are waxing during an appropriate planetary hour to maximize its benefit. Working with the planetary Aspects is often more powerful and more nuanced because you have two Planets activated in a specific mode. However, the Aspect that you desire for a working or a ritual may require a longer wait than you can afford. One of the great benefits of using the planetary hours is that the hour that you need is never that far away in time.

Three Simple Time Techniques

Planetary Order Sequence

As the Planets progress from Sign to Sign in the Zodiac, they move through the degrees from 0° to 30°. They do pause and retrograde from time to time, but the journey continues in the same order. As a result of this progress through the Zodiac, Planets in the heavens will by transit activate the Planets in natal charts in sequence. If you take the Planets from a chart and reorganize them from the Planet with the lowest degree to the highest degree, you will have a guide as to how that person navigates through most of the significant changes and cycles in their life. The first Planet tells us how new cycles of change begin. The seven intervening Planets tell us how they move through a cycle of change. The last Planet in the sequence tells us how things end. Then the cycle begins again with the first Planet. By the way, the planetary order sequence also applies to the charts for organizations, businesses, and other collective entities.



	Long.
☉	19 ♎ 14 07
☽	22 ♓ 48
☿	13 ♏ 22
♀	24 ♎ 25
♂	22 ♑ 53
♃	07 ♏ 08
♄	19 ♒ 31 ℞
♅	19 ♌ 08
♆	02 ♉ 00 ℞
♇	23 ♉ 15 ℞

Aleister Crowley

Natal Chart
October 12, 1875
11:42:00 PM GMT
Leamington Spa > Royal Leami, England

♆	♃	☿	♅	☉	♄	☽	♂	♀
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9

The triggering power of transits is not the only thing that empowers the planetary order sequence. I have observed friends and clients cycle through their personal planetary order sequence in days or weeks, which is too fast for Aspects by transit to be the mechanism of action. Perhaps one of the reasons people follow their planetary order sequence in their personal cycles is because the pattern has been ingrained, conditioned into them through years of repeated experience of the transits. I do think this psychological conditioning occurs, but I also think the planetary order sequence is more intrinsic and is as much nature as nurture. The planetary order sequence is an effective tool when looking at groups or events, not just individuals, which leads me to conclude that it is like

a map of the landscape that underlies events. The planetary order sequence can also be though of as a personalized and localized version of the flash, or the Chaldean, order that shows us the stations of time for a person, a group, and so on. I also think of the Planets in the sequence as being like the notes in the theme music for that chart.

Let's look at a chart as an example. In this case, I've selected Aleister Crowley's chart. Look at the chart and how I've written down the degrees for each Planet in their sequence of activation. You may wish to do the same with this chart or another that you have available as it is a good opportunity to practice reading the planetary positions in a chart. As you see, in this case, because Mr. Crowley's chart had three Planets at 19°, so I had to rely on the minutes as well to determine their order. Here's a brief interpretation of what this sequence means:

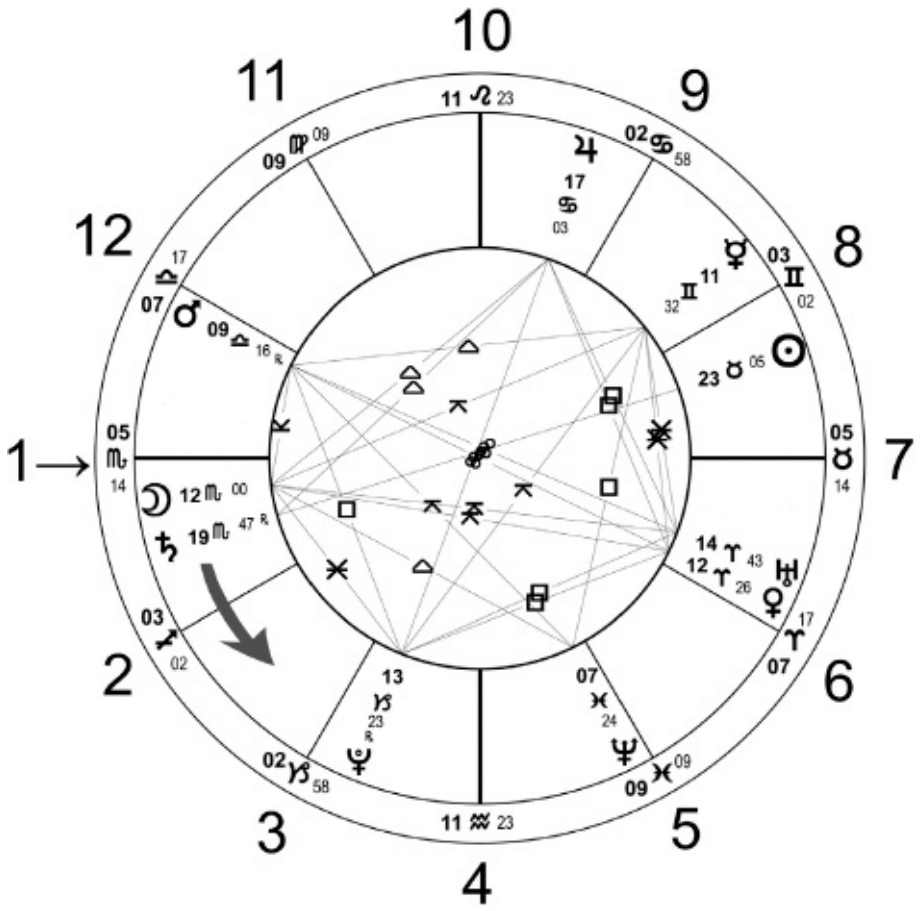
> Neptune: Events begin with a spiritual experience or vision as their impetus.
>
> Jupiter: The spiritual is translated into a schema and theories.
>
> Mercury: The concepts are communicated through writing and teaching.
>
> Uranus: The conditions of life are subjected to rapid change and disruption by the impact of the vision that has been communicated.
>
> Sun: The changes are internalized so they can be brought into balance with will.
>
> Saturn: Hard and necessary steps are to remain grounded and practical.
>
> Moon: What has come up to this point becomes habit and second nature, and colors emotions and thoughts.
>
> Mars: Action, assertion, or aggression to implement the vision, to follow through, and to react to obstacles and opportunities.
>
> Venus: The cycle ends with a valuation and appreciation of what has and has not been accomplished. The cycle begins again with another Neptune experience.

This was an abstracted example, and you'll find that when you look at the specifics of a story arc in a person, group, or event's life more details become apparent. You can also gain more insight if you include the Signs for the Planets in your assessment of what a particular planetary order sequence means. As is generally true in Astrology, you can have multiple planetary sequence cycles of

different time scales running concurrently. You can think of this as plots and subplots within a larger story.

The Chart as a Year Forward

The chart for any event, whether it be mundane or esoteric, such as the signing of a business agreement or a ritual of operative Magick, contains within it a roadmap, or a weather forecast, for the 12 months that follow the event. This technique is also a good predictive technique for infants, but not adults. Each House in the chart is read as if it were a month because the 12 Houses are also symbolic of one year. By looking at the Sign on the cusp of each House and the Planets (if any) within a House you have indicators as to the character of the experiences for that month. In the example chart for this technique I've numbered the Houses, and I have an arrow pointing to the cusp of the first House as a reminder of where each House begins. There is also a curved arrow showing the flow of the Houses. So in the case of this example chart, the first 30 days from when this chart was cast will be under the rulership of Scorpio, with the Moon and Saturn shaping the events. This means that month will involve deep exploration into emotions, subconscious motivations, and how the practical limits of daily life interact with those deep feelings. Depending upon whether this were the chart for a business, an event, or a ritual, we would interpret it and its details within its context of origin. When you first begin to use this technique only focus upon the Signs on the cusps and the Planets in each House. After you have gained more experience, you may also include any Aspects that the Planets are making as well. As you'll discover in the next chapter, this technique can also be used as a tool in selecting between different starting times for projects, rituals, business arrangements, and other events.



The Chart as a Lifespan

A chart can also be viewed as containing the entire lifespan of an individual. The method presented here is my variation of Bruno Huber's progression system. The chart has encoded within its symbolism the cycle of day and night, the cycle of the year, and the personal year that is the span of one life. Each House in the chart represents a period of development, a stage of life, or a month within their personal year. The indicator for timing in this technique is either Jupiter or Uranus. Compare the number of degrees for Jupiter or Uranus, and whichever is the lower number is the timer for the chart. If it is Jupiter with the lower number, then every House is the equivalent of six years of life. If it is Uranus with the lower number, then every House is the equivalent of seven years of life.

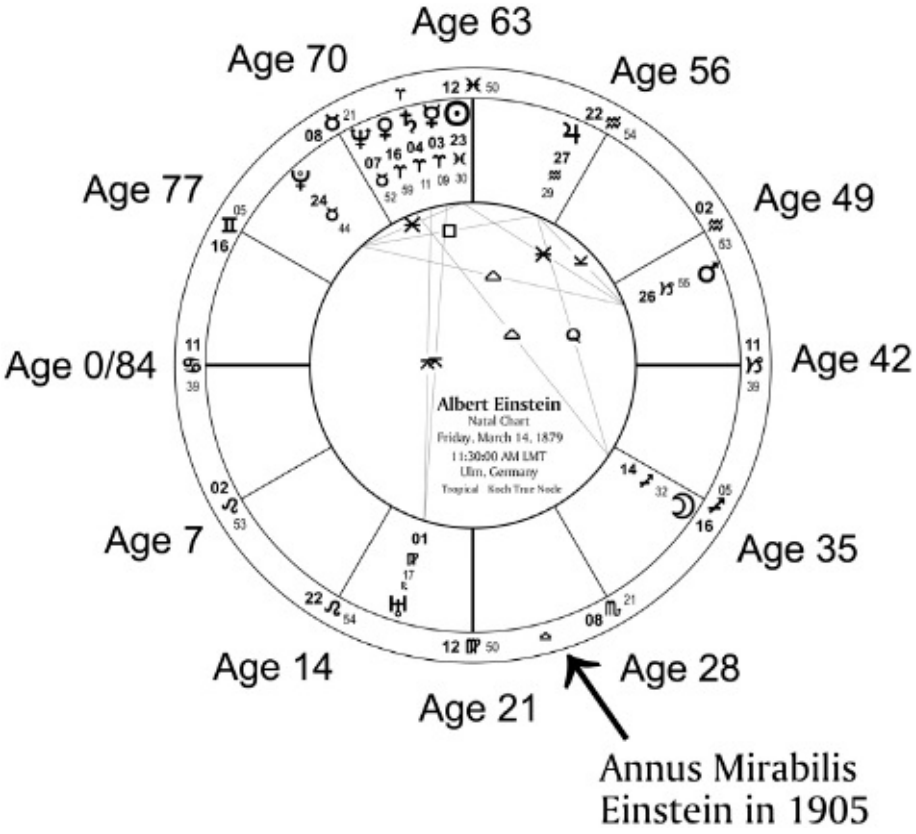
So if you look at a chart from this perspective, then the Sign at the beginning of each House reveals the flavor of activities during that House's six- or seven-year period. If there are Planets within a House, then they also affect the nature of the activities during that time. After you have become more familiar with this technique and Astrology in general, you may also wish to take into

consideration any Aspects that the Planets may be making as well. If a House is empty of Planets, then look to the House directly opposite the House in question for guidance as to the nature of events that will occur during that six- or seven- year span. Often, you can make a good enough visual estimate based on the position of the Planets for most predictive purposes. So if a Planet is halfway through a House and Jupiter is the timer for the chart, then it is three years into that period.

As you know, Houses can vary in size depending upon the time of year and the geographical location for which the chart is cast. The upper six Houses in a chart are the day side, and the lower six Houses are the night side. In a manner somewhat reminiscent of the planetary hours, the number of degrees in a House is made to relate to the number of years that each House represents. If you need greater precision than simply making a visual estimate, then you must count the number of degrees in a House. Depending upon the timer for the chart, you divide six or seven by the number of degrees in a given House. This tells you how much time each degree in a House represents. If a person lives longer than the 72 or 84 years of a full cycle, then the cycle continues starting with the first House again.

As an example, I am providing the chart for Albert Einstein. In his chart Jupiter is at 27° Aquarius, and Uranus is at 1° Virgo. Uranus is the lower number of the two, so Uranus is the timer and therefore each House represents seven years of life. In the diagram for Einstein's chart, I have labeled the House cusps with the age that each represents. History shows us that the peak of Einstein's scientific work occurred between the ages of 21 and 28, with 1905 being a particularly important year. In 1905, Einstein wrote and published four papers of such great importance that it became known as his miracle year (annus mirabilis). You'll note that there are no Planets in that House, but there is a clustering of five Planets directly opposite from that House. I've been spreading out the load of Astrological concepts over the course of the book to help absorption and comprehension. It is time to add one more concept related to the Houses. If you look at Einstein's fourth House, the House of his annus mirabilis, you'll see the symbol for Libra in the center of the House as well as Virgo at the beginning and Scorpio at the end. Einstein's fourth House has the influence of three Signs. All of Libra's 30° fit within his fourth House without touching a cusp (House boundary); this is called an intercepted Sign. Often, an intercepted Sign has some difficulty in expressing itself because it has no House to directly influence via its cusp. An intercepted Sign can be compared to a land-locked nation with no access to a sea. However, with the right agreements

a land-locked nation can still conduct trade and assert influence far from its borders. In Einstein's case, the cluster of Planets in his tenth House opposite his empty, intercepted fourth House gave us wonders that are still marvels today.



Many important breakthroughs in the hard sciences have been produced by people in their 20s or 30s. Perhaps this is the golden period when there has been enough education but before the pressure from peers and from publication reviews have curbed the flight of the creative imagination. In Einstein's case, the power of his cluster of Planets in the tenth House flowed into his open fourth House to fuel his outburst of creativity. Saturn is the center of power in this configuration. Saturn rules all structures and patterns from the largest to the smallest. Saturn also rules time in all its forms and flavors. Einstein's theories are very much in Saturn's domain. It is important to note that when Einstein was between the ages of 63-70 (his tenth House) the atomic bomb was tested, dropped, and we entered the Atomic Age. Saturn in Aries in this case indicated the primal Fire of Aries released from bonds of Saturn. His theories were the echo or reflection of what would come into full manifestation.

A chart when viewed as a map of a lifespan shows us the type of terrain that will be crossed in the journey of life. Looking at the birth chart of an individual

will provide information about many of the characteristics inherent to an individual's body, mind, emotions, and the spiritual aspects of that life's work. No astrological technique will give you the measure of their Soul and Spirit or what an individual can do within the boundaries of the chart that they were born into. Think of a birth chart as being a representation of your subtle, your energetic, DNA. Just as your basic biology is written into the chromosomes of each cell of your body, there is also a unique energy pattern in each bright corpuscle of your aura that also shapes you. We are more than our genetics and our birth charts. What we accomplish in life is greatly determined by the nature of our souls and spirits and how we rise to the challenge of living. If Einstein had been a person with a less developed soul and spirit, he would not have risen to the challenge of his fourth House and would not have had the sensitivity to receive the influence of his tenth House Planets.

CHAPTER 10

CHOOSING THE WHEN

Choosing the best time for a magickal or spiritual endeavor is a delicate art with many nuances and subtleties. If someone in your circle of friends and associates is both an astrologer and magickal practitioner, then by all means, use them as a resource in selecting the times and dates for your more important workings and rituals. Knowing that this is a fairly rare occurrence, this chapter provides you with the basic tools needed to make better timing choices. Even if you don't know or understand all the fine distinctions involved in analyzing charts to select the timing of your efforts, you'll still get better results using these basic tools rather than leaving it all to chance. It is a fairly common aphorism among practitioners that the form of a ritual or working should be dictated by its intent and purpose. It is also widely accepted practice among witches and magicians that we should try to work with the flow of nature rather than against it. When we use Astrology to select the timing for our work, we are really using Astrology to understand the flow of nature, and match it to our intentions and purposes.

Any one of the tools presented in this chapter can make a noticeable difference in creating support and harmony for the work you do. The more tools you use in combination with each other, the greater success you will have. Keep in mind that the more tools you use, the longer you may have to wait for an auspicious time. Some things can wait and some things cannot, so you will have to come to your own determination on how long you're willing to wait. The next chapter will offer techniques for how to make accommodations or compensations when you cannot wait for the best time.

The Moon

Phase

The first and simplest consideration in choosing the best time for a particular working or ritual is the phase of the Moon. When the Moon in the heavens is growing in size, it is called a waxing Moon. When the Moon in the heavens is diminishing in size, it is called a waning Moon.

If the task at hand is one where you are working for a new beginning,

increase, or growth, then a waxing Moon is probably your best choice. If the task at hand is one where you are working to banish, diminish, or cause a transformation, then a waning Moon is most frequently the best option. The Full Moon and the Dark Moon are often associated with the waxing and the waning phases, respectively, but should more accurately be thought of as the two poles that delimit this system. The Full Moon is actually an opposition between the Sun and the Moon. The Dark Moon is actually a conjunction between the Sun and the Moon. The Full Moon is referred to as the second quarter, and the Dark Moon is referred to as the fourth quarter. I make a distinction between the Dark Moon and the New Moon that is clarified below, although many use these terms as if they were interchangeable.

Full Moon

The Full Moon is the Moon at the peak of its power, with all its shaping and manifesting capacities brought fully to bear upon the Earth. The Full Moon tends to reinforce what already is and to bring power and/or stability to the template and the container that is a working or ritual. The Full Moon can also bring things to a boil or their tipping point, and thus reveal both strengths and flaws. As I said earlier, the Full Moon is an opposition between the Sun and the Moon. This means that the Earth is between the Sun and the Moon. Being in the beam of the opposition energizes the Astral plane, which makes it easier for people's psychic senses to become aware of spirits, goddesses, and other such beings who have forms made of subtle matter. This increase in awareness and sensitivity is why Full Moon rituals are popular in many traditions.

If you wish to work with the Full Moon, then whatever ritual, meditation, or other working you may have planned should occur sometime during the 13 hours prior to the exact opposition between the Sun and the Moon. After the opposition peaks, it really is no longer the Full Moon. To your eyes, the Moon in the sky may still look full, but it has begun to wane. If the work you are about to do is of a devotional or celebratory nature, then so long as the Moon is still in the same Sign as it was during the peak of the opposition, you may proceed with your efforts. Each of the 13 hours represents one lunar month within the 13-month lunar year.

Dark Moon

The Dark Moon is the Moon that is at the full depth of its receptive power. At the dark of the Moon, everything is absorbed, leveled, and refined through dissolution to prepare the way for the new. It is the positive power of death and

ending that leads to transformation. The Moon at this time does not offer its stabilizing powers to the Earth. Whereas the full Moon focuses on the outward expression of things, the Dark Moon focuses on the inward and essential nature of things. In some traditions, magickal and spiritual work during the Dark Moon is discouraged or considered somewhat risky. This is not a teaching I follow, although I'm aware of the rationale behind the warnings of doing Magick at the dark of the Moon. As I said earlier, the Dark Moon is a conjunction between the Sun and the Moon. This means that the Sun, Moon, and the Earth are aligned in the same order as they are in the middle pillar of the Tree of Life. One of the consequences of this alignment is easier passage into the Earth plane, and the Moon is not focused on testing and vetting what may pass from one plane to another.

If you wish to utilize the Dark Moon, then whatever you have planned should occur sometime during the 13 hours prior to the exact conjunction between the Sun and the Moon. Many people refer to the 13 hours after the exact conjunction as the New Moon as it has begun to wax. However, for the purposes of making use of waxing Moon energies, you should wait until after those first 13 hours that are the New Moon have passed. The Full Moon and the Dark Moon can be thought of as the lunar equivalents of the Summer Solstice and the Winter Solstice. The word “solstice” is derived from Latin and roughly means “Sun standing still,” which is understandable considering the solstices are the longest day and the longest night. So when the Dark Moon becomes the New Moon, it takes time to build up momentum so that the energy is truly waxing.

First-Quarter and Third-Quarter Moons

First-quarter Moon and the third-quarter Moon are actually squares between the Sun and the Moon. Some people get confused by the terminology because a quarter Moon looks like half of the Moon in the heavens. You have to remind yourself that you're only seeing one half of the Moon, so it actually is one quarter of the Moon. Some people refer to the third-quarter Moon as the last quarter. Both terms are correct and interchangeable. Remember that the quarter Moons are squares with the Sun and as such represent, as famed astrologer Dane Rudhyar said, points of crisis. They are opportunities for change, and change can be a positive or negative thing depending upon how we manage it. The first-quarter Moon is an opportunity for conflicting forces and motivations to break through and to find a new direction. The third-quarter Moon is an opportunity to break free from circumstances and create new options while

resolving what is old and no longer serves. The first-quarter Moon tends to be expressed more outwardly in the world, and the third-quarter Moon tends to express itself primarily in your thoughts and perspectives. Although technically the first-quarter Moon is part of the waxing phase of the Moon and the third-quarter Moon is part of the waning phase of the Moon, it is best to consider them special circumstances. I recommend that the 13 hours immediately before each of the quarter Moons be used for their special qualities rather than as the general trends connected to the waxing and the waning.

In truth, the Moon has eight phases, but until you have worked consistently with the basic four of the full, the dark, and the first and last quarter it is best to stick with the basic four. The eight phases of the Moon can also be correlated to the eight solar holidays of the Wheel of the Year, and will be exploring that in the next chapter.

The Sign of the Moon

The Sign that the Moon is in has a broad and pervasive impact, and it is one of the most important considerations when selecting a time and date. The power of the Moon can be likened to the power of the drumbeat. If you were in a ritual, a drum circle, or a dance, you would find that slowly and surely you would begin to match your motions to that of the drumbeats. In fact, it would take effort to ignore the rhythm. You can think of each of the 12 Signs as distinctive rhythmic patterns that are drummed out by the Moon as it passes through the Signs. If you have ever participated in or observed square dances or contra dances with a caller who calls out the steps, then you can also think of the Moon as the caller. In this case, each of the Signs can be thought of as a sequence of calls, as dance figures in a style that matches the Sign's essence. Because the Moon moves through all 12 Signs in the course of a month, you generally do not have to wait long until the right Sign is in play. Depending upon the nature of what you are trying to accomplish, there may be more than one Sign that is appropriate, which also shortens the duration of your wait.

The following are 12 brief descriptions of the qualities of the Moon in different Signs. Please use these as a starting point, and use your imagination and your knowledge of the Signs to expand upon these descriptions when considering which Moon is best for your purposes. As the Moon passes through the Signs each of their energy patterns awakens and reinforces specific behaviors, personlity traits, and reactions in all the people on Earth. The strength and exact nature of each person's response to the Moon's Sign depends upon the individual, but everyone feels it. As you are deliberating which Sign

matches your objectives, ask yourself whether or not the Sign would be good at that purpose and whether or not they would enjoy it. It is always helpful to slip into the shoes of a Sign, to imagine the world from its perspective when selecting a Sign for a purpose. This simple little thought experiment is often more than enough to bring clarity.

Moon in Aries

This Moon encourages actions that are courageous, energetic, and pioneering. It is a time to begin new things and to take a stand. It has the power of Spring, so it is beneficial if there is a need for an infusion of life-force. It is good for a rapid startup and a swift push, but it is less effective for long-term efforts or results that require follow-up. The downside: quick to anger or conflict, impulsive, fickle in follow-through, and a lack of diplomacy.

Moon in Taurus

This Moon asks us to slow down and enjoy food, beauty, music, and all that is sensual in the world. It is good for efforts that are expected to require slow and steady growth over a long period of time. Taurus Moon is also good for matters related to protection and magickal wards. The downside: can be lazy, unbalanced hedonism, and can also be domineering through stubbornness.

Moon in Gemini

This Moon speeds things up, and there is a desire for communication in all its forms, games, and travel. It is an excellent Moon for divination using tools, channeling, and many types of spiritual communication. Astral travel is easier during the Moon in Gemini. The downside: restlessness, trying to do too much at once, and difficulty focusing the mind.

Moon in Cancer

This Moon brings the focus on home, hearth, nurturing, matters of the heart, and attending to domestic tasks. It is good for work related to developing psychic abilities and intuition. This is also an excellent time for healing the heart, the soul, and our sense of belonging. The downside: emotions run high, are close to the surface, and are easily hurt.

Moon in Leo

This Moon is a time for creativity, confidence, and the recognition of

achievements. Workings to bring strong and steady passion and inspiration are favored. It is also the best time for boosting charisma and leadership qualities. The downside: drama, self-absorption, bragging, and self-indulgence.

Moon in Virgo

This Moon gives attention to details, getting the job done, and helping others. All matters related to health and wellness and the breaking of unhealthy habits is favored by the Moon in Virgo. Activities related to the arts of community and civilization are also supported. The downside: overcritical, hypochondria, may bog down in the details and miss the forest for the trees.

Moon in Libra

This Moon puts an accent on artistic efforts, diplomacy, and the appreciation of beauty. Libra Moon is also good for business partnerships, contracts, negotiations, agreements with spiritual entities, and the resolution of differences. The downside: indecisive, thinking instead of acting, and obsession on getting it right.

Moon in Scorpio

This Moon makes everything more intense, more personal, and the dynamic range of the personality is expanded with brighter brights and darker darks. The capacity for probing and investigating is sharp and strong. Scorpio Moon is good for ending and transforming external situations or internal habits and perspectives. This is the Moon for the making or the breaking of negative magickal workings, as summoning and banishing are assisted by Moon in Scorpio. The downside: secretive, withholding, spiteful, and melancholy.

Moon in Sagittarius

This Moon encourages optimism, curiosity, a love of nature, and humor. There is a heightened interest in sports, education, philosophy, religion, and travel. Sagittarius Moon helps to expand conscious, awareness of the Higher Self, and an understanding of the whys and wherefores of Magick theory. During this Moon, spiritual entities from different orders of being have greater ease in understanding each other. The downside: recklessness, overly optimistic, excessive indulgence, and arrogance.

Moon in Capricorn

This Moon calls for ambition, long-term planning, and organization. There is more stability in all things during this Moon and structures, mundane or metaphysical, can be built or reinforced. Workings for career goals, self-discipline, material gain, and status are favored. This is also the best Moon for breaking or creating bindings and spells of influence. The downside: insensitive actions, dark moods, and pessimistic responses.

Moon in Aquarius

This Moon awakens uniqueness, a yearning for the future, a desire for change, and a fascination with the strange. Aquarius Moon is particularly good for workings related to politics, humanitarian efforts, and creating camaraderie. Workings to stir creativity to break the mold and create a new one are also favored by Moon in Aquarius. Oaths, pledges, and commitment to duty are also assisted by this placement. The downside: fanatical tendencies, weird for the sake of weird, and instability.

Moon in Pisces

This Moon fosters receptivity, expanded boundaries, spirituality, dream states, compassion, and otherworldly interests. Pisces Moon is excellent for dream work, past-life regression, trance states, meditation, and all altered states of consciousness. It is conducive to the creation and the charging of oils, incense, potions, and the like. The creation of illusions and glamours is also favored. The downside: escapism, losing focus and catching a buzz, bad or weak boundaries.

Void-of-Course Moon

There is a special circumstance related to the Moon called void-of-course Moon that has very different implications when considered for mundane purposes versus magickal purposes. As you know, the Moon moves swiftly through the zodiac and as such makes more aspects for any given period of time than the other Planets. The Moon rules the ebb and flow of daily life. The Moon spends roughly two and a half days in each of the Signs, and as it moves it will come into aspect with other Planets. The Moon is said to be void-of-course when it has completed all the aspects that it will within a Sign, and is waiting to enter the next Sign. The duration for void-of-course Moon is generally a few minutes to a few hours, although there are rare occasions when it can actually last for days. Virtually all astrological calendars list when a void-of-course period begins, but most do not list when it ends. Instead, they tell you when the Moon

enters the next Sign, which is in effect the end of the void-of-course. Numerous Astrology programs and smart-phone apps can provide you with this information.

Here are a few analogies to help you begin to understand the void-of-course Moon. Imagine that the Moon is sitting in its celestial office at its desk. The Moon has a to-do list (aspects to make) and has finished everything on the list, but there are still a few more hours until the work shift (Sign) is done. The Moon, like many office workers, will then sit at the desk and doodle, or doze off, or fritter away time on social media websites. If an email arrives with more work to do they won't notice it until the next day. Imagine that the Moon is a cyclist that is no longer pedaling, and is coasting. Or you can imagine driving a truck whose power steering has ceased to work. Or you can imagine a car with a manual transmission with the stick in neutral, but the gas pedal down with the engine revving up. You can help yourself remember the meaning of void-of-course Moon with the image of a crescent Moon floating on the ocean like a ship with no hand upon the steering wheel, and thus no course. Void-of-course means that no direction has been selected or favored.

In conventional Astrology, when there is a void-of-course Moon you are told to avoid making important decisions, not to sign contracts, and not to begin new projects or anything else that you are trying to get off the ground. The Moon rules manifestation, and during the void-of-course, the Moon is off duty. Things tend not to work out as they were planned when begun under a void-of-course. On the other hand, the void-of-course is a good time to disclose a problem, drop a bombshell, or anything else that you would like to fade away quickly. It is also a time that favors matters that require stealth as you are less likely to get caught. It is rumored that former president Ronald Reagan often scheduled press conferences during void-of-course Moons when he had to respond to controversies. This is plausible because it is also known that his wife often consulted astrologers. I quickly spot checked a few of his press conferences, and they were indeed during void-of-course Moons. Void-of-course Moons are good for counseling sessions, introspective work, and inner exploration because our inner Moon is also affected so our defenses are less effective, and we are less resistant to delving deep.

Some will also counsel you to sidestep the void-of-course Moon in magickal work, but I say it depends upon the nature of the work. If you are trying to do a working to get a new job, void-of-course Moon is bad timing. If you are doing any working or ritual wherein the desired outcome is a tangible change in the world, then the conventional prohibitions apply. Remember that during the

void-of-course Moon, the engine of the universe is in neutral, and patterns that you place in the Astral are not likely to make the journey into manifestation the way you expected. That said, void-of-course Moon is a good time for divination, journeying work, and efforts to retrieve things from the past or the future. As an example, past-life regressions are assisted by a void-of-course Moon. The veils between the worlds are thinner, and the Astral tide is slack, neither pushing nor pulling. Another effect of void-of-course Moon is that wards, shields, and castings such as circles are weaker. Knowing this, you may choose not to do particular rituals under a void-of-course Moon, or redouble your efforts at providing a proper container and stronger wards.

For those that do energetic healings, spiritual healings, shamanic healings, and the like, there are also special considerations related to the void-of-course Moon. During a void-of-course Moon, our subtle bodies are more pliant and less resistant to intrusion. That means long-standing, chronic conditions can be more easily diagnosed and their roots unearthed. It also means that if the work at hand is the extraction or the removal of energetic detritus, curses, embedded thought-forms, or entities, then it is easier to dig into the subtle bodies to dislodge and remove the problem. The practitioner should also be aware of the fact that their own subtle bodies have lessened integrity and cohesion during a void-of-course Moon, so they should exercise extra caution and wrap themselves in additional protection.

Aspects

Once you feel that you have a working understanding of what Aspects between Planets mean, you may wish to look at aspects as a part of your selection of the timing for your efforts. There is an important difference between the effect of the Aspects during the working or ritual and the effect of the Aspects after the working or the ritual have taken place. During your efforts, only the aspects that are still building, that have not reached their exact peak, that have not culminated, are in play. These are the energies that you will feel and that are tangible enough to work with. After your working or ritual, you can create a chart based on the time and location of the working or ritual, and it will act as the equivalent of a birth chart. This chart will give indications about how your efforts will play out over time, and in this case all the Aspects that are within acceptable orbs will have an impact. All the tools and techniques you have learned in making sense of astrological charts can be applied to the chart of a working or ritual.

When you look at your astrological calendar, you'll find listings for each

Aspect that occurs each day, and with it the time that it peaks, that it culminates. To make use of an Aspect, your working or ritual should take place before it peaks. The length of time before an Aspect that it becomes usable is determined by which combination of Planets are involved. Look at the two Planets that will be in Aspect to each other and make note of which of the two is the faster-moving Planet. The swiftest Planet determines the window of opportunity for using the Aspect. The Moon is the quickest of the Planets, so if it is part of the pair, then the window of opportunity for the Aspect you desire begins right after the Moon's previous Aspect. This could be minutes, hours, or days. For the other Planets, normally you will have days, or in the case of the outer Planets, weeks to work with active part of a building Aspect. If they are both slow-moving Planets, you will have greater leeway. Of course, the closer you are to the exact moment before the Aspect culminates, the more powerful its effects. The general principle is that for the purposes of Magick in the moment, each Planet only makes one Aspect at a time. On rare occasions, there is an exception to this rule if the Planets are all bunched up with each other in a great conjunction, also called a stellium. As your skill in Astrology increases, you may also wish to pay attention to the Signs and the Houses that the Aspects are taking place in as a factor in your choices. I'll remind you that the positions of Planets in Houses can change within hours, so sometimes simply changing the time for your efforts by a few minutes can make a great difference. I've placed a diagram at the end of this chapter that gives information on the relative speeds of the Planets, how long they spend in each Sign, and their retrograde periods.

Retrograde Planets

A Planet is retrograde when its apparent motion, from our perspective on Earth, appears to move backward in the heavens. Of course, this is an illusion; the Planets do not change direction in their orbits, but the impact of a retrograde is no illusion. You've experienced a variation of this illusion if you've ever been in a car driving on a flat, relatively featureless landscape and accelerated so smoothly that when you pass a car, it seems the other car is moving backward. Or imagine you are sitting in the stands of a celestial car race and your vantage point is partially blocked to the left and right, so you can only see a narrow portion of the track. As the cars go around at different speeds and in different lanes, some of the time it seems they are headed in the wrong direction because you do not see the full circuit of the track. So from our perspective on the Earth when a Planet is retrograde, it traces either a zigzag or loop in the heavens and seems to slow down and come to a stop before changing direction, and in

astrological charts its position by degree and minute will tick down backwards before stopping and resuming its forward motion.

During a retrograde, a Planet's power is turned inward upon itself and is less available. During retrograde, events related to that Planet from recent history may repeat themselves as the Planet returns to the degrees where those events occurred. Many people experience retrogrades as unpleasant because they can cause delays, a lack of vitality, mistakes, and misunderstandings, but they are also opportunities to learn by seeing the same landscape of events from a slightly different point of view. The key to dealing effectively with retrogrades is simply awareness—of the nature of each of the Planets, the events that have transpired in the last weeks or months (depending upon which Planets are retrograde), and attention to the now. If you were a woodworker making furniture from expensive woods, during a Mercury retrograde I would remind you of what you already know: Look at the plans, and measure twice and cut once.

There are very few circumstances where Planets that are retrograde are a favorable selection for choosing an auspicious time. On the other hand, by themselves they are not a reason to rule out a particular time and date. Just be aware that things will take longer to take root and manifest when started under retrograde Planets. The magnitude of this delay will be related to the nature of the Planets in question and how closely they relate to your intentions and purposes. There is of course a special exception for the use of retrograde Planets. The day that they station to go retrograde or go direct actually provides a larger quantity of that Planet's available energy and will give a working done under their influence greater weight and gravitas.

Planetary Periods &Timings

Please note that these are generalized and averaged durations

Planet	Time In Each Sign	One Complete Zodiacal Cycle	Length Of Retrogrades	Duration Of Station Effect +/- the Exact Moment
Moon — ☽	2.5 Days	1 Month	*Not Possible*	*Not Possible*
Mercury — ☿	7.3 Days	88 Days	24 days	1 Day
Venus — ♀	18.7 Days	225 Days	42 Days	2 days
Sun — ☉	1 Month	1 Year	*Not Possible*	*Not Possible*
Mars — ♂	1.9 Months	1.88 Years	80 Days	3 days
Jupiter — ♃	10.8 Months	11.86 Years	120 Days	5 Days
Saturn — ♄	2.5 Years	29.46 Years	140 Days	5 Days
Uranus — ♅	7 Years	84.01 Years	155 Days	6 Days
Neptune — ♆	14.5 Years	164.8 Years	157 Days	7 Days
Pluto — ♇	20.1 Years	248.5 Years	160 Days	7 Days

CHAPTER 11

ADAPTING TO THE WHEN

It is not uncommon that, for reasons of practicality or urgency, you have no choice or an extremely narrow choice as to when you will do a particular ritual or working. In that scenario, the best option is to adapt what you're about to do to the conditions that are available. I know quite a few practitioners who can't be bothered with checking to see what the astrological atmosphere will be like during their workings and rituals, although they go to great lengths to make sure things are just so for their altars or other details. It is true that you can certainly do good work without knowing the astrological conditions—I certainly have—but if you could make small changes that would improve your efficacy, wouldn't you make those changes?

Use the Conditions as Your Starting Point

The simplest adaptation you can make is to use the astrological conditions as your starting point. For example, if you are doing a healing and the Moon is waxing, then you'll get better outcomes if the focus is on increasing vitality and health. Trying to banish, or to remove the cause of the illness is more difficult under waxing Moon as it is the natural inclination for things to grow. Conversely, if you are doing a healing and the Moon is waning, then the focus should be more upon the removal of the illness rather than on the growth of health. Let's say that you are preparing for a job interview and the Moon will be in Virgo during the interview. Going with the flow is usually more productive. So in this case you might want to increase your Virgo qualities by creating an amulet with Virgo's glyph with some of Virgo's herbs or stones, and/or anointed with an appropriate oil that resonates to the Virgo energy. You would also go to the interview prepared for the likelihood that they will be focused upon details and precision.

Let's say you were asked to take a role in an interfaith ritual or service, and upon checking the time and date, you discover that Saturn and Mars will be square to each other. This Aspect often brings out frustration that can lead to anger or resentment, and a keen awareness of obstacles and roadblocks. This Aspect is often associated with power struggles as well. Your part of the service may be better received if it directly addresses the frustrations of interfaith work

while suggesting the tremendous progress that comes from working through issues. Never try to hide from the astrological conditions, but meet them on their own terms. If you were on a boat, and you saw a large wave coming, your best bet would be to align the boat with the wave with the goal of riding it. Should the wave hit you on the side, it is more likely you would be overwhelmed by the wave.

What if you're beginning a new project, consecrating a magickal tool, having an initial meeting of a study group, or some other endeavor that is intended to continue for a good length of time, and you find that one or more of the Planets related to that work are retrograde? This certainly could create a starting point with some built-in difficulties, but when seen from the right perspective, it can be beneficial. Retrogrades are not very useful for creating forward momentum, but they are good for laying carefully crafted foundations and retracing steps. So perhaps the focus of the ritual, working, or meeting should be about visioning and brainstorming what will come. Perhaps it is all prep work such as the purification of the space, the magickal tool, or contemplation with active work delayed until a future date. Retrogrades can also reveal the forces and factors that underlie an effort but had gone unnoticed.

When you are out of ideas or are at an impasse as to what to do next, the existing astrological conditions can be your muse. Perhaps you have a regularly scheduled dream group, path-working group, Full Moon ritual, or other gathering and you are running thin on ideas for what to do at the next one. Look up the Sign and phase of the Moon, see if there are any planetary Aspects in play, if anything is retrograde, and note any other astrological conditions for the day or night of your planned meeting. Then look at the astrological atmosphere for that time and use it as if it were an outline of ideas or components to include in your work. Having these starting points releases your creativity and problem-solving skills because you now have fixed parameters to work with. And since you have designed your efforts to match the energies that will actually be available and buzzing in the air, people are more likely to cooperate and participate.

Changing the Details of Your Plan

There are times when you cannot change the date and time for a working or ritual, or you may have limited flexibility in the changes that can be made to a working or ritual due to liturgical orthodoxy, group dynamics, or other reasons. Probably most of us have heard the dramatic transformation of a familiar song when it is played in different styles, with different instrumentation, sung slower

or faster, with subtle or wild ornamentation, or shifted in key from minor to major. A plain meal can become festive simply by changing the tablecloth, the plates, and adding flowers. When your control over the content for a working or ritual is limited, then much can be done by adjusting emphasis, rhythm, pacing, ritual props, and the style of presentation to be more in line with the astrological conditions.

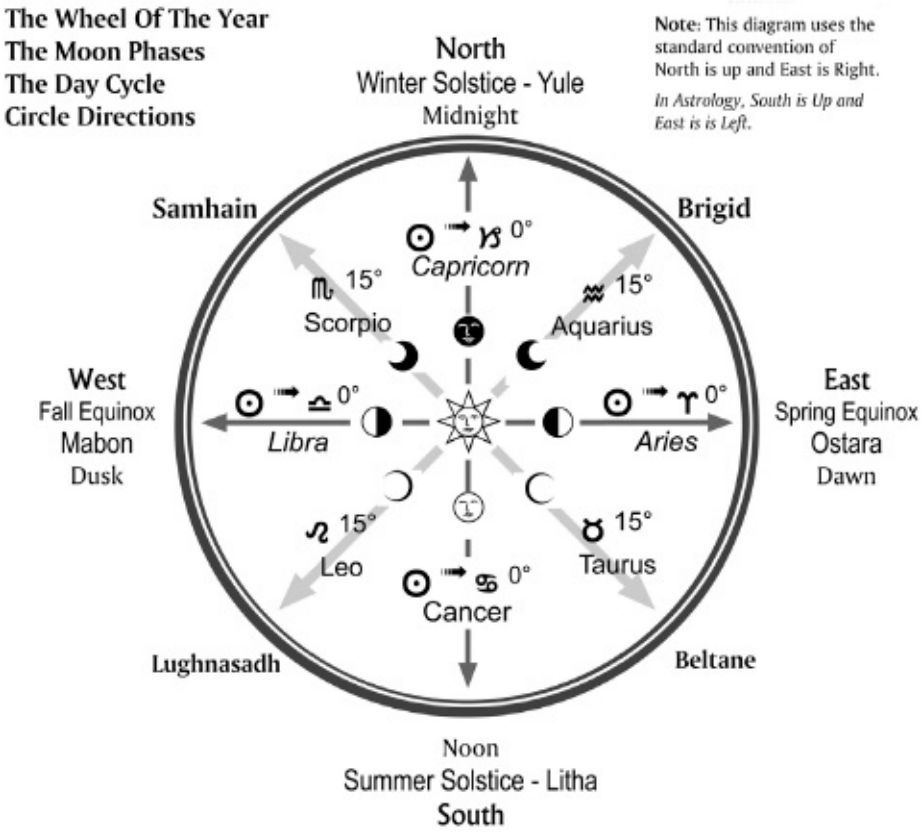
Let's say the Moon is in Libra, and Libra predisposes people to be moved by beauty and harmony. Look at whatever it is that you are about to do and see how you can maximize the parts of the ritual or working that appeal to Libran sensibilities. If there will be singing or chanting, then see if it can be lengthened or enhanced with harmonies or instruments. If there will be altars or special garb, ask yourself what can be added to give them more presence. Simply move through every part of the plan for the working and look for places that you can shift toward a Libran perspective. Look at the Planets, Aspects, and Signs to see if any Elements, challenges, or graces are emphasized. Looking at the placement of the Planets in the Houses will give you insights as to where people's interest and priorities are more focused. Any empty Houses show areas that require extra attention if they are to be present in your work. Then look through the plan or outline again and see how you can adjust it so the ritual or working does not bog down or spin out of control in the areas that are affected by the astrological conditions. You'll be surprised how much you can learn about the art of performing, running, or facilitating a ritual or a working by consciously tuning into the Astrology and adjusting your choices accordingly.

Activating a Lesser influence

Because the influence of Astrology functions on multiple levels and scales of magnitude that interact like layers of fractals, in addition to the primary or most salient there are other, lesser influences present. By directly invoking, summoning, focusing attention, and focusing intention on these lesser influences, they can be used to modify the impact of the primary influences. Most of the suggestions that were made earlier in this chapter can also be applied to empowering the lesser influences that are occurring at the time of a working or ritual. By attuning yourself and the structure of the working or the ritual to the lesser astrological conditions that are more supportive of your purpose, you can increase their presence. In so doing you can compensate for and counterbalance against the predominant astrological conditions.

The following method could have been introduced in the previous chapter on choosing timing, but it will serve here just as well. The information about

Astrology is been broken up into smaller more digestible chunks over the course of the book. This book is meant to be read more than once, and you'll find with each reading how much information from each of the chapters is interrelated. Let's take a closer look at how Astrology is wheels within wheels. The diagram below summarizes the relationships between the cycles of the day, the Moon, the compass rose, and the Wheel of the Year. In order to make clearer the associations between the patterns in Astrology and the format of the most commonly cast circle in Western Magick, I have flipped the Wheel of the Zodiac vertically and horizontally. If you are concerned about this reorganization, think about it this way: The circle in Magick is rooted to the Earth plane as its starting point, whereas the astrological forces exist above us and are rotated because they take as their starting point the path of the Sun across the heavens. There is more to it than that, but for the moment let's keep it simple.



At a fundamental level, the energy, information, and essence that is available at noon is comparable to that of the Full Moon, which in turn is comparable to that of the Summer Solstice. Following this line of reasoning, then, dawn, first-quarter Moon, and the Spring Equinox are also interrelated. The same applies to

all of the eight rays represented in the diagram. Because the solstices and equinoxes are marked by the position of the Sun in the Cardinal and Fixed Signs, you can also say that at noon and at the Full Moon, there is more access to the power of Cancer. Following this logic, at dusk and at the last-quarter Moon, the power of Libra is more available.

So one way to adapt to the prevailing conditions at a time when the most salient Astrology is not well matched to your purposes is to look for any supportive correspondences that exist within the overlapping cycles. If your intended purpose requires growth and expansion that are not supported by the dominant conditions, but your ritual or working is occurring near dawn, then emphasize the rising of the Sun in your plan of action. You may also wish to place your primary altar in the East as it is the direction of Spring and growth. Additionally, you could consider adding the glyph for Aries into some part of the working. As another example, let's say that you are having a ritual or working to commune with the ancestors, and the conditions are not conducive to psychic sensitivity. Samhain, or Halloween, is the time when it is easiest to communicate with the dead, and it occurs at the midway point between the Fall Equinox and the Winter Solstice. If the ritual or working will occurr halfway between sunset and midnight, then you can call upon the power of Samhain. You may wish to place an altar in the Northwest to anchor this place in the cycle. Another option would be to pick colors, incenses, crystals, and oils that resonate to Scorpio and incorporate them into your ritual or working.

So at what time of the night does the halfway point between sunset and midnight occur? This is not as easy a question as you would imagine. If you recall, the chapter “The Astrology of Time” introduced the concepts of the government of the hours and the planetary hours. Day and night vary in length over the course of the year. The time for actual midnight, and for that matter actual noon, are rarely at 12:00. To use this technique, you must determine the length in hours and minutes for the night. Then divide that in half, and that is the number of hours and minutes *after* whenever sunset occurs that is actual midnight. The times for sunrise and sunset for almost any location are readily available. To determine the times for the other points in the wheels just requires a little simple math. The exception to this rule is that at the equinoxes, day night are equal, and if you live near the equator there is little change in the length of day and night.

You can also use the government of hours as another technique to help you cope with less than perfect timing for a ritual or working. If you recall, the planetary hours exist as influences that are separate from the flow of Aspects,

Moon Phases, and so on, as they represent the ongoing pulse of creation. If you are fortunate, you may find that the planetary hour your ritual or working will occur in can provide the energy of a Planet that is supportive of your purposes. I have found it easier to access the power of the planetary hours when I have included in the ritual physical representations for the Planet in question, in addition to verbal invocations and calls. As you'll find in the chapter “The Magick Squares,” you can also create a sigil to act as a focal point for this energy. The word sigil is derived from the Latin *sigillum*, and one of its meanings in Magick is a geometric figure that is a summation of will, intention, and energy.

Plane of Action and Castings

The astrological influences we feel the most keenly during our work tend also to be those that are the most ephemeral, caused by the faster moving Planets. From the point of view of Astrology, an hour or two is but an instant, but it can certainly feel like an eternity if you are pushing against influences that oppose your aspirations. I've been on more than one air flight where upon encountering a thunderstorm or turbulence, the pilot has taken us higher than the storm to avoid the worst. Although it is not always practical or within your capabilities, if you can continue to rise on the planes of existence so that you do the work above the level of the astrological turbulence, less resistance will be encountered. Be aware that although your experience of the ritual or working will be eased by this technique, it does not circumvent the astrological influences as they continue to work after you are done. The Astrology of that time still becomes the chart that guides the manifestation of those efforts in the days, weeks, or months that follow.

Another approach is to create sacred space, a container, a casting that is designed to smooth out or reduce the impact of turbulent or inharmonious astrological conditions. In addition to whatever your normal pattern is to create sacred space or to prepare yourself for doing magickal work, invoke each of the 12 Signs and ask them to hold and to ward your efforts. This can be as simple as naming them and scribing their glyphs in the air, or it can be quite elaborate with lengthy invocations and an abundance of altars. The mechanism of action for this technique is to reaffirm all the intrinsic harmonies and counterbalances that exist within the pattern of Astrology as a whole, thereby reducing the impact of the astrological influences at play during your ritual or working. I use a casting called the Triangle of Stillness that is particularly effective at reducing tensions and obstacles created by difficult Astrology. If you would like to learn

more about the Triangle of Stillness, you'll find it in my book *Casting Sacred Space: The Core of All Magickal Work*.

Fluency and Flexibility

The more fully you become versed in the lore of Astrology, and fluent in its language, the easier it will become to adapt to any prevailing astrological conditions. Although it may not seem likely at this moment, if you persevere, you will be able to use any of these techniques and combine them in a variety of ways. The practice of thinking astrologically, and seeing how different levels of influence interact with each other, will also have the side effect of building more flexibility in your thought processes for Magick in general. Although it seems that it would be easier simply to always pick the perfect astrological moment, that is rarely the case. Over time, this may become one of the chapters that you use as a reference most frequently. Remember that adaptability is about recognizing what can't be changed and succeeding anyway.

CHAPTER 12

THE ASTROLOGY OF THE AURA

Our bodies are mostly water, and just as the Moon governs the tides on Earth so too does it hold sway over our subtle bodies. You may be more familiar with the term “aura,” or “layers of the aura,” to describe the human energy field, but I find the concept of the subtle bodies more useful as it helps to remind me of important principles. Imagine a set of Russian nesting dolls, the sort that fit within each other, with the innermost one painted opaque and each next doll outward becoming more translucent and more streamlined. The outermost doll is like clear crystal with hints of refracted rainbows and is so streamlined that it is a smooth oval. You are a multidimensional being that exits in each of the planes that range from your densest to most your most ethereal bodies. Our focus of awareness defaults to our physical body so we experience the physical plane most vividly. Each subtle body has its own equivalent of organs, senses, muscles, bones, and the rest, but we call the subtle versions chakras, meridians, sheaths, and a host of other terms. The lower subtle bodies more closely resemble who we are in a given incarnation, and the upper subtle bodies more closely resemble what we are in eternity. The lower subtle bodies are also the ones we use the most in Magick and psychism.

The Moon in a birth chart, a natal chart, shows us the default qualities of the lower subtle bodies by its Sign. For those who are interested, the Planets on the middle pillar of the Qabala rule the qualities of the layers of the aura from densest at Malkuth to most rarified at Kether. The Moon Sign's Element and Modality give us insight into how we receive, perceive, send, and shape the energy, information, and essence in our psychic and magickal efforts. As you read in earlier chapters, the Sign of the Moon has a great, all-encompassing effect on all people and activities on Earth. If we look to the bodies of water on Earth, we see that the Moon moves all the tides everywhere, but the shape of the land and climate of each specific area determines the height, the drop, the timing, and the speed of the tides. The Moon in a birth chart also determines the shape of your land and how you interact with the tides stirred by the Moon that moves in the heavens. The interaction between your lower subtle bodies and those of other people in a ritual or magickal working is also strongly affected by the combinations of Moon Signs.

The Moon is correlated to the sphere of Yesod on the Tree of Life, which is the first sphere above that of Earth, Malkuth. There is only one path that leads from the Moon (Yesod) to Earth (Malkuth), and that path, for reasons we need not explore now, is called the thirty-second path. The thirty-second path is birth canal and the tunnel of light that we move through as we leave this life. The Moon (Yesod) collects and brings coherence to all the influences from above and streams them downward through this path. The Moon (Yesod) also receives all that is rising upward from Earth (Malkuth), as well as in the place we call the Astral plane. You can see why the nexus of Moon, Yesod, and Astral plane is so important to esoteric matters.

The Hermetic axiom “As above, so below” applies here as well. The Moon in your natal chart is also the key to your personal Astral and the path that connects the above and the below. As such your Moon Sign is the basic template for your style of Magick and psychism. Knowing your Moon Sign can show you some of the inherent magickal aptitudes you can develop more easily to a higher level. Your Moon Sign also gives insights into weak spots and susceptibilities in psychic or magickal work.

Fire Moons

Fire is a positive Element so the denser layers of the aura, the lower subtle bodies, have a tendency to reach out and to seek contact with other energies and subtle bodies. When you hold two candle flames close together, the flames merge into one larger flame. When you pull the candles apart from each other, the flames separate without effort. When two people with Fire Moons work together, their auras blend easily and separate without entanglement. Of all the Moon Signs, the Fire Moons have the least trouble keeping their energy clear of outside influences and other people's emotional patterns. Because it is natural for fire to radiate energy rather than to gather it, their frailty lies in the potential to be drained of too much vital energy. The aura of a person with a Fire Moon has a natural tendency to try to merge with whatever it touches. When it cannot merge, it engages in the greatest amount of interaction available.

Aries Moon: Cardinal Fire

The subtle bodies of people with Aries Moon generally move faster than any other Sign, but they are harder to hold to a specific task.

Leo Moon: Fixed Fire

The subtle bodies of people with Leo Moon are especially good at energizing

and holding the central focus for individual or collective workings.

Sagittarius Moon: Mutable Fire

The subtle bodies of people with Sagittarius Moon are the most adaptable of the Fire Moons and are especially good at affecting other people's subtle bodies.

Air Moons

Air is a positive Element so the denser layers of the aura, the lower subtle bodies, have a tendency to reach out and to seek contact as does Fire, but Air moves out further from the physical body. An Air Moon subtle body does not seek merger with the energies and auras that it encounters but does copy the patterns it finds. Just as the wind collects the scents and the dust of the land that it traverses, so too does the Air Moon in its fashion. The copied patterns of energy, information, and essence fade if they are not reinforced. The Air type of aura finds it easier to learn the receptive psychic and magickal arts. Energetically turbulent environments can disrupt the integrity of their subtle bodies, which is their frailty. When two Air Moon Signs choose to work together, they must synchronize their actions to prevent interfering with each other's efforts. When working in accord with each other, Air Moons have the furthest reach with their subtle bodies.

Libra Moon: Cardinal Air

The subtle bodies of people with Libra Moon are very capable at bridging and equalizing differences between the subtle bodies of groups of people.

Aquarius Moon: Fixed Air

The subtle bodies of people with Aquarius Moon are good at holding a specific thought-form or energy pattern and transferring it to others.

Gemini Moon: Mutable Air

The subtle bodies of people with Gemini Moon are the swiftest at changing and adapting to quickly shifting energy conditions.

Earth Moons

Earth is a negative Element so the denser layers of the aura, the lower subtle bodies, have a tendency to hold more tightly against the physical body. Also, the negative Elements have a magnetic pull that draws other energies toward

them. An Earth Moon subtle body when properly developed has the greatest strength in the active psychic and magickal arts. It takes more effort to imprint a pattern onto the aura of an Earth Moon, but it will retain the pattern the longest. The greatest challenge for an Earth Moon is a lack of flexibility in the aura. The solidity of the Earth Moon aura endows it with a naturally stronger shield, but if something breaches that shield, the injury takes longer to heal. For two Earth Moons to work together, they must arrange themselves so their auras interlock as closely as possible before beginning the work.

Capricorn Moon: Cardinal Earth

The subtle bodies of people with Capricorn Moon are best at imposing a pattern or a container in a working.

Taurus Moon: Fixed Earth

The subtle bodies of people with Taurus Moon are best at holding or restoring a pattern or a container in a working.

Virgo Moon: Mutable Earth

The subtle bodies of people with Virgo Moon are best at perceiving and understanding the patterns and their unfolding within a working.

Water Moons

Water is a negative Element so the denser layers of the aura, the lower subtle bodies, have a tendency to hold more tightly against the physical body, although less so than the Earth Moons. The magnetic pull of a Water Moon is the strongest. Imagine two drops of water brought together until they barely touch, how they pull together to become one large drop. When two people with Water Moons work together, their auras merge. When they separate they become two again, but the merging is often so complete that they carry away a piece of each other's energy. Water Moons have a tendency to absorb more from their energetic environment than the other Moons. The arts of empathy, healing, and divination come the most easily to the Water Moons. The Water Moon has the greatest flexibility, which can be either a strength or a weakness.

Cancer Moon: Cardinal Water

The subtle bodies of people with Cancer Moon are best at filling, comforting, and healing disruptions in subtle bodies.

Scorpio Moon: Fixed Water

The subtle bodies of people with Scorpio Moon are the most adept at probing and moving past barriers.

Pisces Moon: Mutable Water

The subtle bodies of people with Pisces Moon are most capable at sensing changes, and equalizing and unifying disparate energies.

Combinations of Moon Signs

Moon Signs of the same polarity have a natural ease and grace when they work together in psychism and Magick. Fire and Air Moons are of positive polarity, and Water and Earth Moons are of negative polarity. Of course, any combination can be made to work, but the adjustments and the effort to do so varies. In many scenarios, you will not know the Moon Signs of the other people you are working with, but knowing about the more common interactions and accommodations is always helpful. There is one more concept about polarity in the Elements to consider. Water is the greater negative polarity, and Fire is the greater positive polarity. Earth is the lesser negative polarity, and Air is the lesser positive polarity. The simplest distinction that can be made is that the greater polarities pull and push more strongly than the lesser polarities. The ease of interaction between subtle bodies in mixed polarity cases depends upon whether or not there is a match or a difference in their greater or lesser classification. When there is a greater/lesser pairing, it is easier to sort out how the subtle bodies interconnect and cooperate than when both are greater or lesser. In other words, Fire and Water or Air and Earth are harder combinations than Fire and Earth or Air and Water.

If you have a Fire Moon, an emphasis should be placed on learning to modulate the intensity of your energy when working with others. This also requires learning to pay more attention to what people are doing rather than taking the lead, unless that was the original plan. A Fire Moon is like a singer with a naturally loud voice trying to sing in a chorus; they need to listen and to blend in. When working with Earth Moon Signs, Fire Moons should gradually increase the intensity of their output until they reach their maximum. When working with Water Moon Signs, their is a greater need for a container, casting, or protocol to harness this flexible and volatile combination. When working with Air Moon Signs, Fire Moon Signs need to pay more attention to the horizontal flow of energy around and between different people's subtle bodies.

If you have an Air Moon, an emphasis should be placed on finding and

focusing on your center of energy. Your center of energy is normally in the core of the physical body and in most people is either the same as their center of gravity or proximate to their heart or solar plexus chakras. Although being strongly centered is of value to all work with subtle bodies, it is particularly important for Air Moons. Without a strong focus, the power of an Air subtle body becomes scattered and diffuse. Moreover, it is the core of an Air Moon's subtle bodies that serves as the primary sensor of interactions with other people's subtle bodies. The key to working effectively with Water Moons is to flow as constantly as you can in contact with their subtle bodies until there is the feeling of a bond. To work with Earth Moons, let them hold the pattern or thought-form while you act to enliven it or to move it. When working with Fire Moon Signs, Air Moon Signs need to pay more attention to the vertical flow of energy around and between different people's subtle bodies.

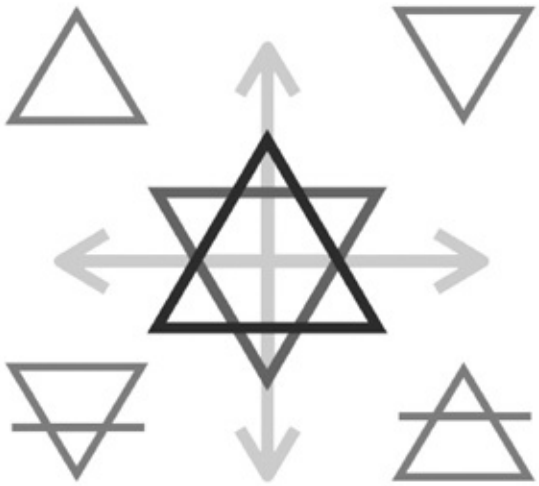
If you have an Earth Moon, the emphasis should be on learning how to feel the shape of your subtle bodies so that you can change their shape with your will and imagination. You have a kinesthetic sense, an internalized model of your physical body, and a similar form of awareness can be developed in your subtle bodies. Once you have that awareness, then feel your way through changing the shape of your subtle bodies. When working with Fire Moon Signs, Earth Moon Signs need to be open to absorbing and holding the active Fire energy. The most effective work with Air Moon subtle bodies comes from remaining solid but becoming a shape that is resonant to their engergies, like an empty bottle or the string of an Aeolian harp made to sing by the wind. The best way to work with Water Moon Signs is to become the shape of the container or the conduit that fits the task at hand.

If you have a Water Moon, an emphasis should be on learning to control the rhythm of energetic motion. The subtle bodies of Water Moon Signs are flexible but cohesive, so they tend to ripple and rock like the action of waves. When working with Earth Moon Signs, it is important to feel for the boundaries and to work with them. Once you can feel the boundaries, you can push or rebound off of them. To work with Air Moon Signs, expand your energy field and try to become more diffuse, but do so slowly as you want to be as still as possible. Once you have expanded your subtle bodies to match the Air Moon's subtle bodies, you may move as swiftly as you like. The best collaborative efforts with Fire comes from trying to absorb and reflect the Fire energy. It is a subtle distinction, but you should try to absorb more of the light and less of the heat. When working with a Fire Moon's subtle bodies, you may need to ground more frequently.

General Principles

If you are involved in rituals or workings with more than two people, or when you do not know the other person's Moon sign, then it is important to be more aware of the innate qualities of your own Moon sign. It is good to develop your own protocol or working procedures for feeling out the best configuration of your own contribution to a particular ritual or working. This may take some time and effort on your part, but I believe that you'll find a significant improvement in your engagement in energy work if you take the information provided in this chapter to heart. In teaching workshops in many locations to many different types of practitioners, I have found there are relatively few techniques commonly in use that directly address the question of configuring the subtle bodies based upon an individual's specific type. There are certainly many techniques and methods for raising and focusing power, but they tend to be fairly generic. The knowledge of one's Moon Sign provides a valuable key to developing energetic visualizations and actions that work with your inherent nature. The diagrams show a summary of the Elements general energetic behavior, and a visual representation of how one of the more common set of glyphs for the Elements are derived.

Fire	Water
The Greater Positive Element **Ascending Force,** Transforming, Stretching, Bright, Subtle, and Mobile	**The Greater Negative Element** **Descending Force,** Condensing, Magnetic, Dark, Dense, and Mobile
The Lesser Negative Element **Compressive Force,** Crystallizing, Concentrating Dark, Dense, and Static	**The Lesser Positive Element** **Distributive Force,** Expanding, Diffusing Dark, Subtle, and Mobile
Earth	Air



CHAPTER 13

THE ASTROLOGY OF SPIRIT WORK

For the sake of simplicity, I'm using the term “spirit” as a catchall for all beings that do not have a physical body, including everything from ghosts to God/dess/es. Every encounter with a spirit is different, even if it is the same being. In part, this is because you are always changing—you can never step into the same river twice—and also because the spirits change as well. Something that is often neglected in discussing or exploring interactions and communications with the spirits is that there is also an astrological component that shapes these occurrences. You are influenced by the Astrology of the moment. The primary plane of interaction is the Astral, and that too is changed by astrological conditions. The spirits themselves are also affected by these changing fields of energy. Depending upon the phase and the Sign of the Moon, whatever planetary aspects are currently active, whether or not there are any retrograde Planets, and the full array of astrological conditions, you will both perceive and respond to contact with spirits differently. The astrological atmosphere has an impact upon your mood and on which things you're more likely to notice or ignore. If there are resonances to your birth chart, then there is also an activation of deep issues and your life history.

There is good news in that generally the same rules that apply to predicting how humans will behave with each other are also the same rules that apply to predicting how you will behave when interacting with the spirits. If as a part of learning the language of Astrology you have been looking at your astrological calendar and taking note of how different astrological conditions have played out in your daily life, then you have also been developing a sense of how spirit contact is shaped by those conditions. You may wish to make it a part of your practice that when you have encounters with the spirits, either as planned or spontaneous events, that you make note of the astrological conditions at the time of those encounters. Over the course of time, you will develop an understanding of how your interactions vary in accordance with the Astrology of the moment. I offer some examples in this chapter, but I'm actually asking you to become more engaged and use what you have learned so far. I will present guiding principles, and then I will ask you to search and sift through your knowledge and see how it all fits together. Fluency in the language of

Astrology only comes when you are no longer dependent upon a phrasebook.

For those of you that have a regular devotional relationship to particular spirits, an awareness of the Astrology during your devotional work will allow you to understand more fully different faces and facets of that being. One simple approach to this work is to see how the Sign of the Moon colors the interaction. If you have the enthusiasm and the interest, then I would also suggest that you keep track of how the interactions are modified as the Sun moves through the 12 Signs of the Zodiac. There are spirits whose mythology and lore indicate times that are holy or special to them. For example, Hecate and Hermes are often approached at the dark of the Moon. There are also holy days associated with particular times of the solar year that have associations with spirits. This is an important clue about their nature, and I suggest you examine each holy day you observe from an astrological perspective as well.

Depending upon your beliefs and philosophy, you may have some difficulty grappling with the idea that higher-order spirits such as goddesses are affected by astrological conditions. Something to bear in mind is that in order for you to have an interaction with a higher-order being, your focus of consciousness must be shifted to a plane above the Earth plane. Which plane, and how far distant from the Earth plane it may be, is determined by your skills, your training, and the conditions at play in that moment. Moreover, the spirit must also move closer to the plane that you are able to reach to make the contact possible. Personally, I believe that no spirits that we are capable of interacting with can disregard the limits inherent in the qualities of each plane of existence. Even if you believe that your God/dess/es are not bound by these limits, you are. Our psychology and our psychic abilities vary in response to the astrological atmosphere. As such, the astrological conditions limit and constrain the shape of that interaction.

Astrology can give us indicators as to when we are more likely to be able to have a significant contact with the spirits. Water is the Element that is most strongly associated with intuition, psychic gifts, and receptivity. When the Moon is in a Water Sign, there is a better chance of being able to perceive the spirits. The same is true when there is a concentration of the other Planets in Water Signs, but the Moon is a stronger indicator as it rules the astral, which is where most of the work occurs. The Outer Planets and Mercury also have an important part to play in spirit contact. The Planet Neptune dissolves boundaries, opens the inner eye, and reveals the bridges that connect beings who believe themselves to be separate from each other. When Neptune is in a harmonious aspect to the Moon, Mercury, Uranus, or Pluto, the capacity for

spirit contact rises. The qualities of the contact will vary in accordance to the natures of the Planets connected in the Aspect, and their Signs. Uranus is often associated with spirit interactions that are strongly felt or leave some sort of tangible evidence in the world. Uranus has a strong effect on our awareness of our chakras and our subtle bodies. When you are engaged in spirit work, whatever Uranus aspects are in play will indicate the ease or the strain that you will feel in your subtle bodies. It is harder to become properly grounded when there are strong challenging Aspects involving Uranus. When there are favorable aspects to Uranus, we tend to have greater access to our active magickal abilities. Pluto is usually the significator for interactions that deal with the underworld, the dead, and spirits who are of primal and titanic nature. Mercury in a favorable aspect to the Moon or the Outer Planets makes it easier for our subtle bodies to travel further and faster. Mercury when favorably aspected also makes it possible to convert visions and psychic impressions into actual words and ideas that can be recorded and shared with others.

As clarification, all the Elements can be useful in communication and work with spirits. The Element of Water heightens our awareness and sensitivity of their presence, but this does not mean your efforts will be less effective if there is a preponderance of other Elements in the heavens. The Element of Air makes it easier for there to be a flow of information that is more readily understood and conveyed. The Element of Earth can be helpful in going more deeply into trance, and in operations involving divine possession. The Element of Fire can make it easier to channel power from spirits into your workings. It is simply a matter of working with what is available and using it to its best effect.

One more layer of insight is provided by looking at which Houses the Planets are in when you engage in spirit work. The twelfth House is strongly associated with psychic talent, visions, and mystical experiences. The ninth House is associated with bringing through important teachings and information from the other realms. The eighth House is the House of the Ancestors and the Mighty Dead. In truth, each of the Houses has their utility in working with the spirits. You simply need to think through how the categories represented in any given House relate to your communication and work with the spirits. If you have the capacity to create charts and are choosing when to engage in spirit contact, then adjusting the House placements for your desired Planets is often nothing more than a matter of changing the timing by an hour or two.

It is a well-known adage among practitioners that spirit contact occurs more frequently and more readily in liminal settings, in the threshold between things. This is one of the reasons that the solstices and equinoxes are often said to be

times when the veil between the worlds is thinner. Keep in mind that the solstices and equinoxes occur at the 0° of the Cardinal Signs of the zodiac which are Aries, Libra, Cancer, and Capricorn. Think of that 0° as a portal that opens between the worlds to bring in the change of seasons, but that portal is also used by the spirits. In many systems and traditions, the times that lie halfway between the solstices and equinoxes are also considered auspicious for spirit work. You may know these halfway points by any number of names, but the ones that I tend to use are Imbolc, Beltane, Lughnasadh, and Samhain. Of these, Samhain (Halloween) is perhaps the best known, and is a time when the dead and other spirits may easily walk the Earth. These halfway points, often referred to as the Cross-Quarters in Wicca and Paganism, occur at 15° of the Fixed Signs of the Zodiac. As you know, there are 30° in each Sign, so 15° is the halfway point of a Sign. So the Cross-Quarter days are the halfway point of the halfway point; you can see why these are thresholds between the worlds. The experiences that occur during these thresholds tend to be more tangible, more overt because the Cross-Quarter days are in the Fixed Signs: 15° Aquarius marks Imbolc, 15° Taurus marks Beltane, 15° Leo marks Lughnasadh, and 15° Scorpio marks Samhain. The experiences at the solstices and equinoxes tend to be more internal and more spiritual. Regardless of whatever other astrological conditions may be active, if your work with the spirits occurs during these eight special thresholds, then the face they show and style of interaction will be strongly flavored by the Sun Sign.

As you become more confident making sense of a birth chart, or if you have access to an astrologer who understands Magick, you can also begin to look at your birth chart with an eye toward seeing what your predispositions are when it comes to spirit work. You may not think of yourself as someone that works with the spirits, but there is a good probability that if you're reading this book, then God/dess/es, nature spirits, the Fae, or other entities are a part of your practice. If you recall, in the chapter on Aspects we touched upon the topic of transits, of Planets in the heavens having an impact on the Planets in your birth chart. By using the same principles that have been shared so far, you can look at your transits and know when you are more open to communication and interaction with the spirits. Also, where there are harsh Aspects by transit, you also know when you either need to work harder or be more cautious in your endeavors. When the time comes that you want to know even more about how your personal Astrology interacts with spirit work, you can also see what is occurring in your progressed chart. There are many forms of Astrological progression. The two most common forms are Secondary progression in which the birth chart is moved forward one day for each year of life or the Solar arc

progression that moves the birth chart forward one degree for each year of life. Chart progressions tell us much about the evolving psychology of a person over the course of their life. This is a more advanced technique, and I'm only mentioning it so that you will know that there is another tool available when you are ready to pursue it.

Of course, you are not strictly limited in your spirit work by what is occurring in the heavens. You can construct altars, amulets, invocations, and so on to call upon, magnify, and refine the energies that may be in short supply when you need to do your spirit work. The Planets are always in the heavens, but the availability of their favor is variable. Let me compare their availability to mining for gold. If you are in the right place, you can pluck nuggets of pure gold out of veins that shine in the walls of the cave. In other places the gold is spread so thinly that hundreds of pounds of stone must be crushed and heated to melt out a single nugget. When the Astrology suits your needs, it is like finding the golden veins on the walls of the cave. When the Astrology is less suitable, then you need to apply more effort to produce the same amount of gold. As a general rule, the less favorable the astrological conditions, the more elaborate the preparations must be for a ritual or a working to be successful. In the chapter “The Magick Squares” you'll learn how to make sigils that can be used to provide you with access to the energy of the Planets, even when they are not fully cooperative in the heavens at the time of your work.

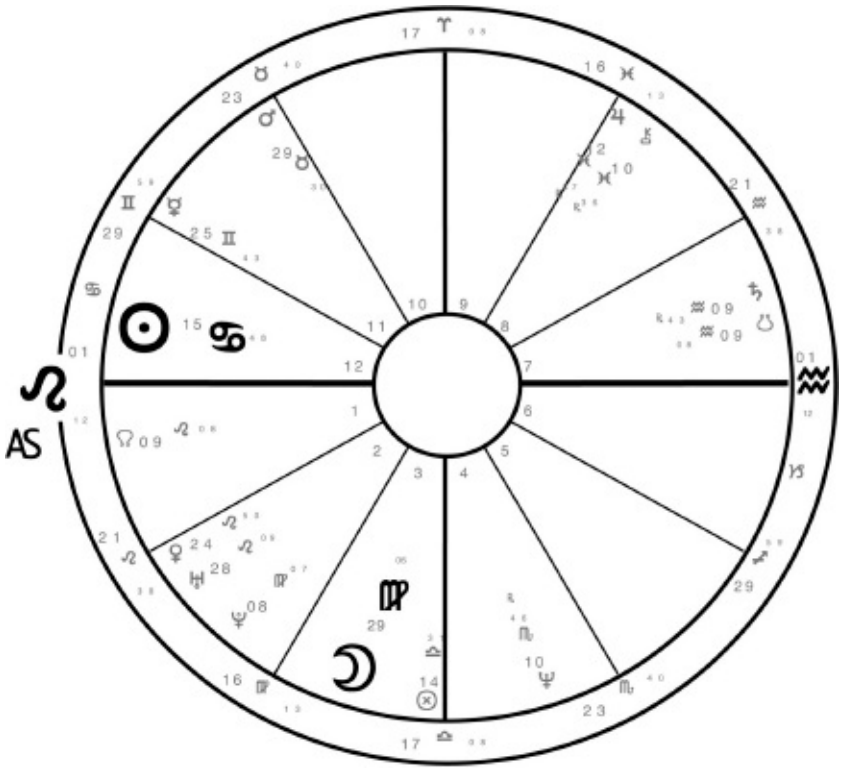
CHAPTER 14

SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION

The Sun, Moon, and Ascendant as Guides to Growth

As you know by now, your Sun Sign, your Moon Sign, and your Rising Sign are the three anchors in your birth chart that form the matrix of your personality. A relatively simple, but very effective technique, uses these three as guides to maximize your spiritual evolution. Just because the techniques I present are simple and fairly straightforward, you should not underestimate their value over time. If you have not already acquired your birth chart, I suggest that you do so. Because you only need the Signs for these, you can easily find websites that will calculate a no-frills birth chart for free. I have found when teaching this technique that people tend to oscillate between thinking they've understood it and thinking they're confused again. Be patient with yourself and the material, and over time you'll find that the Sun Sign, the Moon Sign, and the Rising Sign techniques, although similar in the areas they illuminate, are quite unique. In anything that relates to matters of spiritual growth and the development of the self, there will be areas that overlap and intertwine. A good part of all techniques for personal evolution involves getting to know your parts; then integration truly begins. I'll give an overview of the three techniques first, then provide more detailed instructions for their use.

Over the years in conversations and in your studies, you've probably encountered lists of the positive and the negative personality traits associated with each of the Signs. This is sometimes presented in terms of whether or not the person is functioning at a lower or higher level of evolution within the context of their Sign. It has been my observation that the traits that are identified as being positive or healthy traits are really what occurs when a person is acting like the next Sign in the normal sequence of the Zodiac. This is not to say that they have become the next Sign, but rather that they are adopting some of the behaviors and attitudes associated with the next Sign. The traits that are seen as negative or unhealthy occur when the person is acting like the Sign that is previous to theirs in the zodiac. This is the essential key to understanding the technique that uses the Sun Sign as a guide for spiritual evolution.



Perhaps the single greatest challenge for any seeker or practitioner striving for enlightenment and spiritual evolution is learning to fully experience, process, and understand their emotions. More often than not our conscious and unconscious motivations are driven by our emotions. If we are to succeed in the various cycles of integration that lead to the development of higher heart, higher mind, higher will, and their ultimate unification, then we must understand how to work with our Moon Sign. The Moon in the birth chart shows us how we create meaning out of our experiences, and how we tell the story, the personal myth, that summarizes the who, what, and why of our lives. Of all the Planets, the Moon moves the most swiftly through the Signs, and its face in the heavens is constantly changing. Using your Moon Sign as a guide to create greater emotional stability depends upon creating a connection to the two other Signs that are the same Element as your Moon. The goal is to adopt some of the emotional intelligence and behaviors of these other Signs. It is as if you were to add two additional Moon Signs to your chart. The Magick here lies in becoming more fully aware of all three of the Modalities of your emotional Element.

The Rising Sign, the Ascendant, shows us how we see the world, how we interact with it, and how we are perceived by others. The more clearly we perceive the world around us and communicate with it, the truer we will be to

both our Sun and our Moon. Although this Ascendant-based technique is presented here as a guide for spiritual evolution and development, of the three techniques presented this one tends to have the most immediate effects in making our mundane daily lives easier. The Ascendant represents sunrise in a birth chart, and directly opposite to it at the cusp of the seventh House is the Descendent that represents sunset. The Sun journeys from sunrise to sunset, and this technique uses the journey from the Sign of the Ascendant to the Sign of the Descendent as a guide to personal development. The practice of this technique involves becoming aware of how you communicate with others, how you dress, how you carry yourself, and how you listen and make sense of others. Then you see how this relates to your Ascendant, and next ask yourself the question of how your Descendent Sign would do the same.

Do not try to do all three of these techniques at once immediately after reading this chapter. Instead, start with the Sun Sign technique and practice it for at least a month or two before proceeding with the Moon Sign technique. Similarly, wait another month or two before working with the Ascendant technique. Eventually, you'll be able to use two or three of these techniques together. The more deeply you become connected to the worldview and language of Astrology, the easier these practices will become. In accordance with your circumstances and your goals, these may become a part of your regular routine, or you may only use them when you're going through a particularly difficult or transformative span in your life. I often will turn to these when something has thrown me off balance and I need a way to reorient myself to my direction forward. In the descriptions for these techniques, I am providing a bare-bones approach to each technique. Feel free to elaborate on them as needed to match your style of working, contemplation, or rituals. So long as you stay true to the essence of how they function, I am less concerned about how you create something that works for your path.

Sun Sign

The Sun represents the core of your being, and the Sun in the heavens is always moving forward through the Signs of the Zodiac. As noted earlier, the Sun never goes retrograde. Unfortunately, we have free will and can make choices that allow us to regress in our thoughts, our feelings, and our behavior. When for whatever reason we find ourselves moving backward against the natural forward flow of the Sun, there is dissonance and friction between the Sun within and the Sun in the heavens.

Look to the Sign of your Sun first, and meditate on the meaning of the Sign.

Then contemplate the meaning of the Sign that comes before your Sun Sign, and do the same for the Sign that comes after. I find it useful to have a visual focus when I do this type of work, so I have small wooden discs onto which I've painted the glyphs for the Signs. You may wish to do the same, or you could simply use three pieces of paper with the glyphs written on them, or have your birth chart in front of you and highlight the Signs in question, or come up with whatever would fit your sensibilities. If there is a particular concern or issue at hand, I examine the situation from the perspective of the three Signs. If I am unaware of any concrete example of thoughts, feelings, or behaviors that I want to work on at that time, then I meditate to open myself to hearing what each of the three Signs has to tell me.



Next, I place the three glyphs on the floor about one large step apart from each other. I stand over the glyph of my Sun Sign and call forth inside myself the essence of the meditations I have just finished. When it feels right, I take a step back and stand over the glyph of the previous Sign. I call forth within myself the problems and concerns I've identified, and how they represent regression into that Sign. When I feel ready, I step forward and stand briefly over my Sun Sign, then take one more step to stand over the glyph of the next Sign. I envision taking on the qualities of this Sign, and I imagine how events would play out with those changes.

As an example, my Sun is in Sagittarius, so when I bridle my optimism and broad-ranging thoughts with a Capricorn's sense of planning and caution, I make progress. If I find I am obsessing about nuances and rightness, losing my

perspective, and becoming heavy handed, I am adopting the worst of Scorpio's traits. Lets look at an example using Cancer as the Sun Sign. When a Cancer's drive to nurture and protect is overlain with Leo's centeredness and leadership, the home-centered Sign makes the world their home. When a Cancer steps back into Gemini, they become moody, volatile, and insecure. I encourage you to walk your way through all 12 Signs and to think through how their strengths and weaknesses relate to each other.

In summary, when a person makes life choices and plans that stretch toward the perspective of the next Sign, they are moving toward growth. When their perspective leans back to the previous Sign, they regress. The positive and the negative traits of each Sign show this pattern. Here is a brief list of keywords for each Sign.

Aries

Positive: action, initiative, vitality, courage

Negative: impulsiveness, impatient, argumentative, foolhardy

Taurus

Positive: appreciation of life, stability, stewardship, task oriented

Negative: stubbornness, resists change, earthbound, self-involved

Gemini

Positive: versatility, curiosity, communication, adaptable

Negative: superficiality, fickle, scattered, restless

Cancer

Positive: nurturing, protective, instinctual, caring

Negative: timid, covetousness, easily hurt, moody

Leo

Positive: leadership, joyfulness, centered, sunny

Negative: self-centered, imperious, high maintenance, vain

Virgo

Positive: analytical, helping, discerning, organized

Negative: critical, glass half empty, detached, fragile

Libra

Positive: harmony, diplomacy, impartial, charming

Negative: opportunism, loss of direction, imbalance, indecisive

Scorpio

Positive: depth, strategy, passionate, creative

Negative: ruthless, secretive, risk/danger seeking, manipulative

Sagittarius

Positive: wisdom, holistic thought, enthusiasm, optimistic

Negative: preachy, hypocrisy, intolerant, hot-headed

Capricorn

Positive: responsible, organized, ambitious, perseverance

Negative: rigid, uses others, negative focus, slow to change

Aquarius

Positive: universal, forward looking, reformer, humanitarian

Negative: eccentric, shock value, rebels without love, in their heads

Pisces

Positive: compassion, faith, synthesis, imaginative

Negative: confusion, codependent, escapist, impressionable

Moon Sign

We often think of the Moon as having a threefold quality. This is certainly the case in Wicca where it brings to mind the Maiden, the Mother, and the Crone. Even if this is not part of how you conceptualize the Moon, bring to mind the idea of the waxing, the full, and the waning of the Moon. By incorporating the viewpoints and the styles of the other two Moon Signs that match the Element of your Moon Sign, you are completing this triplicity. The Dark Moon can be seen as a summation of these three, as it is both the end and beginning.

I prefer ritual objects, props, for this technique, but you can do without them

if you like. You can do this technique as a completely internal affair. To begin, sit at a table and place the three glyphs before you to form a triangle. I generally also light a candle by each of the glyphs. In the center of the triangle I place a black circle which can be made of black paper, a black scrying mirror, or something similar. You can also simply rely upon your powers of visualization and see the dark Moon there. Start by calling to your mind and feeling in your heart the qualities of your Moon Sign. Then do the same with the other two Moons in their natural order within the flow of the Modalities. So for example, if your Moon is in Virgo, then you would follow with Capricorn and end with Taurus. If your Moon is in Aquarius, then you would follow with Gemini and end with Libra. For this technique, you always follow the repeating pattern of cardinal, fixed, and mutable. If you have specific emotional troubles that are current, long-standing patterns you would like to examine, or have in mind a specific change you want in how you process your emotions, then gently bring those to mind. After you think you have experienced enough, then point at, visualize, or touch the glyph of the next Moon Sign in your sequence. Spend some time contemplating how this Sign would shape and express your feelings. Repeat the process with the next Moon Sign. Rather than returning to your Moon Sign, end by contemplating the dark center that contains all three. If you used candles, snuff them out and place the glyphs on top of each other. Last, take time to breathe, meditate, ground and center, or whatever your normal practice is for closing down after a working.

The effect of this technique may be immediate, but more often than not it becomes more tangible over the course of days and weeks. It is also important to be mindful of any dreams, daydreams, or waking visions you may have after using this technique. As always, it would be useful to keep a journal of these experiences. The following is a diagram to refresh your memory of the Elements and Modalities of the 12 Signs.

	Fire	Earth	Air	Water
Cardinal	♈ Aries	♑ Capricorn	♎ Libra	♋ Cancer
Fixed	♌ Leo	♉ Taurus	♒ Aquarius	♏ Scorpio
Mutable	♐ Sagittarius	♍ Virgo	♊ Gemini	♓ Pisces

Ascendant

You can do this technique in a completely intellectual way or as an experiential exercise. Your Ascendant shows how you perceive and how you are perceived. It also says much about how you reach out and communicate through words, deeds, and personal expression such as the clothing you choose to wear. The goal of this technique is to activate the polarity, the continuum, between the Sign of your Ascendant and the Sign of your Descendent. In preparing to use this technique, examine again the nature of the polarities of the Signs. Also, in this journey you remain in the same Modality but change the Element.

The intellectual approach is to review your interactions with other people, your conversations, your impressions of yourself and others, and analyze them with the filter of the qualities that you associate with the Sign of your Ascendant. Then engage in a thought experiment wherein you imagine how different those interactions would be if you were adopting the perspectives and style of action of your Descendent. You can also be proactive, and before important conversations in your personal, public, or business life, you can take time to imagine how to incorporate the characteristics of your Descendent into those exchanges. Over time you should see an improvement in the effectiveness of your communication with others, and gain greater awareness of how others experience you.

In the experiential approach, you envision yourself walking the line in your birth chart that runs from the Ascendant to the Descendent until you reach the center. With each step that you take, imagine you are becoming more like the Descendent. When you reach the center, look to the East, which is the place of the Ascendant, and see its glyph shining there. Then look to the West, which is the place of the Descendent, and see its glyph shining there. Experience the center, and see yourself becoming a synthesis of the two Signs. Afterward, you may wish to add your observations to your journal. Depending upon what works best for you, you may wish to create a path-working, a guided visualization, and record it so you may be guided through the journey by your own words. Another possibility is to write a short ritual that contains these components, set up two altars, and physically walk the line to the center.

Major Personal Returns and Transits

If you recall from the chapter on Aspects, a transit is when a Planet in the heavens is in a position that creates an Aspect to a Planet in a chart. There are some transits we all experience, if we live long enough, that are particularly strong periods of personal growth and transformation. Generally, people only

hear about these in the context of having their chart read in relationship to upcoming events in their life. For magickal practitioners, these also represent opportunities for individualized rites of passage, or for personal workings and rituals designed to make the most of these landmark moments in the journey of life. I will focus on the six that I believe are the most important and can benefit from a mindful approach. If you have already passed through these major returns and transits, then I suggest that you look back at them and review the lessons that were offered then. The dates for these events are approximate as they vary slightly from individual to individual, so you should look at your chart and use an ephemeris, software, or an astrologer to determine your dates. If the Planet goes retrograde during the return or the transit, then the length of the experience is extended.

Second Jupiter Return

Sometime around age 23 or 24, you experience your second Jupiter return. This is to say, Jupiter in the heavens has returned to the same Sign and degree as it is in your birth chart. For most people this is a time filled with opportunities, an expansion of the vistas of life, and an awakening to how the world works. It is also the time when the structures of our brain and our mind, the physical and the subtle, are beginning to mesh more fully. This is the time when our psychic and magickal capabilities have the potential to flower.

First Saturn Return

Sometime around the age of 29 or 30, you experience your first Saturn return. This is often a stressful and difficult time, but there is the potential to set the foundation for the course of many decades of life. Saturn is form and limitation, and having completed one journey around the zodiac, it has completed its developmental stages; thus, it marks entry into adulthood. This return tests the structures of your life, prunes away deadwood, and reveals which lessons you missed along the way. The ease or difficulty you experience during the first Saturn return is a clear report on how ready you are for the work of your life.

Uranus Opposition

Sometime around the ages of 39 to 41, you experience your Uranus opposition. This means Uranus in the heavens is directly opposite the position of Uranus in your chart. Uranus moves very slowly, so the Uranus return does not occur until around the age of 80 or 82. Even though it is not a return, the Uranus opposition is perhaps the most important major transit. It can be likened to a second

adolescence in that there are questions of autonomy, life purpose, and passion, but experienced as an adult. Uranus represents the spark that makes you an individual. The Uranus opposition compares and contrasts how you have used your spark in the world with its idealized representation in the heavens. This transit often results in a dramatic change of direction in life. The question posed is: Will you embrace life and choose new goals or simply coast and fade toward death? When experienced without mindfulness, this is the trigger for the classic midlife crisis.



Chiron Return

Some time around age 50 to 51, Chiron returns to the same place that it was at the time of your birth. Chiron is not a Planet. Most astrologers refer to it as an asteroid although technically it is a minor Planet that exhibits some signs of being a comet. It was discovered in 1977 and I believe it has a very strong impact on our lives, particularly if you are involved in metaphysical activities. In some ways, it can be considered a bridge between structure-loving Saturn and freedom-loving Uranus. Chiron is strongly connected to issues of integration, evolution of the self, and the management of pains that cannot be fully healed. The Saturn return deals to a great degree with learning to cope with physical world. The Uranus opposition deals primarily with our emotions, passions, and our use of our life-force. The Chiron return is a crisis of consciousness that can open the doorways to enlightenment. Chiron is the guide to initiation into the higher qualities represented by the outer Planets.

Second Saturn Return

Sometime around age 59 to 60, we experience our second Saturn return. This is a time to evaluate self-worth and the accomplishments of our lives, and an opportunity to choose how we will use what we have accumulated over the years. How we navigate this return can determine whether we will be able to act as wisdom keepers and teachers, or be viewed as foolish and redundant. The fifth Jupiter return usually occurs in close proximity to the second Saturn return. There is a challenge to create the proper forms and structures to make

use of the opportunities provided by the Jupiter return so they are more than fleeting moments of good fortune. Characteristics of the remaining years of life are often determined by actions associated with second Saturn return.

Solar Return and Venus Cycle

Every eight years on your Solar Return, which is when the Sun is at the same position as it was at your birth and is normally within a day or two of your birthday, Venus returns to approximately the same place as in your natal chart. The orb slowly widens each 8-year cycle but it is still within 5° of its position in the birth chart at age 88. So at the ages of 8, 16, 24, 32, 40, 48, 56, 64, 72, 80, 88, etc. you experience a Venus return in close proximity to your Sun return. Conventional astrologers tend to focus on this occurrence in terms of romance and the material abundance in your life that will be experienced over the 12 months following the return. From a more spiritual and magickal perspective, these are also years in which you can hone your sense of harmony and beauty, and bring concordance between the head and the heart. If you are doing work to forge a better union with your higher self or are doing work toward knowledge of and conversation with your Holy Guardian Angel, then these special Venus return years offer you great assistance. Opportunities for those engaged in the great work are always available during these special years.

CHAPTER 15

THE MAGICK SQUARES

Introduction

The full story of the origins of the Magick Squares, also known as the Kamea, are as yet unknown, but their antiquity is without doubt. The roots of the Magick Squares may be in China, Sumeria, or India, but the modern occultist generally associates them with the Qabala, Planetary Magick, and Ceremonial Magick. The oldest Magick Square that I am aware of is the Lo Shu Square that comes to us from the *Scroll of the River Lo* from 650 BCE in China. The Lo Shu Square to modern eyes is the same as the Square of Saturn. Interestingly enough, the Chinese used this Square to control flooding, in other words, to hold back or bind a river, which is a very Saturn-like usage. The oldest European reference to the Squares being correlated to the Planets comes to us from Spain in the 1280s in the *Libro de Astromagia*, the remaining fragment of which is at the Vatican Library. Regardless of their original source, the Magick Squares express a spiritual truth held by most systems of occult philosophy. In ancient times, knowledge of the meaning of letters and numbers was an integral part of the esoteric sciences. The Squares show the underlying unity of numbers and letters with the powers of creation. In them we see concentrated essences arranged in a grid that symbolically shows the interplay between the forces and forms that make up the manifest universe.

In the most simple terms, the Squares are grids of numbers in which the totals of the rows, columns, and diagonals equal the same number. At first glance this may seem an interesting mathematical curiosity and nothing more. I encourage you to consider each Square as a finely crafted poem, deceptive in its simplicity. The first seven Magick Squares correspond to the Seven Elder Planets and are based on grids of 3x3 through 9x9, composed of square-shaped cells. It is not possible to create a Magick Square based on grids of the numbers 0, 1, or 2 for obvious mathematical reasons. The numbers that are written into the squares on the grid are the numbers 1 through the number that is the product of multiplying the number the grid is based on by itself. So in the 3x3 Magick Square the numbers are 1 through 9, and in the 4x4 Magick Square the numbers are 1 to 16. This pattern holds true for all the Magick Squares. One of the qualities that distinguishes Magick Squares is that if you add up the numbers in

the cells of the grid, the totals for the rows, columns, and diagonals are equal.

The Planets are assigned to the Magick Squares using the same numerical correspondences that are derived from the Tree of Life. The third sphere on the Tree of Life is Binah, which correlates to Saturn, hence the 3x3 Magick Square is the Square of Saturn. The fourth sphere on the Tree of Life is Chesed, whose number is 4 and association is Jupiter, hence the 4x4 grid is the Square of Jupiter, and so on. At this point some of you that are reading may be wondering to yourself if you should finish the chapter. Some of you may be having an allergic reaction to talking about math or numbers. Some may be thinking that there is nothing practical in sight, and honestly you would be wrong. Please slog on for a little bit longer, and you'll find just how useful the Magick Squares are for practical Magick and an assortment of tasks. I promise the math won't be any worse than using a child's secret decoder ring.

When you think about studying the Planets, it usually brings to mind reading descriptive passages; looking at lists of keywords; and perhaps memorizing correlations to herbs, stones, colors, and other correspondences. At the same time that this is the easiest approach, there is a missing piece. We speak of the Planets as being powers; as being forces; as having energy, information, and essence. Math is also a descriptive language, and perhaps one of the root languages of the universe. When you are looking at the numbers in a Magick Square, you are looking at a representation of the wave pattern, the wave front, that is the shape of that Planet's energy, information, and essence. The low numbers represent dips, and the high numbers peak in the shape of a Planet's power at a fundamental level.

The most popular use for the Magick Squares is the generation of sigils tuned to specific intents that are powered by the Planet's Square used to generate the sigil. A sigil in Magick is a symbol that can represent a distillation, a summation, the concentration of a series of events, a state of being, a name of power, an encapsulated spell, the formula for process, and so on that is used for amulets, talismans, focal points in rituals, and other purposes. There are many methods for creating sigils, but I will focus on the simplest types of sigils that can be derived from the Magick Squares.

Imagine that the Planets are like spheres of subtle brilliance, each with a particular color that represents its power. Imagine that you aim something like a magickal astral telescope at the subtle Planet, and collect and focus its brilliance. At the end of this magickal telescope there is a special eyepiece that lets you pop in a filter so the brilliance of the Planet passes through a symbol on the filter. You can look directly into the eyepiece or project the image onto a

screen. The magickal telescope is the Magick Square that finds and focuses in on the Planet. The filter added to the telescope is a sigil placed on the Square and imbued with its Planet's power. Looking into the eyepiece is internalizing the message and the instructions of the sigil, and projecting it onto the screen is causing it to manifest in the field of action of the world. You can also imagine that sigil derived from the Magick Squares is like an antenna whose shape is resonant to the specific frequency that matches the intent of the sigil and that Planet's power. If the idea of resonant antennas is foreign to you, then imagine a bottle that is partially filled with water. If you blow air into the bottle, it will produce particular tone. If the tone is higher than you need, you pour out some water; and if it is too low, you add some water. The space within the bottle has a fundamental frequency that is natural to its form. A sigil is a way of creating the right shape to produce the right energetic sound that matches your purpose.

The Squares of the Seven Elder Planets

Traditionally, there were only the Magick Squares for the Seven Elder Planets. Modern occultists have created Squares for the Outer Planets and also for Earth, but to get started, I will focus upon the Seven Elder Planet Squares. If you find the Magick Squares are to your liking, then after you have worked with the traditional Squares you can pursue experiments with the new Squares. The next seven paragraphs walk through some of the mathematical properties of the Elder Planet Squares. I encourage you to read them now, but if you are still not convinced of the Squares' utility or are impatient, you may skip to the next section that describes the creation of sigils. I suspect you will come back and read these paragraphs anyway after you reach the end of this chapter. I am that confident you will adopt the squares into your practices. For now, let us begin with the square of Saturn and begin to train the eye to discern the secrets of the Kamea.

The 3x3 grid that makes up this Square is the key to understanding all the Squares, especially the odd-numbered ones. It is composed of the numbers 1 through 9, all the single digit numerals with the exception of zero. Consider zero to be like a cast circle, important as a container and a boundary but not as the field of action. Saturn's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 15. Its grand total of all the numbers is 45. As we will discover, these numbers become more meaningful when the Square is put to use. This Square is also called the Kamea of Lead because lead is the metal alchemically associated with Saturn. Traditionally, amulets using this Square as their basis were made of lead. As the kernel from which the other Squares spring, Saturn is often used

as it is considered to contain the qualities of the others. Take note of the fact that the even numbers are at the corners, the odd numbers form a cross, and the diagonal that runs from upper left to lower right is a consecutive series. The line of consecutive numbers is the hidden expression of the number 1. Close observation of these sorts of relationships will hasten your understanding of the Squares.

4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

Saturn - ♄
Binah
Lead

The 4x4 grid forms the Square of Jupiter, also known as the Kamea of Tin. It is the first of the even-numbered Squares, and the first with double-digit numbers. It is the hidden expression of the number 2. You'll notice that, unlike the Square of Saturn, there is no central number, but it can be divided into four quadrants about the center point. There is a fifth quadrant if you take the center-most four numbers. Another important structural feature that will reoccur in the other even-numbered Squares is the grouping of numerical pairs forming a vertical column. Jupiter's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 34. Its grand total of all the numbers is 136. Looking at the Squares for Saturn and Jupiter you may deduce that the highest number in any given Magick Square is given by the square of the grid. In the case of Jupiter: 4x4=16.

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

Jupiter - ♃
Chesed
Tin

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

Mars - ♂
Geburah
Iron

The 5x5 grid forms the Square of Mars, the Kamea of Iron. Here again, as in Saturn's Square, we see consecutive numbers running in diagonals from upper left to lower right. This time there are three such diagonals; 3 is the number of Saturn and shows the transmission of Saturn's influence into the field of Mars. If you look in the upper right corner of this grid you will see the number 3. In all the grids based on odd numbers the upper right corner reveals the hidden influence that underlies the Square. You'll note that in the Saturn Square the number is 2. Mars's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 65. Its grand total of all the numbers is 325. The highest number in this series is 25 (5x5). This grid is used in many ancient formulae, especially those using the English alphabet. One of the well-known variations is the SATOR Square charm whose oldest representation was found in Pompeii. In a fashion reminiscent of the numerical relationships in the Kamea, the letters form the same sequence of words up, down, and across, but not diagonally. The words, SATOR AREPO TENET OPERA ROTAS are written to form a fourfold palindrome. The charm is used for staunching blood, stopping fires, and many other purposes that are connected to Mars.

S	A	T	O	R
A	R	E	P	O
T	E	N	E	T
O	P	E	R	A
R	O	T	A	S

The 6x6 grid forms the Square of the Sun, the Kamea of Gold. This Square is the creation of the number 2 multiplied by the number 3 and reflects the essences of both. Look at the center of the Square and you will see a 2x2 grid. Take note that there is no central number but rather a central point around which there are two pairs of numbers. About the central point you can see four quadrants composed of 3x3 grids. If you add up the numbers in these quadrants, the numbers are two pairs of the numbers 135 and 198 which echoes the pairs in the center of the Square. Symmetries such as these occur in all the even-numbered Squares. They reveal another level of interconnection between the Squares, and also have Qabalistic importance. The Sun's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 111. Its grand total of all the numbers is 666. The highest number in this series is 36 (6x6).

6	32	3	34	35	1
7	11	27	28	8	30
19	14	16	15	23	24
18	20	22	21	17	13
25	29	10	9	26	12
36	5	33	4	2	31

Sun - ☉
Tiphereth
Gold

22	47	16	41	10	35	4
5	23	48	17	42	11	29
30	6	24	49	18	36	12
13	31	7	25	43	19	37
38	14	32	1	26	44	20
21	39	8	33	2	27	45
46	15	40	9	34	3	28

Venus - ♀
Netzach
Copper

The 7x7 grid forms the Square of Venus, the Kamea of Copper. The number 4 in the upper-right corner reveals that the Square of Jupiter is the hidden influence that underlies the Square of Venus. The five diagonals wherein the numbers are in sequence from upper left to lower right indicates a secondary influence from the Square of Mars. As the grid number of a Square grows larger it becomes less the expression of pure number and more an approximation of the complexities of the material plane. The Squares are flat representations of what are really multidimensional relationships. Trace the path of the numbers with your finger starting with the number 1 and ending with 49. Now, try tracing that path with your mind, looping above and below the plane of the Square. Take a moment to ponder the differences in your perception of the path of the numbers derived by these two methods. You may wish to repeat this exercise with all the Squares. The difference between the even and the odd squares is very revealing. Venus's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 175. Its grand total of all the numbers is 1,225. The highest number in this series is 49 (6x6).

8	58	59	5	4	62	63	1
49	15	14	52	53	11	10	56
41	23	22	44	45	19	18	48
32	34	35	29	28	38	39	25
40	26	27	37	36	30	31	33
17	47	46	20	21	43	42	24
9	55	54	12	13	51	50	16
64	2	3	61	60	6	7	57

Mercury - ☿
Hod
Quicksilver

The 8x8 grid forms the Square of Mercury, the Kamea of Quicksilver. The number 8 is derived from 2x4, or more accurately 23, the cube of 2. This grid should look familiar because it is the grid that forms the board for chess, checkers, and many other games. You may wish to place a knight on the Square of Mercury and see how that chess piece's movement pattern reveals this Kamea's secrets. Eight is also the number of the octave implying the movement of notes through a scale. In this Square the sum of the quadrants about the center point is equal. Place is more important than value in this Square. Mercury's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 260. Its grand total of all the numbers is 2080. The highest number in this series is 64 (8x8).

The 9x9 grid forms the Square of the Moon, the Kamea of Silver. This is the last in the series of Elder Planets and also the last Square based on a single-digit grid. The last of the single digits is also the foundation for all the numbers above. All numbers of two or more digits consists of the sum of the digits and a set of nines. For example: 237= 2+3+7+ (25 x 9). Another example: 11= 1+1+ (9). There are seven diagonals with consecutive sequences, indicating the influence of Venus. The upper-right corner is 5, showing the hidden influence of Mars. The Moon's key, the total of any column, row, or diagonal, is 369. Its grand total of all the numbers is 3,321. The highest number in this series is 81 (9x9).

37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

Moon - ☽
Yesod
Silver

Creating Sigils on the Squares

In ancient times, knowledge of the meaning of letters and numbers was an integral part of the esoteric sciences. In the present, there are many practitioners who speak of sacred alphabets, and many involved in Magick see the Greek alphabet and the Hebrew alphabet as among the foremost of the sacred alphabets. In Greek and in Hebrew, letters and numbers are one and the same. In other words, each letter also has a numerical value. So when we see a word in those languages, we're also seeing a sequence of numbers. As you can imagine, this would make it very easy to plot a word or phrase onto a Magick Square. There certainly is a value in using foreign languages as liturgical languages, but there's also an advantage in using your native tongue as it is the one that your thoughts take shape in. I believe that all languages are partly a creation of human culture, and partly guided and inspired by unseen forces. So I do believe that you can use any language as a sacred language.

The first step in the process of creating a sigil with the Magick Squares is to narrow and focus what you wish to accomplish down to 1 to 3 words. After you've had some experience with the squares, you may also use longer phrases, taking the first letter of each word as a starting point. Take as long as you need to complete this part of the process. None of this is wasted time because it is leaving its imprint in your mind, which will make it easier to work with the sigil once you have constructed it. Then decide which of the Seven Elder Planets is the most supportive of what you wish to accomplish with the sigil. Review all that you know about the Planets, and explore the pros and cons of each relative

to your purpose. It is not uncommon to find only one is really suitable. Actually, the more time you spend to determine what you wish to accomplish as you condense it down to a few focal words, the easier it is to select the Planet. If you can only narrow it down to two or three of the Planets, then you may wish to take into consideration when you will be creating the sigil and make your choice dependent upon the best timing. If the selection of the timing does not narrow it down enough, then use a simple divination such as pulling tarot cards, casting runes, or using a pendulum to make the decision.

The next step in the process is to convert the word or words into numbers. Regardless of which Planetary Square you use, you only employ the numbers 1 through 9. The first Square, the Square of Saturn, is the origin point for all the Squares, and it only contains 1 through 9. Also the number 9 represents the nine spheres on the Tree of Life above the sphere of the Earth. Take the English alphabet and write it out on a piece of paper. Next to the letter “A” put the number 1, next to the “B” put the number 2; continue this sequence and when you reach 9, begin again with the number 1. Thus at the “J” you begin renumbering again, and the sequence continues through the end of the alphabet. This should remind you a bit about the construction of the tables for the planetary hours. This is also very similar to some operations in numerology, and to casting out 9s or canceling by 9s in mathematics. Here's a simple diagram that illustrates which letters in the English alphabet correspond to which number. You can use the same process with other alphabets.

As an example, let's say you will be going to a family reunion, and you are concerned about the resurgence of some old conflicts during a time that is intended to reaffirm familial love. In this particular case, let's say that you decide that the best word for what you want to accomplish is “peace.” After consideration, you decide the Square for Venus is your best choice as it would support harmony and positive emotions. Take the letters for the word “peace” and convert them to numbers using the reduction key for English. The result is “peace” equals 75135. The next step is to plot those numbers onto the Square of Venus. Do not worry about all the numbers that are skipped over; they are like the silences and durations that turn sound into musical notes and rhythms. There are a number of different schools of thought for notation on the Squares. Some styles are unicursal, that is, the pen stays on the page and every change of direction is a curve that results in flowing, sinuous sigils. Others prefer constructions that are composed of straight lines and sharp angles. I have a friend who starts with a strict construction and then redraws their sigils with a brush and ink while holding their purpose in mind to let inspiration guide

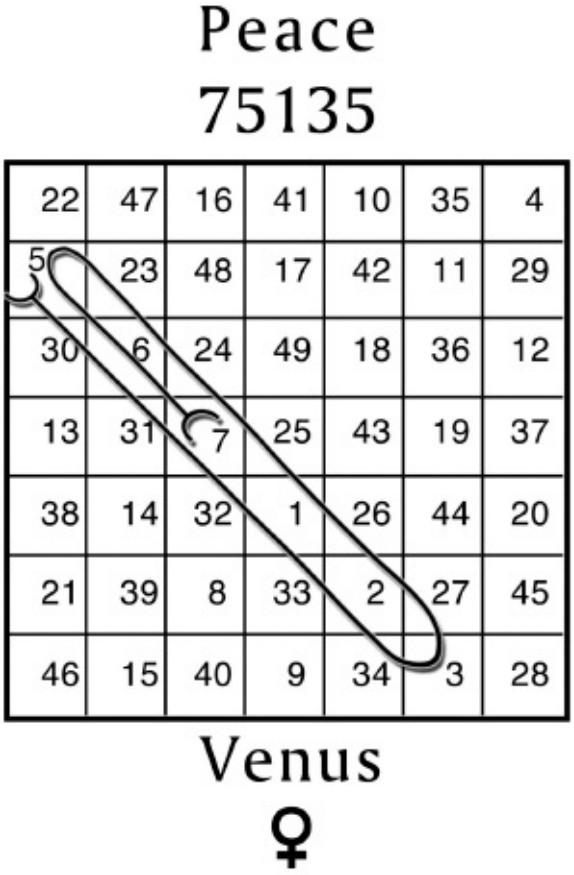
changes in the qualities of the brush strokes. There are many effective approaches; pick one and become consistent and proficient. In my experience, regardless of which style you use, some things need to be included in the notation of a sigil for the sake of clarity. The beginning and ending points of a sigil should be marked; an arc or a short slash can be used to designate these points. If a number is repeated in the sequence, indicate that repetition with a complex curve, a circle or concentric circles, dashes, or something else that would match your chosen style. For the names of beings or complicated sigils with many numbers, it is useful to make the beginning and ending points more distinctive. One simple solution is to use a circle or an asterisk at these points. Or you may wish to use one of my idiosyncratic approaches which is to make the beginning and ending points the shape of the geometric figure associated with that Square. The Saturn Square is a 3x3 grid, so its figure is a triangle; Jupiter's grid is 4x4 so it is a square; Mars's is 5x5, so it is a pentagon; and so on.

The Reduction Key For English								
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
J	K	L	M	N	O	P	Q	R
S	T	U	V	W	X	Y	Z	

This diagram shows one possible construction for the word “peace” upon the Square of Venus. Some of you may note that the sigil is not particularly pretty. Generally, the sigils constructed on the Squares are not pretty, but they are powerful.

The next decision to be made is how you will implement the use of the sigil. For example, you may choose to carve the sigil onto a green candle and dress it with sweet-smelling oils. It almost goes without saying, but since I've had a student attempt to do this, you only need to carve the sigil, not the square that was used to create it. You would then proceed with a candle-burning spell ritual and whatever mode is your custom. Another possibility is copying the sigil onto a small piece of parchment that you fold up and keep in your pocket or in a small amulet bag around your neck. You could also draw the sigil on your own skin (mehndi or henna is an option) in a place that will not be seen. I would think thrice before ever having a sigil tattooed on your body; actually, I strongly discourage it. Or you may take that piece of parchment with the sigil and

conduct a ritual in which you charge it, burn it, and consign its actions to the astral. For something more lasting, you may create a piece of jewelry with the sigil engraved upon it. In fact, the term “cameo” is actually derived from Kamea, and ancient cameo jewelry often had a sigil inscribed upon the unseen side closest to the wearer's body.



The ways sigils can be implemented are limited only by the imagination and the boundaries of traditions and tastes. However, a sigil should be charged before it is put to use, and depending upon its intended purpose, it should be destroyed when its work is done or put safely away until it is needed again. If it is to be used again, then it should be recharged before each use. The charging of the sigil could involve chanting its root word and its Planet's name. It could be charged with intensive visualization and meditation. If it is your practice, it can be augmented with incense and oils that are in tune with both the purpose and Planet. The whole process can be very simple or very complex as determined by your sensibilities, in the amount of power required. Also be mindful that the sigil exists in three places while it is in use. It exists within you, as the process of its creation is imprinted in your psyche and in your energy. It exists in

whatever external object you created with the sigil on it. And it also exists as the energetic process that manifests the change you desire. Whatever type of working or ritual you create should bear all three of these in mind.

A Tool to Assist in This Work

Should you find the Magick Squares become more important in your practices, there are a few tools that you may wish to construct that would provide easier construction and more power for your sigils. Acquire enough wooden squares, the sort that you find at craft stores, for each of the Planets you plan on using. Use a permanent marker or paint to put the grid and the numbers onto the wooden squares, one square per Planet. Place the numbers off-center in each of the cells of the grids. To add another layer of correspondence, you may wish to paint each wooden square with colors that match their Planet. If you want even more, then leave a border around each square to leave room for adding the Planet's glyph and its associated Signs. In my set of permanent Magick Squares, I have a small bit of each of the Planets' associated metal lacquered into place. My solution for dealing with the toxicity of mercury is that I have a small glass mercury switch glued and embedded in the border. Upright in the center of each cell, place a finishing nail or a short dowel stick. Then proceed to consecrate and charge each Square using the techniques that you've learned in this book or elsewhere. You can then use either yarn or flexible wire to quickly create a sigil on any of the Squares. If you're using yarn, the yarn can be taken off after it's been charged as a sigil for use in an amulet or to be burned. If you're using flexible wire, it can be taken off intact and hung over a door, placed upon an altar, or used in any way that you can imagine.

The Squares and Sigils for Attunement

The Magick Squares are not only tools for practical Magick, they are sources for inspiration. The Squares themselves or the various figures that can be derived through their use can be used like yantras or mandalas for meditation. These focal points for meditation can be about the powers and attributes of the Squares. They can also be used to understand how particular ideas express in the realms specified by the Squares in question. Such meditations, in addition to furthering spiritual development, have the effect of increasing understanding of the Squares. It is also an excellent way to embed the pattern of the Planets deeply into the psyche. This is particularly beneficial for those who are unfamiliar with Ceremonial Magick or have only a passing acquaintance with the Qabala because it gives the deeper parts of the mind an opportunity to

integrate the material. A very easy meditative technique using the Squares is to let the eye follow the order of the numbers from 1 to the ending number again and again. If you benefit from a tactile response, then running your finger tracing the pattern of the numbers is also valuable. It is easy to neglect the quieter, less flashy aspects of esoteric studies but there are gems that are only revealed through the polish of meditation.

CHAPTER 16

The Great Year

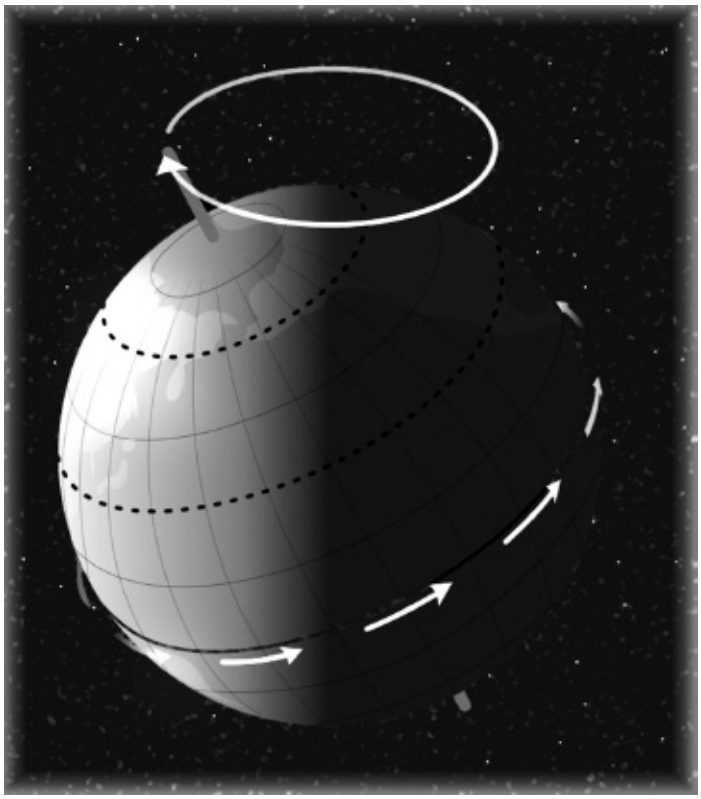
Throughout all of Astrology there are there are cycles nested within other cycles. The Hermetic axiom “As above, so below” is clearly evidenced in all astrological theories and practices. The cycle of day and night dovetails into the lunar cycle, which dovetails into the solar cycle, and now we take it a step further out to the largest cycle we can see in Astrology. One way or another you have probably heard that we are entering into a New Age, or entering into the Age of Aquarius, but what does this really mean? In human terms, an Age sounds like a very long period of time. In the terms of Astrology's perspective, an Age is actually just one month, but it is one month in the Great Year. The length of a Great Year is about 25,920 standard years, and its *months* are about 2,160 standard years long. These months of the Great Year are commonly referred to as Ages.

During each Age, the Sign of the Age leaves its imprint on all major changes and developments in culture, science, religion, and politics. The Sign of the Age is the most powerful of all the astrological influences, but because its action is slow and deep, it often goes unnoticed by most of the people of its time period. For occultists, the change from one Age to another Age also indicates broad and sweeping changes in the energetic atmosphere we live and work in, and the faces in the facets of themselves that the spirits show us.

The Cause and the Indicator for the Great Year

The turning of the Earth on its axis generates day and night, and in Astrology it moves the Houses. The revolution of the Moon around the Earth gives us the phases of the Moon, and the Moon's journey through the 12 Signs. Earth's revolution around the Sun moves us through the 12 Signs of the Zodiac in the solar year. Following this sequence, you can then deduce that some kind of rotation or revolution is involved in the changing of the Ages, the months of the Great Year. If you have ever seen a spinning top, or dreidel, wobbling slightly as it spins with its handle slowly tracing a circle, then you have seen the type of motion that marks the Great Year. The Earth slowly wobbles as it turns on its axis. It takes about 25,920 years for the Earth to complete one cycle of its wobble, and as it wobbles, Earth's poles trace circles (see diagram). This is why

over time the North Star changes and the Signs for the seasons in Astrology do not match the constellations that astronomers see at the change of the seasons. We know which Sign we are in during the year because the solstices and the equinoxes anchor the Zodiac, and from those points we divide the orbit evenly into 12 Signs. So how do we know which Astrological Age we are in? In this case, astronomers and astrologers will make similar observations. At the dawn of the Spring equinox, if we look to the East, the constellation that is rising in the East is the marker for the Age.



The Length of the Transition

At first glance, it appears straightforward to determine when we transition from one Age to another. It is not a simple matter, and astrologers will probably be debating when we have or when we will cross over into the Age of Aquarius for the next century. So when does an Age begin? Is it when the first degree of the 30° segment is visible in the East at the Spring equinox? Is it when the first star in its constellation rises in the East at the Spring equinox? I believe we have already entered the Age of Aquarius, but I think there is very little value in debating the question. It is enough to know that we are in the transition and will be in the transition of the Ages for the remainder of our lives, including even the youngest person reading this book. Let me make a comparison to the

changing of the seasons in the standard solar year that we know best. Imagine that tomorrow is the Spring equinox. Does that mean every day thereafter the weather will be mild and you can put away your winter clothing? Generally, that would be a very bad choice. However, it does mean that with every day that passes after the Spring equinox, there's a higher probability that the days will become more springlike. Then the day comes when there is no question that it is the Spring. If it takes weeks to transition from one season to another in a cycle that is one year in length, then how much longer should the transition be for a cycle as long as the Great Year? To be fair, the turning of the Ages is just the transition from one month to another, from one Sign to another, not the quarter-cycle change of a season. Nonetheless, it conveys the idea that our experience of the turning from one age to another is gradual, even if the actual moment of the change is very brief.

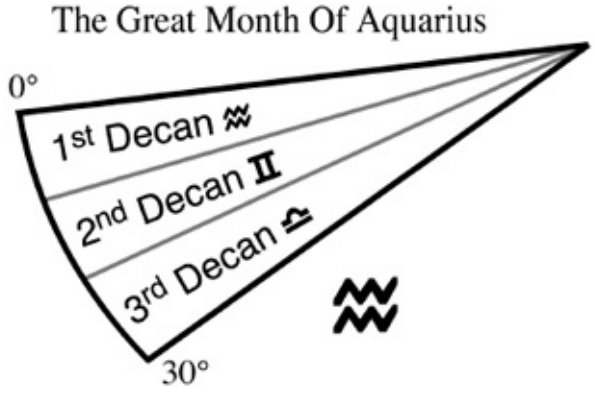
An Astrological Age, also known as a Great Month, lasts approximately 2,160 years. Each Great Month consists of three Great Weeks whose length is roughly 720 years. I will explain shortly why there are three rather than four Great Weeks. The Great Day, which is a precession, a turning, of 1° of the great year, is roughly 72 years, and there are 10 Great Days in a Great Week. I believe that our experience of the transition from one age to another takes approximately 2 to 4 Great Days. This is a period of between 144 to 288 standard solar years.

There is another cycle that is larger than the Great Year, that is called the Galactic Year. The Sun revolves around the center of our galaxy, pulling with it our entire solar system. We are not sure exactly how long this takes, although the current estimate is 250 million standard solar years. We have not had enough observations to begin to guess at the qualities of this cycle from an astrological perspective. Perhaps higher-order beings, who live in a time frame much broader than ours, are aware of the implications of the Galactic Year.

The Order of the Ages

Those of you who are close readers and focus in on the details may have raised an eyebrow at the idea that we are leaving the Age of Pisces and entering into the Age of Aquarius. After all, we normally move from Aquarius to Pisces when we look at the order of the Signs in our standard year. Bring to mind again the image of a spinning top that is slowly wobbling. The circle traced by the wobble moves in the opposite direction to the spinning of the top. This is why we move through the Ages in an order that is opposite to the normal sequence of the Signs in the Zodiac. Pisces is the last Sign in the normal

sequence of the Zodiac, but since we move backward through the Signs in the Great Year, Pisces is both the beginning and the end of the cycle. With this in mind, it seems particularly appropriate the symbol for Pisces is a double Sign with two fish facing in opposite directions. It brings to mind Janus, the Roman god of change, time, and transitions depicted with two faces, one toward the future and one toward the past.



The Decans • The Weeks In The Great Year			
Sign	1st Decan	2nd Decan	3rd Decan
♈	Aries	Leo	Sagittarius
♉	Taurus	Virgo	Capricorn
♊	Gemini	Libra	Aquarius
♋	Cancer	Scorpio	Pisces
♌	Leo	Sagittarius	Aries
♍	Virgo	Capricorn	Taurus
♎	Libra	Aquarius	Gemini
♏	Scorpio	Pisces	Cancer
♐	Sagittarius	Aries	Leo
♑	Capricorn	Taurus	Virgo
♒	Aquarius	Gemini	Libra
♓	Pisces	Cancer	Scorpio

Because we move through the astrological Ages, the Great Months of the Great Year, backward, we enter an Age in its last degree and end an Age when we reach its 0°. One of the consequences of this arrangement is that the most extreme expression of the qualities of an Age tend to occur toward the end of the Age. I'm going to introduce another astrological concept that has multiple uses in conventional Astrology, but for our purposes will focus just on how it relates to the Great Year. Each Sign of the Zodiac is 30°, and that 30° can be subdivided into three sets of 10° (see diagrams). These 10° subdivisions of the Sign are called the decans, or decanates. It is from the decans that we derive the three Great Weeks in a Great Month. The pattern of the Elements and the Modalities is interwoven throughout all of Astrology, even down to the level of a single Sign. Aquarius is an Air Sign of Fixed Modality. Each of the three decans is a part of Aquarius, but there is an undertone within each decan that makes them unique. So the first decan is Aquarius with Aquarius, in it's full expression. The second decan is Aquarius with an undertone of Gemini. The third decan is Aquarius with an undertone of Libra. So each Sign of the zodiac contains within itself an echo of all the Modalities, and the other Signs that are of the same Element.

The Age of Pisces

In order to explain how the Sign of an age influences the development of the world, I will use the Age of Pisces since we have the benefit of hindsight to find examples. Pisces believes in unity and the power of the higher heart above all else. We should not be surprised that it was during this Age that religions became more and more decoupled from tribes and nations, and were presented as universal truths. Christianity and Islam are perhaps the strongest examples of the rise in the importance of belief in religions, and of the desire to spread religions across the globe. Buddhism also arose, expressing the Piscean desires for compassion and peace. I actually think the birth of the Buddha was perhaps more of a marker for the beginning of the Piscean Age than the birth of Christ. Pisces influence is perhaps the reason why transcendence was one of the dominant themes in religion during this Age. Politically there was also a rise in the unification of smaller units such as kingdoms, provinces, and tribal lands into nations. The concept of mass culture, of mainstreams, of nonlocal pop culture are also markers for the Age of Pisces. Self-sacrifice and martyrdom are also part of the Piscean pattern, and we see it strongly throughout the history of the last 2,000 years. Astrological Signs are often best understood when seen as a part of a polarity with its opposite Sign. In the case of Pisces this is Virgo, and

Virgo can be seen to be the *shadow* of the Age. Purity and cleanliness are part of Virgo's pattern. During the Age of Pisces, we have seen many implementations of the concepts of purity and cleanliness. Some of these have been in the physical realm with the discovery of the value of hygiene in matters of health. Others have been in the theological realm and have led to the creation of the dichotomy of spirit and matter being related to the concepts of clean and dirty. The Industrial Revolution is a clear example of Pisces combined with the Virgo shadow, unification of action and standardization. The shadow of an Age is neither good nor bad, although we can find examples that we can label with these terms. The shadow of an Age is simply the grounding rod for the aspirations of the Sign of an Age.

The Element of Pisces is Water, and its Modality is Mutable. Earlier, I explained some of the ways that the Moon has a broad and pervasive impact on Magick and our subtle bodies. At a broader and even more encompassing level, the Sign of an Age determines the attributes of the boundaries between the various planes of existence and spiritual realms. During the Age of Pisces, the veils between the worlds had a watery and mutable quality to them. This meant the veils were easy to pierce but quickly resealed themselves. Imagine going to a placid body of water, like a lake or a bay, and trying to dig a hole with a shovel in the surface of the water. If you shovel quickly, you might be able to keep some of the water back. It is harder to keep a large portal or conduit between the worlds or planes open under these conditions. This in part accounts for the rarity of physically transformative and tangible Magick during the Age of Pisces. I encourage you to spend some time brainstorming through all the different ways the Element and Modality of a Sign would change how rituals and Magick function in various Ages.

The Age of Aquarius

Have you ever heard the song from the musical *Hair* entitled “Aquarius/Let the Sunshine In” that heralds the coming of the New Age? Here are a few lines from the song:

Harmony and understanding
Sympathy and trust abounding
No more falsehoods or derisions
Golden living dreams of visions
Mystic crystal revelation
And the minds true liberation

None of the song actually relates to the Age of Aquarius; instead, it is Aquarius seen through Pisces-colored glasses. The song is a paean to the hopes and the wishes of a fading Age. All the Signs have wisdom and folly, and there is no Sign that is inherently associated with a Golden Age. What occurs in the Age of Aquarius will depend on the overall level of evolution, enlightenment, and effort put forth by humanity. For those of us that are living in the transition between the Ages, our work in bringing forward what needs to come and doing our best to plant the seeds for the new forms should be ever present in our minds. The next century or two will set the template for the next 2,100 years or so.

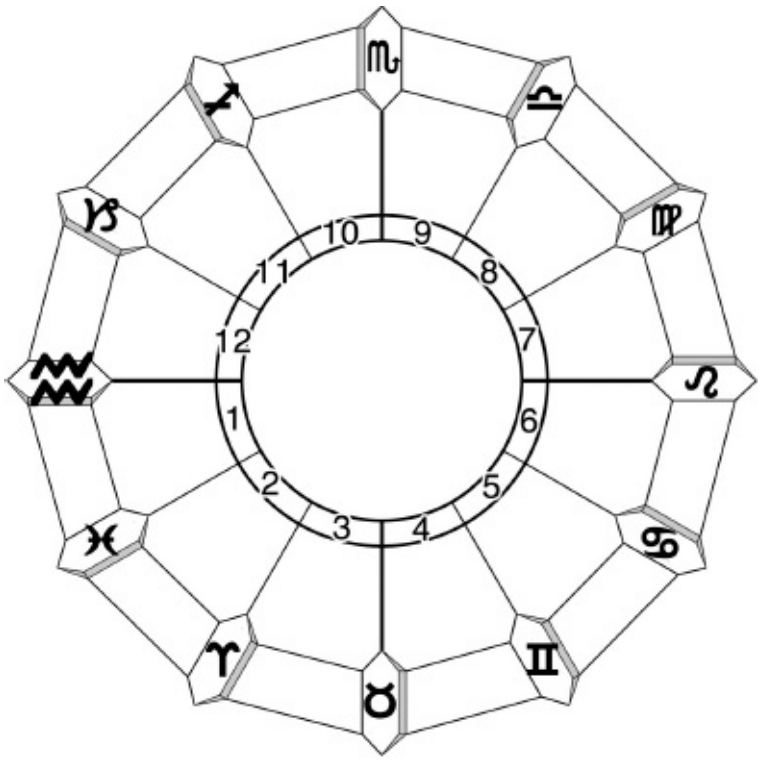
Although it is difficult to see clearly during the time of the transition, there are some general trends associated with Aquarius that I'm fairly confident will hold true. Where is Pisces is concerned with the unification of all things, Aquarius is focused on individuation. We should see a trend toward the unraveling of society into smaller units, tribes, and affinity groups. Many nations will for all intents and purposes break into smaller nations, either officially or by granting more autonomy to local authorities, states, and regions. Just as the change of seasons often produces unsettled weather, it is easy to see the clash between Pisces and Aquarius in our world at this time. Pisces prefers all the waters of the world as one ocean. Aquarius prefers the waters of the world each in its own cup. Aquarius is focused on the individual and on ideology, which may result in greater freedom of individual expression. On the other hand, the shadow of the Age of Aquarius is Leo, so there is also the possibility for greater cults of personality than ever existed in the Age of Pisces. It is more important now than in most periods of history to learn how to form alliances with people, groups, phyles, and tribes that will be increasingly seen as the other. I should point out that the first decan of the Age of Aquarius has a Libra undertone, which to me indicates that patterns of relationships from the smallest groupings to the largest groupings will be extremely important for several centuries if we are to manage our entry into the Age properly.

Let me give a very mundane example from American culture that shows how we are proceeding with this division into smaller groupings. Like language, popular music is often a marker for different cultural groupings. In 1936 *Billboard* magazine published its first hit parade, and at that time it was possible to actually make one list that included all the musical genres. By the time that I was in high school in the 1970s, that one list had grown into several divided by musical genres. Despite this recognition of multiple genres, I was still well aware of what was considered popular, whether I cared for it or not. In

2005, *Billboard* magazine discontinued its Top 40 chart and began to add more and more subdivisions. Today if you speak with young adults, you find that most are extremely knowledgeable about the particular genres that appeal to them and have little awareness of the myriad of other genres. In the Age of Pisces whether or not something appealed to you, you were aware of the culture of the masses. As we move further into the Age of Aquarius, there is access to more means of communication but not much impetus to be aware of those things that fall outside of your immediate interests.

The Element of Aquarius is Air, and its Modality is Fixed. This means the more fully the Age of Aquarius takes hold, the more the attributes of the boundaries between the various planes of existence and spiritual realms will take on a Fixed nature. One of the results is when an opening, a passage, between the worlds or planes is opened, it will have a greater tendency to remain open until someone closes it. Over the course of the next 2,000 years or so, it should be possible to perform Magick that has much more tangible effects than in the Age of Pisces. There are, of course, some risks to be considered as portals have a tendency to remain open. Air being the Element of the Age suggest that Hermetics, mental focus, and visualization will take on a greater role in the Magick of the Aquarian Age. With Leo as the shadow of the Age, there will also be more use of the arts, music, props, and performance in many forms of ritual. Perhaps the largest change is that there will be ongoing differentiations and schisms resulting in a vast assortment of new paths, traditions, and systems.

If you have a question about how a particular practice, arena of life, philosophy, or other facet will be changed during the Age of Aquarius, there is a simple technique that you can use to make some educated guesses. From the perspective of the Great Year, Aquarius is the Ascendant for the chart of the Age. If we then arrange the remainder of the Signs around the wheel of the chart, they become the cusps for each of the Houses. So ask yourself which of the Houses is most connected to the areas of activity posed by your question. Then look at which Sign is on the cusp of that House as it will determine the broad parameters for how that activity fares in the Age of Aquarius. You may wish to take a look back at the chapter on Houses in order to try this technique.

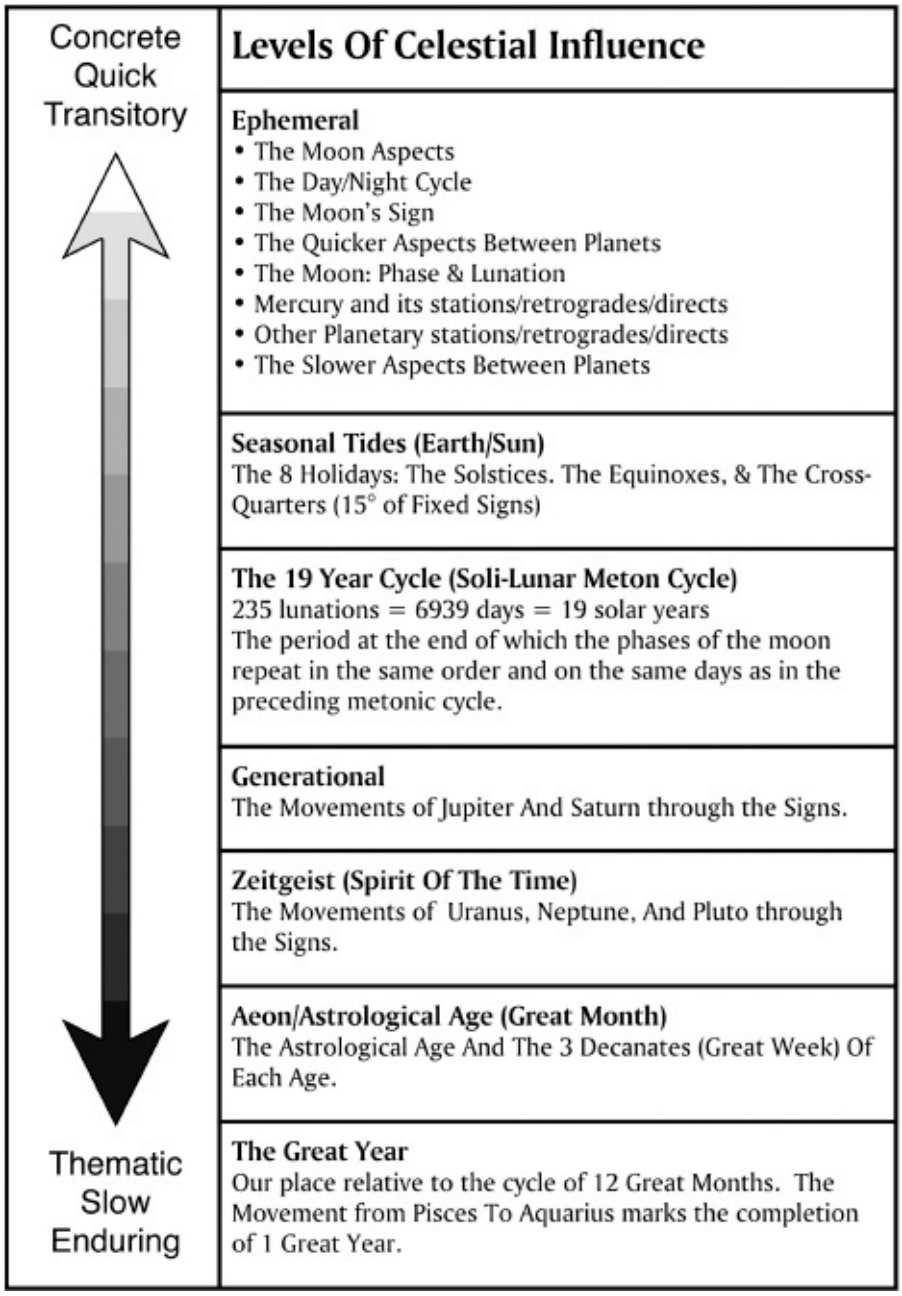


As an example, let's say you have a question about the nature of home and hearth in the Age of Aquarius. Homes relate to the fourth House, and Taurus is on the cusp of the fourth House during the Age of Aquarius. One way this could manifest is people wanting to spend more time and energy making their homes more comfortable and relaxing, with more activities occurring in the home than in outside venues. Taurus also likes safety and security, so we can also anticipate a greater increase in security measures for homes. Taurus prefers structures that are solid, so we should anticipate that homes will be constructed more sturdily to last for decades if not centuries, rather than the fairly flimsy way they are currently being built.

Levels of Celestial Influence

Now that I've introduced some concepts about the Great Year, you can expand your understanding of the astrological worldview as being composed of multiple levels of influence that interact with each other. Take a moment to look over the diagram on celestial influences. It is a generally accepted teaching in the Western Mysteries that the closer you are to the Earth plane, the more time behaves in a linear fashion and the further away from the Earth plane, the more time behaves like eternity, in a nonlinear fashion. This is why the impact of such things as the Sign of the Moon or Aspects to the Moon have such a brief but visible effect, and the timing for their use is so narrow. With each step

outward from the Earth plane, the effective time frame becomes larger, but the impact becomes more diffuse and thematic instead of distinct and concrete. However, the slower-moving changes that occur at the upper, outer levels have the most enduring impact upon history. Spending some time contemplating how each of these levels works simultaneously, in tandem but in different kinds of time, will make it easier for you to use Astrology for divination, personal growth, and Magick. I have also found that sometimes taking into consideration the larger and slower moving cycles explains what would otherwise be unexpected results in workings or rituals.



CHAPTER 17

Next Steps

The following are suggestions for the next things you should study to increase your knowledge of Astrology that is relevant to magickal purposes. These next steps are listed in the order that I think would be most beneficial from the perspective of utility in magickal work. Should you decide that you actually want to learn what is required to be an astrologer, there are numerous online schools, conferences, and even brick-and-mortar astrological colleges that can help you continue your education. I do recommend that you achieve basic mastery of the topics covered in this book before proceeding with more. There is a very easy way to tell whether or not you've achieved basic mastery of a topic. If you are ready to teach a short beginner's class about the topic, then you have achieved basic mastery. If you're not ready to teach the material, then you don't know it yet. This may seem like too stern a judgment, but I have seen too many who merely skim the surface of occult knowledge and wonder why they don't know the depths.

Rulerships and Dignities

You've been introduced to the basic idea of Signs having ruling Planets, but there's much more to it. The relative strength or weakness, ease or difficulty of action, tendency toward harmony or imbalance, and other characteristics of a Planet can also be determined by its relationship to the Rulerships related to Signs, Houses, degree positions, and more. The term “essential dignity” in Astrology indicates the relative strength or weakness of a Planet that arises from the essence of its degree location. The term “accidental dignity” in Astrology indicates the strength or weakness of a Planet that arises from the relationships it has to other Planets in a chart, and the angles of the chart. In traditional Astrology, there are five categories of essential dignity. The topic is complicated because there are many systems and many perspectives on the relative impact of each. Nonetheless, the use of Rulerships and Dignities provides a useful set of tools and perspectives to synthesize the overall impact of all the influences in a chart. Many of the more traditional interpretations tend toward dire or black and white representations of the Dignities, but with a fresh look, you can reframe them to a modern perspective. I've included a diagram at

the end of the book in the appendices that summarizes some of the basics.

Complex Figures and Chart Synthesis

In the introduction to Aspects, the focus was on the interaction between two Planets. It is not unusual for Planets to be made Aspects to multiple other Planets at once in a chart. As you become more fluent in the language of Astrology, you'll be able to make sense of these long passages represented by complex Aspects. Multiple Planets in Aspect to each other can also form special figures. For example, when three Planets are separted by 120 degrees, three trines, they form a Grand Trine, which looks like a triangle. A Grand Trine indicates grace and ease of influence interaction between the three Planets that are connected. It can be tremendously useful if there is a will to use the gift that is given, or it can encourage sloth. When four Planets are square to each other, and also two pairs are opposed to each other this figure is called a Grand Cross, and it looks like a square. Although this can be a very stressful set of Aspects that can generate tension and frustration, it also can lead to great growth. There are many more of these special complex Aspects of which these are but two.

There are also numerous techniques for understanding the meaning of the overall arrangement of Planets in a chart. For example, are most of the Planets above or below the horizon? Are most of them on the East side or the West side of the chart? Are most of the Planets clumped together with one standing alone on the opposite side of the chart? In addition to simply looking for which hemisphere or quarter of the chart is dominant, there are arrangements of the Planets that have meaning even if they are not in aspect to each other, just as there are figures associated with complex Aspects.

Synthesizing the meaning of the chart, putting it all together, can be an intimidating task, so many schools of astrological thought have developed protocols and procedures to assist in this process. I suggest you explore until you find one that fits your needs and sensibilities. Ultimately, synthesizing a chart requires intuition, insight, and a willingness to listen to your own inner guidance. The steps and procedures help, but they are really training wheels.

The Sabian Symbols

There are 360° in the zodiac, and for each of the degrees there is a Sabian Symbol that describes the meaning of the degree in vivid poetic imagery. It is comparable to thinking of the wheel of the zodiac as a tarot deck with 360 trump cards. The Sabian Symbols came into the world in 1925 through the

work of Elsie May Wheeler and Marc Edmund Jones in one intense day of spiritual work. Marc Edmund Jones was a highly educated and well-traveled man who was one of the most important American astrologers of the twentieth century, as well as being an occultist, a Theosophist, and an ordained Presbyterian minister. Elsie May Wheeler was a Spiritualist medium with amazing abilities, who spent the bulk of her life in a wheelchair with almost no use of her hands due to arthritis but with a brilliant, creative mind. Keeping the story short, Marc convinced Elsie to try to use her skills as a medium to contact an Ascended Master and bring through knowledge about each degree of the Zodiac. They spent one day in his car parked near a busy intersection in Balboa Park in San Diego, California, so as to be at a busy crossroads for magickal reasons. Marc had written the 360 astrological degrees onto blank 3x5 cards, which he divided into four sets and shuffled them. One by one, Marc placed a card face down in front of Elsie and she said what she saw. Marc held the space, acted as a guide, a control, and polished the words as they flowed. By the end of the day, all 360° of the Zodiac had been described, many with images and ideas far out of the range of experience of the sheltered life Elsie had led. I believe the collaboration between Marc Edmund Jones and Elsie May Wheeler is as important as John Dee and Edward Kelley's work in bringing through Enochian Magick, or A. E. Waite and Pamela Colman Smith's work in creating the Rider-Waite tarot deck. Unfortunately, the Sabian Symbols are not well known in the magickal community. They are primarily used by the members of the Sabian Assembly for contemplative purposes and by a small minority of astrologers for reading charts.

I have written guided visualizations personalized to individuals based on inspiration from the Sabian imagery for key degrees in their birth charts. I have planned Full Moon rituals around the Sabian Symbol for their degree. I have done rough sketches of the Sabian Symbols and used them on altars to magnify the presence of the forces and forms they represent. Each degree can also be thought of as connected to a variety of spiritual entities, and the description for each degree offers clues to their evocation. As you can see, there is much more that can be done with the Sabian Symbols when viewed from a practitioner's perspective. Numerous books on the Sabian Symbols are available that periodically go in and out of print but are readily found. I suggest as your starting point *The Sabian Symbols in Astrology* by Marc Edmund Jones.

Progressions

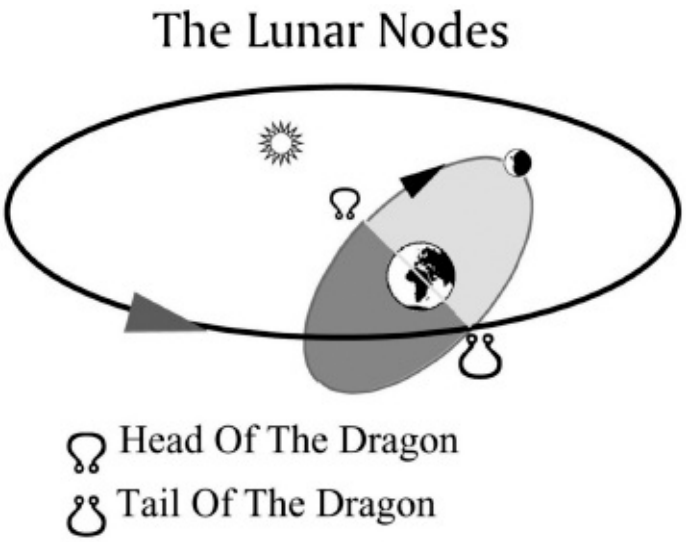
In Astrology there are always wheels turning within wheels, each operating

within its own frame of reference. There are two major systems for forecasting events, trends, and life changes in Astrology: transits and progressions. The use of transits has been touched on in this book, and the use of progressions is something that you may wish to tackle next. There are many different techniques used to create progressions, or progressed charts, but the two most common forms involve progressions where each day represents a year or each degree equals a year. In other words, in secondary progressions, we move a person's birth chart forward one day for every year of their life. The other common form of progression, the solar arc progression, moves a person's birth chart forward 1° for each year of life. These new charts represent the psychological environment for the person at that time in their life. I have found progressions to be very useful in making sense of a person's relationship to spiritual events in their life. For example, if someone is going through a dark night of the soul, a challenge to their faith or their relationship to the God/dess/es, these charts can give great insight into the circumstances. Progressions are also useful in understanding the process that a person experiences as they go through an initiatory experience.

Lunar Nodes

The Moon's orbit around the Earth is tilted relative to the Earth's motion around the Sun. So in each lunar cycle, the Moon intersects the plane of the ecliptic, the plane of the Earth's orbit, and the two places where it intersects are the Lunar Nodes (see diagram). The intersection point where the Moon crosses the plane headed North is called the North Node and is also known as the Head of the Dragon. The intersection point where the Moon crosses the plane headed South is called the South Node and is also known as the Tail of the Dragon. Most astrological charts include the lunar nodes, and glyphs used in the diagram are standard.

Many astrologers associate the Nodes with karma and life lessons. The North Node represents opportunities for growth, and the South Node represents less-developed parts of our nature. Generally speaking, the North Node has more positive associations, and the South Node has more negative associations. One way to remember this is that the head of the dragon eats, and the tail of the dragon is where the consequence of eating comes out. The Nodes can also indicate areas where we feel insecure or uncertain. To use a Tarot comparison, the South Node can be seen as the below card in a Celtic cross spread, and the North Node can be seen as the above card.



For Witches and Magicians, the two places in your birth chart that are marked by the North and South Nodes represent the intersection points between your physical body and your Astral body. The Sign, Degree, and House of these two points describe the characteristics of how you access both your active and perceptive magickal skills. These are also points that are vulnerable to attack or toxic energy atmospheres. If you look to where the Nodes are in the heavens, they show you how and where energy, information, and essence enters and exits from the Astral plane at that time.

Closing

Astrology moves in circles and spirals as we move through time. Your studies of Astrology should also move in a similar fashion. The normal process requires that you return to material you have already studied again and again to deepen your understanding, and to continue to draw connections between the many wheels within wheels. As you move forward, you will begin to think and dream in the language of Astrology, and then you will discover even more ways to incorporate its power into your practices.

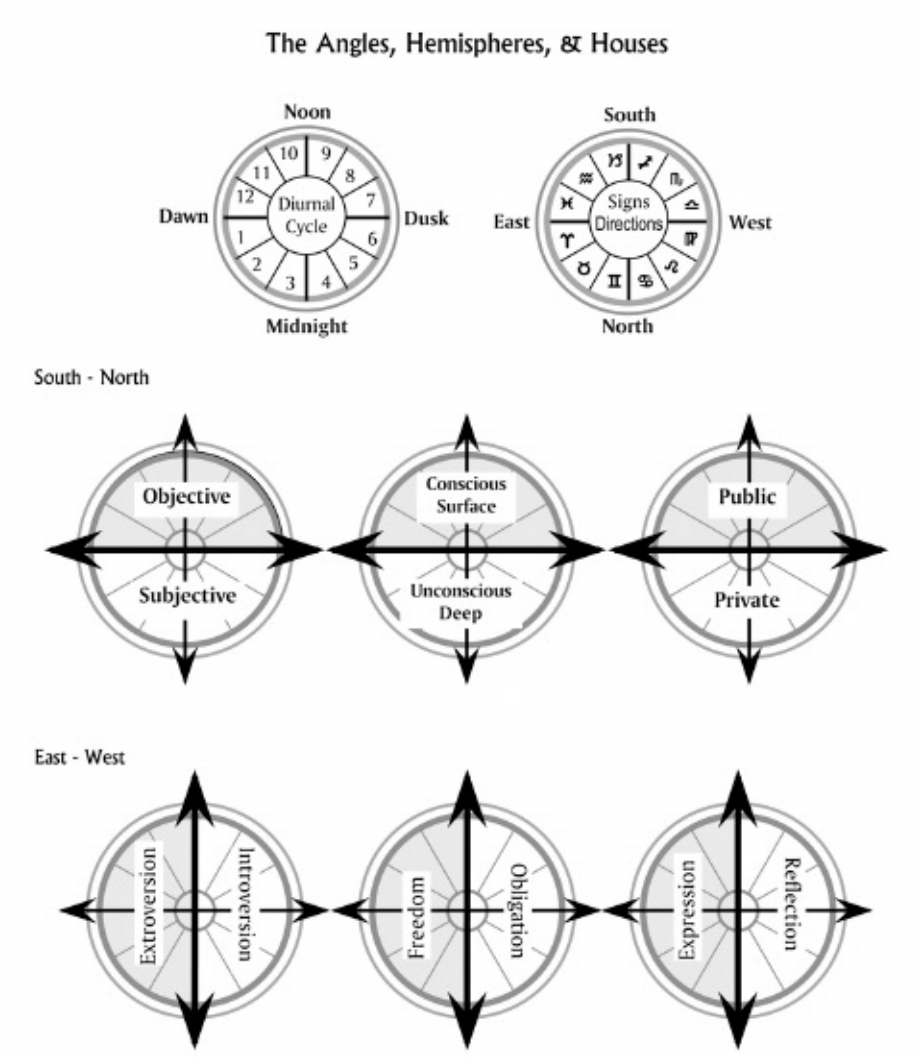
APPENDIX A

Planet and Sign Corespondences

Planet	Glyph	QBL Sphere	Level Of Self	Associated Sign	Expression Of Self	Portion Of Self
Sun	☉	Tiphareth	Personal (Core)	Leo ♌	Source Of Vital Energy	Center, Source, Integrating Self, Conscious
Moon	☽	Yesod	Personal (Surround & Story)	Cancer ♋	Use Of Vital Energy	Reactive, Processing Self, Unconscious
Mercury	☿	Hod	Personal	Gemini ♊ & Virgo ♍	Style Of Action - Expression	The Linear Mind, Learned Patterns, Thought
Venus	♀	Netzach	Personal	Taurus ♉ & Libra ♎	Style Of Action - Expression	Sensibility, Soft Emotions, Tastes, Loving Self
Mars	♂	Geburah	Personal	Aries ♈ *& Scorpio* ♏	Style Of Action - Expression	Self Assertion, Desire To Act, Passion, Physical Self
Asteroids	⚳ ⚴ ⚵ ⚶ ⚷	The Paths	Personal / Social = Bridge	Various	The Experience Of Expression	Bridges, Web, Leaps Of Connection
Jupiter	♃	Chesed	Social	Sagittarius ♐ *& Pisces* ♓	Motivation For Actions (Innovation & Expansion)	World View, Religion, Sense Of Our Purpose, Grace/ Hope, Soft Parenting
Saturn	♄	Binah	Social	Capricorn ♑ *& Aquarius* ♒	Motivation For Actions (Adaption & Accommodation)	Boundaries, Wisdom From Experience, Serenity From Severity, Hard Parenting
Uranus	♅	Chockmah	Transpersonal & Cultural	Aquarius ♒	Meaning Of Actions	Individuality, Higher Thought, The Promethean And/Or Pandoran Self
Neptune	♆	Kether	Transpersonal & Cultural	Pisces ♓	Meaning Of Actions	Unity Of Life, Higher Emotions, Dreamtime, Collective Self
Pluto	♇	Daath	Transpersonal & Cultural	Scorpio ♏	Meaning Of Actions	Urge To Transformation, Initiation, Thanatos

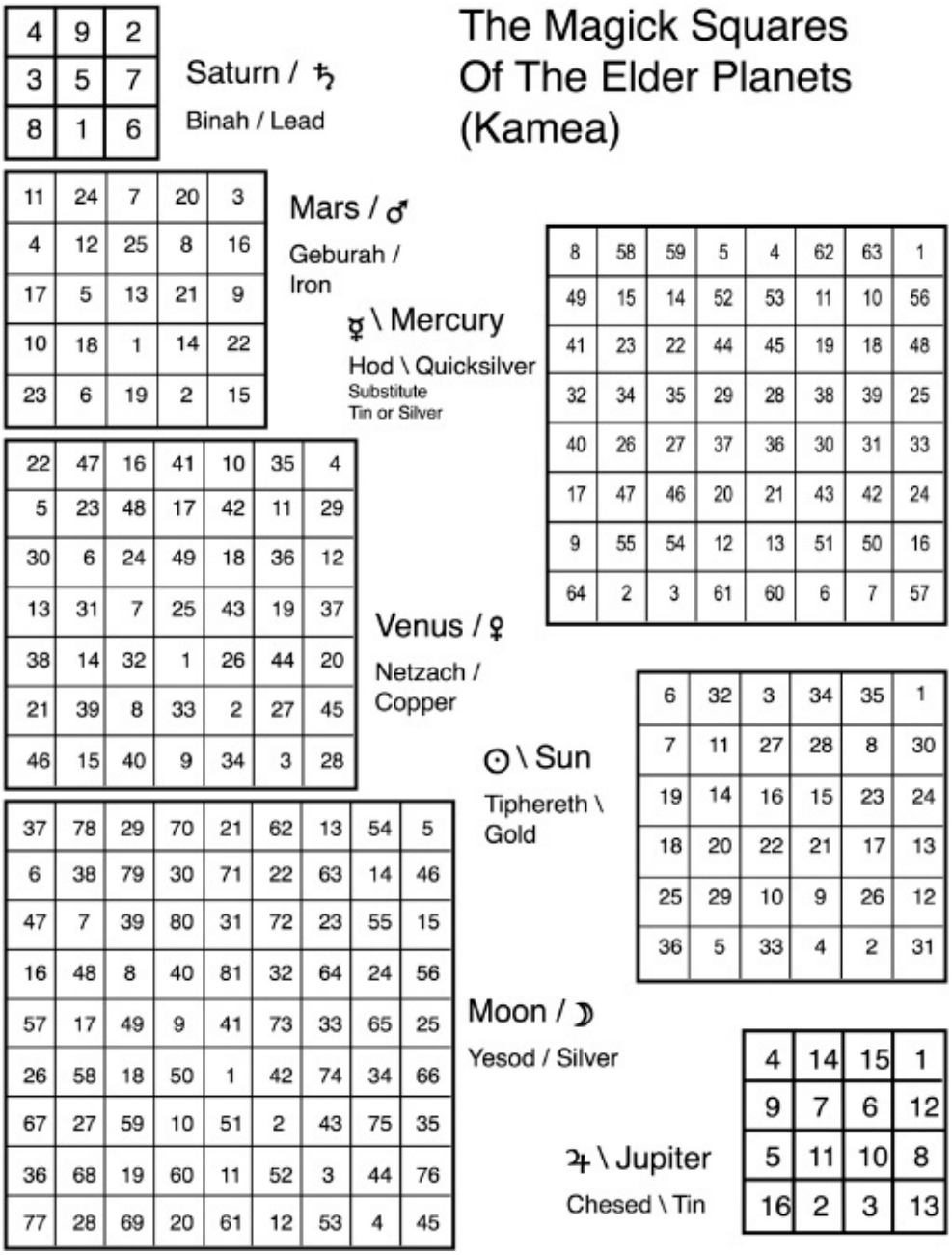
Sign	Glyph	Symbol	Power	Role	Key Words	3 Selves	House
Aries ♂	♈	Ram, Lamb & Sprouting Seed	To Be	The Adventurer & Warrior	Takes Action, Impulsive, Courageous	Elemental Soul/Body	1
Taurus ♀	♉	The Bull, Cow	To Have	The Sensualist, Earth-Steward	Determined, Practical, Solid	Elemental Soul/Body	2
Gemini ☿	♊	The Twins, Yin & Yang	To Think	The Interpreter, Trickster	Versatility, Curious, Quick	Elemental Soul/Body	3
Cancer ☽	♋	The Crab, Scarab	To Feel	The Protector, Preserver, & Parent	Sensitive, Tenacious, Nurturing	Elemental Soul/Body	4
Leo ☉	♌	The Lion, Royalty	To Will	The Leader, Actor, The Call and the Dance	Dramatic, Playful, Confident	Personal Soul/Mind	5
Virgo ☿	♍	The Virgin & The Unicorn	To Analyze	The Judge & The Healer	Discerning, Refinement, Process	Personal Soul/Mind	6
Libra ♀	♎	The Scales & Setting Sun	To Balance	The Peacemaker & Artist	Cooperative, Aesthetics, Negotiation	Personal Soul/Mind	7
Scorpio ♇	♏	Scorpion, Eagle, & Dove	To Desire	The Transformer, Underworld Quest	Sex, Death/ Rebirth, Passion, Privacy	Personal Soul/Mind	8
Sagittarius ♃	♐	The Centaur, The Arrow	To See	The Seeker of Wisdom,Optimist	Exploration, Conscience, Causes, Sports	Universal Spirit Higher Self	9
Capricorn ♄	♑	The Sea-Goat, Fish-Goat	To Use	The Architect, Builder, Founder	Authority, Motivation, Committed	Universal Spirit Higher Self	10
Aquarius ♅	♒	The Water Bearer, Cup Bearer	To Know	The Prophet or Reformer	Eccentric, Visionary, Idealistic, Rebellious	Universal Spirit Higher Self	11
Pisces ♆	♓	The Two Fish, Salmon of Wisdom	To Believe	The Intuitive, The Dreamer and the Dream	Mystical, Compassion, Sacrificing	Universal Spirit Higher Self	12

APPENDIX B
House Angles and Hemisphere



APPENDIX C

The Magick Squares for the Seven Elder Planets



4	9	2
3	5	7
8	1	6

11	24	7	20	3
4	12	25	8	16
17	5	13	21	9
10	18	1	14	22
23	6	19	2	15

8	58	59	5	4	62	63	1
49	15	14	52	53	11	10	56
41	23	22	44	45	19	18	48
32	34	35	29	28	38	39	25
40	26	27	37	36	30	31	33
17	47	46	20	21	43	42	24
9	55	54	12	13	51	50	16
64	2	3	61	60	6	7	57

22	47	16	41	10	35	4
5	23	48	17	42	11	29
30	6	24	49	18	36	12
13	31	7	25	43	19	37
38	14	32	1	26	44	20
21	39	8	33	2	27	45
46	15	40	9	34	3	28

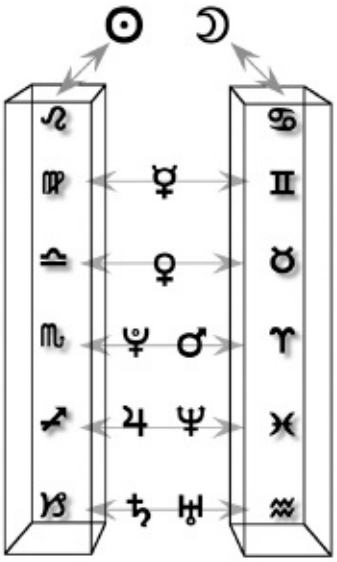
6	32	3	34	35	1	
7	11	27	28	8	30	
19	14	16	15	23	24	
18	20	22	21	17	13	
25	29	10	9	26	12	
36	5	33	4	2	31	

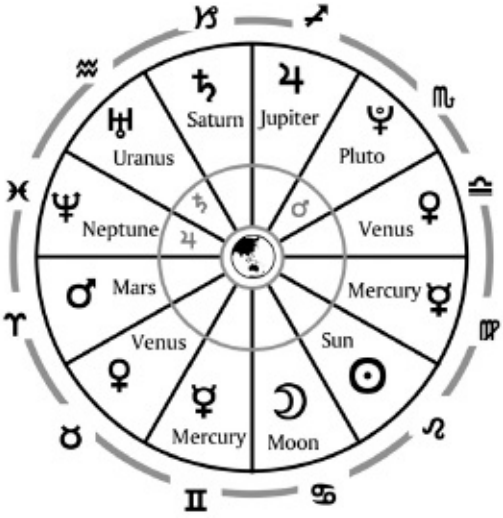
37	78	29	70	21	62	13	54	5
6	38	79	30	71	22	63	14	46
47	7	39	80	31	72	23	55	15
16	48	8	40	81	32	64	24	56
57	17	49	9	41	73	33	65	25
26	58	18	50	1	42	74	34	66
67	27	59	10	51	2	43	75	35
36	68	19	60	11	52	3	44	76
77	28	69	20	61	12	53	4	45

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

APPENDIX D

Rulerships and Essential Dignities





Planetary Rulers Of The Signs

Planet	Dignity	Detriment	Exaltation	Fall
☉	♌	♒	♈	♎
☽	♋	♑	♉	♏
☿	♊ ♍	♐ ♓	♍	♓
♀	♉ ♎	♏ ♈	♓	♍
♂	♈ ♏	♎ ♉	♑	♋
♃	♐ ♓	♊ ♍	♋	♑
♄	♑ ♒	♋ ♌	♎	♈
♅	♒	♌	♏	♉
♆	♓	♍	♌	♒
♇	♏	♉	♓?	♍?

Dignity = Sign Ruled

Detriment = Sign Opposite To Sign Ruled

Exaltation = Based On Function

Fall = Sign Opposite To Exaltation

Dignity= *Planet has full access to its energy. (In Its Own Home)*

Detriment= *Planet is weakened by struggle. (A Known But Challenging Setting)*

Exalted= *Planet has energy above and beyond what is normal for it. (Honored Guest)*

Fall= *Planet has access to its energy but its application is erratic. (An Unknown Setting)*

Also Known As:
Honor (Dignity), Home (Dignity)
Dishonor (Detriment), Debility (Detriment)

APPENDIX E

The Signs and the Body

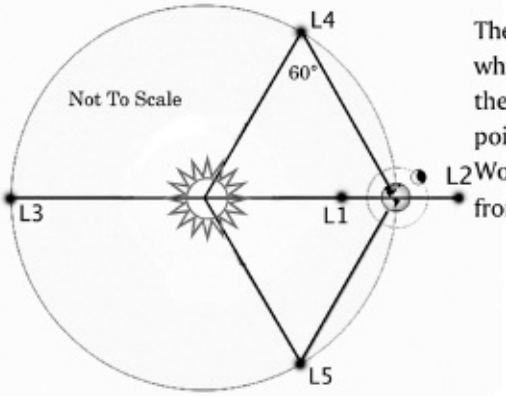
Sign	Systemic	Gland	External	Internal
♈ Aries	Muscular Blood & Pressure Triggers For Action	*Pituitary*	Head	**Brain**
♉ Taurus	Metabolic Anabolic Sensation	*Thyroid*	Neck	**Throat**
♊ Gemini	Central Nervous Pulmonary Ducts & Channels	*Thymus*	Shoulders/Arms	**Lungs**
♋ Cancer	Digestive (Upper) Development Cell Boundaries	*Mammary*	Breasts	**Stomach**
♌ Leo	Cardiac Nucleus/ Genetics Pranic	*Spleen*	Upper Back	**Heart**
♍ Virgo	Alimentary (Lower) Purification Discernment	*Pancreas*	Abdomen	**Intestines**
♎ Libra	Endocrine Homeostasis Equilibrium	*Adrenals*	Lower Back	**Kidneys**
♏ Scorpio	Urogenital Regeneration Limbic	*Reproductive Hypothalamus*	Genitals	**Colon Internal Sex Organs**
♐ Sagittarius	Autonomic Nervous Adaptation Coordination	*Liver (Overall Vitality)*	Hips	**Lower Spine**
♑ Capricorn	Skeletal Connective Tissue Timing/Aging	*Gallbladder*	Knees/Skin	**Joints, Bones**
♒ Aquarius	Circulatory Neurochemical Hierarchy	*Parathyroid*	Ankles	**Synapses**
♓ Pisces	Lymphatic Immune Enzymes	*Pineal Lymph*	Feet	**Body Fluids**

APPENDIX F

The Three Gates of the Moon

None of the Gate points are stationary but how they move and the pattern of that motion reveals something of their nature.

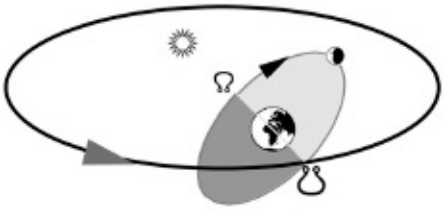
Upper World Gates



The Lagrangian Libration Points are places where the interaction of the gravity wells of the Sun, Moon, and Earth create balance points. L4 and L5 are the stable Upper World Gates and are about 238,000 miles from both the Moon and Earth

Middle World Gates

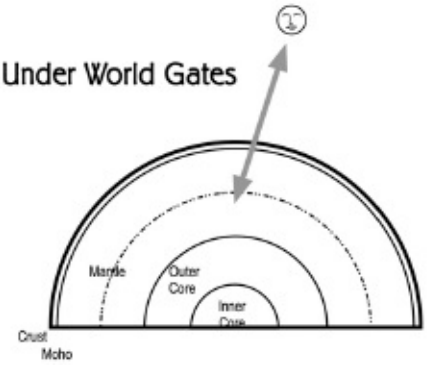
The Moon's nodes in Astrology indicate the location of the intersection between the Earth plane and the Astral plane that is the Middle Gate. These shifting nodes are the intersection between the path of the Moon's orbit and the plane of the Earth's motion around the Sun.



☊ Head Of The Dragon

☋ Tail Of The Dragon

Under World Gates



The fulcrum point where the Moon and the Earth's gravity balance is roughly 1600 miles beneath the surface of the Earth in the Mantle about ¼ of the way to the Core.

About the Author



Photo credit: Adreanna

Ivo Dominguez, Jr. is a visionary, and a practitioner of a variety of esoteric disciplines. He has been active in the Wicca and Pagan communities since 1978, and has been teaching since 1982. Ivo was a founding member of Keepers of the Holly Chalice, the first coven of The Assembly of the Sacred Wheel a Wiccan Tradition. He currently serves as one of the Elders of the Assembly of The Sacred Wheel, a Wiccan syncretic tradition that draws inspiration from Astrology, Qabala, the Western Magickal Tradition, and the folk religions of Europe. His techniques and insights are rooted in a synthesis of traditional metaphysical teachings, modern science, and memories from past lives. He has taught at many gatherings, conferences, and venues across the United States. Ivo is also a professional astrologer who has studied Astrology since 1980 and has been offering consultations and readings since 1988. He is the author of *Casting Sacred Space* (Weiser).

To Our Readers

Weiser Books, an imprint of Red Wheel/Weiser, publishes books across the entire spectrum of occult, esoteric, speculative, and New Age subjects. Our mission is to publish quality books that will make a difference in people's lives without advocating any one particular path or field of study. We value the integrity, originality, and depth of knowledge of our authors.

Our readers are our most important resource, and we appreciate your input, suggestions, and ideas about what you would like to see published.

Visit our website at *www.redwheelweiser.com* to learn about our upcoming books and free downloads, and be sure to go to *www.redwheelweiser.com/newsletter/* to sign up for newsletters and exclusive offers.

You can also contact us at info@rwwbooks.com or at

Red Wheel/Weiser, LLC
665 Third Street, Suite 400
San Francisco, CA 94107



Learn How to Use the Planets and Stars in Your Magickal Work

More often than not, people think of astrology as a tool for divination or the exploration of one's personality. Astrology is considerably more than that. It is a sacred science, a highly descriptive symbolic language, and it is also a technology that can be applied to ritual, herbalism, the use of crystals, and much more.

But it can be daunting to take on the study of Astrology. After all, it's a field so huge it would take several lifetimes to master it. And that's why Ivo Dominguez Jr. wrote this book—to provide practitioners of magick with a Pagan perspective on Astrology and the core concepts of Astrology that are most useful to building rituals and creating effective magick.

When we look at an astrological chart, what we are actually looking at is a map of the multiple planes of existence summarized and flattened into an understandable diagram—a kind of magickal cartogram. Now, what to do with this map? How can we best use it in our magickal work? That's precisely what you'll discover in the pages of this concise, focused, and expertly presented book.

www.redwheelweiser.com
ISBN: 978-1-57863-575-7
51895
9 781578 635757