

When we come to look at Libra, we are focusing on a major entry point for the energy of the third ray into the system. It is therefore worth pondering a little on the nature of “threeness”.

The first three numbers, 1, 2 and 3, are the corner-stones of number. In fact, we might rightly include zero in this list too - zero, the void, the origin of all things while itself being no-thing. Then one, unity, the All. Then two, duality, opposite poles. And finally, three, multiplicity, the gateway to all the other numbers.

Three points make up the triangle, the fundamental two-dimensional shape. Now the key importance of triangles in the Alice Bailey teachings is well-known. We are told of great triangular formations within the Hierarchy, such as that formed by the Manu, the Christ, and the Mahachohan. In *Esoteric Astrology*, the Tibetan informs us that the Science of Triangles is the most important part of the book, and describes a number of triangles, including the great primary one of the Great Bear, Sirius and the Pleiades. And there is of course the work of Triangles and its connection with the reconstruction of the planetary etheric vehicle. So reflection on this threefold relationship is clearly worth pursuing.

One notable characteristic of triangles is that, in engineering terms, they are the strongest and most stable shapes when static. And yet, in dynamic psychological terms, an Open University programme on the psychology of groups suggests that conversations in groups of three people are fundamentally *unstable*, with one person always contributing much less than the other two. We may wonder whether this is partly attributable to the personality-dominated nature of most conversations, and whether, when the soul comes to dominate in future, more balanced three-sided conversations will become the norm. Also, it is an esoteric truism that the spoken word forms a rather small part of the actual communication, and that the influence of the aura forms the major component. So perhaps one with auric perception might see that even current triangular interactions are more balanced than they seem.

Nevertheless, there is something in the thought that when the situation becomes dynamic, involving the continual exchange of energies, that triangles, far from being simple, may be exceedingly complex. For an illustration, we can look to celestial mechanics, which studies the movement of the stars and planets. The characteristic relationship between two celestial bodies is that of an orbit, with a lighter body orbiting a heavier one - the classic one we might think of is the Moon orbiting the Earth. The simplest orbit is a circle, but an exactly circular orbit is never seen out in space - usually the orbit is elliptical, meaning that the distance between the two bodies is always changing. So far, this sounds relatively simple. The complication arises when we take into account the presence of a third body - when we do so we are opening the door on the famous three-body problem.

So for example, we can picture the Earth, the Moon and the Sun. Now because the Sun is very much heavier than the Earth and the Earth is much heavier than the Moon, this leads to the Earth orbiting the Sun in an ellipse, and the Moon orbiting the Earth in an ellipse. But for the Moon's orbit, we also have to take into account the Sun's attraction. In Newton's famous *Principia*, the great scientific server tackled exactly this problem, and helped to explain some of the irregularities which astronomers had observed in the Moon's motion. Some, but not all - and this is not because Newton knew nothing of Einstein's more sophisticated theory of gravitation, General Relativity. It is simply because, even in Newtonian gravitation, the complexity of the calculations is too great for anyone before the era of computers to do it full justice.

Now the Sun - Earth - Moon system is a relatively *simple* version of the three-body problem. In a way, because of the different masses of the bodies, it approximates to two two-body problems. But when the masses of the bodies are nearer to each other, the complexity of the orbits can begin to get really fearsome. In fact, only this year, two researchers in Serbia discovered thirteen new types of orbit for the three-body problem. Some of these orbits are as tangled up as balls of yarn. As another example of the complexity of celestial mechanics involving three bodies, consider the asteroid Cruithne, and its relation to the Earth and the Sun. Cruithne orbits the Sun in almost exactly one Earth year, in an elliptical orbit that overlaps the Earth's orbit, but inclined at an angle of about 19 degrees to us - so there's fortunately no need to worry about it colliding with us. However, something even stranger occurs. Because of this curious

coincidence of orbital periods, it appears, from the standpoint of the Earth, as if Cruithne moves around the Earth in a path that resembles a kidney bean in shape, leading some to dub Cruithne Earth's second moon - which is incorrect, as a moon is a body which orbits a planet because of their mutual gravitational attraction. In fact, Cruithne's gravitational relationship to the Earth is almost non-existent, except at certain brief intervals of closest approach, which simply nudge the position of the kidney-bean-shaped path a little. It is surely not stretching the analogy of orbit and relationship too far to imagine a court or government, with a head of state, an important minister, and a minor official. Now suppose the minister and the minor official attend many of the same meetings as the head of state. An outside observer might wrongly conclude that the minister and the minor official are fast friends, or at least work in the same department, when in fact they barely even know of each other's existence.

Before we continue, let's pause briefly, and then say together the mantram of the new group of world servers.

May the Power of the one Life pour through the group of all true servers

May the Love of the one Soul characterise the lives of all who seek to aid the Great Ones

May I fulfil my part in the one Work through self-forgetfulness, harmlessness, and right speech.

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Now, the major difference between an orbit and a relationship between people is that, while orbits under gravity only involve attraction, human relationships involve both attractive and repulsive psychological components. We have already noted that a gravitational relationship, an orbit, involving only three bodies is already very complex. What sorts of complex 'orbits' might evolve when there is both attractive *and* repulsive forces at work? This isn't an excursion into the territory of the Electric Universe - although some of the Electric Universe theorists have some intriguing things to say about the evolution of the solar system when electrical forces are taken into account. Instead, let's think briefly about the complex patterns which might evolve when more than two people come into contact.

When we enter this field of group psychology, we see a dizzying variety of different configurations, in all the many areas of human life. Religions have their popes, abbots, lineage holders, cardinals, monks, priests and so on and on; businesses their chairs, chief executives, boards, heads of PR, sales reps, engineers, etc.; governments their presidents, prime ministers, ministers, civil servants. All of the above fields, while presenting differences of role and title, often exhibit a basic similarity of hierarchical structure, which, nominally at least, is the result of differences of ability. In other areas, such as the arts, less hierarchy is evident, although there are always more and less successful individuals, whether based on financial reward or critical acclaim. Alice Bailey's writings provide ample support for the idea that hierarchy is not just a human invention, but reflects something very deep within the Divine Plan, with the rays as a fundamental aspect of this picture. And while the diagram of the spiritual Hierarchy found in the Teachings exhibits the fundamental triangular structure of the three main departments, with a secondary fourfold structure emanating from the third aspect to give the sevenfold pattern, human structures, as very imperfect copies of this pattern, are more complicated and various.

A fairly large portion of this additional complication no doubt stems from the fact that human structures incorporate personalities at various stages of integration. One of the challenges for those who are seeking to pioneer the new Aquarian group consciousness, is to find ways of working in groups which transcend the limitations of the personality. As the Tibetan says, "...true group relationships...are not based upon personality or impersonality, or upon liking or disliking, or on criticism or non-criticism, but upon a real comprehension of 'divine indifference,' spiritual detachment and deep, persistent, unchanging love." (*Rays and the Initiations*, pp.209-10); and "The word goes forth to the initiates of the future: Lose sight of self in group endeavour. Forget the self in group activity. Pass through the portal to initiation in group formation and let the personality life be lost in the group life." (*Ext. P.413*)

So we may imagine that as individuals begin to work in this way in groups, the pattern of their inter-relationships will begin to approximate the hierarchical diagram. However, we should remember that the diagram of the spiritual Hierarchy is presented as a static picture, whereas in fact there will be a constant dynamic interchange of energies among all the centres: if we were to attempt to visualise this as the centres

in motion, analogous to the orbits of many bodies within a solar system, it seems doubtful that our finite lower minds would be able to cope, although from the perspective of the Solar Logos, the pattern is no doubt seen as simple and precise. There is an intriguing passage in *Letters on Occult Meditation* referencing a still greater pattern - the pattern made by the seven rays descending through the seven planes and re-ascending, with the resulting interaction giving the key to the “diamond pattern upon the back of the serpent of wisdom.”

Returning to the outer world of ‘simple’ gravitational attraction, the actual complexity of the real solar system, which has of course many more bodies than three, is also bewildering. An early attempt to detect an underlying pattern was made towards the end of the sixteenth century, when the great astronomer Johannes Kepler speculated that the orbits of the planets from Mercury to Saturn could be enclosed by the five Platonic solids. In doing so, Kepler was revealing his own firm conviction that the physical world mirrored the spiritual - in other words, the ancient maxim, ‘As above, so below’. Later, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the first Sun-centred, clockwork model of the solar system, called an orrery, was built. Fast-forwarding to today, the number of known bodies within the solar system means that only computer models can even approximate the vast complexity of orbits. From a picture that, in ancient times involved a star and six planets (with the occasional comet), we have moved to a vast menagerie of bodies - dwarf planets (including the famously demoted Pluto), centaurs, trojans, damocloids, cubewanos, scattered-disc objects, etc. Even just the conventional asteroids between Mars and Jupiter number more than a million, and within that belt the largest asteroid, Ceres, has now been re-designated as a dwarf planet; Jupiter has 67 known moons, Saturn 62. Our knowledge of objects existing beyond the orbit of Neptune (which is about 30 times as far as the Earth is from the Sun, i.e. 30 astronomical units) has grown considerably in the last twenty years, so that now there are at least twelve hundred trans-neptunian objects known, including of course Pluto. Some of the other large trans-neptunian objects include Eris; Haumea; Makemake; Quaoar; and Sedna.

Given that our physical knowledge of the solar system has expanded so much, what implications might this have for astrology, which the Tibetan has called the science of relationships? Do any of these newly-discovered bodies act in significant ways with regard to the seven rays and the twelve constellations of the zodiac? Well, that is a very large question, and not one that can be definitively answered except by one of the initiate astrologers of the spiritual Hierarchy. The astronomical facts allow a little room for speculation, but it should be stressed that the following is just that - speculative, and very highly so.

The first thing to note is the fact that, as a part of the solar system, this naturally implies that they do have some specific role to play within the energetic economy of the system. And from the human standpoint, their discovery at this time at least suggests that they may signify emerging qualities within the consciousness of humanity, although what these qualities might be is open for us to ponder.

One reason why it has taken so long to discover them is their relative faintness, which is a function of both their small size and their great distance from the Sun. It is worth noting that small size and great distance did not disqualify Pluto from being included among the rulers of the constellations, although Pluto only rules one constellation, Pisces.

Let’s compare Pluto for a moment with Eris. Eris is about the same size as Pluto. As for distance, Eris can even get slightly closer to the Sun for a small part of its orbit - but it is much further away most of the time, and because of this Eris takes over twice as long as Pluto to go round the Sun. Probably more important, in terms of its possible astrological influence on events here on Earth, the orbit of Eris is *much* more highly inclined than that of Pluto’s. What does ‘inclined’ mean in this context? Well, most of the planets in the solar system orbit more or less in one plane - like the rings around Saturn. However, the orbit of Pluto is inclined, or tipped, with respect to the plane of the main planetary orbits, by about 20 degrees. As a result, while the other planets as seen from Earth move within the familiar zodiac of the twelve constellations, Pluto’s path across the sky sways slightly above the zodiac at one point, and slightly below at another. Now the orbit of Eris is inclined at over twice the angle of Pluto’s, which means that it only crosses the zodiac in two places. Does this mean that the astrological influence of Eris is only significant when it is near these crossing points? It certainly seems possible. Intriguingly, the points of crossing are at the start and end of the zodiac, in Aries/Pisces, and in Virgo/Libra. Eris will pass into Pisces again around 2036. And it only

returns to Libra around 2280.

Of the other main trans-neptunian objects, both Haumea and Makeamake are a little smaller than Pluto, and take a similar time to orbit the Sun, but their orbits, like that of Eris, are also quite highly inclined. Quaoar's orbit has low inclination, also takes about the same time to orbit as Pluto, but is only about half the size. So it seems likely that the astrological influence of these three bodies will be quite subtle. As for Sedna, named for the Inuit goddess of the sea, which has a low inclination orbit, the chief distinguishing feature of its orbit is that it is highly elongated, like a comet's, and takes 11,400 years. It is at present almost as close as it comes to the Sun, which is still well outside the orbit of Pluto. At its furthest point, it may reach the inner edges of the Oort cloud, which is where the most distant bodies in the solar system, the comets, are thought to come from. The fascinating thing is that Sedna's orbit cannot be explained by any of the current models of the solar system. Its discoverer, Dr Mike Brown, likens it to a fossil of the early solar system. Just as it is still a scientific mystery, so it seems likely to remain for some time an esoteric mystery - what subjective role can we assign to this visitor from the frozen outskirts of the system, which began its latest inward journey around the beginning of recorded history in 3500 BC? How does this link between the inner system and the outer function within the wider solar whole?

We have travelled far from our starting point, the number three - yet given its role as the gateway to the numbers, and its esoteric significance as the fount of all creative intelligent activity, this is not surprising. Creation ever moves from simplicity to complexity on the involutionary arc, and then on the evolutionary arc, back to simplicity. One of the tests of discipleship is to find ways to work with complexity, without becoming entranced by it - as Christ said, to be "in the world, but not of it." With this in mind, let's turn now to our work in meditation. The keynote for Libra is "I choose the way which leads between the two great lines of force."