

# The Jewel in the night sky

The Jupiter-Saturn conjunction on the Solstice day

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Every unit of life, both on earth and in the whole universe has rhythm, it flows in a rhythmic movement, which can be best explained in terms of cycles. H. P. Blavatsky, in her Secret Doctrine, spoke about the universe as a boundless place, cyclically *“the playground of numberless universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing”*. These universes she called *“the sparks of eternity”*, a highly poetic expression pointing to the appearance and disappearance of countless worlds, like a tidal ebb of flux and reflux. The second fundamental proposition of the Secret Doctrine is precisely the absolute universality of the law of cycles. We look around and see an alternation of day and night, life and death, sleeping and waking. Those little sparks of the great Flame, all beings, are subject to cycles of incarnation or necessity in accordance with cosmic cycles, and the karmic law. And this is because of that fundamental identity of all souls with the universal Over-soul.

In Astrology we find a conscious attempt to describe this awesome pattern on the level at which it manifests in the visible world. Astrology is the study of life as a cyclic phenomenon, looking upon the universe as a vast interlocking and conscious organism which ebbs and flows in a cosmic pattern, which in the end we limited minds find too vast to comprehend. To this, the future challenge is added, that Esoteric Astrology may eventually focus on the conditioning energies, the inner causes of outer cycles.

In a way, Astrology evolved as a result of the ability of human beings to make correlations between those cycles, always keeping in mind a correspondence between terrestrial and celestial ones. Not only actual but also symbolic links were established, such as when we relate the human life-death cycle with the seasonal life and death of vegetation, and with the diurnal and annual solar cycles, which themselves were seen as an allegory of human life. This way an amazing canvas of *“cycles within cycles”* emerges, which were later assimilated to the correspondence between macrocosm and microcosm, the life of the center of our system, the Sun, representing on a grand scale the life of a human being, and its soul.

The ancients believed in a fixed cycle of existence, ever repeating itself in a predetermined pattern, though ever on a higher turn of the spiral. The Babylonians, for instance, believed that crucial periods in the life of the universe occurred when there were conjunctions of all planets at the Solstice points, Cancer and Capricorn. When many planets are found on this point, the universe was thought to begin a new cycle, sometimes after the destruction of the old. The idea behind these planetary cycles is that they are in perfect harmony with terrestrial cycles, and it has been argued that they held correspondences with musical harmonies.

When Plato defined *"time"* as *"the flowing image of Eternity"* he certainly alluded to the fact that what we call *"time"* is only in our minds. H. P. Blavatsky, when commenting on an ancient stanza of the Secret Doctrine, said that *"time is an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration"*. So where there is no consciousness in which such illusion may be produced, it *"lies asleep"*. The only reality is never-ending vibration, Abstract Motion, representing an unlimited Consciousness. *Time* is a concept associated with form, the dimension of time. So these cycles which re-emerge as the center of Astrology, can be seen as the expression of the thoughts of the Divine Mind. In other words, *"the means by which the unfolded, infinite and eternal potentiality of divine ideas is unfolded in the dimension of time"*, as Charles Harvey has so intuitively defined it. In each cycle we can distinguish certain phases, which represent the sequence of processes through which an idea passes in its unfoldment. *"Kyklos"*, or *"cycle"* is a Greek term meaning *"circle"*; and the implications are, that these cycles are an expression of that Music of the Spheres which unfolds eternally within the circle of time. The subject of cycles is deeply mysterious: we are told in *Cosmic Fire* that a secret knowledge of number, color and sound is linked with the occult knowledge of cycles, which is only the possession of a true initiate. So Astrology, as the study of cycles, has been the forerunner, the *"torch bearer"* of this cyclical view of the universe.

On this greater tapestry of cycles within cycles, we have the threads of greater and lesser cycles. Among those greater cycles, we have the Great Year, the complete passage of the Sun by precession through the whole circle of the Zodiac, which takes around 25000 years. It is because of this movement that the astrological eras take place, such as the coming Aquarian age. This cycle is said to mark our major shifts of civilization, and determine the energies available at

different periods of human history. However, they are even said to be a part of an even greater cycle, a greater Zodiac.

On a lower level, we have the cycles of the planets, which in their cosmic dance form all sorts of geometrical designs. We call them *aspects*. Some of them, the fastest ones, come together in what we call "a conjunction" in short intervals (the shortest of these cycles being the monthly Sun-Moon relationship); while the slower ones, like Uranus, Neptune or Pluto, may take decades or even centuries to complete the cycle. Their cyclic pattern is different. We speak of "conjunction" when we find two or more planets on the same degree of the Zodiac; in other words, when two planets appear close to each other in the sky because they line up with Earth in their respective orbits around the Sun. Most astrologers are used to interpreting charts for specific moments, rather than thinking in terms of cyclical processes. The conjunction is only the beginning of a cycle which will last until the next one, and which will in time gradually unfold all the potentialities contained in that assembly of orbs. It is the birth of the cycle. This cycle will reach a point of crisis when the faster planet moves ahead and comes to be at 90 degrees from the slower one, forming a square. At 120 degrees, the side of a triangle, the most beneficent and mature aspects of this combination of energies emerge, until another point of crisis comes when they come to be opposed to one another. This is like maturity, a point after which decline follows, until the next conjunction is reached, just as with the life of all beings on earth.

Among these planet relationships, one has been considered particularly important since ancient times: the combination of Jupiter and Saturn, which were called "*The Great Chronocrators*", or "*rulers of the times*." It was known as "the great conjunction" and has been used as demarcation of historical eras. When Jupiter and Saturn come together old forms tend to be dissolved and the fertility of a new growth begins to take shape. As we said, this conjunction is not an isolated astronomical event, but the beginning of a cycle of 20 years. However, this is only its lesser cycle, as this conjunction, unlike any other, occurs for 240 years sequentially in any one element, so that they complete the greater cycle in 960 years. This means that the faster planet, Jupiter, passes through the whole Zodiac and in 20 years catches up with Saturn, which in the meantime has moved from one sign to another of the same element. During this cycle, the movement in the sky brings them into different aspect or angular relationships, each one representing a point of fructification, consolidation, or crisis. We could imagine this as new ideas being born, which reach blossoming, points of crises, to

eventually prove obsolete and in need of replacement: a birth, growth, maturity and eventual death, as everything else in nature.

Today we have Saturn and Jupiter on the same degree of Aquarius, and we may justly wonder what it may mean, both for the next 20, and 240 years, for the planet and for our civilization. This conjunction has been taking place since the 1800s in Taurus, Virgo and Capricorn, the signs related to the element earth, when humanity saw the Industrial Revolution, the rise of consumerism and the emerging concept of material wealth. Today the era of conjunctions in air signs is being inaugurated, as it takes place in Aquarius, though a so-called “forerunner conjunction” in air signs occurred in 1980, when we saw the birth of internet and a new concept of communication. This conjunction combines the expansive vision of Jupiter’s second ray with the structure and discipline needed to both manifest results as well as cast away the non-essentials, the third-ray quality of Saturn. The inspirational nature of Jupiter offsets Saturn’s stagnation and provides a deeper philosophical ground for the emerging new structures. While the earth element signifies focus on material security that is resistant to change, this new era of the air element may bring dramatic changes in ideas and the way we relate to one another. And not only is Jupiter and Saturn uniting in Aquarius, they are also forming a square aspect with Uranus in Taurus, which may help in finally bringing down old structures and encouraging us to release old personal attachments, both a hard and releasing experience. Uranus always teaches us *to let go*. Though from the point of view of outer events it may indicate a change of values from money to data, the binding power of technology and the questioning of the economic system, we should remember that Jupiter is the esoteric ruler of Aquarius, so both rulers of Aquarius are involved in a planet relationship. One may hope we will see new opportunities for anchoring the energy of Love-Wisdom on earth, as well as the emergence of a new concept of community and cooperation, and thus a bridge to the coming age of brotherhood can be built. A new concept of knowledge and learning may appear, as well as a deeper understanding of the power of thought as an energy which unifies all spheres of living.

It is also relevant that this conjunction is taking place only a few hours after both the Sun and Mercury come together on the Solstice point. The Sun reaches this point once a year, though it rarely does exactly when Mercury is – as the ancients say – “*in the heart of the Sun*”, being astronomically *one* with it, as when the mind is fused with the soul. The last time we had a similar phenomenon was December 2007, when the Sun, Jupiter and Mercury came together on the Solstice

point. When we consider the relationship between the Ecliptic, the 12 divisions of which are the zodiac signs, and the Equator, four major “points of crisis” can be determined along this path. When the Sun on its apparent path crosses the Equator<sup>1</sup>, we have the Equinoxes. At that time, our physical life experiences the middle seasons, Autumn and Spring. Around Easter, the Sun is found on this point, being symbolically “crucified”, to then climb up north of the Ecliptic and so “rise” or resurrect. But when the Sun reaches its maximum declination from the Equator, its farthest points north and south, we have the Solstices. A hint of the spiritual significance of this moment is that it symbolically involves *the possibility of taking a whole new direction*, as the Sun does at these points. The Secret Doctrine says that these points hold occult and numerical relationships of all sorts. We find them mentioned in the *Bhagavad Gita* (Ch. VIII) in relation with the human cycle of incarnation. Today, the Sun is on the Capricorn Solstice, in the direction of the galactic center. It is said that at the time of the Winter Solstice, one of the greatest phases of the ancient initiation cycle has always taken place. These four points, the equinoxes and solstices are – according to Blavatsky – guarded by four great beings, the “*Guardians of the Four Quarters of Space*”. This Sacred Season culminating today, the Capricorn Solstice, is a symbol of the mystic birth of the true human individuality, the Inner Christ in the cave of the Heart. Certain astronomical truths seem to enact the story of the Christ within our hearts. A hint of how astronomical phenomena reflect great truths can be seen at the moment the birth is thought to have taken place. On December 25<sup>th</sup>, at midnight, the celestial sign of Virgo, the Virgin, rises in the East. Adonis, Dionysus, Bacchus, Mithra, Osiris and Apollo are also said to have been born in a cave at this moment when the days are shortest and darkness is on the face of the earth. All these sun-gods are born at this time to bring light on a world submerged in darkness.

Christianity was a highly esoteric school in its beginnings, and another example of the many metaphors used by those early forerunners is found in the image of the *Star of Bethlehem*. The historical birth of Jesus is thought to have taken place 7 years before our era, when the great conjunction which is taking place today, that of Jupiter and Saturn, took place in the sign of Pisces. This conjunction has been supposed to have been the so-called Star of Bethlehem, and it is a very tempting assumption. As a matter of fact, this Capricorn Solstice meet-up between Jupiter and Saturn is particularly remarkable since these planets will be close enough to appear like one and only massive star from Earth. However, when we read in the Bible that the three Magi, the three astrologers, “*saw the star in the east*,

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<sup>1</sup> From the point of view of Astronomical truth, an equinox is the instant of time when the plane of Earth's equator passes through the geometric center of the Sun's disk.

*and followed it*", we might consider a more symbolical meaning, the "Mystic East" being a synonym of *occult knowledge*, and "the star" not being necessarily an astronomical phenomenon, but rather that "spiritual star" mentioned by the Secret Doctrine. In the end, the Avatar<sup>2</sup> Christ is thought to have symbolically *descended* to this plane on the Winter Solstice, at the time of the same conjunction which is today taking place. By this I am not implying that an Avatar is about to be born these days, but rather that we could at least think that this time could be considered of great spiritual significance and opportunity, more in the sense of a *new birth*. This new birth is indeed an "immaculate conception" not because of any unnatural theological conception, but precisely because it is a *spiritual birth*, the birth of the Christ/Buddha within the cave of the heart, the recognition of the soul as the ruling agent of our lives.

As we end, let me say that all we know about planetary configurations is of a most basic nature, as the astrological key to the Ancient Wisdom, we are told, has not been given yet. The suggested lines of research in Esoteric Astrology indicate that the most important part of the astrological study is the Science of Triangles. The fact that the entire cosmic web and the solar system is a living, constantly moving, interwoven network of triangles, has profound astrological implications which we must eventually become aware of.

This is what I wanted to share with you today. Thank you Kathy for this opportunity. On this, our shortest, and your longest night, I send you warm greetings in hope that this Solstice may really be a new and inspiring beginning for us all.

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<sup>2</sup> "Tar-" is the Sanskrit root of the verb "to move", "to pass", and it is found in the word "star" in most languages, those celestial orbs being seen *moving* across the sky. "Ava" is the preposition "down", so "Avatarah" in Sanskrit means "the Descending One", or "the Coming One".