

What Planet rules Astrology

Good morning.

I'm delighted to start things off but before I make my small contribution to this interesting discussion, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the students who are here to collect their well deserved Certificates and Diplomas. These are not casual accomplishments. It takes real dedication and commitment to achieve these milestones and you are inspiration for all the students who aspire to follow you to the podium to take their bows someday. I share with my colleagues a tremendous sense of pride in all our students. My students continually amaze me and I am indebted to them. I have to keep my skills sharpened just to keep up with them. And for those students who are in between milestones and are maybe wondering why it takes so long, the short answer is that for most of us, myself included, it just does. Good astrologers are not manufactured. They evolve and they need seasoning. I was impatient to get my Diploma yet now that I have it, it's interesting because as sweet as that moment was, I can honestly say that the best part of my education with the Faculty was the journey and not the destination. I know that sounds like a cliché but every cliché is rooted in some fundamental truth. The American poet Robert Frost said happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length. I love teaching but sometimes I would give almost anything to be a Faculty student again and recreate the joy of so many discoveries I made along the way. So enjoy every moment. It really does go by too quickly. I revived my career as a consultant shortly after the Faculty revamped the requirements for the Advanced Interpretation Exam, and I have to say that I am learning more astrology from my clients than I ever imagined. Of course they don't speak the language of astrology but their own real life experiences make the astrology come alive for me if I can just get out the way and let them share their experiences with me. The very best consultations for me are the ones where I talk very little and listen a whole lot more. For those of you who know me quite well and my ME=ASC/MC this hasn't always been an easy task but it may be the most worthwhile effort I've ever made. Sometimes in the back of my mind I can't believe someone is paying me and giving me an education in astrology at the same time. I honestly believe today that it is the astrologer who consults with the client and not the other way

around. How can any astrologer really know someone better than they know themselves? Astrologers have a lot to offer to clients but superior knowledge of the client is not one of those things. I bring my doubts into every consultation and they level the playing field between me and my clients. Voltaire, the French Enlightenment writer said doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd. It is my task as an astrologer to abandon the absurdity of certainty in my understanding of a natal chart and prepare for the unexpected with every client. I hope our new Diploma holders will try to do the same and good luck in all your future astrological endeavours.

When Julia asked me to participate in the morning forum I was not enthusiastic at first. I thought the subject of the forum, what planet rules astrology, was more of a poll question than a lecture topic. Can we really generalize the rulership of something as complex as astrology to a single planet and not only that, a single planet which is also part of the thing it's supposed to rule? The great mystic poet William Blake said, to generalize is to be an idiot, and I desperately don't want to sound like an idiot up here.

By the time our students get to the third exercise in Module 1 they are already looking for combinations of planets to explain complex scenarios. I think if we put our minds to it we could find evidence of all the planets in most things.

Then I had a helpful conversation with Beth Koch Rosato about it. Beth was one of my Faculty tutors and we've become very good friends over the years, which is especially fun for me now that I'm the North American tutor for the Faculty like she was when I was a student. I was voicing my philosophical complaints about the topic and she suggested that I demonstrate how the drives of all the planets rule astrology. Later on Carole Taylor offered the exact same suggestion. It was comforting to know that we were all on the same page. Their suggestion was very tempting but I am going to narrow my choices down to a select few instead.

My first impulse was that obviously Uranus rules astrology. That seemed like a no-brainer but when I began to reflect on the question I realized that my position was a herd response, uncritical and unquestioning. I don't remember where I learned that planetary correspondence or who we can attribute the rulership to except that we can be sure that it's a relatively modern correspondence since Uranus

was only discovered in 1781, hence Mercury's traditional rulership of astrology. 1781 is still quite a long time ago and its discovery occurred during a period in history when astrology was in a state of intellectual decline, but when we consider that astrology has been kicking around for millennia, Uranus is practically brand new.

Still it makes pretty good sense that Uranus could rule astrology.

Uranus is said to rule vast systems and the solar system is vast. Sir Isaac Newton, the dour and redoubtable 17th century physicist, said of the universe, this most beautiful system could only proceed from the Dominion of an intelligent and powerful being. Nowadays it's almost unthinkable to hear a scientist admit to intelligent design underpinning observable phenomena but Newton didn't see the physical world as lifeless and inanimate or as a creation lacking a Creator. His is almost a ringing endorsement of Uranus ruling astrology. Mercury is impressive especially in his ability to move effortlessly between realms but perhaps lacks the weight to shoulder the whole solar system

My students know that I am not a big fan of New Age astrology which to me is the pretentious show business side of the industry. I like plain spoken language and I think it's important not to talk over the heads of our clients. So when the expression Higher Mind is bandied about for Uranus I honestly don't know what that is supposed to mean. I always thought the human mind was the higher mind of the animal kingdom. But it is an evocative definition.

The ancient Greek poet Homer wrote, 'tis true, 'tis certain; man though dead retains Part of himself; the immortal mind remains.

The Hindu concept of Atman might be what some astrologers are talking about when they speak of the Higher Mind. To quote Hinduwebsite.com, Atman is the immortal aspect of mortal existence, the self, which is hidden in every object of creation including man. It is the microcosm, representing the macrocosm in each of us, imparting to us divine qualities and possibilities and providing us with the reasons to exist and experience the pains and pleasures of earthly life.

The ego is Atman's poor cousin, the false centre, which assumes the position of control and ownership, whereas in actual reality it is a mere reflection, a product of illusion and a mental projection, born out of sensory experiences and the accumulation of memories and thoughts. While the basis of Atman is reality, permanence and Bliss, the nature of ego is illusion, impermanence and suffering.

Isn't it interesting that in the scheme of the zodiac, Leo and Aquarius, ruled by Sun, and Uranus and Saturn respectively, are opposite signs and fixed signs too. This sets up a natural intransigence between the rulers which the comparison of Atman and ego conveys very nicely. We may have no choice but to include Saturn as a ruler of astrology too because its very principle is the permanence of a permanent reality. Anyone who uses astrogeography to plan their vacations knows that we have as much an astrological relationship to the ground beneath our feet as the sky above our heads. Saturn surely must have its hand in any astrology connected to the earth. Personally I'm lucky because I have Venus in London. I always have a lovely time whenever I'm here. When I first got interested in astrology 30 years ago I gravitated first to mundane astrology, and I try to go back to it as often as I can. I've always wanted to understand why events happen when and where they do. The *raison d'être* of mundane astrology essentially is prediction. My first concept of the solar system was very saturnine. I thought it was a giant clock and to be honest I still think of it that way most of the time because it's practical and sidesteps philosophical arguments of free will versus determinism.

Yet Charles Harvey, borrowing from quantum physicist David Bohm, wrote of a universe that is more like a great mind than a great machine, a universe in which consciousness and matter are an unbroken whole. The affinity and sympathy between Uranus and Saturn is deeply strengthened in this kind of cosmological model.

I believe that events are not as capricious as they appear to be but rather, are the culminations of celestial pressures which build up over very long periods of time. There are celestial signatures which define an event like the current outgoing UR *squ* PL for example, which is a major crisis point in the UR-PL cycle, which itself symbolizes the radical restructuring of peoples and nations. Recent current events like the Arab spring and the Occupy movement are some of the early manifestations of UR *squ* PL. Remarkably this square will perfect 7 times between June of this year and March of 2015, and it would be perfectly legitimate to confine our observations to these tense current events, but if we want to fully understand the astrological reasons for the events constellated with this square we have to go back to the conjunction phase of this cycle which occurred 3 times between October 1965 and June 1966. The conjunction is the seed idea of any

cycle and contains within itself all that follows. It may seem incredible in a world dominated by a 24 hour news cycle that the events of today could have a meaningful connection to the start of a synodic cycle more than 45 years ago but astrologically they are connected and we may not see the reforms being demanded today, or to paraphrase Ebertin, the new which will be built on the ruins of the old, fully implemented until the objective expression opposition phase of the UR-PL cycle, which will occur 5 times between September 2046 and June 2048.

This is the nature of astrology. Interlocking cycles of planetary pairs, which range from the 492 year NE -PL cycle to the 12 year JU-PL cycle, and their intersections which permit the transmission and priming of the ideas associated with these cycles, into the progressively shorter cycles of the inner planets and the transiting angles, until the idea is finally released into the world as a demonstrable event.

And these intersection points between the synods of the five outer planets have always been there embedded and then rolled out through the regular motions of the planets in their orbits since eternity began. I don't think we're solely in Uranus territory anymore. This is the handiwork of Saturn. The Argentinean poet Jorge Luis Borges said Time is the substance from which I am made. If you stick with astrology long enough it becomes nearly impossible not to acknowledge determinism or fate as part of the greater reality we live in. Saturn has often been associated with karma and the administration of justice. Astrology might be the celestial embodiment of karma's timetable. Uranus in Greek mythology wasn't just the god of the skies. He was the sky. I found it difficult at first to imagine how the sky could be a God. I used to think that if you could remove all the matter we can see and all the matter we can't see in space that all that would be left would be nothingness with no physical characteristics. But new advances in science are proving that empty space actually does have physical characteristics. It can be bent and twisted by the gravitational forces of the stars and planets. This was predicted by Einstein and proven recently by sophisticated gyroscope technology sent into space. So a sky deity is maybe not such a stretch of the imagination after all. In myth, Uranus was the first ruler of the universe, created by Gaea when she emerged from Chaos. Uranus, with Gaea, became the father

of the Titans, the Cyclopes and the Hecatoncheires or hundred-handed ones.

Uranus was afraid that some of his children would rebel against him, so he imprisoned them within Gaea's earth womb. Kronos or Saturn to the Romans, the youngest of the Titans, freed his siblings by castrating his father. The irony of this myth is that rebellion has become an important feature of Uranus symbolism and Saturn is now the harbinger of old age.

Uranus's blood gave birth to the Furies, and Aphrodite or Venus to the Romans was born of the discarded member when it fell into the foaming sea.

I love the myths because they make even the most dysfunctional human family seem normal. It must not have been easy to be a god and castration is a nasty business but there is definitely a familial connection between Uranus, Saturn and Venus so why not consider all three members of the family firm as rulers of astrology.

Venus is not an obvious choice yet astrology to me is first and foremost a relationship and Venus is the connective tissue, the mediator between sky and earth which makes each of us in our humanity the very same as our unique and unrepeatable orientation to the sky above us .

Can we really have astrology without the human side of the equation? I'm not sure that's possible.

Plato said the heavenly bodies were the first born thoughts of God. Their lives unfold perfectly and symbolically so perhaps there is meaning for them in their incessant orbits, in the conflict and resolution of different aspects formed up between them, and experienced in a way which we can't possibly understand. But is that by itself astrology? When I read the myths I'm often struck by how much the Gods seemed to need humans, just so they could be Gods to us. Some mortals in the myths like Odysseus, the major protagonist of Homer's Odyssey, impressed the Gods maybe because they remained resolute in their heroism despite the deities' vagarious torments, and others were elevated to godhood through a process which the Greeks termed apotheosis, like Heracles and Asklepios who was a student of Chiron and is today the patron saint of medical doctors. Incidentally apparently apotheosis hasn't just been extended to Greek heroes. Freemasons for instance, believe George Washington, the 1st president of the United

States, was elevated to godhood, an event which is depicted in the fresco in the eye of the Rotunda of the U.S. Capital.

For the rest of us mere mortals Venus is the mirror which reflection edges us closer to our better angels and them to us. We may never be equal to the gods we carry within but we need each other, and the relationship has endured even after thousands of years.

Uranus may be its rhythm and Saturn its meter, but Venus is the harmony in the vast system and the music of the spheres. T.S. Eliot said you are the music while the music lasts. Gerard Manley Hopkins, the 19th century English religious poet said Give beauty back, back to God, beauty's self and beauty's giver. Perhaps it's just a Venus conceit to include her as ruler alongside her father and brother, but which I hope you'll take under advisement.