

Astrology and the Inner Self

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Breaking the mould of conventional astrology

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CHAPTER 1

The Cycle of the Self

The aim of this book is to use the symbols of astrology to bring about a meeting between mind and soul; and having achieved *that* minor miracle, to help bring about a further encounter between soul and spirit. This in turn will precipitate a spiritual journey previously only to be dreamed about by saints, sages and seekers after truth: the hidden treasure that has been sought ever since human-measured time began. Why settle for less? Once the journey has begun, symbols will be of little further use. The inner self is more interested in realities.

If you follow astrology in the traditional way, to find out something about character and personality, and possibly to predict the ups and downs of fate, your calculations will need to be precise. If, however, you set out to use astrology to help you discover the inner self, and thence your own soul, your calculations will not need such precision. Why? Because the soul is broad enough to encompass both precision and imprecision. Paradoxically the inner self is greater than the outer personality, and the soul is greater than the inner self — potentially greater even than fate itself.

A horoscope is constructed upon the moment of birth, or coming into being, and as the moment at which a baby is born is seldom known or recorded precisely (and why, indeed, should it be?) it can be of no use to build a complicated edifice of precision upon the basis of a rough estimate. Even if the exact time is known for that crucial first breath, accurate calculations based upon it will work towards elaborating on the personality — on the *outer* self, moving further away from discovering the *inner* self, which has a collective basis. In my view, it is as well to be aware of this principle. Very few astrologers in the past have concerned themselves with the problem, and even fewer have cared to draw a line between the popular view of planetary *influence*, and the more subtle principle of planetary *synchronicity*. Dane Rudhyar, the French-American astrologer and musician who died in 1985, was a pioneer in this field. Though apparently not acquainted with the reality of his own inner dimension — his own soul — he was well aware of its existence, and he set out these matters very succinctly. His book *Astrology of Personality*, first published in 1936, formed my own introduction to the subject and moulded my understanding, such as it is, of astrology and its best uses. I hope that this book might carry his work a step further.

If you are fortunate enough to meet, or to have met, your own newly-awakened soul, and you are mature enough to realize that we all need spiritual guidance through life (not at all the same, you will note, as *religious* guidance), your journey is only just beginning. "Seek and ye shall find" is a piece of divine encouragement which works just as well after two thousand years. It doesn't matter who you are or where you look; it may be taken on any level. It works as well within the most devout, or the most academic spheres as it does in lowlier circles, or in the seamier side of life. It works as well no matter where we are looking from or where we seem to be looking to. The sincere seeker after truth may find the way whether the seeking is directed up or down, inwards or outwards, for the truth is already there, within the soul. Of course, it has been there all the time.

Certainly, the soul can be "born again" and thereby come to awareness. But exactly how it happens, the "mechanics" of it, will probably remain a mystery. There are always more ways than one to describe a mystery, divine or otherwise. Our brains are not made to encompass such matters, and sometimes we have to resort to the use of symbols in order to understand anything that seems to be non-material. Astrology, like algebra, is a system of symbols. Every occurrence, even if seemingly miraculous, is likely to have a material explanation — but that does not stop it

being miraculous as far as we are concerned. So when we exclaim that some happy chance is a "miracle", we are not really denying the concrete causes of that event, or the natural laws of cause and effect, action and reaction. They will be operative too.

This is what happens when we seek an astrological explanation for our own existence, our course through this world. Events are liable to happen in tandem: the practical with the emotional, the logical with the miraculous, the material with the spiritual, and this fact illustrates the synchronistic nature of astrology. There is nothing special about astrology in this regard. It is merely a useful tool, a convenient area in which to "seek". When the time is right and the search sincere, the truth will be found and miracles will happen, for astrology is already present within the undiscovered soul, along with the cause of miracles, with faith and hope, love and hatred, despair and joy: all that is low as well as all that is high.

This book is not a standard work on astrology. Indeed, it may annoy some established astrologers by seeming to borrow, select and modify only those factors having significance for anyone seeking evidence of the existence of a personal soul. Such a search, if successful, will result in the meeting between soul and mind. Only then can the spiritual journey begin, for only the soul can experience spirituality. The inner self is the subtle aspect of the whole self, overriding the limitations of both the physical body and the surface personality. The soul, like a photographic plate, is sensitive to all events and influences, everything we experience, and records them. The soul, be assured, may acquire its own powers of speech, sight, hearing, and understanding, and will feel equally at home in divine and profane company. When we discover our own soul (being as yet bereft of *spirit*), it may not seem a particularly holy place. Indeed, at times it may seem like a garbage tip, because everything, high and low, has entered it to form its contents. There are two levels on which we can live — the material and the spiritual — and only the soul is familiar with both levels of being.

Yes, this meeting can certainly come about, and far more is involved than the mere possibility of contacting an exciting new dimension of "self". Quite literally, the possibilities are infinite. Look at it this way: the inner self is the seed of wholeness, placed at the moment of birth in the seedbed of the personal self. Representing the supreme being, the universe is the cosmic whole, filled equally with the smallest and the largest. The human microcosm reflects these cosmic parts coming together in an act of creation. When a child is born with an individual soul, a new cycle towards selfhood begins. Size and quantity are not issues of wholeness; these belong to the logic of materiality. The issue is one of *being*, coming into being, and it is "being" that has potential wholeness at each moment of creation.

Reality starts here and now!

We have to start from where we are; from what we are. Every moment is itself the synthesis of all past moments, and the source of all future moments. Synchronistic astrology logs the progress of fate, in general or in personal terms. We are reminded of the Buddhist doctrine of karma: "Whatever deeds a man may do ... they make a heritage for him". It is surely this mysterious heritage that militates against wholeness, against the completion of a whole cycle. Is it possible that by changing the synchronistic reflection of fate, we might be able to change fate itself?

This would be to set fate working against itself; to produce a state of inner tension. It cannot happen merely by wishing it; as with so many processes, a catalyst will be needed. Let us say that the journey of discovery can start only when some ray of influence from the outside penetrates the encompassing zodiac of fate — some kind of influence from some unknown source, somewhere "out there". Is this not the old, superstitious brand of astrology we have been striving to avoid? The myth of the tall dark stranger? Be assured it is not! There is indeed an influence which may reach us from beyond the influence of personality. It is not a personal influence, neither is it the arbitrary influence of uncaring gods, or planets: it is the non-personal influence of collective humanity.

Synchronistic astrology of the inner self is based upon the collective nature of mankind. Its propositions are essentially positive, creative, and realistic, leading the personality away from self aggrandizement, and equally away from self abnegation; the two extremes are equally negative. A negative attitude tends to reduce any potential wholeness to its component parts so as to deal with them separately. A positive attitude, on the other hand, accepts the creativity of the moment, and expresses faith in the growth of wholeness — and wholeness is the province of the soul.

Soul-awakening is a necessary step towards achieving wholeness, and wholeness will certainly include the element of collectivity. The most helpful aspect of astrology is to point out the significance of what *is*, the quality of the moment, and moments collectively constitute the organizing principle of wholes. When the quality of wholeness pervades the moment, the possibility of becoming whole, the start of a new personal cycle, is brought to reality.

The cycle of wholeness must involve a recapitulation of the individual's past life in its entirety, and a conceptual return to its source: a return, that is, to purely human awareness, to the awareness that was always present in our very early childhood. From the moment of birth, the individual is unique and self-contained, yet compounded from elements that are common to humankind in particular, and the universe in general. The substance of our individual framework is essentially collective. Individual human nature in astrological terms could be said to comprise soul, earth and planets working together as a prospective whole.

All the life forms that we know can be said to have originated on the Earth, so as a symbol the Earth's motion could be said to represent physical life. This book is concerned with people, and we can take the Earth as a convenient symbol for mankind too. In the dualism of the Earth's movement — firstly by spinning around its own axis, and secondly by the motion of its orbit around the Sun — we can see a duality of direction in life. The two types of movement may be taken to symbolize respectively the individual life, and the collective life of humanity. The Sun, by its gravity and its light and heat, is the source of earthly energy. To many religious people Holy Spirit may be visualized as light. In both the spiritual and the scientific sense, light can be seen as the seed of wholeness, introducing the energy necessary for growth. Light, therefore, may be seen as a necessary condition of wholeness, and wholeness may be taken to imply the presence of light. All life is indeed a cycle, and it seems to follow that individual progress towards wholeness of the self must equally proceed in cycles, large or small, brief or protracted. Completion of the soul cycle brings light and life; unfulfilment equates to darkness and death. Fate and karma, if you differentiate between the two, are not necessarily evil, but they do represent the combined results of unfulfilled cycles, and in that regard they represent darkness. Conversely, the reconciliation of separated elements, the hoped-for state of wholeness, must be represented by light.

Fire, air, water and earth: following ancient tradition the four elements take their place in traditional astrology. The principle is to be found in various other systems of thought, to correspond with the four passions: "observing, desiring, striving and possessing"; or to the four moods: "sanguine, choleric, melancholic and phlegmatic". To the alchemists of old the four elements formed the basis of their research — popularly coarsened into a crude search for material wealth — hoping to find a catalyst, the philosopher's stone, that might allow the elements to flow together in mystical combination: To free the abstract psyche from the deadweight of the physical body, and "make gold from base metal" by forming a new spiritual seat of consciousness — the independent soul.

After a thousand years of utter confusion, alchemy evolved into chemistry, and the original purpose was quite forgotten. But certainly the four elements or passions, as much now as then, need to be somehow combined if there is to be wholeness on the spiritual plane. As the Hindu Upanishads have it: "The elements of fire, air, water and earth find their peace in spirit. Spirit in the soul of man finds peace in universal spirit. Universal spirit rests in God". Synchronistic

astrology attempts symbolically to combine the outer and inner, the physical and the spiritual sides of life, and makes plain the fact that, in their earthly cycle, they are in fact two sides of the same coin. The symbolism that we are using recognizes the "sameness" of all elements, whether material or abstract. A coin, after all, is valid only when both sides co-exist, though, in facing opposite directions, neither side may be aware of the existence of the other.

As a process, the cycle of fulfilment, of attaining wholeness, can never be defined by precise formulae. It may be recognized and shown in individual cases, for every case is unique to the individual. Its possibilities will always be indicated by a rhythm, a continuing vibration with high and low points; but it is not something that can be demonstrated or tailored to fit every case. It can only be seen as a whole.

Need astronomers and astrologers fall out?

Spirituality cannot be fragmented, or isolated, or personalized. It happens to the whole being at once, or not at all, and it is as well to remember this when studying astrology in this way. The more whole the perception, the clearer the truth, the brighter the inspiration to follow the vibrations of spirit. It is no use expecting planetary influence to assist the process; planetary movements can do no more than record the event. Synchronicity is the key. It is all too easy to regard traditional astrological interpretation as law, or to regard planetary interplay as some kind of judgment or arbitrary interference.

This has always been the point, too, at which astrologers and astronomers fall out, the latter seeing only scientific facts. There is the basic misconception engineered by the fact that the signs of the zodiac and the star constellations share the same names. But astrology, in the form familiar to us, is limited to our own solar system, and has no truck with constellations. And those distant stars in their turn can have no truck with our zodiac. Common sense still insists that the planets, equally with the stars, can have no influence whatsoever on human behaviour, or on the ups and downs of fate. The Sun and Moon may have some marginal effects of their own, but as far as Mars, Venus and the rest are concerned — nonsense!

So far, so good. I can see no reasons for the two disciplines to quarrel. All life is rhythm. In our symbolism the rhythm of individual factors relates to the rotation of the Earth; the rhythm of collective factors relates to the Earth's orbital revolution. Nothing stands still. The universe is all movement, and serious astrology seeks to relate those cosmic movements which are closest to mankind with the movements of the life forces which manifest themselves, both in our oft-changing states of consciousness, and in the practical, material events which come to pass — in the form, in fact, of life itself. The larger the scale of outward rhythm, the more closely will it correspond with the inner self of the whole individual.

Perfect roundness, perfect wholeness, the circle — or rather, the sphere — is both the symbol and the reality of universal being. Every point is always turning towards the centre. Perfect universal beings *have to be* spheres. In the case of the planets, though themselves spherical, in astrological terms their sphere is their orbit, as seen from our earthly viewpoint. When casting a horoscope and assessing planetary relationships in a birth chart, this is an important factor to be considered.

If we take the Earth as a symbol of our own individuality, as if it were the human body, its tides and its rhythms, its bodily functions and its moods, are certainly influenced to a greater or lesser degree by its satellite the Moon, and the Moon itself is totally dependent upon the Earth, as the sensations are dependent upon the body. In cosmic terms humanity is placed, it could be said, within the orbits of those planets which operate beyond our physical selves: Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, known to the ancients as the three gods of individual human aspiration; with the remote Uranus, Neptune and Pluto, discovered comparatively recently, seen by astrologers to represent the *collective* passions of humanity.

Bounded in their turn by the Earth's orbit are the orbits of Venus and Mercury, the god-symbols of emotion and thought. Our own orbit — our own selves — encompasses these two alone. To be bound by the forces of emotion and thought, of heart and mind, which should be lesser spheres than our own, is to be bound by forces which are less than ourselves in their spiritual status. Astrology applied to the inner self makes it plain that individuals who are bound exclusively by these subordinate powers — by the heart and mind, or by the bodily sensations associated with the Moon, which is subordinate to the Earth — no matter how clever, how learned, how sensitive, how religious they may be, are necessarily less than truly human. Their potential is thwarted from the start.

It follows that the visible outer planets, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn, indicate the direction in which human aspiration should travel. The discovery of the remaining outlying planets with their yet more widely embracing orbits promised a yet higher destiny for the thoughtful astrologer aspiring to an inward state that could be said to be truly human.

Synchronistic astrology of the inner self acknowledges that all people, all beings are linked at a level which is deep as well as high. I personally see the zodiac as a smothering mantle of worldly desire holding humankind to the Earth, where they are limited by sensations, feelings and thoughts. The zodiac is indeed a symbol of all worldly passions, and it is itself represented as the bounds of a mandala — a universal symbol which is also a diagram of human potential. The kingdom of heaven is said to be within, and in the same vein a way through the encircling zodiac may be sought at the very centre of this personal and collective mandala — a point that touches all other points, and is central to every state of being. A circle may be large or small, and it may contain many eccentric circles within itself, but as a symbol of humankind everyone shares the same central point.

Standard astrology can tell people a great deal about their own selves as individuals; but however valuable as an aid to understanding, an astrological birth chart cannot show the whole, completed self. It is necessarily embryonic, the seed which may or may not grow into a sturdy tree: the scenic impressions at the very start of a journey. But although in the spiritual sense it can do no more than indicate possibilities, it does symbolize the nature of all possibilities open to that individual. In using symbols from a larger, macrocosmic scale to describe the microcosmic self, it will draw a picture of potential destiny, of individual *dharma*, but it cannot by itself tell us whether that *dharma* will ever be fulfilled.

An astrological chart, needless perhaps to say, can be interpreted only on the level at which the interpreter is considering it. One tends to perceive according to what one is. The coming to awareness and subsequent development of the inner self is dependent upon increasing wholeness, and wholeness cannot be perceived beyond the capacity of the observer. What can be perceived, however, by one seeking some kind of spiritual awakening, is past and present progress towards such an eventuality. Already, by having the patience to have read thus far, one has confirmed in oneself the state of receptivity that is essential for growth.

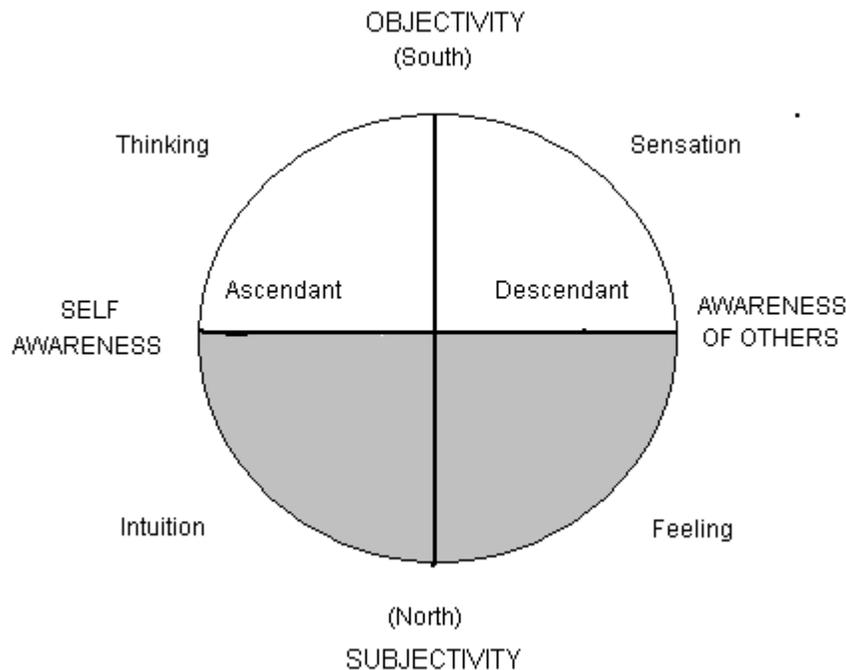
The type of receptivity that leads to the possibility of spiritual opening does not call for any particularly keen brain power, nor particularly sensitive emotions. At the conscious level: intuition and at the unconscious level: instinct; these are the functions that can lead to the perception of living entities as wholes, and the ability to observe universal life patterns in operation. Instinctively, one senses the basic forces of the life cycle. Intuitively, one is able to experience them in a practical form.

Heart and mind, of course, must play their part. Revelations from astrological symbolism may be correctly perceived through the intuitive function, because this function above all others accepts symbols in their wholeness. But more than this is needed. Analysis of parts is a function of the intellect, whilst the evaluation of results is a function of the feelings. In the planning stage at least a certain co-operation between intuitive appraisal, emotional feeling, and analytical thinking,

will be essential in arriving at a sense of *seeking* wholeness, however far from complete that search may seem to be.

The birth chart : a personal mandala

A circle divided by a central cross into four segments, is traditionally used as a chart-symbol of the self — a personal mandala. The top of the chart is taken to represent the south-facing side, or daylight. The bottom of the circle represents the north-facing side, or darkness. The east is on the left, and the eastern extreme of the horizon is known as the ascendant. On the right of the diagram the western extremity is known as the descendant. This type of chart illustrates what is happening in the solar system at any known point in time and space, and may equally represent any event. In this case it represents the individual at the point of birth; the unique nature of that individual, and the fragmentation ensuing from an original state of wholeness. The horizon represents a line of awareness. The ascendant, at the rising of the Sun, is the seat of awareness of others. All planetary synchronicities or "influences" descending from above the horizon can be visualized as reaching us through the air; all those ascending from below the horizon can be thought of as reaching us through the Earth. The sum total represents the fruition respectively of the upper and lower hemispheres: conscious, objective and exterior; unconscious, subjective and interior. Above the horizon, therefore, all is objectivity, thoughts and sensations. Below, all is subjectivity, intuition and feelings.



A Personal Mandala

The idea of potential wholeness was a preoccupation of the famous psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, and his idea of four distinct psychological functions at work within each one of us was applied to the field of astrology in the 1930s by Dane Rudhyar. As involuntary human attitudes they may be symbolized by the four segments of the birth chart, to be summarized thus: the south-east quarter (top left on the chart) stands for thinking; the north-east quarter (bottom left) stands for intuition; the north-west quarter (bottom right) stands for emotional feeling; and the

south-west quarter (top right) stands for bodily sensation. These divisions can indicate the channels through which cosmic awareness symbolized by the zodiac and the planets enter and exit the awareness of the inner self. In the language of symbolism, knowledge comes from the east, fulfilment occurs in the west. The spiritual power of regeneration in the form of intuition and the feelings, is said to come from the north; in the south by means of thoughts and sensations, this power can become crystallized as religion.

The re-creation of wholeness implies a return of the whole non-material self eventually to the spiritual source, as distinct from mere religious aspiration. As the Hindu Vedas put it: "Those who worship in public places and pride themselves on their piety and charity, travel to the south. It is the path that leads to their ancestors. Those who seek the inner spirit with steadfastness, faith and wisdom, travel to the north. It is the path that leads towards the ocean of life; towards the land of immortality".

As time goes by the rhythm of life in general seems to become more and more materialistically orientated; but by this very fact the idea of spirituality as an individual movement towards psychic wholeness, stands out and becomes more readily definable. It is good that we should experience materiality to the full normal extent, for this too is part of the nature of "wholeness". The depths of materiality are balanced out proportionately by the rarer heights of spirituality. We could not really experience the one without the other. A fair balance is essential.

Personal time — collective space

It is of course the Earth's revolution on its own axis that creates the ever-rolling horizon with its own fixed point of reference — the Pole Star. Taken to represent each human individual, during the course of one single revolution the Earth is bathed as it were in all the possibilities for change that are available to it, facing each planet and each sign of the zodiac in turn. One can consider it as a clock face in motion. The single hand of this clock is the horizon between ascendant and descendant — sunrise and sunset. From an individual viewpoint the hand of this clock is stationary whilst the dial itself revolves in a clockwise direction, recording time and logging the spinning of the Earth. From a broader viewpoint, the ascendant-tipped hand could be said to revolve in the opposing, anticlockwise direction, as the horizon continually changes in relation to the constantly rising Sun.

In a completed birth chart, the zodiacal position of the Sun will indicate the exact *position*, within the Earth's orbit, of the individual's birth. The cross, symbol of life on Earth, in determining the position of the ascendant and the descendant, the zenith and the nadir, will represent the exact *time* when the birth took place — the degree reached by the Earth's rotation around its own axis.

Astrology has often been accused of lacking logic, and this is largely true, more particularly perhaps with our selective brand of astrology, intended to be relevant not so much to personality as to the inner self. Rudhyar called astrology the "mathematics of wholeness", because, where logic deals with separate parts in *space*, astrology deals with wholes in *time*. Logic functions by taking this and that fact and fitting them together, perhaps making use of mathematical symbols in doing so. Astrology, on the other hand, considers the whole pattern of astrological symbols, and that symbolic wholeness is taken to represent the physical whole. This is a bringing together of time and space, with time as the symbol, and space as the subject of the birth chart. Within the space-time continuum, if time is subordinate to space, the individual must be subordinate to the zodiac.

Synchronistic astrology is essentially "do-it-yourself", because in order to be really useful everything about the subject should ideally be known and recalled. When the birth chart is calculated a new quality and a new dimension is added — the quality of time. Space symbolizes the individual's ancestral structure, his or her human status, ethnic background, physical

appearance. Time, on the other hand, symbolizes personal content, individual potentiality. The ancestry of space, it seems, gives rise to the potential wholeness of time. But this is not the whole truth: if it were, it would imply that the personality (the most individual and perhaps therefore the most subjective dimension of humankind) symbolized by the Earth's turning on its axis carries the most significance for spiritual development. Wholeness in the spiritual sense implies a broad relationship with the "collective experience", subtle and often hidden from the conscious mind. It is both movements taken together — time and motion in space — that will record outward expansion, the rising of the inner self. It is important to distinguish between a turning inward on oneself by use of the will as a method of "inner development", and the collective way of submission to real influences from beyond the zodiac, indicating the way back to the source.

There is a third motion of the Earth — the Great Polar Cycle — which in astrology symbolizes a periodic influx of cosmic creative powers. In scientific terms, I dare say, the wavering Great Polar Cycle and the resultant precession of the equinoxes is caused by the continuous gravitational effect of Sun and Moon on the Earth's spinning equator. The cycle is said to take 25,868 years to complete, and during this period the "fixed" north point will have changed as the polar axis of the Earth points in turn towards different stars. The nature of incoming cosmic powers, and thence the potential for world spirituality, is said to change as the Earth enters each successive era — now, and for the next two thousand years, the Age of Aquarius.

In astrological terms, the north pole is considered to be the point at which cosmic magnetic energies enter, symbolizing the power of divine consciousness. The opposing south pole is the point of departure for these forces in a modified form: the *yin* of Mother Earth receiving spiritual influences from the bright *yang* of divine awareness. In this respect the Earth as a planetary whole, has often been said to represent the "planetary individual" — a Buddha-like figure whose head is haloed by the aurora borealis. But this type of "wholeness" is not appropriate for the human individual; such a person would have become crystallized in individual selfhood. Such a person would still be bound by that vast web of materiality symbolized by the zodiac. The whole self must include the non-self with the self: truly spiritual wholeness must include all planetary orbits, as the collective experience, within its own being.

In practical terms, individual contents are constantly undergoing change and modification in their relationship with the collective. Only the foundation for the self — the "space" of the birth chart — remains unchanged and unchanging. Time is indicative of change, the continual interplay of influences which surround the individual, changes which are aptly symbolized by the ever-changing zodiac degree, and the ceaseless movements of the planets, seen and unseen.

Meaningful events may seem personal to you and me, but we represent the microcosm, and symbolically such events are registered on the vast meter of the macrocosm. Having recognized this, and having established the link between personal experiences and the workings of our solar system, having studied the resultant patterns as they applied to the past, we can make suppositions for the future, because astrology is a discipline of symbols. The art of putting astrology into practice consists in the use of cosmic symbols as an aid to understanding. To argue whether cosmic patterns can or cannot have influence over human affairs is to misunderstand both the practice and the purpose of this art.

The human recipient of spiritual influence is the soul: not some theoretical principle, but the human soul in reality. Within the solar system the planet Earth represents a kind of prison for the soul, and the perimeter of that prison is the zodiac. In order to escape this prison, the soul must gain an introduction to the spirit which alone can provide access to greater worlds beyond. It is helpful meanwhile if the mind can first gain an introduction to soul. Any astrological doodler may find that *inner* significance may best be charted not on a personal plane by precise calculations involving the Moon and inner planets, but on the collective scale through the zodiac degree and the easily plotted, widely orbiting other planets.

Precision applied on the personal plane can only lead ever more deeply into the thrall of karma and an unfulfilled cycle. The life of the inner self is lived not on the personal but on the collective plane, for the "inner" is indeed greater than the everyday "outer" self. Using astrology to help uncover this fact is essentially a do-it-yourself art, once the seed of the idea has been sown. An individual as the native of a birth chart, sits at the centre of a personal universe, and all else is symbolized as revolving around this unique point in time and space. The most creatively constructive interpretation may be made by the subject alone, for the individual self is its foundation.

