

God, the Universe and Everything

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Transcript for presentation

I want to address myself to those of you who, like me, struggle with Astrology. For those who find Astrology easy, what I have to say might sound trite, but I hope that for some of you, at least, my lecture might be helpful. And I shall break my own rule today by speaking about myself somewhat. This is not for any other reason than to make clear to the strugglers, that the effort is worthwhile and that the difficulties can be overcome. But I truly hope that everyone here will find something of interest even if only to disagree with me.

For all the differences, what remains the same is that in each school of thought there is theory and practice, system and method. It seems plain enough, a simple process of learning the techniques and then applying them. If this is true, then why is it that so many of us struggle? In my own case, I found that the cause was a missing link between theory and practice which in the end I identified as Understanding.

And that sounds simple, too, doesn't it? But the understanding of which I speak does not occur in the brain, which merely collects information into a recognisable and usable form: even I could understand that Mercury square Mars might produce a heated argument. The understanding of which I speak is not of the brain, but of the heart and answers the question of why Mercury square Mars indicates a heated argument. Such Understanding takes a long time to develop for all but the specially gifted.

With this understanding, we can collect all of our knowledge and get it to fit together in every respect without force. It then becomes an 'omni-tool', a little like Doctor Who's sonic screwdriver! It can do everything and will never let you down.

I am neither specially gifted nor clever, and it has taken me a long time. I have learned Astrology several times, in fact I am in my fifth cycle. I know that among you there are some who are experiencing the same joys and difficulties that I did all those years ago. There will also be those among you who are further along the path, and having done everything thoroughly and properly, still recognise gaps in their knowledge and understanding. Well, that's all right because none of us can know everything. In my own case, I was fortunate to find that great astrologer William Lilly, and once I'd learned to trust the instructions in his work, I could make an adequate job of it. But

my judging ability seemed to lack fluency and here it was that I recognised my lack of true Understanding.

So, if I didn't understand, then there must be more information that would solve the problem. Thus I accrued huge amounts of information, I studied hard and researched even harder. Yet, that elusive quality remained ... well ... elusive. The answer only began in my intellect, my Mercurial part.

As a teacher, I have to return to astrological fundamentals repeatedly and it was this, partly, that helped me in my endeavours. To cut a long developmental process short, I eventually recognised that the problem was partly that astrology had been separated from the other hermetic sciences, often defined as Magic, Alchemy and Qabala. This might not sound like much, but it meant a great deal to me and it offered me further sources of research and information. Along with this, I had to recognise that as we have lost the oral tradition I would have to work much, much harder at achieving true understanding.

At some point it became clear to me that, along with our society, astrology had become secularised and that this was in some way associated with the problem I had to solve. Throughout history astrology remained recognisable from one age to another. So why was it different at the end of the 19th century? I became aware that what they forgot and what we have forgotten is the Divine. We had pushed aside ancient spiritualities and philosophies and replaced them with other things, but we did not replace them with a unifying philosophy, a framework within which we could all work. We no longer had a System – the theory; only method remained – the practice. Which is a little like trying to make a jelly without a mould.

During the national trauma of the English Civil War, Elias Ashmole, a Royalist officer, was introduced by Jonas Moore, a Roman Catholic, to William Lilly, a parliamentarian and Puritan. Lilly could have reported Ashmole to the authorities because at that time London was out of bounds to royalist officers, instead he assisted Ashmole. How could this be?

I can think of no other unifying principle than a spiritual one. As we often hear, astrologers from both sides of the political and religious divide met once a year to dine together. How could such enmity be put aside even for a few hours?

In my opinion, and I am not a religious person in the accepted sense, it can only have been that they each recognised that they practised a divine art, that the Divine was their centre. This, as I see it, is the Spirit of astrology; it is its driving force. If we can grasp this in our hearts, we can begin to understand

astrology right down to the marrow. Once that has happened, the application of the theory becomes so much more straightforward because the link is created between head and heart.

I am not trying to preach religion here, and a religious perspective is not essential. It doesn't really matter if you use different words, but in trying to understand astrology we do need to understand what it is and why and how it works. In so doing, we elevate both astrology and ourselves, so that we can look the stars full in the face and make them talk! "Thou talkest with Angels, nay with God himself!", to quote Lilly and others. When I understood this phrase, I found it very exciting and it gave renewed impetus to my obsessive drive for astrology.

Now, if you choose to use different terms to express these ideas it doesn't matter, because the principle remains the same -- a Rose by any other name. This principle simply needs to be addressed.

Let's look at something that we all understand and even agree about -- largely!

Diagram 2

As you look at these glyphs, images of what they mean to you will immediately spring to mind. You might like to consider why that is, after all these are just shorthand expressions, aren't they?

In a way they are, but they are much more than that. They are symbols, and as with all symbols they can bypass the intellect (which is why it is so difficult to rid ourselves of incorrect symbolism). There is an interaction implied between the astrologer and these glyphs that goes far beyond a handy way of putting ideas on paper. But what are they symbolic of?

They are symbolic of a complex system of correspondences.

We might express those correspondences as representations of certain things or rulerships, but the system of correspondences is far more profound than these other words would have us believe. It is not my purpose today to enter into this too far because it is such a huge subject. However, we should always keep in mind that when we say things like, "Mars rules war" for example, that what the system of correspondences states is that Mars is war and war is Mars. We see quite clearly that once a war is being waged, other correspondences of Mars become apparent. And that war does not necessarily have to shed blood: a war of words, cold war and psychological warfare are

apt phrases, too. Mars corresponds with war, and war corresponds with Mars.

Understanding astrology relies on understanding order, patterns, Nature, and Divine Will, however you care to define that. Within this order is the system of correspondences which are defined as similarities, agreements, or analogies. Analogy is defined as a similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar. Through this system we learn of the essence of things, and from that essence all other correspondences derive.

The astrological system as a whole corresponds to Nature and Nature corresponds to the astrological system. To change that system means that we change Nature and only by changing Nature can we change the system. We cannot change the planet Mars and make it something else any more than we can change the essential nature of war.

Macrocosm and Microcosm – as above, so below; phrases that pop up frequently amongst astrologers, but we really must understand what this principle means and why it is so important for astrology. Again in my opinion, in order to obtain a true understanding of astrology, we cannot simply pay lip service to its philosophy – and a philosophy it is. Humanity corresponds to Nature; we are Nature's Microcosm and so this principle can be applied to, and tested through, the nativity.

Here I return to the separation of astrology from the hermetic sciences. What the latter provided, for those who studied them, was a way of 'proving' the correspondences. They were able to prove the astrological system, in their terms, as scientific fact. We, on the other hand, have to accept this so-called proof on trust, if we accept it at all, but don't we do this anyway with the results of modern scientific research? As we progress with our studies and gain experience, we might find the truth of that position, but we no longer have the means by which we might apply our own 'laboratory tests' so to speak. The oral teachings, by whose means we might have understood so much more, are of necessity lost to us. I believe, that the onus is on us to try to understand that context if we are to develop the true Understanding that is so important. Our task, in my view, is to discover why it was so important to those great minds of the past. We should not make the mistake made by Alan Leo and others of considering them ignorant and unsophisticated dabblers in the Mysteries.

In order to understand astrology, and thus in order to apply techniques, we need to understand its structure and find out why astrology is as it is, no matter which school of thought we might follow. So, we'll look at the oldest of myths, that of the Creation. I'm using the biblical account from Genesis, but

there are many others from other cultures which tell a similar story. I am not a bible scholar, so this will be somewhat superficial, but I hope that it will assist you in your search for Understanding.

Astrology expresses Creation and is a part of it, and therein lies the key.

To begin then with some simple principles. Our universe is geocentric, that is, the planet Earth is placed at the centre of the visible Universe which revolves around it. We must remember this – as inaccurate as it might be in material terms – we are dealing with earth-centred perspectives. Poets, artists and lovers do not swoon at the romance and glory of a beautiful Earth rise, but that of a Sun set. Because that is how it appears to our eyes. Our eyes see because of light and no matter how sophisticated the technology of optics becomes, it relies entirely upon light.

So, we have a geocentric universe or solar system filled with the contrasts of light and dark. Out of the apparent chaos of material life, astrologers must seek order; patterns from which to read the past, the present and the future. The story of the Creation in Genesis is helpful because it speaks of the order for which we search.

2 i. “In the beginning

3 God

4 created the heaven and the earth

5 ii. “And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep

6 and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

7 iii. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

8 iv. And God saw the light, and that it was good: and God divided the light from darkness.

v. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night: And the evening and the morning were the first day.

9 vi. And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

10 vii. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

viii. And God called the firmament Heaven.

11 ix. And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear; and it was so.

x. And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good."

12 xiv. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years.

xv. And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon earth: and it was so.

13 xvi. And God made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made stars also.

xvii. And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth.

xviii. And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from darkness: and God saw that it was good."

It isn't possible to enter into a detailed discussion of this section of Genesis especially since it has exercised scholars for many centuries. We are using only one Creation story, and then only one translation of it, so it would be unwise to attempt to extrapolate too much. However, what we see is an explanation of how Order arises from Chaos through the imposing of boundaries by way of division and through that explanation we see astrology's main divisions, both celestial and geographical - as above so below.

Through this Story we can begin to see what becomes an intricate and elegant system of correspondences. With some thought and imagination, you can develop your own perspective because my perspective is only one. But it is essential that each of us recognises and addresses these very ancient philosophies and explanations of how and why Astrology works. We have to look back in order to move forward.

So, we will begin at the end of the story with our primary division of day and night, Light and darkness.

14

Within that we see the division of male and female, but still from the One Source. The Active principle is associated with daytime and the Receptive principle with night-time and thus we find the two primary divisions of astrology.

So, let's look at it in more familiar form.

15

The sphere is obtained from other versions of the story, but what we see is One divided into Two. This division, whilst corresponding to time - Day and Night - also has a spatial reference - Above and Below - and from this we begin to find direction and location.

16 Then we must divide Two into Four and accommodate our other two qualities of moisture and dryness.

17 With the quadrants in place we can begin to deduce further correspondences, thus:

It is, I think, fairly easy to see how further divisions and extrapolations can be achieved in an orderly manner. In this diagram we see a spherical expression of what we saw in the earlier slides. Our quadrants have the above-noted qualities or natures; these natures correspond with the Elements, but are not identical. They accord more closely with the Four Bodily Humours, another very important principle, and we can see how these divisions can be applied more widely, while still maintaining their integrity.

Now, we should revert to the beginnings of fertility as expressed in Genesis I: verse 11: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed was in itself, upon the earth, and it was so." And in the following verse we see this put into action because now the requisite conditions for growth have been created.

The conditions for growth now in place, are then set in motion. I want to emphasise this, because it is often forgotten that for life to exist, the conditions of fertility must exist, that is, light, heat, moisture and dryness in balanced

proportions. These verses provide an immediate image of what occurs when the Elements are combined in balanced proportion.

Each is required for life to exist; too much of one or the other and life ceases. For example, we talk about the fertility of the Water signs, but Water alone is as barren as any other Element. And this is the key: “balanced proportions”. We seek moderation, temperance; the excess of any Element restricts or denies fertility – excess is barrenness.

This principle is the essence of astrology; balance is what we seek in order to maintain health at any level or from any perspective. It is what we seek to maintain all life, physical, mental, emotional, or indeed spiritual. Temperance is fertile, good; excess is barrenness, bad. Health, in one way or another, is what we look for in all of these areas and in all astrological applications.

We can see the same principle operating in the planets. Beneficence and maleficence are qualities which are based on a planet’s capacity for fertility or barrenness, that is, moderation or excess. You will have read many times that it’s wrong to attribute goodness or badness to the planets, and perhaps, in modern terms the language is somewhat harsh, but if we accept that mortal existence is 'good' – and God saw that it was good – then it is a small step to accepting that anything that promotes mortal existence is also good.

So, let’s look at the natures of the planets:

18

Mercury becomes fertile or barren depending on which planet it is most closely connected with.

These are the essences of the planets.

We are used to hearing that Jupiter is a big, fat planet and prone to excess. However, as the Greater Benefic, Jupiter is the epitome of moderation and temperance. Of course, it is capable of excess, as is any other planet, depending on its position and condition, but that isn’t its **essence**.

Notice the dryness associated with the malefics and the moisture associated with benefics – moisture is fundamental to and essential for fertility. This is the reason that these four planets correspond to goodness and badness. Astrology reflects Nature and here is an example of what that means and how it works: nothing grows without moisture. Genesis tells us that it is God’s Will that life exists: “God saw that it was good”; from this perspective therefore, fertility and growth are good, barrenness and contraction are bad.

We might put it another way, that fertility is progressive, healthy and barrenness is stagnation, unhealthy. I'm sure that you will be able to extend these ideas into the horary, nativity or event.

Apart from the purely astrological significance of this, we can also see how humanity may participate in the creative process which, according to this philosophy, is at the heart of mortal existence. Creativity and productivity being fundamental to everything we are and everything that life is – as above, so below. We can extrapolate from these principles and apply them directly to the chart. For example, when we find the malefics in operation, we might decide that here we find barrenness of purpose or destruction of ideas or opportunities. Where Mars burns it up, Saturn freezes it.

The planets' natures correspond to certain things and conditions and this is by way of their natures which are as follows:

19

In this system we find that the malefics are placed in the time opposite to their natures, so Saturn is placed in the day to warm it, and Mars is placed in the night to cool it. This is an important principle, that of amelioration through tempering the essential natures of the malefics and enhancing the natures of the benefics.

The heavenly bodies are expressed in terms of their natures, their essences, and through their natures a system of correspondences is found. When we mention that a planet rules a certain matter, we are really referring to the part each planet plays in the system of correspondences. Through the system of correspondences we can see how it is that Astrology can reflect nature. In other words, how it works.

Moving on a little, verse 14 of Genesis I tells us: “And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years:”

The “signs” here mentioned of course refer to portents or omens, prophecy. The seasons, days and years all refer to the cyclical nature of the universe and particularly relate to the Sun. We know that the constellations and certain stars within those constellations were used as indicators of time, one example being the rising of Sirius which heralded the flooding of the Nile. Eventually, because events no longer coincided with this 'Sidereal' Zodiac, it was superseded by the fixed 'Tropical' Zodiac, which relied solely upon the movement of the Sun for its definition.

The Tropical Zodiac is where we go next. It is defined as a band of some 8° in width corresponding to the Sun's path or the ecliptic.

20 From this diagram we can see that the Zodiac corresponds to time by way of the Sun's annual motion. We see here the four major turning points of the year and they mark the start of each season. As points of change and progress, we call them Moveable. The signs which follow them are at a time when the season is established and we have the weather we would expect at that time of year – if you don't live in the UK that is! So we can imply fixity. In the signs which succeed the fixed we find weather that belongs to the season just passing and the one to come. Hence, their dual or Common natures.

21 This diagram illustrates these ideas a little more clearly. In our Tropical Zodiac, and in the Northern Hemisphere, the seasons begin at Aries with the Equinox and Spring which has the nature of heat and moisture. Remember that these are the two prime qualities for fertility. So when the Sun is in Aries Spring begins, growth begins, and as the Sun progresses the seasons change and so does the nature of those seasons. Because we see this as a reflection of the cosmos, it works both ways and the Sun's nature also changes. Naturally it is temperately hot and dry, but as it moves through the seasons its nature changes accordingly. So, in the Spring, that is, when it is in Aries, Taurus or Gemini, its nature is hot and moist; in summer it is hot and dry, as you would expect; in autumn it is cold and dry and in winter it is cold and moist.

The Moon, incidentally, undergoes similar 'seasonal' changes according to its phase. All of which provides very interesting material with which to delineate a nativity and which forms the basis of the temperament. This word, in English, associates with such words as "temperature" and "tempering" or "moderating". Another word which expresses exactly this is "temperament" and here I refer back to the Four Bodily Humours. In this way, we each have our own seasonality, temperature or temperament – as above, so below.

The twelve signs all derive their qualities in a way similar to that of the planets: so Taurus is a Fixed, earthy, feminine and nocturnal sign, Gemini is a Common, airy, masculine and diurnal sign, and so on with the others. Through their correspondence to the Elements and the division of the heavens they also correspond to locations and directions. When we speak of planets located in the signs we must refer to these fundamental qualities, these essences, and extrapolate from them.

So, the Zodiac was and is a calendar because it measures the Sun's movements and the Sun defines day and night, and, on an annual basis, the start and end of each season and the year itself. Because this is so well known and often taken for granted, I want to emphasise that this astrological system

reflects what we know of life – exactly. Everything that is described by the Zodiacal signs is bestowed by the Sun; everything that is described by the planets is bestowed by the Sun. As indeed, is the case with the houses. The Sun is central to astrology in more ways than one, as it is central to our perceived universe.

We must now combine the planets with the Zodiac, and this is achieved in an orderly and natural way. Each Zodiacal sign is ruled by a planet or luminary in this way.

22 Each sign is either diurnal or nocturnal, masculine or feminine, active or receptive, and these take an alternating order, marked in red and blue. You can see that, apart from the Sun and Moon, each planet rules two signs – one diurnal and one nocturnal. And here is the principal which has caused a great deal of confusion in recent times: the planets rule the signs, but they do **not** correspond with them. In other words, the planets have **not** been allocated to these signs because of any similarity of nature.

We should observe the Sun ruling Leo and the Moon ruling Cancer; having one sign each because the Sun can only shine in the day – keeping in mind that it defines the day and night. Likewise the Moon corresponds to the night and shines at night. So, moving outwards, left and right, from the Luminaries, we find that Mercury rules Gemini and Virgo; Venus rules Taurus and Libra; Mars rules Aries and Scorpio, Jupiter rules Pisces and Sagittarius; Saturn rules Aquarius and Capricorn. What you are looking at shows the distances of the planets from the Sun, and astronomical reality. We see that Saturn, the furthest from the Sun and so the coldest, darkest planet, maintains its diametrical position with both the Sun and Moon from Aquarius and Capricorn – the Sun is the Lord of Light and Life and Saturn is the Lord of Darkness and Death.

The planets in this order also maintain positive relationships with either the Sun or Moon. All the planetary rulers in nocturnal signs, marked blue, are in good relationship with the nocturnal Moon, and likewise, all planetary rulers in diurnal signs, marked red, are in good relationship with the Sun. These are known as the lunar and solar sects, or families. It is this symmetry which corresponds with Nature, and it is a balanced system.

This diagram, this simple diagram, represents the whole of astrology. Everything we know about astrology and everything we use it for, is held here. And you have seen how it was derived, thus you might agree with me that it is crucial to a true Understanding of astrology.

Each planet and the Moon owes its light to the Sun; the Sun owes nothing, it is self-generating and self-perpetuating – it is representative of the Creator, thus of the whole of creation. The light that each planet shows, being dependent upon the Sun, is representative of a facet of the Creator and thus of a part of Creation. Each planet's nature is transmitted on its light. The principle of the transmission of Light is central and requires a great deal of consideration particularly as it reflects the relationship between the Sun and the Moon and the parts they play.

It is worth emphasising that the Sun is the Lord of Life in old terminology, but this is not old-fashioned, modern science repeats this. Light equals life and without photosynthesis we all die.

The astrological system is a reflection of life on Earth, and vice versa. It is a model of the whole of Creation, but through its correspondences we have the means to interpret the evolution of Creation, thus of Divine Will. The planets tell us what will happen, the Zodiacal signs tell us when it will happen, and the astrological houses tell us where it will happen. I have phrased this in the future tense, but it could just as well be in the past or present, however, Genesis does tell us that the "lights in the firmament of the heaven" are for "signs", so we may ask signs of what? In its own terms, we may consider these to be signs of Divine Will however we might prefer to phrase that and in that sense we are looking at an image of Creation and of the Creator.

So this diagram is a representation of Creation, it contains everything. The system described therein depends entirely upon the Sun. This is as materially real as it is astrologically real – as above, so below. The Sun is representative of the Creator (or the creative impulse if you prefer); it corresponds to the Creator. While being a microcosm itself, it is a reflection of the Macrocosm.

22 So, for life to exist we have to find a balanced combination of the divisions of Creation; much easier said than done. Each one of us has his or her own unique combination expressed in the nativity. Few will have the blessing of a truly balanced combination, thus most of us have an imbalance; areas of excess, barrenness, non-productivity. Our craft imposes upon us the task of achieving equilibrium, true moderation, and once achieved we can be rulers of the stars, or, as it is sometimes put, above the stars.

In each of us is the Sun, we can see that in our naticities, we can also bestow light and life through the system of correspondences, and thus be a part of the creative impulse. As above, so below.

There are many ways to approach the story of Creation, but as we read it we read astrology.

23 Here is an image of the First Day painted by a Portuguese artist of the 16th century. It expresses these ideas far better than I have or ever can.

So, when you come up against difficulties in your studies or practice, you might like to recall this painting. Within such an image I found some answers and many clues and I hope that it might do the same for you.

I have presented to you a way in which we might understand the 'how' and 'why' of Astrology. We have looked at a very early exposition of how our Universe was created and found within it the exact image of astrology recognisable to us today. We found that not only did God make humanity in Its own Image, but also astrology. That astrology corresponds with Nature, as each one of us does, and that by recognising this, our application of techniques might become more enlightened.

In my view, the Hermetic philosophy of “As above, so below; As below, so above”, expresses astrology and its source exactly and that by contemplating this principle deeply we can improve our Understanding of what we do, how we do it, and, more importantly, why we do it.