

ASTRO*SHAMANISM - PART 3
Astrology of the Heart - The Inner Meaning
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The first two parts can be found deeper in My Wall or at:

HTTP://MichaelErlewine.com
under "Astro*Talk Blog"

Astrology of the Heart - The Inner Meaning

In this part of the blog, we will start by examining the astrological planets as they relate to the system of subtle internal energies called the chakras, a branch of esoteric astrology. Also called occult or secret astrology, esoteric astrology is by definition somewhat difficult to study. It is occult (hidden) or secret, not because it is some deep dark secret, and not because someone or some group is trying to keep it from us, but because it is, by its very nature, subtle and hard to grasp with the mind. It might be more helpful to say, as the Tibetans do, that it is self-secret. It hides itself from us. We can't grasp it.

And this knowledge is hidden or secreted in the one place we might never think to look and that is: in plain sight. In other words, the secret heart of astrology (esoteric astrology) is hidden by the fact that it is so obvious and present to us that we have no way to grasp it or keep it in mind. Although it is with us and present all the time, our mind has trouble grasping or maintaining an awareness of it.

Self Secret

An example of something that is self-secret would be consciousness itself. Try using your consciousness to look at itself. Take a moment right now and look at who is reading this page. Who is that? See what I mean?

This subject is, by its very nature, hard to grasp and thus is "self-secret," which is what mind training or meditation techniques are all about. If you just tried the little experiment mentioned above, you have some idea of how difficult it is to point out the nature of the obvious, yet that is our task here.

Although esoteric astrology of this type is very subtle and hard to grasp, it is very much worth our efforts to understand it, and has very practical benefits. To rephrase this: Unlike our day-to-day world, in the realm of esoteric astrology even the tiniest bit of increased vision or progress can radically affect how we see things. What separates the initiate from the uninitiated may be only the width of a hair in terms of understanding, yet this difference could be all the difference in the world. It could be the difference between ignorance and vision.

Esoteric Teachers

I have been studying astrology for more than fifty years. During that time, although I am considered quite technical by my fellow astrologers, my primary interest has always been on

esoteric astrology, what astrology means, refers, or points to. I have had the very good fortune to be instructed in esoteric studies by a number of fine teachers. It is to their credit that I am able to present any of this information here.

In particular, I trained for a number of years with Andrew Gunn McIver (a traveling Rosicrucian initiator) who was born in Scotland and later settled in Canada and then the U.S. It was he who introduced me to some of the inner workings of shamanistic astrology, the esoteric or hidden side.

There have been a number of other fine teachers that I have been lucky enough to meet in this world. One such teacher was Lotis Wilder, a Unity minister from Detroit. In recent years, since the early 70s, I have been working with Tibetan psychological methods of mind practice, in particular with Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche, a Tibetan lama. It was Khenpo Rinpoche who introduced me to the Eastern view of esoteric knowledge. I have made two pilgrimages to Tibet and China, one with my teacher.

In these pages, I would like to share with you various esoteric ideas. I am not claiming to be any great expert in all of this, but I do have a sincere interest in the subject and am happy to examine and discuss these ideas with others. My wish is that this discussion may be of benefit to readers and to astrology in general.

The Planets as Chakras

The chakras, vital force centers within the body, are much discussed in the esoteric literature of India, not to mention all kinds of New Age publications. I imagine that most of you reading this have seen illustrations of a yogi sitting in a meditation posture, with a vertical line of colored spheres (the chakras) running up and down their spine. These diagrams, while accurate in themselves, don't tell the whole story, and can be misleading in that they suggest that the chakras are, somehow, only something (points of light) within your personal physical body.

While the chakras or planetary force centers can be said to be within your physical body, as in the diagrams mentioned, these seven centers within our body are but pointers to chakras also outside our body in the world itself, vast areas of life through which each of us live and wander. Or, another way to put this is that the term "physical body," in the esoteric sense, does not just mean your personal body, your arms and legs, but the physical aspects of all life, the physical body of the life in this world -- the world itself as our physical body. We are all wandering in that world.

The Chakras in the World

In other words, our physical body (shamanistically speaking) is also the entire world out there. While it can be somewhat difficult to grasp the chakras as spheres of light along the spine, it is not so difficult to see these same chakras in the world around us, and to learn to use them in astrological counseling. That is what this section of the blog is about, learning to use shamanistic techniques for helping yourself and others, particularly through the counseling process.

Here, as mentioned, we will not primarily be focusing on the planets as physical points or centers within our particular personal body. Instead, we will examine the idea that the planets (chakras) are vast areas of consciousness and life within the larger body of our existence, the external life of the outside world in which we each wander and learn. We are concerned here

not only with the chakras as states or “places,” but also in the process and journey each of us makes from one to another of these chakras.

Reflected In the World

So, let’s put aside for now trying to find the seven planetary force centers or chakras along our spine. You can’t see them in the mirror and, although you may be able to sense something about them from meditating on their qualities, there is a much easier way to learn about these sacred centers, as projected by ourselves onto the world around us. We each have a built-in projector within us.

As astrologers, we are already comfortable with associating celestial events (planets, aspects, houses, etc.) in the heavens with corresponding events personally here on Earth, so we can extend that kind of understanding to the chakras. These areas along the spine correspond with the vast planetary centers in the world around us.

We are familiar, from day-to-day life, with the idea that the mind controls the body, and that if we can learn mental control and stability, the body will usually follow along. If nothing else, we know that what we see and feel in our mind psychologically can affect how we view life outside ourselves, which in turn can affect us physically. We project our inner view onto the outside world, and then proceed to live in that outside world, colored by our own inner psychology, by what we believe and see. If we are still more experienced, we know there is no absolute difference between inner and outer, no hard line --subject and object are one.

We live in a world of projectors, and every person projects their inner world on the screen of life around them and then lives in that world. The phrase “when worlds collide” takes on new meaning in this context.

Then it should not surprise us to learn that the chakras, these great planetary centers, are also vast areas of our mind and life where we exist and live out our lives. If we want to think of the chakras as areas within our body, then we should understand that we are speaking also here of the entire body of existence -- our life.

The World is as ‘We’ See It

Yes, these centers are subtle energy centers, a part of our mind, but that mind, for better or for worse, very much controls and colors (projects) how we see and act in the outside physical world. In other words: there is no outside physical world that is not filtered or first colored by our mind, by the view in-here from which we see that world out there. ‘Out there’ is in here projected to a marked degree. Inside and outside are hopelessly interdependent. If we change our mind, we also change the way we see the world. This is not a new idea.

That having been said, it remains to point out to you how to identify and experience these inner planetary chakras in the world you are now living in, and this is not that difficult. So far, I have indicated that you will be looking outside in the world around you for these subtle planetary chakras, and not just within your mind, in the sense that we tend to think of the mind as connected to our head or our personal body. The chakras are also magnified areas of the mind projected in the world around you and quite easy to see.

Living in the Chakras

Although we all have seen diagrams of the seven chakras or sacred force centers within the human body, these diagrams are hardly very useful without a lot of instruction and practice. As pointed out, it is misleading to think that the chakras are limited to a series of glowing spheres along our spinal cord within our physical body. We don't see them in the mirror, and without a lot of training, we can't really sense them within our personal physical body.

As pointed out earlier, more useful to most of us will be to learn that these chakras are more practically understood to be vast areas of our mind (and therefore our life) through which we wander, a journey each of us takes through life, one that lasts as long as life itself. In other words, at any given time, each of us is centered more-or-less in one chakra or another, and I don't mean looking at a little glowing sphere along our spine. We are out there in our life in the midst of the chakras, always, like: right now. The question for most of us of might be: which chakra are we in, and how can we tell?

Wandering In the Chakras

We are now (and always have been) wandering in the chakras in this vast body of existence that we call our life. When we read in books about spiritually opening the chakras, one by one, or opening them in this or that order, this refers not to focusing on some glowing sphere within our physical spine, but to our life's journey through time and the mind. We move from one chakra to another, in a very slow progression that will take our entire life. Recognizing this fact can make understanding the world of esoteric astrology very much easier.

At any given year or time in our lives, we tend to be centered or "living" in one particular chakra, one particular life area, and we very gradually move or progress from that chakra to the next one in line, and usually in a given order. That order is the same for most of us, but it can vary between individuals. The opening of the chakras for each of us is the story of our spiritual awakening, our spiritual journey beyond time.

Successive Chakras

It can take years (or a lifetime) to move from a particular chakra or planetary sphere to the next one in succession. And, in general, this process is irreversible. In other words, once we have made ourselves at home in (and mastered) a planet or chakra, we move on. We don't go back and live in the previous chakra, but we do remember how to get around in that chakra. We know how it works and how to use it. It becomes part of our personal spiritual toolbox.

It is important to understand that when we speak here of moving from one chakra to the next, or moving through the chakras, this concept can be misleading. We are not really going anywhere and we don't ever get anywhere, other than the right here and now. Both the past and the future are always accessed from the present, that is: right now.

All of our previous changes, all of the chakras we have been in are with us now, and not somewhere left behind or discarded. And this is true for any future chakras we may inhabit. When we master a chakra or planet, it does not disappear, but it no longer challenges or interests us to the same degree. We are the master of it, and can handle it from that point on, without thinking, automatically, much like when we master steering a car; it becomes automatic for us, part of our expertise. That is how to understand how we move from one chakra or planet to another, in our spiritual unfoldment.

Planetary Landscapes

Each chakra or planetary sphere has what amounts to its own particular landscape and series of rules or laws that govern life in that chakra. We gradually learn to find our way around in each chakra; we learn those rules, and master how to live there. It is not unlike going to school. If we take chemistry one year and graduate, we move on to studying physics. We don't have to take chemistry again, we are not studying it now, but we do remember how to get around in a chemistry book. We can use it. It is a permanent part of our education.

In this life as we live it, nothing vanishes or just goes away, because everything is a part of life. Each stage of life we have passed through, and each chakra, is still right here with us, and other people are now living in chakras where we once lived. It is not behind us, just because we passed through that stage. In other words, passing through a chakra means knowing how to get around in that chakra, how to work it, not leaving it behind.

When we learn to breath, we don't stop breathing, but we keep breathing automatically as long as we have life, but we no longer focus on breathing. That is a better way to conceive of chakras and our journey through them. We never really get anywhere else, but we do learn to handle these parts of our lives with skill and understanding. We master them. We become initiates.

Mastering the Chakras

What follows will be explained in great detail later on, so don't panic if this does not make perfect sense right away. When we clear out of a chakra, master it, and graduate to the next chakra, we are no longer motivated by what first motivated us within that chakra. It is no longer new for us. We have moved on to the rules and complexity of the next chakra, and are now motivated by what may be a completely new set of rules, and are working within a wondrous new landscape. Each new chakra is somewhat like a new or completely different world for us.

The previous chakra or area of our lives is still with us, but is now void of interest to us. It is empty for us. We have been there, done that, and we continue to do that (whatever is related to the previous chakra), as needed, from this point on. We have mastered it, like steering an automobile. We drive on.

An important point is that the essence of each chakra we are currently in, the essence of the rules for that chakra or planet, is always the next innermost chakra, that particular chakra or planet that is "inner" to the current one. For example, if we are alive and living in the Saturn chakra, the essence or key to that chakra will be the planet that is next innermost to Saturn, which, of course, is Jupiter. The orbit of Jupiter is next inside (toward the Sun) from Saturn. Jupiter therefore is the esoteric key to Saturn, the key that unlocks how to use and master Saturn. This is true for each of the chakras, in turn. Mars is the key to Jupiter, Earth is the Key to Mars, and so on, in to the Sun. More on this soon.

I am sure this is sounding a bit too mysterious, but as you will see, it is quite simple and easy to understand. What we want to know as shamanistic astrologers is: in what chakra are we now living? Where are we? If we are a counseling astrologer, we need to determine what chakra our client is in, and what are they seeing and experiencing? Once we know what chakra they are in, we can direct our clients or ourselves in a variety of useful ways.

Let me know if I should continue, please

Astro Shamanism

Astrological
Rites
of Passage

