

THE 'NATURAL' ZODIAC

There is a trend to associate signs and houses with seasonal change — for example a belief that the first house is connected with the sign Aries, the second with the sign Taurus and so on because of the seasons. This is based on the Aries-to-Pisces cycle and is a legacy of Northern Hemisphere astrology. This trend can be confusing to the beginner and should be considered with care.

In the Northern hemisphere the Vernal or Spring equinox coincides with the Aries ingress, but in the Southern Hemisphere, the Vernal equinox coincides with the Sun's entry into Libra! There may be some value in understanding the houses by associating Aries with the meaning of the 1st house, but it is vitally important not to start bringing the planetary rulers of those signs into the picture. The ruler of the house and its activity is the ruler of the sign on the cusp. There is certainly some value in understanding the natural cycle but in practise, it is best to avoid inferring that Mars has to be considered in any first house matter.

Houses have specific meaning and *that does not alter*. The sign on the cusp describes the way in which the affairs of the houses are experienced, and that does alter for all the reasons we have explained in the previous chapter. For example if Pisces is on the 1st house cusp, Neptune rules the house. The house still means the same but the way the person experiences it is different. Bringing in the so called 'natural house ruler', i.e. Mars, only serves to confuse the way in which we interpret planets in the house.

The motif expressed in the similarities between Aries as a sign, and the 1st house *experiencing* of personal goals and initiatives in life, is just a loose connection. By attaching an additional ruler in Mars when other signs are on the cusp we make a connection that can be misleading. One initiates something in all the Angular houses and sets goals in the first house, making inroads into life at a singularly personal level. We do that regardless of Mars or Aries, which are expressed elsewhere in the chart. It is essential to remember that the houses are fields of experience while signs describe, and planets energise the house in the manner of the sign. Keeping clarity between signs and houses will avoid confusion.

A person with Neptune in Libra in the 1st house has Venus ruling that house and will not be aggressive in expressing his drive or setting out to achieve his goals. He will still achieve his goals and connect with life, because this is what the 1st house is about, but he will do so tactfully and with consideration for others. As it is we have enough to contend with

just looking at planets in the first house, each planet's dispositor, and the house ruler, without confusing ourselves more by bringing another planet and sign into the picture!

The 'natural zodiac' might, at a stretch, enable you to understand the house meaning but does not in any way modify the expression of planets there. The 8th house is *not* Pluto's house — it is a house where we experience loss, which certainly is a Pluto theme, but it is also a Saturn theme. You should not try to include Pluto in the interpretation of anything connected to the 8th house unless Scorpio is on the cusp or Pluto is in that house. Similarly the 4th house is *not* the Moon's house. Certainly, there is a connection between the Moon and the parental nurturing principle, the 4th house and security, but there is no need to look at the Moon in interpreting a planet there unless it is in the house or Cancer is on the cusp. Try to avoid confusion.

FIRE, EARTH, AIR AND WATER HOUSES

You may also come across references to the 4th, 8th and 12th houses as 'Water' houses. Similarly you may come across the 1st, 5th and 9th as 'Fire houses' and so on. Again, this trend is based on the 'natural' zodiac and the relationship between signs according to element and has loose merit. We have discussed the 4 functional elements as they relate to the signs. Signs are their only connection. Elements have nothing to do with houses, yet the idea of a natural zodiac tends to imply there is a connection.

We have determined that there is a correlation between Water and emotion. If we look at the houses in terms of the 'natural' zodiac, then the 7th house corresponds to Libra, Cardinal Air and the intellectual or thinking function. If we took this to its conclusion and called the 7th an Air House, this would mean there is no feeling or emotional expression in intimate relationships with others and that marriage is only a meeting of minds because Air is objective, connecting us to negotiated relationships not bonding ones.

Similarly, if we assign those elemental houses, we would find the 8th house relating to Water and feelings. This is the house where we struggle to maintain life and avoid death; this is more of a Fire function! Another example would be the 9th house. If we view it as an elemental house, it would be the house connected with Fire — action, survival etc. The 9th house actually has more to do with the intellect, expanding life through

learning and exchange with foreign people, publications, religious institutions etc. This is much more an Air function. Of course the individual will experience this house according to the sign on its cusp, and if there is Fire on the cusp, then and only then, could it be considered a “Fire house”.

A far more useful way to look at the relationships between houses is to examine particular triads of meaning. The 1st, 5th and 9th houses all have a trinal relationship with each other, regardless of the sign on the cusp because they intersect the circle with an equilateral triangle. So those houses all have some commonality of meaning, but it is not elemental, which is expressed in triplicities joining signs in the same element. It is in regard to the activities and experiences of houses — they could be called houses of self-actuation, or primary houses. We could better call them the “self-developmental or “self promotional” triad — not Fire houses.

Similarly the 2nd 6th and 10th houses are all connected to the experience of security or physical experience so can be better called the “substance triad” — or “material triad”. The 3rd 7th and 11th are connected in a triad of relationships with others — with siblings, partners and groups; they are better thought of as exchange or relating houses - the “relationships” or “communication” houses, than as Air houses. And finally the 4th, 8th and 12th, one way or another, are connected by a triad that is concerned with life and death in various forms as well as traditions, taboos and inheritance. They are “beginning and ending” houses – perhaps best called “transitional” not Water houses.

Remember that elements describe the basic temperament of the *person* and are part of the descriptive process. Houses are about the fields of *experience* in life and have no connection with temperament beyond the experience of Life, Substance, Relationships and Transition.

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