

*astrological-cultural-spiritual-political
views & commentary...*

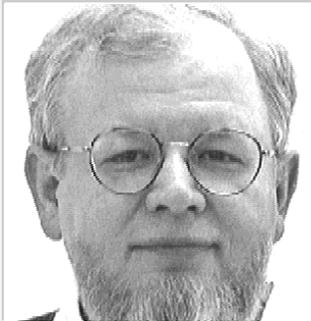
**Issue #47
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THE HERBST NEWSLETTER



Thoughts, dates, & reminders about our lives as members of the craziest species on this lovely planet. Like a message in a bottle washing up on the sandy shores of consciousness...

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Dear friends,

In last month's newsletter, I wrote about the intertwining dance of power and love, reflected in the symbolism of Mars-Uranus and Venus-Neptune. The compulsion to release explosive and radical energies that first emerged in July and August is now challenged by the gentler yearnings of personal and universal love that steadily expanded throughout October. This confrontation between love and power—representing, in some ways, a terrible struggle for possession of our souls—reached full polarity at the end of October and will continue throughout November.

The rising tides of love and idealism are still subtle and introspective, but steadily building as a social undercurrent. The wishes of Venus and Neptune to embrace rather than conquer are making themselves felt, providing a sharp contrast to the aggressive atmosphere of fear and paranoia. Over the next year and a half, how this conflict plays out will tell us a great deal about who we are, as individuals and as a nation.

Now we come to the next chapter.

THE REAWAKENING OF CONSCIENCE

On November 17th, the Sun will be exactly 90° away from Uranus. This passage, which has an effective period of about 16 days from November 9th-25th, is one of four times each year when the Sun makes a major contact with Uranus, roughly every three months. Ordinarily, these periods are just temporary ripples, mere punctuations in the flow. What makes this November different—and important—is the direct connection in astrological meaning of this event to the extremely rare Sun-Mars-Uranus configuration that occurred this past August.

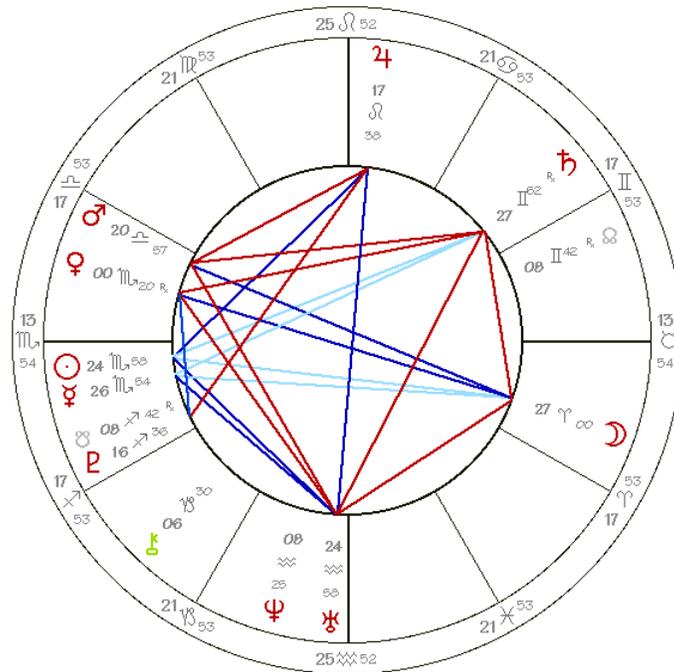
This month is the first significant crossroads of that two-year drama. Other crossroads are yet to come, but this is the first. The volcanic energies that rumbled up from the unconscious last summer are now bubbling to the surface. One way or another, they're going to be expressed eventually, and this is the first point in the cycle when we have both the opportunity and the necessity of consciously directing the forms we give these potent energies. Intention now matters.

Whether we focus on the spiritual, cultural, or political dimensions of this crossroads, and whether we consider it individually or collectively, the fundamental meanings indicated by astrology remain the same.

To resolve the increasing polarization of power and love, we need to reexamine our interests versus our values. What we want for ourselves in the short run must be weighed against our longer-term beliefs for the greater good. The angels and devils of our nature are fighting for control of our future, and the outcome depends on how awake we are.

Each of us lives within a matrix of forces that manipulate and shape us. Some of these factors are internal—psychological habits, imprints, expectations, and instincts. Other factors are external—social conformity, media manipulation, cultural myths, and the pressure to submit to authority.

If we are asleep, running on auto-pilot, then we live at the mercy of these deeply internal cross-currents and ever-changing external winds. Adrift, we go where the internal currents and external winds push us. If we awaken, however, we can set our sails and rudders to stay on course and maintain our integrity. We may not be able to overcome the forces within and around us, but self-awareness gives us a better chance to weather the storm.



Sun-Uranus square
17 November 2002, 6:20 a.m. CST
Minneapolis, Minnesota

No one awakens simply by choice. We need shocks to help us wake up. Like an alarm to jolt us out of our slumber, Uranus is the symbol in astrology that corresponds to these erratic and unexpected disturbances. The electric jolts of unpredictable changes may be gentle or harsh, but the miracle of self-aware consciousness cannot be sustained without them. While security and belonging are wonderful comforts, they inevitably put us to sleep. Authentic freedom and true individuality depend on occasional shocks of upset and revolution.

November will provide such shocks. Although I never predict public events, any that occur in November will have greater impact than usual, because our collective need to awaken is so great. Most of the disruptions, however, will be personal, welling up suddenly from inside our private lives or social relationships in ways that are custom-tailored to jar our minds and emotions in the particular areas where we've been asleep and most need to awaken.

We cannot prepare for the unexpected. By definition, shocks are surprises. To have the desired effect of awakening us from our habits and routines, they have to come from where we least expect. So don't worry about what may happen. Just continue living, but remember that security is an illusion, and that the status quo is ripe for change.

The actual events that provoke us may be minor and unimportant in themselves. Our reactions, however, will be significant. We may suddenly realize where we have been self-deluded, where we have blindly given allegiance to false authority, or where we have remained passive in the hope that life will leave our conflicts undisturbed.

Relationships are a very important dimension here and particularly brittle at this point. You may find that past agreements or previous commitments are no longer viable in intimacy, friendship, or work. Love and good feelings may have been damaged by concessions to maintain superficial harmony. If so, do not attempt to renegotiate now. Separate and let the air clear for a time. Walking away is a safer course than attempting to forcibly manipulate the other. If you already know how you need to be different in a particular relationship, experiment with new ways of sharing and see if your partner resists or accepts the changes.

Superficial conflicts with others are unimportant. Avoid fighting, for this is a time of peaceful resistance, not armed rebellion. We are trying to reawaken ourselves, not change others. Simply make your position clearly known and hold your ground. Do not sell out. But remember that integrity does not mean selfishness. Give what you can, but don't offer what you cannot give. If you must choose between individuality and togetherness, choose individuality, for being alone is preferable now to false acceptance or an artificial sense of belonging.

This crossroads is about honoring who we truly are rather than who we felt we had to be to get by. The spiritual teaching of this time is to act from our deepest values instead of the convenience of compromise. The reawakening of conscience will then lead us to new alliances and more authentic sharing.

Reaching inside to find our best selves can make a real difference.



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