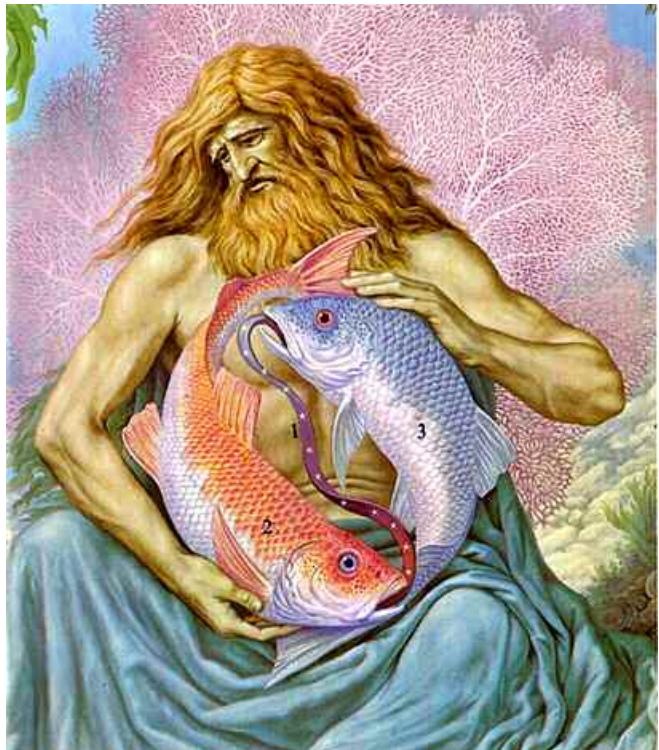


## *Johfra and the Signs of the Zodiac*

### *Pisces and Aries*



**P**isces, the Fishes, is a negative sign, the last of the water triangle, so water in resolution. The sun stands in this sign at the end of February when the last dead bits of winter are cleared up and nature slowly prepares itself for the beginning of a new cycle. Neptune is the ruling planet. Before 1846 when this planet was discovered, it was Jupiter.

The sign of Pisces forms the last phase in the

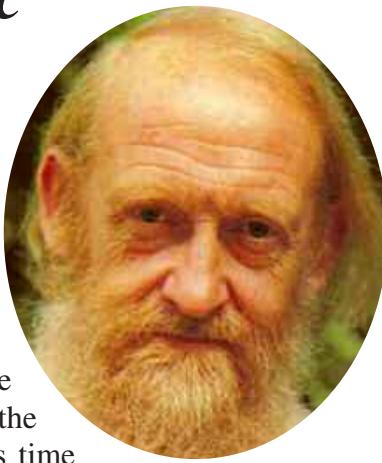
*This is the third of six articles comprising both text and paintings by the artist Johfra. Rays reprint permissions have been graciously granted by Johfra's wife, Ellen Lorien.*

path of human development through the twelve signs of the zodiac. Man will continue his path, starting the cycle again but this time on a higher spiral. In the

*Johfra*

Pisces sign, the resolution of form and the borders between self and non-self fall away completely. They constantly overlapped under Aquarius but under Pisces they disappear from the consciousness. From the point of view of the material world this freedom of form is seen as sacrifice and death. Seen, however, from a spiritual point of view, it means liberation and birth in new, wider perspectives. Under this last sign the experiences gained in the now-ended cycle are abstracted. The contents are separated from the factual form. Only the essence of the experience remains.

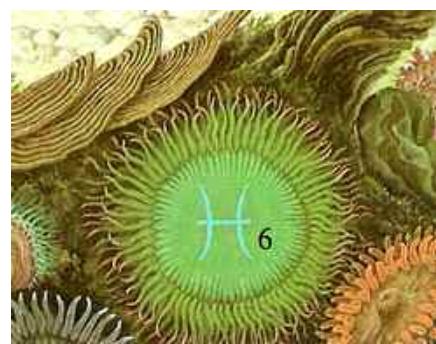
The characteristics of the sign Pisces are therefore synthesis, resolution, and liberation. The mystic comes under these headings as he turns away from the world of phenomena and, looking inwards, sinks into the primordial basis of all things from which he himself once came. The circle closes here. Life came once from the primordial ocean. Now it returns to it, more conscious and richer in experience. Is it then surprising that Neptune, god of the sea, has been attributed ruler of this water sign? The former ruler Jupiter did express the generosity, mercy and nurturing aspects of Pisces but it was not until the discovery of the planet Neptune that an explanation was pro-





vided for the urge to selfsacrifice and resolution in the sea of life of the Piscean mystic.

The sign of Pisces was originally illustrated by one fish or by the fish-man John. In Mesopotamia thoughtit was shown as a 'girdle,' a rope or chord with which the fish were tied, swimming in opposite directions.



absolute balance and the eternal play between the male and female principles within the revealed unity. It symbolizes the complete person of this last sign of the zodiac.

The girdle binding the two parts together is composed of the twelve signs of the zodiac which have been passed (1).

The red fish which represents the active part of this person points downwards, diving into its inner world (2). The blue fish, the passive part, represents the outside world because man has no more interest in the world of phenomena; it has become unreal to him (3). His only reality is the immeasurable kingdom of the primordial oceans of his inner world.

Top left is the sign of Neptune (4.) Top right that of Jupiter (5) and bottom centre the symbol of Pisces (6).

## ARIES

**A**RIES, THE RAM, is a fire sign. The sun is in Aries from 21 March to 21 April. It is ruled by Mars. It is a positive sign, fire in generation. In Aries the sun is in the beginning of spring

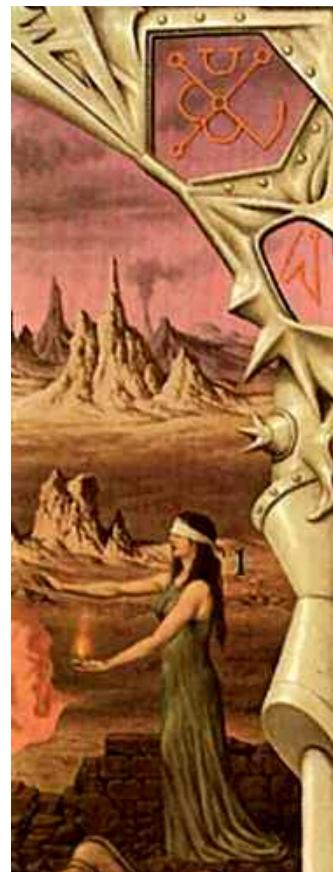
bringing new light, new life.

I have tried to stress the fact that the development through the twelve signs starts with Aries. For this reason I have chosen to depict the primitive ram. It is of course obvious that there are also higher Ram

"natives", more mature spirits whose Aries nature is more highly evolved. Yet, with an eye to earliest beginnings, the ram is depicted here in full movement, his main characteristic. He runs blindly through everything. He is no ordinary, mindless ram though, he is the famous ram of Greek mythology whose golden fleece was conquered by the Argonauts from the fierce dragon that guarded it. Closely linked with Mars, his ruling planet, he gallops past, oblivious to his surroundings, completely closed in on himself.

The warrior is Mars, god of war. He is in full armor, and yet his sword stays sheathed. He has not come to destroy; instead, he bears a burning torch in his raised right hand. Here he is Prometheus, bearer of light. He kindles the fire of enthusiasm. The ram brings the élan of a new beginning. He is the pioneer. Old edifices of the established order topple down. Opening is made for fresh developments.

There has not yet been time for experience under Aries, hence the presence of the figure Avidya (ignorance) as Aries was imagined in ancient Buddhism (1). She appears with her lamp in the



16

17

background at the right, carrying it before her to light her surroundings. She can see nothing through her blindfold which represents her lack of experience of life. Nevertheless, she wears the green cloth of hope.



15

As counterpart, the magician of the Tarot is to be seen in the left background (2). He is a native of Aries, at a high level. Through experience, he has become the ruler controlling the four elements of creation with his Mars power, and he will use his will to work positively on them. The elements of creation are symbolized by the magical attributes lying on the altar before him. They are the staff (3) with which he controls the elements of fire (to be compared with the world of Atziluth from the Cabbala); the sword (4) which rules over the elements of light (the third world, that of Yetzirah); the goblet (5), the element of water (the second world, Briah's); and the pentagram (6) (the fourth world of Assiah). With his right hand, he holds his staff (7) up to the heavens to attract the cosmic powers, which he directs down to the earth, his field of operation, with his left hand (8). The never-ending circle, the lemniscate (9), can be seen above his head. This is the sign of the eternal.

The magician stands in front of a closed door in the rocks, which bears a circle of twelve stars (10). These signify the twelve stages of development through the signs of the zodiac that will start behind the door.

A lizard-like creature (11) sits on a stone in the foreground. It is the Basilisk, whose mere look could destroy all life. The Cabbala has this creature as symbol of Geburah, the sephira that is associated with Mars. In alchemy it corresponds to the Sala-mander, the inspiration (inhabitant) of the element of fire.

## Star Teachers

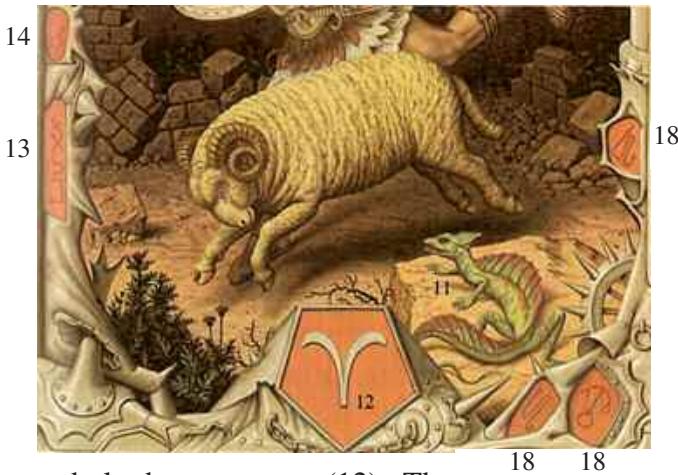
Even as a bird sprays many-colored fires,  
The plumes of paradise, the dying light  
Rays through the fevered air in misty spires  
That vanish in the night.

These myriad eyes that look on me are mine;  
Wandering beneath them I have found again  
The ancient ample moment, the divine,  
The God-root within men.

For this, for this the lights innumerable  
As symbols shine that we the true light win:  
For every star and every deep they fill  
Are stars and deeps within.

—George William Russell

The entire presentation is framed by pointed iron shapes which strike through each other and which I have used to try to express the character of the powers of Mars. At the bottom, the official Aries sign is to be seen in a regularly sided five-cornered



symbol, the pentagon (12). The pentagon refers to Mars, being associated with the fifth sephira of the cabbalistic tree of life.

The following magical signatures can also be seen in the presentation: going round the picture starting from bottom left, the signatures of the planetary archangel Samael (13), the astrological sign of Mars (14), the seal of the planetary spirit Pharos Phalel (15), the seal of the planet Mars itself (16), the sign of the planetary intelligence Graphiel (17), and three signs belonging to the planetary intelligence Barzabel (18). (Continued) □



