

The Prenatal Epoch

THE STUDENT of prenatal astrology does not read very far before encountering references to the “epoch,” and at once wonders what the term may signify. In a general way it can be regarded as one more basis of calculation—a check upon accuracy in placing the ascending degree at birth. Brought down to its simplest expression, it declares an intimate and exact correspondence between lunar conditions at birth and at the epoch, the moment of conception or fusion of the male and female cells into the one new cell which in time develops to produce the body of the child.

The degree held by the Moon at epoch proves to be the degree (or its opposite) ascending at birth, while the degree ascending at epoch (or its opposite) will be that of the Moon at birth. The variants to the foundation rule are clearly due to the law which seems to determine the gender of the body before conception and to which the rest of the planetary adjustments seem to bow. This brings in the Doctrine of Rebirth and the Law of Cause and Effect, or “ripe destiny.”

The observant student finds a definite primary indication in parental charts as to whether or not they are likely to have children. The conditions most favorable to their conception are clearly identified with the parents’ radical or progressed aspects, usually both. The conditions are further reflected in the sympathetic planetary aspects ruling the approximate time of conception.

Some may object to this statement, for many parents find the family augmented only too easily, while others invite the little ones to no avail, expe-



Silhouette Paper-cut by Sister Mary Jean Dorcy, O.P.

riencing disappointed hopes and lonely hearts. If you cannot examine the horoscopes, look closely at the parents of big families. You will find bodily evidence of strong physical natures. Mars is sometimes the evident cause, since conception is easy under a Scorpio influence, comparable to the Venus vibration through Taurus. Another indication is the essentially motherly type of body due to the Moon in Cancer or in another birth-congenial sign.

If you look carefully at the charts of the disappointed ones, you will see traces of Saturn, Mercury, or Uranus powerful in them—intellectual and nervous types that have few children, if any. It has been said that women with Aquarius on the fifth house cusp have a male pelvic bone and consequently difficulty in childbirth.

The conditions ruling childbirth can be traced very easily in any set of family charts, and if this point is established, it is not difficult to prove the

reasonableness of the fact that the conditions at epoch agree with the conditions at birth. A competent astrologer, provided with the data usually given the physician, can estimate with accuracy the probable birth date.

Accepting the Law of Rebirth as a fact, we also believe that certain laws of evolution in general, and of cause and effect in particular, decide the environment, parentage, and general associations of the Ego coming to rebirth. The more advanced the Ego, the more singularly suitable conditions must be found. If these include the strain of so-called bad planetary aspects, it is because the Ego is strong enough in soul quality to meet more problems and greater strain than a less evolved Ego, who struggles with less developed faculties to learn more elementary lessons.

In symbolic astrology the Sun is an indicator of the spiritual quality of the Ego, while the Moon signifies the human quality. Symbolically, the two luminaries represent the individuality and the personality. Leaving the Moon's influence for later attention, let us look at the Sun's position at epoch with its relation to the Sun at birth as a clue to the classification of the spiritual quality of the Ego.

Nine calendar or solar months fix the usual term of prenatal life. It is easy to see that a cardinal sign at the epoch for the Sun means that a cardinal sign will hold it at birth. The same is true of fixed and common signs, with respect to the Sun's position, and the Sun posited between two signs at epoch will be in the same general relation at birth.

Mercury and Jupiter share the rulership of the four common signs. A child born with the Sun in Gemini would have the Sun in Virgo at epoch (nine months earlier), a double Mercury influence, but a progressive trend from an earthy sign to a mental or airy one.

A child with the Sun in Sagittarius at birth has the Sun in Pisces at epoch, a double Jupiter influence and again a progression, since for earth life the twelfth sign is not usually a fortunate sign, and the ninth sign is generally indicative of religious, philosophic, and intellectual interests.

A child born with the Sun in Pisces will have the Sun in Gemini at epoch, a combined Mercury and Jupiter influence. Whether this is an advance or not

would be shown by the aspects of the other planets.

As Neptune has a primary influence on Pisces, we find here an evidential fact that supports Max Heindel's statement that Neptune is the octave of Mercury; namely, that a conception under the Sun in Gemini, ruled by Mercury, comes to birth under the Sun in Pisces, the sign in which Neptune has at present most influence.

A child with the Sun at birth in Mercury's earthy sign Virgo will have the Sun at epoch in Jupiter's sign Sagittarius. So Mercury and Jupiter, as we see, rule all the combinations of the Sun in the common signs.

Considering the fixed signs, we find that Egos with the Sun in Taurus at birth have the Sun in Leo at epoch, a combined Venus-Sun influence expressing a double emphasis on the love quality.

Those born with the Sun in Leo have the Sun at epoch in Scorpio, the sign opposite Taurus. It is small wonder that Leo people are full of purpose and strength, the Mars influence at epoch mounting to the Sun influence at birth.

When Scorpio holds the Sun at birth the Sun at epoch is in Aquarius, the sign opposite Leo. Aquarius is ruled by Saturn and strongly influenced by Uranus. The fact that Uranus is said to be exalted in Scorpio makes the above combination more significant, and impels the thoughtful student to look closely at a chart with the Sun in Scorpio at birth, to ascertain the position and strength of the sign Aquarius and the planets Saturn and Uranus, as well as their relations to Mars.

We find in the Rosicrucian literature Max Heindel's statement that Uranus is the higher octave of Venus. Definite support for this assertion is given by the fact that those born with the Sun in Aquarius, ruled by Saturn and Uranus, have the Sun at epoch in Venus's earthy sign Taurus. Venus and Saturn are related closely in the deeper side of astrology; here we find the Uranus-Saturn Sun-sign individual going back to Venus for his initial impulse in the plunge into form.

The fixed signs in this relation are ruled by Venus, Sun, Saturn, and Mars, four powerful and significant forces. Upon considering the cardinal signs, we find Venus and Saturn again joined in the Libra-Capricorn bond, Venus ruling the Sun in

Libra at birth and Saturn ruling the Sun in Capricorn at epoch, an earthy sign coming into the airy.

The Sun in Aries at birth is balanced by the Sun in Cancer at epoch, a Mars and Moon combination, and an example of one of the most direct male-female polarities.

Contrast the people born through this solar combination with those born while the Sun is in Cancer. The Sun of the latter at epoch is in Libra, and it is small wonder that Cancer gives us gentle, kindly people, ideal mothers, and fine tender-hearted men, since the two ruling planets, Moon and Venus, both instill gentleness.

The Sun at birth in Capricorn places the epoch Sun in Aries. Mars rules Aries and is exalted in the sign Capricorn, indicating why the tenth sign, ruling the radical tenth house, indicates leaders: Saturn's cool judgment is coupled with the energy of Mars.

Taking only the side of the epoch's relation to birth and looking at these combinations of influence through the nature of the signs, we get a hint of the life purpose and of the texture of the higher vehicles of the Ego.

We find that Venus and Saturn rule two zodiacal combinations, in each case earthy and airy signs: Libra-Capricorn and Aquarius-Taurus—two airy signs rooted in two earthy signs; while Mercury and Jupiter rule all the combinations of the common signs with the four elements in different relations.

Mars and the Moon in the Aries-Cancer relation, fire and water, give us steam, which is usually a characteristic of the Aries people; while Mars and Saturn in the Scorpio-Aquarius bond generate the less compatible elements of water and air, difficult to combine unless the intense heat of the spiritual Sun draws the watery element into a finer form that can at least partially adapt itself to the air, as we see in the formation of clouds. One point is clear: there is more hope for this transmutation being accomplished under the fixed signs Scorpio and Aquarius than under the common signs where the Jupiter-Pisces influence is linked with the Mercury-Gemini pairing. Scorpio is often described as a difficult sign, but it has strength, and once awakened to a vision of the right use of that

strength, it has great potential for transformation.

As the Sun indicates the spiritual or the individual quality, so the Moon is symbolic of the varying aspects of the personality. Her lunations, aspects to other potent birth influences, and her position in certain signs all have a very direct bearing upon conception. Students of the wonderful Star Science have found after patient investigation that rules can be given for finding the moment of epoch if there is any reasonable certainty of the approximate birth hour. If that is not known or cannot be fixed with any degree of confidence, the effort to set the chart of epoch is wasted time. We may produce an interesting bit of guess-work, but we have nothing of real value.

The method of arriving at the moment of epoch, of proving the epoch chart by the known facts, especially by the gender of the person, is given with clarity in Sepharial's *Manual of Astrology*. There are some errors in the assignment of gender to certain critical degrees, which the student can easily detect and correct for himself, since Sepharial gives the correct method for so doing. Another book, *The Prenatal Epoch*, by E. H. Bailey, is entirely given to this subject. It is a painstaking and careful work, minute in its calculations and methods, and based upon Sepharial's original work, which was in turn based upon careful data supplied by a sympathetic physician. Mr. Bailey's study is a valuable aid for anyone willing to devote some effort to this branch of astrology.

That gender at birth agrees perfectly with the correct epoch may be taken as proof of the theory that the Ego coming to rebirth has already had his or her gender determined, thus refuting the theory that gender is latent until half the period of gestation is accomplished. We find critical degrees very prominent in the study, and most investigators conclude that the more advanced Ego finds under the special influence of a critical degree the vibration he peculiarly needs.

The anomalies of masculine attributes in women or the feminine in men are clarified in the epoch chart, where the powerful positive polarities are adjusted to the negative conditions; thereby is the open-minded student made aware of new mysteries and alluring new visions of the evolution of

man. That so vast a plan includes a decision before birth as to gender, health, environment, and opportunity is only reasonable. The chart of epoch is declared to be a causal or root chart, the picture of the man and a statement of his achievement up to that point, while his birth chart was the plan studied in the earlier Mystery Schools.

The use of the chart of epoch is frequently a help in estimating character and in looking ahead for favorable conditions for study or work. Its story is often more helpful than that of the chart at birth.

In these days we see many fine men and women devoting themselves to work for the race, either as social welfare workers, students of philosophy and religion, or in other lines of unselfish endeavor. Frequently their charts of birth are appalling in squares and oppositions. It is a time when strong souls coming back seem to have said: "Put in all the old debts. Let me pay them and be ready to meet the New Age with clean hands." And the chart at epoch will frequently show such ones to be

of fine and high attainment, while the chart at birth is heavy with afflictions. Judge with critical deliberation; see both charts and estimate more fairly the real nature of the man or woman. The birth chart alone gives only the road map for one journey; the epoch chart shows the sum of attainment up to that point and gives a hint of the preceding life.

Astrology is the key to all the mystery of man's slow climb up to his present status. It gives to the earnest student the answers to all his questions. Light comes to those who seek with real earnestness. Among astrology's answers the epoch stands, If we reject the epoch as a picture of man's spiritual quality at the time he enters earth life, at least it is a clue to his fundamental physical and intellectual qualities, showing his trend by the relation of the chart of birth to the epoch. It may be not essential to an understanding of mundane astrology, but the epoch helps promote a genuine understanding of the human spirit who lives from life to life. □

—E.J.

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