

The Shifts in Astrology



The foundation of western astrology rests largely on the work of Ptolemy. He used a mode of interpretation that was largely fatalistic. Everything that we experienced was predetermined. Our task, as humans, was largely to accept our fate. However, the earliest astrological texts, including Ptolemy's second century "Tetrabiblos", mentions the important fact that while the planets are a force which operate on us, so too we have a force of our own. We are products not only of the planets, but our environment and temperament as well. All these factors can determine much of how fate ultimately reveals itself in our lives.

By the time we get to the Renaissance, some priests were also astrologers, who had to find a way to make their practice acceptable in a cultural climate controlled by the church. This was a time when astrologers were persecuted for blasphemy. It was at this time that the planets and stars began to make a shift from being thought of less as

determining our fate and more as indicators as to what lessons the cosmos were encouraging us to learn. Astrologers like Facino, and later Christian astrologers like William Lily, encouraged us to think of ourselves as engaged in a cosmic dance with the planets, where it is not only the stars that influence us, but that we, with the force of our determination and free will, influence the planets as well.

It was in the twentieth century that astrology took a definitive psychological predilection. It has been in the last hundred years that astrology moved to a paradigm of self-discovery. The planets began to be used as indicative symbols that revealed various aspects of a person's psychology. Writers like Rhudyar and Jung contributed to helping us understand the significances of various planets and their aspects in relation to our psyche.

With the New age movement came the re-spiritualization of astrology, with a twist. Astrologers who were heavily influenced by Jung, like Steven Forest and Jeff Green, helped to develop an appreciation of what some of our major lessons in this lifetime are likely to be, from a psychological perspective, and at the same time focused largely on the soul's growth. The fatalism of astrology has been completely removed, and instead we find discussion of how people can choose higher and lower vibrations of an aspect, and advice on how to best help integrate spiritual lessons in a way that keeps healing of the soul as the focus. With this paradigm, a relationship with the planets is explored as a way to gain deeper insight into a soul's purpose and truest, most pure desires.

With the rise of the Pagan movement, and some aspects of the New Age movement, there has been a return to the understanding of the planets as gods. But the idea of the planets as only external forces that play with our lives is gone. Instead, people in Pagan and New Age communities around the world use astrology as a way to cultivate a

deeper connection, and indeed a conversation, with these heavenly bodies as a way of connecting with one's self. The planets are sacred energies that are also a part of one's self. It is communion with the gods that is encouraged. Working with them is a way to engage them in a cosmic dance. Awareness is cultivated and work is done to understand their will for us through the omens they provide. By seeking their favour there is participation in the shaping of personal destinies. All this is done with the understanding that life is a magical place, and a healing place.

I believe we are now at a point in astrology where we are being asked to merge the wisdom and insights gained throughout the eras of astrology to formulate something new. Something based on an understanding of the interconnection of all things. Something that can empower us and humble us at the same time. Something based on our recognition of ourselves as creators and also servants to the divine mystery.

Every movement of each planet has a purpose that serves the unfoldment of our soul's path. By trusting the lessons that present themselves, we understand that a destiny is revealing itself to us. A destiny that is characterized in terms of utilizing our fullest potential. The planets, and the gods within, are there to help us realize that potential so that we may be more able and effective in doing their work.

The planets are studied to develop a deeper connection to the divine within us. The planets are representative of how our divine energy, in its tremendous complexity, flows through us. How we use this energy is where our choice lies. The planets contain energies that are there to be cultivated, for the highest good of all concerned. They stand as witness and provide guidance.