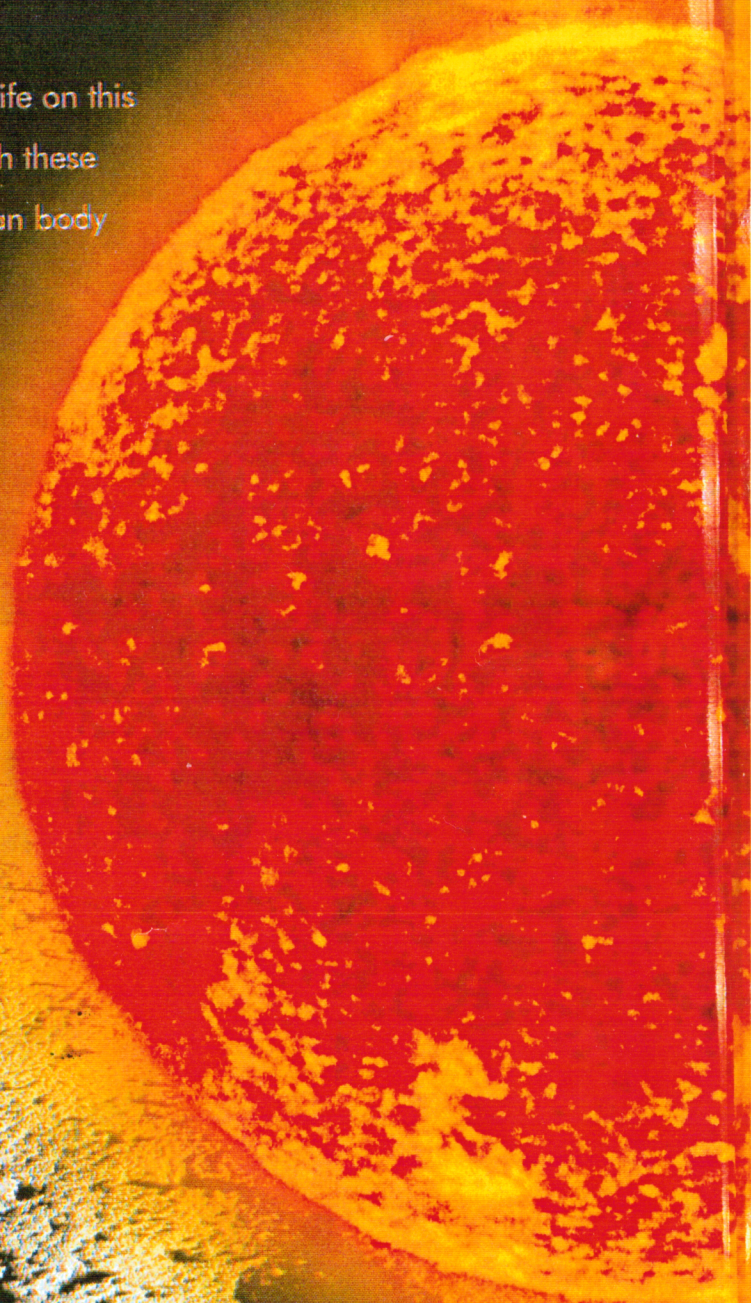


Cosmic Synergy

Cycles of the Sun and Moon

The cycles of the sun and moon powerfully affect life on this planet and tuning ourselves to live in harmony with these patterns can have enormous benefits for the human body and psyche. Leading astrologer **Anne Whitaker** describes how we can step into a more positive relationship with these powerful natural energies.



This time last year we were all waiting with excitement and apprehension for the total solar eclipse, the last one of the millennium, falling on 11 August 1999. Nostradamus' famous four-line verse was being analysed by everyone from erudite academics to tabloid journalists. Half the world seemed to be planning to holiday in the southwest of England, where the eclipse in its totality would fleetingly turn day into night.

Predictions abounded, from the end of the world as we knew it, to Paris going up in flames.

“By a planetary quirk, the moon is 400 times smaller than the sun, but 400 times nearer the Earth, so we see them as the same size.”

I thought it might be useful, therefore, to use this article to introduce the fundamental regulating cycle of life on Earth - of which the eclipses are the most potent part - the cycle of the Sun and Moon.

Sun and Moon - heavenly partners

Astronomically, we know that the Moon is a small satellite of Earth, and the Sun is the great cosmic life-giver, much, much farther out in space. By a planetary quirk, the Moon is 400 times smaller than the Sun, but 400 times nearer the Earth, so we see them as the same size. This is why eclipses can occur, since at the time of a solar eclipse the Moon passes between the Sun and the Earth, blocking out its light totally if the angle of observation is exact.

Astrologers distil symbolic meaning from the astronomical facts of our solar system. They see the Sun and Moon as of equal but complementary importance in the quest to understand the ever-shifting dance of cosmic energy, and where we fit in. The Sun is rather like the Greek hero Jason, setting out on his quest for the Golden Fleece; the Moon, the unfolding pattern of the quest and the experiences which arise from it. The Sun is cerebral, seeking to create meaning from experience. The Moon is the body, receiving and interacting with that experience of everyday life from which meaning can be distilled.

The monthly weaving

The movements of all nine planets plus the Moon are plotted throughout the year against a 360-degree imaginary circular band in the sky called the Zodiac, which is divided into twelve 30-degree sectors called Aries, Taurus, Gemini and so on. The Sun and the Moon have a 29.5-day cycle of relationship with each other, beginning with a conjunction at the New Moon, when the Sun and Moon occupy the same part of the sky. On 29 August 2000, for example, the New Moon takes place in the Virgo sector, which the Sun will occupy for most of September. After about three days the beautiful, fragile waxing crescent moon appears, indicating that the energy of a new cycle of earthly life has begun to take shape.

The Moon moves much faster than the Sun. Within a week, it has moved on to

Sagittarius. The Sun and Moon are now at an angle of 90-degrees to each other. The Moon has become fatter, more substantial. Equally, the energy of the cycle has established itself in concrete action. Just before mid-September we have the Full Moon, with the Moon now in Pisces, opposite the Sun.

The energy of the cycle at this point is at its most potent and visible. In ancient times, the Full Moon point was an important one, for example, in the timing of rituals. Symbolically, the energy of that point had a charging-up effect on whatever was being enacted. The contrast between the forces of light and darkness, birth and death, masculine and feminine, was at its most amplified and potent. Even in this era of electric light and rational analysis, many people can detect a heightening of their energy and emotions at the time of the Full Moon.

By the last quarter, a week before the next New Moon, the Moon is visible in Gemini, 90-degrees apart from the Sun again, returning this time to meet it. The energy of the month's cycle is fading. The splendidly full Moon has diminished markedly in girth. Like the autumn of the year, the efforts of the earlier phase of the cycle have produced results, which are now being harvested, for good or ill.

The next New Moon falls on 27 September, in Libra. 24-27 September represents the very end of the cycle, which began in Virgo. This period was known to the Ancients as Moondark - a time of ending, as the old cycle dies and the new one prepares to be born from the dark womb of the night.

Personal timing - some practical tips

Farmers do not plant their corn in the autumn. That is the time for reaping, just as sowing should occur in the spring, when new life is beginning to surge up from the earth refreshed by its long winter rest.

Thus we can use the Sun/Moon cycle in a very practical way, to help us set our own activity in the context of the natural waxing and waning of the energy of life through space and time. The guidelines which follow can only be general; for specific detail we each have our individual life blueprint or horoscope. This shows, in symbolic form, the characters who enact the play of our lives as the script - the ever-changing movement of the planets - unfolds the action of the drama. Nevertheless, the Sun/Moon cycle offers a useful structure in broad terms. Let's explore how this can offer an aid to planning over the next few months.

If you are intending to initiate something, for example a business, a marriage, a new project in the home, try to wait if you can until there is a New Moon, which reflects the nature of the enterprise. The

One year on we are still here, along with the world as we know it, and Paris. But what happened as the big eclipse approached was very, very interesting. It showed clearly that human beings at a deep level are still very much woven into the powerful rhythms of nature, and responsive to them, despite our increasing dependency on technology. As a working astrologer, I deal on a daily basis with the ever-changing energy patterns of life which can be decoded symbolically by observation of the movements of the planets. In the three months before the big eclipse, by far the most commonly-asked question from clients was how the energies of the eclipse might affect them.

PHOTOGRAPH PAUL VETRON/PICTOR

SOL



New Moons over the autumn of 2000 are in Virgo on 29 August, Libra on 27 September, and Scorpio on 27 October.

Virgo is an earth sign; its energies strongly service-oriented, practical, and good at managing detail. It is also extremely hard-working and analytical. So the Virgo New Moon would be an ideal time to start that blitz on your admin system, which you've been putting off all year, or for putting special effort into reorganising and cleaning up the garden. Libra, an air sign, is connected to the arts, the aesthetic side of life, and to relationship. Thus the Libran New Moon would be ideal for re-decorating your home, taking up an arts-related hobby like painting or theatre-going - or setting that wedding date. Scorpio is a water sign, very much connected to emotional intensity and passion. It also has strong links to all those aspects of life which carry a powerful charge: sex, death, psychotherapy and money being just a few. So if you want to embark on a passionate affair, make your will, sort out a deep-rooted emotional problem which has been left to fester, or persuade your bank manager to give you that big loan, this is the month to do it!

At the New Moon point, life's energies are still fluid, unformed, and the Moon itself is invisible. Initiatives are best taken between three and seven days later - from the first waxing crescent to the first quarter. Moondark is the last three days of the cycle. The Moon disappears then, as the energy of the month wanes. It is wise to avoid initiating something important during this time; it is best used for winding down, withdrawal, contemplation and reflection, stock-taking, preparing for the new.

King Arthur, the legendary king of ancient times, ruled just as the old Pagan beliefs were being superseded by the rise

“If you are intending to initiate something, for example a business, a marriage, a new project in the home, try to wait if you can until there is a New Moon, which reflects the nature of the enterprise.”

of Christianity, and when he married Guinevere, he did so in a Christian ceremony at Moondark. The Pagan priests were appalled at this. 'No good will come of it' was their view. They were right. The marriage of Arthur and Guinevere was barren, and she spent most of it in love with another man, the knight Sir Lancelot.

Applying the cycle to the big picture

The metaphor of the monthly Sun/Moon cycle can be used as a template for helping to understand the much longer cycles of human life. The biggest cycle astrologers work with is the Neptune/Pluto cycle: those two planets meet only once every 492 years, and this 'New Moon' point symbolises the start of a whole epoch of human development. The most recent one took place in 1891/2 in Gemini, ushering in the communications revolution which in a hundred years has radically altered the way we conduct life on Earth. The previous one, also in Gemini, occurred in 1398/9, prefacing the Renaissance and the Reformation, two major shaping processes in European and world history.

But whether the cycle is huge, like the Neptune/Pluto one, or small, like the monthly Sun/Moon one, the same basic stages apply: seeding, germinating, sprouting, flowering, ripening, harvesting, dying back in preparation for the new.

It seems apt to end this article by talking about the important 20-year cycle which began in December 1980, came to its Full Moon point in 1990/91, and, as I write in April 2000, is at the very end of its Moondark phase. The conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn in Taurus took place on 28 May 2000, and by the time you read this piece, a whole new 20-year phase of worldly life, and your life, will have just begun.

Right from the start of this year, I have been fascinated to observe most of my clients being caught up in the same pull of contradictory energies. Many of them have

been talking about endings of major life phases, begun around twenty years ago. It is a very tense time. Uncertainty and fear, as well as anticipation of new possibilities already hovering but not ready to take form, seem to be running through most people's lives. I could give many examples of situations which clients don't expect to become clearer until the summer/autumn of 2000. They are right! Think about your life as you read this. It should be evident to many of you that the turbulence, tension and uncertainty of the first half of the year is beginning to settle down into a clearer pattern. The old order is changing, yielding place to the new: endings have taken place, new plans and projects which had been delayed are beginning to take shape, new journeys are beginning...

At a deep unconscious level, we all live out the unfolding energies of our era, sensing inner timings without the help of any astrologer. But astrology is valuable in its ability to offer a symbolic framework from which individuals can gain greater clarity, conscious awareness, and confirmation of their personal connection with the big picture. Good astrological practice should support people in their courage to be themselves, and help them to see that 'To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under Heaven.' **KS**

LUNE



MORE INFORMATION

• Anne Whitaker is an astrologer, astrology teacher and writer, based in Glasgow, Scotland. Her work has appeared in a wide range of publications in both the UK and the US. She is the advertising manager for Apollon (website: astrologer.com) and a tutor at the Centre for Psychological Astrology in London.

• For more information, write to Anne at: 74 Victoria Crescent Road, Glasgow G12 9JN. Tel: 0141 337 6144 / eve 0141 946 5426. Email: astrolacad@aol.com