

Vision of the Eclipse

The Astrology of Lunations



By Michael Erlewine

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Cover and Graphics by Michael Erlewine

Michael@Erlewine.net

**This book is dedicated
to
Ven. Khenpo Karthar Rinpoche**

*May any merit this book may
accrue, however small, be
dedicated to all the Buddhas and
Bodhisattvas that they may
benefit all sentient beings and
help to bring all to the realization
of the true nature of the mind.*

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Introduction: Vision of the Eclipse

The Sun and Moon are called “The Lights,” and they, along with Earth, make up the key triad of traditional and modern astrological factors. Only the intense solar discharges at the time of flares and related phenomenon supersede ‘The Lights’ in importance. Here we will be looking at the two primary monthly lunar events, the New and Full Moon in themselves, and their relation to eclipses.

For more general information on the Moon and the active Sun, please see my books:

Sun Storms: The Astrology of Solar Activity
Mother Moon: The Astrology of “The Lights”

They are free e-books that can be downloaded here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig=>

The Lunations

Time is perceived as a continuum, articulated by cycles such as the monthly solunar cycle.

The monthly alignment of the Earth, Moon, and Sun at New and Full Moon are recognized by most cultures as key articulation points. The Tibetan Buddhists are very clear that these two days each month should be set aside for observation. We should observe our mindstream at these times. Just as these three bodies fall into alignment at the key lunations, our inner qualities, what are called the “winds and the channels,” also come into alignment at these times.

More important, if the New or Full Moon happens also to be an eclipse, the spiritual alignment is very much greater and deserves even more consideration.

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These are special times. New and Full Moons and eclipses are times when information is circulated, when alignment occurs.

This volume is a collection of articles and blogs, mostly on the lunations and eclipses. There is a fair amount of repetition, but I have always found this kind of rephrasing helpful in my own work. May it benefit those who read it.

Eclipses

Eclipses are simply New or Full Moons with extraordinary alignment or focus. They have been considered for centuries to be astrological events of the first magnitude. If we consider New and Full Moons to be important, then eclipses represent the keys to the lunar cycle for any year.

We mentioned earlier about the New Moon containing an impulse or insight that grows to fruition at the Full Moon. Eclipses, then, provide moments when extraordinary insight or vision are available to us. It is possible for some of us, at least at certain times in our lives, to experience what has been called the "vision of the eclipse," and to remember or keep that vision in mind. There appears to be a theme or principal insight connected with major eclipses. Let me make clear just what we mean here by the word vision.

"Vision" does not mean the fairytale dream picture we might conjure up – but it is related. A vision is a moment of extreme clarity or understanding, when “in a flash” we know or experience something in its entirety. We take it in. There are times in each of our lives when we have vision or see some intrinsic truth about our lives – about life itself.

The Vision of the Eclipse

As mentioned above, there appears to be a common or communal vision that occurs around the time of major eclipses. While each of us interprets the insight or vision in a personal way, the theme or essence of the vision is a common experience. And it is possible to share that vision. Although we all experience it at once, only some of us are capable of remembering the experience in a conscious fashion. It seems that we are privileged to be consciously aware of the vision of an eclipse at special or crucial moments in our lifetimes – times when we are particularly aware.

The message or vision of any given eclipse will tend to dominate our deeper or subconscious minds for months surrounding that eclipse. It is a peculiarity of these eclipse moments that they can happen days or even weeks before or after the actual moment of an eclipse. That is: the eclipse theme pervades the time prior to and after the actual physical event.

Sometimes eclipses happen in pairs, two weeks apart. These are particularly powerful, and the whole time between these events can be a kind of waking dream – a vision.

Learning to recognize a moment of vision and taking advantage of these enhanced moments of vision surrounding an eclipse can be important. If the point in the zodiac where an eclipse occurs is in high focus in your natal chart, then the particular eclipse may have special importance for you.

In general, eclipses of the Sun (New Moons) represent vision into the nature of our life (ideas about life), while eclipses of the Moon (Full Moons) represent a waking experience or sensational event – living in our own dream.

June 15, 2011 Full-Moon Eclipse

The Vision of This Eclipse

I have written here before about eclipses and their meaning spiritually. Here in the west we don't have such a strong tradition in this, but in Tibet, India, China, and many other parts of the world eclipses are considered very, very potent and personally meaningful. In Tibet, for example, they are considered as extreme opportunities for the observation of our mindstream, something we usually pay little or no attention to or, if so, only fleetingly.

The Buddhists in particular have focused on eclipses as rare opportunities when our more subtle internal or spiritual energies naturally come into alignment or attunement, when things that otherwise we would seldom notice line up and can be more easily experienced by us, that is if we know when and how to look for them.

Eclipses are, above all, times of vision or insight. We grow up with the idea that "visions" are little scenes or pageants that appear in the mind to us like movies. Actually the reality is quite different. Visions are times of intense experience when information perhaps vital to us is streamed and imprints itself deeply in our consciousness, more like a brand. Some traditions actually explain it as if a sacred scroll of some kind were placed deep within us (imprinted) and only over time will it unroll and reveal itself, literally speak or reveal itself to us. We read it out from deep within our mind over time.

I don't want to get all other-worldly or Twilight-zone-like about this, as the Tibetan Buddhists are very matter of fact about eclipses and their value. As

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mentioned earlier, eclipses in their view are rare times of inner alignment, times not to be ignored by us, but times when we should pay attention and observe. In fact Tibetans traditionally set these eclipse times aside as days of observation, just as Christians have holy days that they observe. And by “observation,” they mean just that: to observe our mindstream, our stream of consciousness carefully. Take time to do this as opposed to ignoring this opportunity with business-as-usual.

And although every eclipse (or New or Full Moon for that matter) has a vision or insight available to us, most of us have minds that are too noisy to receive that vision. We effectively manage to ignore them. Perhaps they are too subtle and we are not yet aware enough to grasp them. This is also what the Tibetans call “self-secret” in that these opportunities hide themselves not because they are some hidden secret but because we lack the faculties to perceive the phenomenon. Our awareness is not subtle enough.

However, I believe that at the time of an eclipse certain individuals either are naturally sensitive to this information or are rubbed awake by life events enough to consciously experience these eclipse visions. At any given time some of us are awake and experience this consciously. And of course, trained meditators develop awareness of these visions. I will not dwell on this here, but it is worth understanding.

What I do want to point out is that we have an Eclipse of the Moon on Wednesday June 15, 2011 at 4:14 PM EDT. And while the exact moment of the eclipse marks the precise center of the eclipse time, the effect of an eclipse is not so simple as the moment when it is at its maximum. The whole lunar cycle around an

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eclipse, in particular the week before and after an eclipse, is when the so-called eclipse vision arises and imprints, so don't get too specific about a day and a time. The vision of an eclipse fills the whole time around it.

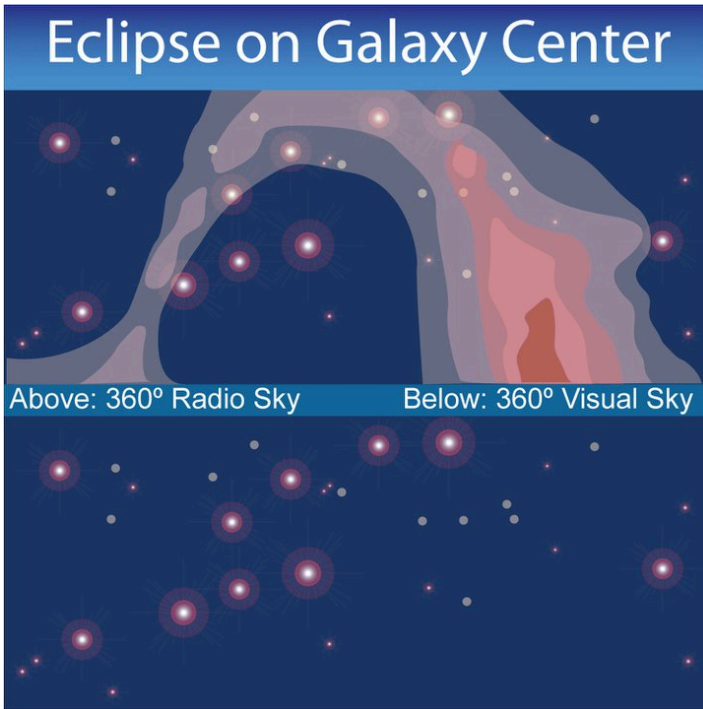
Be aware at these times of intense experiences that rivet you and involve you totally. They can sneak up on you. A "vision" is not an idea that you will simply grasp or that comes to you, but a total experience that is beyond your understanding, that envelops and absorbs your complete attention, and will only reveal its meaning to you over time. This is where the concept of the sacred scroll and its unrolling comes in. Eclipse visions are always totally absorbing and require time to absorb. In other words, they have a future for you to work through and thus the idea that these visions are somehow prophetic comes into play. It is not that they tell the future but that they will only reveal themselves over time. They have a future for us. It takes time to assimilate their meaning or message. You get the idea. I have told you enough about eclipse visions for now. I want to say something about this particular eclipse.

As it turns out this particular eclipse is at or near the very center of our galaxy at 27 degrees of Sagittarius. The eclipse is at 24 degrees of Sagittarius and the center is several degrees wide. This blog is getting kind of long, but I have more to tell you, so I may have to continue this tomorrow or when I have time. Let me just say a few words here and explain the enclosed diagram a bit.

All of the matter (and meaning depends on matter) in the universe is not evenly distributed. In fact it is highly clustered and most of the matter in the whole

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sky surrounding us is in one direction and that is the center of our Milky Way Galaxy at 27 degrees of the zodiac sign Sagittarius. And that is the area in which this eclipse is taking place, so it is by that definition a significant eclipse.



The above diagram illustrates two views (upper and lower) of the entire 360-degrees of the sky. You have to see each of these are a wrap-around view laid out flat. In the bottom panel is the total sky as we see it with our eyes. There are familiar stars and so on. The upper panel is the same sky if we could see beyond the visual spectrum into the infrared spectrum at lower than visual frequencies. In this upper panel, as you can see there are not only stars but also a huge structure that dominates the entire sky. That is the structure of our local galaxy the Milky Way. The night

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sky actually has form and shape that we can't see that well. And that dark red spot in the lower right-hand part of that diagram is the galactic nucleus: the very center of our galaxy. That is the direction where this particular eclipse on June 15th will occur.

More as I have time, but the point is that this eclipse has a little more matter and meaning involved than normal. Look for it in your own mindstream.

Triple Eclipse: A Rare Event

There are actually three eclipses in one month, a partial solar eclipse on June 1st, a Full Moon eclipse on June 15, and another partial solar eclipse on July 1st. Triple eclipses are very rare and we are in the middle of them right now.

This rare triple eclipse is already upon us. It is too late to really train our awareness to perceive it. What can we do to take advantage of this opportunity? One thing we can do is understand what to look for. What is a vision? I will try to put it into words, but don't shoot the messenger. These things are hard to express. It is very difficult, which is why people train in meditation, to learn to be aware of such things. Here goes:

Most important, a "vision" is not something outside, but something inside. You can't "look" for it. You won't see it outside in the world and you won't even "see" it (objectively speaking) inside. It is not about our "getting" it, but is much closer to us than that. The vision of an eclipse is something we all experience together (the whole world) and it is only the awareness of what we are experiencing that we may lack. That is why meditators meditate, to develop greater awareness of what is going on. Like the old Dylan song "Ballad of a Thin Man," it is "... because

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something is happening here but you don't know what it is do you, Mr. Jones?"

Well, except for a few serendipitous moments in our lives when we spontaneously awaken to these visions, we don't see them unless we train for them. That is just the way it is for us. We are normally too distracted for such subtleties.

"Visions" are moments of complete identification in the present moment. These are not experiences of objectification or polarity (stepping back), but just the reverse. They are moments of stepping forward and subtle rapture, when we seize on something (or are seized by something) so absorbing that we drop what we were thinking before and are caught up (despite ourselves) in the present. These are moments strong enough to demarcate or articulate our future from the past. They are important enough for us to forget our distractions. And at these times it is possible for us to just drop the past, to not follow the freight train of our past actions that has been taking us nowhere in particular and to actually cast off in a new direction, turn over a new leaf, so to speak.

In other words, visions are pivotal points (pivots), moments of deep imprinting that are stronger (more significant) than what we were doing up to that minute (what just came before), that is: all of our immediate past that we had been slave to. These moments of vision CAN mark a turning point for us, up or down. Visions are moments that we can seize or become aware of and that mark this particular time forever in the mindstream as one of our turning points. Or we can be totally unaware of what is happening to us as we usually are.

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Of course, we don't often have the awareness to realize these moments of vision. Nevertheless, visions are experiences that are more real than our so-called "real" daily life. That is how they imprint on us; they literally "eclipse" (pun intended) whatever we have been obsessed with in our day-to-day goings on up to that moment. These are opportunities to turn away from or drop the past and old habits. However, eclipses are a double-edged sword and equally can be opportunities to reinforce old habits and the past, and lock them in for the future. Perhaps that is why in astrological tradition eclipses are also sometimes much feared. And that is perhaps also why the Tibetan monks suggest that these eclipse time are times to observe our own mindstream and take note of what appears, to find direction.

In summary, visions are not pipe dreams or ideas that we conceptualize. Far from it. Instead, they are very intense experiences or times that are more real than regular life. In fact, in most cases we only realize that we have had a vision much later, over time, as we find ourselves bringing that time or the experiences at that time to mind, again and again, as we try to glean its meaning for us. Visions are known by the fact that they eclipse the path we were on before they occurred and mesmerize or transfix our attention, effectively demarcating or serving to separate the present and future from the time that came before. They mark a gap in our train of consciousness, one that we can take advantage of to move forward or backward. This is the rub.

I am sorry folks if these words fail to register. This is the best I can do to describe that nature of visions around the time of an eclipse. These visions can be before or after the actual moment of the eclipse

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because the vision experience is all-encompassing and it is only the “awareness” of the vision that may lead or lag the actual event by weeks or even months. It is the awareness of what is happening that is missing for most of us, most of the time.

I would also like to tell you more about the nature of this particular triple eclipse, the significance of it occurring around the solstice and where it is occurring – on the galactic center. But that will be another day, if I have time to put it together.

Do tell if this makes any sense at all, please.

Identification is Circulation

Many of you are asking for more details on these eclipses. I don't want to be a bear, but if you sincerely want to know, I have already given you what you really need which is that eclipses and their vision or imprint are non-conceptual. I understand only too well that we are accustomed to grasping concepts and putting everything into something we can think about or “get” but this is counter-intuitive in this case. You can't “get” these eclipse impulses with your thinking mind. Sorry. God knows I have tried. Think of it this way:

The vision from an eclipse is subliminal, like the low-frequency sound waves that only submarines can hear. IMO eclipses don't speak to the conscious mind; they are preverbal and implant or imprint their message to the subconscious mind and only gradually percolate up into our consciousness. Trying to figure them out consciously only delays their message from reaching us in my experience.

If you really want to learn how to experience eclipses, you will have to get into mind training and mind

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practice. I have written many posts about how to do that, so I won't go over basic mind practice here.

That being said, many of you have asked to hear something about the galactic center and this eclipse. In a short piece like this it is very difficult to communicate what the significance of the galactic center might be to us, but I will do my best, but this will be just a taste.

Our Sun is not only a ball of fire as scientists point out, not just materialistic any more than we are only material. All that we have comes from the Sun, warmth and life itself. The Sun is the heart of life as we know it and simply put: if we consider ourselves spiritual beings, something more than mere matter and dust, then how much more should we pay homage and respect to the spirit and life of our Sun itself. It is the fountain of life as we know it. I won't try to elaborate this concept further here. It is either clear to you or not.

The Galactic Center is the Sun's "Sun" and just as Earth orbits our Sun, so does our Sun orbit the center of the galaxy, albeit very slowly. I mentioned earlier that the content and matter in the universe is not evenly distributed, but clusters. And in the universe near where we live, all of the matter that is anywhere is in the direction of the center of our galaxy. In fact, almost everything is in the direction of late Sagittarius in the Tropical zodiac. All other near space is relatively empty. There is little to nothing there.

The point is that all that "matters" or means much to us is in the direction of late Sagittarius and that part of the zodiac is where the Full Moon eclipse is taking place next Wednesday June 15th, 2011. For most of

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us “meaning” matters and matter is the means for us to have meaning – like our life.

The eclipse is only a transmitter (a messenger or machine) and transmits the vision or information, but many of us don't have our receivers working all that well. In other words, we may not be receptive enough to receive and interpret the information available at the time of eclipses. We have concentrated here in this blog on the meaning of eclipses, but where does that meaning come from? All “meaning” is always only directional, a pointer or reference to an experience. And experience is all that we have as a way to know ourselves. Think of it this way:

Our physical body coheres (hangs together) only as long as we have life, as long as blood circulates and the heart beats. All organisms (large or small) work like this. Just as the Sun is the heart of the solar system, so the galactic center is the heart of the galaxy. Even large-scale structures like the galaxy only cohere as long as energy exists and information vital to coherence is circulated. Scientists don't yet understand how a structure the size of the galaxy circulates information within itself, but they know that it must happen to remain coherent. Everything within the galactic system depends on that information, including our Sun, the Earth, and even ourselves. How do we receive that information, those cosmic messages?

In the sometimes chaos of our lives, even we depend upon something as simple as a clock, and time is measured by the regular movements of the Sun, Moon, and planets. When these bodies line up as with New and Full Moons, or seasonally at the Solstices, and (so I am told by the Tibetan Buddhists) especially

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at the times of eclipses, perhaps these alignments are when information circulates from higher-order structures to lower-order structures – cosmic transmission.

Perhaps when there is an alignment like this eclipse, a shot of information shoots across a gap and is received and implanted in us, to be read back and understood over time, as we are receptive and gradually become aware of it. After all, something drives us to do things. What passes for socialization (when we all get together and share community, like here on Facebook) may be this process of exchange and the sharing of this cosmic information – circulation of essential life-sustaining code, like a bloodstream.

When we discover who we are or have an insight into our identity or the true nature of the mind, when we “identify” anything, that is an alignment and as I have written for many years: “Identification is Circulation.”

That is how the cosmos communicates with itself, through intelligent life like ourselves, through the light in our eyes when we “identify.” When we manage to know ourselves, in that act of identification, the cosmos is communicating and information of key importance is circulated. As we find or know ourselves, as we discover the light in our loved one’s eyes, as we discover each other, etc., the universe circulates and coherence is assured. We live, move, circulate, and life is sustained.

When Earth reaches the solstices each year, that is an important alignment. When the Earth is aligned with the center of the galaxy (like at the solstices), that is an alignment. These two happen within days of one another each year. This Full Moon Eclipse on

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Wednesday June 15th is an eclipse very near the center of the galaxy and the line of solstices. This is both auspicious and significant. I can't tell you if this particular eclipse means you get a new job or lose the one you have now and begin again. That could depend on your personal chart and here I am writing to all of you.

What I am saying is that this time and these eclipses are significant times to note and observe as best you can. I know that most people have no training in this, so relax and observe as best as you are able. Let it happen and don't try to grasp or think what it is. Instead, feel it, feel life around you, and just be present and aware.

For those of you who want to understand this concept more fully, see Chapter 15 of my free e-book "The Astrology of Space." Read the section on page 378 called "Cycles, Circles, Centers, and Circulation." Some of you might want to look at the whole book, which I first published in 1976 under the title "Astrophysical Directions." The link is here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig=>

For those of you who want to actually begin to train your mind, see the free articles on "Training the Mind" at the same link. I hope this has been useful and "Happy Eclipse!"

At Last: The New Moon and a New Time

New Moon today (June 19, 2012) at 11:02 AM EDT, bringing closure and some kind of new start to a long series of astronomical events including the double eclipse starting with the New Moon eclipse back on May 20th, the Full Moon eclipse on June 4th, and all kinds of solar flare and CME events during this time, not to mention the rare Transit of Venus. And that is just the astronomy.

Astrology has to do with the cultural and psychological implications of astronomy (how we explain the astronomy to ourselves), and we have had a lot to digest and interpret of late. I make no claims to having covered it well enough and astronomy has always been much more exact than astrology. After all, astronomers pretty much agree on what happens out there, but astrologers only agree very generally as to what all this astronomy means. And it is one thing to abstractly quote the jargon of astrology (i.e. New Moon today) and quite another to unravel that thread of meaning for events in our immediate life. And the events in my immediate life may be eons away from those in another astrologer's life. You get the idea.

When you add in the fact that we just had a double-eclipse plus any number of solar-flare events and, as mentioned, the Transit of Venus, what a tangled web we weave as for interpretation. Be that as it may, today's New Moon should help to clear away the debris of cascading interpretations and get us back on the same page, or at least make a first pass at that.

And the planet Venus has not only been prominent in its transit across the face of the Sun, but also by aspect, being conjunct Pluto (helio) and Earth recently

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and the focus of a T-Square with Uranus and Mercury, but enough astro-jargon.

Venus, as mentioned in a recent blog here, being the planet next inside the orbit of our Earth, is and has always been the key to life here (astrologically speaking) on Earth. Love and loving we all know is the stuff that holds us earthlings together; just witness all the love songs and love poems over millennia.

Yet Venus also points to our values, what and how we love, what and how we appreciate anything, and perhaps more important “desire,” what and how we desire, and the desire realm in general. And that my friends is a big piece of the pie. Desire and attachment are the glue that holds the Self together, so don't gloss over the power of desire and any shift in emphasis that may occur.

That having been said, having Venus in focus lately really, really means a lot, and will have an effect that we can measure and be aware of. And my point is... look for a shift or reshuffling of your values and desires as we kind of scramble to come out of this recent very meaningful time and once-again pass single-file through the New Moon gateway, thus articulating a new time. We squeeze off what we have just been through and start a new solunar cycle, gradually distancing ourselves from the recent dual eclipses by overlaying something new. Astrology is the study of cycles, and cycles emphasize and overwrite each other.

This does not mean that what visions or insights we had from the double-eclipse or the Transit of Venus do not reverberate. They do, and they will surface or come to mind again and again as long as we can suck any sense from them.

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But it is my thought that today's New Moon will be a marker that these recent events are now officially in the past, although they may cast their shadow forward for a while. For me, I am going to try and catch this New Moon train to the future and close this recent chapter that has been so interesting indeed. Period and exclamation point!

Eclipse of the Moon: Monday, June 4, 2012

I would like to remind everyone that tomorrow morning at 7:13 AM EDT we will have a partial lunar eclipse, one of two eclipses in the last two weeks, somewhat rare. The Moon will pass through the shadow of the earth giving us a partial eclipse that can be seen on the Pacific side of the planet. The zone of the eclipse will stretch from East Asia to the central parts of North America. You may be able to see it just before sunrise on Monday morning.

As for its meaning, I have written quite a bit, so feel free to scroll down my wall, and do read the Transit of Venus blog, since the two are combined. Keep in mind that the transit of Venus across the face of the Sun means a Venus conjunct Earth/Sun, and all that suggests, which is:

An accent on the feminine, women, love, and loving, a deep appreciation of life. As my Venus Transit blog points out, this is another (one of many in these times) event that heralds the arrival of women in greater possession of themselves and by that fact better able to help the planet with the kind of unconditional love we see between a mother and her child. If we men can behave, maybe we can get a little bit of that love ourselves from women or manifest some as well.

Of course, the feminine side of us is not restricted only to women, but women have best exemplified that for countless centuries, and are regularly reminded of this with each birth. We men have no such recourse or reminder, so take note.

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The overall chart pattern points to some outward stress, but a very even inner experience, with perhaps some unusual or at least out-of-the-ordinary insights.

Also folks: Full Moon time.

Cycles in Our Life

Observing the lunar cycle goes back thousands of years and concepts like “Full Moon Madness” and the like have been around for as long. Yet this is a topic that is not taught in schools and is even only obliquely referenced by the media.

For me it was always a no-brainer to grasp that our lives are all wrapped up in these huge bodies like the Sun, the Earth, and the Moon. When science is speculating about the wing flap of a butterfly in Brazil having an effect (chaos theory) in Greenland, what about these great rhythms of life like the solunar cycle? They must do something with us.

Astrology both East and West follows the lunar cycle. While here in the West we generally divide the lunar month into four quarters, countries like Tibet and India speak in terms of thirty phases – much more detail. The Asians are really into this cycle and have much to teach us here in the West.

The moment of the Full Moon marks the exact alignment of the Sun, Earth, and Moon, in that order. The Earth is between the Sun and Moon, and the Moon is outside Earth (toward the outer planets) rather than inside toward the Sun, Mercury, and Venus. I could go on discussing the technical details of the solunar cycle for pages, but instead let’s just look at what we can expect at the full of the Moon psychologically and experientially, since that is what most of you are looking for.

I wrote a whole (free) e-book on the Moon for anyone who craves real detail. It is called “Mother Moon: The Astrology of the Lights,” and it is available here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/download/MotherMoon.pdf>

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If the solunar cycle is so powerful, why is not everybody aware of it? Good question.

The solunar cycle is part of the rhythms of life and obviously they are taken for granted by most people and we are not aware of them. They are too obvious. We are them. And these rhythms are not about to flag us down unless they manifest as earthquakes, tsunamis, and what not. We are too distracted by busyness. If we want to become aware of the Moon, we have to get with the rhythms and not vice versa. It is like a dance. If we move along with the Sun/Moon cycle, awareness of them grows. We get with it. If we have no rhythm, we can't dance.

My point is that first you have to read about these rhythms enough to be able to begin observing them in life around you. But an intellectual grasp is not enough, anymore than reading about dancing is the same as dancing. You have to dance. And here that means learning to move and sway "with" these natural cycles. Get in the flow.

Today is the Full Moon and I already have run out of blog room. I will say just a few words about the Full Moon and then, if you feel you would like me to write some blogs on how to use the solunar cycle I will consider doing that.

The Full Moon marks a changing point in the month, a time when whatever we have been working on, whatever effort we have put out has reached its mark for this month's cycle. No point in pushing onward with effort. Just let things coast and see what was done.

And this is, of course, at a very deep level and not always easy to see. In fact, it usually takes some days, like the continent of Atlantis rising from the sea,

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before we can feel even the outlines of what happened during the waxing Moon cycle. This is subtle stuff and we are loaded with the noise of something, for example, like caffeine, so forget about sensing something subtle. That idea.

In other words, it takes time (and sensitivity) to understand what we have just experienced, much less to put it into words and share it with others.

I wrote yesterday about the meaning of this particular Full Moon, so some of you might like to review that. If you want more on this topic, let me know please.

Cycles In Our Life: Part 2

Tuning into the Sun-Moon cycle has added something important to my life. For one, the Sun and Moon cycles are regular and stable. You can count on them, literally. They repeat themselves and, in the case of the solunar cycle, the whole cycle repeats every month, which means you have planet of opportunity to get to know it. By definition, it is already a part of us; we have always known it, but perhaps have not been aware of it.

In my own life I often tend to forget what is really important. It is easy for me to get carried away by a fascinating project or train of thought, get lost in it, and wake up much later (days or weeks!) wondering what happened. How did I get so far off track?

And sometimes I just fall into times that are no fun at all. They kind of wake me up a bit. I have learned at these harder times in the month to just stop what I am doing, take a break, and check what part of the lunar cycle we are in. More often than not I find that I am at one of the points in the cycle where I am pushing one way and the cycle is going another. Once I

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understand this, I am more patient and stop swimming against the current, relax, and go with the flow.

If I pay attention to the Moon phase I am in, it usually explains a lot to me, and I can get with the program and back into the rhythm of things. Checking where in the monthly lunar cycle I am has saved me, many a day.

Unfortunately, I tend to use astrology more when I get into troubled waters than when things are going well. If things are good, I usually just sail along and get away with what I can. However, when I wander off track (which is often), lunar astrology is a great guide to help me get back in line with my own rhythms. I too often get out of synch.

In other words: I don't use astrology as a preventive technique as much as I should and would like to. I talk the good talk, but sometimes forget to walk the good walk. I get lost in the moment and wake up in a mess of one kind or another that I have made. Thank goodness I wake up at all!

If you feel you are interested in becoming more aware of these lunar rhythms, take a moment to understand the cycles all around us. I wish I could sit down with each of you and explain the concept that everything we see, everything we experience, is cyclic. It is all cycles. If something does not repeat and continuously restate itself, it is soon gone from our memory.

Another way to say this is that there is no such thing as a straight line to the future. All lines eventually curve and return to make a circle or cycle. Trust me in this please and start to do some research on your own.

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Let me summarize: Everything in life “is” (exists) only by repeating and re-positing itself, endlessly -- persisting. It is just like, in banking, when we want to get a return for our investment. If an investment has no return, we get nothing back – no return. That is what the phrase “the point of no return” is all about.

To begin with, we can pay attention to the cycles in our life, like the cycle of our heart beating, the cycle of our lungs breathing, the return of the Sun to dawn every day, and on and on and on. Observe and consider these cycles. I will say it once again:

Everything “IS” only by returning (giving returns), restating, and continuing to be, at least everything that we can be aware of. To exist is to persist or endure. Everything is living energy.

This blog is still prologue to learning about the lunar cycle, so I am sure I will lose some of you. In the next blog I will present a very important concept that comes to us from the Tibet and India that of “lunar gaps” and how to take advantage of them. I hope you can stay tuned and feel free to ask questions.

Lunar Gaps

Let’s move on to the subject of “gaps.” The concept of lunar gaps comes to us from the extensive study of the lunar cycle in Asia, particularly in Tibet and India. It is not a western concept as far as I have been able to determine and it is very powerful. Here is how it works, but first, some background will help:

The Buddhists tend to see us as caught up in the distractions and bewilderment of cyclic existence. Sound familiar? Cycles are what we are talking about here, so note that. They call this cyclic-confusion we are in “Samsara.” I like to pronounce that Sanskrit

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word as “Some Sorrow,” with the accent on the first word in that phrase. Samsara is the total result of our endless cyclic karmic existence, and so on.

However, this unceasing life of distraction that we tend to lead is not air-tight. Thank goodness for that! It leaks, and these leaks are called “gaps.” In other words, there are gaps or time-outs available to us in our deer-in-the-headlights life of fascination with distraction and the solunar cycle is no exception. Gaps are opportunities that are available in the rhythm of the solunar cycle to remember, wake-up, and to be more aware.

This is why, until rather recently, workers in Tibet did not have Saturdays and Sundays off in their monthly calendar, but instead, certain days of the month were set aside for what they call days of “observation,” days to just observe one’s mindstream for the moment. How’s that for an idea whose time has come?

New and Full Moon days are an example of “gap” days, and there are others. This is a very useful piece of information: that on some days of the month it is worth setting aside at least a small block of time to just sit quietly and look at our own mindstream. How we do that is another question, one that we will address later in this series.

And the point here is that the endless life cycles we are in are not seamless, but rather can be articulated to our advantage if and when we become aware of them rather than sleep on in our usual rush of busyness.

But these gaps (opportunities) are not about to run out and flag us down. We have to take the time to observe them and take time to learn to be more

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aware in general. There is no free lunch. Think of the lunar cycle as an example of cosmic breathing. From time to time we need to take a deep cosmic breath and we do this by breathing along with the Sun and Moon. It is about rhythm.

This is, of course, why all those Buddhist monks and nuns meditate, to become more aware. In fact, the word “Buddha” in Sanskrit simply means “awareness” or the “one who is aware,” and nothing more. I try to explain to folks that Buddhism is not a religion in the ordinary sense, but just a method to become aware. Buddhists have no “God,” which is shocking to many, but not if you understand what it means. All this says is that Buddhist meditation is about awareness and nothing else. You can be a Christian and still practice Tibetan-style meditation, and so on. I will spare you the rant, but please let’s stop calling Buddhism a religion in the theistic sense. It is a method or path to awareness, which is what the word “dharma” means – the path Buddha pointed out to become aware. That’s it.

The Buddhists have very carefully (for thousands of years) studied the monthly lunar cycle and figured out where all the “gaps” or chinks in time are. In fact, they divide the Sun-Moon cycle into 30 lunar days, each of which is good for something or other. And lunar days are not simply our solar calendar days, but rather are ‘lunar’ days. A lunar day is simply the time it takes for the Sun and Moon to move another 12 degrees apart or closer to one another. They are close in length to calendar days but don’t coincide. A lunar day can start at any time in the day or night. I publish a free calendar of monthly lunar days here on one of our sites:

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<http://astrologyland.com/>

[Right side of page, Moontime, press the small red dharma wheel]

In summary, there are natural gaps or windows in the monthly Moon cycle that are useful, very useful. In fact, each of the thirty lunar days of the month are useful for one thing or another. There are some days when healing is auspicious, others when fasting and purification are furthered, and on and on. However, we need to learn where those lunar gaps are each month. We will look at those tomorrow.

Lunar Gaps: Part 2

All cycles, including the monthly cycle of the Sun and Moon, have a similar structure. You can see the structure clearly in the cycle of your breath or the heartbeat. We breathe in, pause, breathe out, and pause... and then again. There is a movement from the most inward part of the cycle to its greatest expansiveness and then back down again. Our chest heaves, in and out. Once you understand how the solunar cycle is constructed you will understand how all cycles work including other synodic cycles, like those of the planets to one another.

The New Moon represents the point in the cycle of most inwardness and the Full Moon the point of the most outwardness or expansiveness. And there is a flow from inward outward and back again, just like breathing. The movement goes from inward at the New Moon and expands through the first and second quarters of the Moon until it reaches the moment of the Full Moon. At that point the movement ceases to expand and begins to deflate or contract all the way through the third and fourth lunar quarters, until the next New Moon point is reached. And again. That is

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the movement a cycle, just like a heartbeat of breathing.

Obvious thoughts might include: just as we are not in a party mood when we are at our most inward, we are probably rubbing the cycle-flow the wrong way if we plan a wedding reception for the day of the New Moon. Got it? New Moon is not “party time.”

And the converse is also true. The time to party and to be all out and social is traditionally around the Full Moon. And the same goes for effort and direction. The time to make an effort and really put out and build something, etc. is after the New Moon and before the Full Moon, in particular during the Moon’s second quarter.

After the Full Moon, things begin to withdraw and collapse. Therefore, pushing whatever we are doing beyond the Full Moon is probably not wise, as we are pushing against a natural rhythm that is much stronger than we are. So after the Full Moon, it is best not to push. Instead, we ride and coast as far as we can with whatever effort we made thus far in those first two weeks. The third and fourth lunar quarters are not times to sow, but rather times to reap, to take it all in, and to sort the wheat from the chaff.

Traditionally, after the Full Moon is a good time to take (be receptive) and not give, to reap and not sow, respond and not aggress. You get the idea. We should go with the flow of the natural rhythms. What I am pointing out here is very general. Remember, this is a brief introduction and I have only pointed out two of the changing-points or gaps, the New Moon and the Full Moon. The Tibetans divide the lunar cycle into thirty sections, so consider that. Plus an intellectual understanding of all this is what you are getting here.

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Actual sensitivity to and awareness of the solunar cycles is something entirely different. It is not something to “think,” but something to feel and experience, moving with the solunar rhythms. Please don’t confuse the two.

I don’t want to get too esoteric or too “spiritual” here but the Tibetans are very clear about aligning our own energies with the cosmos, the great rhythms that already are. We learn to work with the rhythms rather than against them. These sacred centers (Sun and Moon) and energies are said to line up (to be aligned) best at the New and the Full of the Moon, especially if there is an eclipse. The New and Full Moon times are prime examples of important lunar gaps during which we might want to set aside some time to observe. We might ask: just what the heck is it that are we observing?

Superficially we are observing our mindstream, our stream of consciousness, how our mind feels and is on that day. In these times of monthly alignment it is written that a certain clarity can be experienced, perhaps some deeper insight into who we are and the true nature of the mind. You will never know if you don’t look and, to see, you have to look and observe. Thinking about it is just your ante in. We must immerse ourselves in experiencing these cycles to know them.

As it is now in our society, we never look. There are no provisions or teachings that tell us that we should look at our mind, much less how to properly do that. There is absolutely zero time set aside on our calendars for looking into the nature of our mind by society at present. Sure, some of us who meditate know about lunar gaps, but knowing they exist and

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learning how to use them, much less actually using them are different things. We will continue, if you wish.

Lunar Gaps: Part 3

The general idea as to how best to make use of the monthly lunation cycle goes as follows: The two main “gaps” or events in the lunar cycle are the moments of the New and Full Moon. Although the exact times are moments or instants in time, the whole area of time surrounding the New and Full Moons is charged or active, both before and after the moment. Please keep that in mind. These are not stopwatch events, but great rhythmic sea changes that we can become aware of, move along with, and learn to use.

These two gaps are the major variations in polarity, with the New Moon being the most inward and private of gaps and the Full Moon being the most outward and social gap. We will get back to these in a moment.

What follows now is very, very abstract, nothing more than the general concept. And it is a long way from understanding the verbal concept presented here to actually experiencing and living the concept in the physical rhythms of life. And the whole point of these blogs is to share enough about how the lunar cycle works so that you don't fight against its tides and, instead, gradually learn to work with and use these great forces. I have pointed out these two major events in the monthly, lunar cycle. Now let's talk a bit about the flow or movement of the cycle itself.

It is important to understand that the entire waxing half of the lunar cycle, which are the two weeks from the New Moon to the moment of the Full Moon, are one huge surge for pushing outward and getting

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things done. This is a time for expansiveness and outreach, building and growing things.

Tradition has it that at the New Moon point, when the Moon is exactly aligned between Earth and the Sun, some kind of vibrational tone or impulse is emitted and received that stirs or sounds deep within our mind – a seed. This seed becomes the theme or flavor for the coming monthly cycle of thirty days that begins at the moment of New Moon.

And this seed impulse instilled or implanted at the New Moon incubates and grows during the waxing two-weeks of the Moon cycle until it reaches its maximum at the moment of the Full Moon. It is during these two weeks that the seed impulse or idea first takes on form in our mind as a concept (an idea we want to pursue) and then begins to actually come out and manifest in the physical world. In other words, born in the mind, the impulse first takes shape conceptually, and that concept can come to some kind of manifestation during the waxing lunar phase.

Of course, this is where we come in. If we fight against the tides of the solunar rhythms, very little will be accomplished other than tiring ourselves out. However, if we, instead, work with the monthly rhythms, much can be accomplished.

It is easy to describe these forces abstractly in words as I am doing here, but much more difficult to actually observe them operating in the world around us. We don't observe the solunar forces like we observe the waves on a beach. These are inner tides that are so much a part of us our lives that we are no longer aware of them, if we ever were. And although they roll on around us without being perceived, we can

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become sensitive to them, we can get in synch. It does not happen automatically.

You don't see these solunar tidal changes with your mind; you feel them with your psyche and your body. It is like that old adage, "Make hay while the Sun shines." There is a time for work and a time for rest. We already know that. And there is also a time to start things and a time to end things, a time to make an effort and a time to leave off, a time to plan things out, and a time to work things out, and so on.

The only way I know to experience this is to begin to work "with" these forces, to move in the same direction in some form of a cosmic dance. And it indeed resembles learning to dance. For most of us this probably involves some amount of imitation, "monkey-see, monkey-do," making some effort to dance along with the rhythms of life. Yet, just as we can learn a new dance, so can we, with a little practice, get into the swing of the solunar cycles and actually use them. Plus, it is a great blessing just to be working with rather than against the forces that be, and way less physically and mentally tiring.

I believe attention span is wavering, so I will try to abridge this and wrap it up tomorrow.

Lunar Cycle: Conclusion

Let me recap a bit as I am sure some of you are tiring from such a long series. This stuff is detailed and I am going on in perhaps too much detail, but then this is not that easy to describe, much less to learn experientially. Today will be my last blog on this topic, but there is a whole free e-book for those of you who are not yet saturated. The link is included at the end of this section.

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When interest here flags, I tend to close out the series, but let me sketch out what I would cover if I got long-winded:

First, I would explain the second half of the lunar cycle. While the first half is all about conceiving a project and making it happen, the two weeks after the Full Moon are about taking the cycle apart or, we could say, helping it fail successfully. If the waxing moon cycle (first two weeks) is about sowing, then the waning (last two weeks) is about reaping. You remember: “We reap just what we sow” sort of thing. In the waxing half we give, and in the waning half we take.

Think of the Full Moon as the heart of an experience you are physically immersed in, immersed to the degree of feeling more than thinking, immersed to the degree of getting dunked and losing control (and perhaps consciousness) of whatever you were pushing at. So in the days after the Full Moon, it takes a little time for us to come out of the experience and to have thoughts about it, and even longer to find words for it, much less express it to others. That is what the Third Quarter of the Moon is all about.

In the Fourth Quarter, there is definitely the sense of withdrawal from the Full Moon experience including the ability to objectify it, to see clearly what happened then. Not only can we see it clearly, but we begin to separate out from the experience the wheat from the chaff, so to speak, what we can take away, and what we must prune out, forget about for now, and discard.

From the Fourth Quarter to the next New Moon, the experience of the Full Moon continues to decline, leaving whatever results we have been able to gather from the Full Moon experience itself. Our take away

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constitutes the seed essence of what we have been able to gather from the whole month so far, be it a little or a lot. This becomes part of the tone that sounds at the coming New Moon, and so on, lunar cycle after cycle. Of course I would go into this in much more detail.

At this point the conversation would split into two parts, a look at the 30-day Tibetan/Hindu lunar cycle and what that is all about, and a different look at the same cycle as seen through western astrology, which would break the cycle into 16 different aspect zones.

In the Tibetan portion, we would look at where the main gaps are in the Sun/Moon cycle, which, as with the New and Full Moon, includes days and times in the month for healing, others for purification, and others for feasting, and so on. I have written about the difficult three days before the New Moon here a number of times. But you get the idea.

In the western portion, I would walk you through the sixteen major aspects used by astrologers in which the lunar cycle can be examined, each of them appropriate or good for one thing or another. And these aspects include what are called "Mirror Aspects," which means waxing aspects have a different interpretation from waning aspects. In other words the First Quarter of the Moon (90-degree aspect) brings a very different interpretation from that of the Fourth Quarter of the Moon, and so on.

As you can see, this would take time and quite a few other blogs. It may just be easier for those of you with a lasting interest to read about this in these two free e-books.

"Mother Moon: Astrology of the 'Lights'"

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And

“Astrology’s Mirror: Full-Phase Aspects”

Both found here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig=>

Thank you for listening.

The Current Eclipses: A Vision

I am putting on my astrology hat on for a moment because once again we are in one of those intra-eclipse times and they don't happen very often, a time when two eclipses occur one after the other within a two-week period. Two successive eclipses that embrace a fourteen-day period are not only rather rare but traditionally very meaningful. In this case we have a partial eclipse of the Sun on Nov. 25, 2011 and a total eclipse of the Moon on Dec. 10, 2011.

I have written about this before here on Facebook. Astrology is the study of these cosmic cycles and this double-eclipse period has cycled back upon us once again and we are now living through it. And each eclipse period is different. What does it mean?

I can only give you my own interpretation but I have studied these things for almost fifty years. First off, these rare two-week double-eclipse periods are special. They underscore or indicate a time of deeper imprinting. Eclipses embed or leave their mark on our mindstream, an imprint that may take us weeks or even months to unravel and read (or live) out. They have a meaning or message for us if we can manage to read it back out to ourselves and become aware of it. And this is happening now. We are in an eclipse time right now.

Traditionally each eclipse brings with it a vision that touches us whether we know it or not. Awareness of what is happening to us is always the key. Ignorance is just that: "ignoring" or being unaware of what is taking place. In books and movies, visions are often depicted as like seeing pictures in the sky but in the flesh eclipses are a little more subtle than that. I think

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of visions as times of deep imprinting when vital or fresh cosmic information is placed or embedded in our mindstream and immediately starts to broadcast or affect us. It shines or like a scroll unrolls and, if we can be quiet enough, we can read what it says into our consciousness and become aware of it.

Every eclipse has a vision and visions by definition are seminal information that guide or direct our life whether we are aware of them or not. They “shine” and we reflect and see our life path by their light. When two eclipses go off one after the other like they are right now, that whole two weeks marks a light-filled time if we can see. So what to look for and what do these particular eclipses mean?

Look for signs in your mind and in life around you. Look for signs of shift or a change of direction and pay attention to where these signs point for they are a harbinger of your future. As mentioned, eclipse visions are not so much dream-like images as they are moments of sudden deepening when we experience or live the moment more vividly than we can remember. Eclipses seal off (or cauterize) the past by their realness, letting the past, well, pass. Just like the Bible says. “It came to pass,” not to stay. Eclipses allow us to drop the past and look ahead once again. They are opportunities to move forward.

Eclipses refresh or reset our odometer. In other words, eclipse times are intense and it is often only later that we realize we had a moment of vision because as an eclipse fades in intensity we only know in retrospect that we have been through something real recently. In other words, we know what was real when it gets less real. That is what visions are like: intense moments of living that serve as guideposts or

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pole stars in our life. You may have to think this through, look in your life, and put it in your own words. What about this particular pair of eclipses? What do they mean for us?

While it is as complicated as we are, this particular coming Full Moon brings with it a vision of compassion or appreciation. We are touched and may be able to better appraise or appreciate the unity in life around us, all that unites our separateness. In other words, instead of an accent on how we differ, during this time the accent is on how we are united, how much we share. Compassion has to do with responding to what is and total compassion is total response to life – caring and serving and loving. Compassion is complete or total reflection.

The vision of this particular coming Full Moon eclipse is one of being able to respond or appreciate deeply the unity or connectedness of life. It is about compassion.

Hope this is useful.

Eclipse Visions: Continued

Some of you have messaged me with questions, so let's go over what happens during an eclipse time and just what we mean by the term "The Vision of the Eclipse." Those of you who have had enough just skip over this please.

Eclipses are potent times. This has been written both in western astrology and in the astrology from the east – China, India, and Tibet. At the moment of an eclipse, so write the Tibetan astrologers, there is an alignment internally of what are called the winds and the channels. This is connected to what are called the chakras. There is such an alignment at every New and Full Moon, but there is a much more dramatic (potent) alignment at the time of an eclipse. Eclipses are seed times – seminal. Seminal means: something is planted, a seed.

And it would be good to wean ourselves from the storybook concept that visions are pictures in the sky or in our mind, like graphics. That is how some writers have tried to describe their visionary experiences but a description of visions as times of great immediacy or presence is much closer to the reality – realness, intense living.

A vision is a time when we live very immediately, with great presence or suchness. Visions mark or articulate our life; they stand out. And by their vividness they help to close-off the past, whatever came before them, and if our past is painful then visions cauterize and seal off that past and pain. The takeaway is that visions are opportunities, time markers that articulate our life, clearly dividing it (however subtly) into what came before the vision and

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what follows from it. In this way eclipses are reference points, experiences strong or vivid enough to remember, points we refer to and mark time from then onward. They are inner events that are vividly stronger than our average day-to-day reality.

Visions can be hard to be aware of because they are so involving that we are deep in them, experiencing, exploring, learning before we ever realize it. Because eclipses are times that are more real than what came before them, we tend to welcome them and enter them without consciousness of doing so. We are like a deer in the headlights. We suddenly are living life more real than we had imagined and just assume this will be how it will be from that day onward. However, that is not usually what happens. We come out of or down from these visions and our more mundane experience reasserts itself. At that point the vision is over, but the memory of it can be still strong. In other words, unfortunately we tend to know visions when they are ending or passing more than when they first come upon us. That is the reality.

In summary, visions are intense or vivid experiences of “being” that overshadow the more ordinary times that precede them. And visions, particularly eclipse visions, tend to have a theme or direction. They become reference points, like the fixed stars in the sky, that guide us along life’s path after the experience is gone. We refer to them and find ourselves bringing those times of vivid experience to mind over and over again much like as teenagers we listened to our favorite songs over and over, extracting whatever information we could from them. Eclipse visions are like that.

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This kind of discussion easily segues into questions of what is beauty? What is love? What is charisma and character? Why are some people, films, or songs like medicine to us in that we need to absorb them over and over and over? What is it that we get from these doses? This speaks to what astrology is all about: not some daily-newspaper column written by a non-astrologer about your Zodiac sign, but an inquiry into how deep and vital communication from the Earth or our Sun or from the center of our galaxy is experienced and interpreted by living beings like ourselves, how bits and pieces of information can penetrate into us or be revealed as the various clock-like heavenly bodies move into and out of alignment.

There is no question that entities the size of the Sun, the solar system, the galaxy, etc. require some kind of circulation of information to remain coherent, to cohere and not to dissolve and fall apart – a life force. All bodies live and die. How that cosmic information circulates and communicates itself is perhaps unknown but the very regular cycles of the Sun, Moon, planets (and everything else out there) are constant enough that we base all our activities on their regularity. So watching the movements of the heavenly bodies (in my opinion) is not just non-sense. I am not interested to trying to prove these concepts but rather in learning how to use them.

Putting aside the discussion of what is the mechanism, the point here is that life does offer us moments of intense realization or vividness. And for me at least, the fact that the great Buddhist teachers have clearly pointed out that the moments of the New and Full Moon, and particularly the moment of an eclipse, are ones of extreme alignment inwardly, we

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might well pay attention to these pointers and work to become more aware of their meaning for us.

Something happens. Something is communicated or revealed. New directions and information do enter our lives and we respond to it instinctively. We have not only “Aha!” experiences once in a great while but all kinds of other experiences that blow us hither and thither in life, and many of them are fueled by impulses and signs that ultimately arise in our mindstream. Eclipse visions are just impulses that are more important or life-changing than on average. Perhaps they contain information coming from our Moon, from our Sun, from the center of the galaxy, etc.

The fact that Tibetan Buddhists at the highest levels consider eclipse times very special means something to me. In fact the Tibetans set aside New and Full Moon days (and especially eclipse days) as days of observation, as in: observe your mindstream on that day. Until relatively recently in Tibet they did not have Saturday and Sundays off as we do, but rather their holidays or “weekends” were events like the New and Full Moon, which were set aside, as mentioned, for observation. Think about that sometime and just how far we have strayed from that approach. I hope that this information is useful to at least a few of you.

The Dark Days of the Moon

As I grow older (and hopefully more aware) I am amazed at how the Moon cycle (and the phases of the Moon) seems to affect me. I should say “affects us” since astrologers (and psychologists) have pointed to the effects of the Moon cycle on all of us for about as long as we have a history. The monthly Moon cycle along with the daily return of the Sun each morning are perhaps the oldest ways of measuring time we know of.

I have spent years studying the monthly cycle of the Moon in the astrology of both the east and west. In Asia the Moon is given much more attention. In fact, in Tibet they don't have birthday celebrations as we do here, when the Sun returns to where it was in its orbit on the day of your birth. Instead, they celebrate and ask about where was the Moon in its monthly cycle when you were born. For example, no one celebrates Buddha's birthday but rather they celebrate the day he was enlightened or died, etc., and that is always a Full Moon or some part of the lunar cycle and not the solar cycle.

Unlike here in the west where we have the four quarters of the Moon, in Tibet, India, and China the month-long cycle of the moon is divided into 30 distinct lunar days, not to be confused with the 30 solar days of the month as marked on our calendars. The 30 lunar days are measured by the angular separation of the Sun and Moon in the sky in intervals of successive 12 degrees. But I am getting off topic here. I have written many articles on this and those interested in learning more can see my free e-book “Mother Moon: Astrology of ‘The Lights’” here:

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig=>

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What actually prompted me to write this today was the realization that we are (right now) in the last three days of the lunar month, the days just before the New Moon. Astrologers both east and west agree that these last days before the New Moon are unusually tough to get through and can be rougher than the rest of the month. In Medieval times the days just before the New Moon were called the “devil’s days” and in Tibet and India they are termed the “dharma protector days” and special rituals and prayers are recited to call for protection during this time.

My point is that I tend to forget about these days being more difficult than other parts of the Moon cycle until I kind of wake up in them each month realizing things have taken on a darker tone, one in which I often find myself struggling along. So I thought I would mention this to readers in case you notice this too or would like to.

I can’t say exactly why this is so. Perhaps it is because the existing moon cycle is coming to a close and we are winding down to the New Moon but have not yet reached it. That “new” impulse or tone that is said to emanate at the New Moon (when the Moon is in a line – and between -- the Earth and the Sun) has not yet arisen. We are still in the backwater of what remains of the current cycle.

I really don’t know the cause, but I do know that astrologers and meditators are very much aware of these “dark days” each month and take precautions. As mentioned, I tend to forget all about them until I find that things are not going smoothly or the train of thought I have been on kind of evaporates, leaving me looking around for a path. Who knows the cause?

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The bottom line is that over the centuries wise men and women have kind of hunkered down during these most waning three days of the lunar cycle and waited them out. The traditional advice is not to start anything new just now, but to keep your head down or, if you must keep busy, be busy tying up loose ends, finishing what is unfinished, paring down your needs to essentials, and so on.

This is a “seed time,” one to cull out what you don’t need and to cling to what is true and lasts longest – the seed for the next cycle, not the dross.

Anyway, you get the idea. For those of you who would like to monitor these days I have written a small practice calendar that keeps track of these days for you. It is available free on both mobile smart-phones and desktop computers at this link.

<http://www.facebook.com/media/set/fbx/?set=a.10150228755052658.363781.587252657>

On that calendar, you want to look for the lunar days 28, 29, and 30. These are the dharma-protector days, the dark days of the moon. Observe these next few days and tell me what you experience.

The image here is of the impulse or tone of the New Moon that is coming, not the dark days that are now with us.

The Dark of the Moon: Dharma Protectors

We are once again in those dark days just before the New Moon which used to be called the “Devil’s Days” in Europe and the “Dharma Protector Days” in Tibet. I first saw the Tibetan dharma protectors as a child while leafing through copies of National Geographic looking for photos of half-naked women. Being raised as one of five boys (with no sisters), how is a kid to learn?

The dharma protectors are those fierce-looking deities that we find in Tibetan thangka paintings and sometimes in statues. They are terrifying to see and typically are shown holding human skullcaps in their hands overflowing with brains and blood. What is that all about, I wondered? And why are these three days of the dark of the Moon called dharma protector days? Are these dark days of the New Moon like Halloween, a time when all the ghouls come out?

The Dharma Protectors (Dharmapalas in Sanskrit) are not there to terrify us, but to protect us, and like their name suggests they are there to protect the dharma, to guard all that is true and most worthy in us and in life itself. They are not outside in the dark of night looking in to frighten us like some demons, but rather they are inside with us looking out, protecting us by protecting the precious dharma in us.

As for the blood and skullcaps, this is nothing more than a representation of the process of impermanence and death itself that awaits each of us, a process we vainly attempt to ignore, but one that sooner or later we will have to meet head on. It is when we break down once in a while enough to admit

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or even allow the fact of impermanence to reach us... that we find the dharma, the moment's heartbreak when our ego shatters and we begin to find our true way once again. In those moments we wake up from who knows how long a sleep or distraction?

I like to tell myself that impermanence is the smelling salts of the dharma. Even a whiff of our own mortality is usually enough to wake us up to what is really important in our lives.

The Dharmapalas are those fierce truths that Mother Nature displays to us all the time, truths that if we will but look at (and that when acknowledged) manage to tame us, subdue our wild tendencies, and make willing subjects of us all. We don't break nature's laws; they break us.

The Dharmapalas protect the dharma (our true life path) from being weakened or watered down in any way. They represent truths (like death and impermanence) and stand fierce, treating all living beings with equanimity. Mother Nature plays no favorites and the Dharmapalas are one with and an expression of nature's own immutable laws.

As for their bloodthirsty appearance? Yes, the gateway to death can be terrifying and is filled with blood and the dying. It is the ring-pass-not of the western occultists, the fierce Dharmapalas to which we each must submit, be tamed by, and pass through sooner or later.

The true nature of our mind is inviolate, surrounded by a ring of fierce Dharmapalas that, like the force of nature herself, shield and protect the living truth. We cannot know the nature of our mind except by burning off the dross of whatever obscures our seeing it. The Dharmapalas appear fierce, but their fire burns

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nothing but our own obscurations and delusions. They don't stand in the way of our awakening, but rather insure that we will always have that opportunity.

The New Moon is on Saturday December 24, 2011 at 1:07 PM EST, which makes Christmas a "new time."

Double Eclipse Coming: A Time of Vision

Today is the Full Moon, Saturday May 5, 2012 at 11:36 PM EDT. I wrote about this Full Moon a few days ago, so scroll down to read that. This Full Moon is not an eclipse, but in two weeks there will be an eclipse, followed by another eclipse: a double eclipse.

Eclipses are perhaps the most important Earthly astrological event we experience. Yes, New and Full Moons are important, but if they are accompanied by an eclipse they are even more important. And when two eclipses happen in a two-week period, one after the other, then the whole time surrounding those eclipses is special.

Double eclipses do not happen each year, but every once in a while they do and we happen to have double eclipses coming up later this month with a New Moon eclipse on May 20th and a Full Moon eclipse on June 4th. This will be a very special time.

The significance of eclipses goes way back and exists in the literature of almost all countries. The Tibetans are very clear about the auspiciousness of eclipses and in their practice calendars are careful to set time aside on eclipse days for what they call “observation,” just looking at our own mindstream. The high lamas point out that on eclipse days the various winds and channels within us (up and down the spine) naturally come into alignment more perfectly than at other times. Those who have developed some sensitivity and awareness can take advantage of these alignments.

I won't belabor you with the benefits of developing such an awareness here; I have done that in many

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other blogs, but I will simply say that practices that make us more aware of the present moment, like certain forms of meditation, are really worthwhile. I mean they pay off. Keep in mind that the very word “Buddha” simply means awareness. It is all about awareness. Enough said.

And I have written many times before about the “Vision of the Eclipse,” the various visions that accompany eclipses. Eclipses are key and seminal times and they emit a pulse or tone that vibrates deep within us and at times in our life we can experience them consciously. Again it depends on our awareness, but even the least-aware-of-us have breakthrough moments sometimes in life when we are tuned in and living large the life of our own mind. We can experience these visions consciously and remember them. But without some kind of mind practice, these personal events would be rare.

“Visions” are not pictures in the sky of our mind that we have been taught to associate with having a vision. They can be, but most often visions are super-intense moments, days, or a part of a day when we are imprinted by (resonating with) the tone of the eclipse; we are vibrating alive with what is present. Only later, when we come down or out of these intense living experiences, do we realize that they are not permanent, but rather were an intense experience that we had that is now passing. Visions are intense times that are like islands of imprinting information in our mindstream. They stand out. We remember them or measure time from when they occurred for us. They are differentiated from our day-to-day flow of events. The visions at eclipse times are like that.

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Here is another way to phrase this: You might call visions at these eclipse times intense experiences of the truth for us, the truth of our life. And truth (by definition) lasts into the future. In other words, what is true will last longer than ephemeral events and so truth is a vision of the future, because it will still be there then. Get it? I just pointed out a secret of how astrology works.

So don't look for visions on the outside, like pictures in the sky above you. Feel them inside, deeply, as the truth that you are when you get the chance. This is how visions communicate their message to us, from inside. They bubble up into our consciousness. What is placed inside at the time of an eclipse can take weeks and months to percolate upward until we can grasp it with our conscious mind. A little bit of vision can go a long way in guiding us because it is a premonition of the truth that will last until then.

The truth of coming events cast their shadow on the present. I will write more on these double eclipses as I can find the time. Let me know if you are interested in this kind of writing please.

Double Eclipse Coming: Part Two

Since many of you have shown interest in how visions work, let's go a little deeper. Visions, whether around eclipse times or whenever they occur to us, and they do arise, are seldom recognized by us when they first appear. Since they are times of great vividness of experience, we naturally kind of fall into them because they are more intense and alive than the time just previous to their onset. We are happy to live more vividly and so welcome any experience that brings more life to us. We often fail to recognize them right off as the seminal truth-bringers which they are.

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There is a tendency to think that “this is the way life always should be” and let it go at that. Visions are mostly subtle and we have to be subtle enough to recognize them when they arise.

It is when the vision passes or starts to pass that we tend to become aware that something has happened within us. It is kind of like when we are at a fun party and gradually realize that the party is over or getting near over. We kind of wake up to normality again, and realize our experience was more meaningful or vivid perhaps an hour ago. The poet Gertrude Stein had a line “Before friendship faded, friendship faded.” That is the idea.

In books and movies, visions are often portrayed as pictures or graphic images in the mind, much like the little text balloons in cartoons. While this can happen, much more often visions are just very intense times of living that stand out like islands of truth in the sea of our day-to-day normality. Visions are clear times when we can see our own truth vividly and this intense truth imprints itself on our mindstream by its sheer reality and intensity. In fact, visions are so vivid that, while we may not understand what we see, we cannot forget them either. They stick in our mind and remain embedded there.

It is a hallmark of eclipse-visions that the intensity of the experience is somewhat overwhelming, more than we can take in at one glance or moment. And although we cannot quite get our mind around a vision, we somehow totally “get it” and willingly take it in or internalize it. Then, in the hours, days, months, etc. that follow, we gradually are able to bring this vision to mind, again and again, until we suck any sense from it we can. This takes time.

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Like an all-day sucker, we often can only grasp a little meaning at a time, but the allure, gravity, or truth of the vision kind of haunts us, floating in there, embedded deep in our mind, just out of reach of our conscious efforts to grasp it all at once. But we savor it like we savor an old love song from our teenage years that we can never tire of listening to. We get something from it every time we bring it to mind, and we do that again and again until the vision holds no further interest for us. Visions are something like that.

We are deeply nourished by the truth of our inner visions. As mentioned in the previous post, visions hold or point out the truth for us, and the truth will outlast all else, and truth, by definition, becomes the future. The truth will last until then. That is why visions are visions of the future.

As mentioned, it can take months or even more to empty a single vision of meaning for us, but eventually we raise all of it to consciousness, a bit at a time, until it is fully present and complete to our mind. We rehearse it again and again until it is exhausted of any new meaning for us, and finally fully present.

In this blog I have tried my very best to put into words something about what visions are actually like so that you can begin to become more aware of them in your life. As I keep pointing out, it is all about awareness. Everyone in the world experiences the tone, pulse, and the visions of the New and Full Moons, eclipses and so on. But everyone is not aware of what is taking place, so it really is a question of awareness of what is happening right now, and it can be developed.

In my opinion and in my own experience, being aware of these visions or deep experiences is more than just

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worthwhile. It makes life constantly meaningful and brings continuity to my experiences that was never there before I began to develop some awareness.

Hope this makes sense. Any questions?

Double Eclipse Coming: Part Three

This will be the last blog on the nature of visions. I could go on forever, but either you get it by now or it does not interest you. So, I will close this short series with saying just a bit about the astrology involved, should some of you wish to explore this. And what I have to say is geared to those of you do not know much astrology. I may have to get a little didactic here and spell it out, so please forgive me if it sounds too wordy and intellectual. I am doing the best I can to explain it.

Before I begin, some of you mentioned equating “visions” with dreams and daydreams. Not similar. Daydreams are just what they are, and the same with dreams while we sleep. While once in a very great while sleep dreams can also be visions, this is not common. Visions are times of intense living wide awake, islands of reality in the sea of time. Enough said. Now for my overview:

There is no reason why we cannot learn just enough astrology for these ideas to be useful in day-to-day life. After all, many of you like to read about the meaning of eclipses, and so on. Why not incorporate this into your lives? Let me know if the following makes sense:

There are milestones or mile markers in our lives, events that are so significant to us that they immediately become markers from which we measure time from that moment forward and before which we

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can't quite even remember who we were. These events imprint us.

In life, what is really important? And how do we know it is important? Of course, everything can seem important sometimes, but there are moments or even days in our lives that stand out as islands or pointers for us as to who we are, why we are here, and what we have to do. Astrology is all about pinpointing these times.

Think of the astrology chart with the planets moving in the heavens around us like a giant kaleidoscope, ever changing. And although time seems continuous, all time is not equal. The intensity or meaning of time for us rises and falls, has peaks and valleys. Some times are intense and meaningful, while others are empty of events, perhaps even a little boring. Are meaningful events just random or can we search ahead through time for these more meaningful and intense moments?

One way to do this is through astrology. Astrology is all about showing us where and when the physically significant events in the heavens occur and we can do this ahead of time. Astrology tells us about the future, not in a psychic manner, but in a measurable fashion, like pointing out when significant heavenly events happen. And let's not forget that we measure our day-to-day time by the astronomical cycles, the day, the month, the year, etc. These cycles in time are so much with us that we take them for granted and tend to ignore them, but they mark time for us nonetheless.

As the Sun, Moon, and the planets form various angular patterns or aspects in the sky, these are events. We can chart the times when these aspect-events occur and they offer a good (perhaps the

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only!) guide we have to important celestial moments. We could do worse than to (at the very least) take note of them.

As a society we have the idea of what celebration is all about, because we already celebrate birthdays and other social events. Yet many of us wish that our entire life was somewhat more of a celebration than it is. What if our existence could be more of a perpetual celebration? Astrology at least points to how that might be enabled.

New and Full Moons are two important events that happen each month. We can learn to take advantage of them and use them. I try to do this whenever I can remember to observe them. And the monthly lunar cycle can be broken down in much more detail than just the New and Full Moons. For example, the Tibetan Buddhists divide the month into 30 distinct lunar days (not calendar days), each of which marks a time for a particular type of activity, and the Buddhists are aware of these events and how to best use them. Just like birthdays, celebrating distinct events like these can make life more meaningful.

Taking advantage of the natural articulation of time as indicated by Full and New Moons, eclipses, and the many other planetary events can bring increased meaning into our lives. We might as well get in-tune with the natural heavenly cycles going on around us all of the time. We can synch up. These cycles are happening anyway, so why not take advantage of them? Astrology charts the flow of significant astronomical events which, like stations on a cosmic radio, we can tune in to.

In my experience, there are just two requirements to make use of astrological cycles in life in order to tune

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in the natural set of astrological indicators happening around us. First, you have to know when these events occur, like the moment (or at least the day) of the New or the Full Moon, planetary aspects, and so on. There are many books and programs that can provide you with a list of what astrological factors are occurring and when. The second requirement, however, is a little more difficult.

Even if we have a list or know when the Full or New Moon is taking place, we still have to tune in or get in synch with these cycles. This is done by gradually becoming aware of them. Reading about them, like you are here, is a first step. If we know when the Full Moon is happening, we can attempt to be aware of that and at least be open to examining our mindstream at these times.

Trying or wanting to be aware is not the same as being aware, but it is a start. We can practice being aware, which is what sitting meditation is all about – practicing. It is just like learning to dance. We go through the motions of a new dance step by rote until we can get a feel for it, get into the swing of it. Fluency does not happen all at once, but gradually we get into the rhythm of the cycles always going on around us. We learn to resonate to and with them. Might as well dance “with” the cycles as against them.

Reading blogs like this and then learning to be aware when the New or Full Moon rolls around is how we begin. And for many of you, that may be enough. For those of you who (like me) really love this kind of thing, then we can be a little more pro-active about our participation. We can practice developing awareness, so that whatever rolls in from the heavens, we can be more aware of.

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As for me, I have increasingly worked to become more and more aware of what is going on around me, but it takes practice. I have done that practice and please don't imagine it was easy or always fun either. It is practice, like any other practice such as learning to play a musical instrument, and so on.

There are signs everywhere in the life around us and I have made a point of trying to learn to read them. I kind of live by reading the signs in my life and acting on them. It became clear to me years ago that I personally needed to become more aware in order to be really sensitive to these natural signs, and that is when I became pro-active in all of this. I actively started to practice meditation under a qualified teacher. It may have been the best decision I ever made. It takes time, but the wonderful thing is that it actually works! Your thoughts?

Total Eclipse of the Moon Tomorrow

A number of you have written asking for more interpretation on the coming Total Eclipse of the Moon on Saturday December 10, 2011 at 9:36 AM EST. I have already posted most general information about eclipses and their visions (and this particular double-eclipse time within a two-week period), so scroll back in my blogs and read those. I can perhaps add just a little more here on how to take or interpret this particular Full Moon and total lunar eclipse.

First, keep in mind this is a Full Moon, not a New Moon, so the textbook interpretation of a Full Moon is that a seed impulse, insight, or idea that started in our mind around the previous New Moon, here at the Full Moon (two weeks later) reaches its greatest manifestation or reality for this cycle, whatever we can agree that is. The New Moon is the seed and the Full Moon is the blossom so, for better or for worse, this Full Moon brings what you get to its fullness, good or bad. Most astrologers would agree on this interpretation.

When it comes to interpreting this particular Full Moon's influence there are, of course, many factors to consider, so I will just give you what I consider the most important:

This particular lunar eclipse will manifest more as a mental and so much not as a physical event, so look to your mind and in your mindstream rather than out toward your circumstances in the outer world. Of course, inner and outer are connected, but the emphasis here is on your analytical and inspirational abilities rather than your practical common sense and

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physical experience. So "Let's get physical" is not the key, more like "Let's get inspired."

In other words, this should be a time to grasp the big-picture view of where you are rather than worrying about the nitty-gritty details. You should at this time be able to see both the forest "and" the trees, as opposed to just the trees. So the takeaway here is of a time where expanded vision and grasping the big picture is possible, perhaps a time more for reflection and analysis than action.

In addition I suggest, for those who are sensitive to these things, that this particular Full Moon may be a time for inspiration and a deeper (or widening) appreciation for whatever spirituality you may have. The idea of oneness, sharing, and togetherness, literally the unity of all life, can be felt and valued at this time – deep appreciation. Music, film, and opening your arms to life is also indicated.

So this is a more spiritually-oriented Full Moon than usual, a good time to gather and share with those you appreciate and love.

I posted this song my daughter wrote a few days ago, but you may have missed it. If you want to hear what this Full Moon is about, May's song says it better than I can. For those who were not able to listen the first time, here it is. It is worth far more than my words. It is called "Sweet Days." This song sets the tone for this particular astrological event.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_z0Nxyu2Gk

VENUS TRANSITS THE FACE OF THE SUN

The transit of Venus across the face of the Sun is one of the rarest astronomical events. This coming transit of Venus will take place on June 5-6, 2012 toward sundown, and is the last event of its kind this entire century. The next will take place in December of 2117. Why are Venus and this event so special? The secret to understanding the meaning of Venus transiting the solar sphere is to be found in the planet Earth and the effect of Venus on us. It is we, here on Earth, who see this happening, not the other planets. Because this event is so rare, astrologers have not had that much experience interpreting this, so please bear with me.

The planetary orbits are placed at intervals outward from their center the sun, much like the esoteric chakras run up and down our spine, at least figuratively. If you want to better understand this event, you might have to relax, let your mind rest, and just take this in.

We all live here on Earth, for us the heart and center of our little world. I will put aside my evangelism about heliocentric astrology and the fact that the Sun is the center of all life for us and that even our beloved natal astrology-chart wheel is nothing more than a snapshot of the sun-centered solar system from Earth's view. I will visit that thought another day.

For now I will give a key insight for you to consider as regards the planets in their order out from the Sun: Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. That key is this:

The inner is always the key to the outer.

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Always take from within. The key to the meaning of any planet is always that planet whose orbit is the next inside. For our Earth, that means Venus, so Venus is the key to life on Earth, forever and ever.

We all know that Venus has to do with love, appreciation, values, and (along with the Moon) also women. Don't forget that we are having a Full-Moon Eclipse around the same time as the Venus transit. Is it not true that for all time the bards, poets, and sages have told us that "love" is the key to life here on Earth – love, love, love. Another way to say this is that Venus or "love" is the key to life on Earth.

In other words, if you want to better understand this earthly life (and your natal chart), look at how Venus is configured in your chart because Venus is the next planet inside Earth's orbit. Can't you tell mine is in Leo?

And you can do this with any two planets. Let me give you just one more example, but you can do this with any pair of planets from the Sun out to and including Saturn. As for the metaphysical or outer planets (Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto), well, they dance to a different tune, which could be another blog if some of you ask for it. Here let's look at the planet Saturn.

Saturn represents time (Chronos) and the laws that hold this Earth together. Saturn also can represent the obstacles and obstructions in our life, all that we have to go or pass through to live and know ourselves. And the key to Saturn?

You guessed it, Jupiter. Jupiter is the next planet just inside Saturn's orbit, so knowing Jupiter in your chart will give you the key to handling your particular Saturn. I am not going to go into great elaboration about this here, but just consider a few of the

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attributes of Jupiter. The word for Jupiter in Sanskrit is “Guru,” so Jupiter has to do with guidance, our vocation or life path, literally the way we go through life, continuity – the way or path through which we can continue.

Jupiter is the Key to Saturn because through our Jupiter we can traverse the maze of laws that Saturn presents to us in life. For example, Jupiter is traditionally connected to lawyers, and lawyers handle the law (Saturn). Get it? Jupiter is the Key to Saturn, our guide or guru through the obstacles that time (Saturn) challenges us with. Jupiter is the planet just inside the orbit of Saturn. That is how to use this simple planetary key: the inner is the key to the outer. Now back to Venus and the lunar eclipse.

Venus is one of the few planets we can frequently see in the morning or evening sky because it never gets too far from its eternal companion, the Sun. It goes where the Sun goes. So we see Venus in the sky a lot. However, we don't see Venus against the Sun, as it rarely crosses or transits the Sun. And unless we have very special sunglasses to protect our eyes, we are not going to see this Venus transit at all.

Yet we all will experience this event. This is not an eclipse of the Sun by Venus. The planet Venus is way too small to eclipse our massive Sun, so that is not a realistic factor IMO as some might suggest.

Venus does represent love and also women, so the love of women and the rise of women on an ascending curve would be a fair interpretation IMO. The sleeper of these modern times is the ascendancy of women, not only to power and not only the love of woman, but more importantly women's love and

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compassion in the world, which includes their love of men.

My own view, which I am sure I will get some flak for, is that the remedy for an excess of the dominant male patriarchal energy is not more aggressive feminism, but just the reverse. It is women remembering that their love, like that which they have for their child, is unconditional. Men have no such capacity, in general. Women have the power to love men unconditionally, and unconditional love is something men are helpless in the face of. They melt.

In other words, the way to handle men is not to rise up and give them a taste of their own medicine, which they well deserve, but rather to love them as only the feminine power can. Women have perhaps forgotten how powerful they are with love. There is no force like love and women can show love where there is none.

In this coming transit of Venus across the face of the Sun, please consider this: Mankind is supposedly more civilized than Mother Nature, and Mother Nature is inexorable in its laws. We don't break the laws of nature; they break us. In fact, if you search through all the world of nature for kindness and compassion, it is not to be found anywhere, with one lone exception, the compassion and unconditional love of a mother for her child. The Tibetan Buddhists have endlessly told us that every sentient being has been our mother in a previous lifetime. This is where unconditional love and compassion can always clearly be seen, a mother with her child.

The power of women is that sleeping force that is now awakening. Remember all bodies, including males enter the world only through the feminine. The transit of Venus plus the Full Moon eclipse on June 4th

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herald the love of women but more importantly women's love and compassion for others, starting with the child and radiating outward. And should women remember their ability to love, the world would change.

That should get you started considering this Venus transit across the face of the Sun.