

Joys of the Planets

By

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The “Joys of the Planets” and the “Planetary Joys” are two traditional planetary conditions that modern astrologers either ignore completely or those who practice traditional techniques may use, but with little or no understanding as to their origin and purpose. What then are these planetary joys?

The “Joys of the Planets” and the “Planetary Joys” are often referred to as two separate notions; one refers to the sign in which the planet rejoices while the other describes the house in which a planet has its “joy”. What most astrologers will come across is illustrated as follows:

- Mercury has dual rulership of Gemini and Virgo
- Venus has dual rulership of Taurus and Libra
- Mars has dual rulership of Aries and Scorpio
- Jupiter has dual rulership of Sagittarius and Pisces
- Saturn has dual rulership of Capricorn and Aquarius

The other notion of “joy” refers to a planet’s preference for being in a certain house or ‘place’:

- Mercury Moon has “joy” in the 1st House
- Moon has “joy” in the 3rd House
- Venus has “joy” in the 5th House
- Mars has “joy” in the 6th House
- Sun has “joy” in the 9th House
- Jupiter has “joy” in the 11th House
- Saturn has “joy” in the 12th House

Planets Prefer Certain Signs

Let us start with the notion of the dual rulership of planets. Now we know that a planet has significant strength when it is in a sign that it rules however each has a preference for the sign it is really comfortable with. Consider the analogy of the British Royal family. They have a number of ‘homes’ dotted around the countryside but the official residence is Buckingham Palace, where the Queen ‘rules’ from and dispenses her Royal duties. However, we also know that the Queen much prefers the surroundings of her Balmoral residence in Scotland. Both are Royal residences; the Queen can ‘rule’ from either and no doubt she does so from Balmoral during the summer and Christmas breaks however, the Queen prefers Balmoral because she is in more ‘comfortable’ surroundings.

The planets are much like the monarch as they too have their preferences as follows¹:

- Mercury **rejoices or prefers Virgo**
- Venus **rejoices or prefers Taurus**
- Mars **rejoices or prefers Scorpio**
- Jupiter **rejoices or prefers Sagittarius**
- Saturn **rejoices or prefers Aquarius**

In having these preferences, planets then gain a position of additional strength not only by being in the sign they rule but also in their **preferred sign**. How and why is this so, and is it important? I believe it is very important for every astrologer to understand the thinking and rationale behind these preferences because it adds another dimension to how we judge the planet's ability to deliver what it promises.

Ibn Ezra tells us that a planet's preference of one sign over another is because the sign is in accord with the nature of the planet viz diurnal planets prefer diurnal signs and nocturnal planets prefer nocturnal signs. Earth and water signs being nocturnal and feminine are the preference of the nocturnal planets while air and fire signs being diurnal and masculine are favoured by the diurnal planets.²

Diurnal & Nocturnal, Masculine & Feminine

The division of planets into diurnal and nocturnal types is what is known as 'sect'. Each planet is part of a team that reflects their nature, led by the Sun for the diurnals and the Moon for the nocturnals. Diurnal is equated with the masculine, active principle and is associated with the planets that are effective when in the presence of light and heat. Together with the Sun, the other diurnal planets are Jupiter and Saturn. Jupiter is considered more effective in the day as it is a masculine planet and a benefic, bringing bounty and expansion. Saturn, on the other hand, benefits from being in the light because it is said that Saturn's nature of coldness and darkness was lightened and made less malefic (or dangerous) when it was warmed and illuminated by light.

Nocturnal planets are equated with the feminine, passive principle and these qualities are associated with planets that flourish and benefit from the absence of light and heat. The Moon together with Venus and Mars makes up the nocturnals. Venus is considered more effective in the night as it is a feminine planet and a benefic. It brings growth and fecundity. Mars, on the other hand is a malefic and like, Saturn benefits from being in an opposite environment. It is said that the darkness and moisture of the night minimizes Mars's harsh effects and makes it operate for the greater good.

The other principle that underpins the "joys" is that of sight and light. This derives from the arrangement of the planets in their signs of rulership and their relationship to the 'lights', that is the Sun and the Moon. In the *Thema Mundi* chart³ with Cancer rising, we see the Moon in her rulership of Cancer and the Sun in its rulership of Leo. Now if we draw a line from Leo to Aquarius, we bisect the chart into two halves: the half from Leo to Capricorn is masculine and diurnal while the half from

¹ Dorotheus of Sidon *Carmen Astrologicum* Trans D Pinigree. Ascella Publications, 1993. Chapter 1.

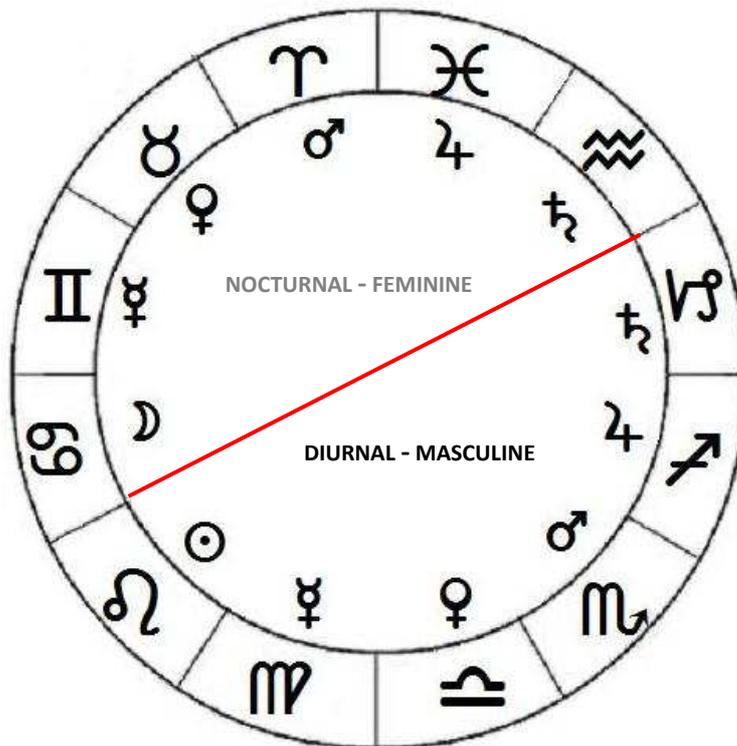
² Ibn-Ezra, Avraham *The Getting of Wisdom* Trans. M Epstein. Ed R Hand. ARHAT, 1998. Chapter 1, page 10

³ This is also known as the "Horoscope of the World".

Aquarius to Cancer is feminine and nocturnal. The Sun is the ‘Light’ or Lord of the diurnal and masculine half and the Moon is the “Light” or Lord of the nocturnal and feminine half. The relationship of the planets to the Lord or Light of their sect is based on their ability to ‘see’ them by aspect and as a consequence they derive a certain level of potency.

Which Planets Prefer Which Signs and Why

The importance of ‘sight’ and of receiving light is an important philosophic and hermetic principle. All life needs a certain level of light and the lack of it is detrimental and dangerous. Think about a pot plant that is kept in a dark cupboard. No matter how much you water it, the lack of light will eventually lead to its death. So, too in astrology, the notion that a planet can see the ‘light’, in this case either the Sun or the Moon, which are also known as “the Lights” suggests that the ancients wanted to enshrine this principle in each of the planets’ relationships to the luminaries in charge of their sect, either the diurnal or nocturnal.



The Thema Mundi chart showing the planets in their rulerships.

This connection with the Lord or light of the Sect seems to imply that strong connections between the planet and the Lord give the planet strength and potency. Therefore, a planet’s preference by sign is because it has that connection by sight as well as affinity and as a consequence can do what it does effectively.

Al Biruni, the 11th century Arab astrologer tells us:

“One of these domiciles is always more congenial to the planets and is said that there they are more joyful on account of temperament, formation and sex.”⁴

Venus, the lesser benefic with rulership of Libra and Taurus prefers to be in Taurus because firstly, Taurus, is a feminine sign, located in the feminine and nocturnal half of the *Thema Mundi*. Additionally, Taurus makes a sextile, or benefic aspect to the Moon, which is the Lord of the nocturnal sect. In Libra, on the other hand, Venus is in a masculine sign and her relationship to the Moon’s sign, Cancer is a square, which is harsher and less fruitful.

Jupiter, the greater benefic, has the rulership of Sagittarius and Pisces. Jupiter prefers Sagittarius firstly, because Sagittarius is a masculine, diurnal sign, located in the masculine, diurnal half of the *Thema Mundi*. Also, Sagittarius makes a trine or benefic aspect to Leo, the rulership of the Sun, which is the Lord of the diurnal sect. In contrast Pisces, Jupiter’s other sign rulership is in an inconjunct aspect to Leo and therefore is disconnected and cannot ‘see’ Leo, the Sun’s sign. Its nature is also in contrast as Pisces is a feminine sign in the nocturnal hemisphere.

When it comes to the malefics, Saturn and Mars we need to consider them in a different way. The 11th century astrologer, Avraham Ibn Ezra tells us:

“One of the malefic is masculine and of the day planets, and that is Saturn. The second is feminine and of the night planets, and that is Mars.”⁵

Mars, the lesser malefic, has joint rulership of Aries and Scorpio. Mars prefers Scorpio because Scorpio, although in the masculine and diurnal hemisphere, is a feminine sign. The nature of Mars is hot and dry and as a feminine planet, benefits from being in a feminine sign. Its relationship to its sect Lord, the Moon is a trine.

Saturn, the greater malefic jointly rules Capricorn and Aquarius. Saturn prefers Aquarius because although Aquarius is in the feminine and nocturnal hemisphere, it is a masculine sign and Saturn is a masculine planet. By opposition, Saturn ‘sees’ its sect Lord, the Sun the ruler of Leo.

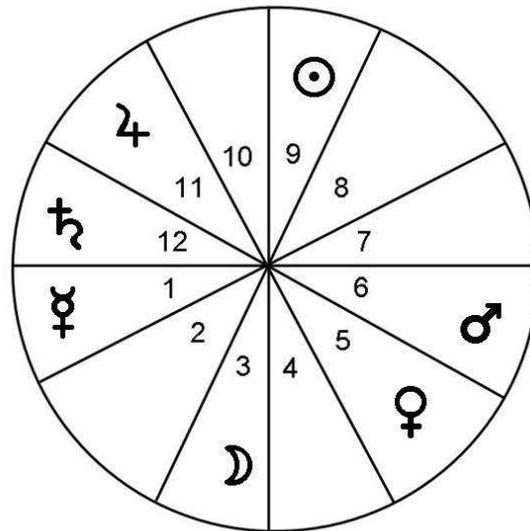
Finally, we come to Mercury which can be masculine or feminine, diurnal or nocturnal, and sometimes a benefic. Mercury jointly rules Gemini and Virgo; Gemini in the nocturnal hemisphere and Virgo in the diurnal hemisphere. Gemini is masculine and diurnal, Virgo is feminine and nocturnal. If we look at the *Thema Mundi* chart we see Virgo rising after Leo, in a nocturnal position and the *Thema Mundi* chart is a nocturnal chart with the Sun below the horizon. Mercury prefers to be in the sign of Virgo which is also the sign of its exaltation.

⁴ Al-Biruni *Book of Instructions in the Elements of the Art of Astrology*. Trans. R R Ramsay Wright. Para 441.

⁵ Ibn-Ezra, Avraham *The Getting of Wisdom* Trans. M Epstein. Ed R Hand. ARHAT, 1998. Chapter 1, page 10

Why Planets rejoice in the Houses

The planets also have ‘joy’ through their placement according to the house they occupy. Therefore if we place them in their ‘joys’, it would look like this



Planets in their House of Joy

Now we may look at this diagram and think it looks rather random but there is reasoning behind it. The main point to remember is the principle of ‘sect’. Each of the planets belongs either to the diurnal sect or the nocturnal sect: Jupiter and Saturn are of the diurnal sect led by the Sun while Venus and Mars are of the nocturnal sect led by the Moon while Mercury is flexible.

Looking at the graphic the first thing that catches the eye is that the 3 diurnal planets, Sun, Jupiter and Saturn are all happiest or in their houses of joy above the horizon, that is in a diurnal placement.

Equally, the nocturnal planets, Moon, Venus and Mars are happiest in houses below the horizon, that is in nocturnal placements.

Mercury, the flexible one is given its joy in the first house where its dual nature was seen to reflect the Ascendant and first house, the point at which day and night intersect. Mercury is also associated with the mind, the ability to articulate ideas and express opinions. In her book, *Temples of the Sky*, Deborah Houlding quotes William Lily, who noted that Mercury rejoiced in the first house,

“...because it represents the head and the tongue, fancy and memory; when he is well-dignified and posited in this house, he produceth good orators.”⁶

The next point is that each planet has a relationship [or lack of] with the Ascendant/1st place, reflecting either their benefic or malefic nature. The Sun and the Moon each make a benefic aspect from their positions: the Moon in the 3rd makes a sextile to the 1st while the Sun in the 9th makes a trine. The benefic aspect of trine and sextile reflects the benefic nature of the Moon and the Sun. Jupiter and

⁶ William Lily *Christian Astrology*

Venus as the greater and lesser benefics also make benefic aspects from their houses of Joy: Jupiter by sextile from the 11th to the 1st and Venus by trine from the 5th to the 1st.

The malefics are interesting because both Mars and Saturn are ‘blind’ to the 1st with Saturn, having its joy in the 12th and Mars in the 6th. It is interesting that this lack of aspect or blindness echoes the destructive nature of both Mars and Saturn on the seat of life and vitality, the 1st house.

The third point to note is that apart from Mercury, which always stands on the periphery because of its dual and flexible nature, all the other planets sit in their house of joy opposite their contrary sect partner: viz Sun in the 9th is opposite Moon in the 3rd, Venus in the 5th sits opposite Jupiter in the 11th and, Mars in the 6th is opposite Saturn in the 12th.

Additionally, each Sect Lord aspects their companions: the Sun as sect Lord of the diurnal planets, in its joy in the 9th squares Saturn in its joy in the 12th and sextiles Jupiter in its joy in the 11th. The aspect connecting them reflects the nature of the planet where Saturn as malefic is in square to the Sun while Jupiter as benefic is in sextile. The Moon as sect Lord of the nocturnal planets, in her joy in the 3rd sextiles Venus in her joy in the 5th and squares Mars in its joy in the 6th. Again, we see the aspect reflecting the nature of the planets with the square to Mars and the sextile to Venus.

Finally, it is also interesting to note that the placement of these planets in their houses of joy has contributed to the meanings of the houses themselves. The following Table shows the planets and their places of joy, the traditional house meanings according to Ibn Ezra and a commentary as to how these are related to the planet.

House	Planet	Ibn Ezra ⁷	Commentary
1 st	Mercury	<i>“...denotes life, the body, speech, the mind, fruitfulness (fertility), the beginning of all actions, and the thoughts on one’s mind.”</i>	Mercury, having its joy in the first house has contributed to the meaning of the 1 st that it is about the direction and motivation of a life. Mercury’s affiliation with the mind and speech also lends itself to the 1 st house meaning of how the person comes across to others and how they communicate and express themselves.
3 rd	Moon	<i>“..denotes brothers and sister, and relatives, and in-laws, and knowledge, and the knowledge of the Torah and the laws, and dreams [interpretation], and modesty, and counsel, and faith, and letters, and rumours and short distance travel.”</i>	The meanings of the 3 rd house can be said to be derived directly from its association with the Moon especially with its references to dreams and their interpretation. The notion of security and familiarity associated with the Moon has been absorbed in the 3 rd house meaning of familiar surroundings and also those who provide security in ones’ life, i.e. siblings. The other association of the 3 rd with truths, knowledge and laws is a direct link to Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom, inventor of writing, patron of scribes and the divine mediator. The notion of travel associated with the 3 rd is an oblique reference to the Moon’s quick movement as she is also known as ‘the traveler’.

⁷ Ibn-Ezra, Avraham The Getting of Wisdom Trans. M Epstein. Ed R Hand. ARHAT, 1998. Chapter 3, pages 85-90.

5 th	Venus	<i>“..denote the son (children), gambling (luck), food, drink, fine clothing, pleasure, gifts, emissaries, and the crops and the treasures of the father.”</i>	Venus the goddess of desire and her association with the 5 th is reflected in the 5 th house meanings of leisure, pleasure, entertainment, gifts and pleasantries. The other meaning of emissaries suggests that the Venusian qualities of cooperation and conciliation are those which good ambassadors or representatives have.
6 th	Mars	<i>“...indicates chronic illness, slaves and maids, small animals, prison, lies and slander.”</i>	As a malefic, Mars’s destructive and martial nature has coloured the meanings of the 6 th with its association of servitude and slavery as well as illness. It is also interesting to note that in mundane astrology, the 6 th is associated with workers and the military.
9 th	Sun	<i>“...denotes travel and a distant road, and everyone who is removed from a high position, and philosophy, and religion and the worship of God, and emissaries, and rumours and dreams, and oaths and divination, and laws and judgement.’</i>	The Sun has given the 9 th is associations with worship and philosophy but also with travel. In most traditional societies, long distance travel was only ever associated with either (foreign) trade or religious pilgrimage.
11 th	Jupiter	<i>“...denotes honor and grace, and good name, and hope, and friends and companions, the Kings’ ministers and treasurers and wardrobe stewards.</i>	Jupiter’s nature as the great benefic and its association with patronage provides some of the important qualities of the 11 th . This is where we see Jupiter’s influence with the meaning of the 11 th as the ‘hopes and dreams’ – the sense of inspiration and broadening of horizons as well as the ‘patron’, ‘teacher’ or guide – the Jupiter figure who helps make things happen.
12 th	Saturn	<i>“...denotes grief, poverty, jealousy, hatred, fear, fraud, vigilance, prison, captivity, all disgrace and affliction..”</i>	Saturn, as the great malefic adds its sorrow and lamentation to the meanings of the 12 th . It is also interesting to consider one of the primary meanings of the 12 th of isolation and captivity as reflecting Saturn’s blindness to the 1 st and its slack of ‘light’

In summary, the Planetary Joys and the Joys of the Planets are not just minor and obscure notions but rather they reflect the most important principles upon which astrology is based. These include the principle of sect, the notion of sight and the crucial issue of light. All of these form a foundation for everything we do in astrology and understanding the rationale will go a long way in making astrology as it is practiced today meaningful and cohesive. It also provides us with provenance as to the reasoning behind what we do.

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Copyright Mari Garcia 2012. Mari Garcia is a consulting astrologer who has been involved with astrology since 1990. She has lectured widely both in Australia and the USA and has published articles in Australia and overseas and writes for several local and national publications. She runs a consulting practice in Adelaide and is co-principal of ASTRO MUNDI, which offers a four year course in astrology, a Traditional Astrology course as well as special interest workshops and Master Classes. Mari can be contacted on 08 8563 9182 or check out the website at www.astromundi.com. Keep abreast of developments at Astro Mundi on Facebook.