

Gemini and the Children of Alternation

THE STORY OF THE DIOSCURI, the twins in classical Greek mythology, contains a number of principles fruitful to spiritual pondering. In the story, Castor, the mortal twin of human parentage, dies during a battle, transfixed to a tree by a spear. Polydeuces (or Pollux), the immortal twin, grief-stricken at the loss of his beloved brother, pleads to his father, the god Zeus, that he will forego his immortality if he cannot share it with Castor. Zeus is faced with a dilemma. He does not wish to challenge a decreed fate or his brother Hades, lord of the underworld, nor lose the joy of such a son. So he allows each twin to spend alternate days in the underworld and the upper air. In further testimony to brotherly love he places their images in the stars as the twins arm in arm. Both share death and immortality. The twins' curious parentage merits meditation, but our attention here is drawn to the significance of their alternation between life and death.

The principle of alternation is among the most fundamental in the cosmos. Bulwer-Lytton in his eloquent spiritual novel *Zanoni*, observes that were there complete equality in the world there would be no change, no development, no improvement. Were divinity to remain in undifferentiated unity there would be no creation, no evolution. So, one of the first acts of creation is a polar differentiation within unity into spirit and matter, heaven and earth, actual and potential, will and imagination, life and form, and, of course, Father and Mother—all essential attributes of the primordial polarity. As a dream bridges the actual and the potential, so



Aurora Consurgens, early 16th century, Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Paris

All polarities emanate from and return to Unity. The duality of Gemini and the other mutable signs fosters a variety of experiences that feed the unitary Spirit. The androgynous alchemical figure represents the bipolar (will and imagination) human Ego which embodies alternately in male and female form.

unity lies between and within duality, even after differentiation. Polar attraction is a consequence of unity within duality and as a result, attention is drawn alternately from pole to pole. From the alternation of attention between poles all new waking consciousness is born; i.e. consciousness is the

child of the union of the divine Father and Mother. All evolutionary accomplishment is the result of cycling alternately between various poles. All creative epigenesis comes from individual application to involution and evolution.

In human activity, this principle manifests in many ways. Through the cycle of many successive rebirths and resurrections we pass back and forth through the realms of matter and spirit, becoming more self-conscious with each alternation. Now in the world of form, then in the world of meaning, the creative consciousness gradually dawns. One facet of alternation, distinction, is beautifully demonstrated in this process.

When the spirit is reborn into the physical plane it usually alternates as male and female. The distinct, separative nature of the external world is perceived through the distinctive masculine or feminine experience wherein we appreciate a special point of view, balanced and compensated by the ever-attractive opposite pole. When something is carried to its polar extreme it is experienced and known in its purest state. This process is realized physically when we tone our bodies via alternate steam baths and ice water dips and more subtly through the gradual alternating experience of summer and winter.

While alternation leads to knowledge and appreciation of distinct states of being and their opposites, it also unfolds the relationship of change and consciousness. Walking through a forest, we become aware of the nuances of light and shape and color, but when we stop and remain still and silent we become aware of the life of the forest. Eventually, through continuous alternations, changes, and adaptations, the still, silent fact of consciousness itself dawns on us as a constant. All waking consciousness is born through alternation and change. Rosicrucian philosophy is more precise and teaches that consciousness is born of the struggle between active desire for change and our preservative instinct for constant, steady life. If consciousness is realized through change, then by shifting attention from the change to the con-

sciousness itself one becomes self-conscious. Realization of our individual free agency as conscious beings within divinity is thus born.

In philosophy and politics another facet of the principle is expressed. There really are few new philosophical questions or positions, or even political stances. There always are nominalists and realists, idealists and materialists and, in politics, the liberals and the conservatives—with the tide of advantage constantly shifting back and forth between them. Despite the constancy, neither philosophy nor politics is monotonous because there is always progress. Confronted with the advan-

tages of opposing ideas of the preceding generation, contemporary philosophers carry the question farther by allowing for previous arguments and meeting them with new sophistications in thought, building on the past. Everywhere in the continuum of time the principle of alternation leads to progress of

one sort or another.

In scientific realms we observe this principle from the leafing of plants to AC electricity, which both improves and enslaves our mode of living. But nowhere is it more classically illustrated than in the function of the human lungs. Through alternate inhalations and exhalations we are revived with fresh oxygen and relieved of stale carbon dioxide. Even our consciousness in the physical body is changed by the alternating oxygenation and carbonation of the blood, as we can see in the extremes of gasping and sighing. It is a miracle worthy of adoration.

Numerous manifestations of alternation are there for our discovery in the process of self-development and service. However, the fact that alternation, like almost every other principle, can be misused should also be examined briefly.

We can become so mesmerized by the alternations that we ignore the awakening to general consciousness or self-consciousness. Here is the phenomenalist who never asks the whys and the wherefores. It is possible to escape into change and become a faddist and ignore the responsibility of



Heck's Pictorial Archive of Art and Architecture
The Dioscuri

self-development, or become indecisively suspended in oscillation and be neutralized in progress. One can psychologically hyperventilate from too much alternation. These misapplications, like the positive uses of the principle, are as multiple as human creativity allows.

In the cosmic mandala, Gemini, the first mutable sign, most basically and intensely expresses the principle of change and alternation. Gemini's location in the horoscope indicates where in life the principle tends to be most active.

Gemini on the cusp of the 9th house may indicate a religious nature best developed or satisfied by viewing divinity in alternately male and female creative aspects, as Father and Mother. On the 2nd house cusp, it may indicate alternatives in investment as a means of loosening up the potentially stiff personality, changing sources of materials or necessitate alternating the materials themselves to remain solvent. Gemini on the 6th might mean that control of breath is essential to health. On the cusp of the 5th, it could mean vacillation in child rearing where steady honesty is needed; or, on the 7th cusp, misapplied, a situation where alternation and variety are socially and morally inappropriate.

Mercury, messenger of the gods, is the apt ruler of this sign. As primary significator of the concrete mind, Mercury in Gemini demonstrates the classic neutrality of seeking out the truth by looking into both sides of the matter. It shows ability to develop a line of thought dialectically and a mind that might appreciate both the truth and its shadow.

Jupiter in Gemini indicates a propensity to ideate from opposing sets of facts but difficulty in transcending them. Venus must have an object for her love and finds alternation discomfoting if not disgraceful, though she will beautify its progressive delineations and smooth over its arguments.

In the astrological mandala, Gemini coincides with the 3rd house, and the principle of alternation finds optimal expression in one signification of that house—communication. We know that letters have to alternate to be successful communication. But we seem to forget that when we engage in conversation and go off on our “meaningful” monologues.

The 3rd house indicates communication, not

APART FROM ME...

Apart from me
There is neither wisdom,
Nor knowledge, nor understanding.
Into every state of knowledge do I enter,
Into false knowledge as well as into true,
So that I am not less the ignorance of the
deluded
Than the wisdom of the sage.
For what thou callest ignorance and folly
Is my pure knowing,
Imperfectly expressed
Through an uncompleted image
Of my divine perfection.

Woe unto them
Who condemn these my works unfinished!
Behold, they who presume to judge
Are themselves incomplete.
Through many a fiery trial of sorrow
Must they pass
Ere the clear beauty of my wisdom
May shine from out their hearts,
Like unto a light
Burning in a lamp of alabaster.

—Paul Foster Case
From *The Book of Tobias*

expression (found in the 5th house). Brief, clear, alternating statements make the most direct and relevant communications as heard in the archetypal radio dispatch. Conversely, the prolix storytelling propensities of the opposite sign, Sagittarius, are out of place in this house (the idealism need not be). At the other extreme, taciturn Capricorn or Saturn in the 3rd house may extinguish communication, often due to insecurity or fear. Cancer communicates well through pictures or feelings; Taurus may get bound up in clichés, and so on. Possible manifestations of the principle of alternation and the art of communication are infinite and it is a challenge to the creative imagination and intuition of the astrologer to find those relevant to the horoscope and needs at hand. □

—J. Crane