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Astrological Encyclopedia

The Planet Mercury

Part I

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To the planet Mercury is symbolically ascribed the faculty of Intellect by which we interpret, identify, classify, analyze, and evaluate the things of Earth. As the principle of Identification it represents "name-giving," "word creating," and the objectification of thoughts in spoken and written words. It is the symbol of conscious communication and perception. It is our awareness when we are unencumbered by our emotional congestion or sub-conscious-feeling disturbances.

The substance we call Mercury is heavy, yet its quality is liquescent; our thoughts, when unorganized or unfocused, are also liquescent, fleeting, quickly merging from one impression to another, "up-and- down, "yes-and-no," "now-hot-now-cold." However, when our thought-patterns are organized we have the faculty of deciding definitely and embodying them in some sort of concrete definite out-picturing in single words or in their extensions into sentences. This out-picturing is what we call "language"—the universal faculty of embodiment of thought. The liquescence of Mercury is seen in the many ways by which a specific thing can be identified; its definiteness is seen in the "solidity" with which it is identified in a specific word or sentence.

Mercury identifies the abstract as well as the concrete. It is through Mercury that we understand the concrete, but it is through other planetary faculties that we understand the abstract. Mercury, however, is the basic root of our understanding-unfoldments, from the most literal of concreteness to the most intangible of abstractness. Let us analyze the planetary symbol: a cross (matter, manifestation, structure, concreteness, incarnation) surmounted by a circle (perfection, completeness) which in turn is surmounted by an upturned semi-circle (instrumentation, receptivity of instruction or inspiration). Synthesizing these symbolic factors, we see that by the exercise of the Mercury-faculty we learn about life principles through their expression in the chemical region of the universe. This symbol might be called "Venus with the horns of Wisdom," and Mercury's air-dignity, Gemini, is the ninth-house sign (Wisdom octave) of Venus' Libra. We are told that the Lords of Venus and Mercury were the Masters who instructed infant Humanity in the principles of language, the crafts, arts, and sciences by which Humanity learned to function with ever-increasing efficiency in the material world. In short, Mercury is the link (messenger) between the gods (principles) and mankind. It is through Mercury that we learn, first, the objective nature and quality of things, and then the awareness of principles opens our consciousness to the subjective reality; on both octaves we are learning but on the first we integrate through identification; on the second we know through experience which yields Understanding.

Since the symbol of Venus is included in the symbol of Mercury it may be surmised that all of mankind's artistic expressions were founded through the desire to communicate. The up-turned semi-circle which Mercury has in common with Neptune represents a microcosmic form of the instrumentation which is one of Neptune's

principal meanings. Primitively, man draws a little picture of something to communicate his thoughts about it to another person. From that level he evolves a system of symbols to communicate his "thought-pictures"—ideographs, letters and their combination into words, thence to sentences. The expression that mankind gives of his concepts, realizations, dreams, and aspirations—distilled from evolutionary experience—-is what we call the **Fine Arts**; they are all, regardless of materials or techniques, the Mercury-faculty extended by Venus-Neptune as symbolic communications from the resources of consciousness. Not everyone understands a picture, a piece of music, a poem, or a sculpture; those who do are sympathetically at-tuned to the consciousness of the artist. However, everyone who possesses a normal degree of mentation can understand the relatively "literal symbolism" of language and express himself—at least in speech—by it. To learn speech is something we have all done in every incarnation since the beginning; we do it—and learn it—instinctively. This instinct is symbolized by the mental realm of the Moon-vibration—that which we know or learn through subconscious-memory faculty. Thus speech is seen to be as instinctively natural as walking or sleeping. Reading and writing, however, are extensions of Moon through Mercury. The conscious mind must be trained to understand the symbol-technique represented by the particular language to which one is born. You learned English in your childhood, but you may not have known English in any previous incarnation. You learned to speak in English by instinctive imitation of those around you as a recapitulation of a faculty you have exercised in every incarnation; but it may be that only within the scope of the relatively recent past that you acquired a fluency with the written word and it may be that English, your birth-language, is the only one that you now have any ability to read or write. An outstanding illustration of the

"adulthood" of Mercury is seen in the natural talent of learning to speak, read, and write in other languages. The possession of this talent is evidence that the person has exercised his Mercury-potentials for many incarnations; his mind has acquired a receptivity by which he can comprehend a variety of symbol-techniques; comprehension of vocabulary, grammar, etc., have become a specialized faculty that is integrated in consciousness. The "mercurialness" of Mercury is nowhere better illustrated than in the "magic" that takes place in a person's consciousness toward other people when he learns to communicate in *their language*—**or** when they communicate with him in his. The "psychological space" that tends to exist between people who are foreigners to each other is thereby, to a degree, disintegrated and a sense of mutual "togetherness" takes its place. From "Mercury as words" we graduate to "numbers," then to abstract symbols. In these three stages, the conscious mind is exercised on three specific levels, the first two being the more concrete and direct channels for learning. It is true that each planet has its special effect on the mental faculties, but, in addition to Mercury, three others specifically refer to "mental octaves." These are Moon, Neptune, and Jupiter. The Moon, ruler of Cancer, is the "instinctive" mind; by this octave we think by "inherited patterns," we "think as the tribe thinks," we think through feeling, fear, desire, prejudice and instinctive security-patterns. Mercury is our "individual choice and selection," "thought free of congestions of feeling or subconscious negatives." Neptune is the psychic mind, the telepathic mind and that part of mentation by which we become instruments. Jupiter is the mind of morality," it is "thought raised to the level of concept," decision that is based not just on expediency but on understanding of principle. Through Mercury we learn by study and observation; through Jupiter we learn from experience from which we distill improvement and growth. All four of these planetary symbols

involve the semi-circle which is the symbol of the Moon; Jupiter is "the Moon surmounting the cross of incarnation;" Mercury and Neptune have the semi-circle up-turned but Neptune's symbol does not use the cross—it is the pure symbol of "chalice," "perfect intake," "receptivity that is founded on faith" and it is the symbol of the upper-octave faculty which we call instrumentation.

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We ascribe to Mercury the rulership of two mutable signs: Gemini and Virgo, Air and Earth respectively. As ruler of Gemini, Mercury is exalted (matured) in Virgo because knowledge is matured in being put to use; knowledge, as such, remains in its "childhood" if it is not projected or expressed for the ongoing of incarnation. Only through knowledge can service be fulfilled and material affairs be improved. Anything that is "rightly known" can be "rightly used;" ignorance is the path to "wrong use" and corruption of service.

Mercury is the most plastic of all planetary vibrations. By this is meant that "he" is most easily affected by—or qualified by—the sign which he is in. Both of the signs of his dignity are mutable signs; one (Gemini) is female-masculine, the other (Virgo) is male- feminine. Mercury, as intellect, is un-emotional or neuter as far as gender is concerned. By sign-rulership he is the root of fraternal relationship patterns and the androgyny of his nature is clearly revealed in the nature of Uranus, ruler of Gemini's ninth-house sign, which is the symbol of creative bi- polarity. The intellect is also a bi-polar faculty since it is one which both sexes must exercise in every incarnation. It, as far as "generic quality" is concerned, is neither masculine nor feminine, but it is not peculiar to either one or the other. One of the evidences of polarity-fusion is the development and exercise of intellect by human beings

incarnated as females; just as cultivation of the sympathies represents a "rounding-out" of the nature of males. The mind must be trained to coordinate the conditions of, and give expression to, the powers of emotion, feeling and desire on all evolutionary octaves.

As the faculty of reason, Mercury represents the root- unconsciousness by which the Law of Cause and Effect is learned. The conscious mind observes the material world, hence an awareness of the out- picturing of inner causes is evolved. In mythology, the wing-footed Mercury was the messenger of the gods to mankind. "The gods" is simply a symbolic way of referring to life principles. When mankind emerges from a purely feeling- reaction toward life and experience he clears the way to unfolding his awareness of the material world and the principles which it expresses and by which it functions. Man learns about an action when he perceives its effect; from that, he learns about his own consciousness as the source of all his actions and expressions. The unreasonable person—if one could be entirely so—is so because he refuses to open his consciousness to the voice of Mercury. He does not study himself in relationship to the effects which he has caused. He does not study things and other people as manifestations of law, therefore he does not integrate himself in form. He remains in an unfocused swirling of feeling- reaction; no control, no pattern, no directive. Planetary squares to Mercury represent the person's potential for being un- reason- able. Bear this in mind when you analyze a chart—it is very important. Mercury is the way by which we learn how to disintegrate congestions and fulfill ideals.

A psychological point that may be of interest: when Mercury's Virgo is on the Ascendant, his other dignity is (usually) on the Mid- heaven. The introversion that is so often ascribed to Virgo-

Ascendant is here pictured: Self-development is the focus of ambition fulfillment. Personality complexities of Virgo-Ascendant and Pisces-Ascendant (Virgo and Pisces are the last of the signs of the lower and upper semi-circles) are represented by the polarity of Capricorn-Cancer synchronizing with the fifth and eleventh houses—the houses of creative love. Whenever Capricorn-Cancer are focused in the fifth house, we see the love potential mixed up with parentage-consciousness and these persons are most likely to have emotional complexes of a karmic nature in relationships with their parents.

Mercury, variable and impressionable, is at the mercy of "too much action," "too much fixity" and "too much adjustability." Since this planet rules the two basic mutable signs, its potential for integration is largely qualified by the relative dynamic-ness or static-ness of the chart, as a whole. Gemini and Virgo each initiate a zodiacal quadrant, therefore they initiate a quadrant of houses totaling together an entire semi-circle of houses or one complete diameter of the wheel. Therefore any congested or frictional aspect to Mercury has the direct effect of impeding the person's ability to learn from the experiences represented by those two quadrants—wherever they are placed in the chart. The particular placement of Mercury, as "focalizer" of the Gemini-Virgo vibrations, shows the department of experience that provides exercise of the mental faculties toward the "rehabilitation" of disharmonies and coordination of mind with feeling. The sign in which Mercury is placed identifies this particular "generic coloring"—dynamic/expressive or absorptive/reflective. A most important factor in the analysis of Mercury patterns is found in the planet which rules Mercury's sign placement. This planet is Mercury's dispositor and has much to say about the way that the person develops—or fails to develop—his "reason-able" faculty.

"Mind against emotion" is pictured by an uncongested Mercury dispoited by a congested planet. The congestions involving the dispoitor represent—of course—problems which are ignited by emotional reactions of a negative kind—toward other people, events or whatnot. The clarity of Mercury, uncongested, makes it relatively easy for the person to learn from his experience and to exercise reason-able control of his emotions and feeling-reactions. You can be sure of one thing if Mercury and its dispoitor are uncongested: no matter what other difficulties may be pictured in the chart, the person has a natural ability and urge to be practical about learning how to realize his ideals and fulfill his deepest urges, regardless of what the ideals are or what he, in consciousness, terms "fulfillment" or "success." His ideal may be financial abundance, it may be popularity and admiration, it may be professional fulfillment of a talent, it may be power over other people; it may be one of a hundred other things, but the clarity of uncongested Mercury—both by aspect and vibration—makes it possible for him to see his way clearly toward realizing his dream.

A congested Mercury with an uncongested dispoitor promises disintegration of a mental congestion if the principle of the dispoitor is exercised in relationship to the Mercury problems. The "virtues" of the planetary dispoitor are the "alchemical agencies" by which that particular generic quality of the Mercury may be "purified" and the mental qualities harmonized and organized. Any planetary aspect to Mercury is better than no aspect at all, because every aspect is a "channeling" for the training of the Mercury faculties. Mercury, cardinal, fixed, or mutable must be synthesized with the cross that is most strongly emphasized in the chart, because, for example, a cardinal or mutable Mercury may serve as a very effective counteractive to many planets in fixed signs—and so forth. Cardinal Mercury emphasizes expression,

fixed Mercury emphasizes retention, and mutable Mercury emphasizes adjustability.

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The Planet Mercury

Part II

For the pursuance of this material we will use a copy of the Great Mandala—a twelve-housed wheel with the zodiacal signs in sequence starting with Aries as the Ascendant; place the planetary symbols in the signs and houses of their dignity. Emphasize the third and sixth cusps because they pertain to Mercury's dignity in Gemini and Virgo.

The androgynous (bi-polar) nature of Mercury is seen in his attributes of "in-take-ness" (learning) and "out-put-ness" (expression of thought). To learn everything and express nothing is to use only half of the Mercury faculty; conversely people who are mentally unorganized display only "half of Mercury" when they express continually without concentration, reflection, or mental intake. As expression, Mercury cannot put out anything that is valid if the intake is not the result of a concentration and clarification of mental powers. We express ourselves to the world according to our mental picture of the world; viewpoints that are based primarily on congestions of feeling and desire do not—and cannot—"see" the world with clarity or give expression of thought with truth or judgment.

A square or opposition aspect from a planet to Mercury may act as a stimulus to expression, but the expression itself will tend to outpicture a negative in consciousness. This is what is meant by congestions to Mercury. States of subconscious feeling based on ignorance, disharmony, and so forth divert the Mercury faculties

from true perception; consequently what is expressed through Mercury will be a "false messenger" to other people. With reference to the Great Mandala, let us see how Mercury's potentials can be thwarted and corrupted by misinterpretation of other planetary principles. Misinterpretation simply means false knowing—therefore false understanding.

The "criminality" that is traditionally ascribed to Mars-square-Mercury is due to a mental coloring of negative egotism. "Me first" is the keyword of this combination. The Great Mandala tells us that "*I-am*" (the awareness of individualized Being) is the keyword of Mars' rulership of Aries. The congesting mixture of the Aries vibration with Mercury, as ruler of Gemini, is a picture of "I think in terms of what is expedient for me— first and last." A criminal is such because he is unaware of, and has no respect for, the "*I-am*" of the other fellow. So—his Mercury functions accordingly; he figures the angles, "works the tricks," and "plays the game" according to his limited understanding of "*I am* and I Want." This negative preoccupation with "*I am*" without consideration of "You Are" does create congestions in thought because we are here to learn how to use the resources of the first three signs for evolutionary expression. The anti-social criminal mind is not very aware of the principle of the sixth sign, Virgo, the Earth- dignity of Mercury, because Virgo is the application of mental powers toward the fulfillment of service-patterns. In turn, service (Virgo) emanates from the heart-center of Leo, and Leo is the first trine (Love-aspect) of the fire- trine initiated by Mars' Aries. The harmonious aspects of Mars-Mercury picture a practical integration in thought. The person can project his thoughts into form and give them objectivity. This is one of the best patterns of picturing the ability to "get things done" because thought is integrated with action and physical expression generally. This pattern emphasizes

the masculine areas of consciousness because it adds the dynamic coloring to the thought-processes.

Venus and Mercury can make only the conjunction, semi-sextile, and sextile aspects to each other. The Venusian vibration, by the sextile, acts as a refining alchemicalization for any congestion of Mercury by other planets. Since Mercury's Gemini and Venus' Libra are trine to each other this planetary aspect points unquestionably to a vibratory resource by which relationship-disharmonies may be adjusted into constructive exchange and mutual good. The sextile from Venus indicates that artistic expression is also an alchemicalization for the harmonizing of mental powers. Venus-Mercury, by conjunction or sextile, adds a touch of refinement to the entire personality which can increase with spiritual maturity. Since Mercury's Virgo is Libra's twelfth house-sign, this aspect between the two planets indicates the improvement of relationship-experiences when service is rendered and the consciousness of fraternity is one of the most significant "adjusters" to all kinds of relationship-congestion or difficulty. This aspect clearly indicates that when the person seeks to learn (Gemini) from relationship he unfolds a sure-fire potential for harmonizing relationship, through the alchemicalization of mutuality. Venus conjunct Mercury squared by a third planet is like a birdling in a nest of thorns. The delicacy and refinement of the conjunction is—to a degree—congested in expression by the third planet; that planet may represent an environment factor or a relationship-factor, but the aspect itself indicates that the person must refine his consciousness toward that situation or relationship and redeem it by expression through Venus. The principle represented by the "squaring planet" must be unfolded into conscious levels by the alchemy of exercising Mercury-Venus.

Moon square Mercury most certainly activates the mental faculties but the great need shown is concentration. This is the aspect of "scatterbrained-ness." Reference to the Great Mandala is very illuminating: Gemini is Cancer's twelfth house-sign, therefore knowledge and mental organization is the "redemption" of the "instinctive feelings" of Cancer. A chart having this aspect tells us that the Principle of Maternity is one of the important "studies" for the person in this incarnation; the disorganized quality of Mercury in this pattern is due to a weakness in the psychological base of subconscious feeling, and the need is shown to learn the lesson of disciplining the mind against the onslaughts of negatives in subconscious feeling. The mother of this person may have a very pronounced effect on the mind and—since the Moon is the arch-symbol of basic feminine polarity—the aspect pictures a form of negative thinking and expression on the part of the person in a previous female incarnation. So—now, whether male or female, with this aspect the native is susceptible to the mental influences of either the actual mother or to persons who take a mother's place in the life. The Moon is also the "public mind"—the collective instinctive mind of masses of people who are magnetized together through the common denominators of nationality, religion, emotional vibration or mutual activity. The person with Moon square Mercury who seeks to express in public ways must organize his thoughts to be effective. The "mass-mentality" is affected—for good or ill—only by concentration of power. To fulfill such a work-pattern the discipline required for planning, organizing, etc., is the means by which the person is induced to correct the disintegration or "scatteredness" of the square aspect. Mercury's Virgo is third house-sign from Cancer; since Virgo is Earth—and therefore a more concrete expression of Mercury's potentials—the experience-chapter represented by the placement of Virgo in the natal chart may be the most objective channeling for correcting the Mercury

square. If Gemini is knowledge, then Virgo is knowledge put to work in practical ways. The instincts represented by the Moon must be trimmed down and focused if knowledge is to be put to practical use.

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The Great Mandala shows Capricorn at the apex of the wheel; its ruler, Saturn, is the Guardian of that gate; he says: "Fulfill your responsibilities to yourself and to others or you cannot pass through into Aquarius and Pisces." In a chart showing Saturn square or opposition to Mercury we see a picture of "organize your mind in this incarnation—or else!" This aspect is a peculiar one because it illustrates, perhaps more clearly than any other, the inherent goodness in a "bad" aspect. Capricorn is Gemini's eighth house-sign; regeneration is through discipline and order. The frustration which seems to be pictured by this aspect is evidently focused in those conditions of the house carrying Gemini, because Gemini is Mercury's mutable sign and, hence, the one that most needs organization. This aspect, in a chart that is primarily cardinal or mutable by planetary placement, is a focus of organization; it "holds back" the Mercury conditions only because the Mercury conditions need to be brought into greater order and clearer system. The cardinal person who just "expresses without plan" or the mutable person who "just floats" needs to be focused on points of needed fulfillment. The fixed person who has Saturn square Mercury can, if he will, use his Mercury to learn about the results of unadaptability. He has, in the past, "buried deep" in set patterns of thought and reaction; consequently when he is timed for "new things" he tends to resist and resent the changing of his conditions. This person can be—usually is—highly concentrated with, perhaps, a wonderful focus of mentality, but he tends to think about everything, or learn anything, from a very set

approach. He will, in time, sicken inside himself at the crystallization of his conditions and affairs and seek to expand through change. Saturn square Mercury, in a fixed chart, can picture mental or intellectual fear, and to experience the desire to know more will prove an effective release for the mental congestions and from that level to an improvement of psychological conditions. Any chart with Saturn square Mercury will have to be synthesized and analyzed carefully to determine if the purpose of the aspect is to organize tendencies that incline to be scattered or to observe the results of over-crystallization. Life is a sequence of emanations: the best of the past (Saturn) made its contribution to the best of the present. The person with Saturn square Mercury may tend to resist and resent the past (the old, crystallized, and out-dated) as no longer practical or needed. However, if he uses his Mercury he will study the old to determine its constructive value to the present. This decrystallizes the feeling of frustration and results in turning the combined powers of Saturn and Mercury to good account.

Further, Saturn rules the cardinal sign which initiates the Earth trine—the third octave of which is Mercury's Virgo. The spiritual lesson is this: since "third octave" means "Wisdom," perfect fulfillment on any level adds to the resource of wisdom—since wisdom is distilled from experience. Book-knowledge (Gemini) is the first step in understanding, but all claims to understanding are put to concrete testings in the processes of living. Therefore, in valid service-contributions we prove whether or not we know whereof we speak. So, with Saturn square Mercury, knowledge must be demonstrated in the kind of living that is true service; this is the evidence of the wisdom-octave of Mercury's vibration.

Uranus, ruler of one fixed sign and exalted in another, adds a touch of what might be called "implacability" when square to

Mercury. Uranus "inspires" Mercury with the genius of inventiveness because Uranus is the symbol of individuality that expresses creatively. But this aspect can mean "lock-jaw" for Mercury because the thought-processes are filtered through an intense resource of emotionality. Immovable opinionatedness is pictured by this aspect—it is the picture of the fanatic mind. A genius may need this deep certainty in order to fulfill his great purposes; he is focused on a great fulfillment and he cannot afford, in many cases, to be too responsive to, or influenced by, the thoughts of others. He must live and fulfill through his individuality however unorthodox or eccentric he may appear. He can be a tyrant or despot, master criminal or inspired scientist, but his mind is revolutionary in its effect; his mental expressions are charged with power—for good or for ill. However, geniuses are few and far between; the average person with this aspect may be evolving a genius-potential, but mental adaptability is one of the things needed in evolutionary processes—we have to be free inside to learn more and more as we climb the ladder. A mediocre person with Uranus square Mercury may feel, "I know it all—don't tell me anything." Life, by activating the Uranus, may elasticize him in radical ways by bringing about changes in such an abrupt fashion that the person's world either expands with life or it disintegrates through resistance to needed changes. Gemini is the root of fraternal consciousness; Uranus' Aquarius is its spiritualized octave; when the two rulers are square we have a possible portrait of a person whose experience in this incarnation is tuning him for the first time to the concept of universal brotherhood and this is an octave of consciousness that is way over the mind and heart of the average person. So, "catching a first glimpse," the person may talk fraternity beyond his ability to realize it and live it—except in a sort of "pretend-way." He may—and usually does—proselytize a great deal on this subject and bash his head against the wall of

rock-like conservatism. This aspect is the symbol—par excellence—of the "parlor pink;" it is also the symbol—let's face it—of a person who is contacting astrological or psychological thought for the first time. The Uranus vibration interjects newness of mental perspectives. We may be catapulted into a Uranus vibration during the course of one incarnation but we do not adjust to that vibration except in several incarnations. Uranus square Mercury simply means that in this incarnation the mental powers and the intellectual capacities are encountering a newness that was never known before. Uranus trine Mercury is an established mental adjustment to an impersonal pattern; individuality is here timed for "flowering" and the person expresses naturally in this transcendent vibration that refers to "that which is progressive." This person can learn from the all-over picture—he can think in terms of the race, not the limited conditions of the local group. This aspect, on whatever evolutionary level, is outlet for a potential of genius because, with the trine, Mercury is organized for expression.

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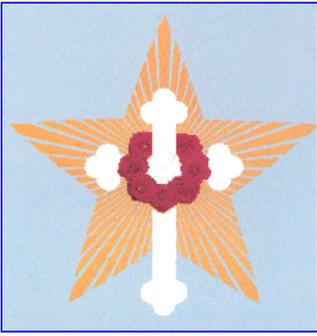
In conclusion, connect the cusps of the third, sixth, ninth, and twelfth houses of the Great Mandala by straight lines; the result is the mutable square, the congestions of Mercury through the defects of Jupiter and Neptune, and the negative potentials of Jupiter and Neptune created by the basis of unorganized Mercury. If Mercury is "talk, tell, and communicate," Jupiter is "teach" and Neptune is "inspire." We give information through Mercury but we radiate wisdom—distilled from our experiences—through Jupiter to ignite the latent Wisdom of our "younger brothers and sisters." Through Neptune we "ignite the souls of people" and this ignition can only be radiated from a consciousness that is centered on true perception; this perception, in turn, is evolved from the

constructive exercises of Mercury. The upper octaves of Mercury, when congested, represent potentials for "perversion of truth;" when they congest Mercury then the faculty of intellectual organization is "tampered with" through subtle false concepts that have been built in past incarnations. All conditions represented in a chart by congested Jupiter and Neptune represent a need to gain truthful information from facts that pertain to those conditions and experiences—that means use Mercury objectively, unemotionally, and concisely. Facts, not beliefs; statements, not implications; proofs that are realizable not just blindly and credulously accepted through mental laziness are the Mercury correctives for Jupiter and Neptune congestions. The "base" of the mutable cross is formed by two Mercury signs to give reliable foundation to the truthful realizations of Jupiter and Neptune; they, in turn, are to provide scope on more and more abstracted octaves for the exercise of the Mercury faculties. We understand a literal picture, then a word, then a number, then a symbol, then a concept, then a principle, and then an ideal. To understand the nature of ideals (Neptune) is the flowering of the Mercury-potentials, because in ideals is found the esoteric reality of all manifested life.

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