

CAUSES, TIMING, DURATION, AND TYPES OF STRESS

BENEFICS AND MALEFICS

There are many rules in astrology. We can't cover them all in one lesson. However, I would like to address the concept of benefic and malefic in a somewhat new light. Generally speaking, Venus and Jupiter were considered to be the lesser and greater benefics; and Mars and Saturn were regarded the lesser and greater malefics. As the outer planets were discovered and attempts were made to interpret them, they were usually added to the malefic category – probably because people had not yet learned how to respond to them.

As a medical astrologer, I find limited value in the traditional assessments. Briefly, Venus and Jupiter are medically malefic if they encourage permissiveness, indolence, and indulgence. Eventually, they show around the waist! Playing the Devil's advocate for a moment, Mars energies are valuable if they enhance self confidence, courage, and metabolic functioning. Likewise, Saturn is useful if boundaries and perseverance are needed. Thus, a cancer patient who is under Jupiter influences may, all other things equal, witness an increase in the tumor size whereas a Saturn transit may indicate that there is time and discipline for containment or even shrinkage of the same tumor. With cancer as well as many other medical conditions, there are ample instances in which the planets have to be considered in relationship to the actual disease.

Warning! Just because Jupiter may incline towards growth does not mean that there are not creative ways of responding to Jupiter which take

the pressure off the illness. Travel, religious study, expansion of interests and viewpoints may all utilize the energies adequately enough to mitigate all risk to the disease process.

The problem, and these are hints, is that a patient who experiences Jupiter as a malefic probably lacks a positive relationship to Jupiter. The person may feel unlucky, pessimistic, limited in ability and prospects for the future, and disinclined to explore new avenues. The question then becomes, "Why?"

This is the astrologer's question. Why are some people expansive and others constricted? How do we develop our particular attitudes towards each of the areas symbolized by each of the planets? (This will be covered in considerable depth in future lessons.)

LUNAR DISPOSITOR²

For me, the lunar dispositor is at least as important as the ruler of the chart (the Lord of the Ascendant). Of course, the ruler of a sign and the sign have much in common, but we can often tell something more about a person's relationship to the lunar energies by looking both at the sign of the Moon and the aspects to the dispositor of the Moon. Moreover, we can look at the house positions of both to see how the energies and interests are divided.

² A dispositor is the planet ruling the sign in which a luminary or planet is found. For example, if the Moon is in Libra, Venus is the dispositor of the Moon since Venus rules Libra.

I will use the example from one of the students in this course. The Moon is in Capricorn in the fifth house of self expression, children, and creativity. It is not aspected to Saturn which is also in Capricorn, but in the sixth house closely conjunct Jupiter. This modifies the Capricornian energies substantially in favor of more expansiveness, open mindedness, and progressiveness. The Moon is still in Capricorn and still influenced by Saturn, but Saturn is allied with Jupiter. Both are quintile Neptune which is sextile the Moon and, in general, beautifully aspected (not perfectly). To me, the combination suggests creative use of dedication and much seriousness about work.

The culprit is Mars, the major afflictor of the Moon. Moreover, this is really important because though both Mars and Jupiter are different in temperament to Saturn, Mars is seen as the danger, not Jupiter.

To be really clear: Saturn is conservative and restrained whereas Jupiter is expansive; but in this horoscope, they are allies. Certainly, Saturn is the stronger planet in the conjunction because they are in Capricorn. Jupiter is hence a lesser force in driving the psyche, but the two planets cannot function without reference to each other.

On the other hand, Mars is extremely ill placed in a water sign, in fall in Cancer. Mars is expressive, active, and most of all spontaneous by temperament – absolutely the antithesis of cautious Capricorn. The judgment is therefore that these two planets do not know how to work together, that they have a long emotional history with each other, and that reconciling their differences will be a lifelong challenge, though not probably impossible because Mars gets some help from the Sun, the ruler of the chart.

When we come to the lessons on the Moon, I will go into this in much more detail; for now, I simply want to familiarize you with the concept that stress is increased when the planets themselves (and their dispositors) are temperamentally unsuited to each other.

Moreover, in each such instance – and most people have such dilemmas in their charts – one of the planets is favored over the other. It is almost always the planet that is most congenial to the Moon and its sign and dispositor.

Then, as indicated, this same theory holds forth in the case of conjunctions. One of the planets is invariably better suited to the sign of the conjunction than the other(s). This will, all other things equal, and they seldom are, usually be the stronger planet, as in the case of Saturn in the example just cited.

When all other things are not equal, judgment must be made. For example, what if the Jupiter/Saturn conjunction had been in Sagittarius? In my opinion, this would have had a dampening effect on Jupiter since Saturn would still have been more supported by the psyche.

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