

SCORPIO SOLAR FESTIVAL 2014

6 NOV 2014

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Happy Halloween Everyone!

I hope you all have your most outrageous costumes ready for the Halloween festivities tonight, although for Australian and New Zealand readers the night is already a done deal. Even if you don't put much stock in Halloween, it is a day that a great many children, especially in the US, look forward to. At least, they did in my day, and it was a day when we let ourselves be a little outrageous and then gorged ourselves later on the sweeter things of life that we had collected during the night's ramblings through the neighborhoods. In the days that followed, though, we paid for all that sugar. When Scorpio rolls around every year I am always reminded of Halloween and those more carefree earlier years of life. Now that I have been around the world a little and have been able to experience other traditions I can appreciate the ways in which people view death, honor the dead and even use macabre imagery as a means of out-picturing their fears, their darker impulses in a more positive light, of laughing at death in a way, and of trying to make sense of a world that is still often macabre in some sectors—war-torn areas, for instance. Some great art has been born out of war, for example, as a reminder of what can happen when we let our baser impulses take over and run away with our better sensibilities. Scorpio deals with these sorts of things, among many others, and we will take a look at some of that in a little bit.

I was recently sent a link by a good friend of mine and was asked what I thought about it. It was a link to a piece about the 14th Dalai Lama¹, perhaps our last one, and about some things he has been saying. I say 'our' in the sense that he is a world messenger of peace among other things, and his message goes beyond any religious or spiritual boundaries. Basically, in the article he is saying that he will not return as the political leader of Tibet, essentially ending the lineage of Dalai Lamas, for the Dalai Lama is a political post, aside from the spiritual side of Tibetan Buddhism. There has been a lot of speculation about what that might mean. Some people have taken his statement to mean that he will not return at all, although I cannot really see that. The Tibetan people and the world at large still need his presence and his message, but that is my own speculation, and there are many who may well disagree with me on that point. Tibet as a nation no longer exists except in exile, and the Tibet we once knew at the time of the Dalai Lama's birth is now little more than a museum in some ways. There are a few of the great old monasteries still functioning, but they are shadows of what they once were except for a few isolated pockets. I know. I have seen it. Still, Tibetan Buddhism lives on and is now firmly ensconced in India and much of the Western world, there to be safeguarded, at least in India, which is away from Western influence on the whole.

So, why talk of the Dalai Lama right after an introductory paragraph about Halloween? It concerns one of the rulers of Scorpio—Pluto—which is directly implicated in the death of old movements that are no longer useful, of societies that no longer fulfill the needs of their people, of educational systems that no longer work, and essentially of any social system of beliefs or on the ground that holds back the progress of a people. Pluto has been working very potently for us since its discovery in 1930 and before, and the results of its actions have seen a world that has been shaken to its foundations, yet has risen above the turmoil and rebuilt itself upon a sounder foundation than what we once had—despotic monarchies, feudalism, slavery and a host of other social ills. Now, before some readers start to get the idea that I am equating all this with the office of the Dalai Lama, and with Tibetan Buddhism, let's see what the preceding thoughts might hold for us.

In my researches I have focused quite a lot on all the dwarf planets in the past months and I have come upon some rather interesting facts about Pluto (and yes, it is a dwarf planet). We think we know a thing or two about that little world via its mythology and its actions in aspect to the other planets, and we actually have learned quite a lot about it. However, there are a few things that have

probably escaped our notice about Pluto, factors which bring up some rather valuable information if we care to pursue it, and this is related to the astronomy of Pluto. I will not outline too much here, partly because we do not have the space to do so and partly because there are some aspects of it that I would rather investigate further until I have had more of an opportunity to mull over what it all means. To start with, Pluto does not orbit entirely within the constellations of the zodiac, the ones after which the signs were named. In fact, it spends about 1/3 of its time out away from the ecliptic in other constellations—Cetus, Orion, Coma Berenices, Boötes, Eridanus, both halves of Serpens and Ophiuchus, to be exact. Two of these—Cetus and Ophiuchus—have been suggested as extra signs for the zodiac, an idea to which I do not ascribe. The reasons these two constellations are mentioned as candidates for the zodiac is because all of the main planets (Mercury outward to Neptune) eventually pass through them, and Ophiuchus in particular crosses the ecliptic. Ophiuchus being suggested as a sign was originally put forward by an astronomer, but the idea essentially fell flat among astrologers and rightly so, I would say.

Whereas the main planets essentially only eventually touch one small corner of Cetus, which is a very large constellation, Pluto has spent close to fifty-six years there every time it has passed through in recent millennia. It will enter Cetus again in 2060 and remain there for the remainder of the century. Cetus was the sea monster in Greek mythology (not the whale, as people now know the constellation), and during the time Pluto was last in Cetus the issue of slavery was fully addressed and finally done away with in the US—a truly monstrous episode in US history, one might say. While it is in Cetus Pluto traverses three zodiacal signs—parts of Pisces and Taurus and all of Aries—a total of around 53° of zodiacal longitude. It does so as it ascends from the southern celestial latitudes. And, when it descends from the north, Pluto also crosses an equivalent part of some of the other non-zodiacal constellations previously listed—Serpens and Ophiuchus. In fact, Pluto passes right by the head and tail of the serpent and through the knees of Ophiuchus. And this latter point brings us to the point I have found most interesting, which is tied in with the following quote:

Esculapius [Asclepius], Serapis, *Pluto*, Knoum and Kneph, are all deities with the attributes of the serpent...“They are all *healers*, givers of health, spiritual and physical, and of *enlightenment*.”²

Asclepius and Ophiuchus are one and the same. Without going too much into the mythology, Ophiuchus was the serpent bearer in Greek mythology. He was known as Asclepius, the son of Apollo and Coronis, and he was the god of medicine. It was said that Asclepius knew how to bring the dead back to life—an action opposite to that of Pluto. He had been raised and trained from infancy after the death of his mother (at the hands of his father due to a ‘crime of passion’) by Chiron, the wise centaur, who was also skilled in the healing arts. So, Ophiuchus and Chiron are related, in a way. Asclepius knew how to raise the dead from his observations of a snake, who had placed a herb on the body of another snake that Asclepius had killed, thus resurrecting the dead snake. Hence, Asclepius is depicted in the heavens holding a snake which is entwined around his body, the head of the serpent looking back toward him. Apparently, Asclepius became so skilled at healing and raising the dead that Pluto, god of the underworld, became fearful that the flow of souls to the underworld would cease, so he implored Zeus to do away with Asclepius, which Zeus agreed to do. He killed Asclepius with a bolt of lightning, but eventually placed his image in the heavens as an homage to his skill as a healer. So, we have a sort of triumvirate here of Pluto, Ophiuchus and the Serpent. We have the life in form and able physician to the physical need (Asclepius/Ophiuchus), the once dead and then resurrected serpent (Serpens) representing the soul entombed in the material world and then resurrected, looking back upon its form, and Pluto, who governs the destruction of the form, and yet restores the spiritual life, granting wisdom.

In a way, and especially astronomically, Pluto is actually more related to Serpens/Ophiuchus than it is to Scorpio, yet Scorpio and Ophiuchus are incorporated into the same entity—the sign Scorpio.

How can this be? When we look at the pictures of the constellations we notice something peculiar about the relationship between Ophiuchus and Scorpius, one that actually holds much in the way of spiritual significance to us: Ophiuchus stands on the Scorpion's back. In other words, with Pluto we go beyond the earthly, stinging and struggles associated with the worldly life of Scorpio—the manifestations arising from the actions of Mars/Pluto combined—and into the realms of healing, transformation, resurrection and the wisdom derived from our struggles, as represented by Pluto's transits through Serpens/Ophiuchus.

To put this in perspective pictorially, the ecliptic only passes through just over 6° zodiacal longitude of the constellation of Scorpius, and about 15° of Ophiuchus. Pluto itself only passes through about 3° of zodiacal longitude of the constellation of Scorpius (3° – 6° of the sign Sagittarius, currently, zodiacal longitude). It last entered Scorpius, the constellation, in 1997 and stayed there for only a year. So, it's a puzzle: Why would Pluto be said to rule a sign when it only passes a few degrees through the constellation after which that sign is named? If we see Pluto as being associated with healing and the serpent rather than darkness and trials, then our answer is readily available. Scorpio is the sign associated with death, transformation and emergence out of the twelve signs we currently use—that is, in its higher essence. It is the death of all that hinders us on our spiritual path, whatever that may be. The end result of all the trials and tribulations we see associated with Scorpio is the triumphant warrior, as represented by Mars as the esoteric ruler of the sign: "Warrior I am, and from the battle I emerge triumphant." Mars is the ancient god of warriors, after all. However, even though Mars represents the warrior, Pluto is the herald of war itself—the burning grounds of human life. Ask most anyone who has been through a war and they will tell you: "War is hell", and Pluto is the planet we currently associate with that sort of thing—and probably wrongly so, but that is another story.

However, to illustrate the point that Pluto heralds wars, Pluto last entered the head of the serpent at 18° Scorpio (the sign) in 1991 just after having passed by the claws of the scorpion, and left the serpent's tail at 27° Sagittarius (the sign) in 2007. That period of world history covered both Iraq wars and the wars in the Balkans, 9/11 and the War in Afghanistan. It was a time that could have brought much in the way of healing to the world. Instead, it is a period that is widely seen as having contributed more to the troubles in the Middle East than it helped and a major erosion of civil liberties and incomes in the West, as well as bringing forward all the tech surveillance and invasion of privacy that one would normally associate with Scorpio—spying, subterfuge, etc. However, true to form, Pluto signaled an end to a despotic regime in Iraq, saw the independence of several Baltic states and ushered in changes in the dynamics of world power politics for some years to come. I think there is a larger process at work with the Middle East than we are able to see at the moment, and I mean with regard to the forces of evolution. All the while, Pluto was making its way through the latter part of the signs Scorpio and most all of Sagittarius. It is also of interest to note that there was a Bush in the White House during Pluto's transits through the halves of Serpens. Read into that what you will. The period has been a real test of goodwill and actions for peace throughout the world, but especially in the Middle East and eastern Europe. There is much more that could be said, but hopefully we get the idea.

So, having outlined all this, what does it have to do with the Dalai Lama, Tibet, world peace, Buddhism, *et al*? Well, in 1948 Pluto heralded the regime change in China that led to its becoming a communist state along with the subsequent invasion of Tibet, as well as heralding regime changes in many other countries post-WWII and decolonization in many countries that were once claimed by European powers. It was a massive change in world geopolitics, and it has resulted, however slowly—or quickly, depending on your perspective—in the world we see today. In looking at the history of the world in my researches, we live in an era that is in stark contrast to the world we knew even 100 years ago, and in that I am speaking solely of the politics of the nations. Our progress in that area has been amazing, even though there is still a lot to do, and it has been largely

due to the soul of humanity finding its voice in the world populace—first through its leaders and then through changes in public perception and then wider acceptance.

If one knows anything about the history of Tibet, it was still a medieval state last century in some ways—feudal, the masses being largely uneducated and poor—with the intellectual elite of the country being found largely in the monastic system. I didn't know this myself until recently, but slavery was only outlawed in Tibet after the Chinese took over in 1948, for instance, although one could argue that the Tibetans have only been subjected to another type of slavery under the communist regime. However, the system as it was in Tibet up into the last century needed to change, a fact which was recognized and beginning to be implemented by the previous Dalai Lama. The Chinese invasion simply accelerated the changes and the physical modernization of the country, all the while seeking to stamp out the vestiges of the old culture and seeking to control the spiritual life of the people. The latter effort will ultimately fail, in my opinion.

When the Dalai Lama was forced to flee Tibet he took many of the old teachers with him and many more followed in the years afterward. By invading Tibet and seeking to change the culture, along with the oppression of the Tibetans, the Chinese have unwittingly caused Tibetan Buddhism to be spread rapidly throughout the world. Today every Western country, at least, now has at least a few Mahayana Buddhist centers, fully established, and giving out progressively more and more to its new-found Western audiences and students. Tibetan Buddhism, which is Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism, is especially suited to the West and has served as a link between East and West. The West, on the other hand, has made its way into Tibet via Chinese influence, especially regards its scientific method and technology. The Dalai Lama has sought to promote dialog between scientists and Buddhists and to see the similarities between the two approaches to the human mind. So, in terms of planetary indicators, Pluto has indicated an end to old Tibet, but it has also signaled that the spirit of the culture lives on in other countries and will eventually arise again in another form, enriched through its experiences. So, what do I see with regard to article mentioned at the start of this letter? I will get to that at the end in the closing remarks.

Pluto has been involved in virtually every major political change in the West and Middle East over the past few hundred years, and its influence will only strengthen. It has figured quite strongly in the evolution of the United States, for instance, as well as in Europe. The pace of its influence has been quick, relatively speaking, over the last few decades. After the next ten years its influence will slow down for a while. It may be of interest to note that Pluto will be at the same position in 2023 that it was in 1775, or thereabouts. If the year 1775 rings any bells, that was the year that the American Revolutionary War started. It was also about the time the Industrial Revolution started, although the latter was not a specific event. Do I see another war coming for the US? Well, Pluto does not always repeat countries, I have found. Instead, it acts where change is most sorely needed. If the US needs to change its political structure—or educational, or spiritual or social—then Pluto will surely influence the minds of the populace to do so. Otherwise, it will be quiescent. So, no, I am not going to predict a major war for the US, although it could happen. It depends on us, really. However, with the preceding remarks in mind, let's have a look at the full moon.

The full moon takes place on 7 Nov 2014 at 9:23 AM AEDT (6 Nov at 22:23 UT). In the full moon figure we find the Sun conjunct Venus, with Venus square to Jupiter and the Sun linked to Uranus by quincunx. The full moon axis is made an easy opposition by the Moon trine to a Mars/Pluto conjunction. Uranus is almost within a degree of a square with Pluto by retrograde motion, which will be exact again in December—the second-to-last one of that series. There are no major stressful aspects between the main planets and dwarf planets aside from a square between Ceres and Neptune and the Mars/Pluto conjunction and, and since the latter are in easier aspect to the luminaries we do not expect major unsettling events for this full moon. So, aside from Pluto we do not have to worry with heavy collective 'burning ground' sorts of activities with this interval. On the contrary, we

may see a wider cooperation between nations to address the problems we currently face in our world.

The Sun is conjunct the stars Zuben Elgenubi and Zuben Elakribi (literally, and not by projected longitude) in the constellation of Libra (α and δ , resp.), while the Moon is conjunct the projected longitudes of Almach (γ Andromedae) and literally conjunct Menkar (α Ceti). Zuben Elgenubi is said to portend sickness, losses in business, ruin, wrongful accusations and disgrace³—the sort of thing one would normally expect from the claw of a Scorpion. We do not have much information on Zuben Elakribi. Those two stars were associated with the claws of Scorpius in the old days, whereas nowadays they are associated with the scales of Libra. Almach (in Andromeda) is said to give honor, eminence and artistic ability⁴, along with military honors⁵. Menkar (in Cetus) is said to produce mental anxiety, danger from thieves, quarrels, legal losses and problems with legacies and inheritances⁶, among other things—the sorts of things one would associate with a sea monster, which is the original meaning of Cetus. So, Menkar is not such a favorable influence. Of these four stars, the ones in Libra and Cetus are the most powerful, being closely conjunct the luminaries. Almach gives a background emphasis.

There is one thing that stands out in the current media with regard to these stars, and that is the ongoing ebola outbreak (re: sickness and mental anxiety), which has been with us since last year, having resulted in just over 5,000 deaths worldwide so far. Although tragic, this needs to be seen in perspective. I say this because the fear factor with this disease is strong and is often whipped up in the media. Now, it is nothing to be played with, as this *is* a deadly disease, but it is not the largest epidemic we have seen in recent memory—not by a long shot. The biggest one was the worldwide flu pandemic in 2009 which claimed anywhere from 125,000 to 400,000 lives, according to estimates. The flu and malaria remain our biggest killers, with the flu pandemic of 1918–1920 alone claiming around 75,000,000 lives. As recently as 2012, there were over 150,000,000 cases of malaria (with some estimates being higher), with an estimated 675,000 deaths that year. Yet, these pandemics go largely unreported. Ebola pales in comparison. The flu and malaria are familiar to us, while ebola is still largely unknown to the world at large. Plus, there is a stigma attached to malaria and ebola in particular, because they are found primarily in Africa. It is a hard saying, but it is true. They do not affect the West directly as disease agents, yet malaria in particular causes human suffering on a vast scale, for instance.

To have the two co-rulers of Scorpio conjunct in this Scorpio figure is significant. These are the two ‘destroyer’ planets in astrology, meaning that they act along the line of destruction. But, when they are trine to the Moon/sextile the Sun, what does that mean to us? A vaccine for malaria is currently being intensively researched, thankfully, and for instance, but it is a stubborn disease, with the parasite developing resistance to all known trial drugs when used by themselves. The flu vaccine remains a controversial one, with questionable efficacy. There are trials currently underway of an ebola vaccine that has been developed by Canadians which shows promise. The point of this discussion is that, with Mars and Pluto trine the Moon/sextile the Sun, we may yet see breakthroughs with these illnesses, along with breakthroughs in other areas, especially when we consider Pluto as the healer.

Moving on with the figure, the Sabian symbols for the degrees of the luminaries are as follows:

Laughing children play upon five mounds of white sand. Sun, 15 Scorpio

Head covered with a rakish silk hat, muffled against the cold, a man braces against the storm.
Moon, 15 Taurus

These two symbols are opposites in some ways. Children do not ordinarily play on sand piles in a storm, for instance. But there is another rather interesting take on the solar symbol. If we look at the current ISIL conflict in Iraq and Syria, prior to the air strikes, there were around five main

participants on the ground in the region directly involved in the conflict. (There are currently six on the ground, but who is counting?) With the Scorpio/Taurus polarity we see the testing of the resolve and mettle of all forces involved in a conflict, with testing and trial being the order of the day with the two signs. They are discipleship signs, after all, with all the internal turmoil that accompanies people who have one of those signs rising or as their sun-sign. For those people who have both, I would say you have been born into a most fortunate life, spiritually considered. That being said, the ISIL conflict is no laughing matter, but it is finally being addressed in an international fashion, however slowly, along with the Syrian civil war. The conflict itself has indeed been a storm for the inhabitants of the countries involved. And, those countries are in a particularly arid part of the world. However, the true storm at which we are looking with the lunar symbol has another meaning, I believe.

The degrees of the luminaries are on so-called ‘disaster degrees’, meaning that when eclipses take place on those degrees we can expect some ‘interesting’ times in the world. Well, we haven’t had any eclipses on those degrees in the last ten years, so we shouldn’t expect any major occurrence from this full moon in that regard. Instead, what we can most likely expect are further extremes of weather over the next few years, and for a rather large event in that regard to take place in the period from 2016 – 2018/9. We are building toward it. There is a dwarf planet that heralds extremes in weather—Huya⁷—and it will be particularly highlighted in the next few years. It acts in a fashion similar to Pluto, and it calls upon us to be mindful of how we use our resources and how we interact with the environment. We see this sort of thing reflected to us in the symbol for the lunar degree in the full moon figure. The last time Huya was at its current position there was a protracted and severe drought (1769) in India that caused a famine (1770), and we currently have drought conditions in several parts of the world, most notably in California currently, along with China and Brazil, and with Australia having just been released from its millennial drought (pronounced ended in 2012). The latter drought was also signaled by Huya, along with extremes of rain in other parts of the world. So, with this latter point in mind, we should be aware, too, that extremes in weather have been with us all along, with worse than what we are seeing now.

However, weather aside, we have not fully addressed the two co-rulers of Scorpio being conjunct in this figure. The two of these together should give us breakthroughs in stalemated conditions on the world stage. We are beginning to see slow progress in the fight against the ISIL militia in Syria and Iraq, with a steady increase in confidence shown by the Iraqi army. That steady progress should begin to ease tensions in the Middle East and bolster the positions of more moderate forces in the region. That aside, the laughing children in the solar symbol can have many interpretations, as can the five mounds of white sand. The mounds of sand can represent our five senses, with the children representing us, as the higher Self, released from the thrall of the senses, freely playing with all the information we receive from them. For us as individuals this latter sense of the meaning of the five mounds of sand is what applies with this full moon.

So, we have our work cut out for us in many ways, and each in our own way. The thing we essentially need to do is to maintain our focus and continue to sue for cooperation between nations. At the Scorpio interval each year we have a chance to rise above the storm of our senses and to see things more clearly. Pluto and Mars will do their work on and for us in this interval as they always have and will. Scorpio reminds us that we are human, that we all have a lot in common, that we all struggle with ourselves, and that we can and all do prevail and come into a greater degree of light when we sit with ourselves and examine our thoughts—which is the real import of the influence of Mercury and Pluto in Scorpio. It is also a message that Buddhism in particular consistently rings out to the world.

There will be a confluence of Pluto-like energies in the years immediately preceding 2025, and Pluto will again herald changes to come in the geopolitical world structure. These will be preceded in the early years of the ‘20s by other heralds, one of which will be economic. When I use the word

‘herald’ I am not talking about angelic beings trumpeting a second coming or anything like that. I simply use the term as an indicator that major events are on the horizon. There can be and will be changes before that, but with the planetary energies mentioned and the timing, these will be major events. These events will indicate sea-changes in public consciousness and need, and in turn they will evoke a response from the evolutionary beings associated with our world. Then, decisions will be made about the next steps ahead for the world at large, both collectively and by us as individuals.

Of particular interest to me in the article cited at the start of this letter was a comment the Dalai Lama made with regard to his next incarnation—that he would make a decision about it on his 90th birthday—which just happens to fall on the year 2025. Readers of the books of Alice Bailey will be well familiar with that date. It is the date cited when a decision will be made about the reappearance of the next world teacher as to timing. Do I think the Dalai Lama would be the next world teacher? No, in a word. Many religions predict a ‘second coming’, but no one I know of has given any compelling evidence of when or who that might be. But, if the Dalai Lama does come back, which he likely will, although probably not as another Dalai Lama, he would come in on such a wave or preceding it in all likelihood, and would still be considered as one of the great spiritual figures worldwide. As for Tibet, that land and culture has been changed irrevocably. The Dalai Lama is intimately connected with that land and its people, as well as with China and surrounding countries by interaction. We should be aware, though, that the government in China is changing, however slowly, and the karma of the two countries is ancient and inextricably linked. I could see a day when Tibetan Buddhism would return to Tibet, but it would not do so in its old form. The culture would be modernized, and I could also see the influence of Tibet extending into China as the decades unfold. I would think it would be a slow burn, as the saying goes, but I could see it happening.

Who knows what the world holds for us? All we know for certain is that we live in a special time in Earth’s history, and that we are in this together. It is no time to hide our heads in the sand and expect someone else to fix things. We have to start in our own backyard, literally and figuratively, and this is the sort of thing that Pluto, via Scorpio, safeguards for us. But, at the same time, we need to keep a balanced outlook and proceed deliberately, and with deliberated confidence. And, we need a sense of humor about it all. Nothing quite exposes the darker side of human nature like humor, and it does so in a way that makes life seem a little more bearable. We have lived through two world wars, the Great Depression, the Great Recession, and a host of other societal ills, and we have progressed and made a go of things, and even managed to make things better. Really, we have. So, when the ghosts and goblins of the dark things coming to derail us land in our inboxes again or arise at the dinner table, let’s just remind ourselves of from where we have come and have a good laugh or two about it all. Things are only scary because we make them that way—a costume that hides the laughing child within—the ‘Christ child’ in each of us. If someone like the Dalai Lama can laugh at himself, who are we to take things so deadly seriously?

All the best,
Malvin
31 Oct 2014

¹ <http://boingboing.net/2014/10/24/the-dalai-lama-will-not-return.html>

² *The Secret Doctrine II*, p. 26: “Stanza I, The Beginnings of Sentient Life”. Bolding and italics added for emphasis in the quote.

³ *Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology*, Vivian E. Robson, p. 205

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 128

⁵ *Fixed Stars and Judicial Astrology*, George Noonan, p.22

⁶ *Fixed Stars and Constellations in Astrology*, p. 176

⁷ Huya was a rain god in Wayuu mythology.