

Hermetic Reiki

a complete practitioner's manual
2nd Edition

By Rev. James Bulls, RMT



The possession of Knowledge, unless accompanied by a manifestation and expression in Action, is like the hoarding of precious metals – a vain and foolish thing. Knowledge, like Wealth, is intended for Use. The Law of Use is Universal, and he who violates it suffers by reason of his conflict with natural forces.
–The Kybalion

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Welcome to the Aquarian Age

The world is changing. The way we share information is changing. The Mystery Schools of antiquity have vanished, replaced by radical new technologies which favor greater dissemination of knowledge to greater numbers of people almost instantly. Leaders have risen to power on the wave of Aquarian technology, but so too have leaders fallen to the Aquarian lightning strike of unpredictable change and innovation. For better or for worse, there are no more secrets – the apocalypse has already happened and an age of awakening and total awareness is upon us. I have chosen to make this text available at no cost so that it operates harmoniously within the Aquarian spirit now presiding, but that does not mean the text is free. In the Aquarian spirit of equity, if you find value in this text I ask that you return it: please visit <http://www.thehighwayhermit.com> or <http://www.hermeticfellowship.com> to make a \$5.00 donation as your way of saying thank-you. The Rule of Law is give and take: if you fairly take, it is appropriate that you fairly give.

LEGAL

Reiki is not a substitute for professional medical or psychiatric care. Unless otherwise recognized as a trained, licensed and credentialed physician, psychiatrist or similar healthcare professional, a Reiki practitioner is not a doctor and is not qualified to diagnose conditions, prescribe medications, interfere with a prescribed course of treatment or act in the capacity of a trained healthcare professional.

Even as a complementary or alternative therapy, Reiki is not a guarantee of recovery, improvement of health, or remission or cessation of symptoms or conditions. Reiki should never be given in place of treatment from a qualified healthcare professional.

Reiki sessions are administered only for the purpose of helping a subject relax and to reduce a subject's stress. Reducing stress and increasing relaxation may promote recovery from some injuries or illnesses but only a qualified healthcare professional is capable of deciding what is best for each person. Lack of proper medical attention may cause death; never delay calling a healthcare professional in favor of Reiki.

The author of this book is not qualified to treat or diagnose any conditions. His advice should not be used in place of a qualified healthcare professional. In some jurisdictions it is against the law to use the words healer, heal, treatment, diagnosis, cure, and patient in context to Reiki. Laws and ordinances vary between jurisdictions and the author, publisher, distributor, and vendor of this book cannot be held liable if you choose not to research local laws and ordinances.

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Greetings from the Author

I am an ordained minister of the International Metaphysical Ministry and a Reiki Master Teacher affiliated with the International Association of Reiki Professionals. I provide personalized divination, pastoral counseling, programs of Reiki sessions, and instruction as well as professional certification in Hermetic Reiki. As a martial artist, I've earned two black belts, won four state championships, placed among the world's top three competitors in traditional weapon katas, and am a nationally-recognized instructor. The martial arts fuel my interest in the transformative power of self-discipline and the ability of the mind to conquer the body: come train with me at www.HermeticFellowship.com.

My primary goals are the unification of mind, body, and spirit through martial arts; development of the 12 Noble Virtues of the Zodiac; application of the 7 Hermetic Laws; and observance of the 3 Essential Things: truth, beauty, and love. Because I believe that ministry is charity, I refuse to be a slactivist: come join me this weekend and actually do something to make the world a better place. I enjoy meeting new people, and if you're interested in real change you can contact me through my website at www.theHighwayHermit.com.

While reviewing the first edition of Hermetic Reiki, I felt that I had over-reached in my efforts to provide a totally comprehensive guide to the physical and Spiritual aspects of the human body. To improve the focus of the book and to ensure that you possess the most accurate information available, I encourage you to select a textbook or instructional guide to human anatomy and physiology to complement what you read here.

I came to this study in a round-about way through a variety of different disciplines and I've done my best to keep out what will not be relevant while retaining what I believe are the most important and profound aspects of the system I've developed. The sort of person I am, I have a penchant for collecting information; I don't always do anything with the information I collect, but sometimes I get lucky.

I'm lucky that I've never suffered material hardship nor wanted for food on my table; I love you Mom, I love you, Dad. I'm lucky that I've never suffered for lack of kisses; I love you, Jen. I'm lucky that I've been able to choose my path in life and not been restricted in my choices. I'm lucky in that my parents encouraged me to read. I'm lucky that I had a karate instructor who taught me that no person will take responsibility for me except for me and that I can choose to do anything I want.

I'm lucky that even if I haven't learned wisdom, I have gained perspective. Closed doors can be lost opportunities but they can also be the freedom to pursue new goals. Stumbling blocks can stop me from reaching my destination, but they can also give me time to reevaluate my goals. I think I'm lucky that I've been given plenty of obstacles and stumbling blocks – may I continue to have many more.

-James

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Overview and Learning Objectives

The system I have developed is the result of my own personal studies and experiences and I have deliberately limited this book's content to only that which pertains to Reiki, astrology, and human anatomy and physiology. I have not included the ways in which I incorporate cartomancy, numerology, and dream analysis to provide a more detailed system of consultation for my clients. Those things are all secondary to the framework which I have presented here and I hope that through study and earnest application you will see the many ways in which you can easily relate this same framework to your preferred methods and practices.

When I first began writing this book, I was astonished at the shortage of textbooks on astrology and health. The books I could find were focused primarily on the casting and interpretation of natal charts and horoscopes in relation to a subject's health. What's more, almost all of these books were written at the level of a clinician or health care professional and were almost of no use to the average reader. What they presented was only accessible to an accomplished astrologer and almost totally inaccessible to the beginning student. I was certain that there must exist a way to easily apply the correspondence of the planets, signs, and houses of the Zodiac to the Spiritual treatment of a body in crisis. It is my sincere hope that this book provides an accessible, easy-to-read introduction to a system which will explode the concept of astrological medicine in context to Reiki.

If you do not presently practice Reiki or have not considered a study of the system, I encourage you to do so. Reiki has brought me great peace, calm and taught me self-control in a way I never learned through years of practice in the martial arts. It did for me in the first month after I began practicing it what seven years of medication and counseling did not. I don't know if Reiki will alleviate your own dis-eases, but I can offer my testimony that since I began practicing Reiki in November of 2008 I no longer struggle with hypomania, chronic depression, or anxiety. I can testify that I no longer suffer the chronic neck pain or sciatica which both appeared after a dangerous fall in early 2009. I can also testify that through daily application of Reiki my body dissolved a painful heel spur on my right foot.

There are many schools of Reiki and not all students are comfortable in the same style; I encourage you to research what's available and see what schools interest you. I believe that the most important requirement is that you are comfortable with your teacher and the theory taught in that system. To learn more about Reiki, I encourage you to connect with a reputable, professional teacher licensed by the IARP who can guide you through your journey.

This book will not teach you astrology – horoscopes, natal charts, hard and soft aspects, trines, sextiles, transits, and so on are not introduced here because they are not necessary to the practice of Hermetic Reiki. This book will introduce you to the ten major planets: the Sun, Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto. It will also introduce you to the twelve Houses and signs of the Zodiac: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius, and Pisces. I do not include Chiron, Ceres, the North or South Nodes of the Moon, moons of any other planets, asteroids, Ophiuchus, or the smaller heavenly bodies acknowledged by contemporary astrologers because I don't believe they possess significant meaning to the

practice of Hermetic Reiki. If you find them to be useful and discover meaning in them, I encourage you to share your knowledge with others.

This book provides a broad overview of human anatomy and physiology. Entire series of books can be written on the function and operation of the human nervous system, but I feel that it would be impractical to go too far into the details. The details are important and worthwhile, but for brevity I have made an effort to include the most pertinent information and exclude that which I felt would be beyond our needs and interests. This book will introduce you to the primary processes, key functions, major structures, and prominent internal organs of the human body.

I will be the first to tell you that I have overlooked some details. I am a lay student of the human body and I have done my best to share with you what I believe is most important. I study a variety of textbooks on anatomy and physiology to broaden my knowledge and improve my competence and I encourage you to do the same. This book is by no means a comprehensive resource and you should take personal responsibility for your own education by enrolling in college classes, taking self-study courses, meeting like-minded people, and reviewing relevant textbooks. If you lack for knowledge, the only person at fault is you: take responsibility for yourself and do what needs to be done.

Let there be absolutely no confusion or misunderstanding: I do not believe that Reiki or other meditative, bio-field, Spiritual, life-Spirit, and vibratory/energetic modalities are a replacement for professional medical attention. I believe and affirm that Reiki should come secondary to established, trusted, and proven medical practices and I emphatically state for all to read that I believe Reiki is only useful for relieving stress or providing Spiritual comfort. I believe that those benefits which I and others have experienced concurrent to Reiki are the result of relaxation, stress-reduction, and the body's own natural ability to recover from illness and injury.

A close friend's father in law once had a heart attack and several strokes which left him immobilized and in the hospital for several weeks. Arteriosclerosis necessitated the amputation of his left leg and he was in danger of suffering permanent brain damage. Giving distance Reiki for this man, I felt a tight band of pain around his right wrist. I encouraged my friend to ask the nurses to massage some oil into his wrists, but I was unpleasantly surprised to hear a few days later that he had another stroke and his right hand had lost fine motor control and was now held in a claw at a ninety-degree angle.

My friend told me that his father in law's strokes were caused by a blood clot, so I gave distance Reiki specifically for the man's head and brain with the hope that I could ease the resolution of his suffering. During the session, I intuited two very specific points of stress: one high up in the parietal lobe by the crown, and another further down the right side near the temporal lobe. I relayed to my friend that he might consider ordering some more scans or asking the doctors what they can do to pre-empt a stroke, and once again I was unpleasantly surprised. I heard a few days later that he had another series of strokes, the cause of which the doctors said appeared to be two blood clots in the exact locations I described. If I had the opportunity to work with the man's physicians, I believe that I would have been able to accurately describe my impressions in a language which they understood so that they might have been able to help him more.

Following that episode, I went to the hospital to pray with him. I held his hands and also placed my hands on his head for a few minutes. A couple weeks later he came out of the hospital and to all outward appearances was very much the same when he went in. He had regained the use of his hand, was walking again by the use of prosthetics, and

was in his right mind – a stark departure from the angry, paranoid, hallucinating stroke-victim he had been for several weeks. I do not believe that I “healed” this man: I believe that his team of nurses and physicians helped him recover from what would otherwise have killed him. I believe that I, like his family, played a role in ministering to his personal and Spiritual needs during his convalescence.

Incidentally, my right lung spontaneously collapsed that very same night while leaving the hospital. A cold breeze blew through the parking garage and I suddenly didn't feel very good. Hours later I went to the emergency room and was immediately put on suction to reflate my lung. I spent the next week on suction before undergoing thoracoscopic surgery, a procedure which led to the most painful experience of my life. I went in and out of consciousness, had almost no sleep, and was given near-fatal doses of morphine and other opiate-derivatives to manage my pain. I hallucinated, had conversations with imaginary people, and believed that every time I slept I was being tortured by demons who wouldn't permit me to wake up. There are large gaps of my weeks-long hospital stay that I can't remember; my family's stories of those blank periods frighten me. With expert medical care I recovered and am today as good as I was before the collapse.

Had I relied solely on Reiki for my treatment, I would certainly be an invalid or could even be dead. Would my daily practice of Reiki have prevented the lung from collapsing in the first place? Probably not: the ruptured blebs on my right lung were present since birth or early childhood, and men like myself with a thin build and little body fat experience spontaneous pneumothorax more frequently than other groups. As little consolation, the attending surgeon told me that if I had been a little fatter or exercised a little less, it's likely the collapse wouldn't have happened.

The lesson I took from this experience is that Reiki is for the Mind and Spirit: Spiritual and personal development, learning to reduce stress, living a lifestyle conducive to peace, and giving non-reactive responses to physical, emotional, and Spiritual stressors teaches us to be the masters of our own wellness. I believe that Spiritual unification at the highest levels leads to physical wellness at the lowest levels. Reiki is a Spiritual practice, and medicine is a scientific practice, but that doesn't mean the two are antithetical. The responsible, professional Reiki practitioner will familiarize himself with human anatomy and physiology so that he will be able to speak the same language when he coordinates his efforts with the subject's physician. A Reiki practitioner frequently receives a number of intuitive signals during a session: if he is not familiar with the human body, he may misinterpret or simply not understand what he is feeling. Likewise, a physician cannot be expected to understand the occult vocabulary used by Reiki practitioners.

It is my belief that a person can be arbitrarily divided into Mind and body. I believe that stressors can be motivating or distressing (or both at the same time), and that just as the body can be injured, broken, or suffer, so too can the Mind become upset or dis-eased. I believe that the body and the Mind affect each other and that to the furthest extent practical and possible they should be treated simultaneously. I believe that there is a divine pattern to the universe not exclusive to Earth and that through study and application methods can be devised which accurately describe the subtle nature of the Spirit as it relates to health and wellness. It is my belief that what I have presented here is a method to aid the restoration of balance and harmonious integration of the Mind and body. I intend this book to be used in a Spiritual, holistic setting and as a complement to established medical and therapeutic procedures.

A chronological review of this text will provide the best foundation for you in the long term: each chapter builds on the one which came before it, so even if you decide to jump around, I encourage you read the text through from start to finish at least once so that you are aware of what has been introduced. I use the word “dis-ease” not to name any particular illness, affliction, condition, or malady but instead as a broad-spectrum word to indicate stress, suffering, negative Spirit, or any manner of physical, mental, Spiritual, and emotional upset.

All illnesses I believe are, in truth, a body not at ease, in other words, dis-eased. I use the word liberally and hope that no confusion will come of it. I encourage you to never lose your intuition and flexibility. Hermetic Reiki is a fallible , human approach to working with a perfect, divine Spirit. If when healing yourself or another you intuit or receive insight that your healing efforts should be performed differently, you should do what you believe is right.

It’s not grammatically correct, but to avoid the awkward “his or hers,” “he or she,” and “him or her,” I have chosen to use either the masculine or the feminine but not both at once. This doesn’t mean anything except that I’m a lazy typist.

History of Reiki and the Usui system of natural healing

Reiki is translated from Japanese as Universal (Rei-) Life (-ki), but it has also been translated as universal life Spirit. Reiki is a Spiritual healing modality which is commonly used to manage stress and promote relaxation; practitioners believe that giving Reiki for oneself or another promotes health and wellness. Reiki has a long history and I am greatly indebted to such scholars as Frank Petter and William Rand whose tireless research and vast experience have illuminated my own knowledge of Reiki. The Reiki story begins with Dr. Mikao Usui in the late 1800's, although a great amount of misinformation exists which suggests that Reiki goes back much farther than Dr. Usui.

Of the texts which I have reviewed in preparation for this book, one of the most commonly repeated and factually debatable histories of Reiki is offered by Diane Stein in *Essential Reiki*. Stein teaches that Reiki predates Biblical history, is directly connected with ancient Tantric Buddhism, and was the same method of healing used by Christ himself.¹ In principle, I agree with Stein that Reiki (however it has been called in the past) has been used by great healers throughout history, but I disagree with her belief that Usui Reiki is a Buddhist Spiritual practice descended from the teachings of scholars in ancient India.

In ancient India, education, religion, and formal instruction were dominated by the caste of the Brahmins. The Brahmins kept their knowledge and sacred rituals secret from the lower castes in order to deliberately retain power and authority as the intermediaries to the divine. To prevent others from stealing their knowledge, they developed their own scholarly language – Sanskrit – which was taught only to initiates and spoken only among themselves; Stein proposes that Reiki was among the secrets revealed by Gautama Siddhartha (Buddha) when he translated their knowledge into Pali for consumption by the masses.² Although it is true that Gautama Siddhartha translated the Brahmins' secrets to Pali, it does not appear that the secret of healing without Spirit depletion was ever included in that body of knowledge: Reiki as we know it was not codified into Tantric Buddhism more than a hundred years before the birth of Christ.

William Rand, director of the International Center for Reiki Training, has shown that Japanese Reiki masters who practice Buddhism report that there is nothing of Buddhism in Reiki and that for all purposes Reiki is neutral to any religions.³ Despite this, Stein continues with the position that Jesus Christ studied at the mystery schools of Egypt and India before beginning his ministry in Jerusalem and teaching Reiki to his disciples.⁴ I disagree with Stein's version of history, but I don't think it's unreasonable to attribute similar principles of compassion and respect for human dignity found in Christianity to Reiki. If it is to be believed – and that's something you'll have to decide for yourself – Jesus healed without Spirit depletion by connecting with the current of universal life.

Now we move forward to more recent history, the late 1800's, where Dr. Mikao Usui enters the Reiki story. Mikao Usui was not a doctor or physician: it is more accurate to call him "sensei" or "teacher," but because the Japanese title is used so infrequently in the West, it has for practical purposes been easier to give him the title "Doctor." Dr. Usui was born on August 15th, 1865, in the Japanese province of Gifu.⁵ Dr. Usui was a lay Tendai Buddhist monk⁶ and is commonly reported to have been actively searching for Reiki, but his own handwriting reports that his system of natural healing was unsought

and spontaneously discovered.⁷

Part of the common misinformation about Dr. Usui is that he taught at a Christian university in Japan and also studied for seven years at a college in the United States. Both of these claims have proven to be untrue and appear to have been fabricated by a later leader in the Reiki story, Hawayo Takata. Though it is certain that Takata did fabricate stories about Dr. Usui which were untrue, the majority of Reiki professionals today generally recognize her for the Reiki hero she is. Without her efforts to make a Japanese practice more palatable to the West, Reiki may never have spread beyond Japan and Hawaii.

What is true is that Dr. Usui was the private secretary for a government official – Shimpei Goto – who was the Secretary of the Railroad, the Postmaster General, and the Secretary of the Interior of the State;⁸ Dr. Usui did travel abroad and probably traveled to the United States. His exact travels, duties and responsibilities are not clear but it can be surmised that Dr. Usui was able to use this position to his benefit.

As commonly repeated in Western Reiki, Dr. Usui supposedly found a method for unlocking a lost method of healing without Spirit depletion passed down from time immemorial encoded into Tantric Buddhism and went on a Spiritual retreat to perform a hitherto unknown ritual to unlock Reiki. We now know that story to be factually untrue: he already practiced other healing modalities and his retreat had nothing to do with Reiki.⁹ What is known is that after three weeks of fasting, meditation, prayer, and Spiritual devotion, Dr. Usui had a Spiritual experience. The story frequently says that a beam of bright white light struck him in the forehead and he saw a fantastic vision of lights, spirits, and the mystical symbols which are now used in Reiki. What really happened that day on Mount Kurama is like much of the Reiki story a mystery, but most people believe that his spontaneous discovery was much less dramatic.

It is important to note the manner in which Dr. Usui presented his discovery. Because each person can only teach what he or she knows, Dr. Usui taught Reiki from the perspective of a Japanese Buddhist monk; this may be what has contributed to the persistent and factually untrue connection between Reiki and Buddhism. Dr. Usui included in his Reiki instruction principles, songs, and poetry from the Meiji Emperor which he believed taught the best way to live. In fact, Usui Reiki is guided by five principles taken from the Meiji Emperor's five rules for life. With much gratitude for his excellent research, I reprint here Frank Petter's translation¹⁰ of Dr. Usui's original handwriting:

The secret method of inviting happiness. The wonderful medicine for all diseases (of the body and the soul). Just today:

- 1.** *Don't get angry*
- 2.** *Don't worry*
- 3.** *Show appreciation*
- 4.** *Work hard (on yourself)*
- 5.** *Be kind to others*

Mornings and evenings, sit in the Gassho position and repeat these words out loud and in your heart. (For the) improvement of body and soul, Usui Reiki Ryoho (Usui system of natural healing.)

What I want you to take from this is that Dr. Usui, as a Buddhist monk, had a Spiritual approach to healing and taught a flexible, intuitive system structured around learning to feel “Byosen” or stress in the body. Dr. Usui had many students who in turn also had many students. As it concerns the movement of Reiki from Japan toward the West, the next most prominent figure in the Reiki story is Dr. Chujiro Hayashi. Dr. Chujiro Hayashi, unlike Dr. Usui, was in fact a physician. Dr. Hayashi was born in Tokyo on September 15th, 1880 and died at his home in Atama, near Mt. Fuji, on May 11th, 1940.

Dr. Hayashi served as a physician in the Japanese Navy and began studying with Dr. Usui in 1925.¹¹ It is important to note the differences between Dr. Usui and Dr. Hayashi. Dr. Usui was a lay Buddhist priest who taught an intuitive approach to a Spiritual practice. Dr. Hayashi, as a trained physician, had his roots in a traditional, clinical approach to the application of Reiki. After studying with Dr. Usui for about six years, Dr. Hayashi formed his own system of Reiki and named it after himself: Hayashi Reiki. Dr. Hayashi taught a more clinical approach to the use of Reiki and was asked by Dr. Usui to write a teaching manual and develop a set series of hand positions for particular dis-eases.¹²

It is important to note the differences between Dr. Usui and Dr. Hayashi because of one of Dr. Hayashi’s most famous students: Hawayo Takata. Hawayo Takata was born on December 24th, 1900, in Hanamaulu, Hawaii.¹³ Takata primarily lived and worked in Hawaii and had the misfortune (or blessing?) of enduring great hardship during her lifetime and outliving her husband after he passed from cancer. Possibly from the stress of being a widow with two children and the demands of working full-time to support her family, Takata suffered from a variety of illnesses and is even reported to have had a nervous breakdown.¹⁴ To make matters worse, one of her sisters died unexpectedly which necessitated that Takata travel to Tokyo to bring the sad news to her parents.

This trip to Tokyo was also to get medical treatment for her own life-threatening ailments. As the story is commonly told, Takata was in a hospital operating room waiting for the surgeon to arrive when she heard a voice say three times “the operation is not necessary.” She got off the operating table and declined the surgery; when she asked the surgeon about alternatives to surgery, he referred her to Dr. Hayashi’s clinic in Tokyo. She received Reiki from Dr. Hayashi or his students every day until, four months later, she was completely cured of her ailments. Also commonly told is that Takata wanted to learn Reiki but Dr. Hayashi refused. Takata was insistent and Dr. Hayashi finally agreed to teach her: she was initiated to first and second degree Reiki in 1936 and 1937, respectively, and shortly thereafter enjoyed great success and popularity operating a Reiki practice in Hawaii.¹⁵ Takata is believed to be the last person initiated as a Master by Dr. Hayashi.

Hawayo Takata continues to be a controversial figure in the Reiki story. She is justly accused of fabricating fantastic stories and even outright lies about Reiki; the history and development of Reiki; Dr. Usui himself; roles and titles within the Reiki community; claims to authority over the origin of Reiki; and many other similar stories. For contrast, Takata was promoting a Japanese Spiritual practice at a time when American anger at the Japanese was still a concern. One of her most widespread fabrications is that Dr. Usui was a Christian minister who was searching for a method to heal the Spirit as he supposedly read in the Bible. The true reason for Takata’s fabrications can only be guessed, but it is commonly believed that she introduced several

Western elements to the Reiki story (and Dr. Usui's history) in order to make Reiki more palatable to Westerners. Though her motives behind such fabrications are uncertain, I believe as do many others that she was absolutely instrumental in the promotion, education, and acceptance of Reiki in the West.

It's important to note the many differences between Hawayo Takata's, Dr. Hayashi's, and Dr. Usui's systems of treatment. In Dr. Usui's system, eight or more initiations were performed over several years.¹⁶ During regular treatments, Dr. Usui sat his patients in a chair and only let them lay if they were seriously ill.¹⁷ Dr. Usui worked with patients one-on-one and directed much attention to the Tanden (just below and behind the navel), and divisions of the spinal vertebrae.¹⁸ Dr. Usui taught that detecting Byosen, or learning to feel sickness and stress with the hands, was absolutely necessary in giving Reiki. He also taught his students to use a variety of methods to include looking at the area of stress, blowing breath on the area of stress, tapping and massaging the affected area, and giving Reiki through the hands.¹⁹ Contrary to what Takata taught, holding the hands with the fingers tightly together does not appear to be an absolute necessity: Dr. Usui was known to teach his students a variety of hand and finger positions to channel Reiki.

Dr. Hayashi was asked by Dr. Usui to use his skills and knowledge as a trained physician to further develop Reiki.²⁰ With his clinical approach, Dr. Hayashi required patients to lay prone on a straw mat or futon and at least two practitioners worked on a patient at the same time; sessions were generally 60 to 90 minutes long and were given daily.²¹ Dr. Hayashi placed less emphasis on the Tanden and more on the meridian lines, endocrine glands, and the internal organs;²² he also followed every session with a special massage of the spine to increase circulation.²³ Initiations weren't limited to the eight or more given in the Usui system, but were instead given at regular monthly intervals to promote personal growth and sensitivity.²⁴ Last, Dr. Hayashi developed an original manual to guide Reiki practitioners: this manual included set series of hand positions which were intended to aid the Reiki practitioner who has not learned to detect stress.²⁵

Just as Dr. Hayashi took one step away from Dr. Usui, Hawayo Takata took one (or more) steps away from Dr. Hayashi and removed many of the Eastern traditions from the Reiki system she taught to her students to include the Spiritual element introduced through the recitation of song, verse, and poetry.²⁶ She taught neither to breathe in a specific manner when giving Reiki nor that masters should hold the breath or contract certain muscles when initiating others.¹⁶ Another significant difference is that she did not appear to have taught her students to feel or detect stress.²⁷

There are a few reasons why there is so little concrete information about Takata's approach to Reiki. One of those reasons is that she forbade notes or audio recordings of her teaching; to compound this, she herself did not write or publish her teaching methods and philosophy. Contrary to history, she insisted that Reiki was and always had been a strictly oral tradition and should not be recorded.²⁸ Because her students were forbidden from taking notes, their fragile and fallible memories were all that remained. To further complicate affairs, Takata did not teach the same material to each class and did not consistently present the same information each time. Both the history and the curriculum she presented weren't consistent from one presentation to the next.²⁹

In the Summer of 2009, William Rand corresponded with Alice Picking, a student who attended a seminar taught by Takata in 1975. This appears to have been one

of the only (or the only) classes where Takata gave hand-outs and allowed her students to take notes. Ms. Picking saved her hand-outs and shared them with William Rand to help the rest of the world learn how Takata taught Reiki. In a word, Takata's system was concise. Takata did teach a series of hand positions for the treatment of chronic and acute conditions, but they were few: upper left abdomen, upper right abdomen, navel, lower abdomen, upper-mid spine, mid-spine, and lower-mid spine.³⁰ All other accounts of Takata which I have read are either conflicting or describe a system which emphasizes allowing Spiritual intuition to prompt the practitioner.

Takata's changes, revisions, and subtractions were seen by traditionalists as a betrayal of the purely Japanese Reiki system and this led to a fracture between Eastern and Western Reiki. Fortunately, time has shown that Reiki is much more flexible than the human minds which have tried to define it. Were it not for Takata's revisions, Reiki may never have gained footing in the West nor spread the way it has; it may also have fallen into obscurity and never received much notice outside of Japan. In Takata, East met West and Reiki spread like wildfire across the globe – Western Reiki enjoys equal and sometimes greater popularity in Japan than the traditional Eastern styles.

Reiki is not a religion, nor is it associated with any one particular religion. Reiki practitioners traditionally observe the five Reiki Principles, but their religious beliefs are separate. These five principles work in conjunction with the Three Pillars of Reiki in order to promote modesty, kindness, and respect for human dignity. The Three Pillars of Reiki are the key devotions which form the Usui system of natural healing. They are Gassho, Reiji-Ho, and Chiryō.

The first pillar of Reiki is Gassho, which can be interpreted as “two hands coming together.” Gassho is very simple: sit or kneel in a comfortable position and bring your palms together at the level of your heart, the same as children are taught to pray. The back is kept as straight as possible and breathing is performed regularly. While sitting in this position, all attention is focused on the point where the two index fingers come together. If a thought comes to Mind, it is acknowledged and allowed to pass. With practice, the Mind can be held in peaceful silence. The scientifically proven benefits of regular meditation are outside of the scope of this book, but I encourage you to adopt twice-daily meditation (Gassho or your preferred technique). I noticed a sharp increase in my sensitivity to Reiki and a dramatic improvement in my mood and temperament after I began regular meditation and I'm confident that you will notice similar benefits. A short guide to meditation is included in Appendix D.

The second pillar of Reiki is Reiji-Ho, or prayer. Reiji-Ho (or just Reiji), is a three-part prayer said before every Reiki session, be it for oneself or for another. The practitioner brings his hands together in Gassho at the level of his heart, prays for the Reiki to enter him, and waits for the Reiki to enter his body; it can be felt as it passes through the crown, brow, or temples. The second part, only to be performed after Reiki has entered the body, is a prayer for the recipient's health and recovery. The practitioner prays for the recipient's health and recovery on all levels and asks that the subject be healed. In the third part of the prayer, the practitioner brings his joined hands to the level of his eyes or forehead and prays that Reiki guides him to where the subject needs the most help. Whether this is spoken in the Mind or out loud is up to you.

The third pillar of Reiki is Chiryō, or treatment. This is the actual channeling of Reiki through the practitioner to the subject. At this point, it should be noted that Reiki is dissimilar from many biofield modalities in that it does not use or require the

practitioner's own life Spirit but instead draws from an infinite or inexhaustible supply of universal life. Reiki practitioners do not believe that they transmit their own vitality but instead are acting as a medium through which Reiki can flow. This is the single most important element of Reiki: the practitioner is working with a power greater than himself. When I say that a practitioner acts as a medium or channels universal life Spirit, I do not mean that he channels messages from the dead or speaks with the departed spirits. I mean that the practitioner enters a meditative state and uses his Mind and body as a vessel to permit the passage of life Spirit.

As was noted before, Dr. Usui used a more intuitive approach. Although Dr. Usui did have specific hand positions which he used for specific ailments,³¹ he was known to stress the importance of following intuition and being guided by the signals given from the patient or from the Reiki itself. Dr. Usui rigorously taught methods to detect Byosen and locate the places of greatest stress; without this skill, the practitioner was lost. To remedy this obstacle, Dr. Hayashi, at Dr. Usui's request, wrote a standardized series of hand positions which are commonly followed today: forehead, temples, back of head, back of neck, throat, crown, stomach, and intestines.³² Dr. Hayashi's most famous student, Hawayo Takata, appears to have forsaken her teacher's clinical, systematic methods and prescribed to a loose intuition.

What I want to illustrate is that each one of the key players in the Reiki story taught a different system and used a different approach from the other, but each was able to help their patients and initiate new practitioners. That is, despite their sometimes radical differences, each was able to channel Reiki and each experienced the same results. It is my opinion that, despite their differences and what they did or didn't include in their own systems, they enjoyed success because they were working with a power greater than themselves which could not be foiled or restrained by human efforts to define or shape it.

By acting as a channel or conduit for this divine Spirit, the Reiki practitioner can promote relaxation, reduce stress, and improve well-being and peace of Mind. I, as do many others, believe that Reiki promotes natural recovery from illness, injury, and disease; this is accomplished by virtue of the body's innate drive to live and operate in tune with the natural order and divine Spirit of the world.

How and why Reiki benefits recipients is debatable. Some take the position that Reiki is chi, ki, qi, prana, orgone, or a natural product of the human body which stimulates the natural healing process. The position has also been made that Reiki is the presence of God (however you define it), and a transcendent or extrinsic force which the practitioner channels for the benefit of himself or another. Scientific research is being conducted to explore Reiki and primarily focuses on the subtle, measureable energies naturally emitted by the body.

One such body of research is a study in which Japanese researchers released data showing that the human body emits visible light.³³ This light was captured on film in a light-proof room with ultra-sensitive cameras which show that the light emitted by the body naturally fluctuates during the day and is connected to the body's metabolic rate and overall vitality. One explanation has been put forward by Dr. James Oschman, Ph.D., who hypothesizes that the measurable electric fields naturally generated by the body work according to proven scientific laws of electromagnetic fields. Dr. Oschman shows that human organs naturally emit Spirit on set frequencies and that when they are unhealthy they are literally out of tune. His hypothesis suggests that the healthy "in tune" frequency of Reiki makes use of Faraday's Law and induces the weaker field back into its

natural range of operation.³⁴

Another study³⁵ shows that benefits from Reiki are not the result of self hypnosis or auto-suggestion. In this study, autonomic nervous-system changes of human subjects were measured while receiving Reiki. A control group who received no Reiki was compared to two experimental groups. One experimental group received Reiki from actual practitioners and the second experimental group received “sham Reiki” from actors. The study showed that the only group which exhibited a significant change was the group receiving Reiki from the actual practitioners. Neither experimental group was told if it was paired with actors or Reiki practitioners. The “sham” and control groups showed no significant changes.

Another peer-reviewed study³⁶ used white noise to artificially stimulate the heart rate of laboratory rats. Probes were inserted to accurately measure internal changes in real-time. Three groups were formed: the first group of rats received no Reiki. The second group of rats was treated by actors who pointed their hands at the rats from a distance of four feet. A third group of rats was treated by practitioners who also pointed their hands at the rats from a distance of four feet. As with the humans in the previous study, the only group of rats which exhibited a lowered heart rate was the group which received Reiki from the practitioners. Because rats can't be influenced by self-hypnosis or auto-suggestion, this study and others like it is among the most encouraging indicators that the positive results reported by recipients of Reiki can be attributed to something greater than positive thinking.

To deliver Reiki, the practitioner places his hands lightly on the dis-eased areas of the subject's body and uses meditative techniques to open the flow of universal life Spirit. The Usui system of natural healing employs five sacred symbols (or keys) to channel specific types of Spirit. There is debate to be had over the origin of the symbols, and even more debate to be had over their Spiritual properties. Some authors will tell you that the symbols are the power they represent and that wherever they're drawn they channel that Spirit. Whether you draw the symbol with your fingers in the Air or with a pen on paper, the power of the symbol will be invoked.

Others, including myself, take the position that the sacred symbols of Usui Reiki are graphic representations of something far larger and much less tangible. The story of Plato's cave illustrates this belief: in Plato's cave, a group of people are chained in such a way that they can only see a blank wall in front of them, upon which the shadows of things and people behind them are projected. The cave people see these shadows and give them proper names. For example, the shadow of a horse is projected onto the wall and the cave people will say, “See? That is a horse.” Of course the shadow isn't a horse: it's only the shadow of a horse. In this pattern, what we call a sacred symbol of the Usui system of natural healing doesn't actually have any power: it's only the shadow of something which is with us but outside of our full awareness.

There are many different schools of Reiki in the world today. Not all schools of Reiki use the same symbols and even those which do use the same symbols don't all draw them the same way. Hawayo Takata taught different students variations of the same symbols, and as Reiki has grown and expanded into the New Age and Occult cultures of the West it has acquired other symbols which differ in both function and appearance than the original five of the Usui system.

One of many debates in the Reiki community is over the necessity of initiations. Initiations, also called attunements, are a Spiritual ritual in which the teacher “enables” or

“opens” the student so that he can channel Reiki. The debate over the necessity of an attunement or a grand initiation goes back to Dr. Usui’s discovery of Reiki. The question always is, “Who initiated Dr. Usui?” Well, nobody. Dr. Usui was an intelligent, educated, and deeply Spiritual man who had for many years practiced several other healing modalities. I believe that he identified a common thread among all healing modalities and saw that it was easier and more powerful to channel universal life Spirit from the original source than to give away one’s own vital reserves.

My personal belief is that an initiation is not necessary to channel Reiki, but having a teacher to guide you through the learning process is necessary. The teacher guides the student in his studies and by doing so transfers necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities for the student to become a capable, confident practitioner. Some things are sufficiently overt that they can be learned from a book, but others so subtle that they require a guide. In that sense, Reiki is an initiatory tradition which celebrates the teacher-student relationship and places emphasis on experiential knowledge through mentorship and guided learning.

Following initiation, the practitioner simply lays his hands on the subject and allows the Spirit to flow. This level of training is called “Reiki I,” and the student focuses on learning to detect, feel, and measure stress as well as give Reiki in a semi-meditative state. Traditionally, no symbols are used at Reiki I. Learning to give Reiki in a meditative state teaches the student to separate his or her own thoughts, feelings, desires, and goals from those of the subject. The student learns to be an empty vessel or open conduit for life Spirit and allows himself to be used by a higher power for the benefit of another.

Consider the analogy of the painter and the brush. Would the brush feel limited because it could not paint a beautiful picture? The brush is no more than an instrument at work on the canvas. The artist who holds the brush is the one true awareness or reality and it would be folly for the brush to say, “I painted this!” When the brush realizes that it is an extension of the artist and that the painter’s skill, vision, talent, and drive flow through the brush to form something beautiful, the brush is no longer a brush – it is the painter. When man realizes that he is a brush in the hands of the master painter, he becomes one in THE ALL and ceases to be bound by his limitations. The best tool is one which allows itself to exist solely for the purpose it was created. The best Reiki practitioners put aside their own goals for the subject and serve no purpose other than to channel life Spirit for the benefit of another.

In Western Reiki, the second level of training is called “Reiki II;” it is also called the practitioner level and is when a student is traditionally qualified to offer his services to others in a professional capacity. There are five sacred symbols in the Usui system of natural healing. Their Western descriptive names are the Power symbol; the Release symbol; the Distance symbol; the Master symbol; and the Grounding symbol. At Reiki II, the student is initiated into the mysteries of the first three symbols. The first symbol is the Power symbol and it is frequently called the “light bulb;” it is typically presented as a symbol which amplifies the strength of Reiki and also the strength of other symbols. The second symbol is the Release symbol and is used to mitigate Spiritual, mental, and emotional upset. It is frequently used to clear Spirit and in contrast to the Power symbol’s vivifying or enriching attributes, the Release symbol can be seen as purifying or revelatory.

The third symbol is the Distance symbol and is arguably the most powerful and versatile of all the symbols taught in Usui Reiki. The Distance symbol is used to connect

with clients wherever they may be: whether the subject is sitting next to you, in the same room, in another room, in another city, in another country, or on the other side of the Earth, the Distance symbol bridges the gulf. The Distance symbol doesn't just cross distance, it also crosses time. The Distance symbol transcends past, present, and future to travel to the point of greatest stress. It is frequently used to undo past traumatic experiences and help the recipient change how he feels about a subject.

The final level in Western Reiki is called "Reiki III" and is traditionally reserved only for those who decide to teach. The final symbols taught are the Master and Grounding symbols. The Master symbol is described as pure god/dess Spirit. If the Power symbol is the "light bulb," then the Master symbol is the light socket! The Grounding symbol, also called the Raku, is only used during the initiation process; it has also been named "calling the Fire," and "banking the Fire."

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Henry Cornelius Agrippa and Western occult philosophy

Whatever name you prefer to give to Reiki – Gaia, Bioplasma, the Holy Spirit, Prana, Chi, Qi, Ki, Orgone – I believe that it is the same Spirit only differentiated by the ways in which it is described. I propose that many have known of and sought this Spirit and that many more have written of it. One of the authors who has most profoundly affected my study and comprehension of the nature and variety of occult sciences was a German born more than five hundred years ago. This man's name was Henricus Cornelius Agrippa von Nettesheim, or as he is commonly named in present history, Henry Cornelius Agrippa, or just Agrippa. Agrippa was born on September 14th, 1486, in Cologne, Germany and is believed to have died on February 18th, 1535, in Grenoble, France.

Agrippa, being the son of minor nobility, enjoyed great privilege, though with his natural intelligence it seems that he would have gone far no matter how much money or how many connections his parents had. Agrippa was a devout Catholic and an insatiable collector of occult knowledge. Not counting his occult studies, he learned to speak French, Spanish, Latin, Hebrew, and Greek, and also received college degrees in the arts, church canon, civil law, theology, and advanced mathematics. Agrippa, though a talented physician of much renown and sometimes compared to Paracelsus, is not known to have ever actually received a degree or manner of formal recognition from a medical institute or school of medicine.

Agrippa traveled extensively between Germany, Spain, France, Italy, and England, and was engaged in controversial affairs wherever he went. In his lifetime, he served royalty in varying capacities: astrologer, alchemist, theologian, physician, orator, soldier, diplomat, spy, and others. His talents were many and he wrote prolifically. In 1515, Agrippa delivered a popular and well-received presentation on Hermes Trismegistus in Dole, France. We'll return to Hermes momentarily, but I bring this specific point to your attention to show that Agrippa was acutely aware and highly knowledgeable of one of history's most profound figures, the man from whom was taken the name for Hermetic philosophy: Hermes.

Agrippa's written works were abundant and sadly not all survive to present day; however, his keystone text and the one which concerns us most is what is now known as the foundation book of Western occultism: Henry Cornelius Agrippa's Three Books of Occult Philosophy. In the 11th Chapter of the First Book of Occult Philosophy, Agrippa speaks of the manner in which occult virtues are given to lesser bodies, or in other words, how heavenly bodies transmit the qualities, nature, and Spirit of the divine to mortal bodies:

Platonists say that all inferior bodies are exemplified by the superior Ideas. Now, they define an Idea to be a form, above bodies, souls, minds, and to be but one, simple, pure, immutable, indivisible, incorporeal, and eternal: and that the nature of all Ideas is the same. Now, they place Ideas in the first place in very goodness itself i.e. God, by way of cause; and that they are distinguished amongst themselves by some relative considerations only, lest whatsoever is in the world, should be but one thing without any variety, and that they agree in essence, lest God should be a compound substance.¹

The “Idea” described by Agrippa is the Platonic Ideal which teaches that there is only one perfect form of every thing which we know. Imagine, for a moment, all the different breeds and varieties of horses in existence today. Each one is different from the other and has been deliberately differentiated through breeding to form varieties, certain traits, and attributes. Now, suppose that when you look at a horse – any horse, it’s not important – you’re not really seeing a horse. What you see is something which resembles a horse. That is because, outside of mortal existence there exists a perfect form, archetype, original pattern, or Perfect Ideal of a horse. This perfect form is the thought, concept, pattern, or ideal from which all other forms on Earth which we call horses are made. This original or perfect form of the horse, which exists outside of man’s knowledge or comprehension, resides in the Mind of God. The perfect ideal of the horse never changes and what we perceive in the finite world is only a shadow of the greater truth.

Now, physicists will define energy as something which can never be created or destroyed, always has been, always will be, and moves in and out of form. Theologians, when asked to define God, will say that God can never be created or destroyed, always has been, always will be, and moves in and out of form. The Mind of God is perfect, infinite, and unchangeable to the will of man. Because God can never be destroyed, lessened, reduced, altered, changed, or otherwise made different, the Original or Perfect Ideal must therefore remain in the Mind of God. This is an important point, so I’m going to be very careful with this: an original form or perfect pattern must exist transcendentally (outside of and beyond manifest reality). This form exists outside of manifest reality because if the Perfect Ideal was capable of being changed by man or circumstance, then it wouldn’t be the Perfect ideal – it would be something less.

Agrippa continues in the 13th chapter to detail the transmission of divine Spirit to manifest reality. Specifically, he mentions how this Spirit is distributed by officers and authorities, chiefly, the stars, constellations, moons, and planets of the Solar System:

Therefore, Plato, and his scholars attribute these virtues to Ideas, the formers of things. But Avicen reduceth these kinds of operations to intelligences, Hermes to the stars, Albertus to the specifical forms of things. And although these authors seem to thwart one the other, yet none of them, if they be rightly understood, goes beside the truth: since all their sayings are the same in effect in most things. For God in the first place is the end, and beginning of all virtues, he gives the seal of the Ideas to his servants the intelligences; who as faithful officers sign all things entrusted to them with an ideal virtue, the heavens, and stars, as instruments, disposing the matter in the meanwhile for the receiving of those forms which reside in Divine Majesty (as saith Plato in Timæus) and to be conveyed by stars; and the Giver of Forms distributes them by the ministry of his intelligences, which he hath set as rulers, and controllers over his works, to whom such a power is entrusted in things committed to them, that so all virtue of stones, herbs, metals, and all other things may come from the intelligences, the governors.²

Thus we see the development and point of Agrippa’s view: God or the divine as we believe it to be is transcendent and outside of manifest reality; further, all things exist in an original form in the Mind of God and that all of these Perfect Ideals are transmitted

from the Mind of God to their designated place in manifest reality according to the power and authority of designated officers and authorities. In the 14th chapter Agrippa explains the truth of the matter which most concerns what I wish to present: the interaction and union of the animating Spirit of the divine with the base elements:

*Now seeing the soul is the first thing that is moveable, and as they say, is moved of itself; but the body, or the matter is of itself unable, and unfit for motion, and doth much degenerate from the soul, therefore they say there is need of a more excellent medium, viz. such a one that may be as it were no body, but as it were a soul. ... Now they conceive such a medium to be the Spirit of the World, viz. that which we call the quintessence: because it is not from the four elements, but a certain fifth thing, having its being above, and besides them. ... There is therefore such a kind of Spirit required to be, as it were the medium, whereby celestial souls are joined to gross bodies, and bestow upon them wonderful gifts. This Spirit is after the same manner in the body of the world, as ours is in the body of man. ... now, this Spirit is received or taken in by the rays of the stars... through the Sun, Moon, planets and through stars higher than the planets.*³

As I have done before with respect to Dr. Usui, Dr. Hayashi, and Hawayo Takata, I believe it is important to note how Agrippa's background as an astrologer directed his interpretation of the divine. In his position as an astrologer, he noted with precision the passing of the planets in their orbits and their sway on mortal bodies and the affairs of men. What Agrippa named the quintessence (fifth element) and the Spirit of the World is also known by other names: Gaia, Chi, Bioplasma, the Holy Spirit and, as I know it, Reiki. Agrippa recognized that the Spirit in man balanced itself according to the same principles which balanced the heavenly bodies: just as Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto move in their orbit around the Sun and through the Solar System in proper balance, the Spirit which animates our bodies exists in similar balance.

In approximately 5 CE, the Roman astrologer Manilius corresponded each planet and sign of the Zodiac with a part of the human body. It is unclear if he was the first to do so, but history seems to have remembered his name over others. The signs of the Zodiac number twelve and form four groups of three, one group for each element. Each group of three (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius, etc.) is called a triplicity. Additionally, the planets were also assigned rulership over the body: together, the signs and planets form the Balances of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth which are in turn animated by the Spirit which inhabits the body of man. In the 22nd chapter, Agrippa writes:

*The several signs of the Zodiac take care of their members. ... And as the triplicities of these signs answer one the other, and agree in celestials, so also they agree in the members, which is sufficiently manifest by experience, because with the coldness of the feet, the belly, and breast are affected, which members answer the same triplicity; whence it is, if a medicine be applied to the one, it helps the other, as by the warming of the feet, the pain of the belly ceaseth.*⁴

What Agrippa is saying here is that the body is a microcosm of the Solar System. Just as the Solar System is a living, moving, animated body with independent members

who perform a variety of functions and fill a variety of roles, so also is the human body. It is important that you understand this difference, so I'll be very specific: in the system which I am presenting to you, the relative position of the planets is of no importance. The signs of the Zodiac and planets of the Solar System correspond to the organs, glands, bones, structures, and processes of the human body: their role and function are analogous to the role and function of their corresponding portion of the body. What is important to note is that Agrippa is describing a balance of Spirit in the body. Three signs of a triplicity (Capricorn, Taurus, Virgo) spread over separate parts of the body are not separate. They are all the Balance of Earth and when one is affected so too will the others be affected. Agrippa taught what we now recognize as holistic medicine: the body is not separate parts but an integrated whole. Even things which appear separate do in fact share a connection. This is important because of the famous figure I mentioned earlier in the text: Hermes Trismegistus.

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Hermetic thought and the 7 Hermetic Principles

It is easier to say who has been inspired by and what is connected to Hermes than it is to say who he actually was. Hermes inspired generations and caused entire organizations and movements to form in the name of his teachings. Among others, Hermes is the foundation of the Golden Dawn, Kabbalists, Sufis, Christian Science, and Rosicrucians such as Ordo Templi Orientis, Ancient Mystical Order of the Rose Cross, and the Builders of the Adytum (to name a few.) Hermetic philosophy, the school of thought which follows his teachings, has been present to one degree or another for thousands of years. Moses himself of the Old Testament was said to have been a contemporary of Hermes; compare Hermes's caduceus with Moses's answer to the Hebrews' afflictions in the desert:

KJV Num. 21:5-9: And the people spake against God, and against Moses, Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread. And the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and much people of Israel died. Therefore the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, for we have spoken against the LORD, and against thee; pray unto the LORD, that he take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the LORD said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent, and set it upon a pole: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and put it upon a pole, and it came to pass, that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld the serpent of brass, he lived.

But just who was Hermes? Depending on who you ask, he was a god, a man, a Spirit, a demigod, or even an ascended master. Such was his influence and importance to so many that Greek, Arabic, and European scholars continue to argue to this day over his true identity. It is commonly believed that Hermes was not one person but a title or identity assumed by a line of teachers, each passing the title to his student upon death or inability to continue. Hermetic scholars give the traditional lineage of Hermes as Poimandres, Thoth, Hermes Trismegistus, Asclepius, and Tat. It is uncertain what gaps exist in the lineage and it is generally believed that some of the writings were of translators and scribes who maintained his teachings.

Hermes, however many he really was, was a prolific writer and renowned teacher. Works attributed either to Hermes or his teachings include the Corpus Hermeticum, Book of Thoth, Emerald Tablet, the Torah, and the Book of Raziel, among others. In more recent history, the Hermetic Law of Attraction appeared in Rhonda Byrne's motivational and self-improvement movie "The Secret," which is an odd name for something so widely known and commonly followed.

Going back only a hundred years, we find other writers and teachers who were inspired by the work of Hermes. One work to come out of the body of Hermetic thought is the Kybalion: it was printed in 1912 by the Yogi Publication Society and the only authors listed were the Three Initiates. The word Kybalion doesn't exist anywhere else and most people agree that it's an errant spelling of Kaballah. The Kyablion is described

by the Initiates as the first-ever written account of a purely oral tradition and teaches seven laws which operate along Hermetic beliefs. The full text of the seven laws is included in Appendix A; they are:

1. The Law of Mentalism
2. The Law of Correspondence
3. The Law of Vibration
4. The Law of Polarity
5. The Law of Rhythm
6. The Law of Cause and Effect
7. The Law of Gender

The Law of Mentalism teaches that the universe and all things which we know or perceive are mental creations held within the Mind of THE ALL. THE ALL is described by such names as God, the First Cause, or the Creator, and is outside of and beyond all human comprehension. Just as man creates when he forms an idea in his Mind, THE ALL creates everything in its Mind. It is everything that ever was and ever will be, it cannot be created or destroyed, it cannot be decreased or increased in substance, and it moves in and out of form at will. Consider the Australian aboriginal expression, “Somewhere, a dreamer is dreaming us.”

I propose that Reiki – universal life Spirit – is the essence and Spirit of THE ALL which animates and moves all things: animal, insect, planet, microbe, mineral, and all other forms of matter which we haven’t yet discovered or acknowledged. By channeling Reiki, we open ourselves to the presence of THE ALL and invite pure, restorative, original source Spirit into our body. Just as a pure spring feeds a river which may become cloudy far from the source, receiving Reiki is a return to our source and a drink of pure, original Spirit (a re-connection with the First Cause.)

One of the qualities which distinguishes Reiki from other healing modalities is that it is infinite and doesn’t “run out” or dissipate over time; additionally, it doesn’t deplete the practitioner’s own vitality. The Law of Mentalism explains this phenomenon: all life and all which we can perceive are mental creations in the Mind of THE ALL. Just as THE ALL creates without depleting itself through the generation of thoughts and ideas, so Reiki heals through the practitioner’s generation of thought. THE ALL is within all and encompasses all living things; thus, through meditation and Spiritual discipline one is able to channel the same creative, restorative, and regenerative presence of THE ALL.

The Law of Correspondence teaches the commonly recited maxim, “As above, so below; as below, so above.” This is the premise that there are many levels of existence and that an effect on one plane is felt on many others. This is where we gain the healing principle that the root cause (which is not always immediately discernible) should be given greater importance than the symptoms of dis-ease. If the body manifests an ache or pain, it is more important to treat the disturbance which is operating at the higher level. An example of this is headaches which we know appear more frequently during periods of stress and anxiety. The medicinal response to headaches is to treat the symptoms with aspirin or a similar remedy which acts on the physical level; however, headaches are symptoms, not causes. If the subject isn’t relieved of the root cause (stress, anxiety, anger, frustration, etc.), the headache will return. In this case, headaches are a physical manifestation at the lowest base level of a disturbance on a higher level. Treat the dis-

ease at the highest level and the disturbance on the lowest level will obey.

The Law of Correspondence also shows why Reiki through the Law of Mentalism is possible. THE ALL, being by its very nature beyond all human comprehension, still encompasses all which is known or perceived. In that sense, THE ALL is within each of us: the divine isn't something to which access is mediated by a priesthood, it's something innate to each of us. The Temple of God exists in our own minds and the doors are open to those who would dare to move them! Just as THE ALL creates infinite universes and realities within itself for its own purposes without depleting itself, such is the manner in which Reiki practitioners aid their clients. The finite human Mind is unable to even conceive a fraction of the generative power of the infinite Mind of THE ALL, but because it is similar in degrees to the infinite Mind of THE ALL it too is capable of creating, generating, and regenerating in the same manner on a lower plane.

The Law of Vibration teaches that everything is in motion and that everything moves. The only difference between a human body and a block of granite is that a block of granite vibrates at a dramatically lower frequency and forms a heavier mass. Matter is matter, differentiated only by its atomic configuration. To further illustrate this point, consider a plate glass window: glass is not solid, but a static liquid. Over the course of years, glass actually loses its configuration and begins to droop. This fact can be observed in old windows which are thinner at the top and thicker at the bottom.

Reiki scholar Frank Petter describes Reiki as Spiritual Fire, and the differing levels of vibration between hot and cold bodies can be simply illustrated at home. Pour a glass of ice-cold Water and a glass of boiling Water. Add two or three drops of food coloring to each: you will quickly see the difference in movement of the food coloring in the cold Water which dissipates slower and in hot Water which dissipates faster. Reiki, which I believe is an expression of Spirit at a very high speed of vibration, permeates and Spiritually invigorates the body. Reiki represents pure Spirit in an extremely high vibratory state. The faster a thing moves, the finer and more subtle it becomes. Stress, anxiety, fear, depression, greed, anger, selfish pride, wrath, and similarly gross, overt states vibrate slower and restrict growth. To oversimplify the Law of Vibration, consider Peter Pan's first lesson to Wendy: "Happy thoughts make you fly." The extent to which you raise your vibratory level and take residence in the Temple of God within your Mind is the extent to which you cast aside negativity, shun wicked deeds, and consistently live a life of charity, virtue, honor, and righteousness.

The Law of Polarity states that in all things there are opposites, but also that opposites are complementary. That is, they are the same element at differing degrees of vibration. For example, what is the difference between love and hate? Both emotions are characterized by extreme interpersonal fixation and intense emotional arousal. In both love and hate, all of one's attention is directed to another person to the point that it consumes the originator and impacts every aspect of his life. The extreme emotional attachment between the originator and the target of his emotions is the same, differentiated only by what he might do with his target: there's a reason that sex and violence frequently appear together.

The Law of Polarity is evidenced in the manifestation of dis-ease across a spectrum of Spirit. Symptoms and root causes exist in the balance of the elements. Like an iceberg whose greater mass is hidden to plain sight below the Water, such is dis-ease. The symptomatic dis-ease of the Balance of Air will be accompanied by root disturbances in the Balance of Earth. Air and Earth oppose each other, but are in fact mirror reflections

of the absence of the other; so, too, does this partnership exist between Fire and Water. Wherever you find opposites, look for the connection and you'll find the answer: opposites define each other.

The Law of Rhythm states that all things have a regular motion, pattern, or set mode of movement. Just as the planets of the Solar System move in a predictable and orderly manner around the Sun and change the flow of Spirit in the Solar System and on Earth, so too do our bodies have a natural rhythm. Women experience a monthly rhythm of menstruation, men experience seasonal fluctuations in mood, and all things on Earth happen in their own time.

The Kybalion teaches that the "pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right, is the measure of the swing to the left." What swings to the left must return to the right: what goes up must come down, and the health and wellness of living creatures is no exception. The Law of Rhythm is perhaps the most difficult one to apply because it necessitates finding the rhythm of one's transit between opposite poles. By virtue of the Hermetic master's wisdom and self-discipline, he dominates the base forces which impel him back and forth and stops himself at the point he wishes to rest. In this law is found the transformation of hate into love; lead into gold; Water into wine; the gross into the subtle; and dis-ease into health. There is no recipe for eternal physical life; the fountain of youth exists only in myth; and no mortal body may escape the inevitable day of transition; but mastery of the Law of Rhythm is the final key to the inner sanctum of the Temple of God within one's own Mind where is found eternal Spiritual prosperity.

Stress is generally considered a result of only negative conflict, but it's just not true: stress is the result of too much or too little of anything. The Law of Rhythm illustrates how too much or too little of even the most innocuous subject may lead to conflict, dissatisfaction, and discontent. When one's rhythm is upset through lack or excess, it pushes one off-balance. In partnership with the Law of Polarity, the Law of Rhythm illustrates balance and how one may restore himself to the most suitable position.

The Law of Cause and Effect is very simple: for every cause (root), there is an effect (symptom.) Symptoms are easily observed, but root causes of dis-ease must be identified through application of the Law of Polarity. The balance of an element doesn't just simply become dis-eased: it had to have been disrupted by an agent of change, be that agent internal or external to the subject. The Law of Cause and Effect also operates between higher and lower planes of Spirit: what happens on a higher plane cascades down to every lower plane beneath it. What happens in the Mind naturally affects the body.

Agents of change contribute not just to happiness, satisfaction, joy, ambition, self-esteem, confidence, and identity, but also to anxiety, anger, depression, selfish pride, discontent, hate, and other undesirable states. To return to the example given under the Law of Polarity, a symptomatic dis-ease in the Balance of Air indicates a more serious root dis-ease in the Balance of Earth. Having identified the root manifestation of dis-ease, the root causes are to be found in those houses where the members of the triplicity of Earth reside: the 2nd, 6th, and 10th Houses (these houses will be explained in the following chapters.)

Even though dis-ease can be mapped according to stressors resident in the subject's Spirit, it is emphatically not the Reiki practitioner's responsibility to take part in the metaphysical blame-game. No responsible practitioner will say that the subject's dis-

ease is caused by poor thought or a failure to adapt. The Mind does affect the body and what one thinks can direct one's health, but there is no beneficial purpose in blaming the subject for his own dis-ease. The responsible practitioner will record these observations in his notes and use them as a guide to the development and application of a series of Reiki sessions. The subject should only be encouraged and directed to take positive steps toward the resolution of his dis-ease!

Consider the central principle of the Hippocratic Oath: do no harm. A problem may not exist until the practitioner convinces the subject it is present, so you would do well to favor positive direction over negative illumination. The metaphysical blame-game will tell the subject that his dis-ease is a result of bad thought and that the subject has only himself to blame, but consider this: would you blame a fallen tree for the ice which felled it? If the tree had not grown tall and extended long branches, it would never have accumulated the weight which led to its collapse. You may find it irrelevant to compare a fallen tree to a dis-eased subject, but in the grand scale there is little difference: both are living organisms subject to natural laws and the influence of outside stressors. You wouldn't blame a tree for accumulating ice, so don't blame a subject for experiencing stress. Sometimes dis-ease is the result of internal stressors within the subject's control, and sometimes dis-ease is the result of external stressors outside the subject's control, but either way it's not your place to judge: a Reiki practitioner's only responsibility is to help.

Last, the Law of Gender. The Law of Gender teaches that there is a natural contraction and expansion, yin and yang, introversion and extroversion, and duality to all things. Just as there is masculine in the feminine, there is feminine in the masculine; the Law of Gender teaches that creation results from the unification of opposite poles. The Law of Gender manifests on the physical plane as sexual intercourse but also appears on higher planes in more subtle forms of Spiritual creation. All creation, generation, and regeneration are the result of the Law of Gender. The Law of Gender is seen in the dichotomy and division of the THE ALL by Wiccans and other neo-pagan into the God and the Goddess. The Gender dichotomy is also observed in Catholicism through the elevation of Mary into the role of the divine feminine opposite her son Jesus Christ in the role of the divine masculine. In either case, opposite masculine and feminine poles are the two faces of THE ALL.

Though all of these Laws are indispensable, the one which has proven to be the most quoted and the most referenced is the Law of Correspondence: "As above, so below; as below, so above." Just as Agrippa and Manilius have described, the body in its perfect condition and order is analogous to the perfect order and movement of the Solar System. This system of correspondence teaches that in the logic, movement, and order of higher planes can be found the reason or explanation for all logic, movement, and order of the lower planes.

In this manner, Agrippa, Manilius, and others have corresponded the planets and signs of the Zodiac to portions of the body and made the function, order, systems, structures, and processes of the human body analogous to the order of the stars, planets, and heavenly bodies which Agrippa describes as the authorities and officers of the Divine. Just as the heavenly bodies in space move in their perfect order and maintain and distribute divine Spirit according to their movement through the heavens, the structures, parts, and processes of our body do the same by distributing and maintaining the balance of universal life Spirit within us.

Astrological principles of Hermetic Reiki

The first thing I'd like to tell you about this section is to relax: you won't need an ephemeris, graphing calculator, sextant, star chart, or any other such tools. As I mentioned in the introduction, you won't be learning true astrology in this book: the only astrology you'll need to know is the nature, character, disposition, and correspondences of the planets, signs, and houses of the Zodiac. There are many excellent authors who have written many excellent textbooks on astrology and I encourage you to read their work if you wish to learn divination. Astrology is the study of the stars and there are many forms of astrology from all over the world. Among the schools of astrology which have been formed are Arabic astrology; Chinese astrology; Vedic astrology; Amerindian astrology; Meso-American astrology; Australian aboriginal astrology; and the one which concerns us, Greek astrology.

Thousands of years ago, astrologers watched the skies for omens, portents, and signs. Kings wanted to know the best time to wage war; farmers the best time to sow crops; couples the best time to get marry; spouses the best time to conceive; architects the best time to begin new construction; and so on. As astrologers watched the skies and recorded their observations, they noticed that some of the lights in the sky were fixed in their position while other lights appeared smaller or larger and moved through the sky with the passage of the seasons. These heavenly bodies which moved were recognized as greater or more powerful influences in the lives of men and, with time, given the names by which we know them today. Ancient astrologers, lacking powerful telescopes and other scientific equipment we now enjoy, could not observe all of the planets in the heavens; thus, it was not until hundreds of years after the advent of established astrology that the outer planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto were discovered.

The following chapters will introduce you to the planets of the Solar System; signs and houses of the Zodiac; their unique roles and qualities; their history and mythology; how they impact life on Earth; and which parts, processes, and properties of the human body each governs. The planets and signs of the Zodiac describe aspects of our personalities: even if a man is born under the sign of Taurus and may display her respective attributes more frequently, he is still a microcosm of the Solar System and has within him all the elements of creation in all their variations (Aries, Scorpio, Gemini, Taurus, etc.) When a subject is dis-eased, those parts of him which are most out of balance will manifest not only on the gross physical plane (in the body), but also on the subtle emotional and fine Spiritual planes. These dis-eases can be traced back to root causes in the astrological houses which are connected to those signs and planets analogous to his body.

A subject's illness can be found in the corresponding planets and signs of the Zodiac at the lowest level as physical ailments or dis-ease. Illness can be found in the corresponding signs of the Zodiac at the mental and emotional level as bad moods, emotional upset, poor mental vitality, unhealthy attitudes, and weak moral fiber. More, the roots of illness can be traced back to the houses in which a sign is most at home; for example, if a person is complaining of frequent, chronic neck pain, he's manifesting symptoms in Taurus which are caused by roots in Aquarius and the 11th House. Through proper identification of a person's dis-ease, not only can the physical, mental, and emotional symptoms be addressed, but the root causes in a person's life can also be

resolved. The key to the healthful human condition lies in the proper balance of the elements of creation.

The last note I want to make before this chapter concludes is on the higher octaves and the re-assignment of the signs of the Zodiac. Before modern astronomy, the only planets which could be observed from Earth were the Sun, Mercury, Venus, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. These seven planets are called the inner planets and the personal planets. Ancient astrologers could not see the outer planets Uranus, Neptune, or Pluto, but with the discovery of the outer planets, astrologers found it necessary to examine both the roles of the new planets and the present rulers of the signs of the Zodiac.

The outer planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto are the higher octaves or more refined and evolved aspects of Mercury, Venus, and Mars, respectively. Aquarius, previously ruled by Saturn, was assigned to Uranus. Pisces, previously ruled by Jupiter, was assigned to Neptune. Scorpio, previously ruled by Mars, was assigned to Pluto. Although these signs are now ruled by the outer planets, they still retain a connection, or secondary rulership, with their original planets. This will become important when we begin looking at the correspondences of the planets and the signs and houses of the Zodiac to the human body. For example, Mars rules blood, red blood cells, adrenaline, and sex drive, but the sexual organs themselves are ruled by Pluto through Scorpio who first belonged to Mars, the lower octave of Pluto. These and other unique relationships will become clearer as we move forward and will make much more sense in context after having been presented as a whole.

I divide the planets into three groups: the Greater and Lesser Luminaries; the Inner Planets, also called the Personal Planets; and the Outer Planets, also called the Higher Octaves. The Greater and Lesser Luminaries are the Sun and Moon, respectively. They are called such because they are illuminated or luminescent. The Moon does not actually emit light, but it's understandable how early astrologers could make that mistake. Even though we know better today that Earth's Moon doesn't emit light, the name "luminary" is for traditional purposes still used. The inner planets are those planets which can be seen by the naked eye without the aid of a telescope: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn. They are called the personal planets because when used in divinatory astrology are the planets which have the clearest and most immediate impact on our day-to-day lives.

The Outer Planets are those planets only recently discovered and which can't be seen without the aid of a telescope: Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto. The outer planets' effects are more frequently measured on a large scale, thus the difference between the inner planets and the outer planets. In astrology, the planets which are farthest away from the Sun are the most powerful; why is that? Though I'm certain many people aren't familiar with it anymore, you might remember such a thing as a record player. If you're young enough that you've never seen a record player, you might be more familiar with the dual turn-tables used by disc-jockeys. Consider two points on a record: one close to the center another at the very edge. Both points travel the same speed but they do not travel the same distance. The inside point travels a shorter distance to make a single rotation, but the outside point must travel the entire circumference of the disc to make one rotation. Now compare Mercury and Pluto: Mercury, the planet closest to the Sun, spends 88 days to complete its orbit. Pluto, on the other hand, is the planet farthest from the Sun and spends almost 250 years in orbit.

Quite a difference, wouldn't you say? Because the outer planets spend more time to complete one orbit around the Sun, they spend significantly more time in each sign of the Zodiac. Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto have such a massive influence that their effects are not measured so much on the individual person but instead on entire generations. Everybody remembers the turbulent 1960's – peace rallies, hippies, free love, culture wars, actual wars, and the civil rights movement. For the first time in more than a hundred years, Pluto was conjunct Uranus. This led to sudden, erratic, innovative, and dramatic change on a broad scale affecting people all over the world. The effects of the outer planets are very powerful but because of their longer orbit are more subtle. Recall the last time you stood in the surf when the tide was going out: the surface Waters were quick and choppy, but when the waves rolled out you suddenly felt that massive pull of the surf flowing back to deeper Waters. That's the outer planets: massive influence on a wide scale.

Integral to the instruction of Hermetic Reiki is that each planet is variously in rise, rest, detriment, or fall under certain signs of the Zodiac. This will be difficult to understand until you have become acquainted with each planet and sign of the Zodiac but will become clearer. What these descriptions mean is that some planets behave differently depending on where in the Zodiac they are found. The following descriptions are used to describe these changes in behavior:

- **Rise:** More active. This planet's qualities or attributes are refined, evolved, or more pronounced in this sign. (equivalent to the Usui Reiki Master symbol)
- **Rest:** Normal. This planet's qualities or attributes are functioning normally and are neither excessive nor lacking. (equivalent to the Usui Reiki Power symbol)
- **Detriment:** Weak. This planet's qualities or attributes are functioning at reduced capacity, out of character, or are redirected to complementary outlets. (equivalent to the Usui Reiki Raku symbol)
- **Fall:** Distressed. This planet's qualities and attributes are distorted or not functioning properly; its Spirit is blocked, not flowing correctly, or "fall-ing" apart. (equivalent to the Usui Reiki Release symbol.)

The significance of the rise, rest, detriment, and fall of the planets through the signs of the Zodiac will be explained in more detail as we learn about the Spiritual body and how Reiki in context to astrology can effect a positive change. Until then, if you are unfamiliar with these descriptions, simply be aware that they exist and take notes: you'll need to know this system later.

Although we are all born under one sign of the Zodiac (or two if born on the cusp), we contain within us the properties, character, attributes, desires, strengths, and weaknesses of all twelve signs of the Zodiac. When we are healthy, at ease, and well-adjusted – physically and mentally – we typically demonstrate the favorable characteristics of the dominant signs within us. When dis-eased, the Mind and body both wane negative toward the less favorable traits of the signs and planets most affected.

As in all occult sciences, there is disagreement regarding the correspondence of the signs of the Zodiac and the planets of the Solar System. For example, the sacrum is reported by some to be exclusively ruled by Gemini, Sagittarius, or Scorpio. Others disagree on the attribution of the kidneys to Sagittarius and instead assign them to Gemini. Similar disagreements exist with other planets and signs. I tell you this not to

criticize any other's interpretation but to highlight the fact that no system is perfect and disagreements and differences of opinion do exist. When in doubt, cast aside what you believe to be correct and follow your intuition: direct guidance from the Spirit is more important than artificial guidance from human systems.

Generally speaking, the planets of the Solar System are analogous to the higher order processes and functions and the major internal organs and key structures of the human body. The signs of the Zodiac are analogous to lower order process and functions and minor structures of the human body, and the Houses of the Zodiac represent the kingdoms in which the signs and planets principally reside. The following list illustrates the analogous correspondences of the signs and houses of the Zodiac and of the planets of the Solar System in relation to Spiritual, emotional, and physical health.

The human body, in its physical and Spiritual expressions, can be explained through a variety of systems, one of which being Western astrology. The microcosm mirrors the macrocosm, and the Solar System is reflected within the human body. Just as heavenly bodies move through the Solar System and influence daily affairs on Earth, so too do our bodies have places of special importance. There's no great mystery to seeing these places of special importance: if you can see yourself in a mirror, then you are looking at universal life Spirit. Uranian Spirit flows from the crown and diaphragm; Mercurial Spirit from the brain; Plutonic Spirit from the brow; Jovial Spirit from the liver; Lunar Spirit from the stomach; Martial Spirit from the perineum; and Sanguine Spirit from the sacrum. What you see is what you get, and exercises to literally feel this Spirit in three dimensions with your very own hands are provided in the latter portion of this book.

The planets and signs of the Zodiac are the analogous rulers of the human body. As above, so below: just as the heavenly bodies move in their circles through the Solar System and by natural laws govern the variance and expression of life, so do their corresponding organs, tissues, nerves, processes, and properties govern our own bodies. Those principal organs are the chief sources of universal life Spirit in our bodies and like the planets they move in their proper order and pattern: balance is maintained by equal distribution of life Spirit and the unification of genders and opposing elements.

The human body is a microcosm of our Solar System and the astrological balance of the Heavens is mirrored within us. The four elements – Air, Fire, Water, and Earth – form our bodies. The intangible quintessence of THE ALL which animates all things is understood as “life Spirit.” Absent the fifth element of Spirit, none of the beautiful variations of life we know would exist: fish, birds, beasts, reptiles, insects, the infinite varieties of vegetation, microbes and bacteria, the largest whales to the tallest trees, and even the atom and molecule would have no animacy.

All life Spirit is maintained in a single balance. This single balance is the full or whole expression of life Spirit. It is the One, the Unity within which all exists. The Unity of Life expressed as a single balance is the fusion of Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and the Spirit which moves them to action. The whole is not the sum of its parts because only the four elements are expressed in this unity: the pervasive Spirit transcends matter and can be understood as the invisible glue which enables a finite perception of reality. Everything we know is One, held in the Mind of the THE ALL in whose infinite Mind everything is created. Everything which we can perceive, measure, name, classify, imagine, or learn is a thought already expressed on a higher plane of existence.

This Unity of Life can be arbitrarily divided in two pieces: the masculine and the

feminine. The masculine and the feminine are the active and passive poles of the Unity of Life: they show such opposites as positive and negative, light and dark, plus and minus, yang and yin, extroverted and introverted, and male and female. To aid comprehension they are described as separate but are in truth one and the same. There is no sharp division between the two and each overlaps the other. The masculine is within the feminine, and the feminine is within the masculine. Nothing is strictly masculine or feminine and can never be totally removed from the Unity nor forced into an artificial dichotomy. The opposite poles of masculine and feminine illustrate the Hermetic Law of Gender which reveals the higher processes of creation and generation. Active and passive unify on a grand scale and their union produces the infinite variations we perceive as reality.

The arbitrary division of the Unity of Life into masculine and feminine repeats in each of the genders: the masculine pole is divided into Air and Fire, the feminine pole into Water and Earth. This division does not mean that masculine and feminine have a sharp and clear division, nor does it mean that the two are separate from one another. The masculine pole's rulership includes female Air and male Fire, and the feminine pole's rulership includes the male Water and female Earth. Taken as four parts, these are the Balances of the Elements: the Balance of Air; the Balance of Fire; the Balance of Water; and the Balance of Earth. Each gender has the other within itself and the division continues into the individual members of the Zodiac. Cardinal, fixed, and mutable signs of the Zodiac illustrate portions of the individual balances. Those signs which form a triplicity (Aries, Leo, Sagittarius), are the lesser officers of a balance and the planets which rule them are the major officers who transmit universal life Spirit.

Because it is important and vitally necessary to the application of Hermetic Reiki, I will repeat this fact again many times: opposites are the same. You'll notice immediately that Venus and Mercury are major powers in the Balances of both Air and Earth. Also consider that Aquarius, Pisces, and Scorpio all had rulers who resided outside their native Balances. Health and wellness are the outward manifestation of the Unity of Life, therefore the ultimate goal of Hermetic Reiki is to unify what we have arbitrarily divided. Dis-ease happens when the Mind and body are divided, even within themselves, and the cause of division must be reconciled in order to recover Unity. Pay attention to the relationship not just between masculine and feminine, Air and Earth, and Fire and Water, but also to the opposition between cardinal and mutable. The importance of the fixed signs and the reason for their own respective opposition will quickly become evident.

The signs of the Zodiac are constellations which communicate additional qualities and attributes the same way as the planets and are at home in one of the twelve respective houses of the Zodiac. To further illustrate the difference between the signs and houses of the Zodiac, a very short history lesson is in order. The signs of the Zodiac are constellations or groups of fixed stars which maintain their relative positions one to the other in the Heavens as seen from Earth. The Houses of the Zodiac, in contrast, are the divisions of the elliptical. The elliptical is the area of the sky through which the constellations and planets are seen as Earth travels in her orbit. The elliptical is 360° and is divided into twelve 30° houses. The houses, unlike the planets and signs, describe situations, events, circumstances, and concepts in our lives. Additionally, each sign of the Zodiac is at home in one House of the Zodiac. See the difference? The signs of the Zodiac are constellations of stars with fixed positions in the sky, while the Houses of the

Zodiac are the twelve 30° divisions of the elliptical through which the signs of the Zodiac are seen.

There are twelve signs of the Zodiac and each is different from the other in several ways. The first way the signs of the Zodiac are differentiated is that they are given a particular element. The twelve signs of the Zodiac are divided into four triplicities of three signs from each element of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth. The element of Air broadly governs intellect, intelligence, communication, and relationships. The Air signs are Libra, Aquarius, and Gemini. The element of Fire broadly governs intensity, vitality, and driving energy. It can also broadly govern challenge, pride, ego, and conflict. The Fire signs are Aries, Leo and Sagittarius. The element of Water broadly rules sensitivity, emotions, feelings, intuition, and the unconscious. Water also broadly rules love, compassion, sensitivity, loss, and emotions. The Water signs are Cancer, Scorpio, and Pisces. The element of Earth broadly rules industry, productivity, and stamina. It also broadly governs ambition, goals, and desires, as well as wealth and family (which I believe are the same), roles and responsibilities within a network, and networks themselves (such as families or businesses.) The Earth signs are Capricorn, Taurus, and Virgo.

Next, each sign is given a polarity or gender: feminine and masculine, yin and yang, introverted and extroverted, minus and plus, and negative or positive. This is easy to remember: Air and Fire are masculine, and Water and Earth are feminine. Positive masculine elements are extroverted and expansive, negative feminine elements are introverted and contractive.

Last, the signs of the Zodiac are assigned one of three modalities: cardinal, fixed, or mutable. These three modalities describe how the element to which it is attached moves or functions. Cardinal signs are enterprising and get things started but aren't famous for being patient or taking it slow. Cardinal signs are Libra, Aries, Cancer, and Capricorn. Fixed signs consolidate progress and cement things in place. They are an anchor to the people around them and work to maintain stability. The fixed signs are Aquarius, Leo, Scorpio, and Taurus. Mutable signs change with their surroundings and rebound easy. The mutable signs are Gemini, Sagittarius, Pisces, and Virgo. With respect to friendship, neutrality, and enmity, cardinal signs oppose mutable signs, and fixed signs oppose fixed signs of contrary elements.

Each element is friendly to its own element, or in other words, agrees with itself. Air agrees with Air, Fire with Fire, Water with Water, and Earth with Earth. Each element is complemented by its respective active or passive half: passive masculine Air and active masculine Fire complement each other; and active feminine Water complements passive feminine Earth. Each element is neutral to another element: Passive masculine Air and active feminine Water share neutrality, as do active masculine Fire and passive feminine Earth. Neutral elements have neither positive nor negative effects on the other. Each element is opposed to another element: passive masculine Air and passive feminine Earth share opposition, as do active masculine Fire and active feminine Water.

Through use of a simple four-square, you can lay out the elements and easily see their relations one to the other. Air and Fire are active and rise above the passive Water and Earth. Each element agrees with its own quadrant. Complementary elements appear on the left or right, neutral elements are aligned vertically, and opposing elements are positioned at a diagonal one to the other. Consider the following diagram:

<u>Air</u> <i>Passive masculine</i>	<u>Fire</u> <i>Active masculine</i>
<u>Water</u> <i>Active feminine</i>	<u>Earth</u> <i>Passive feminine</i>

So much information can be imposing at first, but you can quickly learn the order, polarity, element, and modality of the signs of the Zodiac with the following list. It begins with Aries and alternates polarity, element, and modality with each following sign:

1. **Aries:** cardinal masculine fire
2. **Taurus:** fixed feminine earth
3. **Gemini:** mutable masculine air
4. **Cancer:** cardinal feminine water
5. **Leo:** fixed masculine fire
6. **Virgo:** mutable feminine earth
7. **Libra:** cardinal masculine air
8. **Scorpio:** fixed feminine water
9. **Sagittarius:** mutable masculine fire
10. **Capricorn:** cardinal feminine earth
11. **Aquarius:** fixed masculine air
12. **Pisces:** mutable feminine water

In the following five chapters, the anatomical and astrological review of the planets is not in the order of the Solar System, but of the human body. Instead of ordering the planets from the Sun to Pluto, I've ordered them from the crown to the sacrum; in other words, from the top of the head to the bottom of the spine. The three pairs of Higher-Lower octave planets are first (Uranus-Mercury; Pluto-Mars; and Venus-Neptune); the Greater and Lesser Luminaries second (Sun and Moon); and the Supply and Demand last (Jupiter and Saturn.) Following the review of the planets, the respective Balances of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth will be introduced and are ordered from finest to grossest.

The Houses of the Zodiac will be briefly introduced during the review of the 10 planets of the Solar System, but for sake of brevity and reducing confusion, their descriptions will be provided in Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 14 (the Balances of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth), and how the Houses of the Zodiac are incorporated into Hermetic Reiki is fully explained in Chapters 15 and 16. You may consult Appendix B for a quick-reference list of all planets', signs', and houses' correspondences to the human body.

Knowledge and Innovation: Uranus and Mercury

Uranus (higher octave)

- **Rulership:** Breath; breathing; diaphragm; brain stem and spinal cord; central nervous system
- **Native house:** 11th House
 - **Rise:** Scorpio
 - **Rest:** Aquarius
 - **Detriment:** Leo
 - **Fall:** Taurus

Mercury (lower octave)

- **Rulership:** Left/Right hemispheres of brain; peripheral nervous system
- **Native houses:** 3rd House; 6th House
 - **Rise:** N/A
 - **Rest:** Gemini; Virgo
 - **Detriment:** Sagittarius; Pisces
 - **Fall:** N/A

The first planet from the Sun is Mercury. It is the planet closest to the Sun and is the quickest of the planets, completing one orbit around the Sun in 88 days at about 30 miles per second. Mercury is among the planets with the most stories written about him. Mercury is the Roman name for this planet, but the Greeks called him by the name of another: Hermes. In Greek mythology, Hermes was the messenger of the gods and was given winged sandals by Zeus himself to aid him in quickly ferrying messages and communications. Hermes was free to travel at will and without permission between the Heavens, Earth, and the Underworld. Mercury is at home in two houses of the Zodiac: the 3rd House of siblings, communication, and learning, and the 6th House of work and health. Mercury governs the signs Gemini and Virgo, the signs of mutable Air and Earth, respectively.

Mercury also shares the root for the word “merchant,” this because of his role in a natal chart: communication and exchange of information, among others. Mercury, as the ruler of two mutable signs (Gemini of Air, Virgo of Earth), holds neither a negative nor a positive charge and possesses no distinct personality of his own. Instead, Mercury – as the mouthpiece of the gods – amplifies or transmits the message or personality of whichever planets are in close proximity.

Mercury imparts a quick intelligence, clever nature, and adaptability that would make Indiana Jones or MacGyver look positively rigid. Mercury governs all things which require communication and exchange of ideas, including writing, speaking, listening, learning, teaching, and assimilating what others communicate. Mercury also rules those things which facilitate communication and exchange of knowledge: books, contracts, agreements, newspapers, journals, sales, and exchange of money. Mercury, as the ruler of the hands, leads people under his influence to speak with their hands, to possess great dexterity, and be skilled in fine craftsmanship.

On a bad day, Mercury is out of touch and unavailable. Misunderstandings

abound and nothing seems to be communicated properly. You tell your friend about ABC but later he gets upset and swears that you were talking about XYZ. Mercury will cling to rational thinking, even if the logic is faulty or rational thought can't explain what happened. This means that Mercury can have trouble adapting to a new game because he's still operating under the rules of the last game and doesn't understand why things needed to be changed.

Mercury goes into retrograde four times per year for about three weeks. Retrograde means that the planet as seen from Earth appears to slow down, stand still, or even move backward. In reality, it is a trick of the eye – the planet is as always moving on its same course. When Mercury goes into retrograde, the things he rules experience flux and difficulty. Phone calls mysteriously disconnect, emails get lost in cyberspace, arguments start from simple miscommunications, the payroll database crashes, and so on. All of these happen more frequently during Mercury retrograde and for that reason it gets a lot of attention every time it rolls around. For all the worrying some people do about Mercury-retrograde, it's not as terrible as is described. The blessing of Mercury-retrograde is that we are given a three-week period in which we can disengage from others, focus on ourselves, and enjoy some peace and privacy. Mercury-retrograde is a good time for reflection and inquest.

Before we go any farther, I want to preemptively kill any naughty astrologer jokes. I have a very dry and sarcastic sense of humor and I love puns and plays on words; however, I find it hard to avoid being laughed at by complete strangers when I bring up the subject of Uranus. I have to admit – potty humor is immature but it makes me laugh because, well, it's funny. Unfortunately, it's hard to talk when the other person laughs every time I mention Uranus. Imagine an astrologer sitting at a table with a client looking at a natal chart: "The signs look favorable for a romantic encounter in the near future, but I see unexpected trouble coming from Uranus." You can say the name of the planet any way you like, but I've found that I avoid a lot bad jokes at my expense when I move the stress from the letter "a" to the first letter, "u." Ur-ANUS is something you discuss with a proctologist, and UR-anus is something you discuss with an astrologer.

Back to business: Uranus is the seventh planet from the Sun and the first of the outer planets. Uranus is an odd-ball, in the most literal sense: he orbits the Sun on his side and rotates clockwise. This is unusual because the other planets of our Solar System rotate counter-clockwise and their poles face away from the Sun (not toward it.) This unusual axis and rotation is thought to be the result of a cataclysmic collision or similar event which radically altered the planet's position; maybe there's truth to Uranus' mythological castration and deposition at the hands of his son Saturn? Uranus is the ruler of youth and orbits the Sun in eighty four years. Men's common "mid-life crisis," which generally happens between 38 and 42, is the result of Uranus occupying the exact opposite position of a man's natal chart as when he was born; thus, things are literally upside down.

Uranus is the higher octave of Mercury and functions in a similar manner but on a higher order. Mercury could be compared to a reporter or journalist: he discovers, collects, digests, assimilates, and disseminates information. Mercury is a mouth-piece who reports what's happening or what already happened. Mercury hears the word, assembles the word, and then puts the word on the street. Mercury dutifully and responsibly collects, relays, and reports information like Hermes the fleet-footed messenger of the gods. Uranus is different: like Mercury, he's smart, swift, and agile, but

– unlike Mercury – Uranus is inventive and highly original. To get an idea how Uranus works, just look to the metal named for him: uranium, which is used both for nuclear power and nuclear bombs. You can use uranium to light up a city, but you can use it to blow up a city. Uranus does not suffer consistency: he wants to turn things upside down to match the axis on which he sits.

Unlike Mercury, who collects and reports new things, Uranus wants to collect and invent new things. Mercury will maintain a car in working order, but Uranus will strip the car apart, change up to a bigger engine, improve the fuel economy, add a new sound system, and install satellite radio. See the difference? He changes everything. Of all the changes Uranus would make to that car, the one thing he would definitely install is satellite radio. Uranus is the ruler of radio waves, advanced communication, new research, and experimental development. Uranus takes the information and then works to learn something from it and make it better. Uranus can be difficult to cope with because he changes things by first pointing out what's not good about them. Uranus doesn't wait on others for their permission: he's willful and he doesn't conform to expectations. Despite all of that, Uranus is highly scientific and can make sudden breakthroughs where others have languished. He is a synthesizer and combiner of all things: give him ten difficult projects and he'll turn them into one successful endeavor. It won't be anything like what you gave him, but it will be original, unique, and powerful.

On a bad day, Uranus can be impetuous and he'll leap before he looks: he may even leap just to disprove his naysayers, only realizing later that he really should have checked the height first. He can also be disconnected from the rest of the world or in his comings and goings a regular space cadet. His ability to synthesize moves beyond the scientific and instead into the imaginary where everything makes perfect sense and no sense at all. He feels like he's on the brink of something great but instead he's totally confused with all of the ideas he's spinning around in Mind. Uranus is the primary ruler of Aquarius, the sign of fixed Air, and is most at home in the 11th House of friends, groups, mentors, teachers, and aspirations.

The entire head is a major junction of universal life Spirit; the first portion which will be discussed is Uranus, or the crown, and the second which will be discussed is Mercury, or the brain. Because the kingdoms of Mercury and Uranus are inseparable, they must be considered the same. Any division between the two is artificial and exists only to provide clarification. If you lay your hand palm-down over the top of your head with the fingers are pointing behind you, that's almost the entire crown. Mercury, as the left and right hemispheres of the brain, covers the portion of the head not included in the crown to exclude the brow and temples. This area includes the rear of the head extending to the occipital bone.

The question can be asked, "Which planet is the most important?" The answer, if you're curious, is "yes." Yes – they're all the most important. Each planet is absolutely vital and important to the individual's health. The only importance given to a planet is the importance of the structures, functions, and processes it rules. Although Hermetic teachings confirm that reality as we know it is a lower, base manifestation of myriad higher planes, there is no benefit to giving exclusive emphasis to planets such as Uranus, Mercury, and Pluto in an effort to ascend more rapidly to higher planes of Spiritual awareness. Placing exclusive emphasis on Uranus, Mercury, and Pluto is like building a palatial mansion on top of a mobile home: grossly unbalanced. Ascension to and operation within the higher planes of Spirit is only accessible to those whose Minds and

bodies are equally balanced.

The importance of the crown in Hermetic Reiki is that the crown is the gateway to the breath of life: it is revered in world religions as a place of importance and significance. It is considered among the most sacred parts of the body and is frequently protected or shielded from outside influence by hats or other garments. Yarmulkes are found in Judaism; kufis and taqiyahs are found in Islam; zucchetos are found in Catholicism; tubeteikas are worn by ethnic Turks and some eastern-Europeans; the fez is still worn in parts of Libya, Morocco, Egypt, and northern Africa; turbans are worn by Sikhs; a wide variety of headwear is in use today in the Middle East both among men and women; and a wide variety of headgear is worn in traditional Asian cultures.

In many cultures around the world it is considered an extreme offense to touch or strike another's crown, and even if the exact importance of the location is not explained, the crown is given great emphasis in Christian culture: when congregants come together to give a blessing of comfort to a brother or sister in need, they do so by placing their hands atop the person's head.

Uranus is best illustrated through his lesser-used second glyph which looks like an amalgam of the glyphs of the Sun and Mars. The second glyph of Uranus shows a circle of Spirit with a seed of potential or identity within it, but in this instance it is topped with a straight vertical arrow of aim, drive or desire. It is almost identical to the glyph of Mars, except that the arrow points straight to the divine and is an emblem of mortal man's innovation and self-determination to grow and become closer to the First Cause from which he and all other life originated.

The importance of Mercury is that he's is the communicator of information and ferryman of signals throughout the body. You remember the importance of the Roman Mercury or Greek Hermes in mythology: he was the fleet footed messenger of the gods and the only person who could freely and without restriction travel between the Heavens, Earth, and Underworld. He fulfilled his duties as a courier but also used his privileges to learn and indulge his curiosity. Mercury is the general ruler of the brain itself is also the specific ruler of the corpus callosum, the segment which connects the left and right hemispheres of the brain. Uranus is the higher octave of Mercury, and Uranus and Mercury together form the Mind, intellect, rationale, thought, insight, and wit of man. Because Uranus is the higher octave of Mercury, the two are essentially the same Spirit.

Uranus is the major portal through which Spiritual life Spirit flows into the human body. Uranus, similar to its association with the breath of the divine, governs the breath, breathing, and diaphragm. Scriptures from the Bible, Koran, Tora, and others which refer to man being made alive or animate through the breath of God are numerous. A review of other holy texts outside the Abrahamic faiths shows similarities between breath and animation of the human Spirit.

An intriguing story stems from the correspondence of Uranus to Tarot, a form of cartomancy famously employed by Gypsies and fortune-tellers around the world. The 12th card of the major arcana (greater secrets) of the Tarot is the Hanged Man and shows a man tied by the ankle to a wooden crossbeam hanging upside down with a corona or bright aura around his crown. Although the Hanged Man originally referred to a traitor or somebody who went against the established regime (much like innovative, rebellious Uranus), physical inversion is archetypally significant.

In Norse mythology, Odin was said to have hung himself upside down from a branch of the World Tree (or Tree of Life) to gain wisdom. Similarly, yogis and other

mystics practice physical inversion to let oxygen-rich blood flow from the feet and abdomen to the brain and head. The increased blood flow is said to improve health and promote wisdom. Likewise, chiropractors and health spas frequently employ swinging tables to invert their patients for health and wellness.

Uranus primarily rules the central nervous system which includes the brain, the brainstem, and the spinal cord. The brain is ruled by both Uranus and Mercury, but the nature of their kingdoms is different in function. Uranus and Mercury are inseparable and, for our purposes, must always be treated together. Uranus primarily rules the central nervous system (brain, brain stem, and spinal cord), and Mercury primarily rules the peripheral nervous system and the signals and messages which are carried through it. Like fleet-footed Hermes who traveled everywhere as he pleased, Mercury governs the nerves and pathways which permeate the body and bring signals from the top of the crown to the tip of the toes and everywhere in between.

Uranus' rulership of the central nervous system controls a variety of functions, primarily the central nervous system, which includes the brain, brain stem, and the spinal cord. The brain is not one solid mass of grey matter but several separate pieces. The brain is made of four lobes in two hemispheres and the two halves are joined by the corpus callosum, an information super highway which coordinates the body and facilitates transfer of signals to, from, and between the separate halves of the brain. The two hemispheres of the brain form the cerebral cortex, the wrinkly, ruffled surface which most people see when they think of the brain. The cerebral cortex sits on top of and surrounds other structures, such as the pons, cerebellum, and the ubiquitous medulla oblongata. The cerebral cortex forms the base for the neo cortex, in Latin meaning "new bark" or "new rind," the gray matter which surrounds the deeper white matter of the brain.

The four lobes of the brain are interconnected and work together, but each individual lobe generally governs specific processes. The portion of the brain nearest the front of the head is the frontal lobe. The frontal lobe governs speech, speaking, expression, motor control, coordination, plans, and planning. After the frontal lobe is the parietal lobe which governs comprehension of speech, interpretation of signals, making sense of communication, and decoding signals of sensation from the body. At the very rear and base of the skull is the occipital lobe which governs sight, vision, and making sense of what we see. Last, wrapped or tucked around each side is the temporal lobe. The temporal lobe governs the interpretation of what we hear, how we hear, moderates behavior, and influences long-term memory.

The spinal cord, as an extension of the cerebral cortex and cerebellum, is also ruled by Uranus. One of the most interesting functions of the spinal cord is the function and operation of dermatomes. Dermatomes are those portions of the body which are connected to specific portions of the spinal cord. This is important not just to Uranus but also Pluto, who we'll meet next, because both Uranus and Pluto are in rise, rest, detriment, and fall only in the fixed signs of the Zodiac which correspond to the divisions of the spine.

The spine is divided into four portions: the cervical vertebrae (C2-C8), thoracic vertebrae (T1-T12), lumbar vertebrae (L1-L5), and sacral vertebrae (S1-S5.) We'll return to dermatomes later when we explore the fixed signs Aquarius, Leo, Scorpio, and Taurus, but I introduce the subject now to illustrate the spinal column's relation to Uranus as a relay network. The spinal cord transmits signals to the body from the brain via synapse

nerves which run through the entire body. Nerves extend from the spinal column (the central nervous system) to every region of the body and in response to signals from the brain innervate (synaptically trigger) muscles, organs, and tissues to perform certain functions. These same nerves also relay information from dermatomes back to the central nervous system.

Another interesting relation between the 12th major key of the Tarot and Uranus is that there are twelve cranial nerves which extend from the brain stem and terminate at different locations in the body. They primarily terminate in the head, but a few extend much farther than the head, face, jaw, and neck.

The function of Cranial Nerve Zero is uncertain and is debated by researchers. It is known to be a sensory nerve, meaning that it is essentially afferent, or that it transmits outside signals to the central nervous system, but is believed to play a role in the detection of pheromones. More practical than Cranial Nerve Zero, Cranial Nerve I is an afferent nerve which communicates what we actually smell, such as food, smoke, trees, and unwashed laundry. Wouldn't it be wonderful if we could just turn that nerve off sometimes?

Cranial Nerve II is an afferent nerve which transmits light signals to the brain stem. In other words, it is our sense of sight and it helps us make sense of the visual input we receive. Complementary to Cranial Nerve II, Cranial Nerve III (the oculomotor nerve) is an efferent nerve which innervates most eye motion. Cranial Nerve IV is an efferent nerve, called the trochlear nerve, and complements Cranial Nerve II through innervation of fine motor control of the eyes. Cranial Nerve VI, called the abducens nerve, abducts the eye, or in other words innervates the muscles of the eye to track left and right. When the doctor watches your eyes and asks you to visually track light as he moves it left and right, he is examining your abducens nerve for proper functioning.

Cranial Nerve V is both afferent and efferent, and is called the trigeminal nerve. It receives sensory information from the face and innervates the muscles of mastication, or in other words, signals muscles of the jaw which enable us to chew our food. Cranial Nerve V is good friends with Cranial Nerve IX, the glossopharyngeal nerve, which innervates the parotid gland to produce saliva and which also communicates the sense of taste from the rear third of the tongue.

Cranial Nerve VII is an afferent and efferent nerve, called the facial nerve. It innervates the muscles which enable us to create so many different expressions, from the saddest frown to the happiest smile and everything in between. It also innervates a very small skeletal muscle in the ear called the stapedius. This muscle acts like a buffer or valve, relaxing or contracting, to regulate the effect of very loud sounds entering the ears. Cranial Nerve VII additionally communicates taste from the front two-thirds of the tongue.

Cranial Nerve XII is an efferent nerve, called the hypoglossal nerve, and enjoys the company of Cranial Nerves V, VII, VIII, and IX. It innervates most of the tongue and it is important with respect to swallowing because it promotes bolus formation. A bolus is the mass of food formed in the mouth so that food can be swallowed and easily digested. The hypoglossal nerve also innervates the parotid gland to produce saliva which begins the process of digestion in the mouth.

Cranial Nerve VIII is an afferent nerve, called the statoacoustic nerve. It relays sound to the brain stem and acts as a gyroscopic compass which maintains rotation, gravity, hearing, and equilibrium. Cranial Nerve X is an afferent and efferent nerve,

called the vagus nerve. Vagus comes from Latin, meaning “wanderer,” which is appropriate in that it “wanders” quite a long way away from the brain stem where it originated. The vagus nerve is parasympathetic in nature, meaning that it serves to relax the body. The vagus nerve helps control the muscles which form our voice and resonance as well as the soft palate. It innervates the palatoglossus, which is the muscle that elevates the posterior of the tongue and aids our ability to swallow. The vagus nerve “wanders” from the brain stem through the head, neck, chest, and abdomen, and also contributes to the innervation of the internal organs. Cranial Nerve XI is an efferent nerve, called the accessory nerve. It innervates the muscles of the neck and of the trapezeus and it shares several functions with the vagus nerve.

Uranus rules breath, breathing, and the diaphragm. As illustrated earlier, the mystical significance of breath can't be undervalued. Breath and breathing are essential not only for life, health, and relaxation, but also for occult purposes. It is no accident that breath-control and awareness of one's breath is taught in classes of conflict mediation, stress reduction, and anger management. On the purely physical level, breathing is the process by which the body expels carbon dioxide. This gas exchange removes harmful carbon dioxide from the human body and the rate at which a person breathes is set by the autonomic nervous system.

Like the Hanged Man suspended in mid-air, the diaphragm performs a similar function: it suspends the heart and prevents it from “falling” into the abdominal cavity. Every time you inhale, your body moves. Depending on how you choose to breathe (because it is a conscious choice), either your chest or your abdomen will expand; this is in response to the movement of the diaphragm. The diaphragm is a large wall or sheet of muscle which separates the abdominal cavity from the thoracic cavity. The diaphragm is related to breath and breathing in that as it expands and contracts, the lungs breathe in and out.

Deep breathing which expands the abdomen is called diaphragmatic breathing, belly breathing, and abdominal breathing, but Yogis have even more names and methods of performing this technique. Most people breathe into their upper chest, which causes the familiar “rise and fall” of the chest. This is the way most people automatically breathe and unfortunately it's not the best way to breathe. Breathing into the chest restricts the lungs from expanding fully and does not encourage a full breath of fresh Air and exchange of carbon dioxide. By “breathing” into the abdomen, the lungs accept more fresh oxygen and harmful carbon dioxide is expelled with greater efficiency. With practice this way of breathing can become automatic – I encourage you to research deep breathing and work to implement it in your own life.

Beyond the coordination of the body and aiding the transfer of information, Mercury specifically rules the peripheral nervous system which includes the somatic and autonomic nervous systems. The autonomic nervous system is further subdivided into the sympathetic, parasympathetic, and enteric nervous systems. The peripheral nervous system connects the central nervous system (brain, spinal cord) to the rest of the body and relays information from one to the other and back again in a constant flow of information. Autonomic body functions are those functions and processes which are “automatic,” or which function without conscious effort on your part (digestion, heart rate, etc.) The central and peripheral nervous systems can, as already mentioned above, be afferent or efferent. Afferent means that a nerve carries sensory information or signals from external stimuli to the brain for processing; in other words, afferent nerves affect the brain.

Efferent means that a nerve carries signals from the brain to the body for action; in other words, efferent nerves create effects.

The somatic nervous system is primarily efferent and it works to coordinate movement and regulate those activities which are under conscious control. In its afferent capacity, it receives external stimuli which when relayed to the brain keep the body in touch with its surroundings. These afferent signals come from muscles, skin, and sense organs. In other words, if something is heavy or light, hot or cold, or smells good or bad, the somatic nervous system helps relay that information to the brain so that we know whether to work harder to lift an object, stay away from an intense heat, or not eat something rotten. In its efferent capacity, it coordinates voluntary movement of the body through the innervation of skeletal muscles (walking, jumping, turning the head, etc.)

Interestingly, the somatic nervous system does not rule reflex arcs. A reflex arc is an automatic reflex which happens involuntarily and which appears to have become ingrained in our genetic make-up as a survival mechanism; reflex arcs are autonomic and somatic. Autonomic reflex arcs are reflexes which occur in the internal organs, while somatic reflex arcs are reflexes which occur in the muscles. The knee jerk and the rapid retraction of the hand after touching a hot surface are examples of a somatic reflex arc. Curiously, reflex arcs do not result from a command issued in the brain but instead from the spinal cord; in other words, the afferent signal doesn't travel to the brain and the efferent signal is issued from the spinal cord. The autonomic nervous system operates largely outside of our awareness. The autonomic nervous system is responsible for regulating and coordinating such activities as sexual arousal, salivation, perspiration, heart rate, sexual arousal, intestinal activities, and digestion, and it is classically divided into two halves: the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems.

The sympathetic nervous system is what prepares the body for “fight or flight” and could be compared to the accelerator pedal in a vehicle. The sympathetic nervous system reacts and responds to danger, irritation, stress, and anxiety – in other words, it compels us to act in the face of danger. The sympathetic nervous system increases blood pressure, raises heart rate, increases adrenaline, and coordinates other physiological changes associated with excitement and arousal.

The parasympathetic nervous system is the counterbalance to the sympathetic nervous system: it is the rest-and-digest, like the brake pedal in a vehicle. Generally speaking, the parasympathetic nervous system slows the body, calms the nerves, and returns the body to homeostasis. It responds to calm surroundings and can be deliberately activated by increasing one's sense of peace and calm. The parasympathetic nervous system promotes healthy digestion and can be seen in the slowing of the heart, healthy digestive activity, and dilation of pupils or blood vessels.

The autonomic nervous system also includes the enteric nervous system. The enteric nervous system regulates everything which operates in context to digestion: esophagus, stomach, small intestine, and colon. The enteric nervous system innervates the digestive tube and is located inside its walls. Curiously, the enteric nervous system collectively contains as many neurons as the entire spinal cord and can operate independently in isolation from the autonomous nervous system. For this reason, the enteric nervous system has been called a “second brain” and provides evidence for “gut feelings!”

Life and Death: Mars and Pluto

Pluto (higher octave)

- **Rulership:** Endocrine system; reproductive system; regeneration; eliminative process
- **Native house:** 8th House
 - **Rise:** Leo
 - **Rest:** Scorpio
 - **Detriment:** Taurus
 - **Fall:** Aquarius

Mars (lower octave)

- **Rulership:** Muscles; sexual desire; adrenaline; blood pressure; blood; veins; all muscles
- **Native house:** 1st House
 - **Rise:** Capricorn
 - **Rest:** Aries
 - **Detriment:** N/A
 - **Fall:** Libra

If women are from Venus, then men are from Mars. The Red Planet bears the name of the Roman god of war. Mars is the fourth planet from the Sun and spends about two years in orbit. Mars appropriately has the largest known volcano in our Solar System, Olympus Mons, which stands almost twice as tall as Mount Everest. Mars is all about action: Nike's famous slogan, "Just do it," could easily characterize the Spirit Mars contributes to our lives. Mars governs strenuous physical activities such as competitive sports, sexual intercourse, sport combat, and all manner of risk-taking, armed conflict, and warfare. Mars has great endurance and when the going gets tough, he gets going. Mars is all about living in the moment and is interested only with base, material desires. He lives to assert himself and get what he wants, so he seeks dominance and exercises his power at every opportunity.

Here we see the difference between Venus and Mars: Venus gets her way through her feminine charms and subtle affections, while Mars gets his way through brute force. Might may not make right, but a strong personality (or a strong arm) can achieve an end. Mars may not build friends or form lasting relationships, but he can get things done.

Mars is not famous for patience and does not encourage a wait-and-see attitude. Similarly, Mars does not suffer procrastination or delay. On his bad days, Mars is uncontrollable. He is explosively angry and his need for instant gratification borders on addiction. He experiences wild mood swings, goes into a rage at the drop of a hat, and embodies pride and anger. If he was very forward and aggressive before, he's positively violent and possessed by his needs now. For those who are curious, Mars corresponds to the Tarot card The Devil, which has also been alternately named "Materialism" or "Pride" in some systems.

Mars is the lower octave to the tenth planet of the Solar System, Pluto. There are

three glyphs I want to discuss. The first glyph is perhaps the most literal and easy to perceive: a single black sphere. This black sphere is, like Pluto, small and dark. Pluto, being the farthest planet from the Sun receives 1/1,600th of the amount of light on Earth. The planet itself is very small – only two thirds the size of our own Moon – but astrologers still recognize her unique qualities even if astronomers have declared her not a planet. I personally prefer this first glyph because I believe that it more succinctly communicates Pluto's dark, mysterious, frightening, and enigmatic character.

The existence of Pluto was first hypothesized by Percival Lowell, but he was not the one to discover it; instead, Clyde Tombaugh discovered Pluto almost by accident in 1930. The second glyph of Pluto is written as an amalgamation of the letters P and L, both for the man who began the search to find it (Percival Lowell) and for the name of the planet itself, Pluto. This second glyph of Pluto is the most widely used and commonly recognized of the Plutonian glyphs and is what you will see in most references. The third glyph of Pluto represents her supreme power: a circle of Spirit above a crescent of Mind over a cross of matter. In other words, Spirit conquers all, and all things are subordinate to the divine.

Pluto is the ninth planet from the Sun and by merit of her distant position is the most powerful planet in the Solar System. Pluto spends almost 250 years to orbit the Sun and spends about 20 years in each sign of the Zodiac. Pluto's effects are measured not by their power over an individual but over entire generations: she dictates and defines the stories of our lives and the struggles of entire nations. Pluto is the Roman name for the Greek god you probably know better: Hades. Pluto is the ruler of the dark underworld. Unlike the popular misconception which teaches that the Underworld is a dark, fearsome, terrible place of suffering, Greek and Roman mythology teach that the Underworld is a place of renewal and transformation. It is true that some spirits suffered or were tormented in the Underworld, but it is also true that some spirits (and people) suffered or were tormented greatly both on Earth and in the Heavens, too.

Pluto, as the ruler of the Underworld, symbolizes that last descent into the Final Mystery and the Great Unknown. What else could be more fearful than passage through the veil from the land of the living to the land of the dead? Fortunately, the Underworld is not a dungeon or a place of banishment: it is a place of change, transformation, birth, and rebirth. It is the Waters of the abyss which hold the rich treasures of original life. To put it bluntly, change is difficult. Look around you the next time you're at the bookstore and notice how many books are written for the purpose of self-improvement or learning to cope with the challenges life brings. Humans (myself included) are creatures of habit and, no matter what we may say, change is almost never welcome or easy. Change and transformation require that we move out of the familiar and into the unknown. Only by experiencing life's changes and demands do we grow and become more than we were yesterday – that is why Pluto wields such influence over our lives.

Additionally, Pluto governs the most personal and intimate aspects of our lives which exert an equally powerful influence over us: sexual intercourse, sexuality, and sexual preference. The next time you're at the mall, or the gas station, or watching TV, or watching a movie, or listening to the radio, or practically doing anything at all, consider the frequency with which you are bombarded with sexually oriented media or sexually suggestive messages. Sex and the sexual urge are used to market and sell food, drinks, clothes, perfume, cars, and everything else under the Sun. Look around you and you'll be amazed how frequently you find sex woven into your surroundings – it's almost

impossible to escape. Sexuality is woven into our genetic make-up – teenagers and adults struggle daily to find a happy medium between satisfying their sexual cravings and learning self-control. Domination of the sexual urge and self-discipline over sexual desire is a prominent feature of many religions around the world and not a few religions mandate that their clergy observe celibacy.

The last element of Pluto I wish to discuss here is perseverance. Mars and Pluto both enjoy great stamina, but the difference is a matter of scope. Mars works hard for a goal, Pluto works hard regardless of goals. Pluto never stops, never relents, and never yields to outside pressures. Pluto is the ultimate force to whom all others must yield – there is no choice in the matter. Pluto also governs elimination and finality. Without death, there can be neither regeneration nor rebirth.

Pluto – dark and enigmatic – stands opposite the bright, vital Spirit of the Sun. This isn't to suggest that Pluto is harmful, negative, or bad. Quite the opposite! Pluto, like Uranus, occupies a place of special prominence: the brow, also called the third eye. Like the crown, the brow is a gateway of special importance. The brow is credited by some as the key which opens the door to psychic phenomena, exploration of the astral planes, clairvoyance, clairsentience, and all manner of Spiritual experiences. While the exact function and operation of the brow is debatable, its significance is not.

In both Buddhism and Hinduism, the third eye is a symbol of inner attainment, or enlightenment. Statues of enlightened spirits are marked with the third eye, and temples and shrines are likewise marked with the third eye as a sacred ward. Taoist scholars use special techniques to focus attention on the third eye and the location is also a special point of reference for yogis, qi-gong practitioners, karatekas, and others who seek to join the lower body with the higher Mind. Likewise, the third eye holds a special place in Western occult philosophies, the Hermetic arts, and Gnostic interpretations of the Bible.

In context to Western astrology, the brow is at home in the 8th House of sex, death, transformation, and money. Sexual intercourse is an exchange of Spirit between two people and, when performed as a sacred ritual between man and woman, transforms the base elements of seed and egg into the divine – a new Spirit is conceived in the womb of the mother. Death is also a transformation – the shell which we know as the body releases its animating Spirit so that it may transition into another state. The vacated shell returns to the base elements of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth from which it was formed and they, too, undergo their own transition into another state. Sex and death, while not the same, share the common thread of transformation, transition, change, and movement from one state to another or from one form into another. Money, or things of value, is the same element of change on the physical plane. Money is exchanged for other things of value and, at the time of this writing, much debate has been had regarding governments' responsibility to stimulate their economies through tax-payer subsidized injections of money. The ability for money to change lives is both literal and figurative and everywhere you go in life, you'll always find people who need just a little more money.

Pluto is the sexual organ of the Mind, the truth of which is evident in the expressions “thoughts become things” and “be careful what you wish for.” All perfect things originate in the infinite Mind of THE ALL and it is from the First Cause that the Platonic Ideal or the perfect form descends to the Mind of man. These thoughts form in the Mind and are made manifest through the outward Spiritual projection of the brow. Through the mystical power of the third eye, the transformative power of THE ALL

changes the world around us. Through self-discipline and techniques such as fasting, meditation, prayer, and ritual, one is able to open the third eye and direct the flow of universal life to whatever and whomever calls for it. All these areas – sex, death, and transformation – are ruled by Pluto and are the areas in which she is most at home. They are also those things which cause her the greatest amount of stress. A subject who exhibits stress or who shows a blocked third eye or brow is most likely experiencing stress or conflict expressing himself in his love life; is coping with or fearful of death; is experiencing significant change or upheaval; or an unhealthy or improper relationship with money. There's nothing new about man's struggle to balance his needs and wants:

“For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” KJV 1 Tim. 6:10

Like the Hermetic Law of Use suggests on the very cover of this book, hoarding money (transformative Spirit) is a foolish and ultimately self-destructive practice. Dr. Sharon Daloz Parks, former director the Harvard School of Divinity and present associate director of the Whidbey Institute, says of money:

*"Like the words ecumenical and ecology, economics is rooted in the Greek word oikos, meaning household, and signifies the management of the household - arranging what is necessary for well-being. Good economic practice - positive ways of exchanging goods and services - is about the well-being, the livelihood, of the whole household."*¹

In context to the human body, Pluto rules the endocrine system as well as the processes of reproduction, regeneration, and elimination. Pluto's rulership of elimination does not simply refer to the passage of stool or urine but also to the passage of dead cells and the elimination of all waste products from the body, such as passage of the uterine lining during menstruation or the shedding of dead skin. Though humans don't shed the whole of their skin at once as does a snake, the principle is the same: out with the old, in with the new.

Pluto rules the endocrine system, a network of ductless glands which serve the same purpose as that of the central and peripheral nervous systems: achievement and regulation of internal stability. The endocrine system works in partnership with the central and peripheral nervous systems to form what is called the neuroendocrine system. The endocrine system is named such because it is a network of endocrine glands. Endocrine glands are ductless glands which secrete directly into the bloodstream, unlike exocrine glands, which secrete into a duct. For example, an exocrine gland would be the salivary glands. These glands produce saliva which is stored in a duct or temporary chamber which then excretes the saliva into the mouth. Another example is the mammary glands which produce milk during lactation as well as the sebaceous glands of the skin which secrete body oil.

Both the endocrine and nervous systems perform regulatory functions by means of chemical messengers sent to specific cells. The endocrine system works by secreting hormone molecules to target cells and target organs throughout the body. The process by which hormones communicate and signal messages is called signal transduction. In signal

transduction, cells convert one form of stimulus into another, like a relay process or a very precise game of “Telephone.” In other words, this is a chemical change or transformation, in which cells alter one substance into another to effect a change.

Synaptic signal transduction, the manner in which the central and peripheral nervous systems communicate with the body, is very fast but short lived. The central and peripheral nervous systems can only control glands and muscles which are innervated by efferent fibers. That is, if there isn’t a direct line from the nervous system to a gland or muscle, the nervous system can’t control it. It’s like a wired intercom system: if there isn’t a connection from point to point, the call can’t be made. Hormones, which are secreted by the endocrine system, are slow to act but are long-lived in their effect. Specific hormones are secreted directly into the blood and are chemically structured to trigger or signal only a specific target cell or target organ. Because hormones are diffused directly into the blood, they can be carried to any point in the entire body. A few endocrine glands are called neurosecretory, and may signal both through nerve synapses and hormones.

Even though hormones secreted directly into the blood stream come in contact with many cells and organs through the body, they will only affect specific target cells and target organs. This is because they will only be received by specific receptors in these target cells and target organs: without the appropriate receptor, a cell or organ won’t accept a hormone. Many cells and organs have receptors for many types of hormones, but it’s a lock-and-key pattern: if the specific hormone doesn’t fit the appropriate receptor, the target cell or target organ won’t receive it.

Diseases of the endocrine system are varied, but the cause is usually either hyposecretion, in which too few hormones are secreted, or hypersecretion, in which too many hormones are secreted. Hypo- and hyper-secretion of a hormone do not appear to indicate a problem with the specific endocrine gland which secretes it, but instead with the target cell or target organ which receives it. This means that when an endocrine gland exhibits stress, it may only in fact be a symptom related to a different problem.

When a target cell or target organ for whatever reason lacks sufficient receptors to receive a specific hormone, the responsible endocrine gland will produce an excess amount of the hormone which isn’t being received. The idea is that hypersecretion will produce so much of a hormone that what few receptors are present in the target cell or target organ won’t be able to miss the large volume of the secreted hormone. Likewise, with hyposecretion, the target cell or target organ for whatever reason has too many receptors capable of receiving the secreted hormone. To correct this imbalance, the responsible endocrine gland dramatically reduces the production of the hormone in question so that there is simply less of it to be received by the target cell or target organ. Prolonged hypo- and hyper-secretion can cause trauma for the endocrine gland in question, compounding the subject’s state of dis-ease.

Dis-eases of the endocrine system are generally classified as either primary or secondary. A primary endocrine disease is one in which the endocrine gland in question is healthy but the target cell or organ which receives the hormones is not. A secondary endocrine disease is one in which the endocrine gland itself is damaged or malfunctioning. That is, primary endocrine diseases are afflictions of the target cell or target organ, and secondary endocrine diseases are afflictions of the endocrine gland itself. Long-term malfunction between the endocrine system and the appropriate target cells and target organs can result in a variety of dis-eases such as uncontrolled weight

gain, diabetes, and tissue wasting.

Pluto, as the planet farthest from the Sun and with the longest, most powerful orbit, indirectly holds sway over every other planet in our Solar System. This is because the effects of its orbit encompass all other heavenly bodies. Likewise, the endocrine system is not exclusively ruled by Pluto. Some endocrine glands are ruled by other planets and signs: in these instances, primary rulership of the gland in question goes to the planet or sign to which it is properly attributed and then secondary rulership is given to Pluto. For example, the parathyroid gland is ruled by both Venus and Pluto. In this case, look first to Venus for dis-ease. If Venus and either the Balance of Air or Earth predominantly exhibit stress, then Pluto and the Balance of Water can be exempted as a subject of immediate attention; however, Pluto should be included in the next sequential Reiki session and certainly not forgotten as an area of importance. If the Balances of Air and Earth exhibit no stress or dis- ease, then the Balance of Water should be reviewed: the Moon, Cancer, Pluto, Scorpio, Neptune, and Pisces will probably exhibit this stress. Invariably, either one or the other will exhibit more stress than the other and show where the dis-ease has built its foundation. The major endocrine glands of the human body are:

- **Located in the brain or cranial cavity:**
 - Hypothalamus
 - Pituitary gland
 - Pineal gland
- **Located in the neck:**
 - Thyroid gland (neck)
 - Parathyroid glands (neck)
- **Located in the mediastinum:**
 - Thymus
- **Located in the abdominal cavity:**
 - Adrenal glands
 - Pancreatic islets
- **Relative to the reproductive system:**
 - Ovaries (pelvic cavity, women only)
 - Placenta (pregnant uterus, women only)
 - Testes (descended, men only)

The hypothalamus is an almond-sized structure located above the brain stem which contains several tiny substructures. It serves a variety of purposes, but one of the most significant is to connect the endocrine system to the nervous system which is facilitated by the pituitary gland. The hypothalamus regulates portions of the autonomic nervous system as well as metabolic rate. The hypothalamus also regulates sleep cycles, appetite, blood pressure, sexual desire, and serves as a thermostat to tell the body when to heat up or cool down. This means that in any case of fever or chills, the brow should be treated as either a primary or secondary point of interest. It also indirectly contributes to the operation of the enteric nervous system.

The hypothalamus responds to a variety of external and internal signals. Among those internal signals to which the hypothalamus responds are nervous signals from the stomach, reproductive organs, and the heart. This clearly illustrates several of Pluto's

connections which we have already explored: the stomach is ruled by the sign of cardinal Water, Cancer, which forms a triplicity with Pisces and Scorpio; the reproductive organs are ruled by the sign of fixed Water, Scorpio, who in turn is ruled by Pluto; and Pluto rises in Leo, the sign of fixed Fire, which together with the Sun rules the heart.

The pituitary gland is a pea-sized structure attached to the hypothalamus via the pituitary stalk. The pituitary gland is, to use an expression, "snug as a bug in a rug." It is secure inside a small cavity of bone which, in turn, is sandwiched in a fold of the dura mater (the outer layer of the brain). The pituitary gland is considered a master gland, or having much more importance than other endocrine glands, but it is still controlled by the hypothalamus. The pituitary gland is similar in function and operation to the hypothalamus: some of the functions it serves are to regulate growth; stimulate contractions of the uterus during childbirth; control Water retention; initiate lactation and production of breast milk; and moderate function of both male and female sexual organs.

The pineal gland, a structure the size of a grain of rice, is almost dead-center in the brain at the top of the brainstem near the corpus callosum between the left and right hemispheres of the brain. The pineal gland exists outside of the blood-brain barrier and the only organs which enjoy greater blood flow than the pineal gland are the kidneys. Like the hypothalamus and pituitary gland, the pineal gland also plays a role in moderating and regulating sleep cycles. Among other hormones, the pineal gland produces melatonin which promotes healthy, regular sleep cycles and which also regulates mood, promotes a strong immune system, and moderates emotional stimulation. The production of melatonin is a natural process in the human body in response to the perception of light, either detected visually (through the eyes) or through photoreceptors in the skin. The pineal gland is present in all vertebrate species and has been shown to be closely involved with photoreception and light sensitivity. In some species, it was a literal third eye which detected light and operated similarly to the actual physical eyes.

Like the hypothalamus, the pineal gland is a gland of much importance and debate in the occult and metaphysical community. Like the hypothalamus, the pineal gland is considered by some to be the resting place of the soul within the human body. Also like the hypothalamus, it is considered by some to be the "psychic" organ or the gland which enables psychic phenomena. This hypothesis is linked to the pineal gland's natural production of the drug dimethyltryptamine, or DMT, which is a psychedelic drug comparable to lysergic acid diethylamide, or LSD. Occultists speculate that the pineal gland's production of DMT contributes to dreams, lucid dreams, out of body experiences, and other psychic or paranormal phenomena.

The thyroid gland is one of the three largest endocrine glands in the human body and is located in the front of the throat beneath the larynx, or the Adam's Apple. The Thyroid gland thyroid gland is about the size of the palm of the hand and, in a manner, resembles a butterfly in its shape: wide at the sides and narrow the middle; the narrow portion which connects the two wider wings is called the isthmus. The parathyroid gland is actually four small endocrine glands which typically rest on the reverse side of the thyroid gland. The parathyroid glands are less than a third of an inch in length and less than a fifth of an inch wide. The thyroid and parathyroid glands serve totally different purposes and the parathyroid gland is only named such because it is located behind the thyroid gland.

The activity of the thyroid gland is directly controlled by the hypothalamus and pituitary glands and produces thyroid hormone in response to the dictates of the latter

glands. Thyroid hormone, the production of which is largely dependent on the level of iodine in one's diet, isn't actually a single hormone but three separate hormones: triiodothyronine (T3); thyroxine (T4); and calcitonin. Thyroid hormones T3 and T4 largely regulate physical growth and development as well as one's metabolic rate. T3 and T4 hormones also work through the sympathetic nervous system's fight-or-flight response and calm the body. Calcitonin, just as its name suggests, promotes the passage of calcium into bones (i.e, increasing bone density.)

The parathyroid gland, as a counter balance to calcitonin, produces parathyroid hormone (PTH). PTH causes the bones to release calcium into the blood stream. PTH, when functioning properly, promotes calmness or a sense of well-being and encourages the proper absorption of vitamin D in the digestive tract. PTH also affects the kidneys which filter all the blood in the human body and, with exposure to PTH, more easily accept calcium.

The thymus is a large endocrine gland which rests in the mediastinum, or chest cavity, behind and above the heart. The thymus at its peak growth is almost the size of the palm of one's hand. The thymus is unique among endocrine organs in that it grows and reaches its peak maturity by puberty and after sexual maturation begins a years-long atrophy during which the organ turns to fatty tissue.

The thymus can be described as a nursery or garden: lymphocytes which grow in bone marrow are cultured in the thymus before insertion to the bloodstream. These lymphocytes grow into thymocytes and, in turn, become thymus cells (called T-cells.) T-cells play a critical role in the formation, development, function, and maintenance of the immune system and the strength of one's immunity to disease and infection. Because the thymus atrophies with age in response to the presence of sex hormones, the thymus is much smaller in size and lacks much of its original tissue in older adults. Despite its long, slow atrophy, it continues to play an important role in the regulation of the immune system and one's immunity to illness, disease, and infection.

The adrenal glands look like small hats or caps which rest over each of the kidneys. Because the kidneys serve to filter the body's supply of blood, the adrenal glands could be described as the busiest glands in the body! The adrenal glands are two layers of endocrine glands which secrete hormones into the bloodstream via the kidneys. Each adrenal gland is layered: the outer layer is the adrenal cortex and the inner layer is the adrenal medulla.

Although the adrenal cortex and adrenal medulla are part of the same endocrine organ, they are in fact very different and separate structures. The adrenal cortices are made of typical endocrine tissue, meaning they are ductless glands which secrete endocrine hormones directly into the bloodstream; however, the adrenal medullas are made of neurosecretory tissue. Both of these endocrine tissues – the cortex and the medulla – synthesize and secrete different hormones. The adrenal cortex synthesizes and secretes a variety of hormones which include aldosterone, corticosteroids, and gonadocorticoids (androgen and estrogen.) The adrenal medulla primarily synthesizes and secretes epinephrine and norepinephrine.

Aldosterone hormones target the kidneys themselves and stimulate them to conserve sodium which regulates the level of Water in the body. Cortisol hormones target the body at large and influence metabolism; in greater concentrations they act as an anti-inflammatory to combat injury and stress. Adrenal androgen hormones chiefly target the sexual organs and support healthy, regular sexual function and development. Adrenal

estrogen hormones, like androgen hormones, also target the sexual organs and play a role in healthy sexual development and function. Adrenal androgen hormone is familiar to most people as testosterone and its presence at high levels in the developing fetus determines if the child will develop male sex characteristics. As a side note, this is interesting because this means that all human fetuses are by default female and only develop into a male fetus if the additional hormone is added.

Corticosteroids aren't one type of hormone but actually are actually a family of hormones which serve a variety of purposes. Primarily, corticosteroids work to keep the body in supply of fuel and contribute to overall homeostasis. Corticosteroids include mineralocorticoids, glucocorticoids, and gonadocorticoids. Mineralocorticoid hormones regulate mineral salts (electrolytes) in the bloodstream. Specifically, they moderate how these salts are processed. Like the adrenal cortex, the adrenal medulla also secretes aldosterone hormones; aldosterone is the chief mineralocorticoid hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla. As mentioned before, aldosterone adjusts blood sodium levels; however, aldosterone also affects potassium levels and the body's overall pH content (acidity and basicity).

Glucocorticoid hormones have no specific target organ – they are capable of affecting every part of the body. The chief glucocorticoid hormones are known as cortisol or hydrocortisone. Glucocorticoids cause the body to shift from using carbohydrates for fuel to instead using lipids (fats) as the primary fuel source. They promote a rapid transition of proteins into amino acids and, in turn, these amino acids are changed by the liver into glucose. High concentrations of glucocorticoids in the bloodstream cause tissue wasting (loss of proteins) as well as the condition hyperglycemia (excessively high glycemic index.) Glucocorticoids, like aldosterone, also moderate blood pressure. They are described as “permissive,” in that without their presence in the bloodstream, epinephrine and norepinephrine hormones (adrenaline) cannot act and blood pressure falls. In other words, high levels of glucocorticoids can dramatically or even dangerously lower blood pressure.

The adrenal medulla, unlike the adrenal cortex, is a neurosecretory gland. This means that it (like the adrenal cortex) is still a ductless gland, but it doesn't secrete its hormones directly into the bloodstream. Instead, the adrenal medulla transmits its hormones through synapses in the same manner as the central and peripheral nervous systems. The chief hormones which the adrenal medulla secretes are epinephrine and norepinephrine, which you probably know better as adrenaline. Both hormones prolong and enhance the sympathetic division (fight or flight) of the autonomic nervous system. The familiar “adrenaline rush” which many feel when driving fast, bungee jumping, parachuting, sport-fighting, or engaging in thrilling activity are a result of the adrenaline dumped into the body via the adrenal medullas.

Moving beyond the adrenal glands, now we meet the pancreas. The pancreas resides high up in the abdominal cavity at the level of the solar plexus and is cradled in the bend of the duodenum beneath the stomach. The pancreas is unique in that it is both endocrine (without ducts) and exocrine (with ducts.) As it concerns the endocrine system, the part of the pancreas which most interests us is the islets of Langerhans, commonly called the pancreatic islets. The islets of Langerhans are named for the German researcher Paul Langerhans who documented their existence in 1869. The islets of Langerhans are not one single identifiable portion of the pancreas, but are instead groups or clusters of endocrine tissue in the pancreas. These islets form less than four percent of the total

pancreatic body and the average adult has about one and a half million such cells.

The islets of Langerhans synthesize and secrete four important hormones: Glucagon; insulin; somatostatin; and pancreatic polypeptide. As a group, all four of these hormones work to maintain homeostasis of amino acids, fatty acids, and blood glucose levels. Glucagon, as the name suggests, moderates blood glucose levels. When glucose levels in the bloodstream are low, glucagon is released into the bloodstream. Glucagon targets the liver and, upon arrival, the liver converts stored glycogen into glucose which is used for energy. High levels of glucagon can lead to an elevated glycemic index, known as hyperglycemia. Even those of us who aren't diabetic are probably familiar with insulin: insulin is a hormone secreted by the islets of Langerhans which performs roughly the opposite function of glucagon. When blood sugar levels rise too high, insulin is secreted into the bloodstream. Insulin moves glucose out of the bloodstream where it is kept in storage until such time as glucagon in turn is secreted to pull it back out.

Somatostatin is a hormone which targets many parts of the body and is generally classified as an inhibitor. It is named such because of the effects it has upon the target organs which receive it. In the pituitary gland, somatostatin inhibits growth hormone and productivity of the thymus gland. Somatostatin also suppresses the secretion of a variety of gastrointestinal hormones, lowers overall activity in the stomach and digestive tract, and inhibits the production of other hormones in the islets of Langerhans. Pancreatic polypeptide is very similar in purpose to somatostatin in that it serves to moderate the activities of other organs. Pancreatic polypeptide is a compound hormone formed of more than 30 amino acids and primarily regulates gastrointestinal secretions and digestion.

In context to the sign Pluto rules (Scorpio), Pluto is tightly connected to generation and regeneration. Conception, gestation, and delivery are all closely connected to Pluto but will be covered in greater detail under their respective signs. The form of generation and regeneration which most concerns us in this chapter happens at the cellular level.

All somatic cells contain 46 chromosomes. Numerologically, this is significant because the elements of 46 (4 and 6) add up to 10. As you can see, 10 is both the beginning (1) and the void (0); thus, transition is literally a part of who we are at our lowest levels. Human cells are called diploid, or paired, in that they are formed from 22 matching pairs (the remaining pair being the sex chromosomes.) This too is numerologically important. 22 is a master number which is often referred to as the "Master Builder." 22 is a number of ambition, leadership, organization, large projects and undertakings, discipline, and confidence. 22 reduces to 4 which is also significant in that it is the same as the number of the elements. In other words, our cells or "who we were" are a composition of the base elements Air, Fire, Water, and Earth which are not animate without the quintessence or animating Spirit of the divine.

In context to the gonads, generation begins with the gametes: ova and spermatozoa. Spermatozoa, or sperm, and ova, or eggs, are formed through spermatogenesis and oogenesis. Mature sex cells have 23 chromosomes each and are called haploid, or single. When haploid spermatozoa and ova are paired, they in turn form the 46 matching chromosomes of the human cell. The number of chromosomes in the mature haploid spermatozoa or ova (23) is, as you may have guessed, equally important: 23 reduces to 5, five being the number of the elements of life: Earth, Water, Fire, Air and animating Spirit.

Intangibly, Pluto rules elimination and the eliminative process. Matter, Spirit, attitudes, emotions, and all elements of the human Mind and body which no longer serve a purpose or which no longer possess any nutriment are voided by Pluto. What's important is that the principle of elimination and release – the necessity and the power to transition those things which no longer serve a purpose or which require an independent life of their own – rests with Pluto.

Elimination and release are seen in many things, such as shedding of dead skin cells; loss of old hairs; evacuation of waste matter; and emotional release. The transformative and generative powers of both elimination and release can be seen such events as death and birth. The birth of a child is the elimination or release of Spirit from the mother: to keep the child in her longer would mean to restrain Spirit or an expression of life which needs to be released. Likewise, when a person transitions to another mode of existence (what many call death) is the soul's ultimate release of base matter. The lower, base elements of Earth, Water, Fire and Air which form the human body eventually come apart and the soul which we knew as that person voids those elements. Like the shedding of dead skin cells but on a larger scale, the soul sheds the body in which it previously resided.

Pluto's rulership of elimination includes the urinary system and the colon. For our purposes, Pluto's rulership of the urinary system does not include the kidneys who properly belong to Jupiter. It may seem unusual to divide rulership of the urinary system between two members of different elements, but this is easily explained through the Hermetic Law of Polarity: Pluto and Jupiter, as members of the Balances of Water and Fire, respectively, define each other through opposition and are in this way connected. Remember that Pluto (ruler of Scorpio) is the higher octave of Mars (ruler of Aries), and also that before Pisces (mutable Water) was given to Neptune, it was ruled by Jupiter (ruler of mutable Fire.)

Not including the kidneys, the urinary system includes two ureters (one from each kidney) which empty into the bladder. The ureters are fibrous sleeves which protect an interior muscle wall around a mucous lining. Through peristalsis – alternating contraction and expansion – urine is moved from the kidneys through the ureters to the bladder. The bladder is a muscular pouch located in women between the vaginal cavity and the pubic symphysis, and in men behind the pubic symphysis and above the prostate gland. In women, the urethra is located above the vaginal opening, and in men is a shared passageway for both urine and semen.

The colon, also called the large intestine, is the means by which the body eliminates solid waste. Partially digested food is passed through the winding small intestine before emptying into the colon which forms solid matter into feces. The small intestine empties into the ascending colon which begins on the lower right side of the abdominal cavity. The ascending colon rises to just beneath the liver, where it takes a 90-degree turn to the left and crosses the abdominal cavity. This portion of the colon is named the transverse colon for its reach from one side to the other. The transverse colon makes a 90-degree turn downward beneath the stomach; since this portion literally descends into the rectum, it is named the descending colon. The rectum is the last portion of the colon and joins with the anal cavity where excrement is stored prior to elimination. As mentioned, the colon serves to form waste matter into feces, but it also reabsorbs some of the nutrients and Water which weren't absorbed by the small intestine.

A five-sided star represents human existence: four base elements at the lower

points and the element of Spirit or transcendent Mind at the highest point of the star. In its most dignified and righteous aspect, the pentagram remains upright showing the domination of base elements by the soul. That is, one's Mind or conscious awareness and connection to the divine rule the physical body. When the pentagram is inverted, it symbolizes the reverse of all that is good and righteous: domination and repression of the Spirit by lower base elements. When Plutonic Spirit flows strongly, the Spirit rules the lower base elements from high on the top point of the pentagram, but when one denies growth, transition, and rebirth, he is chained or enslaved by his inability to dominate himself through self-discipline and Spiritual self-expression.

A healthy flow of Plutonic Spirit is rooted in the Scorpio and the 8th House of sex, death, transformation, loss, and money. In other words, Pluto expresses pure, transformative, mutative Spirit. Sexual health and generative expression release creative Spirit (literally and figuratively) and expel anal retentive desires to retain those things which no longer give nutriment or which restrain further growth. The male and female external sexual organs serve as the tangible representation of the same purpose and function of the brow: expression of generative will and desire. The rectum and anus exist as an expression of Plutonic urge, as well: the route through which physical waste matter is expelled from the body. The connection between chronic and severe constipation and a regular flow of Plutonic Spirit through the brow is clear!

Mars, like Pluto, is a powerful force but unlike Pluto, Mars operates at a lower octave. Plutonic Spirit is fine and subtle whereas Martial Spirit is gross and overt. Despite this, it is none the less a powerful force. Martial Spirit is strong, assertive, aggressive, outgoing, and defensive of its own personal identity and agenda. Martial Spirit is rooted in the perineum, the soft portion between the anus and the external sexual organs. Martial Spirit isn't just an intangible description or a thing which exists only in name: any practitioner of Karate, Kempo, Taekwondo, Hapkido, Judo, Jiu Jitsu, Kung Fu, Western boxing, Thai boxing, and any other style could tell you immediately the importance of the Martial center.

For example, the International Taekwondo Federation uses Chang-Hon Taekwondo which teaches the development and use of a sine wave to deliver greater strength with each strike. With few exceptions, the upper body remains upright and balanced over the Martial center. As the strike begins, the arm coils and – in tandem with supporting movement through the legs and rotation from the hips – uncoils with greater strength and power than it would otherwise have through only the muscles of the arm, shoulder and chest. All the twisting power of the strike is supported by the feet and pushed out from the Martial center up through the arm and striking surface of the hand and transferred into the target. Likewise, when striking with the foot or the leg, the greatest portion of the power exists in the explosive release of Martial strength from the base and the hips which is transferred through the extended leg and the striking surface of the foot into the target.

Mars rules all the muscles of the body; sexual desire; the adrenal glands; blood pressure; blood and red blood cells; and veins. Mars is the gross and overt Spirit which moves the material human body. Whether it's martial arts and defense of self and home; a foot-race around the neighborhood; the swing of a hammer to break down a wall; or even the highly intangible principles of sexual desire, aggression, and identity – Mars rules them all.

All physical movement and motion are the result of muscular contraction.

Skeletal muscles are those muscles which primarily serve to animate the human frame and produce the contraction or relaxation which moves the body up, down, and around. There are more than 600 skeletal muscles and together they form nearly half of one's bodyweight. Because muscles rest on the framework of the skeleton, they contribute to one's shape, body contour, and overall physical appearance (which is appropriate in that Mars is most at home in the 1st House of outward appearance and external personality.)

The muscles themselves are densely packed fibers, more like rope than anything. In fact, some of the strongest rope you'll find is modeled after muscle fibers. One of the ropes I used frequently when I served in the Marine Corps is 550 cord, also called parachute cord. 550 cord is a sleeve of olive-drab green nylon which is filled with a dozen or more thin nylon strings. Because of the number of cords inside the sheath, the tensile strength of the cord becomes significantly stronger.

Muscle fibers, like 550 cord, can be described as densely packed bundles of threads called filaments. Individual muscle fibers are grouped together like tightly bundled ropes and sheathed by connective tissue, the endomysium. These muscle fibers and the endomysium which bonds them together are in turn all held together by the perimysium, which is the same as the endomysium. Several such groups of bundled muscle fibers exist in a single muscle and all of them are contained within the epimysium, the same connective tissue as the endomysium and the perimysium. These names exist not to describe different tissues but to describe different levels of connective tissue.

Muscle tissue is characterized as having three attributes: excitability, contractility, and extensibility. Excitability means that the muscle fiber can be activated or "fired" by synapse signals from the central and peripheral nervous systems. Contractility means that the muscle fiber can contract or pull itself together in the middle and in turn pull the bones to which it is anchored. Extensibility means that the muscle fiber returns to its normal length after contraction. With only a few exceptions, all muscles have a point of origin and a point of insertion. The origin is fixed, stable, and does not move during a muscular contraction. The insertion point is the point which moves or is moved during a muscular contraction. One end of the muscle anchors the contraction, and the other end is moved by the contraction. During contraction, the point of insertion is moved closer to the point of origin. Although movement and balance are a complex process coordinated by groups of muscles which work in unison, origin and insertion explain the most basic principle which animates the skeleton.

When a group of muscles act to animate a portion of the body, some muscles will contract and others will relax. Groups of muscles, whether grouped by function or location, will include muscles categorized as being an agonist, antagonist, synergist, or fixator muscle. An agonist muscle is also called a prime mover. An agonist can be a single muscle or a group of muscles which directly perform a single, specific movement. Agonist muscles are specific in that they cross an axis from one limb to another, such as the connection between the bicep and forearm. An antagonist muscle is one which during contraction opposes the agonist and performs an opposite function to return the limb to its prior state (extensibility.) When the opposing agonist contracts, the antagonist expands; likewise, when the antagonist contracts, the agonist expands. This relationship between agonists and antagonists is exploited by Wing Tsun boxers who train to powerfully and quickly contract the triceps. Any time the arm extends – as when executing a punch – the bicep must expand and the tricep must contract. When practiced correctly, the tricep can

be developed to the point that it quickly snaps the clenched fist quickly forward for a devastating strike. Many fighters spend their time developing the biceps and building grip strength, but they could make faster progress developing the tricep and its ability to launch an explosive punch.

Synergists are muscles, or groups of muscles, which contract at the same time as the agonist. Synergists, as their name suggests, work with the agonist to stabilize the movement or the motion of the limb during contraction. Synergists work to stabilize movable joints, such as the elbows and the knees. Fixator muscles, like synergists, are also much like their name suggests: they “fix” things in place and add stability. Fixators maintain balance and promote posture, especially when agonists demand movement from the limb in which the fixator is found.

As previously stated, the terms agonist, antagonist, synergist, and fixator don’t necessarily describe the same muscles every time: they are labels for the roles or functions of a muscle or group of muscles in performance of a movement. To return to the illustration of the relationship between the bicep and the tricep, both muscles could be an agonist. When the arm is contracting, the tricep is the antagonist and the bicep is the agonist, but, when the arm is extending, the tricep becomes the agonist and the bicep the antagonist.

Muscles are organs formed from muscle tissue and connecting fibers. They come in every shape, size, form, and physical orientation, and a full, in-depth exploration of the skeletomuscular system is beyond the scope of this book. What I provide here is designed to help you understand how muscles work so that when you work with yourself or your own clients, you’ll have a better idea how to address muscular complaints.

Mars also rules blood. As exclaimed by the enslaved solicitor R.M. Renfield in Bram Stoker’s masterpiece *Dracula*, “The blood is the life!” Though the context in which the statement was pronounced is quite morbid, it is actually closer to truth than fiction. If you’ve never looked at the individual elements of blood before, you may be surprised to learn that it’s quite a lot more than you thought. The majority of whole blood is actually straw-colored fluid called plasma which forms 55% of whole blood by volume. The other 45% of whole blood – the “red” portion we normally think of – is called “formed elements.” Whole blood is a transport medium through which oxygen, hormones, and a variety of other substances are delivered to every part of the body. Blood also warms the body: it is unique in that it is highly efficient at trapping heat.

The actual elements in whole blood vary depending on which portion you examine. Plasma is clear and appears light-yellow when centrifuged. In itself, plasma is almost entirely Water: 92% by volume. The remaining 8% is formed of proteins and other Water-soluble nutrients. The proteins which form the solutes of plasma enable blood clotting and boost the body’s natural immunity to illness and disease. Plasma solutes also carry a variety of other substances such as fats, sugars, and amino acids, as well as hormones excreted by the endocrine system, gases such as carbon dioxide which will be expelled through the lungs, and other metabolic by-products which aid and support the body’s day-to-day operations. As a group, plasma proteins are important because they promote healthy, normal levels of blood viscosity, pressure, and volume.

Blood clotting, or coagulation, is a natural process which forms a first line of defense against injury and the resulting loss of blood. It is a complex series of chemical reactions between compounds extrinsic to blood in the skin (such as collagen and lipids) as well as compounds intrinsic to blood and found within plasma (such as fibrinogen and

calcium.) Together, extrinsic and intrinsic compounds form the barrier which slows or stops the flow of blood from an open wound. This shield against blood loss is quite accurately described as a net. Fibrinogen in plasma forms with other compounds to form fibrin, a fine mesh which traps blood cells and begins the first of many steps to knit the wound closed.

Blood clotting is naturally hastened by immobility which is one of the reasons why in emergency situations lay responders are reminded to not move the body or to avoid disturbing the injured. Obviously, blood clotting is inhibited by movement which is why recovering hospital patients are encouraged to get out of bed and ambulate as their strength and stamina return. Blood clotting is also deterred by heparin, a naturally occurring compound in the blood. When working with clients who exhibit hemophilia, the culprit can quickly be found in the deficient plasma; the Balances of Fire and Water should be treated for Spiritual relief.

The other portion of whole blood, the “red” portion, is properly called “formed elements.” Formed elements include red blood cells, white blood cells, and platelets. Red blood cells are very small: one and a half thousand could stand side by side in a row only one centimeter long. The primary component of mature red blood cells is hemoglobin. Hemoglobin counts for more than a third of the volume of a mature red blood cell and if hemoglobin were not present, the red blood cell could not function. Hemoglobin forms more than 95% of the dry mass of the red blood cell and (counting Water) is more than 30% of the entire cell. Even though red blood cells are very small, their combined surface area is larger than a football field and provides a vast exchange network to move gases in and out of the body.

Each mature red blood cell contains about 300 million such hemoglobin molecules. Each hemoglobin molecule contains four atoms of iron. This is significant in that four is numerologically considered a number of strength and foundation. Additionally, four is the number of lower, base elements (Earth, Air, Fire, and Water) and the element iron is itself a base metal. In those people who have low iron in their blood (who are anemic), they exhibit weak immunity, have low energy, are wan, and possess poor vigor.

Red blood cells are in a constant state of flux. In a healthy adult, 200 billion red blood cells are formed each minute while the same number dies each minute. Red blood cells don’t normally live longer than four months and, upon death or disintegration in the bloodstream, release iron, important amino acids, and bilirubin (the pigment which colors blood red and stool brown.) The amino acids will be used to synthesize other proteins and promote stamina; the iron will be absorbed by bones where it will be used to form new hemoglobin; and the bilirubin will be processed through the liver and gall bladder where it is formed into bile and eventually passed through the intestines as waste product. Because bilirubin is a pigment, it in turn gives excrement its characteristic color. Excrement which is poor in color or very light in coloration is one way that the observant person can realize that his red blood count is low and that he should consult a physician, naturopath, herbalist, homeopathic physician, or nutritional expert to adjust his diet.

White blood cells, as a group, are called leukocytes. Leukocytes are variously distinguished according to their own unique properties and come in five varieties: neutrophils, eosinophils, basophils, lymphocytes, and monocytes. Neutrophils serve as a measure of defense at the cellular level against very small pathogenic microorganisms. Eosinophils serve as an anti-inflammatory and also defend the body against larger

pathogenic organisms such as parasites and protozoa. Basophils secrete heparin (which reduces blood clotting) and helps control inflammation through the delivery of antihistamines. Lymphocytes release antibodies and regulate response and action of the body's immune system. Last, monocytes are aggressive, active white blood cells which are capable of leaving the bloodstream to attack and ingest bacteria, cellular waste, and even cancer cells.

Mars, as the ruler of all the body's muscles, is also the natural ruler of blood pressure and works with another member of the Balance of Fire – the Sun – to operate the cardiovascular system. The cardiovascular system promotes homeostasis of the body by moving blood through the body's arteries, veins, and capillaries. Depending on which part of the body is active at any time, more blood will flow to it. For example, after a meal greater quantities of blood flow to the stomach and digestive organs; likewise, skeletal muscles experience greater blood flow during exercise or other strenuous motion.

Blood flows in greater volume to active cells. Inactive cells, which require much less energy to function, receive less blood flow. Naturally, those cells which are active and need more energy will receive a greater volume of blood in order to recover nutriment, increase oxygen, exchange gases, and clear waste matter. Like any fluid, blood only flows under pressure. If pressure is uniform through a volume of blood, it can't flow because it has equal pressure on all sides. Imagine, for a moment, a sealed Water balloon. When you clamp your hands around it and squeeze, the pressure inside remains the same, but the balloon expands (and will eventually burst) to distribute the pressure. When pressure is strong in one area, blood will flow from that place to the place of less pressure.

Mars' rulership of blood pressure refers to arterial and venous blood pressure. Arteries are vessels which carry blood from the heart to other parts of the body and are classified as follows: elastic, muscular, arteriole, and capillary. Elastic arteries have great elasticity, or the ability to expand, in order to accommodate a sudden surge in blood flow. Muscular arteries carry blood from a major elastic artery to other parts of the body. Arterioles provide resistance to blood flow by constricting and limiting or restricting blood pressure. Capillary beds are small networks which move blood from arterioles to individual veins. Elastic arteries carry large quantities of blood from the heart; the chief artery is the aorta, the central artery through which the heart pumps blood to the entire body. Muscular arteries tap into elastic arteries and distribute blood to the capillary beds via the arterioles.

Capillaries number more than one billion in the human body but are not equally present in all parts of the body. The liver, for example, has a very large number of capillaries, but the cornea (a surface lens of the eye) has none. As an interesting side note, corneal transplants are almost never rejected by the host because of the very fact that they receive no direct blood flow and thus receive no exposure to antibodies which would attack them. Capillaries themselves have varying degrees of porosity. Porosity refers to the ease with which blood passes through a capillary to the surrounding tissue. For example, the capillary beds of the liver have a high degree of porosity in order to accommodate the massive volume of blood which passes through them each day.

The aorta extends above the heart as well as deep into the abdominal cavity before separating into the common iliac arteries in the pelvis. The aorta begins with the ascending aorta which rises from the right ventricle of the heart, makes a 180-degree turn, and descends through the diaphragm. The curved upper-most portion of the aorta is

named the aortic arch: the arteries which extend under and through the clavicle arches to the arms, as well as the carotid arteries which rise through the neck and into the head, begin here. The aorta above the diaphragm is named the thoracic aorta, and the aorta below the diaphragm is named the abdominal aorta. This central vessel, the aorta, is the primary artery which feeds the entire body.

Mars rules not just arteries, but also veins. Veins, like arteries, are highly elastic and by virtue of their own special valves only permit blood to flow in one direction: to the heart. The difference between arteries and veins is that arteries carry blood away from the heart and grow smaller as they progress farther from the heart; veins carry blood from other parts of the body back to the heart and become larger as they progress closer to the heart. To illustrate the difference between arteries and veins, think of the human body as if it were shaped like the trunk of a tree and its large network of roots beneath. Arteries begin at the top of the large tree trunk and flow down to the gradually diminishing roots; veins begin at the thin ends of the roots and flow up toward the top of the trunk, becoming larger as they join into one body. The central vein where returning blood joins is called the vena cava.

Among other compounds, arteries and veins are formed from collagen and elastin. Collagen imparts strength and durability to the vessels, and elastin imparts elasticity and the ability to swell without bursting as blood volume increases. Arteries, veins, and capillaries are all ruled by Mars because each and every one of them is lined with smooth muscle. Thus, muscular contraction and expansion in partnership with the pump and suction of the heart squeeze the arteries and veins to push blood through the body.

Finally, both Mars and Pluto rule sexual appetite, preference, and gender orientation. I retained this subject for last because human sexuality is not a simple male-female dichotomy and it is best discussed with both respective planets together. Mars rules the sexual appetite, or the outward and base physical desire for sexual gratification. Pluto, as Mars' higher octave, doesn't govern the desire for sexual intercourse, but instead governs sexual preference and gender orientation. Pluto rules quality (or preference), but Mars rules quantity (or desire.) Sexual appetite is an intangible thing: it fluctuates greatly for each person and is influenced by one's health, mental and emotional state, season, and relative level of stress. Additionally, poor blood flow strongly impacts both sexual desire and sexual performance. Many popular stimulants (such as cigarettes) and depressants (such as alcohol) severely impact blood flow, virility, and sexual stamina.

Heterosexuality, homosexuality, bisexuality, and trysexuality ("he'll try anything") are all normal variations of human behavior. The argument has been made by some groups that sexual longing for the same gender or both genders is "against God," but an examination of the facts will reveal otherwise. Homosexuality has been observed in many species other than humans and one's sexual orientation is not a choice. The reason I say this is to reinforce the sheer strength and power of Pluto. Those same groups who would say that non-heterosexual preferences are elective or are a lifestyle choice are simply wrong: you would have more success reversing the Earth's rotation than you would in permanently and truly altering a person's sexual orientation. Sexual preference is an unalterable facet of one's identity: it is a manifestation of Plutonic force which cannot be denied.

However, the necessity to accept and integrate one's sexual identity should not be construed as free license to feed one's sexual appetite. Martial Spirit expressed

through sexual appetite is, like Plutonic Spirit, a force which should not be restrained; however, it must be released responsibly. Mars, as you'll recall, is a planet of aggression and base material desires (which includes sexual intercourse.) Indulging Martial desires with no restriction quickly pulls the Spirit down to depths of depravity and Spiritual ignorance. Mars expresses the Spirit of cardinal Fire and demands an outlet. Whether this Fire is released in the heights of sexual ecstasy or redirected into other arenas, it is meant to be used: express it responsibly.

1. [Parks, Sharon Daloz. (1997). *Practicing Our Faith: Ways of Life for a Searching People*. "Household Economics," p. 45-46. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers.]

Agape and Eros: Neptune and Venus

Neptune (higher octave)

- **Rulership:** Lymphatic system; ductless glands; thymus gland
- **Native house:** 11th House
 - **Rise:** Cancer
 - **Rest:** Pisces
 - **Detriment:** Virgo
 - **Fall:** Capricorn

Venus (lower octave)

- **Rulership:** Skin; senses taste, touch, smell; digestive properties of saliva; swallowing; production of insulin; assimilation of carbohydrates and sugars; parathyroid gland
- **Native houses:** 7th House; 2nd House
 - **Rise:** Pisces
 - **Rest:** Libra; Taurus
 - **Detriment:** Aries; Scorpio
 - **Fall:** Virgo

Venus is the second planet from the Sun. She is the brightest star in the eastern sky and can be easily seen on cloudless nights but only for three hours after sunset and only for three hours before sunrise. Venus is an almost perfect sphere and spends 225 days in an almost perfectly circular orbit around the Sun. It is appropriate that Venus should have such a perfect shape and orbit: she is the ruler of Libra, the sign of cardinal Air, the glyph of which is the scales of justice.

Men are from Mars and women are from Venus: she embodies tender feelings, kind humor, interpersonal relations, and aesthetics. Venus also communicates the importance of self-worth and of high self-esteem: she teaches us to say, "I'm worth it." In that aspect, Venus also governs gifts, money given to others, sensual delights (chocolate, wine, etc.), and fine things such as silk, expensive clothing, and lavish jewelry, all of which are important to Taurus and appear in the 2nd House. Venus teaches balance and may be the secret to woman's ability to defuse conflict and maintain harmony. Venus contains elements of contribution, cooperation, and resolution.

As the saying goes, you'll catch more bees with honey than you will with vinegar. In the same way, Venus imparts the ability to soften hard positions and smooth things out. Her tender touch and fine sensitivities win over even the most savage beasts. Venus is not just a peace-maker, but also a love-maker: eroticism, sensuality, and sexual attraction all reside with her.

On a bad day, Venus can be petty and angered by the slightest offense (real or perceived.) She feels that she deserves better than others and can be described as looking down her nose at lesser mortals or of simply being lavish and expecting to be treated like a queen. Venus, with her charm and interpersonal intelligence, can become over-stimulated or unbalanced by the things she brings into her life. Venus could be described by Madonna's song from the movie Dick Tracy: "Nothing is better than more." Venus is

at home in two of the twelve houses of the Zodiac: the 2nd House of values and possessions and the 7th House of marriage and relationships. Venus governs the signs Libra and Taurus, the signs of cardinal Air and fixed Earth, respectively. Venus is one of the three planets which have a higher octave: in this instance, Venus' higher octave is Neptune, whose love and devotion move beyond himself and his desires and are instead focused on the community or world as a whole.

The eighth planet from the sun, Neptune is the higher octave of Venus and shares many of her characteristics. Neptune, like Venus, has a nearly perfect circular orbit and spends nearly 165 years to orbit the Sun. Venus is the planet of feminine attributes and brings a sultry, sensual, erotic influence to everything she touches and teaches the lesson that "I'm worth it," or in other words, that it's okay to love, be loved, love yourself, and enjoy the finer things in life; Neptune, however, is different: his love and caring sensitivities are less selfish and more altruistic. That is, Neptune would go without what he loves so that he can preserve it and allow others to enjoy it as well. Neptune is extremely imprecise and focuses less on the rational and more on the emotional: he merges with and expands whatever he touches. His is not the domain of factual, reliable knowledge but of beliefs and intuition.

Neptune is an idealist: to illustrate this, imagine a traditional Japanese garden complete with a pond and a small island in the middle. This island is tended by the gardener and manicured to perfection; however, this island may not be approached – it is only to be viewed from the shore. The island, representative of perfection, is always out of reach and can only be viewed as an unattainable goal. That is among the lessons taught by Neptune: preservation, protection, and promotion of lofty ideals and impossible goals. Neptune teaches us to believe in the impossible and to refuse the advice of scientific precision which tells us what is and isn't. Neptune doesn't care what's possible – he simply believes. Neptune is most at home in the 12th House of secrets, seclusion, enemies, self-defeat, withdrawal, and the unconscious, and is the ruler of Pisces, the sign of mutable Water.

Neptune, like the other ruling members of the balance of Water (Pluto and the Moon), is closely connected to the endocrine system and the subtle processes necessary to homeostasis. The astronomical and astrological properties of Neptune accurately describe his character and mode of operation in the human body. Astronomically, Neptune is a gas giant on a leisurely orbit around the Sun. Speed and urgency do not become Neptune! Astrologically, Neptune merges with and cleanses whatever he conjuncts in a natal chart: Neptune eschews borders and arbitrary divisions.

Neptune primarily rules the lymphatic system which, like a sewer system or waste treatment facility, circulates waste and detritus carried by interstitial fluid (intercellular) through an extensive network of filters and cleaning stations before reintroduction to the bloodstream. Just like a vast, underground network of passages, pipes, cisterns, and drains, the lymphatic system carries away what would pollute habitable spaces. The lymphatic system is named for its role in the circulation of lymph and the sanitization of interstitial fluid.

Lymph is the fluid which is found inside lymphatic vessels and is formed from the fluid which fills the spaces between cells (interstitial fluid.) Arteries and veins are not hermetically sealed: many are fenestrated (perforated) and deliberately leak plasma to varying degrees. Plasma, as you'll recall, is almost entirely Water with a small percentage of protein and other trace elements such as gases and waste products. The difference

between plasma in whole blood and plasma in interstitial fluid is that the latter contains almost no proteins: the reason for this is because like a soaker hose laid out in a garden, veins “soak” the body with plasma to distribute nutrients. If permitted to collect and accumulate, interstitial fluid would cause massive swelling and tissue damage, the complications of which could even lead to death. For that purpose, the lymphatic system collects and re-circulates interstitial fluid.

Interstitial fluid is collected by a vast network of lymphatic vessels and capillaries. Lymphatic capillaries are found in tandem with blood capillaries. Pisces and Aries in their respective side-by-side 12th and 1st Houses oppose each other not just by modality but also by polarity: cardinal Fire strongly opposes mutable Water. The former initiates, the latter dissipates – they define each other through opposition. The lymphatic and venous systems exist in the same way: side by side, but with no physical connection between the two. Lymphatic capillaries, in order to capture and remove interstitial fluid, appropriately reside in interstitial space, unconnected to the venous system, and siphon away the interstitial fluid leaked from the veins which isn’t absorbed by other cells.

Like the arterial and venous systems, the lymphatic system utilizes an extensive network of one-way valves which prohibit the movement of lymph back into interstitial spaces; however, unlike the arterial and venous systems which circulate by pump and suction of the heart, the lymphatic system has no central organ to pump and suction lymph. Instead, the one-way passage of lymph to the thymus is achieved through the compression of lymphatic vessels by skeletal muscles. The lymphatic system, like Neptune, cleanses and removes impurities. At regular intervals in lymphatic vessels are found lymph nodes – these are small, oval-shaped structures which serve as filters or cleaning stations. Lymph nodes slow the passage of lymph to the thymus and use this time to filter and destroy damaging particles as well as harmful microorganisms, such as bacteria and viruses. Lymph nodes are located in the deep fascia of the skin and generally appear as clusters. These clusters appear in the groin and pelvis; in the arms above the bend of the elbow; deep beneath the armpits; in the upper chest; on either side of the ears; in the lower jaw on the floor of the mouth; and on either side of the neck. Lymph nodes also appear in the small intestines and aid in the conservation of fluid which would otherwise be eliminated with stool.

It’s important to note that the lymphatic vessels on the upper right quadrant of the torso return to the thymus by a different route than those in the rest of the body. The lymphatic vessels in the upper right quadrant of the torso return to the thymus by way of the right lymphatic duct to the right subclavian vein (found beneath the clavicle.) Lymphatic vessels from the upper left torso, abdomen, and lower body return to the thymus by way of the thoracic duct, also called the left lymphatic duct. The location and division of lymphatic vessels is important to recognize in the instance a subject reports lymphedema or complications resulting from obstructed or damaged lymphatic vessels and nodes. This is also important because of the role the lymphatic system play in the spread of cancer cells and gestation of HIV and AIDS.

Neptune is closely connected to the endocrine system. In this case, the emphasis is strengthened by Neptune’s rulership of ductless glands which places him on nearly the same pedestal as Pluto with respect to power and influence over the entire body. The presence of lymphatic vessels and nodes across the length and breadth of the body complicates an accurate assessment of a subject’s condition. A swollen lymph node in the arm may lead one to conclude that the disruption exists within the Balance of Air, but the

practitioner should objectively examine the results of the Spiritual measurement as well as the subject's reported stress and dis-ease to uncover the true source of the disruption. A preponderance of indicators will reveal what's disrupted and where the practitioner should direct his attention.

Neptune, as the ruler of the lymphatic system, primarily resides in the thymus, the source to which all lymph ultimately flows. As we learned in the introduction to the endocrine system, the thymus is vital to the function of the immune system for its role in the maturation of lymphocytes which produce antibodies and also attack cancerous and infected cells. Outside of the thymus and lymph nodes, the greatest concentrations of lymphocytes are found in the spleen and in bone marrow. The function of the spleen will be covered in greater detail under Libra and the Balance of Air; the composition of bone and bone marrow under Saturn.

Venus is the most sensual and sensuous of the planets. She indicates both self-esteem and self-importance but also the pleasure and enjoyment derived from the things of the world. Among other parts of the body, Venus rules the skin. Venus is unique in that, like Mercury, she is a member of both the Balance of Air and Earth. In her membership of the Balance of Air, she rules tactile sensation, but does not rule the actual transmission of such sensation back to the central nervous system: the transmission of sensation through the peripheral nervous system to the central nervous system resides with Mercury! Mercury, in his obsession with raw data and information, is concerned with the facts. Venus, in her adoration for sensation, is concerned with the senses. In such an instance where a subject exhibits loss of sensation in a dermatome but retains both gross and fine motor control, this would be a clear indication that the flow of Venereal Spirit is out of balance.

The skin is the physical organ which covers the body and is described as being either thick or thin. Thick skin covers the soles of the feet, palms of the hands, and other high friction areas. The majority of the body's skin is classified as thin and it is easily differentiated from thick skin because it grows hair. Thick skin is different from thin skin in that it develops ridges and striations which create resistance in contact with other surfaces. These ridges and striations are typically called palm-, finger-, and foot-prints, and they serve to promote friction and create traction which improve the flow and function of common daily movements.

Skin is additionally classified as either superficial or deep (the epidermis or the dermis.) The dermis is the denser, heavier skin which rests beneath the comparatively lighter and more porous epidermis visible to the eye. Together, the dermis and epidermis create a layered defense to the outside world. The dermis acts as the foundation to the epidermis and feeds nutrients to the epidermis which secretes body oil, grows hair, and shields the body from the rays of the Sun. Venus, through the skin, additionally rules the growth of hair as well as the health and growth of toe- and finger-nails. A subject who complains of hair loss or poor toe- and finger-nail health would be exhibiting a need for balanced Venereal Spirit. The skin is the largest sensory organ of the human body and it is vital to the navigation and integration of one's environment. Skin communicates through the somatic nervous system tactile sensations of touch, pressure, temperature, and pain.

The skin defends the body against external dangers such as ultraviolet radiation, the danger of dehydration, germs and bacteria, and physical trauma. If not for skin, gentle organs and internal structures would be totally exposed to outside elements! Skin

regulates body temperature by moderating the flow of blood and also the evaporation of sweat. As an organ, it is both exocrine and endocrine: it secretes body oil through the sebaceous glands and also synthesizes and secretes vitamin D in response to sunlight. Homeostasis and proper function of the body depends on a stable core temperature: with only a few degrees' difference, one's core body temperature remains a constant 98.6 degrees Fahrenheit. Much like a chemistry set (or a fragile ecosystem), the body requires the correct temperature to properly coordinate chemical reactions. Without the correct core temperature, the body is unable to properly complete thousands of chemical processes and exchanges without which the body would fail to function.

Temperature is chiefly regulated through moderation of the flow of blood. Blood, as you'll recall from our introduction to Mars, is tops at retaining heat. When the skin signals to the central nervous system that the ambient temperature is too cool, the arterioles which supply blood to the capillary beds tighten or constrict. This causes less warm blood to dissipate heat through the skin and more warm blood to retain heat in the body. Likewise, when the skin signals that the ambient temperature is too warm, the arterioles open wider and allow warm blood to flow to the capillary beds where the heat within the blood is dissipated through the skin.

Skin has several exocrine glands which secrete body oils lubricate of the skin; maintain elasticity and suppleness; strengthen and fortify hair; secrete sex pheromones; defend against bacteria and germs; form a natural shield against fungus; and expel uric acid, salt, and ammonia from the body.

The ability to swallow is achieved by the pharynx, a muscle which extends from the base of the skull to the esophagus – it is lined with mucus membrane which lubricates its surface and aids the passage of food. The pharynx is multi-purpose and is divided into the nasopharynx, oropharynx, and the larynx. The nasopharynx opens into the nasal and sinus cavities to permit the intake of Air through the larynx, which you probably know better as the voice box. The oropharynx is the division of the pharynx which leads to the esophagus and carries food and fluid on toward the stomach for digestion.

Those organs which transmit the senses of taste, smell, balance, hearing, and sight are named special sense organs. Of the special sense organs, Venus rules those which transmit taste and smell (the senses of balance, hearing, and sight belong to Mercury.) Olfaction, the sense of smell, is accomplished by olfactory receptors in the nasal cavity. These olfactory receptors are chemoreceptors which respond to chemical molecules carried on the Air. Humans have about 350 unique olfactory receptors, whereas other mammals such as mice possess more than a thousand. Because olfactory stimuli are transmitted to the brain through Cranial Nerve I, they're intimately connected to thought and memories.

The sense of smell is closely connected to the sense of taste which is transmitted to the central nervous system through Cranial Nerves VII, IX, and X. Taste is the perception caused by chemical stimulation of taste buds on the tongue and in the mouth. Flavor, or the character attributed to something tasted, is a combination of what each taste bud experiences. Taste buds come in four varieties and each is suited to interpret one of four qualities: sweet, sour, salty, and bitter. Thus, a subject who reports tasting only certain flavors would clearly be describing a disruption of Venereal Spirit in context to the Cranial Nerves which communicate taste to the central nervous system. Saliva, secreted from exocrine glands beneath the tongue and in the cheeks, is primarily formed from Water and mucus which lubricate food, promote mixing, and aid in bolus formation.

Venus additionally rules the sensory receptors which transmit the perception of heat, cold, pressure, touch, and pain to the central nervous system. These tissues which transmit such feelings are called general sense organs. General sense organs can be described as afferent because they transmit information back to the central nervous system (they accomplish this by means of the peripheral nervous system which extends to every point of the body.) As it concerns Venus, our primary interest is in mechanoreceptors, thermoreceptors, and nociceptors. These receptors are found across the entire surface area of the body and each transmits different information: pressure, heat, and pain. Diabetics frequently lose sensation in the extremities, so when giving Reiki for diabetics, Libra and Venus should be treated together.

Indeed, the healthy action of Venus should be of the greatest importance to diabetics because of her rulership of the production of insulin and the assimilation of carbohydrates and sugars. Carbohydrates are the primary fuel source required by the body and provide this fuel in the form of starches and sugars. Amylase, found in saliva, begins the digestion of carbohydrates in the mouth by breaking down sugars into simpler structures before they reach the pancreas. The pancreas is the responsible for the production of insulin, a hormone which triggers cells (such as those in the liver) to absorb and retain sugars, removing them from the bloodstream.

Strength and Rhythm: The Sun and Moon

The Sun (Greater luminary)

- **Rulership:** Heart; general health; healthy flow of energy; recuperation
- **Native house:** 5th House
 - **Rise:** Aries
 - **Rest:** Leo
 - **Detriment:** Aquarius
 - **Fall:** Libra

The Moon (Lesser luminary)

- **Rulership:** Digestion; regular movement of fluids in body; water retention; natural rhythms; adrenal glands
- **Native house:** 4th House
 - **Rise:** Taurus
 - **Rest:** Cancer
 - **Detriment:** Capricorn
 - **Fall:** Scorpio

The Sun holds a prominent place not just in astrology but also in mythology and world religions. Countless traditions have begun in praise of the Sun: even the most widely known Solar religion, Christianity, descended from worship of Osiris, Zoroastrianism, and the Cult of Mithras. For Spiritual reasons, people around the world continue to sunbathe in the winter months as a way of reconnecting with the life-Spirit of the Sun. More connected to health, people in northern climes who don't get enough sunshine suffer from seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and are directed by physicians to sit under lamps which recreate sunlight. This exposure improves their mood and restores their sense of "self."

From Zoroastrianism, and the Cults of Mithras, Apollo, and Asclepius, to the rise of the God of Abraham, Sun worship – like Moon worship – has and will always be present. For example, the "Sun Rise" early-morning worship service has become a popular fixture in many Christian churches, and many others use "Sonrise" as part of their name. In this case, the play on words between Sunrise and Sonrise is simply truth in advertising! Some Christian denominations may criticize pantheism, but that won't change the Sun's central role in their religion.

The Sun describes strengths, confidence, potentiality, drive, ambition, desire, performance. The Sun is a source of great strength and it doesn't turn off – it's always on. It is those areas of a person's life which he simply can't deny and in which he or she must be engaged. Start asking your friends and family their Sun sign – I've found that to be among the fastest ways to learn the true nature and character of the signs of the Zodiac and to be a much more engaging experience than reading from a book.

On a bad day, the Sun just isn't acting like himself. He isn't living his truth, he refuses his nature, and he insists on being somebody or something he isn't. He feels like he has to be active and he creates, generates, or contributes things which have no personal meaning. He creates or contributes simply because he feels that he must. On a

bad day, the Sun doesn't display his usual personality or temperament. This could be because the Sun doesn't do well with the Shadow; once the uncomfortable aspects of himself are revealed and confronted, he can return to being his usual self and keeping us warm with his glowing personality. The Sun is the ruler of Leo, the sign of fixed Fire, and is at home in the fifth house of pride, vanity, children and lovers. The Sun's heat and light is only useful if there's somebody around to receive it and reflect it back to him (like the Moon.)

Equal to the Sun, the Moon is among the most written, celebrated, and observed of the heavenly bodies and books (countless series of books) have been written for her mythology, mystical properties, and effect on Earthly life. Such is the Moon's prominence that she was a focal point of worship for early humans and continues to be a focal point of worship today: indeed, entire religions have been formed in worship of the Moon and her passage through the heavens. Neo-pagan religions such as Wicca place an almost exclusive emphasis on the importance of the Moon in context to holy days, spiritual rites, and religious practices. Nor will it change the Moon's central role in Christianity: for example, why does Easter fall on a different date each year? Because Easter is celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the Spring Equinox. Page, Father, and Sage; or Maiden, Mother, and Crone: the triune goddess in both the masculine and the feminine is here to stay.

The Moon is not a planet, but she is recognized by astrologers as having the same profound influence of a planet. The Moon is called the Lesser Luminary and is paired with the Sun to provide the full nature of an individual's personality. An individual's Moon sign (the sign in which the Moon resides in a natal chart) describes the inner-most part of a person's self which is only known to that person and to those who know that person very well. As the Earth orbits the Sun, its shadow covers more or less of the Moon at regular intervals; thus, the Moon is said to wax and wane through her regular phases. The Moon has three phases: waxing, full, and waning. Because of this, the number three is associated with the Moon who embodies the archetypal triple-goddess: Maiden, Mother, and Crone.

Anecdotally, I have heard from nurses that the number of patients seen in the emergency room, mothers delivering children, and mentally unstable patients admitted for observation all happen with more frequency at the full of the Moon. A crime scene investigator and college professor who taught police investigations told me that although no statistics confirm that humans suffer from lunacy, he himself is convinced that such phenomena do occur. What do you believe?

The Moon governs the sub- or un-conscious as well as regular rhythms and cyclical order. Like Venus, the Moon shares sensitive, feminine qualities and imparts a measure of receptivity and openness, like the gentle crescent of the new Moon. On a bad day, the Moon can be irrational, eccentric, or erratic. She may also use her darker side to manipulate others or play at politics (openly or behind closed doors) to get what she wants. Make no mistake: the Moon is as variable as the hearts and minds of men and as fickle as the oceans whose tides she pulls. The Moon can be lucky and an omen of good fortune, or when crossed can be described by Credence Clearwater Revival's song "I see a bad Moon rising." The Moon is at home in the 4th House of home, roots, one parent, and end-of-life circumstances. The Moon also governs Cancer, the sign of cardinal Water. The 4th House describes the ideal of motherhood and the parent referenced here is typically the nurturing mother.

The Solar System is named such because everything orbits around the Sun. Mercury, Venus, Earth, the Moon, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, dwarf planets, smaller moons, asteroids, dust, ice, and more all move around one central point whose gravitational pull permits their beautiful dance of synchronicity. Astrologically and astronomically, our yellow Sun is where it all begins. Without the Sun, nothing (including ourselves) would be as we know it.

More so, without Earth's Moon, nothing here would be as we know it either. Without the Moon, the tides of the oceans wouldn't follow a predictable pattern and the natural rhythm and order we enjoy would be nothing. The Moon controls the tides of the oceans and because the body is 70% Water, she has a profound effect on human life. The terms "lunatic" and "lunacy" directly reference the effects of the Moon on an individual. At one time in my life I worked as a security officer in a shopping mall. Although none of the other officers on staff were interested in astrology, they all knew the phases of the Moon and took extra precaution on duty when the Moon was full. For whatever reason, there were more fights, conflicts, arguments, drama, and other unusual events around the full Moon than at any other time of the month.

The Sun is classified as a star and the heat or light it releases varies by no more than one percent. The Sun is called the Greater Luminary and is considered the most powerful indicator of a person's personality in a horoscope. The Sun shows where we shine, what's important to us, sources of pride and ego (for better and for worse), and what fuels or drives us in life. The Sun and the Moon, members of the Balances of Fire and Water, respectively, are opposites but astrologically are connected. The Moon is called the Lesser Luminary; it of course emits no light of its own but reflects the Sun and its wax and wane is only because of Earth's shadow. None the less, the Moon is not simply a mirror, but a major force which affects all life on Earth. For the glorious strength of the Sun, the Moon provides a gentle caress.

The union of the Moon and the Sun is so clear that one would have to be nearly blind not to see it. For example, Dianic Wicca is a neopagan religion which observes the phases of the Moon and venerates the eternal feminine as manifested in the three faces of the Goddess: Maiden, Mother, and Crone. Moon worship is as old as, well, the Moon. As many ancient and contemporary Moon-worshipping religions are known, the same number can be found for Sun-worshipping religions.

The difference between the two Luminaries is important: the Sun imparts vitality, strength, stamina, and the ability to quickly recuperate from illness, injury, and exhaustion. As the ruler of the sign of fixed Fire, it is the Fire in our breast like the furnace which heats and powers a home. The Moon governs the natural rhythms of the body, Water retention, and the regular movement of all fluids in the body. Besides these functions of the Sun and the Moon, there are two more to introduce: the heart and the stomach.

The heart is the fist-sized organ which rests above the diaphragm and behind the sternum and grows to maturity between ages 12 to 25. Though the Heart is ruled by the Sun and through its pumping action is responsible for the circulation of blood, this is only accomplished through a partnership with the rhythmic influence of the Moon. The heart is protected by the tough outer layer of the fibrous pericardium and the smooth, lubricated layer of the serous pericardium. This tough outer jacket protects the heart, while the smooth inner jacket provides a frictionless environment for the ever-moving heart.

The four chambers of the heart are the atria and ventricles: two upper atria, and two lower ventricles, both separated by the septum, a part of the heart wall. The two upper chambers, the atria, receive blood from veins and alternately relax to receive blood and contract to pump blood. Upon contraction, the atria push blood into the two lower ventricles. The ventricles are the chief pumping mechanisms of the heart and are significantly thicker than the thin atria.

Like the one-way valves in the arteries, veins, and lymphatic vessels, the heart also benefits from structures which permit fluid to travel only one direction. The atria are protected by the atrioventricular valves, which prevent blood from flowing backward from the lower ventricles. The semilunar valves protect the ventricles and prohibit backward flow of blood away from the pulmonary artery and aorta.

Blood returning to the heart enters through the right atrium and is passed into the right ventricle. The right ventricle empties into the pulmonary artery which carries blood to the lungs for oxygenation. Pulmonary veins feed the oxygenated blood to the left atrium, which empties into the left ventricle, which in turn pumps fresh blood into the aorta. The aorta is the central artery which feeds blood from the heart to all other arteries in the body.

After the heart, the other organ of the body which commonly gets a lot of attention is the stomach. We may take the heart for granted and forget about it, but our stomach kindly and not so kindly reminds us of its presence every hour of every day. The stomach is gifted in that, like the Moon, it can wax and wane. The stomach is flexible enough that it contract to the size of one's hand when empty or can considerably distend to accommodate the volume of an enormous meal. The size of the stomach varies from person to person and fluctuates based on quantity and frequency of meals, but on average is the size of two fists together.

The stomach is located left-center of the solar plexus under the diaphragm and behind the left lobe of the liver. The stomach is composed of a protective elastic outer layer, three middle layers of muscle, and an inner mucus lining. The three middle layers of muscle efficiently squeeze and relax to churn food and promote digestion. The upper portion of the stomach is named the fundus; the central portion the body; and the lower portion the pylorus. The lining of the stomach wall contains mucus and endocrine cells. The gastric mucosa secrete gastric juice and hydrochloric acid to promote digestion, and the endocrine cells secrete gastrin and ghrelin. You may not know these hormones by their names, but you certainly know what they do: gastrin regulates the stomach for efficient digestion, and ghrelin signals the hypothalamus to increase appetite.

The stomach, like other organs which transport fluids, is protected by special structures to prevent the passage of fluid in the wrong direction. The entry of the esophagus into the fundus is guarded by a muscular opening named the lower esophageal sphincter, and the entry of the pylorus into the duodenum guarded by the pyloric sphincter. The duodenum, a portion of the small intestine, will be covered in greater detail under Virgo, the sign of mutable Earth.

The Moon also shares rulership of the adrenal glands with Mars. Mars' rulership of the adrenal glands is over the androgens (especially testosterone) and adrenaline. The Moon's rulership of the adrenal glands is over estrogen, cortisol, and aldosterone. The rulership of aldosterone is especially important because it is the hormone which signals the kidneys to conserve sodium which ultimately governs Water retention.

Important to both the Sun and the Moon is shock, the potentially life-threatening

condition in which the circulatory system is unable to feed sufficient blood to the body. Shock can be classified as cardiogenic, hypovolemic, neurogenic, anaphylactic, and septic. Cardiogenic shock is when the heart is unable to pump blood at full capacity. This may result from infections, heart attack, or other heart failures. Hypovolemic shock is exactly what it says: hypo- (low) –volemic (volume). Hypovolemic shock is commonly caused by severe trauma which leads to massive blood loss. It can also be caused by the sudden loss of interstitial fluid, which we learned about under Neptune. Vomiting, diarrhea, and constipation are all disruptions of the Balance of Water which in turn upset the Balance of Fire. Neurogenic and anaphylactic shock are nervous and allergic reactions which cause widespread dilation of blood vessels throughout the body and reduces, slows, or stops the flow of blood. Septic shock is the result of a large-scale infection in the body which spreads poisonous toxins and damages tissues.

With an appreciation for Solar and Lunar influence upon the human body, other subjects are illuminated. For example, high blood pressure: hypertension is one of the leading reasons for a visit to the doctor or the emergency room. Curiously, greater than 90% of all cases of hypertension have no single identifiable cause. In other words, hypertension is a name for category of symptoms whose cause can't be strictly identified. The remaining cases of hypertension are caused by kidney problems and hormonal imbalances related to the use of some types of birth control, as well as pregnancy. Untreated, hypertension can lead to kidney damage, stroke, and heart failure. Do you see the relationships? These examples illustrate how the Hermetic Law of Polarity operates in the human body: the heart, kidneys, and blood pressure (all ruled by the Balance of Fire) accompany distress related to fertility, conception, and the endocrine system (all ruled by the Balance of Water.) Fire and Water oppose each other, yet both are joined inseparably as members of the same balance of universal life Spirit.

Feast and Famine: Jupiter and Saturn

Jupiter (Feast)

- **Rulership:** Growth; kidneys; liver; assimilation of fats; elimination of toxins
- **Native house:** 9th House
 - **Rise:** Cancer
 - **Rest:** Sagittarius
 - **Detriment:** Gemini
 - **Fall:** Capricorn

Saturn (Famine)

- **Rulership:** Skeletal structure; strength of bones and teeth; calcium; minerals; deposits; knees
- **Native house:** 10th House
 - **Rise:** Libra
 - **Rest:** Capricorn
 - **Detriment:** Cancer
 - **Fall:** Aries

The planet Jupiter was named for the chief god of the Romans, Jove, and it is from him we get the word jovial: if you're looking for a perfect one-word description of Jupiter, jovial is it. Jupiter can also be called by his Greek name: Zeus. Jupiter is the king of the planets and has some unique qualities to give him that name. Jupiter is the largest planet in the Solar System: he's larger than all of the other planets combined. Jupiter is a gas giant whose core is formed of rock and iron but body from the lighter gasses helium and hydrogen. Jupiter is 1/4th the density of Earth, and if a swimming pool large enough could be found, he would float. Because of Jupiter's iron core, it has an incredible magnetic pull. Although the ancients named Jupiter the king of the planets and described him as a defender or protector, they couldn't have known that his magnetic core has for centuries pulled large meteors and other space debris away from a deadly collision with Earth. Jupiter is unique in that he produces more heat within his core than he receives and also emits more radio static than the Sun.

When you think of Jupiter, think big. Jupiter operates on a holistic level and governs all manner of expansion, growth, and increase. It is appropriate that Jupiter was the first ruler of Pisces, the sign called the Fish, because Pisces is now associated with the Christian church which shares a long history with the cult of Jupiter. Jupiter teaches benevolence, charity, kindness, goodwill, and using one's skills, knowledge, and abilities to help others. Jupiter also teaches generosity: he spends 12 years orbiting the Sun and is equally generous to all twelve signs of the Zodiac and bestows his gifts to all in turn.

When Jupiter's having a bad day, he can be boundless (a trait also shared by Pisces.) His principle of expansion turns into a cancer and he simply consumes everything in his reach. Jupiter's previous goodwill toward man turns into assumption: he knows best for you so he'll do what's best for you (whether or not you agree.) He imposes on others and doesn't ask if they want or need his help.

Jupiter is the ruler of Sagittarius, the sign of mutable Fire, and the secondary

ruler of Pisces, the sign of mutable Water. Jupiter is at home in the 9th House of religion, philosophy, higher education, and travel. The glyph of Jupiter shows a crescent of Spirit rising from and above a material cross. It is known as the crescent-above-the-cross to indicate expansion of both matter and Spirit. As wonderful and terrible as Jupiter can be, restraint is an absolute necessity, and that's what Saturn brings to the picture. Jupiter governs growth, expansion, and all forms of increase, and Saturn governs limitations, restrictions, reduction, boundaries of reality, discipline, societal demands, and learning to live with less. Together, Jupiter and Saturn form the give and take, yang and yin, plus and minus, and the up and down of the Solar System. Like the Sun and the Moon (the Greater and Lesser Luminaries), Jupiter and Saturn form a pair greater than the sum of their parts.

Saturn is the sixth planet from the Sun and is named for Cronus, the mythological father of Jupiter. The father-son relationship between Saturn and Jupiter is rather conflicted. In Roman mythology, Cronus – one of the titans who ruled before the birth of the gods – was afraid of losing his grasp on power. His wife Rhea bore him many children, among them Hades, Poseidon, Demeter, Hestia, and Zeus. Cronus feared a prophecy which said that one among his children would steal his throne, so he decided to consume his children as soon as they were born. Because the children of Cronus and Rhea were immortal, they did not die but continued to live inside their father. Rhea hid Zeus and fed Cronus a rock wrapped in rags which he ate without consideration. When Zeus grew to maturity, he returned as an adult to overthrow his father. After Zeus poisoned his father's wine, Cronus vomited out his previous four children and in the battle which followed he was cast down and Zeus took his throne. The irony in this is that Cronus overthrew and castrated his own father, Uranus. What do you suppose this myth teaches about the sins of the father and what children learn from their parents?

Saturn is the counter-balance to Jupiter's expansion, growth, and increase. Saturn teaches the importance of hard work, diligence, and the value of not taking shortcuts. Saturn is a taskmaster whose job is to make demands which teach the value of discipline. Saturn teaches patience through limitations and restrictions: if ever any one thing embodied the principle of delayed gratification, Saturn would be it.

For example, the ancient Romans observed a harvest festival at the end of December called Saturnalia. This festival celebrated the hard work of planting, nurturing, harvesting, and storing the crops through the growing season. It was a time of great merriment and celebration after a season of hard labor and every person from the highest nobility to the lowest farmhand ate, drank, and enjoyed other pleasures (it was a Roman festival – use your imagination.)

Saturn also teaches the importance of practicality and living within the boundaries of reality. Mars teaches us to act and take advantage of surprise and initiative, but Saturn is the doubtful voice in the corner which says never to gamble and to do instead what may be more difficult but more certain. When Mars says "Just do it," he means to simply get out there and see what happens; nothing risked, nothing gained, right? But when Saturn says "Just do it," he means for you to tighten your belt and do your work properly so you can enjoy the fruits of your labors. Saturn governs Capricorn, the sign of cardinal Earth, and is at home in the 10th House of career, status, reputation, and the strict, demanding parent (usually the father.) Saturn was also the original ruler of Aquarius, the sign of fixed Air.

An interesting note is that Saturn spends about 29.5 years to orbit the Sun. Because of Saturn's unique role in astrology, when an individual experiences a Saturn

return (Saturn returns to its location at the time of that person's birth), he is said to have reached the age of maturity. Thus, in astrology, adulthood is not age 21, but age 29. Most people are fortunate enough to have two Saturn returns in their lives, but some are lucky enough to have three. It's no accident that age 60 is considered the age of retirement!

Jupiter, the benevolent planet of growth and expansion, is starkly contrasted by Saturn, the stern planet of limitations, discipline, and determination. Jupiter, the largest planet in our Solar System rules the liver, the largest exocrine gland in the body, as well as all growth and expansion, the assimilation of fats, and the elimination of toxins from the body. Jupiter's rulership of the elimination of toxins from the bloodstream may seem unusual, but a review of history will show us why: before the discovery of Neptune, rulership of Pisces fell to Jupiter.

Jupiter's broad and arguably vague rulership over growth and expansion can be difficult to understand, but becomes clearer with an application of the Hermetic Law of Polarity. Water and Fire oppose one another, but are in truth joined as opposites at far ends of the same spectrum. Jupiter's broad, expansive, and adaptable Fire exists at the opposite end of the same spectrum which includes Pluto's rulership of the endocrine system and the pituitary glands. Jupiter assimilates fats, and his boon influence promotes positive development.

Astronomers say that Jupiter's tremendous magnetic pull attracts the majority of Earth-bound meteors, and if not for its presence the potential for deadly impacts would be much greater. Jupiter's role in the Solar System is reflected in the human body: the kidneys and the liver filter and eliminate toxins and other dangers from the bloodstream. The liver is the largest gland in the body: it rests beneath the diaphragm, behind the 8th through 10th ribs on the right side of the abdomen, and is both suspended and protected by a tough fibrous sleeve.

Despite its large and imposing size, the liver is actually four connected lobes. The left lobe is the smaller of the four and is about 1/6th of the total mass. The larger right lobe is divided as the superior caudate, inferior quadrate, and the larger right lobe proper. The liver's chief functions are the detoxification of harmful substances in the bloodstream, excretion of bile, and the completion of metabolic processes. The small intestine, ruled by Virgo, absorbs harmful substances and then passes them into the bloodstream from where they are directed to the liver. Toxins and impurities nullified in the liver are combined with salt, Water, sodium, bilirubin, mucus, and cholesterol to form bile. Bile is excreted by the liver through the hepatic ducts and stored in the gall bladder, an exocrine gland who we'll meet under Virgo and the Balance of Earth. Even though Virgo's gall bladder is responsible for passing bile into the small intestines, Jupiter retains rulership of the bile itself. This is because bile mixes with and lubricates partially digested food in the intestines to break down fats.

Jupiter's ability to clean the body of toxins and purify the blood is not limited to the liver and the gall bladder – it also extends to the kidneys. The kidneys are oval-shaped organs located at the lowest of the thoracic vertebrae and extend to about the 3rd lumbar vertebrae. The average adult kidney is four inches long, three inches wide, and only an inch thick. The kidneys are behind other organs in the abdominal cavity, with the right kidney slightly lower than the left because the comparatively massive liver displaces it. To give you an idea how much the kidneys do, consider that 20% of all blood pumped by the heart is fed into the kidneys for processing.

It's fortunate that the body comes with two kidneys, because it can't function

with less than one: the kidneys dynamically adjust the Water in the blood and also filter excess content such as chloride, potassium, sodium, and nitrogen. Content filtered from the blood includes of course uric acid, a waste product of protein metabolism. The kidneys aren't a mechanical balance which automatically responds to extreme variances: through a complex process of filtration and examination, the kidneys adjust the chemical balance of the blood stream in real time and in response to a variety of stimuli to maintain homeostasis. If not for the kidneys' dynamic filtration and adjustment of blood, homeostatic balance of the body would fail and death would quickly follow.

Saturn, Jupiter's sanguine neighbor, has an equally broad and important influence on the body: he rules the skeleton, all bones, the strength of bones and teeth, calcium, and all minerals and deposits. At first glance, Jupiter and Saturn may appear to oppose each other, but it just isn't so: both promote growth and progress. The difference between the two is revealed in the planets' astrological roots: Jupiter, the benevolent ruler of the heavens; and Saturn, the stern disciplinarian of time. Jupiter is the quantity, and Saturn is the quality. Saturn is significant in that it is the last of the inner planets and is the segue to the outer planets Uranus, Neptune, and Pluto.

Saturn principally resides in the sacrum, the bony foundation which anchors the spine and enables us to walk on two legs. The sacrum, like all bones, is a dynamic, living, growing tissue which depends on the arterial, venous, and lymphatic systems to cycle blood, deliver nutrients, and remove waste. As the body develops and the skeleton matures, so does the sacrum: in children it is five separate vertebrae, but with time these vertebrae fuse together and reach their full maturity usually no later than the 27th or 28th birthday.

The skeletons of men and women are not the same. Generally, men's bones are thicker, heavier, broader, and more pronounced than women's. Women have greater flexibility through the sacral vertebrae and for obvious reasons are also wider through the hips. The external visible surface of bones is named compact bone: two thirds of compact bone is formed from salts and minerals, one third from collagen. Compact bone encases cancellous bone tissue which is soft, spongy, and looks like many criss-crossed, overlapping beams. By mass, bones are eighty percent compact bone, and twenty percent cancellous bone. Besides the obvious functions of the skeletal system – shielding internal organs such as the lungs and giving the muscles a frame to pull against – it also acts as a vital reserve of minerals and provides a gestation area for new blood cells. Cancellous bone's spongy, porous network forms the support structure for red bone marrow, the greatest concentrations of which exist in the ends of long bones, plates of the skull, ribs, pelvis, and sternum. Red bone marrow is important because it contains hematopoietic stem cells, the means by which the body forms new red blood cells.

For reference purposes, the skeleton is divided into two categories: the axial skeleton, and the appendicular skeleton. The axial skeleton is the "axis" or "axel" from which the appendicular (appendage) skeleton extends. The axial skeleton includes the skull, jaw, entire spinal column, ribs, sternum, sacrum, and coccyx. The skull is several bones: the frontal bone (forehead); parietal bones on either side; occipital bone; nasal bone; zygomatic bones (cheekbones); maxilla (upper jaw); and mandible (lower jaw.)

The spine is formed of many stacked bones named vertebrae. The hard vertebrae form a protective tunnel for the spinal cord and are named as four groups according to size, shape, and relative location. They are the cervical, thoracic, lumbar, and sacral vertebrae. The seven cervical vertebrae extend from the base of the skull to the shoulders;

the 12 thoracic vertebrae from the shoulders to the lower back; and the five lumbar vertebrae from the lower back to the sacrum. The sacral vertebrae, since they fuse together with age, are not strictly counted. The division of the vertebrae is not arbitrary – it is a distinct division made by structural differences and nervous pathways. Spinal nerves extend from the spinal column to every part of the body through the peripheral nervous system.

Each group of vertebrae are nervously linked to broad areas of muscle and skin respectively called myotomes and dermatomes. Dermatomes are broad areas of skin innervated by a particular spinal nerve which stems from a specific location in the vertebrae, and myotomes are broad areas of muscle likewise innervated by a particular spinal nerve from a specific location in the vertebrae. Myotomes are more specific and accurate about which nerves are connected to which muscles, but dermatomes overlap considerably; despite this, dermatomes are an accurate, consistent roadmarker to measure dis-ease.

The spine, though it is bone and primarily ruled by Saturn, has the distinction of being ruled secondarily by each of the four fixed signs of the Zodiac: cervical vertebrae by Taurus, thoracic vertebrae by Leo, lumbar vertebrae by Scorpio, and sacral vertebrae by Aquarius. If the Aquarian rulership of the sacral vertebrae seems unusual to you, it shouldn't: before discovery of the outer planet Uranus, Aquarius belonged to Saturn. As with the previous chapters' emphatic illustrations of the Hermetic Laws of Polarity and Gender, the union of masculine Air and feminine Earth in the sacrum is one more example that all opposites are connected and that the Spiritual division between the masculine and the feminine is artificial. Because it will be more relevant, dermatomes and myotomes will be reviewed by element under the respective Balances of Air, Fire, Water, and Earth.

The sternum is the long, narrow bone which extends from the clavicle notch to the solar plexus. It is formed from three pieces, and in descending order they are the manubrium, body, and xiphoid process. The manubrium is less than half the size of the body, and the xiphoid process a much smaller tip pointing down from the body and resembles a spear tip or a dagger. The sternum is the solid anchor for the ribs which extend from the vertebrae of the spine and wrap around to join the sternum in the front.

10 of the 12 ribs anchor directly or indirectly to the sternum by way of costal cartilage, a connecting bridge which adds stability and structure. The first through seventh pairs of ribs are named "true ribs" because the costal cartilage which connects to the sternum does not connect to the costal cartilage of the rib above it. The eighth through twelfth ribs are named the "false ribs" because of how they do or don't connect to the sternum. The eighth through tenth ribs' costal cartilage does not anchor to the sternum, but instead joins to the costal cartilage of the ribs above them. The eleventh and twelfth pairs of ribs are additionally named the "floating ribs" because they have no costal cartilage and connect neither to the sternum nor to other ribs.

The appendicular skeleton includes the bones of the feet and legs, pelvis, the bones of the hands and arms, the shoulder blades, and the clavicle. The principal bones of the shoulders include the clavicle and shoulder blades. The upper arm is built around the humerus; and the forearm around the ulna and radius, two separate bones which permit greater articulation of the forearm and wrist. The hand is formed from the wrist's carpals, the palm's metacarpals, and the phalanges of the fingers. The arms and hands will be covered in greater detail under Gemini and the Balance of Air.

Not counting the sacrum, the pelvis is principally formed from the ilium, ischium, and pubic bone. The ilium is the large wing whose hard edge can be felt through the skin and which in women is so often admired by men. The ischium and the pubic bone form a passage way for nerves, veins, arteries, and lymphatics; they also provide an anchor for the muscles of the hips and thighs. The upper leg is formed around the massive femur bone, and the lower leg (like the forearm) benefits from two bones – the tibia and fibula – for greater articulation and balance. The foot is divided into the tarsals of the ankle, the metatarsals of the foot, and the phalanges of the toes. The legs and feet will be covered in greater detail under Pisces and the Balance of Water.

The Balance of Air

- **Libra (cardinal masculine Air)**
 - **Rulership:** Spleen, pancreas (7th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 23 September – 23 August
 - *Planets in rise:* Saturn
 - *Planets in rest:* Venus
 - *Planets in detriment:* N/A
 - *Planets in fall:* Sun, Mars
- **Aquarius (fixed masculine Air)**
 - **Rulership:** Lower legs; shins; calves; nervous system; sacral vertebrae (11th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 20 January – 18 August
 - *Planets in rise:* N/A
 - *Planets in rest:* Uranus
 - *Planets in detriment:* Sun
 - *Planets in fall:* Neptune; Pluto
- **Gemini (mutable masculine Air)**
 - **Rulership:** Fingers; hands; arms; shoulders; lungs; ears (3rd House)
 - **Calendar date:** 21 May – 21 June
 - *Planets in rise:* N/A
 - *Planets in rest:* Mercury
 - *Planets in detriment:* Jupiter
 - *Planets in fall:* N/A

Welcome to Libra and the 7th House of the Zodiac! Residing in the 7th House, Libra – like Virgo – sits in the middle. Appropriate as the segue from one half of the Zodiac into the other, the glyph of Libra shows a balanced scale: a horizontal plane balancing a measure of weight. Some believe that those born under the sign of Libra make the best attorneys and public defenders because of the association with the scales of justice, but that's just not true: as a cardinal sign, he's interested in progress, not on prosecution or legalities. Libra wants to put things in motion and maintain equilibrium even if it means overlooking (or forgiving) a few indiscretions.

Libra may not be a good attorney or prosecutor (that's Gemini!), but Libra makes a terrific police officer or agent for harmony and balance: Libra counts among those born under his sign the celebrated and revered Indian leader Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. When Libra is living his truth and acting in accordance with his essential self, he can create great change without causing great harm. Contrast Libra to his complementary opposite, Aries, and you'll see the difference: Aries would change by blowing up the establishment and seeing how the pieces fell, but Libra would change the establishment step by step as a whole. Diplomacy, tact, and the careful selection of words or outward expressions to achieve a result are embodied in Libra: he could have been the author of I'm Okay, You're Okay.® Libra knows that it's not what he does that creates change, but how he does it

Indeed, people born under the sign of Libra have an even, balanced appearance

and symmetry which somehow escape the rest of us. The next time you meet a Libra, take a look at his physical appearance – what does his body look like? How does he dress or manage himself? How does he keep his desk at work or his room at home? I'd bet money that even if he isn't particularly neat, he'll be orderly and fair in all he does.

Libra also has a strong need for order and to keep things in their place. This is why some people think Libra would make an excellent attorney or prosecutor, but no – Libra sees the good and bad as parts of the whole and if the bad is punished that would mean that Libra has taken one side over the other and upset the balance. This is part of Libra's bad side – on a bad day, he can be totally ambiguous or unwilling to make a decision. He may hem and haw one way or the other but never say yes or no either way. Have you ever heard a politician try to not answer a sensitive question? He's speaking, but not really saying anything! It's the same problem with Libra on a bad day: he avoids taking sides or making substantial pronouncements.

He can be a total jellyfish and in an effort to maintain balance and harmony will avoid creating upset or hard feelings. This distaste for creating upset is not just for creating upset in other people's lives, but also in his own life. I've met more than one Libra who has used his cardinal Spirit to move forward and do something else rather than engage in an activity or conversation which would directly or indirectly lead him to confront an unpleasant reality or shortcoming about himself.

Libra and his ruling planet Venus are at home in the 7th House of marriage and partnerships. Although this house is about relationships which bring people together, such as marriage or romance, it is also about inter-personal connections and those people who are tightly bound to us in either friendship or enmity. What's the difference between love and hate? Both love and hate are strong emotional fixations held by one person toward another person. For better or worse, good or bad, friendship or enmity, love or hate, the 7th House is about the people who are tightly bound to us and we to them.

Libra, the sign of cardinal Air, rules the spleen and the pancreas. The pancreas is generally thought of as an endocrine gland, but it's also an exocrine gland. In its role as an endocrine gland, it's responsible for the secretion of insulin and glucagon which govern retention or release of sugar in the bloodstream between fat cells. As an exocrine gland – one which secretes into a duct – it is responsible for the production of pancreatic juice which it secretes directly into the duodenum. The duodenum is the portion of the small intestine ruled by Virgo which directly receives partially digested food from the stomach. Pancreatic juice aids the digestive processes carried out in the small intestine and promotes absorption of nutritive content not absorbed in the stomach. The pancreas can also secrete pancreatic juice into the stomach to reduce the acidity of stomach acid and aid in the chemical digestion of complex sugars and lipids.

Libra rules the spleen, which is located on the left side of the abdomen above the colon and the left kidney, beneath the diaphragm, behind the stomach, and snuggled closely against the 7th through 12th ribs. The spleen is about the size of one's fist, but its size varies quite a bit from person to person and even fluctuates considerably within the same person. The spleen is a lymphoid organ meaning that it has many compartments and chambers which filter and clean the fluid which passes through it; however, unlike the thymus or the lymph nodes, the spleen doesn't process lymph: like the lungs, it processes blood. The spleen removes impurities from the bloodstream and destroys imperfectly formed, damaged, and dead red blood cells. Iron from destroyed red blood cells is retained and reintroduced to the bloodstream where it will either be eliminated from the

body or stored in the liver or bones. The spleen is also a reservoir for blood: it typically holds 350 ml. in reserve at any given time to use as an emergency transfusion in case of a sudden loss.

Welcome to Aquarius and the 11th House of the Zodiac! Aquarius is the masculine sign of fixed Air and is ruled by the planet Uranus. All the signs of the Zodiac represent beasts and animals, except for the signs of Air who are all drawn as people. Although the glyph of Libra shows a scale of justice, it is often depicted in artwork as a scale being held by a woman. Although the glyph of Gemini shows the Roman numeral two, it is depicted in artwork as a pair of twins, and Aquarius is traditionally depicted in artwork as a man or woman pouring Water from a vessel. Aquarius is historically called the Water bearer, but this interpretation changed with the discovery of Uranus. Saturn, the former ruler of Aquarius, ceded him to Uranus, the planet of technology and radical change. The glyph of Aquarius is now also interpreted as bolts of lightning or currents of electricity. As a fixed sign, Aquarius doesn't have the same disruptive potential as his ruling planet Uranus, but he does have Uranian perspective. Aquarius strives to find a new perspective, remain objective, and work to see something from angles you might never have imagined.

Consider a group of people with all three of the Air signs present in it. Libra, like the scales he carries, is interested in the common thread which unites people despite their differences; Gemini is flexible enough that he can see an issue from the perspective of anyone else in the group; and Aquarius would find a place outside of the group so he could sit and watch: he'd employ his objectivity to detach himself from the group dynamics and gain a totally new perspective which none of the others could see.

Aquarius shares in the intuition or uncanny logic of Uranus. Aquarius uses his unique perspective on all things to collect and assemble information and, much like Libra and Gemini, has breakthrough moments where all the pieces in his Mind come together and fit perfectly into place. This gives others the impression that he has secret abilities or unexplainable gifts, but in reality it's simply that his perspective gave him distance (and time) to assemble what appeared to be separate pieces. Aquarius is also unique in contrast to Leo whose pride and vanity lead him to the center of attention. Leo is a natural leader and well suited to his role and Aquarius, also being a fixed sign, shares in the same stable, grounding character; however, unlike Leo, Aquarius doesn't insist on being the Sun around which the rest of the group orbits. Aquarius has the same extroverted, masculine Spirit as Leo but under his Uranian governance is focused instead on contribution. Aquarius works well with groups to reach a goal or achieve an end but he can do it without being the center of attention.

On a bad day, this task is more difficult for Aquarius. The order and sense of calm movement like the smooth passage of Water from a vessel become chaotic. Thought becomes difficult and rational objectivity becomes an exercise in futility – frustration is the mood of the day. Nothing is quite as it should be and everything feels out of place. To regain his perspective or simply get things back into a semblance of order, Aquarius attempts to reorganize everything, even if the pieces don't fit the available slots. Aquarius feels surrounded by commotion and the din of arguments and dropped connections makes everything else too difficult to even be considered. As soon as he can correct the disorder and calm the commotion he sees all around him he'll be right as rain, but until then his Uranian influence shows and he's like a radio receiving only static when it should be getting stereo reception.

Aquarius and his ruling planet are at home in the 11th House of the Zodiac, the house of friends, groups, mentors, teachers, and aspirations. This is the house of people who share your goals and are friendly to your ideals. These are friends, acquaintances, associates, teachers, and mentors but also clubs, associations, organizations, and the like which encourage or complement what you want to achieve in life.

Aquarius, the sign of fixed Air, rules the lower legs, shins, calves, and sacral vertebrae. Aquarius' rulership traditionally extends also to the nervous system, but that rulership is only an extension of his ruler Uranus. Apart from the nervous system, Aquarius shares distinction as one of the four fixed signs which rule a segment of the spinal vertebrae. Aquarius rules the sacral vertebrae, and this is especially significant because of the relationship between Aquarius and Saturn. You'll notice that many planets and their subordinate signs reside in the same organs: Leo and the sun both rule the heart, Cancer and the Moon both rule the stomach, Capricorn and Saturn both rule the knees, Jupiter and Sagittarius both rule the liver, and here Saturn and Aquarius both reside in the sacrum.

Spinal nerves from the sacral vertebrae direct both myotomes and dermatomes. Efferent nerves of the sacral vertebrae innervate muscles of the hips, thighs, and some muscles on the outside of the lower leg. Afferent nerves from the sacral vertebrae relay sensation to the central nervous system from the buttocks, posterior of thighs, skin behind the knees, calves, sides of the lower legs and ankles, the heels, and part of the soles of the feet.

Welcome to Gemini and the 3rd House of the Zodiac! Gemini is the masculine sign of mutable Air and is illustrated by the Roman numeral two. Gemini is the only sign of the Zodiac who has the potential to be whole or complete within himself because in Gemini you get two for the price of one. The myths of Gemini come from the story of Castor and Pollux who were born of the same mother, Leda, but from separate fathers – Pollux from Zeus, Castor from Tyndareus. The brothers shared all their adventures but Castor, being mortal, could not live forever like his immortal brother Pollux. When Castor died, Pollux asked to share his immortality with his brother. Zeus agreed and made the brothers into the constellation Gemini.

Gemini is ruled by Mercury and shares in the many attributes of his ruler Hermes. Gemini is famously optimistic and eternally curious – he is a voracious consumer of information and loves nothing more than to be in the know (although he doesn't always do anything with the knowledge once he gets it.) For a Gemini, knowledge and information are usually an ends, not a means. Gemini can usually be found living in the blogosphere, always knows the latest rumors and juiciest gossip, loves to talk, and he strives to keep his finger on the pulse of the world around him. Gemini is also famous for taking up foreign languages or becoming a disseminator of information, and all because of Mercury's position as the messenger of the gods who relays information between the Heavens, Earth, and the Underworld.

Because Gemini is essentially two people, he can always be relied upon to have at least two opinions on every issue. Gemini is blessed (or cursed?) with the ability to hold two or more mutually incompatible perspectives because in his Mind both make perfect sense and it's only a matter of deciding which he prefers. If you've ever been with somebody who changes his Mind like other people change their socks and who you can't pin down on any one subject, you were probably speaking with a Gemini. Gemini is a blessing in that he can bring a "can do" attitude, flexibility, adaptability, and an unending

variety of perspectives to a project, but he can be a curse in that he is unable to confront his twin, sometimes also called his Shadow (after the Jungian description of the alien, frightening side of one's personality or psyche.)

In this version of the story, Gemini is not two twins working in unison but two twins from opposite ends of the same spectrum. One is the good, light, heroic aspirant and the other is the frightening, dark, antithetical Shadow. In order to become whole, Gemini must reconcile these two parts of himself. The reconciliation is difficult and the light aspirant fears the dark Shadow. Gemini, fearful of this union, can be superficial and anxious. He flees from confrontation and does not dig deeply to the truth of a matter. He distracts himself with outward events because he doesn't want to turn his sharp attention inward on himself. Only by confronting his Shadow and his mutable self is he able to be at peace and move forward hand-in-hand with his twin.

Gemini and his ruler Mercury are at home in the 3rd House of the Zodiac, the house of communication, siblings, and learning, exchange, and local travel. Similar to Gemini's plural personality, communication refers to both inter- and intra-personal communication: the things we say to ourselves, how we communicate within our own minds, the things we say, and how we communicate with others. Because communication accompanies the exchange of information and facts to deliver a message, this is also the house of experiential learning. Finally, Gemini – the sign of the Twins – brings siblings to the 3rd House of the Zodiac and illustrates how we relate to our brothers and sisters. Siblings aren't always blood-related and may simply be those people in our lives who are very close to us. In this sense, the 3rd House illustrates how we express our sense of brother- or sister-hood.

Gemini, the sign of mutable Air, broadly rules the fingers, hands, arms, shoulders, lungs, ears, and eyes. Regarding the lungs, it's important to remember that the heart pumps blood directly into the pulmonary artery which feeds it to the lungs for oxygenation. This blood returns to the heart and feeds all- important oxygen to the rest of the body. Regarding the eyes and ears, they connect directly to the brain through the cranial nerves we met under Mercury and Uranus. The eyes connect by way of cranial nerves II, III, IV, and VI; and the ears by way of cranial nerve VIII. This means that erratic movement of the eyes, inability to visually track a moving object, loss of hearing, and distorted hearing are all indicators of a disruption to the Balance of Air and are definite indicators of a Spiritual disruption of the sign of mutable Air.

Regarding the hands and arms, it's important to pay attention to body language be it in person or in dreams: subjects who report dis-ease of the hands and arms in waking life or who report dreaming of dis-ease of the hands and arms are exhibiting a Gemini disruption.

The Balance of Fire

- **Aries (cardinal masculine Fire)**
 - **Rulership:** Head; face; sinus cavities; nose (1st House)
 - **Calendar date:** 21 March – 19 April
 - *Planets in rise: Sun*
 - *Planets in rest: Mars*
 - *Planets in detriment: Venus*
 - *Planets in fall: Saturn*
- **Leo (fixed masculine Fire)**
 - **Rulership:** Heart; thoracic vertebrae; muscles of upper back (5th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 23 July – 22 August
 - *Planets in rise: Pluto*
 - *Planets in rest: Sun*
 - *Planets in detriment: Uranus*
 - *Planets in fall: N/A*
- **Sagittarius (mutable masculine Fire)**
 - **Rulership:** Upper legs; hips; thighs; sciatic nerve; kidneys; liver (9th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 22 November – 22 December
 - *Planets in rise: N/A*
 - *Planets in rest: Jupiter*
 - *Planets in detriment: Mercury*
 - *Planets in fall: N/A*

Welcome to Aries and the 1st House of the Zodiac! Aries is the masculine sign of cardinal Fire. In an explosion of hot, fiery, aggressive, masculine Spirit, Aries is the initial spark which puts things in motion. Aries is named for the Greek god of war and is ruled by Mars, the Roman god of war. Aries is all about spontaneity and risk and this person could easily be heard saying, “Nothing ventured, nothing gained,” as well as “You’ll never know if you don’t go.” Aries loves the excitement of living in the moment and having an exciting task to occupy his attention: he’s very good at starting projects but his staying power and commitment are questionable because he’s happiest as a pioneer setting out into the Great Unknown. He seeks conquest of virgin territories and wants to be the first in whatever he does. Aries sees no reward in sticking around after the job is done – he’s ready to move on to the next adventure as soon as the previous adventure has begun to wind down.

To best capture Aries, imagine that you see a man building a tower: he wants the fame of being the first to build a large and impressive tower. The passion consumes him, he builds, and the tower grows taller into the sky. Eventually he completes the tower and finds himself standing at the top of it with nowhere else to go. Now what? Now Aries is stuck at the top of a tower with no task, no goal, nothing to accomplish, and nothing to spread his renown. As soon as he’s laid the last shingle on the roof, he’ll be on his way to the next big thing and nothing can hold him back.

On a bad day, Aries can go two ways: first, he can share in the same aggressive, hostile Spirit of Mars and incinerate the people around him in his impatience; second, he

can become discontent and bored. Without a purpose or a goal, Aries can be listless and depressed. Aries needs purpose and he defines himself by what he does, where he's going, and what he'll accomplish. Without those things, Aries will lose interest. He needs an outlet for his Spirit and without one he's in danger of turning it in on himself destructively.

Aries and his ruler Mars are at home in the 1st House of the Zodiac, the house of outward appearance and external personality. This house describes how a person is perceived, not necessarily who they really are. That's why you may meet somebody who seems wonderful at first but then later you find out they're quite unpleasant. This is an extreme example, but I use it to illustrate the effect of the 1st House: it is the surface personality and the first part of a person which everybody else sees. The glyph of Aries shows the horns of a ram and it mimics the brow and nose of the human face, aptly suited for the 1st House of outward appearance and exterior personality as well as the explosive, extroverted Spirit of the sign of cardinal Fire.

Aries is unique in that he governs the whole head, a piece of the body already carved up between three planets and two signs. This can be challenging, but as with any effort to assess the root causes and influence of a subject's dis-ease, the decision must be made only after careful observation of how stress is distributed across the body. Aries' rulership of the head is primarily limited to the structure of the head, or a somewhat vague concept of integrity and strength. Aries' residence in the 1st House of the self, ego, and surface personality connects him to intangible injuries of the ego, but also to swelling, headaches, and other tangible injuries and chronic conditions not related to another element's balance. Aries also rules the face: the brow, eyes, cheeks, vitality, and expressiveness as well as the intangible "wellness" of the face all belong to the sign of cardinal Fire. This includes the sinus cavities along the brow, by the temples, and on either side of the nose beneath the eyes.

Welcome to Leo and the 5th House of the Zodiac! Leo is the masculine sign of fixed Fire and he can be described in just one adjective: Lion-hearted. Leo the lion is a true and constant companion who can be depended on to be there for you even in the most trying of times. The sign of fixed Fire is ruled by none other than the Sun himself. Leo is bright, resplendent, shines strong for the people in his life, and brings the flame of friendship to everything he touches.

Being a fixed sign, Leo enjoys constancy and consistency. Like the invariable heat of the Sun, Leo's support for others doesn't change with the season: he's the same today as he was yesterday. He is royalty and carries himself with the same sense of pride, dignity, and self-respect you'd expect to find in any prince of distinction. To complement his royal dignity is his sense of pride and identity. Like a Lion, Leo can be seen preening his mane and strutting his stuff: whether he's posing for himself or others, it's because he wants to know that he's appreciated. To maintain his dignity and pride, Leo is also disciplined (or vain.) Like the runway model who religiously maintains his appearance or the gymnast who lifts on a regular schedule to maintain his physique and physical abilities, Leo has the discipline to regularly invest in himself to maintain both his abilities and his status. Essentially, Leo is like the Sun: he needs a Moon to reflect his light.

Don't misunderstand Leo – he truly is a wonderful person and has a lot to offer: his passion, intensity, constancy, consistency, pride, self confidence, and eager willingness to help others is unmatched by any of the other 11 signs of the Zodiac... you just have to understand that he's a social creature who requires external validation. Like

the Moon which reflects the brilliance of the Sun or all life on Earth which is nurtured by the heat and light of the Sun, Leo needs people who need him. Leo needs love and attention! The down-side to Leo is that he can't just switch off his constant Spirit: he just keeps going, and going, and going. He is happiest when he is himself and is fulfilling his purpose in life, but what happens when he isn't fulfilling that purpose? Well, he just keeps going. Even if he's doing the wrong thing and is showing a degree of hypocrisy, he'll just keep on doing it because it may be the only thing he's got going for himself at that moment.

This drive to push forward and be of service to others or to be helpful to others can also lead Leo to put up a facade over who he really is. Leo wants to be strong, capable, and helpful, but it wounds his pride to let others see when he's not able to fill that role. Leo needs authority and sense of power and responsibility which come from being looked to by others for leadership and stability. If his admiring audience is gone or he can't find one, he scrambles to regain the attention and adoration of those people who need his help. On a bad day, Leo could be heard exclaiming "You don't know how badly you need me!"

Leo and his ruler the Sun are at home in the 5th House of children, lovers, dependent relationships, vanity, and creativity. Like a lion and his pride, Leo needs people around him who, in turn, need him: children, dependents, lovers, spouses and significant others. Like Leo's need to be the center of somebody's attention, vanity also appears in the 5th House. Vanity and creativity go hand-in-hand for Leo because it all begins with him. His creativity is first exercised over himself and then offered to the world around him.

Leo rules the heart and the thoracic vertebrae: for more about heart, refer back to the Sun and Moon. Efferent spinal nerves extending from the thoracic vertebrae innervate muscles of the upper body (but not the neck or head), to include muscles of the mid- and upper-back, shoulders, biceps, triceps, forearms, and hands. Afferent nerves relay sensation to the central nervous system from the upper-chest (beneath the scapula) through the lower abdomen (excluding the upper hips and groin.) They also relay sensation from the back at the level of the thoracic vertebrae.

Welcome to Sagittarius and the 9th House of the Zodiac! Sagittarius is the masculine sign of mutable Fire and is ruled by the planet Jupiter. Sagittarius, being the complementary opposite of Gemini, is fast-moving and exciting. Both Gemini and Sagittarius share mutual interests in learning new things, but they satisfy their interests in different ways. Gemini would rather read or talk about something, but Sagittarius would rather get up and actually go somewhere. Gemini would spend the day in the library reading journals and magazines or using the library's computers to scour the Internet and read the latest blogs, but Sagittarius would prefer to buy a bus ticket or get in the car and go where the action is.

Sagittarius can be an inspiring person – he sees connections between all things and is great at finding corresponding elements between even the most diverse subjects. If Gemini is the field reporter gathering the facts, Sagittarius is the investigative journalist who puts the pieces together and discovers a larger story. Sagittarius doesn't need to rely on cold hard facts to do his job because he has enough intuition to follow his faith to what he's looking for.

Sagittarius is called the archer for his far sight and accurate aim: once he gets an idea in his Mind, he can find a way to make it work. Where there's a will, there's a way,

and Sagittarius can be counted on to find it and make it work. Sagittarius is also called the sage for the advice he can give: he loves to learn and do new things, so he naturally collects words of wisdom. While the rest of us have to strive our whole lives to find meaning or purpose in what we do, Sagittarius never lacks for a purpose or destination. Sagittarius isn't necessarily a religious person, but he is naturally suited to faith and religious convention. He sees everything as connected and related one to the other and could probably recite scripture for any occasion if he was so inclined.

Sagittarius takes a long, broad view of the world. He takes from his ruling planet Jupiter a desire to grow and enjoy broadening experiences which give him a fuller appreciation for life. Sagittarius isn't necessarily the person who believes that he should go large or go home, but does see a need for a larger scope in what he does. Sagittarius can be depended on to consider the future and make multiple contingency plans. If it's worth doing, Sagittarius can be depended on to come up with several terrific ways to do it.

Of course, on a bad day, you might wish Sagittarius would just find somebody else to help. On a bad day, Sagittarius knows all the answers and is more than happy to make sure that he gives you all of them – whether you want them or not. Sagittarius gets caught up with himself and his ego inflates to massive dimensions. Right or wrong, he knows the best and right way to do anything. Because he knows (or thinks) he's right, he comes across as self-righteous or “holier than thou.” His vast experience, sage knowledge, and incredible insights are something he has and you don't. Simply put, his arrogance can be legendary.

Because he gets caught up in how much he knows or thinks he knows, he can be a fanatic. His mutable fiery Spirit carries him away to great heights where his own importance is grossly exaggerated. As a side effect of the ego-inflation process, he doesn't bother to do any fact-checking or to consider the validity of what he's found. He's too busy forming connections and creating a “bigger picture” of what he thinks is happening to consider the factual reality and what's really happening. The worst part is that you can't even challenge him on this: disputing one wrong fact doesn't change the validity of any of the other connections he's formed. Unlike Scorpio who is totally attached to her emotions and identity, Sagittarius has a more cellular personality. So he's wrong about one thing? No problem – he's still got a dozen other ways to prove his angle.

Sagittarius and his ruler Jupiter are at home in the 9th House of religion, philosophy, higher education, and travel. The 9th House is the house of things which give us a broader world-view and enlightens us to the ways of the world. Religion, philosophy, higher education, and travel cultivate our minds and show us the essential truth celebrated by Sagittarius: we are more alike than we are different. Thousands of years ago when the Greeks assigned these meanings to the 9th House, travel far from home and in foreign countries was considered a broadening experience as valuable as that gained from a formal education.

Sagittarius, the sign of mutable Fire, rules the upper legs, hips, thighs, kidneys, liver, and the sciatic nerve. It is true that the sciatic nerve is a member of the nervous system and should thus be included under Mercury or even Gemini, but its size and location instead give it to Sagittarius. The sciatic nerve is the largest, broadest nerve in the entire body. It stems from portions of the lumbar and sacral vertebrae and passes through the buttocks and the protective loop of bone made by the ischium and pubic bones on either side of the pelvis. The sciatic nerve relays information to and from the

lower back and nearly the whole of both legs.

The significance of the sciatic nerve is also Spiritual: Judaic kashrut laws strictly forbid the consumption of it. This prohibition against consumption of the sciatic nerve is based on the Old Testament verse which tells the story of Jacob wrestling with Yahweh. Whether you believe or doubt the story of Jacob's struggle with the God of Abraham, I introduce this verse to provide one Spiritual illustration for the separation of the sciatic nerve from the Balance of Air:

KJV Gen. 32:25-32: And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him. And he said, Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, What is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed. And Jacob asked him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And he said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name? And he blessed him there. And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel: for I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved. And as he passed over Peniel the sun rose upon him, and he halted upon his thigh. Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day: because he touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank.

The Balance of Water

- **Cancer (cardinal feminine Water)**
 - **Rulership:** Stomach; breasts; womb; abdominal cavity (4th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 22 June – 22 July
 - *Planets in rise: Jupiter, Neptune*
 - *Planets in rest: Moon*
 - *Planets in detriment: Saturn*
 - *Planets in fall: N/A*
- **Scorpio (fixed feminine Water)**
 - **Rulership:** Sexual organs; gonads; genitals; lumbar vertebrae; muscles of lower back (8th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 24 October – 21 November
 - *Planets in rise: Uranus*
 - *Planets in rest: Pluto*
 - *Planets in detriment: Venus*
 - *Planets in fall: Moon*
- **Pisces (mutable feminine Water)**
 - **Rulership:** Feet; immune system; ductless glands (12th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 19 February – 20 March
 - *Planets in rise: Venus*
 - *Planets in rest: Neptune*
 - *Planets in detriment: Mercury*
 - *Planets in fall: N/A*

Welcome to Cancer and the 9th House of the Zodiac! Like the Moon orbiting the Earth, Cancer is about the parent-child relationships and taking the initiative to care for those who need it. Cancer is the feminine sign of cardinal Water who moves forward and initiates action, but unlike the brash, fiery Spirit of Aries, Cancer initiates change through her feelings and emotions. Cancer teaches the importance of proactively nurturing, mothering, and supporting a goal.

Cancer is characterized by her emotional sensitivity: she's compassionate and feels the pain of others. Because Cancer feels her way through life, she immediately picks up on every nuance and change of others (which makes her a wonderful parent.) The glyph of Cancer is representative of the parent-child relationship between the Earth and the Moon, but it also representative of a woman's breasts which nurture a child in its infancy. Cancer has a powerful maternal instinct and possesses a driving desire to care for others and provide a parenting influence in their lives. With her cardinal Spirit, she steps forward to put things in motion for the betterment of others.

Crabby Cancer has a set of sharp pincers to attack those who injure her. The saying "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" was probably written by a man after being royally pinched by a wounded Cancer. For that matter, any of you who have a parent born under the sign of Cancer know first-hand how easily a wounded Cancer can pinch you in places you didn't know you had.

Cancer isn't just the parent in the parent-child relationship, but also the child:

she requires a parent-child role and she's happy to fill either one of those depending on her mood. Cancer typically only fills the child role in a relationship or displays her child attributes when she's having a bad day or is in a poor mood. Like a child, Cancer can be immature or childish and can sling the arrows of discontent with both alarming accuracy and surprising ease. In Cancer's Mind, everything makes sense when it comes to doing what's best for you (or for her, in the child aspect), so she can also be irrational. You just can't argue with a Cancer because for every contradiction you can find, that's just one more reason why you're part of the problem. Cancer can also be manipulative in a terribly sweet way. Because she obviously knows what's best for both you and her, she'll do whatever it takes to get what she needs, even if that means she has to play one person against another or pinch you with her pincers to show you what she doesn't like.

Cancer is at home in the 4th House of home, roots, end of life circumstances, and the more nurturing, accepting parent. The 4th House is the house of the nuclear family and the traditional sense of home. It is that place from which a person comes and to which they can always return: no conditions, no strings attached – they have to take you in when you go home. It also shows a person's "end of life" circumstances: when people near the end of their lives, they are comforted to be with friends and family and to transition in a familiar place. Home is what we strive to create and recreate through the course of our lives and home is where we'll be both at the beginning and end of our finite existence.

Cancer rules the stomach, breasts, and concavity of the abdomen. Like several other signs, Cancer resides in one of the same organs as the her ruler the Moon. The stomach is the principal member of the digestive process and also an endocrine gland which secretes ghrelin and gastrin to moderate appetite.

Cancer's rulership of the breasts is true for both men and women, but is more significant for women. The mother-and-child orbit of the Earth and Moon echoes the mother's and child's relationship formed during pregnancy, nursing, and the early formative years. Additionally, the female sex hormones estrogen and progesterone signal the mammary glands to begin lactation. Breastfeeding is more than just nutritional care or a bonding experience: the mother's breast milk imparts immunity. This happens because the suckling infant's saliva enters the mother, whose immune system reacts and generates the exact antibodies needed to ensure the infant's best health, vitality, and immunity against illness and disease. Not counting the immunological benefits, breast milk is filled with important vitamins, minerals, proteins, and plenty of fat to satisfy the nutritional demands of a growing baby.

Welcome to Scorpio and the 8th House of the Zodiac! Scorpio is the feminine sign of fixed Water, and you know you've met her because looking her in the eye freezes you like a deer in the headlights. Scorpio is famous for having the most striking eyes you've ever seen which look straight through you and into the depths of your very soul. Crystal blue, storm grey, emerald green, chocolate brown – Scorpio's eyes reflect extremes and have caused more than a few fatal attractions. Not every Scorpio has the wildest eyes you've ever seen, but all Scorpions have emotional and Spiritual depths the rest of us can only wonder at. If the eyes are the windows to the soul, be careful you don't fall in because it's a long way to the bottom! Halloween, All Hallows Eve, or Samhain as October 31st is variously named, falls within Scorpio's birth date. Many people believe that the veil separating the living and the dead is thin at this time and Scorpio takes her depths from this time of Spiritual transition.

Scorpio is a person who is naturally inclined to go to extremes in everything she

does. Scorpio may not consider herself an extremist because in her Mind she may only be going a short distance, but when you compare the depth of a Scorpio to everybody else her short distance becomes a football field. She is a native daughter to great depths and distances! Scorpio may not necessarily be a disciplined individual, but she can be disciplined about how she pursues a goal or a person in her life. Because of her deep emotions and the depth of her passion, she can easily set anything else aside to focus on what she wants.

She is steadfast in her desires and will travel to the ends of the Earth to find what she's looking for. She is purposeful in what she does and seeks purpose and meaning in her own life. She sees people and experiences as transformative and can fairly be called a vampire for the fact that she often takes more from others than they do from her. At the risk of sounding cheeky, "Scorpio lives to live." It's all about the transformation or those moments which touch the soul. Physical intimacy, lust, desire, deep religious devotion, meditation – these are all things which are instrumental to Scorpio's pursuit of deep, transformative experiences which move the soul and touch the emotions.

It's important to consider Scorpio's pursuit of deep transformation and the importance she gives to it because on a bad day it all comes to bear: Scorpio gets what Scorpio wants and can be among the hardest to dissuade from a particular course of action. Because Scorpio sees the depth and scope of a goal or task, she'll go after that with all her power. She can't be controlled, can't be persuaded – in fact, she might do something just to spite you and show that she can do it. She can be a true rebel, with or without a cause!

Scorpio is sometimes called a schemer, and it's not entirely untrue: Scorpio has been known to mull deep thoughts and deeper plans in her head for long periods before revealing them. Scorpio can keep things tucked away in her Mind and hidden from others which turns her into a cauldron or pressure cooker: don't be around when she boils over. Unlike some of the signs of the Zodiac which are able to separate their emotions from their self-concept, Scorpio has a much harder time with this. Contradicting a Scorpio doesn't mean that you're going against what she thinks, but that you're going against who she is. To defend this position, Scorpio can be argumentative and even downright contrary, sometimes for no good reason other than that she enjoys arguing with you. If you know a Scorpio, be aware that if you choose to argue with one that you'll be in for a long-winded argument (of which you may never hear the end.)

Scorpio is at home in the 8th House of sex, death, all forms of loss, communal loss, transformation, and money. The 8th House is analogous to the great mysteries of the joy of sex, the loss of death, and the mystery of transition and rebirth. Sex is both for pleasure and for procreation and leads to the birth of both children and ideas. When people come together and share emotions the results can be both tangible and intangible. Death is not necessarily loss but a journey into the final mystery of the underworld of rebirth and renewal. Many Pagans believe that at the time of Scorpio, the Crone Goddess mourns the God and journeys to visit him in the underworld where they join in union to renew the cycle of life. Because money has transformative power, it too is associated with the 8th House. Money is also frequently encountered as an inheritance when a parent passes away, thus a second reason it is encountered in the 8th House.

Scorpio rules the gonads, sexual organs, genitals, womb, and lumbar vertebrae. Scorpio governs two important endocrine glands: the placenta and the gonads. The placenta is the uterine lining which supports the gestating fetus. The placenta could be

called a disposable endocrine organ in that it is designed to be passed from the body after the child is born. Human chorionic gonadotropin, or hCG, is one of the chief hormones secreted by the placenta and it promotes increased synthesis and secretion of estrogen and progesterone during the course of the pregnancy. The placenta also synthesizes and secretes human placental lactogen and relaxin. Placental lactogen signals the development and operation of the mammary glands and relaxin softens the bones of the hips to prepare the female skeleton to deliver the fetus.

The gonads are the human sex organs. In males they are the testes, and in females they are the ovaries. The testes reside in the scrotum and primarily secrete testosterone. Testosterone is the male sex hormone which promotes the development of male sex characteristics: increased muscle mass, greater bone density, development of facial and body hair, production of sperm, deepening of the voice, and so on. Women also require testosterone but produce on average more than fifty times less than men; this difference is insignificant because women are far more sensitive to testosterone than men. In females the gonads are the ovaries which reside in the pelvis. The ovaries are regulated by the pituitary gland which moderates the levels of gonadotropins and follicle-stimulating hormones in the bloodstream. The ovaries chiefly secrete estrogen and progesterone. Estrogen is the primary female sex hormone which promotes the development of female sex characteristics: slight build, lighter voice, smaller frame, breast development, and so on. Progesterone promotes conception and inhibits the elimination of the uterine lining.

Sexual and reproductive health is important, but are also a very broad, deep field of study and I encourage you to research these subjects on your own. What I want to emphasize about Scorpio is the mystical or Spiritual significance she has in the human body: Scorpio, like several other signs, resides in one of the same organs as her ruler: in this instance, Scorpio resides with her secondary ruler Mars. The union of opposites is to be expected because Scorpio first belonged to Mars before she was reassigned to Pluto; however, what is unexpected is Scorpio's rulership of the lumbar vertebrae and how those vertebrae relate to other nerves and muscles. Spinal nerves extending from the lumbar vertebrae tie in very closely with those from the sacral vertebrae. Spinal nerves extending from the lumbar vertebrae primarily innervate muscles of the abdomen, and afferent nerves relay sensation to the central nervous system from the lower back, hips, front of the legs, tops of the feet, and the external genitalia.

What's significant about this is that the muscles of the perineum are innervated by nerves which extend from the sacral vertebrae, which are home to both airy Aquarius and earthy Saturn. See what's happening here? Airy Aquarius, earthy Saturn, fiery Mars, and watery Scorpio all come together in one location. Saturn's earthy sacrum hosts airy Aquarius which innervates Mars' perineum who rules watery Scorpio! Sexual intercourse and reproductive health are the ecstatic union of the elements of creation.

Welcome to Pisces and the 12th House of the Zodiac! Pisces is the feminine sign of mutable Water and is quite possibly the most sociable and gregarious sign of the entire Zodiac. If Cancer is a river and Scorpio is a swamp, then Pisces is a trickling stream or a babbling brook. The glyph of Pisces describes two fish bound at the tails but swimming in opposite directions. Owing to her emotional nature and mutable character, Pisces is in touch with everything around her and has a measure of empathy others can only imagine. Pisces is acutely aware of her place in the world and how she relates to those around her. Pisces is often deeply religious or highly Spiritual, and even if she's not a member of a

church or a devout follower of a chosen tradition, she still has a very Spiritual or empathic connection to the people and places around here. She's empathic and cares for the humanity and dignity of those around her; I've met several Pisces and they have always been the most concerned, caring people.

In my experience, Pisces is also one of the most insightful people, too. Pisces doesn't sweat the small stuff – like the trickling stream to which we compared Pisces, she keeps things moving in a quick and light-hearted manner. On a good day, a Pisces is a terrific boss to work for because she just wants to know that all is right with the world. Part of the reason that Pisces is such a wonderful person to have around is because she's so empathic and in tune with others: when something is wrong or out of order, she can feel how it affects you because it affects her. When Pisces lends a hand or offers a shoulder to cry on, it's not just because she wants to help you, but because she wants to help herself, too. By working through your obstacles with you, both she and you grow stronger and share an experience.

On a bad day, though, that's also one of Pisces' weak points. Because she is so acutely in tune with others' needs, troubles, struggles, and obstacles, she can often have a difficult time seeing where her life ends and another's life begins. She has difficulty setting or maintaining boundaries and like a trickling stream or body of Water trickles into other people's lives. Their problems become her problems and she feels the greatest urgency to help them because in her Mind, she's helping herself as well. Because Pisces has a difficult time saying no, she often finds herself made into a victim. Less scrupulous people may discover her lack of personal limits and take advantage of her giving nature by always having just one more thing she can do for them.

This boundless (literally, without boundaries) personality can lead Pisces to experience a great amount of unnecessary emotional suffering. Addiction – in all forms and varieties – is a common struggle for Pisces. This strong emotional attachment to people and causes isn't entirely a drawback, though: when Pisces is moved to work for a good cause or a wonderful person who doesn't take advantage of her good nature she's almost a rival to Leo in her devotion.

Pisces is at home in the 12th House of the Zodiac. The 12th House could be called the house of the mystic – it is the house of secrets, seclusion, withdrawal from the outside world, the unconscious, and the subconscious. It is also the house of self-defeat or what's sometimes called secret enemies: those things which can undo us but which we might not see.

Pisces, the sign of mutable Water, rules the feet and to a lesser degree also the immune system and ductless glands. Pisces' rulership of the immune system and ductless glands is an extension of her ruler Neptune and it echoes the cleansing, boon influence of her first ruler Jupiter. You may scoff at Pisces' modest claim to the feet, but the feet are much more than a lowly pair of appendages. Not counting their obvious and practical purposes, the feet are powerful psychic and Spiritual conductors. For example, reflexologists practice a highly specialized form of therapeutic massage in which only the feet are manipulated. Detailed charts have been established which map the entire body and everything in it to specific zones of the soles of each foot. Through precise manipulation and stimulation, reflexologists can affect the health and wellness of the Mind and entire body through only the feet. Reiki practitioners also commonly report powerful psychic or Spiritual insight when giving Reiki for the feet.

The Balance of Earth

- **Capricorn (cardinal feminine Earth)**
 - **Rulership:** Skeleton; bones; knees; teeth (10th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 22 December – 19 January
 - *Planets in rise: Mars*
 - *Planets in rest: Saturn*
 - *Planets in detriment: Moon*
 - *Planets in fall: Jupiter*
- **Taurus (fixed feminine Earth)**
 - **Rulership:** Lower jaw; thyroid gland; esophagus; gullet; neck; throat; muscles of neck; cervical vertebrae (2nd House)
 - **Calendar date:** 20 April – 20 May
 - *Planets in rise: Moon*
 - *Planets in rest: Venus*
 - *Planets in detriment: Pluto*
 - *Planets in fall: Uranus*
- **Virgo (mutable feminine Earth)**
 - **Rulership:** Gall bladder; intestines (6th House)
 - **Calendar date:** 23 August – 22 September
 - *Planets in rest: Mercury*
 - *Planets in detriment: Neptune*
 - *Planets in fall: Venus*

Welcome to Capricorn and the 10th House of the Zodiac! Capricorn is the feminine sign of cardinal Earth and is ruled by Saturn whom the Romans feted every December at Saturnalia. After months of hard labor to bring in the crops and store them away for the winter, Saturnalia was a reward for hard work and effort. Capricorn under her ruling planet Saturn takes a cue from the lessons of the harvest and teaches us the importance of hard work. Capricorn is essentially a pessimist, but that's not to say that pessimism is an unworthy trait. After serving in the Marine Corps, I think that Capricorn must have been the guiding force behind all of our policies. We were constantly told such commandments as: mission accomplishment comes before troop welfare; proper prior planning prevents poor performance; and plan for the worst but hope for the best. These expressions best exemplify Capricorn because the sign of cardinal Earth is born during the darkest time of the year when the Sun is dwindling and the days are short and cold. Capricorn isn't necessarily contrary or disagreeable, she simply doesn't like doing things twice or getting a poor return for her efforts. I once saw a humorous picture which illustrated Capricorn very well: this picture showed a woman sitting at an office desk looking out at the viewer with a smart face and proclaiming, "Of course I don't work as hard as the other men here – I do things right the first time." Capricorn doesn't want to say no to progress or spend all day working, she just wants to only have to do it once. If that one time is longer and more difficult than expected, she'll do that, but she'd rather be like the Romans: do a good job so she can party at Saturnalia.

She's conservative with her time and energy, and doesn't spend either

wastefully. She is a perfectionist not out of pride but out of preference. Why do a job twice (essentially, two jobs) but only get a return on investment for just one? It's not a smart decision. Capricorn avoids mistakes and bad investments of time, energy, and money by nurturing a healthy level of doubt, skepticism, and pessimism. By troubleshooting an idea and subjecting it to a tough screening process, Capricorn can be certain that she's making a wise investment. Capricorn loves to say "I doubt it. I don't think so. That'll never work. Not likely." By putting her opinion out there, the recipients of those statements must either show that she is wrong or acknowledge her criticism and fix the shortcomings she's discovered. If not for Capricorn's perpetual doubt, we might get caught in Rhonda Byrne's "Secret" trap: hoping and planning for the best only to be later confronted by the harsh reality that life punishes the careless.

On a bad day, Capricorn just doesn't care that much. Being a cardinal sign, Capricorn prefers forward movement, but she just doesn't stop to question her actions as she did previously. She makes silly mistakes that should have been easily prevented and makes foolish choices about how to proceed. Her judgment simply isn't as good as it was because her attention is focused elsewhere. She appears blind to the outside world and leaves others wondering both how and why she could have chosen some of the things she did. Her previously razor sharp discernment has whittled down to the point that she's overworked, overloaded, and accepts what comes to her only because she doesn't have the time or ability to protest.

Capricorn is at home in the 10th House of career, status, reputation, and the stricter, more demanding parent (usually the father.) This is the house of real-world concerns, results, and consequences, but it's also a house of great rewards. Like the long journey through the harvests to reach Saturnalia, the 10th House is about the effort we put forth and the fruits of our labors. The 10th House complements the 4th House of the kinder, nurturing, more accepting parent; paired with Cancer, Capricorn shows parents' differing roles and responsibilities. Capricorn rules the skeleton, bones, knees, and teeth. Of these, Capricorn principally resides in the knees. Capricorn's domain is entirely shared with its ruler Saturn which reinforces the necessity to treat dis-ease on both the higher and lower planes.

Welcome to Taurus and the 2nd House of the Zodiac! Taurus is ruled by Venus and is about living life through the senses. Like a sommelier, Taurus sips from life's cup of pleasure and sensually contemplates the fine bouquet offered. Taurus doesn't just live life through her senses but is also a person who enjoys life's bounty to its fullest. While Aries may plow through something just to be done with it and begin the next project, Taurus wants to take her time on it and enjoy the process as well as the result. Taurus shares the earthy qualities of industry and productivity and uses her stability to ground a project and keep things centered. Taurus isn't famous for being hasty or very quick to finish anything, but considering the fast-paced Western lifestyle, Taurus does bring a welcome measure of patience and thoughtful consideration. Taurus is very capable of finishing a project and is just as productive as the other Earth signs, but she won't be pressured into completing anything on an artificial schedule.

Taurus is also reliable and can have a calming effect on those in her presence. Taurus works and lives on her own schedule and doesn't easily get carried away by the comings and goings of others. Taurus generally has long patience and isn't easily provoked, but she isn't called the sign of the bull for no reason: when angered or provoked, Taurus can be explosively hostile. The senses through which she lives and

enjoys her life can become overly sensitive to her surroundings and everything sets her off. “Volatility” doesn’t even begin to describe Taurus on a bad day, and if you’ve ever met a Taurus in a foul mood you know that it’s just better to stay away and disengage. You can’t argue with an upset Taurus because she’ll argue her point until you’re willing to concede out of exhaustion if not outright loss. Like the bull, Taurus can be totally stubborn and refuse to budge from a topic until it’s settled the way she likes.

Taurus is at home in the 2nd House of values and possessions, or the intangible and tangible things of importance in one’s life. The 2nd House of the Zodiac describes the finer material things in life, the importance we ascribe to them, and how we relate to those things. It also describes the values or viewpoints we hold. Things of importance aren’t necessarily expensive silk, rich chocolate, or fast German cars – things of importance can also be personal, cultural, religious, or Spiritual. Like Venus’ position of high self-esteem and self-worth which teaches us to say, “I’m worth it,” Taurus shows us what and where those values are. The glyph of Taurus is the head and horns of a bull which communicate the qualities and attributes of the sign of fixed Earth: a patient and reliable body but a couple horns to be used when provoked.

Taurus rules the lower jaw, thyroid gland, esophagus, neck and throat, muscles of the neck, and the cervical vertebrae. Taurus’ rulership of the lower jaw is like Aries’ rulership of the head: in need of definition. The teeth are ruled by Capricorn and Saturn, but the mandible which supports them belongs to Taurus. As with any attempt to correctly assess dis-ease, the judgment must be made based on the subject’s total-body picture. The thyroid gland is a shield-shaped gland in the throat which secretes calcitonin to move calcium from the blood into bones and increase bone density, as well as thyroxine which slows one’s metabolic rate.

Taurus rules the esophagus, a portion of the digestive tube. It begins where the pharynx ends and extends from the clavicle notch through the diaphragm to empty into the fundus of the stomach. The esophagus is protected by a smooth, thick outer sleeve which contains three layers of muscle around a lubricated mucus lining. Just like the colon and small intestine, the esophagus moves solids and liquids by means of peristalsis which is why you can swallow food and liquid even when upside down. Of course, food, drink, partially digested food, and stomach acid don’t all flow out of an inverted body just because of the muscles of the esophagus but also because of the upper and lower esophageal sphincters. These muscular rings contract and relax to prevent or allow the passage of solids and liquids. Located at either end of the esophagus, the upper sphincter closes during respiration and the lower sphincter closes to prevent the contents of the stomach from washing the wrong way. Acid reflux, heart burn, and hiatal hernias all accompany dis-ease of the lower esophageal sphincter.

The seven cervical vertebrae extend from the base of the skull to the base of the neck. Spinal nerves extending from the cervical vertebrae innervate muscles of the neck, both the major and minor pectoral muscles, the upper-most region of the shoulders, and the diaphragm. Afferent nerves relay information to the cervical vertebrae from the outside of the arms, thumbs, part of the palms, shoulders, front of the neck, and the entire head with the exception of the brow, face, cheeks, and jaw. Areas of the face not nervously connected to the cervical vertebrae link directly to the brainstem by way of the trigeminal cranial nerve (cranial nerve V). By now, it shouldn’t surprise you that the sign of fixed Earth is connected to several members of the Balance of Air. The sign of fixed Air resides with Saturn at the bottom of the spine, and the sign of fixed Earth resides with

all three rulers of the Balance of Air at the top of the spine: there are no opposites, only degrees of separation upon the same balance of universal life Spirit.

Welcome to Virgo and the 6th House of the Zodiac. Virgo is the feminine sign of mutable Earth and is traditionally ruled by Mercury, the planet which also rules Gemini, the masculine sign of mutable Air. There is some debate in the astrological community as to the true ruler of Virgo: a small but growing number of astrologers give Virgo to the dwarf planet Ceres, which orbits the Sun between Mars and Jupiter. All astronomical debates aside concerning Ceres' status as a planet, astrologers recognize the influence of heavenly bodies regardless of how the scientific community chooses to classify them.

Ceres was discovered in January of 1801 by Giuseppe Piazzi and was named for the Roman goddess of grain, agriculture, and maternal instincts, but you probably know her better by her Greek name Demeter. It is from the name Ceres that we derive the word cereal, which is food-grain, wheat and similar goods harvested from the field. Though the debate about the true ruler of Virgo could (and does) continue indefinitely, I introduce Ceres-Demeter for the important elements she contributes to the story of Virgo. Like her patron goddesses, Virgo is productive, fruitful, and hardworking. Virgo embodies a variety of other goddess elements, which is appropriate since she is also called the virgin and the maiden. Virgo is not a virgin in the contemporary sense of the word, but in the oldest sense of the word: she is free to choose her partners and is not bound to another. Like the maiden, Virgo is fruitful and vibrant; those born under her sign share in her health and well-being. Virgo is a natural mother and her ability to nurture is arguably greater than the legendary mothering abilities of Cancer. Virgo is intimately aware of her health, the health of others, and works hard to care for both.

Indirectly related to Virgo's interest in health and caring for others is her caution and adaptability. Virgo knows that the best way to stay healthy and keep her loved ones in good health is to simply avoid problems from the start. If you'll do some mental gymnastics, try and see a difference between making the "right" decision and making the "best" decision. To use an expression, "What's right is not always best, and what's best is not always right." Virgo will make the best decision when it comes to taking care of herself and others and under Ceres describes the reality of motherhood (Cancer describes the ideal of motherhood.)

To complete that decision making process, Virgo benefits from Mercurial influence and employs her mental acuity to approach the issue logically. Virgo is, for lack of a better word, a nit-picker and no detail is too small to be unimportant. When presented with a problem, Virgo will closely examine the issue and perform a totally thorough cost-benefit analysis. Virgo is similar in function but dissimilar in operation to Gemini. Gemini is broad but shallow, and Virgo is deep but narrow. Pretend that Gemini and Virgo are avid newspaper readers: Gemini will skim the headlines, glance at the obituaries, browse through the comics, and leaf through the classifieds, but Virgo will read the main story on the front page, finish the main story where it continues inside the fold, check out the articles related to the main story, go to the internet to read more about the people or issues who appeared in the article, check the blogosphere to see what other people have to share about the same story, and probably also call her friends and family to gather their input on the same issue. Gemini is broadly read but shallowly interested, Virgo is narrowly read but deeply interested.

On a bad day, Virgo starts to forget about important things, particularly herself and her own health. Virgo's tendency to nit-pick can swing into overdrive and before she

knows it she's obsessing over the smallest detail while the rest of the world is falling down around her. To use another expression, Virgo "can't see the forest because of the trees." Every detail has to be just right, and if it isn't she gets entirely wrapped around the axel trying to fix it. Virgo can be difficult to tolerate because she'll pick you apart and point out every flaw you never knew you had.

Virgo's obsession with details in pursuit of critical analysis can make things far more complicated than they need to be. I once had a college instructor who taught a criminal investigations class. This class was during the summer semester, each period was two hours long, and the class met five times per week. The course had a syllabus which consisted of thirteen weeks of instruction with a week-by-week overview listed for our reference. To make a long story short, the instructor never finished the syllabus. We spent thirteen weeks, meeting five days a week, two hours per day, and we never got past the sixth week of instruction. Every class was two hours of the most obscure details of police investigations not related to the syllabus. He wasn't a bad instructor – we just never learned what was on the syllabus.

The glyph of Virgo shows the letter M which can be taken as mother or matron. The tail crossing over is symbolic of the Virgin's crossed legs in that she is not bound to another can choose her partners and what she brings into her life. Virgo is at home in the 6th House of work and health, the two areas with which she is most occupied. Virgos are born in August and September, the time of the first harvest when men and women labor hard to bring in the plentiful crops and not miss one single ear of corn on a fallen stalk.

Virgo rules the gall bladder and the small intestine. The gall bladder is an oval-shaped exocrine gland about four inches long and an inch wide. It is located directly beneath the liver, is fed by the liver's hepatic duct, and holds up to 50 ml. of bile. Unlike some exocrine glands which simply retain a fluid until secretion, the gall bladder concentrates bile to as much as 10 times original strength. As the stomach empties partially digested food into the duodenum (first portion of the small intestine), the gall bladder also secretes its concentrated bile which lubricates food and aids the digestive process in the intestines.

In such instances when the gall bladder becomes inflamed or obstructed, the passage of bile into the duodenum stops. Bile is absorbed back into the blood and eventually deposited in the skin. This condition, jaundice, colors the skin yellow and is an immediate outward indicator that the gall bladder is dis-eased. Other than jaundice, the gall bladder is most famous for its ability to cause excruciating pain in the form of gall stones. Gall stones are solid accumulations of cholesterol and other fatty blood content. Gall stones result from a variety of causes, but are more frequent in obese individuals and in those who have lost a significant amount of weight in a very short period of time. Sudden or dramatic weight-loss means that the fat content in blood is acutely elevated, which places much stress on the liver and challenges its ability to properly metabolize fats (which contributes to stones in the gall bladder.)

The small intestine is a one-inch wide tube 20 feet long whose coiled body fills the majority of the abdominal cavity. The small intestine is divided into three portions named the duodenum, jejunum, and ileum. The duodenum is the ten-inch neck which receives partially digested food from the pyloric sphincter; it also accepts bile from the gall bladder and pancreatic juice from the pancreas. The duodenum hugs the pancreas and turns in a "C" shape beneath the pancreas where it makes a sharp turn downward. The eight-foot length following the duodenum's latter downward turn is named the jejunum,

and the remaining 12 feet which empty into the ascending colon are named the ileum.

The small intestine is formed by consecutive layers of fibrous and muscular sleeves which protect an inner mucus lining. Like in the colon, food is moved and broken apart in the small intestine by means of peristalsis (the alternating contraction and relaxation of muscles to squeeze matter in a single direction.) The mucus lining of the small intestine is larger than the surface area it covers and is folded to create grooves and ridges: the tremendous inside-surface area of the small intestine gives it a nearly unlimited ability to catch fine particles and other matter passing through it. These grooves and ridges are covered with millions of special cells with a specialized brush-like surface which produces digestive enzymes and fights bacteria. As food passes through the small intestine, it's pushed, combed, brushed, and squeezed by the inside mucus layer and the digestive process begun in the mouth and stomach is carried to completion.

Practical Application of Hermetic Reiki

What the previous chapters have all illustrated is that the human body corresponds to the pattern of the Solar System and that specific portions of the body will respond to certain stressors. The 12 Houses of the Zodiac describe different portions of human experience and are reflected in the body as relative levels of stress. Some practitioners are of the opinion that stress is a free-floating radical, or some sort of extrinsic anomaly like a germ which lies in wait for us or which must first pierce our defenses before it can take root. I am of the opinion that stress is not an extrinsic substance but our own Spirit. Stress is the result of an experience, feeling, thought, emotion, decision, interaction, or any other stimulation which disrupts one's balance.

Reiki doesn't have to be complicated: it can be beautiful and simple. The easiest way to give Reiki for the resolution of stress, dis-ease, discomfort, and illness is to simply place your hands on the dis-eased location keep them there for as long as time allows. Giving Reiki directly to the point of greatest distress is an effective and powerful method for bringing comfort and restoring wellness. It is most effective in cases of acute injury, accidents, minor aches and pains, and other daily problems. There is a large body of anecdotal evidence to show that Reiki given directly to the point of greatest stress is helpful; examples include broken bones, pulled muscles, cuts, bruises, burns, periods of recovery after car accidents and chemotherapy, and even to prepare for surgery or chiropractic. Simply give Reiki for the dis-eased limb, organ, or area of the body and work for the overall wellness and relaxation of the subject. In these instances, dis-ease is transient and shouldn't be considered indicative of a larger problem.

However, when an injury or dis-ease lingers chronically or the subject reports injury or dis-ease which affects him or her broadly across a wide spectrum of bodily functions and processes, restoration of balance can become difficult and complicated. Assessing a subject's dis-ease is rather like what the martial artist Bruce Lee opined in his classic movie Enter the Dragon: "It is like a finger, pointing away to the Moon. Don't concentrate on the finger, or you will miss all that heavenly glory!" Through our exploration of astrology, anatomy, and physiology, we have learned the following:

1. The body is a holistic unit: nothing is truly separate from the other.
2. The body operates on planes of authority, with those on the higher planes directing the health of those on the lower planes. Dis-eased Mars will impact Aries, but not Leo or Sagittarius. Dis-eased Mars may also impact Jupiter and the Sun, but will not directly impact those planets' respective subordinate signs.
3. One dis-eased member of a Balance may impact other members of the same Balance, but only on the same plane. Dis-eased Aries may affect Leo and Sagittarius, but not Mars, the Sun, or Jupiter.
4. Treatment of one dis-eased member of a Balance can strengthen other members of the same Balance, but only on the same plane. Treatment of Aries can help Leo and Sagittarius; and treatment of Mars can help the Sun and Jupiter.
5. What is done on higher planes affects subordinate lower planes: Reiki given to Mars will pass down to Aries, but not to Leo or Sagittarius.
6. Opposites are the same by virtue of their opposing positions at the ends of the same balance. The Balances of Fire and Water are opposing separate balances,

but both exist on the same pole because each defines the other through opposition: Aries in the 1st House defines Pisces in the 12th House, and so on.

7. All chronic, long-term dis-ease is the result of division within oneself resulting either from internal or external stressors. Health and wellness return when the mind and body are unified. This does not include abnormalities and disorders present from birth.

Hermetic Reiki is most strongly suited to the identification and resolution of stress or dis-ease which results from chronic, long-term disruptions to a Balance of the body. Hermetic Reiki seeks to identify the source of dis-ease by referencing it back to the Houses of the Zodiac in which negatively affected planets and signs of the Zodiac reside. For example, if a subject reports headaches or chronic migraines and struggles with day-to-day affairs in 1st House issues of ego, identity, self-awareness, and the outward face one projects to the world, that would indicate a symptomatic disruption to the Balance of Fire (appendix B contains a quick-reference chart of the planets, signs, and houses of the Zodiac with their corresponding anatomical and physiological counterparts.)

Pain and dis-ease are uncomfortable, but they exist in order to show that the unity of the body has been disrupted. The challenge with resolving dis-ease is to not mistake the finger for the Moon. In other words, symptoms point the way to roots: don't mistake the symptom for the root. Let's return to the example of the headaches: "John" reports chronic headaches and migraines, which are frequently indicative of 1st House stress; however, this does not necessarily mean that his headaches are caused by problems in the 1st House. Applying the Hermetic Law of Polarity, we find the polar opposite of Aries in Pisces. The cause of John's headaches is unresolved stress native to the 12th House which negatively impact affairs in the 1st House (polar opposites connected through opposition.)

The Spiritual root resides in Pisces and stems from unresolved difficulty in the 12th House. The physical symptom manifests in Aries and complicates matters in the 1st House. This sequence illustrates dis-ease and how it affects the subject: the higher root and symptom create a dependent lower root and symptom. Unification of all four parts must occur: the lower cause and symptom must be unified; the higher cause and symptom must be unified; and the higher cause and symptom must be unified with the lower cause and symptom. This truth of opposition has proven true in every subject I have worked with. The best example I can use to illustrate this point comes from a subject I worked with in early 2010. "Amelia" reported that for several months she had suffered from extreme stomach upset, vomiting, sulfurous burps, difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, diarrhea, and other problems with the eliminative process. She added that she had unusual dreams of home invasion and being stabbed in the foot. The dis-ease she reported and the dream she mentioned all painted a vivid picture of a disruption to the Balance of Water: Cancer, Scorpio, Pisces, the Moon, Pluto, and Neptune all ruled what she described.

The greatest discomfort and single most distressing complaint she gave was that her stomach couldn't keep anything down and nothing she ate was being properly digested. The Spiritual assessment revealed the cause: much stress over her liver and thighs. Jupiter and Sagittarius rule the liver and thighs, and it is not surprising that they appear: the stomach is ruled by cardinal Water, and the liver by mutable Fire. Though they are exact opposites, they are linked: the stomach is the symptom and the liver is the

cause. When asked for more details, Amelia mentioned that her stool contained much undigested fat which was significant because the liver is responsible for the assimilation of fats. This information – both her reported symptoms and the roots revealed in the assessment – painted a full-body picture to show where her body was out of balance and how it affected her.

The previous examples were used because they provide the best illustrations. Some clients will exhibit stress in only one balance, but the majority of clients will exhibit stress across three or all four elements: look for the element most heavily afflicted and begin there. Mind and body, cause and symptom, female and male: what is separate must be unified, and the accurate measurement of Spirit is necessary for an assessment. Without a proper assessment, it is impossible to formulate the best program of treatment and series of Reiki sessions to reach the best conclusion. The traditional method of measuring Spirit is with the palm of the hand. To begin, the subject lays face-up on a massage table. The practitioner stands beside the subject with one hand held away as a control reference and the sensing hand held palm-down just above the subject's body. The practitioner holds the sensing hand an inch or two above the subject's body and slowly moves from head to toe feeling for changes, distortions, fluctuations, or other differences in the subject's Spirit.

Spirit is felt in area, strength, and quality. Area is the surface area of the body. An area of stress shows the map of illness and broadly indicates the dis-eased zone. Stress is typically felt as warmth, but with practice can be easily distinguished from body heat. The distinction between stress and regular body heat is made not just by feeling the subtle difference in temperature but also by judging the quality: area of stress represents the boundaries of a field, and quality of stress represents what's growing there. The quality of stress can be judged by sensation, feeling, or impression in the palms of the hands. Negative quality imparts an unpleasant feeling of static, but practitioners also report feelings such as burning, tingling, stinging, magnetic attraction or repulsion, vibrations, and even sound. This is difficult to explain in text and can only be properly learned through practice – a competent teacher can guide you through this process and help you recognize these signals.

Strength of Spirit is measured using the same mechanics as those to measure area (one hand away from the subject, one hand palm-down over the subject), but instead of passing your hand close above the body, you hold your measuring hand far away. For example, the subject is laying face-up on a massage table and I'm standing at the side with my left hand away and my right hand above the subject. I reach my right hand high above the subject's body and slowly lower it palm down until I feel the "push" of the subject's Spirit. You can learn to detect the strength of Byosen in less than 60 seconds, and this is how: hold your hands in front of you facing together as if the palms are mirrors and each reflects the other. Hold your hands far out to the sides of your body and slowly bring them together. As your hands get closer together you will begin to feel a "push" between them. The Air will feel thick and it will seem as if you are pushing down on a very large bubble. You will not notice this feeling if you move quickly and this exercise must be done slowly. If you don't feel anything, continue practicing until you do.

I measure strength as a bar of three units colored by the quality of the Spirit which gives a range from +3 to -3. Strength is a relative measurement with no absolute value: high strength projects very far from the body, and low strength projects very little (or not at all). Each subject is different and not all will have the same absolute

measurements: a +2 in one subject may be a +1 in another subject, and so on. Judge strength based on a relative scale dependent to each subject and observe changes over time. Strength is different from quality because it is the strongest indicator of Spiritual vitality. An area of stress with negative quality and high strength illustrates a severely diseased portion of the body. An area of stress with negative quality and low strength is the same as the previous example but less severe. Likewise, an area of the body with zero stress, positive quality, and high strength illustrates health and wellness. It is an excellent idea to record and review your observations so that you can chart progress and respond immediately to any changes. A healthy body will have consistently high, healthy area, quality, and strength.

I measure the strength of a subject's Spirit at eight points: crown; left and right sides of the head; brow; throat; heart; abdomen; and groin. The crown and sides of the head necessitate that I measure on the X-axis, but each of the others can be easily measured on the Y-axis. Measuring Spirit in area, quality, and strength reveals a three-dimensional map: healthy regions of the body will display zero stress, positive quality, and a varying level of strength. Dis-eased regions of the body will display an area of negative quality with a varying level of strength. The full map of a subject's Spirit reveals choke-points, critical blocks, dramatic imbalances, and those areas where Spirit isn't flowing smoothly. With time and practice in measurement of the Spirit, nearly all Reiki practitioners develop psychometry to the extent that their own bodies reflect the clients' bodies and Spiritually mirror the exact location of physical illness, dis-ease, injury, and discomfort. These psychometric signals can be easy to miss, but with consistent practice you will recognize them immediately.

Measurement of Spirit is critically important because it guides you in the development of a proper assessment, aids you in the selection of hand positions, and resolves the root Spiritual causes of dis-ease. It is appropriate and worthwhile to give Reiki for symptoms, but only after giving Reiki for the root: lasting wellness will only come when the root division has been resolved. Reiki resolves Spiritual causes of dis-ease through the transmission of universal life Spirit and the unification of divided wholes. When what was separated is brought together and harmonized, it expresses the infinite unity and harmony of THE ALL.

The Unity of the Spirit: restoring health and wellness

Unity and harmony are achieved according the selection of which areas of the body are given Reiki. Any Reiki anywhere on the body for any duration will be helpful, but the greatest results are found when the subject is given Reiki in a sequence and combination specific to the subject's dis-ease. Fundamental principles apply to the application of Hermetic Reiki and what follows is a guide to aid you in the development of a session or series of sessions for the best health and wellness of your clients. Giving Reiki for the health and well-being of yourself or another is a Spiritual experience: when you place your hands on another to give Reiki, you are touching the universe. The starry skies and infinite depths of the Solar System are literally at your fingertips. The planets and the signs of the Zodiac are laid out before you, inviting you to breathe the breath of life into them.

The first (and simplest) way is to give Reiki for the individual members of each balance separate from any others. For example, when giving Reiki to the Balance of Fire, you treat the face, heart, liver, kidneys, groin, and thighs one at a time. This is a very stable, gentle, comforting method to give Reiki and works well with simple aches, everyday pains, transient illness, and other minor, temporary dis-eases. This method is also a powerful tool to isolate individual portions of the body with surgical precision and affords the best opportunity for intense scrutiny. This is the method I used when giving Reiki for a friend who had suffered a heart attack and multiple strokes and it helped me identify the exact location of the clots in his brain which restricted blood flow. This method of giving Reiki doesn't require a name, but to clearly differentiate it from the other methods which follow I call it solomental unity (solo-elemental.) There's no great secret to this method: put your hands where it hurts and give Reiki for as long as you're able. Solomental unity may be accompanied by the use of the traditional symbols of the Usui system of natural healing.

If you are uncertain what will most benefit a subject and aren't sure where to direct your attention, giving Reiki just for the ruling planets with the solomental method is your best choice. Giving Reiki for the ruling planets will be calming, relaxing, and have a balancing effect on the whole Spirit. The order in which the ruling planets are treated is not important. When deciding which hand positions to select remember to use common sense, work within your time limits, and listen to your intuitive signals so that you know when to stay with one area of the body and when to move on to another. You may choose to give Reiki for any part of the body in order regardless of its relation to anything else. You may choose to give Reiki for the entire balance of an element, just the subordinate signs of an element, just the ruling planets of an element, or any combination of signs and planets you think is best. To provide an example, a full-body Reiki session using solomental unity to give Spirit for the ruling planets could proceed as follows:

1. Uranus (crown)
2. Mercury (left and right sides of head)
3. Pluto (brow)
4. Venus (throat)
5. Neptune (center of chest – thymus gland)
6. The Sun: center of chest (center of chest – heart)

7. The Moon (stomach)
8. Jupiter (liver)
9. Mars (groin or perineum)
10. Saturn (sacrum or knees)

The second way to give Reiki is to unite members of the same Balance. For example, if I was treating the Balance of Fire I would place one hand on the subject's thigh (Sagittarius) and another hand over the subject's liver (Jupiter.) By using both hands at the same time on different parts of the body, I unite them and restore the mutual flow of universal life Spirit. I call this method intramental unity because it works within one element to restore balance (intra-elemental.) Intramental unity is performed by placing one hand over a planet and another hand over its subordinate sign. Because higher planes direct the activity of lower planes, uniting the ruler planet and its subordinate sign emphasizes the flow of life Spirit from the source to its dependent member.

Besides physically connecting a ruling planet and its subordinate sign, there are three variations on this technique: lateral, top-down, and bottom-up intramental unity.

In lateral intramental unity, the practitioner unites members of the balance on the same plane. The intramental method takes the solomental method to the next logical step, which is to join ruling and subordinate members of the same Balance. The higher are joined with the higher; the lower are joined with the lower; and the higher are joined with the lower. The body is a singularity of universal life Spirit described as masculine and feminine poles. Each pole halves again into a separate balance according to active and passive, each of which divide again into ruling and subordinate parties. The higher share affinity with the higher and rule the respective lower who share affinity among themselves; thus, the planets of a balance can be united, the signs of a balance can be united, and within a balance the ruling planets can be united with their respective subordinate signs.

Placing one hand over the heart and another over the liver is lateral application of intramental unity from ruling Sun to ruling Jupiter. Similarly, one hand over the face and another over a thigh is lateral application of intramental unity from subordinate Aries to subordinate Sagittarius. Lateral intramental unity balances planets with planets, and signs with signs, but only within the same element and at the same plane of operation: higher with higher, lower with lower.

In top-down intramental unity, the practitioner places both hands on the ruling planet and sends Reiki to the subordinate sign. For example, placing both hands over the liver and sending Reiki for the thighs is a top-down application of intramental unity from ruling Jupiter to subordinate Sagittarius. In bottom-up intramental unity, the practitioner places both hands on the subordinate sign and sends Reiki to the ruling planet. For example, placing both hands over the face and sending Reiki for the perineum is a bottom-up application of intramental unity from subordinate Aries to ruling Mars. The differences between these three variations of intramental unity are subtle, so you should practice, experiment, and learn what works best in which situations for you and your clients.

Using lateral, top-down, and bottom-up applications of intramental unity, a Reiki session to treat the Balance of Fire could proceed as follows:

1. Bottom-up unity from Aries to Mars: both hands over the face sending Reiki for the perineum.
2. Lateral unity from Aries to Leo: both hands over the face sending Reiki for the heart.
3. Lateral unity from Aries to Sagittarius: both hands over the face sending Reiki for the liver, kidneys, hips, thighs, or sciatic nerve.
4. Top-down unity from the Sun to Leo: both hands over the heart sending Reiki for the heart.
5. Lateral unity from the Sun to Jupiter: both hands over the heart sending Reiki for the liver.
6. Lateral unity from the Sun to Mars: both hands over the heart sending Reiki for the perineum.
7. Lateral unity from Leo to Sagittarius: both hands over the heart sending Reiki for the liver, kidneys, hips, thighs, or sciatic nerve.
8. Lateral unity from Jupiter to Mars: both hands over the liver sending Reiki for the perineum.
9. Top-down unity from Jupiter to Sagittarius: both hands over the liver sending Reiki for the liver, kidneys, hips, thighs, or sciatic nerve.

The third method is called intermental unity: it is the most complex of the three methods and is the heart and soul of Hermetic Reiki. Just as planets are in rise, rest, detriment, and fall when moving through the signs of the Zodiac, so too with Hermetic Reiki will you move the body's planets in and out of the 12 signs of the Zodiac to direct the recipient's Spiritual health and overall wellness. Placing one hand over a planet and another over a sign links the two and dignifies the unique flow of universal life Spirit from the ruling planet to its subordinate sign.

The Usui system of natural healing is a distinct, unique tradition whose methods are not directly equivalent to Hermetic Reiki. The two styles vary greatly but share in common the same belief in the unifying strength of the one infinite universal life Spirit. The Spiritual properties of the traditional symbols of the Usui system of natural healing are not the same as the Spiritual properties of Hermetic Reiki, but a side-by-side comparison provides a conceptual framework to aid comprehension. The Power, Release, Distance, Master, and Grounding symbols of Usui Reiki are external tools applied by the practitioner to the subject's Spirit to direct the variance of Spirit in order to reach a specific result. The most significant difference between Usui Reiki and Hermetic Reiki is that in Hermetic Reiki no symbols are used: all the power you need already exists within the body. Instead of applying sacred symbols to express a variance of Spirit, the practitioner moves the planets through the signs of the Zodiac and allows the Spirit to express itself according to natural laws.

What Usui Reiki interprets as five sacred symbols is in Hermetic Reiki interpreted as the five elements of creation: Air, Fire, Water, Earth, and the One Spirit. Because these elements are present in the body from birth, no symbols are used to channel them. Hermetic Reiki operates on the premise that all chronic dis-ease which has not responded to treatment and which is constant despite changing variables is the result of Spiritual division and unresolved stress within oneself. Only through unification of what has been artificially divided and the restoration of the natural flow of Spirit from the ruling planets to the subordinate signs will wellness return.

The method used to move the planets through rise, rest, detriment, and fall is intermental unity. Intermental unity is named such because it works between the elements (inter-elemental) to achieve natural variations of Spiritual expression which alter the flow of universal life Spirit within the body. For example, I would place one hand over the subject's liver and another hand above the subject's breast. This particular combination unites the Jovial liver with the Cancerian breast in which Jupiter rises. When in Rise, Jupiter's dignified Spirit flows down to Sagittarius but not to Cancer. Higher planes direct the activity of lower planes: the signs in which planets are in rise, rest, detriment, and fall are used to modify the flow of universal life Spirit from ruling planets to subordinate signs. Similarly, I could place one hand over the Lunar stomach and another over the Scorpicoin groin: the Moon falls in Scorpio and this combination can be used to disrupt Lunar governance of Cancer.

Rise, rest, detriment, and fall are not directly equivalent to the sacred symbols used in Usui Reiki. Through the application of intermental unity, the flow of universal life Spirit is adjusted to promote balance in the recipient. Rise is comparable to the Master and Distance symbols; rest is comparable to the Power and Grounding symbols; detriment is comparable to the Power and Release symbols; and fall is comparable to the Distance and Release symbols. The Distance symbol's ability to bridge time and distance is understood to be an extension of Plutonic force already present in the Mind and body.

To illustrate intramental unity in context, consider that warriors depend on Martial Spirit for stamina to accomplish their goals – warriors can be anyone who fights for a cause or campaigns for change. Martial Spirit is cardinal Fire and warriors who burn too long may burn themselves to ashes. Burn-out is a condition in which one has given (or fought) passionately for a long time only to see little or no reward. Burn-out is common in professional caregivers and hospice nurses, but also in others who fight important battles. Service-men and -women frequently suffer depression and risk suicide from the chronic stress of war-fighting – these dangers are greater because the results of their labor are difficult to define.

Distressed Martial Spirit contributes to chronic muscle pain, elevated blood pressure, swelling and pain in the head, insomnia, and general restlessness. If left unresolved, distressed Martial Spirit can lead to urogenital problems, poor sexual performance, hormonal imbalances, and severe emotional upset. Whether you're a weekend warrior or a full-time warrior, Martial balance is necessary to health and longevity. To maintain your balance of Martial Spirit, practice the following self-treatment in a prayerful state while sitting, kneeling, or laying in a comfortable position:

First, you should start from a clean source. When the flow of Martial Spirit is distressed, its source must be realigned to the origin. Do this by placing one hand over your groin or perineum and another over the spleen or pancreas. You may also place both hands over the groin or perineum and send Reiki for the pancreas or spleen, or both hands over the spleen or pancreas and send Reiki for the perineum. This combination disrupts the flow of Martial Spirit and forces confrontation and assimilation of the root causes responsible for the original disruption. Be aware that this may lead to uncomfortable feelings and frightening dreams. Maintain this position for 15 to 20 minutes. Focus on feeling the flow of Spirit between each hand. Listen for subtle changes.

Next, restore the flow of Martial Spirit. Place one hand over your groin or perineum and another over your face. You may also place both hands over the face and send Reiki for the perineum, or place both hands over the groin or perineum and send

Reiki for the face. Feel the unification and restoration of Martial Spirit. Open your Mind to the presence of the divine and allow universal life to flow freely between Aries and Mars. Maintain this position for 15 to 20 minutes.

Last, dignify the flow of Martial Spirit. Place one hand over your groin or perineum and another over either of your knees. This combination dignifies the flow of Martial Spirit and imposes a calmer sense of productive and constructive purpose over the aggressive force and direct intensity of Mars. Maintain this position for 15 to 20 minutes. Focus on feeling the dignified flow and passage of Spirit between Aries and Mars. Mars is never in detriment, but if he was, he would be united with that sign as the final step in a session of intramental unity; doing so would subdue his expression and bring you down from the heights of Martial rise. Doing so would also redirect Martial rise elsewhere in the body to share the dignified flow of Spirit with other members.

After you've finished, place both hands over your knees and focus on your breathing. When ready, conclude your practice and move on to something productive; if it's not productive, don't do it. Pick a task or job you can do right away: Martial Spirit needs an outlet and when dignified it is meant to be applied to constructive ends. Wash the car, pick up your room, clean the kitchen, straighten the living room, mow the yard, iron your shirts, or go exercise: just do something!

Regardless of the method you use to give Reiki – solomental, intramental, or intermental - the following steps should be observed:

- Measure area, quality, and strength of Spirit
- Take notes and record observations
- Select your approach
 - Solomental unity
 - Intramental unity
 - Lateral
 - Top-down
 - Bottom-up
 - Intermental unity
 - Combination
- Give the session
- Measure area, quality, and strength of Spirit
- Take notes and record observations

There are many possible hand positions and sessions between solomental, intramental, and intermental applications of Hermetic Reiki. In fact, there are so many that it's not practical to list all of them – it's far more practical and efficient for you to learn the theory behind the application of Hermetic Reiki so you may develop your own sessions for the many unique and individually demanding scenarios you will encounter in the course of practice. A session can be as short as 15 or 30 minutes or it can be as long as one or two hours, but as a rule of thumb remember that longer sessions impart greater benefits for relaxation and wellness.

If you're looking for a section of this book which spells out simple, easy-to-follow instructions, you won't find it. All the direction you need is within your Mind and relies on your comprehension of the material presented in the portions of this book which

detail theory and practical application. If you can't find Hermetic Reiki within you, you'll never find it without you. A competent teacher can guide you, but nobody has the power to magically unlock this knowledge: in the end, it can only be found through earnest study and application.

If you are a true student, you will be able to work out and apply these Laws – if not, then you must develop yourself into one, for otherwise the Hermetic Teachings will be as "words, words, words" to you. –The Three Initiates

Appendix A: The Seven Hermetic Laws

"The Laws of Truth are Seven; he who knows these, understandingly, possesses the Magic Key before whose touch all the Doors of the Temple fly open." — The Kybalion.

The Seven Hermetic Laws, upon which the entire Hermetic Philosophy is based, are as follows:

1. THE LAW OF MENTALISM.
2. THE LAW OF CORRESPONDENCE.
3. THE LAW OF VIBRATION.
4. THE LAW OF POLARITY.
5. THE LAW OF RHYTHM.
6. THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.
7. THE LAW OF GENDER.

These Seven Laws will be discussed and explained as we proceed with these lessons. A short explanation of each, however, may as well be given at this point.

THE LAW OF MENTALISM.

"THE ALL is MIND; The Universe is Mental." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that "All is Mind." It explains that THE ALL (which is the Substantial Reality underlying all the outward manifestations and appearances which we know under the terms of "The Material Universe"; the "Phenomena of Life"; "Matter"; "Energy"; and, in short, all that is apparent to our material senses) is SPIRIT, which in itself is UNKNOWABLE and UNDEFINABLE, but which may be considered and thought of as AN UNIVERSAL, INFINITE, LIVING MIND. It also explains that all the phenomenal world or universe is simply a Mental Creation of THE ALL, subject to the Laws of Created Things, and that the universe, as a whole, and in its parts or units, has its existence in the Mind of THE ALL, in which Mind we "live and move and have our being."

This Law, by establishing the Mental Nature of the Universe, easily explains all of the varied mental and psychic phenomena that occupy such a large portion of the public attention, and which, without such explanation, are non-understandable and defy scientific treatment. An understanding of this great hermetic Law of Mentalism enables the individual to readily grasp the laws of the Mental Universe, and to apply the same to his well-being and advancement. The Hermetic Student is enabled to apply intelligently the great Mental Laws, instead of using them in a haphazard manner. With the Master-Key in his possession, the student may unlock the many doors of the mental and psychic temple of knowledge, and enter the same freely and intelligently.

This Law explains the true nature of "Energy," "Power," and "Matter," and why and how all these are subordinate to the Mastery of Mind. One of the old Hermetic Masters wrote, long ages ago: "He who grasps the truth of the Mental Nature of the

Universe is well advanced on The Path to Mastery." And these words are as true to-day as at the time they were first written. Without this Master-Key, Mastery is impossible, and the student knocks in vain at the many doors of The Temple.

THE LAW OF CORRESPONDENCE.

"As above, so below; as below so above." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that there is always a Correspondence between the laws and phenomena of the various planes of Being and Life. The old Hermetic axiom ran in these words: "As above, so below; as below, so above." And the grasping of this Law gives one the means of solving many a dark paradox, and hidden secret of Nature. There are planes beyond our knowing, but when we apply the Law of Correspondence to them we are able to understand much that would otherwise be unknowable to us.

This Law is of universal application and manifestation, on the various planes of the material, mental, and Spiritual universe — it is an Universal Law. The ancient Hermetists considered this Law as one of the most important mental instruments by which man was able to pry aside the obstacles which hid from view the Unknown. Its use even tore aside the Veil of Isis to the extent that a glimpse of the face of the goddess might be caught. Just as a knowledge of the Laws of Geometry enables man to measure distant suns and their movements, while seated in his observatory, so a knowledge of the Law of Correspondence enables Man to reason intelligently from the Known to the Unknown. Studying the monad, he understands the archangel.

THE LAW OF VIBRATION.

"Nothing rests; everything moves; everything vibrates." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that "everything is in motion"; "everything vibrates"; "nothing is at rest"; facts which Modern Science endorses, and which each new scientific discovery tends to verify. And yet this Hermetic Law was enunciated thousands of years ago, by the Masters of Ancient Egypt. This Law explains that the differences between different manifestations of Matter, Energy, Mind, and even Spirit, result largely from varying rates of Vibration. From THE ALL, which is Pure Spirit, down to the grossest form of Matter, all is in vibration — the higher the vibration, the higher the position in the scale. The vibration of Spirit is at such an infinite rate of intensity and rapidity that it is practically at rest — just as a rapidly moving wheel seems to be motionless.

And at the other end of the scale, there are gross forms of matter whose vibrations are so low as to seem at rest. Between these poles, there are millions upon millions of varying degrees of vibration. From corpuscle and electron, atom and molecule, to worlds and universes, everything is in vibratory motion. This is also true on the planes of energy and force (which are but varying degrees of vibration); and also on the mental planes (whose states depend upon vibrations); and even on to the Spiritual planes. An understanding of this Law, with the appropriate formulas, enables Hermetic students to control their own mental vibrations as well as those of others. The Masters also apply this Law to the conquering of Natural phenomena, in various ways. "He who

understands the Law of Vibration, has grasped the sceptre of Power," says one of the old writers.

THE LAW OF POLARITY.

"Everything is Dual; everything has poles; everything has its pair of opposites; like and unlike are the same; opposites are identical in nature, but different in degree; extremes meet; all truths are but half-truths; all paradoxes may be reconciled." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that "everything is dual"; "everything has two poles"; "everything has its pair of opposites," all of which were old Hermetic axioms. It explains the old paradoxes, that have perplexed so many, which have been stated as follows: "Thesis and anti-thesis are identical in nature, but different in degree"; "opposites are the same, differing only in degree"; "the pairs of opposites may be reconciled"; "extremes meet"; "everything is and isn't, at the same time"; "all truths are but half-truths"; "every truth is half-false"; "there are two sides to everything," etc., etc., etc. It explains that in everything there are two poles, or opposite aspects, and that "opposites" are really only the two extremes of the same thing, with many varying degrees between them.

To illustrate: Heat and Cold, although "opposites," are really the same thing, the differences consisting merely of degrees of the same thing. Look at your thermometer and see if you can discover where "heat" terminates and "cold" begins! There is no such thing as "absolute heat" or "absolute cold" — the two terms "heat" and "cold" simply indicate varying degrees of the same thing, and that "same thing" which manifests as "heat" and "cold" is merely a form, variety, and rate of Vibration. So "heat" and "cold" are simply the "two poles" of that which we call "Heat" — and the phenomena attendant thereupon are manifestations of the Law of Polarity. The same Law manifests in the case of "Light and Darkness," which are the same thing, the difference consisting of varying degrees between the two poles of the phenomena. Where does "darkness" leave off, and "light" begin? What is the difference between "Large and Small"? Between "Hard and Soft"? Between "Black and White"? Between "Sharp and Dull"? Between "Noise and Quiet"? Between "High and Low"? Between "Positive and Negative"? The Law of Polarity explains these paradoxes, and no other Law can supersede it.

The same Law operates on the Mental Plane. Let us take a radical and extreme example — that of "Love and Hate," two mental states apparently totally different. And yet there are degrees of hate and degrees of Love, and a middle point in which we use the terms "Like or Dislike," which shade into each other so gradually that sometimes we are at a loss to know whether we "like" or "dislike" or "neither." And all are simply degrees of the same thing, as you will see if you will but think a moment. And, more than this (and considered of more importance by the Hermetists), it is possible to change the vibrations of hate to the vibrations of Love, in one's own mind, and in the minds of others. Many of you, who read these lines, have had personal experiences of the involuntary rapid transition from Love to Hate, and the reverse, in your own ease and that of others.

And you will therefore realize the possibility of this being accomplished by the use of the Will, by means of the Hermetic formulas. "Good and Evil" are but the poles of

the same thing, and the Hermetist understands the art of transmuting Evil into Good, by means of an application of the Law of Polarity. In short, the "Art of Polarization" becomes a phase of "Mental Alchemy" known and practiced by the ancient and modern Hermetic Masters. An understanding of the Law will enable one to change his own Polarity, as well as that of others, if he will devote the time and study necessary to master the art.

THE LAW OF RHYTHM.

"Everything flows, out and in; everything has its tides; all things rise and fall; the pendulum-swing manifests in everything; the measure of the swing to the right is the measure of the swing to the left; rhythm compensates." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that in everything there is manifested a measured motion, to and fro; a flow and inflow; a swing backward and forward; a pendulum-like movement; a tide-like ebb and flow; a high-tide and low-tide; between the two poles which exist in accordance with the Law of Polarity described a moment ago. There is always an action and a reaction; an advance and a retreat a rising and a sinking. This is in the affairs of the Universe, suns, worlds, men, animals, Mind, energy, and matter. This law is manifest in the creation and destruction of worlds; in the rise and fall of nations; in the life of all things; and finally in the mental states of Man (and it is with this latter that the Hermetists find the understanding of the Law most important).

The Hermetists have grasped this Law, finding its universal application, and have also discovered certain means to overcome its effects in themselves by the use of the appropriate formulas and methods. They apply the Mental Law of Neutralization. They cannot annul the Law, or Cause it to cease its operation, but they have learned how to escape its effects upon themselves to a certain degree depending upon the Mastery of the Law. They have learned how to USE it, instead of being USED BY it. In this and similar methods, consist the Art of the Hermetists. The Master of Hermetics polarizes himself at the point at which he desires to rest, and then neutralizes the Rhythmic swing of the pendulum which would tend to carry him to the other pole.

All individuals who have attained any degree of Self-Mastery do this to a certain degree, more or less unconsciously, but the Master does this consciously, and by the use of his Will and attains a degree of Poise and Mental Firmness almost impossible of belief on the part of the masses who are swung backward and forward like a pendulum. This Law and that of Polarity have been closely studied by the Hermetists, and the methods of counteracting, neutralizing and USING them form an important part of the Hermetic Mental Alchemy.

THE LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.

"Every Cause has its Effect; every Effect has its Cause; everything happens according to Law; Chance is but a name for Law not recognized; there are many planes of causation, but nothing escapes the Law." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the fact that there is a Cause for every Effect; an Effect from

every Cause. It explains that: "Everything Happens according to Law"; that nothing ever "merely happens"; that there is no such thing as Chance; that while there are various planes of Cause and Effect, the higher dominating the lower planes, still nothing ever entirely escapes the Law. The Hermetists understand the art and methods of rising above the ordinary plane of Cause and Effect, to a certain degree, and by mentally rising to a higher plane they become Causers instead of Effects. The masses of people are carried along, obedient to environment; the wills and desires of others stronger than themselves; heredity; suggestion; and other outward causes moving them about like pawns on the Chessboard of Life.

But the Masters, rising to the plane above, dominate their moods, characters, qualities, and powers, as well as the environment surrounding them, and become Movers instead of pawns. They help to PLAY THE GAME OF LIFE, instead of being played and moved about by other wills and environment. They USE the Law instead of being its tools. The Masters obey the Causation of the higher planes, but they help to RULE on their own plane. In this statement there is condensed a wealth of Hermetic knowledge — let him read who can.

THE LAW OF GENDER.

"Gender is in everything; everything has its Masculine and Feminine Laws; Gender manifests on all planes." — The Kybalion.

This Law embodies the truth that there is GENDER manifested in everything — the Masculine and Feminine Laws ever at work. This is true not only of the Physical Plane, but of the Mental and even the Spiritual Planes. On the Physical Plane, the Law manifests as SEX, on the higher planes it takes higher forms, but the Law is ever the same. No creation, physical, mental or Spiritual, is possible without this Law. An understanding of its laws will throw light on many a subject that has perplexed the minds of men. The Law of Gender works ever in the direction of generation, regeneration, and creation. Everything, and every person, contains the two Elements or Laws, or this great Law, within it, him or her. Every Male thing has the Female Element also; every Female contains also the Male Law. If you would understand the philosophy of Mental and Spiritual Creation, Generation, and Re- generation, you must understand and study this Hermetic Law. It contains the solution of many mysteries of Life.

We caution you that this Law has no reference to the many base, pernicious and degrading lustful theories, teachings and practices, which are taught under fanciful titles, and which are a prostitution of the great natural Law of Gender. Such base revivals of the ancient infamous forms of Phallicism tend to ruin Mind, body and soul, and the Hermetic Philosophy has ever sounded the warning note against these degraded teachings which tend toward lust, licentiousness, and perversion of Nature's Laws. If you seek such teachings, you must go elsewhere for them — Hermeticism contains nothing for you along these lines. To the pure, all things are pure; to the base, all things are base.

Appendix B: Astrological correspondences

The following list is ordered according to the order of the planets of the Solar System from the Sun to Pluto. Bulleted underneath each planet are the sign or signs ruled by that planet. Each planet's and sign's native houses are listed immediately after their designated rulership of the body.

- **The Sun**: *Heart; general health; healthy flow of energy; recuperation (5th House)*
 - **Leo**: *Heart; thoracic vertebrae; muscles of upper back (5th House)*
- **Mercury**: *Left/Right hemispheres of brain; peripheral nervous system (3rd and 6th Houses)*
 - **Gemini**: *Fingers; hands; arms; shoulders; lungs; ears (3rd House)*
 - **Virgo**: *Gall bladder; intestines (6th House)*
- **Venus**: *Skin; senses taste, touch, smell; digestive properties of saliva; swallowing; production of insulin; assimilation of carbohydrates and sugars; parathyroid gland (2nd and 7th Houses)*
 - **Taurus**: *Lower jaw; thyroid gland; esophagus; gullet; neck; throat; muscles of neck; cervical vertebrae (2nd House)*
 - **Libra**: *Spleen, pancreas (7th House)*
- **The Moon**: *Digestion; regular movement of fluids in body; water retention; natural rhythms; adrenal glands (4th House)*
 - **Cancer**: *Stomach; breasts; womb; abdominal cavity (4th House)*
- **Mars**: *Muscles; sexual desire; adrenaline; blood pressure; blood; veins; all muscles (1st House)*
 - **Aries**: *Head; face; sinus cavities; nose (1st House)*
- **Jupiter**: *Growth; kidneys; liver; assimilation of fats; elimination of toxins (9th House)*
 - **Sagittarius**: *Upper legs; hips; thighs; sciatic nerve; kidneys; liver (9th House)*
- **Saturn**: *Skeletal structure; strength of bones and teeth; calcium; minerals; deposits; knees (10th House)*
 - **Capricorn**: *Skeleton; bones; knees; teeth (10th House)*
- **Uranus**: *Breath; breathing; diaphragm; brain stem and spinal cord; central nervous system (11th House)*
 - **Aquarius**: *Lower legs; shins; calves; nervous system; sacral vertebrae (11th House)*
- **Neptune**: *Lymphatic system; ductless glands; thymus gland (12th House)*
 - **Pisces**: *Feet; immune system; ductless glands (12th House)*
- **Pluto**: *Endocrine system; reproductive system; regeneration; eliminative process (8th house)*
 - **Scorpio**: *Sexual organs; gonads; genitals; lumbar vertebrae; muscles of lower back (8th House)*

Appendix C: Rise, Rest, Detriment, and Fall

This table shows the rise, rest, detriment, and fall of the ten planets of the Solar System in the 12 signs of the Zodiac. The signs are grouped together by triplicity and in the order from fastest to slowest.

The Balance of Air

- **Libra**
 - *Rise: Saturn*
 - *Rest: Venus*
 - *Detriment: N/A*
 - *Fall: Sun; Mars*
 - **Aquarius**
 - *Rise: N/A*
 - *Rest: Uranus*
 - *Detriment: Sun*
 - *Fall: Pluto*
 - **Gemini**
 - *Rise: N/A*
 - *Rest: Mercury*
 - *Detriment: Jupiter*
 - *Fall: N/A*
-

The Balance of Fire

- **Aries**
 - *Rise: Sun*
 - *Rest: Mars*
 - *Detriment: Venus*
 - *Fall: Saturn*
 - **Leo**
 - *Rise: Pluto*
 - *Rest: Sun*
 - *Detriment: Uranus*
 - *Fall: N/A*
 - **Sagittarius**
 - *Rise: N/A*
 - *Rest: Jupiter*
 - *Detriment: Mercury*
 - *Fall: N/A*
-

The Balance of Water

- **Cancer**
 - **Rise:** *Jupiter; Neptune*
 - **Rest:** *Moon*
 - **Detriment:** *Saturn*
 - **Fall:** *N/A*
- **Scorpio**
 - **Rise:** *Uranus*
 - **Rest:** *Pluto*
 - **Detriment:** *Venus*
 - **Fall:** *Moon*
- **Pisces**
 - **Rise:** *Venus*
 - **Rest:** *Neptune*
 - **Detriment:** *Mercury*
 - **Fall:** *N/A*

The Balance of Earth

- **Capricorn**
 - **Rise:** *Mars*
 - **Rest:** *Saturn*
 - **Detriment:** *Moon*
 - **Fall:** *Jupiter; Neptune*
 - **Taurus**
 - **Rise:** *Moon*
 - **Rest:** *Venus*
 - **Detriment:** *Pluto*
 - **Fall:** *Uranus*
 - **Virgo**
 - **Rise:** *N/A*
 - **Rest:** *Mercury*
 - **Detriment:** *Neptune*
 - **Fall:** *Venus*
-

Appendix D: Meditation Techniques

Meditation begins very simply: time and location. Find the time when and a location where you won't be bothered. Picking a regular time and a consistent place for meditation will help you tremendously. Whether this place is on your bed, on a stool, in your living room, at the park, or even behind your desk at work, you should pick a place that's safe, conducive, and which works for you. There are many, many techniques you can use to meditate. What follows are the two techniques with which I'm most proficient and I encourage you to try them, but as with anything you should do what works for you.

Once you've selected your location, the next step is to begin clearing the surface Mind. This sounds difficult and complicated, but it's much easier than it sounds. The surface Mind is cleared by eliminating internal dialogue. You know what I mean: when you're sitting at the table trying to balance your checkbook and you can't stop talking to yourself in your head about that awful episode of American Idol. That's thought pressure and when it's permitted to talk freely it's called monkey Mind. As you hear yourself begin an internal monologue about Simon and Paula's decision to cut down some singer, just nip it in the bud. You'll find that with practice you can command your Mind to stop talking and be quiet. Eventually, you can feel thought pressure and push it away before it turns into a thought. For example:

- *Simon and Paula really didn't have to be so mean to that cute girl.*
- *Simon and Paula really didn't have to be so mean ... (pushed away)*
- *Simon and Paula really didn't have to ... (pushed away)*
- *Simon and Paula really ... (pushed away)*
- *... (thought pressure is felt and pushed away)*
- *(the Mind is held perfectly clear)*

This requires a passive awareness in which you listen very closely to yourself and diligently push away thought pressure which would initiate an internal monologue. When I first began, I often became frustrated or upset when I couldn't silence my Mind or I suddenly realized that I had permitted a thought to take shape and run wild for several minutes. Controlling the Mind is beside the point: meditation isn't about control, it's about letting go. The extent to which you are able to acknowledge and release your thoughts is the extent to which you will experience the greatest success in meditation.

As you succeed in clearing and maintaining a clear surface, you'll experience a great silence in your Mind. This silence could be compared to the feeling you get when you're in a very large and quiet library or saintly cathedral. The silence may feel uncomfortable at first and like when I began you may feel the need to think something to fill the space, but remember the first goal of meditation: let go of yourself. Only by releasing your surface Mind and the desire to accomplish or do something will you enter the inner sanctum of the peaceful Mind.

Once you've achieved a measure of inner silence, there are two routes you can choose. Actually, there are a lot of routes you can choose but I'm only going to present two here. The first is the repetition of an affirmation or sacred recitation. The benefit here is in that the surface Mind is clear and, without its nagging attraction to the outside world, you can direct your attention directly to your Spirit. This method can be used to

reprogram oneself: just like a programmer can rewrite individual lines of code, you can rewrite your own Mind. Obviously, the affirmation or sacred recitation you choose to impress on your deep Mind should be carefully selected. For personal, practical, and Spiritual reasons, I recite the five Reiki Laws.

You can also select sacred recitations which draw you closer to your own Spiritual goals. The other direction which I'm presenting today is to utterly clear your Mind. That is, clear the Mind and keep it clear for the duration of your meditation. This was very challenging for me at first. Time seemed to slow down and it was very difficult to overcome my impatience and desire to do something. Of course, "doing" and "accomplishing" aren't the point. The goal is to release your surface Mind and to detach yourself from the outside world. In the inner temple of your Mind you will find peace and joy in the solace of yourself.

I use both methods I presented here and I often use them both during the same session. I typically spend the first 15 or 20 minutes of my meditation reciting the inspired teachings of the Meiji Emperor and the remaining 15 or 10 minutes in the total silence of the inner sanctum of my Mind. When you bring yourself back from within your Mind, do so gradually and do it in stages. Gently tell yourself that you're finished and that it's time to return. Slowly return to yourself and open your eyes. After a few moments of re-acclimation, move your hands and then slowly the rest of your body. This is not a comprehensive guide to meditation and meditative techniques: you should research what's available and choose what works best for you.

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