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Remastered

Christmas

The truth behind the tinsel and
thoughtless consumerism

Astrology for Aquarius



Albert Benjamin

**Beware when the Great God turns a Thinker lose
on this Planet. Then all things are at risk.**

Ralph Waldo Emerson

**Nourish your soul with the Religion of the Stars
and the teachings of the Brotherhood of Light.**

Christmas

The truth beneath the tinsel and thoughtless consumerism

In astrological symbolism the Sun and its position and movement in the sky usually carries a big message.

Legends about ancient heroes and all the religious and national holidays are almost always associated with the Sun.

Mithraism, the dominant religion in Rome about 60 BC, held that Mithra, the god of light, was born in a cave on Christmas day, so we look to the position of the Sun at that time to discern the significance of the belief.

And on Christmas day we find that the Sun is in an earthy sign, Capricorn. It entered Capricorn three days earlier, when it was at its lowest point of declination. But on Christmas day, while still in the cave of Capricorn, it is decreasing in declination and moving toward the light. It signifies the birth of a new dispensation of sunshine and warmth.

Christmas is a holiday to celebrate the turning point of the Sun when it no longer moves southward in declination. It has begun to move northward promising more abundant light and the heat necessary for the crops of another year.

It is also a holiday of spiritual significance for this light of the Sun has always been considered the most fitting emblem of information and spiritual illumination, and its heat the comforting power of divine protection.

Light reigns supreme and dims

The power of light reigns supreme at the summer solstice when the Sun enters the zodiacal sign Cancer.

Stonehenge, in the County of Wiltshire in England, is supposed by archaeologists to have been built about four thousand years ago. Radiocarbon dating in 2008 suggests the first stones were erected 2400-2200 BC. And people now visit Stonehenge on mid-summer day to watch the sunrise at the summer solstice exactly over what is called the 'Hele Stone'.

But the power of light is dimmed and at its weakest at the winter solstice point when the Sun enters the zodiacal sign Capricorn, some three days before Christmas.

The Sun's declination on December 22 is 23S26 – its farthest distance from the Earth – and on December 24 its declination is 23S24. So for several days at this solstitial point the Sun is stationary having no apparent north or south motion.

It's not always exactly three days, but the approximate time of three days has other mystical significance relating to body, soul and spirit; as in the story of the gifts of the three Wise Men of the East.

But having reached the turning point on December 22 the Sun on December 25 has begun its northward movement.

At the winter solstice the power of darkness is defeated, the stone of the tomb of winter is rolled away, the nights cease growing longer, and there is gift giving and rejoicing.

The turning back of the Sun

The custom in various lands has been to celebrate the 'turning back of the sun', three days after the solstice when the noon shadow of the marking stake could be discerned to shorten.

This day was easy to ascertain – you don't need sophisticated gadgetry – for at noon on the day of the solstice a stake driven into the ground, or a tree, would cast its longest shadow.

By tracing in the snow or dust the movements of the tip of the shadow for several consecutive days about that time, and observing when the crescent of the moving shadow was farthest north of the tree or stake near noon, the day of the winter solstice, and the beginning of the calendar year, could easily be established.

It constitutes a natural starting point for recording time and astronomical phenomena far better than our first day of January, which is some nine or ten days after the winter solstice.

In various regions of the Old World Christmas was celebrated long before it was designated a religious holiday by Christianity. And in the New World the Maya, the Aztecs and the Indians of the Southwestern United States staged ceremonies in its honor long before the White Man landed on these shores.

In fact, the winter solstice (usually December 22) when the Sun reaches its farthest declination south was the commencement of the calendar for these people.

At the winter solstice three days before Christmas, the Sun passes from Sagittarius, the Archer, to its lowest position in the tomb of winter, at the commencement of Capricorn.

The nights are longest then, and the Earth is captive, bound by frost in the hands of the evil forces of the underworld unable to bring forth fruit.

The Hopi Indians of America enact this by kidnapping a maiden and taking her beneath the Earth (Capricorn) where initiates are assembled in the kiva.

The ceremony of calling back the Sun then occurs, in which there is struggle with the forces of darkness, after which there is victory for the Brethren of Light, and the kidnapped maiden is released, and symbolically fertility is restored to the Earth.

In this Hopi ceremony ears of corn and seeds of such other things as the Indians hope to harvest are placed before the feathered serpent alter.

And at Christmas time we adorn a tree with presents to indicate the fruits of the branch held in the hand of Hercules, picturing the middle decanate of the harvest sign Virgo, in anticipation of the harvest which will follow this turning back of the Sun.

The Christmas legend

According to the Christian legend – no one made any inquiry into the date of the birth of Jesus until 580 years after the approximate date he was born – Jesus was born in a manger. And on Christmas day the Sun has just moved a few degrees into Capricorn – the sign of the goat – from Sagittarius – the sign of the horse.

Giving three days grace after December 22 insures that on Christmas day the Sun will be moving northward in declination and the days have started to get longer.

They continue to lengthen until June 22, when the Sun reaches the topmost point of the home sign, Cancer, the place where it is located when at Stonehenge it rises exactly over the 'Hele Stone.'

The topmost part of a home is commonly the chimney. So, the Sun, coming to the home from the place where Jupiter brings his gifts on the line dividing Sagittarius and Capricorn in winter must touch it first at the highest spot, the chimney. And to reach it, he must come through the air.

You will search the Bible in vain for any mention of Christmas or Santa Clause.

Santa Claus

Santa Claus, like the two horsemen in the sky, one of which relates to the time of winter's cold and the other to the heat of summer, portrays two seasons of the year.

His garb is chiefly red; for as representing the constellated Centaur he is next to the fiery furnace, Crater, where the heat glows fiercest. Yet to denote the snow of winter, the trimming of the garb is spotless white.

The gifts he brings at Christmas time are tokens of still greater gifts to come; they are the promise that abundance will follow after the time of winter dearth, when the heat from the Sun has ripened the crops again.

Still ahead, even though the days have started to lengthen, is a period of privation and cold. Stored supplies may become exhausted giving rise to dark despair; yet even at the entrance of this period he gives promise of better days to come.

But whatever the true significance of a holiday may be, those who celebrate it tend to warp it into the patterns of their own strongest desires.

Some, for instance, use Christmas and Thanksgiving as an excuse for getting drunk; yet the Pilgrim fathers who gave thanks for safety and sustenance would never have countenanced drinking to excess, nor can I discern anything in the beginning of the return of light and warmth to a bleak, crop-barren Earth which justifies people gorging themselves with food.

If they do these things, it is not in celebration of these holidays, but because the holidays give them an excuse to satisfy such desires.

Christmas and a troubled world

Christmas occurs at the time of the year when the light of the Sun, representing both intelligence and spiritual illumination, is weakest. And if you look around the world today you will find civil wars, ethnic hatred and repressive regimes which try to suppress liberty of consciousness.

Each molds spiritual aspiration, which could express through religion, into a barbaric pattern. In some countries where dictators are fattening themselves on the spoils taken from unpopular minorities, the true cultivation of intelligence is forbidden.

The people are only allowed access to information that those in positions of power permit them to have.

In many parts of the Middle East – Iran and Syria – and in some Sub-Saharan countries – Zambia, Niger and Sierra Leone – censorship oppresses the free flow of information. Journalism remains a dangerous occupation with journalists often killed or imprisoned.

The restrictive, selfish, crystallizing side of Saturn's sign Capricorn, where the Sun holds forth on Christmas, has a dominant influence in these and many other countries on the globe.

Even America has its Saturn and Lower-Pluto (work, poverty, disease and insecurity) problems.

Thank God the light is not dim in this country. In America we are still permitted to seek spiritual satisfaction and intellectual illumination in our own way.

But even though many people experience the warmth of fortunate economic conditions there are still millions of people, able and willing to work, who cannot find employment.

In 2021, according to Statistica, there were 220.5 million people unemployed around the world with the number expected to fall to 205 million in 2022.

And according to the World Bank there were 689 million people living in extreme poverty on less than a \$1.90 a day in 2019; and according to UNICEF 5.2 million children under the age of 5 died in 2019 which translates into 14,000 every day. Hunger and under-nutrition contribute to more than half of child deaths globally.

These gloomy statistics reveal that the world is at the bottom rung of the cycle and this is in strict accordance with the true significance of Christmas.

In the Bible story, it represents the time when Herod (Saturn) was in power and sought the life of the newborn infant.

It recognizes that a period of dearth is yet ahead. Spring is not yet here. There are many hardships ahead before a new crop can be planted and their serious-ness should not be treated lightly.

The promise of better things to come

Christmas signifies all this; but in addition, now that things seem at their darkest, it also holds forth the promise of a better time to come.

There are dangers to escape, even as the child in the Bible story was taken to Egypt to escape being slain.

Those having its custody did not remain idle, to await the wrath of Herod. They energetically did what they could to insure its protection. And the custodians of the Religion of the Stars must not permit sloth or negligence prevent its preservation, dissemination and growth.

In the Bible story the Wise Men of the East brought presents of three different kinds – Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh; and the teachings of the Religion of the Stars are derived from these Wise men.

In the true spirit of Christmas you have gifts to give.

Gold, of course, is a symbol of spiritual things and you can pass on the spiritual knowledge and benefits that you have received through astrology and the Religion of the Stars.

The other two gifts, frankincense and myrrh, are the symbols of intellectual things (thoughts and ideas) and those things that are purely physical.

With widespread physical suffering often due to illness; and psychological suffering due to fear, anxiety and economic uncertainty there is ample opportunity everywhere to give a helping hand.

It may be a basket of food for a hungry family, clothing for one who is cold and ill-clad, a healing thought for one who is ill, or a friendly smile for one who is downcast; and these helpful actions are the gifts of myrrh.

So if you desire to celebrate Christmas in its true spirit, speak of the better things to come, the new harvest of blessings for the Earth that will surely arrive if each of us plants the seed and tends it industriously.

Such is the significance of the conventional lighted tree. And like the Wise Men of tradition, see that presents are given.

Give to those in need. And while you are naturally inclined to give gifts and things of the nature of physical myrrh, don't forget to give your intellectual frankincense, and your spiritual gold.

For today, as never before, each and every one of us has the need to express this true spirit of Christmas.