

## **The Great World Religions and the Age of Pisces - Richard Smoley**

### **Age of Pisces Excerpts of Analysis from Various Sources**

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*Excerpts from The Astrologer's Handbook* by Frances Sakoian & Louis S. Acker

Keyword for Pisces: compassion, universality, renunciation (p.50)

“They [Pisces people] desperately want to do the right thing, but as a rule they do not have strong willpower. Therefore, they are easily influenced by external factors.” (p.50-51)

“The symbol for Pisces is two attached fishes, one swimming upstream and the other downstream, implying the drastic duality of emotions in persons born under this sign.” (p.51)

“They will generally suffer injury rather than fight for their rights.” (p.51)

“Pisceans like to be enveloped in a dream world where they can forget the self. If this tendency can be developed, controlled, and directed, the result is an admirable dramatic ability. It sometimes produces the artist, poet, musician, or sculptor.”

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Organized religion, including the elaborate systems of the major religions we know today—Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, and Islam—took their mature present shape and birthing during the astrological age of Pisces.

Those of the major religions which existed before this time were in a form that would be unrecognizable. For example, before the age of Pisces, as Richard Smoley summarizes in his *The Future of Esoteric Christianity*:

“Animal sacrifice fell into obsolescence, in fact, with the coming of the great world religions, all of which were founded between 700 BC and 700 AD. Even the faiths that existed before this point—such as Judaism and Hinduism—were transformed into radically new versions that earlier practitioners might or might not even have recognized. The Vedic horse sacrifice and the immolation of lambs and bullocks at the Temple in Jerusalem were replaced by deeper, more sophisticated approaches to the divine.

Thus, it would seem, the world religions express a particular phase of human development. Astrologers call this epoch the Age of Pisces, and it may be no coincidence that they also associate Pisces with religion. Today, there is a widespread belief that we are entering or have entered the Age of Aquarius (as there is no consensus about exactly

when one Age ends and the other begins). As the Age of Pisces passes, will the age of religion pass as well?"

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The following excerpt is from:

*Astrological Timing: The Transition to the New Age* by Dane Rudyard

#### The Pisces-Virgo Age

If one considers what has been called the "Piscean" Age (which I have defined rather as Phase One of a complete cycle of precession) one should say that the Christ Impulse in it represents the Pisces factor or polarity, while the Romanesque-Gothic culture of the Middle Ages (from 900 AD onward) is to be linked to the Virgo pole. Indeed, we find the first centuries of this medieval period illumined by a worship of the Madonna, the Holy Virgin, and of all the Beautiful Ladies to whom Knights paid homage according to the spirit of Chivalry. The Christ spirit is that of the "fisher of men" out of the sea of the old equinoctial cycle — Christ who stated that he brought to man the "sword" of severance from a concluded period of twenty-six millennia, rather than "peace." But the spirit of Chivalry and of the great cathedrals is to be seen as an expression of the Virgin's adolescent aspiration toward God, the Beloved — a transcendent God not to be known concretely, a "dream lover" of the sky.

We cannot fully understand the Middle Ages in terms of Piscean symbolism, because during these centuries the dominant factor in Europe was not the "descent" of the creative Spirit, but instead the "ascent" of man. And this emphasis upon "ascent" has been retained by the men of the renaissance and the builders of our classical science and philosophy, from Descartes to Darwin. Even today Western thought can hardly conceive evolution except as a straight line of ascent from barbarism to enlightenment, from amoebae to man. It stresses the evolution of earth-substance and physical organisms; and it ignores the "involution" of creative spirit through impulses and ideas which build civilization and all universalistic concepts or institutions.

In other words, at the beginning of an Age, the positive characteristics of this Age manifest in terms of the spring equinox polarity, while at and after the mid-point of the Age (about 900 AD in the "Piscean" Age) it is the fall equinox polarity which assumes the controlling role. Both are operative throughout the entire Age, it is true; yet during the first half of the Age the dominant historical fact is that universal spiritual values seek incorporation in the substance of the new humanity. By contrast during the second half the elite of this (then) spirit-impregnated humanity is striving to radiate outward and God-ward through adequate cultural forms. These cultural forms are "man-made"; the revelations of the new spirit seeking to impress themselves upon the collective mind of the human races during the first half of an equinoctial Age are "God-inspired" — whatever exact meaning we wish to give to the term, God.

The Gospels, we might say, were divinely inspired and revealed through illumined personages. But the Catholic Church, as an institution which controlled the culture of

Christian Europe, grew to its stature — particularly thanks to the Popes Gregory I (600 AD) and Gregory VII (1075 AD) — as an attempt by eminent individuals to build concrete social-religious structures that would powerfully show forth the glory of the divine Revelation. If early Christianity and the Roman Empire which built its power upon the mastery of the sea ("*mare nostrum*"), have a deep affinity with the symbolism of Pisces, the spirit of the Middle Ages and of typical European achievements by individuals is essentially of the nature of Virgo. Intellectual analysis, criticism and scholasticism (the foundations of European mentality) are all Virgo traits. Virgo emphasizes also the keynote of the European era, the factor of psychological crisis.

European man is characterized by Spengler as the "Faustian man" — with reference to Faust, the restless seeker for truth, fulfillment and mastery, who made his famous pact with the Devil for the sake of regaining his youth. Faust, and, also Hamlet, are men filled with a poignant sense of personal crisis. They are men either going somewhere at all cost, or unable to go anywhere because they cannot meet the cost of maturity and liberation from ghosts. European man has either sought the technique that would give him mastery even at the sacrifice of feelings and morality, or felt himself accursed by past failures he could not overcome. He has been essentially a technician or a sick man, and at heart a restless and forever dissatisfied individual, always ready to storm the gates of Heaven, or to rape ancient lands and peoples, or to collapse into a hopeless sense of sin and perdition; a man faced constantly by crises, which he solved God-ward or hell-ward.

This psychological attitude was in no way that of the citizen of ancient Rome, or of the early Christian with his soul aflame with a strange glow of transcendent love, of destiny, of newness of being. The Faustian-Hamlet type and the Roman-Christian type are indeed as much polar opposites as Virgo and Pisces are polar opposites. But in this case Pisces comes first; it is the action to which Virgo is the reaction — for we are dealing with a reverse or retrograde zodiacal sequence. Moreover, if we want to grasp fully the meaning of this action, and this reaction, we should remember that both are expressions of Phase One of the 26, 000 year long precessional cycle.

It is because the Christian devotee of a transcendent yet immanent God-Man and the Roman citizen of the first consciously-built universalistic Empire were both pervaded with the conviction that they participated in the establishment of a truly new departure in human affairs, that their distant European progeny (especially in Nordic lands) felt burdened as individuals by a sense of personal crisis. The men of the first centuries after Christ were participants in a ritual of world-renewal of which Jesus-Christ was the Officiant; but the men of the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance were individuals who had to take a tremendous step in their personal lives — now or never, at once, irrevocably. If they were intensely Christian, they had to become saints or be damned forever. If they were more intellectually and individualistically oriented, they had to solve crucial psychological or scientific enigmas, or else become lost in insanity or moral failure. In any case, they had to make an almost inhumanly critical choice, because they were to set the pace for an entire world-cycle, or drop into the past as failures.

Christ sounded a new keynote for humanity. It was so new that the individuals who had to live by it were faced with a truly tragic personal choice between tomorrow or yesterday; and it is the essence of the Virgo phase of a cycle that it revolves around the necessity for such a choice. Because the Piscean Age is Phase One of the Great Sidereal Year, it could be the beginning of the new evolutionary tide only in an archetypal or transcendent sense, for in the first period of any spiritually considered cycle the weight of memories makes it difficult for the "new spirit" to be an actual power in concrete living. Generally speaking, Christianity has indeed presented the "way of Christ" only in an ideal and transcendent manner, as something to orient oneself toward, not actually to live by — this, remarkable exceptions notwithstanding. Likewise the Roman Empire was a ruthless military autocracy far more than a truly universal organism in which all human beings could participate. It was based on Law, not on Harmony — a fundamental difference of crucial importance at this time when, at the close of this Age, the same trends which gave to the Roman Empire its Fascistic character are at work, making an often tragic mockery of the spiritual Masonic ideal of democracy — of "liberty, equality, fraternity."

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\*The following excerpt is from:  
"Prospects for a Golden Age: The Meaning of the Great Planetary Cycles"  
by E. Alan Meece  
THE RELIGIOUS CYCLE

"In a series of brilliant articles in The Encyclopedia of Astrology, Charles Jayne revealed his research on the planetary cycles. Among his findings was a 600-year cycle of the world's great religions. Every 600 years, he said, a new religion is born; and at each of those times Uranus is either aligned with or opposing Neptune. Here are the dates:

575 B.C. Births of Buddha and Pythagoras; careers of Lao-Tzu, Mahavira and Confucius. Babylonian captivity of the Jews. Final Upanishads written.  
25 A.D. (opposition) Mission and crucifixion of Jesus Christ.  
624 Flight of Mohammed from Mecca in 622 A.D.; the start of Islam.  
1222 (opposition) Founding of Franciscan and Dominican Orders in Catholicism; career of St. Thomas Aquinas; a peak in the Age of Faith.  
1821 Births of the co-founders of the Bahai Faith; Joseph Smith's conversion (Mormonism); birth of Mary Baker Eddy (Christian Science, Unity, etc.), births of Thoreau and Whitman (American Transcendentalism); founding of the American Unitarian Association. It was also the time Marx and Engels were born, suggesting this cycle represents socialism as a religion, while the Uranus-Pluto conjunction of 1850 (see below) represents socialism as a revolutionary movement. Its career as the former may thus long outlast its history as the latter.  
2420 (opposition) The next great religion is not due until then. It may incorporate the essence of the Aquarian Age, as Christianity did for the Piscean. It could be a new sect within an already-existing religion.

We can further speculate that the previous opposition of 1176 B.C. may have coincided

with Moses or Zoroaster, the conjunction of 1778 B.C with Abraham, and the conjunction of 2980 with Krishna.

In any case, history shows that the "ages" have tremendous significance. Let us review some general evidence showing how past ages have corresponded to the precession cycle as astrologers describe it. In doing this, I refer to an idea put forward by philosopher-astrologer Dane Rudhyar. He points out that each 2100-plus year Age can be divided in two parts; the first half will have the traits of the constellation at the vernal equinox, but the second half will have the sub-traits of the opposite constellation at the autumn equinox. These traits are at their peak about half-way through each sub-age. So here is how the cycle has shaped up throughout recorded history, using approximate dates:

2100-3200 will be the Age of Aquarius proper, meaning an age of knowledge, independent thought and demands for freedom and progress. The role of the individual and the organization will be coordinated into a humanitarian whole. Religion and spirituality will be based on knowledge and experience instead of belief. From 3200 to 4200 the Age will be under a sub-influence of Leo, the opposite sign of Aquarius; therefore the creative powers of the romantic individual will re-assert themselves.

1100-2100 was the second half of the Age of Pisces, under the sub-influence of Virgo. Therefore this now-ending age was one of science, intellectual analysis, and service to one's superiors; all traits of Virgo. Certainly the ever-increasing power of scientific and rational thought and the growing power of the secular state and bureaucracy in this period could reflect the Virgo "influence."

0 to 1100 was the Age of Pisces proper, meaning an age of faith and religion, of dissolution and breakdown of structures, of devotion and compassion, and of escape into the other world. This is a perfect fit for Christianity (whose symbol was the fish) and similar religions worldwide that dominated the period. Some philosophers say that the denial of life and spirit and the assault on nature that took hold under Virgo were based on the escapist attempt to divorce spirit from the world that happened under Pisces."

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\*The following excerpt is from the website "Entire Living"

<http://www.entireliving.com/posts/contributions-of-the-age-of-pisces/>

### **About The Age of Pisces**

One thing which always gets to me is how The Age of Pisces is consistently put down by astrologers claiming the great "Age of Aquarius" is coming, or how the great "Ages of Aries and Taurus" have now passed. The Ages of the zodiac, periods of about 2,000 years through which the Earth falls under the influence of one of twelve recognized signs of the zodiac, all carry with them their very own significance. This significance can be analyzed and denoted from as far back as the oldest of the recorded ages, "The Age of Leo," in which human kind learned to utilize fire as a tool for survival. The same significance can

be expected from Pisces, as with any other sign. Throughout the ages many lessons have been taught, and it is the duty of every astrologer to denote the contributions Pisces has left behind to the evolution of our kind:

- First and foremost, the sign of the dreamer is a sign with a magical vision. Aries taught the world through a realist perspective of violence, gore, and ultimately, power; Taurus through immortalization of the dead; and Gemini through innovative communication. But all of these signs had one thing in common, a rather REALIST perspective of the harsh realities of the world. Their gods were nearly human, and their peoples lived risky, often pointless, lives (which can also be denoted much throughout the age of Pisces.)
- Pisces gave man the ability to dream beyond comparison through the rise of the monotheistic phenomenon which has clouded human kind for about two millennia. Even in non-monotheistic areas of the world, dogmatic teachings of self-less acts of self-sacrificial nature have been able to take hold. No age before Pisces had such power to make the people believe in a higher entity which could ultimately never be seen by the human eye, not in such large a scale. Past Ages had mostly based their power under the rule of empires and forces visible to the human eye, through intimidation and force.
- Pisces had the power to bring amongst the population many fairytales, and create such illusions here on Earth, within the minds of the subjects living under its influence. Superstitions took hold, as power lay encrypted within such superstitions. The systems of belief gave people hope, as they did not have in other more realistically inclined ages.
- Pisces is a mutable sign, one which flip-flops between two ideas. Yet the mutability of Pisces does not lie in a change of pure spoken communication such as the mutability of the Air sign Gemini, or upon action such as can be observed with Sagittarius or with analysis such as with Virgo, no, but rather in a much more complex form of mutability, the mutability between the soul and the body. Pisces is the only sign in which the body stands at complete opposite pole from the soul (or emotions) of its subject. Meaning the sign of Pisces is least likely of all signs to follow its carnal instincts, also a characteristic of the age, a neglect of human instinct.
- Such neglect of natural inclinations lead to detrimental actions such as the wide distribution of slavery and the extensive persecution of numerous groups for merely existing and acting upon their own desires. Yet no other sign has the ability to do such things, and it is for that reason, amongst many others, that it carries much value in its own twisted, magical right. The sign of the dreamer is the only Zodiacal sign which allows for the creation of a “dream world” under which everything is perfect and joyous, and nothing can be altered. Even signs such as Capricorn, with a high tendency to maneuver things to its liking, cannot ever create the sort of alternate reality Pisces is able to formulate.
- This alternate state of mind leads me to point out the greatest contribution Pisces leaves behind to the people of coming astrological ages, its artistic value. It is said that Pisces’ full potential is only reached upon engagement in music, sculpture, painting, or any of the arts in simplest form. This is undoubtedly Pisces’ greatest contribution to humanity, its artistic value, now left behind. Movements such as

The Renaissance, The Reformations, and The Enlightenment are without doubt all very distinct but powerful manifestations of Piscean thoughts upon conflict, amounting to the creation of such culturally rich human history.

- It **IS** true that the world has been dreaming for about 2,000 years. And perhaps it is true that we are in need of a new age in order to replenish the dumbness left behind by such perpetual a dream. But what when the dream is no longer here to stay? Humanity has been shielded by the power of a child for quite some time. When the child is gone and awareness remains, will there be any fairytales left to calm a single mind to dumbness? Will there be anything left to believe in, if belief is even possible? When eyes are opened and the second of Pisces' two conflicting fish releases itself onto the liberty of awareness, it is likely there will be no God amongst our people, and no Nations left standing. So sad for those who will desire to dream, and will no longer be able to remain dreaming.
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