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## Ancient Methods of Knowledge - Abhidhamma and Astrology

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*"When I the starry courses know,  
And Nature's wise instruction seek,  
With light of power my soul shall glow,  
As when with spirits spirits speak."*

Since ancient times, there have been methods for attaining knowledge, designed to help man to understand the universe and himself. Systems such as Astrology, Alchemy, Kabaala, I Ching should not be regarded as being something entirely different to the Buddhist Abhidhamma system...

To seek the underlying unity of all religions...to draw out the similarities between different systems...this has been an important aim for truth-seekers of all ages.

Here only a small key to those ancient mysteries and their application and relevance...

*I*n ancient times, when people more often looked up at the stars,...marvellous and inspiring as they are, ...these at first appeared as just bare phenomena... there was no pattern and no usefulness in seeing them. Then, perhaps some wise person looked a little longer. And doing thus he might have perceived certain patterns. That is, some stars possess some mysterious connection. They move about in a pattern; they do not change randomly, and they do not change every day. And if they move, they move together. Possessing such knowledge gave a man, particularly in ancient times, an enormous advantage over other people already. If he would travel, either by boat or on land, he could know, 'I'm still moving in the same direction as yesterday, I'm not out of course'. Further, if a person possessed certain knowledge regarding the planets and their influence on earth, especially if he would be living in a perhaps relatively primitive society, (a life close to nature)...when perceiving: the moon is so and so; in conjunction with such and such constellation of stars (maybe a constellation ruled by Mars...(?)), he could make certain calculations... He might divine that moving alone at night, especially if there are people of barbarous nature around, they would be more likely to be emotionally aroused than at other times. Crossing their path, I might be in trouble. In this manner a person of knowledge can avoid danger, protect himself and make use of the conditions surrounding himself for his own advantage.

Similarly, a meditator upon starting his meditation journey, when having perceptions in his own body (and mind), he might perceive only bare phenomena,...just mysterious, inexplicable sensations. Yet, if he but looks long enough, and also possess certain relevant knowledge; with time, he might be able to perceive certain patterns. He might get to understand, that,...if there is a constellation of material phenomena of a certain kind, certain negative mental phenomena are

more likely to arise. While, on the other hand, if certain other material phenomena are there, certain positive mental phenomena are more likely to arise....

He may notice, ...when some wind goes up here, I feel light, I feel clear, ...feeling light and feeling clear, life becomes easier. While when some heavy element is stuck there, ...my mind is not clear, I don't feel good, I feel troubled. Contacting the outside world, it is more likely that unpleasant things will happen to me.

Seeing in this way he will be able to cultivate the suitable and avoid the unsuitable. And cultivating the suitable, and avoiding the unsuitable, he will be able to free himself from many random factors of existence.