

QUINCUNXES

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The quincunx is a minor aspect often considered as less important or more passive than major aspects. Descriptions of quincunxes range from having a 'mildly favourable' action to being a source of stress, irritation and confusion. With this background, it is not surprising that this valuable aspect is sometimes overlooked, particularly if it is not understood. This article describes the quincunx and how it presents an opportunity for soul growth.

A quincunx, also called an inconjunct, is an aspect of 150°. The symbol of a quincunx is \sim . Experience suggests that the orb for a quincunx is up to 3° between two planets (somewhat less between a planet and an angle, as with all aspects). The orb increases to 4° if the Sun or Moon are involved.

Summary of characteristics

A quincunx is generally regarded as an inharmonious aspect which manifests with strain and friction that are associated with a degree of discomfort at the physical, mental, emotional or spiritual levels of life. With a bit of adjustment, conditions become more acceptable for a while. Then another situation arises and the feeling that things are not quite right comes back. A further adjustment is made but again it only brings some temporary improvement. This is a bit like trying to score a goal when the goal posts keep moving! It can also feel like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. The discomfort within a quincunx leads a person to seek adjustment on an ongoing basis.

Signs

At 150°, a quincunx falls midway between a trine at 120° and an opposition at 180°. Planets that are trine to each other are both in the same element. Planets that are opposite each other are in the same quality. In the case of a trine and opposition, the two ends of the aspect have something in common and can relate through this common factor. The two ends of a quincunx generally have neither element nor quality in common to link them. Each is acting separately. This fact alone causes a feeling of stress between the planets in a quincunx. Their energies do not give rise to the extremism that is possible with an opposition but neither can they be integrated. As the planets of a quincunx generally have so little to share, they have a great deal to offer each other.

As an example, let us consider a quincunx between planets in Gemini and Scorpio. The former is the mutable air sign while the latter is the fixed water sign. They have neither element nor quality in common. There is inherent tension between these signs as Gemini is associated with connecting information about many subjects but at a superficial level. Scorpio is interested in the depths of an issue. Gemini could

benefit by looking at things more deeply while Scorpio could benefit by looking at other topics.

There are exceptions in which the planets of a quincunx can have something in common. Including the orb of a quincunx, planets can be quincunx if they are 147° to 153° apart (146° to 154° if the Sun or Moon are involved). This can create a dissociated quincunx. A planet within 3° of the beginning of a sign (4° for the Sun or Moon) can be quincunx to another planet that is right at the end of the fourth sign further round the zodiac, which is of the same element. If a planet is within 3° of the end of a sign (4° for the Sun or Moon) it can be quincunx to another planet that is at the beginning of the opposite sign, which is the same quality. In these cases, there is commonality within a quincunx and it is easier to integrate the energies of the planets concerned.

There are a further two cases where there is a common link between the signs of a quincunx. In the first case, the signs of Aries and Scorpio are quincunx to each other but both signs are ruled by Mars. In the second case, the signs of Taurus and Libra are quincunx to each other and both are ruled by Venus. It is worth looking at the condition of Mars or Venus as dispositors of planets in an Aries-Scorpio or Taurus-Libra quincunx respectively.

Houses

In the equal house system, one planet in a quincunx is usually five houses away from the other planet. When using the topocentric house system, the sizes of the houses depends on the latitude where a person was born. Houses can be of different lengths. Quincunx planets are not always five houses apart. If the first house and seventh houses are long and the interim ones relatively short, a planet towards the end of the first house could be quincunx to a planet at the beginning of the seventh house. These quincunx planets are in opposite houses, which are of the same nature; angular, succedent or cadent. In contrast, if the second, third and fourth houses are long, a planet towards the beginning of the first house could be quincunx to a planet at the end of the fourth house.

Dispositors

By looking at the dispositors of two planets which are quincunx to each other information can be gained on how the quincunx is expressed. Let us consider two hypothetical, but possible, cases. In the first case, the dispositors are in dignity or exaltation, are in houses with which they are associated and there are harmonious aspects between them and other planets. In this case, the tension of the quincunx is ameliorated. There is something for the soul to learn from the quincunx but that pathway is eased to some extent. In the second case, the dispositors are in detriment or fall, are not in houses with which they are associated and there are tense aspects to the dispositors. Here, the tension of the quincunx is accentuated. This quincunx is

not so easy to deal with. Obviously these two examples are extreme cases but they highlight the necessity to look at the dispositors of quincunx planets.

Planets

Consideration of the planets in quincunx is essential to understanding the aspect. If the planets are in dignity, in houses with which they are associated and have harmonious aspects to them, there is less tension in the quincunx than if these conditions were not present.

Let us now consider some examples. These show the frequency with which these quincunxes occur in natal horoscopes and how they manifest. In each of these cases, the planets are working independently with little interaction. It is essential to consider the signs and houses the quincunx planets are in and other aspects to each planet. When interpreting a natal horoscope, it is also worth examining the houses that the planets rule.

1. The Moon is quincunx to the Sun for up to twelve hours on two days every month, once at the waxing Moon and again when it is waning. Thus nearly 3% of the population has a natal Sun-Moon quincunx. The person's reactions are at variance with the creative energy of the spirit. There is tension between the spirit and the soul.
2. Mercury is quincunx Jupiter at least twice a year for a few days each time. Over 1% of the population has this aspect. The everyday mind of these people is at odds with the higher mind. There can be tension between wanting to think about mundane matters but also being drawn to a more philosophical approach. The detail and dexterity associated with Mercury are not easily aligned with the expansive nature of Jupiter.
3. Mars is quincunx Venus for a few days at least twice a year. Again, over 1% of the population has this aspect. The clear decisive action of the fiery planet is at variance with the need for harmony and peace. Personal desires may clash with consideration for others.
4. Jupiter can be quincunx Saturn for several months. People born during these times have inconsistent or contradictory feelings regarding expansion and limitation. Having abundance while simultaneously thinking there is shortage or scarcity brings an uneasy feeling relating to the houses involved.
5. Quincunxes between the outer planets are less frequent but occur at specific times over months or years. These time depend on retrogradation of the planets concerned. Uranus was quincunx Neptune at times from 1922 to 1929 and will be again several times from 2063 to 2068. People born when Uranus and Neptune are quincunx experience tension between inspiration and imagination, the occult and the mystical, science and vision. Facing the truth of reality is in conflict with wanting to escape into a fantasy world.

A soul learns much through the obvious lessons of the major aspects. It also looks to other types of lessons, perhaps ones that are less easy to resolve. Through experiencing the difficulties of two planets that are quincunx and so not interacting, the soul realizes its own lack of understanding and what it wants to work on. Events throughout the life offer opportunities to experience the two apparently separate energies of quincunx planets. This can lead to feelings of dissociation within the soul and discomfort in the personality. Something needs to be done. The soul looks for ways to relate that which is dissociated and integrate it into the whole. Nothing in life can ever be totally isolated and that includes all facets of the soul and how it manifests spirit.

As the soul learns the lessons that a quincunx offers, it begins to realize how the attributes of one planet can promote a greater understanding of the qualities of the other planet in the aspect. For instance, in a Sun-Moon quincunx, the vital force of the Sun, expressed through the sign it occupies, helps the soul to look at the personality traits in a different light from those associated with the Moon in its sign. This can considerably extend the soul's experience and help align it to spirit. The energy of Venus and Mars, manifesting in quincunx signs, can shed light on new ways of following personal desires and being considerate. It may not be easy to correlate their different energies but continuous opportunities occur in life to bring an ever increasing understanding of how this can be done.

Aspects

Aspects from other planets modify how the quincunx manifests. Harmonious aspects to one or both planets ease the quincunx while tense aspects provide energy that directs attention to the issues that need to be addressed. When a planet forms two quincunxes to different planets that are sextile to each other, the configuration is called a yod. There is a considerable need for adjustment through the quincunxes. While a sextile is a harmonious aspect, it is one that also needs a bit of effort to make the most of it. The point of resolution of a yod is midway between the two planets that are sextile to each other. This is opposite the position of the planet that is common to both quincunxes. The sign of this point is fundamental in resolving the configuration.

Transits and progressions

Transiting planets form quincunxes with individual natal planets on a regular basis. As the Moon, associated with continual change, transits a natal horoscope each month it forms two quincunxes to each planet. The signs involved depend on the signs occupied by transiting Moon and the natal planets. Each quincunx only lasts a few hours but provides time for adjustment in matters to do with those signs and the houses involved. Each month, all people are given these numerous opportunities to refine how the soul manifests the energy of each planet. They may be small changes, each only a tiny refinement, but cumulatively they add up and contribute to changes

made over a lifetime. This is the power of quincunxes in soul growth that can be attributed to transits of the Moon.

Transiting Mercury, Venus and Mars make quincunxes to all planets and angles in a natal chart at least once every year. These quincunxes last a matter of days. The outer planets will make quincunxes to the natal positions of planets on a less frequent basis but the transits last longer. In each of these cases, retrogradation of transiting planets can extend the duration of the aspect.

Progressed planets also form quincunxes to planets and angles in the natal horoscope. The effects of a quincunx by a progressed planet last much longer than those of transits. Quincunxes by progression can last for years.

During quincunxes formed by progressed or transiting planets, the person could feel unsettled, aware that something is happening or changing but not sure what is going on or what to do. Detailed examination of all facets of the quincunx helps to elucidate the dilemmas and opportunities for development. There may not be a single resolution to the situation but appreciating the different factors that are interacting can help a person understand what is happening. The longer the quincunx lasts, the more the soul wants to understand, learn from and develop the energies that are activated by the progression or transit to a natal planet or angle.

Aspects by transiting and progressed planets

If a progressed or transiting planet makes an aspect to one planet in a natal quincunx, it will also make an aspect to the other planet. For simplicity, for the rest of this paragraph only the transit will be referred to. A transiting planet that is conjunct one planet of a natal quincunx will be quincunx to the other planet. If a transiting planet is semisextile to one planet, it will be trine or opposite the other planet depending on whether the transiting planet is within the arc of 150° of the quincunx or outside it, in the other 210°. For the same reason, if the transiting planet is sextile to one planet, it will be either square or quincunx to the second planet. If the transiting planet is square to one planet it could also be trine to the second planet. Some of these aspects are harmonious and others are tense. Each way that a transiting or progressed planet activates a quincunx needs individual interpretation. This needs careful examination of the nature of the planets, signs and houses involved and any other ongoing transits or progressions that are affecting the quincunx. Steady, methodical analysis of all factors helps to unravel the complicated interactions.

Summary

The interpretation of quincunxes involves examination of all the factors that are considered when looking at any other aspect. This includes the planets concerned, the signs and houses they occupy, their dispositors and aspects from other planets.

While planets which are quincunx have little in common, the differences provide opportunities for the soul to learn valuable lessons not offered by other aspects. This contributes to soul growth.