

There are two zodiacs in use by astrologers. They both use the same twelve signs. In India astrologers use the sidereal zodiac based upon *the journey of the Sun through the constellations*. It reflects the changes that have occurred in our viewpoint of the sky over the last 3000 years.

Western astrologers use the tropical zodiac. It is based on the *seasons and the relationship of the Sun's rays to the earth*. The Vernal equinox, 0° of Aries occurs on or about March 21st when the Sun's rays meet the equator directly overhead. When the Sun's rays square the Tropic of Cancer, we call this the Summer Solstice, 0° Cancer, the first day of summer. 0° of Libra is when the Sun's rays hit the equator once again to mark the Autumn equinox in September. We just had the winter solstice when the Sun's rays squared the Tropic of Capricorn. The seasons are reversed in the Southern Hemisphere. The four Cardinal points: Aries, Cancer, Libra and Capricorn divide the 360 degree zodiac into four equal parts, three zodiac signs, 30 degree each.

Vedic astrologers use the Sidereal Vernal Point, which, because of the earth's wobble (usually compared to a top as it begins to run down) moves gradually 'backward.' At this time, on the spring equinox (March 21), the Sun is actually in 5° Pisces. This is where all the talk about the Age of Aquarius arises. 2000 years ago, the vernal equinox fell on 0° of Aries and then entered Pisces. The last two thousand years are called the Age of Pisces because of this. The early Christians who began their history at this time used the fish as their sign just as the vernal equinox moved into the 'sign of the fishes' according to the sidereal zodiac. We are now 5° degrees from a vernal equinox in the sign of Aquarius. Two thousand years from now, the position of the Sun at the vernal equinox will be in Capricorn, but the rays of Sun will still hit the equator on March 21st, and Western astrologers will still call this the moment of the vernal equinox, 0° Aries. In India, the Sun's journey through the stars is the marker. In Western astrology, it is the Sun's relationship to the earth, which is used to designate the signs. If you like, you can move your birth sign back by 23°, but then the interpretation of that sign is changed as well.

That's not the only difference between Vedic and Western astrology, but it's where the differences begin. Both systems work well, but they should not be confused, and both have astronomical and symbolic significance.

Ophiuchus is a constellation, but it is not in the ecliptic and therefore, not part of either the sidereal or tropical zodiac. It is a perennial hoax which was first put into form by John Sladek a science fiction writer. There is no conspiracy to suppress it by astrologers or astronomers.

Keeping our Ancient Wisdom Alive

The Wisdom Tradition evolved over the centuries to address our deepest human needs. Sarah Fuhro is a practitioner of its many forms; including Astrology, Tarot, Flower Essences and Druidry. In addition to personal consultations, Sarah teaches workshops and private classes, offering both clients and students knowledge powerfully rooted in the past, presented in the language of the present. To learn more, please visit www.sarahfuhro.com.

