

SATURN IN LIBRA AND THE COMING CARDINAL CRISIS

By

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On 29th October 2009 at precisely 17hrs 09 GMT, Saturn enters the sign of Libra. Saturn is one of the most important planets for consideration in both mundane astrology (the astrology of world affairs) and natal astrology (person-centred astrology) so its entry into a new sign is of great significance.

Saturn takes roughly twenty-nine years to orbit the sun, and therefore to circle the zodiac, and it spends approximately two and a half years in each of the twelve signs. Saturn previously transited Libra from September 1980 to December 1982, with a brief run between May and August of 1983. So if you were born during those periods you are about to experience your first Saturn Return – an occasion that marks the astrological coming of age. If, on the other hand, you were born between November 1950 and October 1953 you are on the threshold of your second Saturn Return and were you to have been born between October 1921 – September 1924 poised for your third. Of which more later...

Until Uranus was discovered in 1781, Saturn was thought to be the outermost planet in the solar system. Since there was no other planet beyond Saturn astrologers deemed it to have great power over human affairs: you could not go beyond the limits of Saturn, or else. For thousands of years, Saturn has been synonymous with law and order, rules and

regulations and those things that are unchangeable and unchanging: Saturn represents our internal morality. It is he-who-must-be-obeyed, the policeman indoors. In more mystical terms, Saturn is synonymous with the process of karma – the law of cause and effect. In psychological terms, Jungian terms, Saturn represents *the shadow* - those things we fear and believe are flawed within ourselves which must be overcome in order to be whole.

To be frank, Saturn isn't much fun; he is to be endured and ultimately to be thanked for all those dreary lessons he's forced us to learn. If all the planets were at a party, you wouldn't want Saturn supervising the drinks and the games: he'd be the guy standing guard in the corner reminding you that if you overindulge you'll pay for it the next day; he might even put in a call to the Noise Abatement Society. But fun he is not.

While Saturn is our cross to bear, he does work better in some signs than others, and Libra is one of them. Saturn is said to be *exalted* in Libra: it acquires a certain grace. Libra's qualities of fairness and justice soften Saturn's intransigence. Saturn is more merciful in this Venus-ruled sign. While looking back at the events of the last Saturn-in-Libra period (1980-1983) gives us some idea of what is to come, because of the relative positions of the other planets - most notably Jupiter, Uranus, Neptune and Pluto - each Saturn cycle is unique. Indeed, this time round, with Pluto in early Capricorn and Jupiter and Uranus in Aries, these next couple of years could be momentous in terms of wars, alliances, peace-treaties and societal changes.

Synchronicity is a fascinating thing. As I began this article, one of the hottest issues being debated in the UK was the treatment of women-of-a-certain-age by the media:

many loved, admired and experienced female presenters were being forcibly ejected from their premium-time perches and replaced by younger models. Saturn has much to do with the elderly and it may be that its passage through Libra will bring about a change in the perception of age and ageing, thus reversing the ageism trend that has been rearing its ugly head in the latter degrees of Saturn in Virgo. The beauty of age could be said to be quintessentially Saturn in Libra.

THE SATURN RETURN

And talking of growing older... There's nothing like a Saturn-Return to make you feel your years. Given the first Saturn-Return occurs at roughly twenty-nine years of age when you're staring thirty in the face and the second at approximately fifty-eight as the big 6-0 is coming towards you faster than an Exocet missile this astrological event can be seriously depressing. Chickens come home to roost on a Saturn-Return: we face setbacks and harsh realities; we have to take responsibility for our actions. Yet we also reap the rewards of our hard efforts. By age twenty-nine we realize who we are; we have experimented with this and that, tried to live up to the expectations of our parents and our peers – or not as the case may be - but we finally know what we like, what we detest, what is important to us, and we're ready to fashion the world according to our perceptions. At fifty-eight, we look back and reflect on where we've got to in life and what we want to do with the remainder of our existence. What we failed to address on the first Saturn-Return comes back in surround-sound at the second, and often in our late fifties we are less fortified to deal with such slings and arrows. Men set considerable store by their physical strength thus when age weakens muscles and bones and

diminishes the ability to dominate in the bedroom and the boardroom it can precipitate a severe crisis; likewise, for women losing their looks – becoming 'invisible' - is as disorienting as it is painful. Yet the second Saturn Return is not just a time of fears and regrets but of liberation and new starts. As for the third Saturn Return at roughly eighty-seven years of age, it's not just the big 9-0 staring you in the face but the Grim Reaper! (Remember, Saturn and his scythe?) But even at this stage of life there is still the capacity for new starts based on coming to terms with one's failures and limitations, accepting the transgressions of others and, indeed, relishing the role of the wise-woman and the elder statesman.

These themes have a resonance in mundane terms too as institutions, cities and nations experience Saturn>Returns. The USA is a case in point since Saturn at 14° 48 Libra will return to its natal point on 10 December, 2010. Just for the record, on 22 October, 1981- the exact date of the previous US Saturn Return – the American people were informed that the national debt had topped \$1 trillion. There's nothing like Saturn to remind you of your debts.

So, with the US set to experience its eighth Saturn-return just before Christmas of 2010, now is the time for the country to build up resources, balance the budget, lobby support across the globe and get all those proverbial ducks in a row. The US Saturn is situated in the 10th house – one reason among many for its great power and imperialistic drive – and it is squared by the sun in Cancer in the seventh house of 'other people'. It doesn't take a genius to work out that when Saturn returns to its original position the US will be open to attack, at the very least in the form of intense criticism by other countries. Atonement is

another great Saturnian theme...

1981 - 1983

If you have forgotten the significant events of the first three years of the Nineteen-eighties when Saturn last transited Libra here is a small sample. Britain, under the Premiership of Margaret Thatcher – the first female Prime-Minister and a Libra to boot – went to war with Argentina over the Falkland Islands (April - June 1982). Israel invaded Lebanon (June 1982). President Ronald Reagan (Libra on the Midheaven) survived an assassination attempt (March 30 1981). John Lennon (sun Libra) was not so lucky and was killed on 8 December 1981. Sandra Day O'Connor (Libran Midheaven) became the first female judge elected to the US Supreme Court. Michael Jackson (Jupiter in Libra) released *Thriller* – the biggest selling album in history. And you probably don't need me to remind you that the 1980's was the hey day of big hair, huge shoulder pads, cool music and *Dynasty*, *Dallas* et al.

August 1982 also marked the beginning of the longest bull market in American history – the end came in September 2008 with the collapse of Lehman Brothers. There were, of course, huge market tumbles during those twenty-six years – take October 1987 for instance and September 2000, in the wake of 9-11 – but the overall trend was ever upwards. So, with Saturn poised to return to Libra could we be within a year or so of the start of another mega bull market?

THE ECONOMY

At the time of writing (September 2009), the markets have been buoyant for the past several months - this despite the global recession, the worldwide slump in property prices, bankruptcies, foreclosures and company collapses on a scale not seen since the Great Depression of the Nineteen-thirties, nations with debts in the trillions and banks with no money to lend – but this upward trend is not such an anomaly as one might think. A recession is an opportune time to invest, and stock markets across the globe have experienced rapid growth in the six months from the depth of the crisis in March 2009. However, this rise in the markets is also built on growing optimism that the worst of the recession is over. A little premature to my mind.

It is unlikely that this time round Saturn in Libra will spark another bull market: if anything the reverse will be the case, and the prospect of the 'double-dip' is far from remote. The global economic crisis that occurred in September 2008 was precipitated by the collapse of banks and lending institutions that had handed over funds indiscriminately to people who had no hope of ever meeting their commitments; it was a policy fuelled by greed and overweening arrogance. When banks came tumbling down the concept of hubris became startlingly evident. (The ancient Greeks knew a thing or two.) Clearly, if you could see outside the bubble you were in, you knew there had to be a reckoning at some point, a correction was inevitable. Effectively, the Age of Irresponsibility came to an end on September 16 2008.

THE SATURN-URANUS OPPOSITION

If there is an astrological signature on the economic turmoil that began in the autumn of 2008, it is not Saturn's alone but the Saturn-Uranus opposition. I have dealt with this opposition in detail in a previous article, *The Saturn-Uranus Opposition*, but in a nutshell when these two planets oppose each other old systems crumble and new orders emerge – albeit slowly and with considerable resistance. Saturn and Uranus met for the first time in this current cycle on 4 November, 2008 – the day the American people voted in their first black president, Barack Obama – and it would be hard to find a more fitting expression of this opposition: overnight, a people thirsty for change swept away centuries of prejudice by electing a black man to the highest office in the land. To date all subsequent oppositions between these two planets have occurred in the signs of Virgo (Saturn) and Pisces (Uranus) but on 26 July, 2010, they will stand opposed in the first degree of Aries and Libra. But Saturn and Uranus are not alone. On 15 November 2009, Saturn will be squared by Pluto.

THE SATURN-PLUTO CYCLE

The Saturn-Pluto cycle is of great relevance to world affairs. Neither of these planets is easy to deal with on its own, and when they're together they are relentless. Saturn and Pluto were in square during the Great War, in opposition during the Great Depression, in square at the start of World War II and in opposition in 2001, the start of the so-called War on Terror. The present Saturn-Pluto cycle began on 8 November 1982 and we are currently on the threshold of the final waxing square – exact on 15 November, 2009, 31 January, 2010 and 21 August 2010.

As I reach this point in the article several highly significant events have been taking place on the international stage. In Pittsburgh, USA world leaders recently gathered at the G20 summit. There, on 25 September, Barack Obama, flanked by Gordon Brown of Great Britain and Nicolas Sarkozy of France, issued an ultimatum to Iran over the discovery of a uranium plant secreted in a mountain, close to the holy city of Qom, the size and configuration of the facility being inconsistent with a peaceful domestic nuclear programme but compatible with the production of nuclear warheads. With tensions between Iran and the West already at an all time high, this discovery pushed diplomatic relationships to the brink. The threat of further sanctions was made at this conference and if this strategy fails, Israel has hinted that it is prepared to order air strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities. As if to hold two fingers up to President Obama, Iran tested two short-range missiles on the 27th September and a long-range missile on the 28th. Clearly, the storm clouds above Iran are gathering, and we have the astrology to mirror the situation.

THE CARDINAL T-SQUARE

Let us rewind for a moment. Saturn enters Libra on 29 October, still in opposition to Uranus and applying to a square to Pluto, which will become exact on 15 November. Pluto in the early degrees of Capricorn will thus 'stand' at the apex of the Saturn-Uranus opposition, creating a *T-square*. That this *'T'-square* occurs on the cardinal points only adds to the prospect of incipient change and transformation. And, as we must all know by now, change and transformation are rarely achieved when skies are blue and the hummingbirds are draining the nectar from the blossoms: change and transformation take place in times of turmoil, when we are pitted against the elements, so to speak. It is also

necessary to mention at this stage that several key nations have planets and points at 4° of the Cardinal signs (Russia, Israel, Iran, Pakistan and the USA among them) so that over the next two years, as Saturn, Pluto, Uranus and Jupiter transit these early degrees of the Cardinal signs, the potential for confrontation will be released and tipping points of a financial, societal and terrestrial kind will be reached.

While each time these planetary aspects reach exactitude is likely to coincide with significant world events the extra weight of, say, a planet or an eclipse at these junctures considerably ups that potential. With this in mind, the late June and late July periods of 2010 emerge as the most precipitous.

TIMING

Getting the precise timing of events in advance remains one of the greatest challenges to astrologers. So often a 'perfect storm' will go past only for all hell to be let loose three weeks later under a delightful *Grand Trine*. Nonetheless, that 'perfect storm' will have played a key part. I am reminded here of the July and August of 2001, a matter of weeks before the terrorist attacks in the US. On 5 July, '01 a total lunar eclipse occurred at 13° 39 Capricorn – within ten minutes of the US natal sun. Throughout July the Saturn-Pluto opposition drew ever closer reaching exactitude on 5 August. Thus the hands on the cosmic clock were pointing to a crisis in early August but that crisis did not occur for thirty-five more days. However, during the 9/11 Commission it emerged that two crucial memos were circulated on 6 August: the first in the form of a Presidential Daily Briefing entitled, *Bin Laden Determined to Attack Inside the United States* and the second sent by

Larry Thompson, Deputy Attorney General, to the FBI, Department of Justice Criminal Division and the Office of Intelligence Policy and Review complaining about the grave deficiencies in the exchange of information between the intelligence services and law enforcement officials, which in turn hampered the Department of Justice's ability to defend the nation against terrorist attack. Both these memos were effectively ignored. My point here is that even if the dates I list below – those periods when alignments are at their most potent – do not give rise to sensational events, they will surely be seen to have been highly significant in hindsight. And should signs and signals occur on those dates they should not be ignored.

IN CONCLUSION

As I read through this article I realized that I had been voicing strong concerns about the configurations of 2009-2012 without pointing out the potentially positive effects of them. And such configurations can and do become a force for the good. There is nothing intrinsically bad about any planet, aspect or configuration – a knife can save a life in a surgeon's hands and it can kill in a murderer's grip - what makes the difference is the level of consciousness at which it is experienced. We should never forget that as much as we individually are on a journey so too is humanity, so while we may be swept along by the tide of events the choices we make in the process and what we do in the aftermath shape our destiny. And as each of us expands our awareness we contribute to the overall expansion of consciousness, which effectively is the only thing which is going to prevent us from self-destruction.

Experience is, as they say, the greatest teacher and if nothing else the recent war in Iraq has revealed the folly of invading another country without a mandate and a plan for the consequences. Likewise, the global economic crisis has made it clear that no one country, no single economy, is immune to the actions of and developments in another. Thus, as we go forward to 2012 and tensions mount and nations indulge in brinkmanship, instead of looking Armageddon in the eye we could be opening a new page of humanity's story, one in which we recognize we will only survive as a unit and that we are better equipped at dealing with planet Earth when we're all on the same page. Out of crisis must come growth.

History may show us that the countdown to a new dawn began in the September of 2008 and as Saturn moves through Libra and the kaleidoscope of alignments form, reform and diverge and old orders end and new orders begin, we will be paving the way to a better world in 2039 when Saturn once again returns to Libra.

KEY DATES

15 November, 2009 - Saturn-Pluto square: 1° 42 Libra/Capricorn

31 January, 2010 - Saturn-Pluto square: 4° 22 Libra/Capricorn

26 June, 2010 - Partial lunar eclipse: 4° 42 Capricorn (Pluto 4° 05 Capricorn)

11 July, 2010 – Total Solar eclipse: 19°24 Cancer

26 July, 2010 - Saturn-Uranus opposition: 0° 25 Libra/Saturn (Pluto 3° 21 Capricorn)

30 July, 2010 - Mars opposing Uranus: 0° 21 Libra/Aries (moon 0° 21 Aries)

31 July, 2010 - Mars conjunct Saturn: 0° 48 Libra

21 August, 2010 – Saturn square Pluto: 2° 56 Libra/Capricorn (Jupiter 2° 03 Aries)

CHARTS OF INTEREST

Russia: 25 December 1991 19hrs 25 LT, Moscow

Pakistan: 23 March 1956 07hrs 05 LT, Karachi

Israel: 14 May 1948 16hrs 00 LT, Jerusalem

Iran: 1 April 1979 15hrs 00 LT, Tehran

USA: 4 July 1776 17hrs 10 LT, Philadelphia, PA