

# Chiron and Aquarius

## Astrology for Soul Evolution

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Over the years, astrologers have associated Chiron with a number of signs, including Virgo, Scorpio, and Sagittarius. While I often associate Chiron with Scorpio, as the stars of his constellation, Centaurus, fall within the realm of tropical Scorpio, I certainly wouldn't want to limit him to one sign. His archetype is multifaceted, as Zane Stein<sup>1</sup> and others have discussed—master teacher, mentor preparing the hero for his/her quest, maverick, wounded healer, evolutionary agent, bridge.

While teaching an in-depth course on the planets earlier this year, I became aware that Chiron also has a vital connection with Aquarius. Given that he's currently transiting through Aquarius, it seems timely to explore this connection.

### The Astronomy

Astronomically, Chiron shuttles between his dad, Saturn, and Uranus, named after his grandfather but really representing the archetype of Prometheus, as Richard Tarnas has eloquently pointed out.<sup>2</sup>

### The Myth

Prometheus was a Titan who created humanity (astrologically represented by Aquarius). Some versions of the myth say that he did so at Jupiter's request, while others say that he created mankind before Jupiter came to power. At any rate, Prometheus, whose name means "forethought," gave humanity the

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<sup>1</sup> Zane Stein, *Essence and Application: A View from Chiron* (New York: CAO Times, 1988). (Zane's revised 1995 edition is available from him at [www.zanestein.com](http://www.zanestein.com).)

<sup>2</sup> Richard Tarnas, *Prometheus the Awakener: An Essay on the Archetypal Meaning of the Planet Uranus* (Woodstock, CT: Spring Publications, 1995).



gift of fire, i.e., consciousness. This made Jupiter furious. Jupiter liked getting offerings from humans but otherwise had little regard for them. He felt threatened by Prometheus' gift. Humans thinking for themselves? They might actually come to realize that they, too, have the divine spark within themselves. Then maybe they might not feel subservient to the power structure of Olympus any longer. Jupiter might lose his offerings and his power.

Why did Prometheus do this? Some versions of the myth say he felt compassion for humanity, who seemed weak and helpless. Others point out that for various reasons Prometheus felt betrayed by Jupiter and wanted to get back at him, fomenting his fall from power, just as the Titans were dethroned by the Olympians. Revolution!

In this instance, Jupiter reacted more like his reactionary, status-quo-oriented dad, Saturn, than the progressive we tend to make him out to be astrologically. (Did he *ever* act as a progressive in the myths?) Jupiter couldn't kill Prometheus, an immortal, but he could torture him. Prometheus was bound to a rock, and a vulture visited daily to eat his liver (a Jupiterian organ), which would regrow overnight. Jupiter told him that the only way he would be freed would be for an immortal to give up his immortality. Jupiter must have thought that no immortal in his/her right mind would do such a thing.

Some time later, Chiron, who was Jupiter's half-brother and friend, was accidentally wounded by an arrow poisoned with the blood of the Hydra, a water monster, a poison Chiron taught Hercules to make. (Chiron taught the arts of war out of necessity, as all heroes-to-be of the day needed them to survive and succeed, but he greatly disliked them, preferring the healing arts.) Try as he might, Chiron the master healer could not heal himself. He was half immortal and so would not normally die, but the pain became unbearable, and he sought a means for ending it.

So Chiron did what Jupiter figured no one would do—he told Jupiter he would give up his immortality for the release of Prometheus. Jupiter had to agree, as Chiron met Jupiter's conditions for the release. But more than a mere truce resulted from Chiron's mediation between Jupiter and Prometheus. Not only did Jupiter heal Prometheus, but Prometheus was welcomed back with open arms on Olympus. Chiron benefited, too, as Jupiter raised him into the heavens as a constellation and made him fully immortal.

## The Archetypal Dance

The Greeks may well have been trying to explain the individual's potential for self-knowledge and fulfillment (Leo) within the context of being a member of



society and aiding in humanity's evolution (Aquarius). First we as individuals (Leo) come to realize that we are more than the roles we play in society (Saturn, Capricorn, and Saturnian Aquarius). We rise out of being blindly controlled by our enculturation, i.e., the patterns imprinted on our psyche by our culture which reside largely in the subconscious, and we get a first glimpse of our inner divine fire (high Leo). In many cases, this leads to a sense of rebellion (Uranian/Promethean Aquarius) against the status quo (Saturnian Aquarius), which is then felt as restrictive rather than supportive.

Overcoming one's primary dependency on authority figures, from both inner and outer standpoints, is necessary, but this rebellion can become extreme to the point of anarchy—one may completely reject one's parents and authority figures, God him/herself (Aquarius can have an atheistic or agnostic side), and even the notion of authority. Toppling one's gods completely tends to leave a vacuum, which is typically filled by one's human ego (lower Leo), the new tyrant.

But the goal is fusion with the true inner sun of being (high Leo), the true authority in one's life, not merely freeing oneself from others' control. As Nietzsche so eloquently stated in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*,<sup>3</sup> "Free from what? As if that mattered to Zarathustra! But your eyes should shine brightly—free for what?"

This is where Chiron can show the way. Chiron was on good terms with Saturnian Olympus. However, he was a bit of a maverick and quietly followed his inner conscience even if what he did wasn't always politically correct. (Qui-Gon Jinn in *Star Wars*,<sup>4</sup> Obi-Wan Kenobi's teacher, exemplifies this side of Chiron. He was led by the Force to the child Anakin Skywalker, a Promethean figure, and championed Anakin's being trained as a Jedi knight despite the Jedi Council's objections.) Even though Chiron had good reason to reject authority—both his dad, Saturn, and his mom rejected him as a baby—he did not do so outright. In any situation, he felt that it was not so important whether one agreed with (Saturnian Aquarius) or rebelled against (Promethean Aquarius) authority figures—what was important was acting on the guidance of one's true authority, the divine consciousness within (a trait of what I'm calling Chironian Aquarius).

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<sup>3</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra: A Book for All and None* (published in various forms 1883-1892; numerous translations available).

<sup>4</sup> George Lucas, *Star Wars, Episodes I-VI* (20th Century Fox Film Corp./Lucasfilm Ltd.—various versions available).



Chiron trained his students, both mortal and immortal, on how to make this connection so that they could be successful in their heroic quests (self-realization/high Leo) and in being of service to society (Aquarius). But he also taught them to respect Olympus, give the gods their due, and work with them as appropriate (Saturnian Aquarius). A bomb-thrower (Promethean Aquarius) he was not!

I understand that George Lucas consciously patterned Yoda in *Star Wars* after this facet of Chiron's archetype. A successful Jedi knight needed to flow with the Force's inner guidance in order to wisely serve humanity. The Jedi did not go live together on their own planet, thinking themselves better than less evolved people—they remained within society to serve (until it became impossible to do so).

Yet Chiron's teaching his students how to connect with the inner Force and bring forth its wisdom and fruits might well be perceived as a threat by an overly rigid Olympus allergic to change. But Chiron's mode of change was evolution, not revolution, working within society to catalyze humanity's progress at a rate at which it was capable of assimilating, resulting in slow, steady, permanent change. Status-quo Olympus was going to have to adjust to new realities, but it could do so at Chiron's evolutionary pace rather than go into knee-jerk defense mode when feeling threatened by Promethean Aquarius' "Revolution now!" demands.

Interestingly, I think that Qui-Gon Jinn came closer to comprehensively realizing the Chiron archetype than did Yoda. While Yoda was the master teacher of the "younglings," he was a part of the internal power structure of the Jedi, sitting on the Jedi Council. As wise, dedicated, and brave as he was, Yoda was not open to understanding what the Force was showing Qui-Gon Jinn, that Anakin was being sent as the Chosen One to bring balance to the Force. Yoda, at least at that point in the saga, was stuck in Saturnian Aquarius.

As Martian/Arian/Scorpionic as Anakin was, he has also always struck me as Promethean, someone with vast creative gifts which it was his task to learn how to flow with and use constructively. While preaching oneness with the Force, the Jedi Council had become too stagnant, too hung up on absolute obedience to outer authority (Saturnian Aquarius). The Jedi had lost their primary reliance on inner authority and, as a result, their creativity (high Leo). So Anakin/Prometheus was sent to restore oneness and co-creation with the Force as the centerpiece of Jedi life.

But Anakin needed to learn how both to develop his creative talents and work constructively within society. After Qui-Gon Jinn's death, Anakin really



didn't have anyone around him who was capable of providing the Chironian mentorship he needed. Obi-Wan did his best as a mentor, but I don't think he ever really understood the great challenges Anakin faced of learning how to work with the intensely Promethean energies that flowed through him. Anakin was caught between the tidal wave of those energies of change and a too status-quo-oriented Jedi Council and the plodding inefficiencies of democracy. At times he could barely stand the tension, declaring to his wife, Padme, a senator (who I think did understand Chironian Aquarian evolutionary change), that people should be *made* to change (dysfunctional Promethean Aquarius, imposing one's "correct" political views on others, by force if necessary). Unfortunately, the only one who seemed to understand him was the evil Chancellor Palpatine, who took advantage of Anakin's lack of a true mentor to tempt him to use his powers for self-serving (lower Leo) ends. Anakin thus fell, and it took another Jedi, his son, Luke, trained by an older and wiser Yoda, to get Anakin back on track himself through love.

### The '60s and Beyond

My astrologer friend Carolyn Torkko once told me that she believed that the Aquarian Age began with the great stellium in Aquarius in February 1962. I think she was right. But whatever one believes regarding the start of the Aquarian Age, this stellium was impressive by any measure. On February 3-5, 1962, all the planets through Saturn, including the moon, plus the south node were in Aquarius. On the 4th, a powerful solar eclipse conjoining Mercury, Venus, and Jupiter squared Neptune in Scorpio and Ceres and Varuna in Taurus. This solar eclipse, at 15 Aquarius 43, at a cross-quarter point, activated the World Axis (0 degrees cardinal). Powerful!

Chiron was not directly involved at that time with the stellium, being at 5 Pisces. However, several healer centaurs and asteroids were—Chariklo (Chiron's wife) conjoined the eclipse, Okyrhoe (their prophetess daughter) along with Minerva and Apollonia squared it near Neptune, and Makhaon (the surgeon son of Chiron's favorite pupil, Asklepios, the Greek god of medicine) semisquared it at 2 Aries 43, conjunct the World Axis. A prophecy of world healing, perhaps?

But Chiron was not about to be left out of the action. In his discovery charts (photo taken October 18, 1977, and discovery made November 1, 1977), Chiron was retrograding through the third degree of Taurus, squaring the Mars-Saturn conjunction that was part of the February 1962 stellium. (On February 4th, the day of the solar eclipse, Mars was at 2 Aquarius 22, and Saturn was at 3 Aquarius 48, so Mars was applying to the conjunction, which then occurred on February 6th at 4 Aquarius 4.) Hmm... so when Chiron chose to enter the



conscious collective psyche in the fall of 1977, he activated (and perhaps confronted) the Mars-assaulting-the-Saturnian-bastions-of-power Promethean aspect of the 1962 Aquarius stellium!

What's more, before his discovery, Chiron turned retrograde on August 9, 1977, at 5 Taurus 47, conjunct the retrograde Transneptunian planet Admetos (a slow, intense form of Saturn) at 7 Taurus opposite Uranus/Prometheus at 8 Scorpio; Chiron was heading back toward Astraea (blockage and liberation from it) at 0 Taurus opposite the Transneptunian planet Cupido (the group/society planet) at 2 Scorpio.

So looking at Chiron's activity in 1977 alone tells the story of his bridging between Uranus/Prometheus' confronting a dysfunctional, blocked power structure (retro Admetos) and blocked society at large. But then he carried that activity further during his retro cycle, doing inner work to resolve the past and prepare for the future, by reactivating the Promethean Mars assault on Saturn of the 1962 Aquarian stellium. Quite an entrance into the collective psyche!

Certainly we needed Chiron's intercession. The bomb-throwers of the '60s, activated by the '62 stellium and fueled by the Uranus/Prometheus-Pluto conjunction in the years following, had become the Saturnian Aquarian suits of the late '70s and beyond. Where did the revolution go? Did it founder, insisting on too much change too quickly (typical of Promethean Aquarius)? Could the revolutionaries not handle their own creative intensity, becoming lost after trying to topple all societal gods, then turning around and joining the ranks of those gods themselves? Or are the seeds planted in '62 still alive?

I think they're alive and well and "we ain't seen nothin' yet." But we need Chiron to help us. And he's here. For the first time since his discovery, he is taking his own turn transiting through Aquarius, entering on February 21, 2005, and now retrograding as I write at 5 Aquarius. He's been quite active this year, too, confronting the "big boys" Saturn and Jupiter duking it out in the fixed signs, who have also been confronted by the transformative influences of Pluto and Hades in Sagittarius and Gemini and the power of spiritual transformation of Poseidon in Scorpio.

Many of us have been feeling an intense Uranian/Promethean step-up in energies in the last couple of years, wherever it's coming from. Simultaneously, it appears that the Saturnian Aquarian powers-that-be are becoming more backward and entrenched than ever. But "appears" is the operative term here. I don't think anyone can or should try to stop these intense energies of change. But the unmediated collision between Prometheus and Saturn could result in



societal collapse and civil or possibly world war. This is no way to progress into the Aquarian Age.

Happily, there are Chironian Aquarian forces afoot also. There are quiet experiments in fresh forms of democracy and humane economics occurring mostly under the radar all over the world. Chiron's means of change is not to blow up dysfunctional citadels of power, but to displace them with new forms of the wise use of power. Raise up a new Olympus, but this time let it be wise self-governance of the people (Aquarius). After all, Aquarius excels in decentralized networking and democracy when it puts its mind to it. And Chiron is here to mentor those of us open to his tutelage so that we may in turn effectively mentor our brethren to make the Aquarian dream of peace, freedom, and equality a reality.