

NEVER TRUST ANYONE OVER THIRTY – SERIES IN 5 PARTS

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PART 1: "SATURN, THE TIMEKEEPER"

January 23, 2012

"Never trust anyone over thirty." Remember that old phrase? Intuitively we know what it means and astrologically it makes perfect sense. What I am about to present here is very abridged and thus quite abstract, so those of you who are already having trouble staying in touch with the earth, read no further because this is subtle and not for everyone. See if it makes sense to you. It is about "time." Here goes:

Saturn is the great chronometer in astrology, the timekeeper. This has been so for... ever, I guess, and it appears both in the astrology of the East and the West. Saturn not only measures time; it is time, astrologically speaking. Which means the other planets are not.

The planet Saturn takes almost 30 years to make a single orbital revolution around its center, the Sun, 29.4 years to be exact. This thirty year cycle marks the complete growth and maturation of the physical human body. It encompasses and demarcates the so-called "Prime of Life."

It is generally accepted that the orbital period of any planet is the time it takes for us to assimilate that planet in consciousness since, UNTIL each degree of the zodiac is covered (for the first time) by a planet, we have (at some subtle level) no complete idea of that planet in our life memory. This is old stuff, with Mercury returning around three months of age, the Earth (baby walking on its own) at one year, and so on. I won't elaborate that concept here. Every astrologer knows it.

Saturn or 'time' takes thirty years to complete its first round of the zodiac, moving slowly ever forward, zodiac degree by zodiac degree. During that first thirty years we have no real idea of time because it has never started to repeat itself in our memory. From our point of view everything is new; it is all new.

However, after Saturn completes an orbit (around thirty years of age) and begins to go over for a second time the same part of the zodiac where it was when we were born, we gradually start to wake up to the fact that we have been here, done this before. We begin to lose interest in life as we knew it, albeit our loss of interest is at first very subtle. It takes most of us quite a while to wake up to this, often years, if it happens at all.

When we do wake up or begin to notice it, this awakening has been called being "born again" (by Christians) and many other names, but they all have to do with a spiritual awakening of some kind in the middle of life. If it comes to us much later in life, we call it a mid-life crisis, and the heck with the spiritual aspects. Better late than never.

My point here (and it would really take a whole book to communicate this properly, which I have written) is that 'time' as we know it is cyclical and does not just stretch out forever in a straight line toward the "future," but turns back on itself (recursively) and repeats its rhythms, at first gently and then ever more emphatically, until we wake up. In other words, time stops at thirty, thus the phrase "never trust anyone over thirty." Time stops and our body stops growing, but

some part of us goes on.

Therefore one of the great climactic events, astrologically speaking, is our Saturn Return around the age of thirty years. It happens to everyone who lives that long, like clockwork.

What is remarkable about what I am pointing out here is that few people are aware that time has just stopped for them at thirty years of age, around the point when our body stops growing. Beyond thirty, we each actually rise up and begin to leave the body and float out into inner space, if that makes sense. We start to go back in, back to where we came from, spiritually AND physically. Our body starts to decline.

Just as our body does not improve after its prime, that leaves our mind and psychology to improve or move on - our spirit. In other words, the spirit leaves the body not at the end of life (like many imagine), but right in the middle of life, at the 'prime.' This is enacted for all to witness, and all students of the mysteries know that the obvious is what is most often ignored, every time. We don't see it, consciously. We ignore it. But we do pass out, with or without an awareness of what is happening to us. Awareness is optional.

This whole process is what inner esoteric initiation is all about for those who are aware of this, those who can learn about it and become aware, and even those who just can't manage to wake up to this experience. It is all about awareness, which is why we train to become more aware through meditation and the like.

I was made aware of this as a young man by a great teacher, who not only pointed this out to me but helped me prepare to undergo the transition more or less consciously. I was about 26 years of age, so I went through my Saturn Return with my eyes open, so to speak. I share this here on the chance that it strikes a chord with some very few of you, who can grasp the idea and make it your own, who will find it helpful.

I wrote a whole book about this, based on my own experience and journals many years ago in the 1960s. It is called "Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism," and is available free as an e-book here, or as a paperback on Amazon.com.

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

You can color me crazy if you wish or you can try the concept on to see if it makes sense to you. For me it has been a great way to understand esoteric philosophy.

Part 2: OUT OF THE BODY: LEAVING EARTH
January 24, 2012

The point of yesterday's blog is that time (Saturn) as we know it stops or ends at thirty years of age. This is a key thought, so don't just nod your head, please. Saturn represents 'time' in astrology and while the other planets are colored by it or work within time's context, they are not about time. In order to get the benefit of this approach or view, this concept must be clear.

The trickle of new events that in our formative years have always led us on toward the future ceases or begins to fall away when Saturn begins to repeat itself (to go around a second time) in the zodiac. A great hush falls over our life as we gradually sail and float beyond the circle or

cycle of time into what can only be called eternity - that place beyond time. This is called "Entering the Silence." Like the astronaut pushed free of the mother ship, each of us slowly spins off into space, turning and floating, adrift, and (if we are lucky) aware of all this, trying to figure out what has happened to us.

When Saturn begins to repeat itself in the zodiac, for all practical purposes, time stops and fades from importance. No more does life call and beckon to us with the promise of an endless linear progression. That imagined future vanishes. We each gradually begin to experience and grasp the circularity of it all, whether consciously or unconsciously. We begin to develop what is called "wisdom." That is what I mean by "time stops." Your watch does not stop ticking, your heart keeps beating, but the timeline you have followed so raptly up to that point gradually becomes meaningless. Going where? What is the point of it all? There is no longer any more "more." At some point your "future" becomes old age and death rather than the promise of the young life.

Under Saturn's seal or cycle (under the age of 30), we are led toward the future as to some place that we might achieve or actually get to. Time is conceived by young people up to that point as linear, a straight line stretching off into the future, their future. At the Saturn return, that very straight line begins to be seen, however subtly at first, as a great curve, and eventually as a circle that returns on itself. We gradually start to lose sight of our future life as just a straight line. Time starts to curve back on itself. We are going, of course, nowhere in particular.

Around thirty (and after) we begin to realize that our mode of travel, our way of living life, is a goal in itself - the "Way to Go." In other words, the place we are traveling to becomes also our mode of travel, the way we get there. In a poem I wrote years ago, I said "Call what carriage as you may, your hearse." Chuck Berry said it too: "no particular place to go."

Leaving the Womb of Time

The movement I am describing here is from within the womb of time (Saturn) without or beyond time or Saturn. Once outside or beyond our Saturn return, we begin to see those still within time's grasp (those under 30 years of age) like babies still asleep in the womb, while we are born free of Saturn or time for the first time in our lives. We are just out there! Younger people are "in" there with all the time in the world, while we have less and less time; and it no longer has us. We become free-floating entities. This is what is traditionally called "Out of the Body" experience.

A palindrome is a word, verse, or sentence that reads the same forward as backward. "Able was I ere I saw Elba" is a famous one that refers to Napoleon. The fascination with palindromes becomes almost an obsession at the level of the esoteric. There is a point when each of us begins to read life backward as well as forward - no difference! Going forward is going backward, back to our roots. We have passed through the prime of life and there is no percentage in just continuing life on a straight line toward death. It gives us pause. The symbol of this great process is the Sun and the simple statement: the Sun is shining!

Better yet, we begin to read life as a circle or cycle, rather than a straight line. The Saturn return stands out like a great beacon or turning point in our lives. The age of 30 is what is called a climactic year in the esoteric tradition, a rite of passage. There is a great stream of souls leading up to this event, and then this Saturn return, and beyond that is another great stream stretching off into middle and old age.

From the non-manifest emerges an endless stream of bodies forming, and this builds to the prime of life. From the prime of life, stretching off and fading to old age is another stream. Think of these streams as light, and the prime of life as the center of the Sun. This then is the image of the esoteric Sun and it "shines."

Part 3: ENTERING THE SILENCE

January 25, 2012

Those of you under thirty reading this can only imagine what someone is talking about who has taken the Saturn return initiation (or perhaps two!) and is become aware of it. When young, life is always filled by the incessant hum and drum of the Saturn cycle laying down each beat and measure of time – the song of the future. The "noise" of time. Saturn fills the mind up with activity, with noise. It can be a bewildering display or show. A few sensitive souls, with a thirst for the esoteric, can perhaps peer beyond their womb of time at a young age for snapshots of what is to come - glimpses of the eternity that awaits us all.

Older souls (over thirty) can tell these younger something of what is coming, but most young listeners cannot hear these thoughts all that well. They have no experience or faculty to measure these words, no clue. And they are still wrapped in time. All of this (what is to come) has not yet dawned on them.

And, we might ask: what is the point of hearing about or prefacing such a natural event with words? Why not just let nature take her course? There are many possible answers to this question.

My own feeling is that perhaps once upon a time we were trained for esoteric events such as the Saturn return. We were prepared to experience this rite of passage in a more conscious way, to appreciate and know what it is that is happening to us at the time it actually happens, rather than to piece together some ghost story from hindsight many years afterward like most of us do.

What I am speaking of, in terms of preparation, is nothing more than developing an "awareness" of life that all esoteric studies encourage, awareness of what, in fact, IS, and is happening - happening right now: to measure and appreciate life as it happens. Preparation for these life passages can be important.

Setting the Sails

The Saturn return at thirty years is much like the birth process when a baby is first born. Just as the midwife may have to adjust the infant in the womb so that it enters the birth passage in a natural way, so too esoteric knowledge given (that is: pointed out) at the right time can help to set the sails for our inner birth.

Like sailing a ship, we come from within the womb of time and sail out beyond time into our particular version of eternity. Without training, this can be whatever we imagine.... or fear. It can make a difference to us how our sails are set and how those sails will take the inevitable winds of change. We can also shipwreck or spend years in an eddy or cove of confusion.

This is why I write on this topic. I had the good fortune to receive instructions on this subject (prior to my Saturn return) from a Rosicrucian initiator. And although at the time I had great

difficulty understanding what was being presented to me, some glimpse into the reality of this passage did filter through to me. Like a baby in the womb, I tried to prepare myself for what was coming and I experienced at least a portion of it with awareness or consciousness. Yes, it was more than worthwhile to do so. And we are never too old. It is never too late to develop awareness of what is being discussed here.

But I should say this: I am sure I was not a very apt student, but during those years I spent with my teacher before he died, I hardly ever said a word. It was unspoken between us that he would point out this material, again and again, and I would try to just absorb it. He read it into my mind, where I eventually would retrieve it.

I heard these concepts over and over and over. In fact, he would say to me things like: "Michael, I am tuning you like one would tune an instrument. Years from now, you will respond to what is being placed in your mindstream." And I did.

To give you one clear example of how potent were his words, one thing he said to me endlessly was:

"Michael, imagine yourself standing at the center of the Sun," then he would kind of growl, and say "That is hot stuff!"

I had no idea what this meant or why he was saying it to me, but years later I naturally discovered what has become a life-long interest in heliocentric astrology that has fueled most of my work. I put the Sun at the center of the astrology chart. And it 'is' hot stuff.

Part 4: RITES OF PASSAGE
January 26, 2012

I want to wrap up this series of blogs on the rite of passage known to astrologers as the Saturn Return. As mentioned earlier I wrote a whole book about this phenomenon based on my own experience and journals many years ago in the 1960s. It is called "Astrology of the Heart: Astro-Shamanism," and is available free as an e-book here, or as a paperback on Amazon.com.

<http://astrologysoftware.com/books/index.asp?orig>

The book also, correctly I believe, introduces shamanism as it actually exists in society today. I am surprised at how much shamanic experience many of us already have, and I don't mean in the far-away world of Carlos Castaneda, Don Juan, Jimson Weed and peyote. I mean right here in the cities, society, and the family. If you study shamanism, you find that it naturally occurs in all societies by default. The fact that there are societal conventions dictates that there will also be those who fall through the cracks of those conventions – wander beyond the fringe. These drop-outs or drop-throughs are the ones who have no choice but to manifest shamanic activity or be considered crazy, or both.

So, unlike many esoteric studies, shamanism is non-volitional, simply a natural byproduct of the nature of society itself. If you fall outside the curve that society sets, you are on your own, and will see or experience things that the average person never dreams of and wouldn't want to.

This is particularly true when it comes to the separation of our spiritual life from the flesh that can start to manifest after the first Saturn return. This is such a taboo or unconscious (ignored)

experience in these times that almost no one is consciously aware of it. Of course it is embedded in the language, gestures, media, and activities of society, but obscured by the ignorance of the pain such awareness can involve. The signs are all there, loud and clear, but the obvious is always the hiding place of the hidden and the esoteric, century after century.

Natural rites of passage get short shrift in modern times, with mostly no recognition or celebration whatsoever. We each live out our meager rite-of-passage celebrations mostly alone or with the comfort of literature, but seldom surrounded by kindred spirits in the flesh. This is sad because there is so much to know and share when it comes to these rites of passage like the Saturn initiation, as the spirit begins to up and leave the body. But mum is the word in modern society. I am not enough of an historian to know if this was always true, but I do know that it is not necessary.

The signs are all around us. Look at the attention paid to youth, to youthful appearance, to glamour. Signs can also be conspicuous by their absence, like age, the elderly, death, and so forth. These are tucked away and seldom celebrated. It is getting better in the last decade, but still, aging is more or less something we choose to ignore, but its opposite is always on our mind and prominent. Isn't that just is saying the same thing?

All of these death and dying teachings are esoteric, hidden from society by simple ignorance -- ignoring the obvious. Why not just let this material remain hidden? What's the difference?

The "so what" of it is that as a counselor for some 40-plus years I have seen too many individuals confused by these experiences and at a loss. These are precious experiences, real insights, life passages, some of which happen only once in a lifetime. They deserve to be shared, recognized, and celebrated by family and friends. More important, to the person going through this experience, without some confirmation and recognition, the same experience can be frightening and received negatively. It is all about attitude, like the attitude of the sails on a boat determines where it will go -- how to receive or take the wind. And the wind will blow for all of us.

I should know because in my own case I could not get a witness and celebrated this rite of passage alone and with very little fanfare other than my own mind. What's new, right?

The separation of principles, the spirit from the flesh, is a natural phenomenon, one that takes place not only at the very end of life, but begins right in the middle of life, at life's prime. My Rosicrucian teacher sometimes presented this concept using the two most common kinds of peaches as an analogy, the "cling" and the "freestone" peach. With the cling peach, the flesh is tightly attached and tears when we try to remove the pit. On the other hand, with the freestone peach, the pit easily separates from the flesh; it just pops out.

It is my experience that with a little knowledge and guidance of these rites of passage, we can each have a "freestone" experience as opposed to clinging to the flesh (and the past) with the suffering that this entails.

When we experience separation from what we have always known, there is a tendency to cling to the past, to hang on to the known, and to not let go. Fear of the unknown is very strong and the resulting struggle is painful and of no use. It can be avoided.

So there you have an introduction. I am still considering whether to add another blog or two and include some of my actual journal entries.

Part 5: AFTER THE FACT, THE POETRY
January 27, 2012

This is the end of the end of this series. I am surprised at how timid I can be about opening to what is happening around me that I am not familiar with. If I get a touch of aloneness or life gets a little sketchy or just a bit too thin, I tend to scurry back toward the known, and I certainly won't venture voluntarily into the "unknown."

There are so many states of mind that are alternative or outside the consensus of the known, the majority opinion. We tend not to mention those alternative states because they are unknown, which makes us the "weird" one, yet they happen all the time.

Life gives all of us the clues, constantly, but that old devil "ignorance" takes over. As a society we agree to ignore what we find too hard to allow into our mind and remain blind to the unusual. We stay close to the familiar and the known, shunning the unfamiliar.

I am not suggesting we throw ourselves off the bridge of the known into the river of the unknown and hope to swim. Not that, but with no learning activity on our part, it will come to that bye and bye. What I "am" suggesting is that we just allow ourselves to be aware of what we already are sensing and simply not ignore the obvious.

An occasional whiff of the unknown will not kill us. On the contrary, if we can tolerate treading along the edge of the unfamiliar, it can greatly enrich our lives. For one, it will then gradually become familiar to us and we can expand what we could call the "known" territory of our lives, which includes the inevitable.

But such activity involves risk and, more important, "trust," taking that little step into the unknown, and trusting that the angels of life will hold us up and support our gentle trespass into uncharted waters. Or we can be totally conservative and cling to what society tells us is real and "acceptable," even though our common senses tell us there is more out there to be known.

However, sooner or later, the actual "real" will overcome society's conventions or sanitization, and expose itself to us. At that time we will have no choice but to look. As my teacher Andrew McIver used to tell me many times:

The student of life can perhaps close the door on new experience now, but someday the winds of change will blow that door wide open and we can no longer shut it. At that time we will have no alternative but to not only see what's there, but to ourselves pass through it, ready or not.

I prefer a preview and gradual acceptance of the inevitable rather than a cold plunge into unknown waters, but that is just me. We can go to meet the inevitable, with our eyes open, or we can wait for the inevitable to come for us and force itself upon us. We can be dragged into our future or willingly venture in that direction and see for ourselves. It is a choice we each have.

The Purple Prose

It does not matter if you are under 30 and within Saturn's grasp (and return) or over thirty and beyond that grasp. If you can understand what is being pointed out here, it will make reading any other esoteric literature much more sensible. It will make life more sensible. This will be

much harder to grasp for those of you under 30, but not impossible. With some help from an older friend, I did just that.

In closing, I would like to quote from a journal I wrote years ago about this rite of passage. I know it is florid, but for days or parts of days in our lives, we do sometimes have poetry. When it comes to prose and poetry, we all differ, so please don't be offended at my style or think that your response should be similar. Just be aware of it. Here are some of my notes during this rite of passage:

Person the Product of Time

"No matter what you think about me, about my person, I know in time you will learn to recognize me as yourself and you will love me, as I have learned to love myself, as I have learned to love you, like it or not.

"My person has not changed. How could it, truly? For 'person' is the product of time, and my person, like a freight train, rushes on at the future. It always has.

"Only I, stepping off my person, am with you now. I am myself. I turned off or away from time's endless matter at thirty and dropped my body or sense of gravity. It proceeds on without me or, rather, with my perpetual care and love. But I am not only my person. I am as well one with the creator of my body, of anybody. My faith informs me. Each day's passage frees and reveals my past, presents my past, and clears it open.

"Where before was but an endless accumulation, layer on layer, is now removed with every passing day. And as the layers lift, it is clear to me that there is nothing there worth worrying. All the past lives I have are presently living, are become clear. Nothing to go back to. No place to hide. No cover. I am born free, held awake by all that lives. Where before I could not keep my eyes open, so now I cannot shut or close them. No closure.

"From my subconscious pours my past. Cloudiness clearing, it is my present. My placenta is being born, turning out all of that which once nourished me. I can clearly see all that clouds this stream of consciousness is but a searching, is itself but a frowning, a looking to see, a pause, a hesitation that, caught and unfurled in the eddies of time, becomes clear, and laughing, I leave it go clear, and turn from a darkening or dimming of my mind to light. And it came to pass, and I let it pass."

Personal Ties

"The morning's brightness lights the day. And when that day is gone, the quietness of evening here approaching settles to sleep this restless world. Hard can I hear the frantic rush as I turn away from the edge out into floating rest am I. It is not my conscious direction doing this but, as a head down-turned all life now turns up a blossom to the night, the night of time urges me open, at last a flower, too, open to life. Already the dawn.

"Still, around me, urging caution, a retinue of persons set my spirit, like a jewel is set, in time. But where before my worry, now my rest. The tide rolls on beyond me. Ever changing, it rocks me now asleep. And in my sleep awake am I, so clear a bell is ringing.

"The smart of persons lash and crack to drive me at time's edge. My personal ties are slipped as floating out I'm gently tugged. Too long have fought to force my thought and not, at ease,

arising like some cloud to pass. My work undone, yet done, I rise. Drifting through strains, I sieve and pass myself, open out to nothing, thoughts to touch back not once more.

"A clear sleep is soft; its ever-blooming sound is silence. Now to find my way among the slips of time, and slip I will, now lost to striving, and lounge in this room of emptiness. To lay back in time, behind its edge and ever look eternally. No way to pass this on. This is: passing on. Slamming against the walls of time, I shove off into eternity, and spread open a flower, so wide."