

## **The Never Ending Search**

The basic drive for love is the foundation of all relationships. This continuous search ensures that much of our time is taken in establishing and nurturing relationships. Strangely, even more of our time seems to be taken in trying to improve relationships, recover from broken relationships or deal with the pain of failed relationships.

In astrological tradition, Venus is the universal significator of love. Much can be known from the sign and house position occupied by Venus and its connection to other planetary placements. Venus shows how love is given, received and experienced. The planet Venus governs all things beautiful. Venus is tactile and sensual and seeks pleasure! A universal symbol for Venus is the rose. Roses have perfume, colour and shape – yet we must always remember the old saying “Never a rose without a thorn!” - for with love comes the risk of pain. However, with even a well placed Venus, difficulties in relating are often encountered as we do not understand that the primary relationship is with the ‘self.’

To be alone with the self and follow the inner journey can be a painful experience causing a rush of ‘festering wounds’ to surface. The wounds will not ‘just go away,’ they remain until we take some action to allow healing. Until we heal our pain we are incapable of moving on. Many do not recognize their pain and have become anaesthetized to its promptings. Denial has continued over a long period of time. What is the purpose of pain? It lifts awareness that some area of the body is “not OK” and experiencing “*dis-ease*”, putting us at risk of illness which can manifest through the physical body or emotionally in our ability to relate to others.

By the time we seek an adult love relationship the primary wound is well established and has become an integral part of life. In fact, it has become so familiar that it is largely lost to consciousness. During this process of detachment, strategies are developed to avoid the pain and even the memory of the pain. However, it continues to fester beneath the surface and represents a vulnerable point. We then become masters of avoidance techniques! Can this wound be healed? Yes - by actively bringing awareness to the wound. There can be no healing without consciousness.

Astrological archetypes are helpful in healing. With the discovery of the planetoid Chiron in November 1977 a new player entered the field of astrology. By studying the mythology, connections were made between the specific astrological location of Chiron and the type of wounding which may have occurred. This small body in our Solar System shows the sensitive underside and vulnerable areas of life particularly within relationships. The discovery of Chiron has opened the doors to self awareness and healing. To fully understand the Chiron issue it is worth exploring the mythological story.

## **The Mythical Chiron**

The Chiron story begins with desire - the desire of a man for a woman. The man is already in a relationship. The woman is young, vulnerable and desirable. She is also willing to enter the forbidden relationship. The “man” is the god Saturn – an upright responsible citizen of the community. He has a partner Rhea, who after long association

has become predictable, to the point of boredom. Rhea takes her position as his wife for granted. Saturn is tempted by, and desires, the beautiful nymph Philyra who thus far has avoided him by changing herself into a mare. At this point Saturn is faced with a choice. He is aware that Rhea is a faithful, dutiful partner whose only crime is diminished appeal. Saturn is seeking excitement, stimulation and escape. Saturn has the powers of a god so devises a scheme wherein he can have the best of both worlds - or so he assumes! He devises a plan wherein he becomes a beautiful black stallion and sets off to successfully seduce the willing Philyra. Rhea apparently remains ignorant of their association. The love affair runs its course, until Saturn realizes that he has compromised his status and reputation within the community. He chooses to sever his connection with his lover and abruptly abandons her.

Philyra is rejected and abandoned without explanation. While experiencing this great pain she discovers that not only has she been unceremoniously dumped, she is pregnant as well as abandoned. Her grief is great. In the fullness of time she gives birth to Chiron, a male, who is born half man and half horse. This added burden proves too much. Philyra is repulsed by his grotesque appearance and abandons him in disgust. She withdraws to become a tree of the forest – specifically a Linden tree whose leaves are heart-shaped and asymmetrical.

Chiron is raised on Mount Pelion. As the son of Saturn, he is also a god. Taught by Apollo, he becomes accomplished as an archer, natural healer, teacher, musician and prophet. He is a mentor and teacher of others. One day he is injured when his student Hercules returns from a hunting expedition. Hercules accidentally releases a poisonous arrow which has been dipped in hydra's blood. The arrow penetrates Chiron's leg causing a painful wound. The wound will not heal, and due to Chiron's immortality he cannot escape the constant pain even through death. Chiron, himself a healer, is unable to relieve his own suffering. He is caught in a vicious cycle. Pain is his constant companion as the wound continues to fester. He withdraws to a cave to seek privacy and solitude.

Eventually Chiron is able to resolve his situation through awareness and sacrifice. He leaves his cave and moves toward the light to exchange places with Prometheus, who has been banished to the underworld for stealing fire. By entering the underworld, Chiron relinquishes his immortality, once again becoming mortal and therefore subject to death. Having made his sacrifice the wound heals. Chiron is rewarded by Zeus with a place among the stars. Thus the story of the mythical archetype Chiron ends.

### **The Role of Saturn**

The ancient masters of astrology considered the planet Saturn was astrologically the "Greater Malefic". This means that Saturn is the author of the difficulties, challenges and suffering which beset humankind. Some of the key words for interpreting Saturn are 'separation, loss, denial, delay and death.' It is of interest that Saturn is the mythological father of Chiron. In the myth the theme of separation, denial and loss is very obvious. Saturn rules the colour black as well as poisonous substances.

Let us now examine the mythical Chiron story which is rich with Saturnian symbols. The stallion ridden by Saturn is black and the primary theme of Saturn's role revolves around separation and rejection – both of his lover, his son and his wife. Saturn aptly represents our mortal state. As the rejected son of Saturn, Chiron carries these qualities within and bears the burden of rejection and abandonment. These factors are part of the human condition. Immediately we enter life we can be sure that at some point we will face death. The older we become the more this fact impinges upon our consciousness. To take human form, we had to 'separate' from our source. In this light death then represents 'reunion'.

Chiron's parents separate before his birth. He is separated from his mother in early infancy and again from his peers when he enters the underworld. The physical wound is in the thigh which is astrologically ruled by Jupiter, the planet of higher consciousness. So the separation of incarnation is really a spiritual separation and the quest is for spiritual re-connection. We are prone to confuse the body with the soul.

Returning to the myth, we find Philyra as the rejected lover. She is an abandoned pregnant woman who has chosen to love inappropriately and suffered the consequences of her actions. In her despair and woundedness she retreats to become a tree of the forest. Her vitality and identity as a woman is lost as she merges into the forest for protection. Chiron as the creature born half man and half beast, represents the split from our spiritual source.

We have an instinctual animalistic nature as well as a spiritual side and the ability to choose to connect with the divine. Astrologically Chiron is a source of issues surrounding rejection, self worth, personal appreciation and our ability to cope with the unfair hand life may deal. In times of unstable social values Chiron offers a window of awareness and an opportunity for self healing. It may be explained in these words : "Making one's own wounds a source of healing, therefore does not call for a sharing of superficial personal pains but for a constant willingness to see one's own pain and suffering as rising from the depth of the human condition which all men share" *Henri Nouwen, from "The Wounded Healer"*

### **The Myth and Relationships**

How does this myth connect with relationships? Primarily we all have a Chiron placement which delineates our specific experience of 'separation'. By entering a physical body we separate from the spiritual self and our source. We then learn to identify with the physical body through our particular conditioning. That is, we identify strongly with our name, our role, our sex, our ego and our place in society.

We seek to find haven and escape personal pain through relationships. In seeking earthly relationships we are disappointed as 'the significant other' fails to fulfill our desire for closeness. We seek externally, a reconciliation which in reality, can only be found within. If we do not know ourselves it is impossible to meet the expectations of another. If we do not perceive our own motivation and drives we are not equipped to understand or fulfill the needs of another. The oracle at Delphi Temple stated "know thyself".

Astrologically the planets have an influence on our ability to relate. The Sun denotes our tribe, sense of self worth and true identity, while the Moon speaks of our emotional needs, sacrifice and sympathy and bonding with family. The ability to communicate and negotiate and use gestures of touch, come from Mercury. Expressions of love and the desire to receive love and experience harmony, come from Venus. Mars shows the warrior spirit used to defend those whom we love. The desire to connect spiritually with others is the realm of Jupiter. Saturn encourages us to accept responsibility, discipline and the limitations of physical reality. Chiron allows focus on the primal wound and acts as the awakener. Eventually we let it all go – ‘Till death do us part’ is a familiar term.

### **The Healing Process**

By acknowledging our own wounded-ness and by seeking and allowing healing to occur we place ourselves in a far better position to relate with others. In our Chironic (chronic) pain we are totally self absorbed. We are all seeking to escape from inner pain. While so doing, relating on any meaningful level is limited. Furthermore we seek to escape our pain through any method or medium available. To release the pain, we must first acknowledge and enter the pain. While we avoid pain we avoid true living. This takes courage, yet is the only avenue to true healing. Book of Runes page 58 states: “The starting point is the self. Its essence is water. Only clarity, willingness to change, are effective now. A correct relationship to yourself is primary, for from it flow all possible correct relationships with others and with the Divine.”

Pain is trapped energy. Healthy energy, like water must move. When it stagnates it becomes toxic. Thus every hurt, pain, rejection and criticism that we nurse and nurture takes us farther away from the love we so desperately desire.

The suffering from Chiron’s wound was unceasing and easily irritated. It was caused through no fault of his own. Due to his immortality he could neither cure his wound nor escape the pain through death, despite his skills. This story stresses the need for acceptance of our woundedness as a prerequisite to healing. While we are in constant pain and un-reconciled to ‘the self’ we are unable to relate without projection. We carry the scars from one relationship into the next, further compromising our likelihood of forming a fulfilling relationship. As like attracts like, we become imprisoned in an emotional co-dependency. We follow the pattern we have already established. The hope of resolution lies in entering and releasing the wound. The symbol of Chiron is like a key in an upright position. (♄) The cause of the wound comes from within by our ego responses to our conditioning. We alone hold the key to relieve our suffering and be released from the prison of pain.

The name Chiron comes from the base word “chiro” meaning hand. Hands have the gift of touch, which itself is a basic form of healing. Mothers touch and hold their babies. Research has shown that infants deprived of touch do not thrive and experience a high mortality rate. The young of animals are constantly nudged and licked as a form of nurturing. In the 1980’s a popular therapy was ‘Touch for Health’. In more recent times

natural 'hands on' healing is readily available through body massage, reflexology, reikki, kinesiology, Bowen therapy, craniosacral therapy to name a few.

### **The Chiron Cycle**

The cycle of Chiron is 49-51 years. Due to the erratic orbit it follows, the first quarter and half way point of the cycle does not occur at a consistent age. The first quarter may occur anywhere between ages 4 – 18 years. What does seem consistent is that those receiving a pre-school quarter cycle (square) often have difficulty in adapting to the event marking this period in life. It is important that at some point they seek to explore and release the wound. The greater the early trauma, the greater the difficulty in later relationships.

The Chiron return at age 49-51 ushers in a window of opportunity and awareness, usually through some external influence involving the principle of 'separation' such as loss of the partner, employment, a health crisis, children leaving home, the death of a loved one, awareness of rapidly approaching 'old age' and the search for 'meaning in life'. We ask 'Is this ALL there is?' and discover the emptiness of the superficial life in a materialistic world. This period offers a huge opportunity to evaluate life and move forward to enter a previously unknown spiritual peak. It is an appropriate time to evaluate our life direction and prioritize our goals.

The pain of rejection and separation is part of the collective unconscious. This is revealed by our literature and legends. In popular fairy stories we have tales like the 'Sleeping Beauty' and the 'Briar Rose' where true love cures all after a period of separation. Popular novels, movies and dramas use variations of the Chiron theme as a basic plot. More recently films like 'Shrek' are a modern day version of the Chiron wound. In this quirky story the beautiful Princess takes on another persona at sunset and lives in fear of discovery and rejection. This is symbolic of her darker side and hidden wound. The Shrek does not trouble to hide his true self. Together, when they really see and accept each other they are able to drop unrealistic expectations and are placed in a better position to form a happy relationship.

### **Masters of Disguise**

Many are not consciously aware of their Chiron wound. Over time they have become masters of disguise and are in total denial of their wounding. Chiron was aware of his psychological wound of rejection by his parents and suffered due to his grotesque appearance. The final insult being his physical wound inflicted through no fault of his own. To distract others from detecting our woundedness we engage in various tactics. Focus is often on performance, appearance, highly developed skills, gathering knowledge and generally keeping occupied so we have no time to contemplate what is happening within. Indeed we are encouraged to find distraction rather than enter our pain. In western society this is particularly true when dealing with the pain of grief. We create our own cave in which to hide and display a clear 'keep out' sign. This may be through the avoidance of certain subjects, non communication and reporting facts rather than feelings. Other methods of avoidance are playing the clown, body language and over reaction to situations and leaving an uncomfortable scene. All these techniques are aimed

at avoiding the sore spot we so desperately protect. The fear of being vulnerable puts a limitation on our ability to give and receive love. The yearning for love is part of our unconscious. Often the healer has huge wounds. He can heal, yet avoids self healing. We cannot truly heal, unless and until we have first embraced that process ourselves.

To heal our wound we must bring awareness to the wound. This of itself will allow healing. The process may be accelerated and intensified by the use of healing herbs, healthy lifestyle, regular exercise, letting go of emotional baggage, avoiding comfort eating and addictive habits. The use of music, song and a peaceful environment can aid in eliminating the emotional toxins along with an increased intake of pure water. Water flushes away toxins and provides nurturing and relaxation.

Acceptance of our humanity, vulnerability and personal pain along with an acknowledgment of the need of healing and self restoration sets us on the road to recovery. We can learn to deal with life, accept challenges and build stronger and better relationships. The theoretical Venus might be likened to the rambling rose – fragrant, lush and rampant. The individual Venus represents a love more akin to the hybrid rose which needs constant care, nurturing and protection. The reward of one beautiful flower validates all the expended effort. The benefit of healing is that like attracts like. The vitality of a functioning Venus permeates every relationship. Once we have addressed and healed our blockages, we can appreciate those around us and accept them as fellow travelers in the never-ending search. Once this is established we place ourselves in a stronger position to accept the gift of life and enjoy the benefits of love with gratitude.

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