

***Clarifying Your Life
Options with Astrology***

by Dane Rudhyar

Before the Industrial Revolution, which, some 150 years ago, began disrupting the traditional patterns of interpersonal and family relationships, a person knew he or she was an integral part of the social community into which he or she was born. There were, undoubtedly, a few individual exceptions, but this was generally the rule.

I am not implying that this was an ideal situation. I am only stating facts which the latest generations too easily forget. These facts provide a necessary background for the valid and meaningful understanding of many of the problems today which people try to evade.

The most fundamental way of grasping the significance of these problems, then trying to solve them, is to realize that, in earlier times, human beings lived a relatively orderly existence with few lifestyle options open to them. But today, a teenagers confronted with many options, can make and has to make choices that may affect his or her whole life. This freedom of choice among a number of often conflicting and **almost never clearly understood** possibilities is accompanied, in most cases, by a deep-seated state of confusion, uncertainty and an often poignant sense of insecurity.

I do not speak here only of options affecting a young person's future profession or a relatively permanent interpersonal relationship, but of choices related to a basic way of life — to religion, philosophy, travel and personal involvements in glamorous causes.

Too many options — too much freedom — can be a curse rather than a blessing. The emotional and mental insecurity which a combination of extreme individualism plus parental and social permissiveness has engendered in young people is the root cause of a large number of crucial problems they find themselves unable to constructively meet. The drug situation now plaguing most of our Western world is a direct result of this, because there is a human tendency to try to escape from what we cannot positively meet with self-assurance and confidence.

This often means putting oneself in a psychological or biopsychic state in which one is no longer able to choose between alternatives. The drug addict has no option besides satisfying his addiction. And there are also religious or quasi-religious types of addiction born of the insecurity produced by too many options. Any form of passionate and blind fanaticism constitutes an addiction.

Be certain, however, that fanaticism essentially differs from commitment. Fanaticism is an overly emotional and usually irrational reaction engendered by insecurity and fear. On the other hand, commitment implies a relatively clear and reliable knowledge, concerning what one consciously decides to do. A true commitment is based on a degree of self-assurance. There must be a realization of what one is able and willing to do in terms of one's commitment, as well as knowing what actually calls for commitment. The commitment need not be a permanent one, but the factor of time is all-important.

A human life is not a tightly bound series of actions, psycho-mental beliefs and realizations. Life divides itself into cycles and subcycles, each having an independent character that contributes to the functional and holistic unfoldment of a person's potential. Change and transformation are — or should be — ever-present factors in the life process, from birth to death. Yet the process of transformation should not be considered and undertaken as a disconnected sequence of moves from one state to another. It is a structured process. To fulfill each phase, some relevant kind of commitment is needed, consciously given in the freedom that only knowledge and self-assurance can truly provide. But what kind of knowledge? This is — the crux of the problem; and the problem becomes more and more difficult as the number of possible options increases.

It is here that astrology, when properly handled, without any trace of fanaticism or dogmatic pretense, can be of real service. The deepest reason for the recent spread of astrology is that at a time when so many options are possible, many people intuitively sense that astrology can help to clarify the nature of these options. Astrology can give clues to the proper selection of optimal conditions for a fully significant, constructive and transformative personal experience.

In the past, when human beings were faced with very few options, there was no great need

for astrology. Ancestral religion and morality, the social and family way of life and the relative scarcity of means to challenge and overcome the binding pressures of a tightly organized community left only the narrowest range of alternatives to a young man, and even less to a young woman. The man's career was also conditioned, if not determined, by his social class, his father's occupation and, in general, by parental expectations. For a woman, the choice of a husband was primarily a social and financial arrangement made, or at least largely controlled, by her parents. There was hardly an alternative to marriage and bearing children.

Today, however, except in some of the most deprived socioeconomic groups, options are wide open. While in the past a man in his teens was most often fighting for the freedom to make individual decisions, many young persons today find themselves so free to choose their associates, their life style, their career and their religious outlook that in utter confusion they strive to **limit** their options. They do so by forming strictly recognizable peer groups, flocking to communal entertainments and going from one spiritual movement, one guru, one college, to another.

Yet this search, combined with an often panicky feeling that one's options should always be kept open, leads from one manmade system to another. It is, "human, all too human" — to use the famous phrase of the great philosopher, Nietzsche. Isn't there some way to gain an objective knowledge of the type of option which, **at any particular time**, would mean the best way of fulfilling one's self?

There are, of course, the many aptitude tests to which children and teenagers are made to submit, but these are mainly social and career-oriented. These tests are supposed to indicate the most profitable way one can fit into the patterns of our society and business. Psychological tests, in most cases, also give only indications of how close to — or far from an idealized socio-psychological norm — a person may be. None of these tests actually defines, or even evokes, what a human being was born **for** as a potential individual. They do not indicate the purpose which the universe in its evolution, or God, had in focusing the energies of life in a particular human organism at a particular time and place. If the universe is a vast and organic field of activity in which everything is functionally related to everything else, the place or position in space and time at which a man operates should reveal something basic concerning the function he is meant to fulfill. This is somewhat (but, of course, not exactly) like the place a cell occupies in a human body telling us a good deal concerning its essential character and the purpose of the activities it performs.

Astrology tries to help interpret the cosmic patterns in a symbolic two-dimensional chart of the solar system, cast for the exact time of an individual's birth (first breath). The birth-chart indicates the basic need a particular human organism is meant to fulfill on this earth, as a particular member of the solar system. Thus a chart reveals, or at least suggests, the types of options which will be most constructively open to the developing person, in order for him or her to fulfill the purpose for which he or she was born.

However, because the astrological indications are also given in a symbolic language — a special kind of astrocosmic algebra — interpretation is necessary. Interpretation, being a human factor, is susceptible to error; yet what astrology presents essentially is a nonhuman, cosmic picture — a hieroglyph. The chart deals with a limited set of celestial variables — the cycles of constantly moving planets — which at any moment give us a "formula" characterizing not only what is possible for an individual human being to consciously achieve during his or her life, but the most significant and effective way to achieve it.

In other words, the birth-chart **limits but also defines** the kind of options open to the individual if he follows a path consonant with the potentialities inherent in his nature or as Hindu philosophers would say, in his **dharma**, his "truth-of-being" or archetypal self. A wise astrologer should be able to outline the nature of these basic options. More easily perhaps, he can help the individual, who is hesitating between several possibilities of choice, know how to select one that most meaningfully fits the life purpose suggested by the birth-chart,

or at least that is best attuned to the phase of the individual's development occurring at the time of the consultation.

Unless the preceding evolution of the client is closely scrutinized and understood, selection may be difficult; but clarification is always possible. And without clear thinking and an understanding of the basic factors involved in any option, a sound commitment to a course of action and/or a program of self-development and self-transformation rests on precarious foundations.

To see or think clearly means to perceive and evaluate **all** the basic factors in a situation, without emotional prejudices and intellectual preconceptions; it is to understand the **interrelationship** among these factors — i.e., the way they react upon each other — and to at least try to fathom the meaning which the **whole** picture suggests. The meaning, in turn, should be referred to the entire life and the present state of awareness and maturity of the individual.

This is obviously a large order! To fill it, an open and perceptive mind is needed, as well as intuition and honesty of feelings. It requires objectivity as well as a deep familiarity with the basic meaning of the astrological symbols. The mind should be free from the all too easy and often grossly materialized interpretations of the planets and their positions; and this includes the superficial use of keywords meant to facilitate and expedite astrological interpretation — the bane of current astrological practice.

The curse of our hurried and hectic society powered by greed and a material concept of achievement is the superficiality and fragmentary nature of the judgments we usually pass on people and situations. We all try to act like big executives who, after being fed reams of data, must quickly decide what policy to set because so many other matters require our attention. Quick judgments are fine for business, where matters fall into specific categories with specific options. But when it comes to judging another person — a complex human being in a crisis-ridden society — it is foolhardy to jump to conclusions.

The Freudian or Jungian psychologist operates under better conditions, through a long series of consultations, though in view of the high cost of analysis, the practice is restricted to a relatively wealthy class of people. Nevertheless, the astrologer who fully understands what astrology is **for**, and does not merely play to the "pop" expectations of a client, is very often able to act as a clear lens focusing upon a baffling situation. The astrologer can act as an agent for the spiritual forces that always surround a person in critical periods when decisions can be made that are attuned to the inner rhythm of that person's deeper self. When the surge of emotions speaks with blinding intensity, this is the time when a wise astrologer may give an objective evaluation of all the options really open to someone, relating them to the whole life of the person, from birth to death.

Any life process has its limits; and limits are necessary for clarity and concentration, thus for effective action. But today these limits need not be thought of merely in terms of social conditions, dogmatic religion and morality and emotional pressures induced by family ties. The true limits that should give individual form and structural consistency to the life of an individual are not man-made and culturally imposed; as revealed by astrology, they are cosmic patterns that define who the individual essentially is, rather than what society expects him to follow and what his ego finds profitable and self-glorifying.

When the individual has discovered the "who," there will be little trouble finding the "what" that can fit this "who." It will be the individual's **vocation**, that which he or she is "called" to be — regardless of consequences to the ego's desires, or to the expectations and pressures of family and society. The decision can only be made by the individual. But it should be, if at all possible, a conscious, clear, unemotional and unglamorized decision. To **become**, actually and concretely, what one essentially **is**: this is always an open option. Yet it is very often difficult to disengage one's consciousness from fear, insecurity, convenient attachments, social imperatives and ego wants. In our chaotic modern society, we seem to be free to choose among so many things, so many alluring or seemingly fated paths; but this is not true freedom, only bewilderment. One is really free only when one is

committed, deliberately and totally, to one's essential destiny, one's spiritual — because individual — vocation.

Happy are those who know with irrevocable and unhesitant knowing, the character and full implications of this one, unquestionable option! For them, and for the majority of other people searching for fulfillment, astrology can be an illuminating factor of major importance. But it can only perform this archetypal function when understood and used wisely to shed light on and clarify life options.