

***Meditations
on SATURN
by Dane Rudhyar***

"In the Beginning" is the Seed.

Any cycle of existence must begin in something. Life emerges out of one kind of seed or another. In the cycle of yearly vegetation, the seed lies hidden in the ground during the winter; then, as the sun's rays gain strength and spring begins, the great event of germination occurs. As the seed is torn asunder by some inner power of eager response to the sun, the rootlet stretches itself downward into the soil and the little germ reaches up to the crust of the soil, which it breaks in a magnificent gesture of liberation from the darkness of the past.

Rootlet and upreaching germ are, however, but the twofold "externalization" of the power of life that has been imminent and latent in the seed. They represent the two basic aspects of life: the search for raw materials which can be incorporated into the growing plant and the drive of more or less conscious forms of existence for self-expression in the light and self-multiplication in a progeny. The former produces the complex system of roots which provide water and chemicals to the plant; the latter manifests as stem, branches, leaves, flowers, and the fruit within which a new crop of seeds will mature.

In Greek mythology, the god Saturn was said to be the ruler of the "Golden Age," the age of purity and innocence. Why was Saturn given this position, which seems ill-fit for the mostly dreary reputation which astrologers usually give to the planet which is supposed to be the embodiment of this god? The planet Saturn is, in its most fundamental aspect, the seed; and the power of the seed is supreme during the very first phase of existence, when the downward and upward drives of rootlet and germ are still close to the seed — indeed within the "aura" (or field of energy) of the seed.

Greek mythology speaks of four ages: Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Iron Ages. It simply repeats the great and much older Indian tradition which described four *yugas* (or great cycles): *Satya Yuga* was the first age, the Golden Age — and we will note at once the relation between "*Sat-ya*" and "*Sat-urn*." The word *Sat* in Sanskrit signifies "essential being." It is the pure, spiritual foundation of existence. It is, thus, the seed state **before** germination - i.e., before the purity of essential being is affected by the results of complex and often adulterating relationships with the world.

"Satya" is the powerful assertion (*Ya*) of essential being. In the now quite fashionable language of Zen Buddhism, the word refers to a man's "fundamental nature" — or, it is said, to "the face one had before one was born." This fundamental nature — this pre-existing form of selfhood (i.e., "face") — which becomes clouded over by a constantly increasing agglomeration of non-essential characteristics and superfluous social acquisitions, this is the seed-being deep in every human personality. To live "spiritually" is to live in terms of, and with reference to, this seed-being instead of according to the dictates or ever-changing moods (perhaps vagaries, even perversions) of our surface being. It is, therefore, to live in terms of what the planet Saturn essentially represents — that is, in terms of the "purity" of our true self. In Sanskrit, the word *Satya* has also the meaning of truth — but truth not as

an intellectual fact — i.e., a statement is true or untrue — but instead as a reference to the essential being of every living entity, especially of every human person.

Saturn is, therefore — if I can be permitted this bi-lingual play on words — the "urn of essential being." It is the seed, inasmuch as the seed is the tough-skinned container of the essential characteristics of a particular species of life. It is the foundation of **human** existence — first, in a "generic" sense (for we all are first of all human beings), then in an "individualized" sense as a particular person with a consciousness which he calls his own.

Why do we speak in astrology of Saturn as the symbol of fate or often unbearable pressures and of ill fortune? It is most evidently because most human beings today do not live in terms of their fundamental nature, but rather according to the formulas and the set modes of response to life and environment which have produced what they call their **ego**. They live determined by circumstances and complex relationships, according to traditional social patterns or, even more today, according to ever-changing fashions. Yet the fundamental nature within them is not dead. Its presence is felt, sometimes quite crucially and devastatingly; but it is experienced as a stern reproach (the so-called "voice of conscience") or as what we interpret as the compulsion of fate — which many people call "Karma."

Thus, Saturn has acquired the reputation of being "the task-master," he who drives us as if we were his slaves. **We are** slaves — but only to the superficial and deviated reactions of our everyday personality. We have enslaved ourselves; and Saturn's stern and forbidding countenance is only the *negative image* of our true individual selfhood, of *Satya* in us. It is, in us, the image of our seed-being, which implores us — and often demands of us in ways from which there is no escape — to "re-become" what we were "before we were born," before we became perverted by our relationship to our environment.

The seed-that-was-in-the-beginning demands of us that we change our ways of response to life and interpersonal relationships because the time has come for the reformation of seeds within the fruitions of our personality. The seed-that-was is projecting its archetypal image upon the process that leads to the seed-that-will-be — to what spiritually inclined philosophers have called the "New Man," the child-self whom we must bear within if our life is to prove to have been worth living.

Saturn and Bearing

A woman "bears" a child. A well-educated person knows how to "bear" himself in society. A pillar "bears" the weight of a building. There are indeed many ways in which we can use the words to bear and bearing. Yet, essentially, these varied meanings are derived from the principle of existence, the function of which Saturn is a symbol; for Saturn is not only a power effective in the beginning and at the end of any cycle of existence which has reached a degree of achievement and fulfillment in some kind of seed product, but it is also the power which sustains and maintains the **structural integrity** of the existing organism and personality.

In the broadest sense of the term, "bearing" for a person means the ability to retain his structural integrity in spite of conditions which might tend to distort and perhaps destroy it. In the usual sense, a person displays a good bearing when the structural balance and the poise of his body are not disturbed by difficult or embarrassing conditions in his environment, particularly when having to play a part in an important social gathering. The children of the nobility were taught first of all to have a good bearing; they were trained into the accepted manner of how to comfort themselves under all circumstances.

We can only regret that the youth of America, for so many years now, has failed to recognize the importance of bearing in a physical sense. It has lacked, at least under usual conditions, "backbone." The postures of the usual teen-ager are still an affront to the structural integrity of his or her body. If we compare these postures to those of far less "civilized" people — for instance, to the carriage of women used to toting heavy loads on the top of their heads — we can only deplore what has happened to our youth under the fallacious banner of a "self-expression" which disregards all Saturn-inspired values.

Saturn, all readers of astrological texts know well, refers to the bones and, thus, to that which maintains the structural integrity of the organism, the skeleton. This structural integrity is affected adversely by too-strong forms of Jupiterian expansion — for instance, by overindulgence in food, resulting in obesity. It is affected as well by bad posture which disturbs the natural balance of weight which basic bony structures, like the spine and the pelvis, have to bear. The comportment of the body loses its character of strength, poise, and immediate "response-ability." The same thing occurs at the psychological-mental level "when an obesity" of the ego develops and the psyche loses its capacity of spontaneous adjustment to interpersonal and group pressures and its resilience when confronted by crisis.

The escapism of a growing number of young people — even though it is obviously the result of the dreadful mess their elders have made of the world in which they live — constitutes or implies a lack of psychological bearing. It is also, in a somewhat different sense of the word, due to the fact that these young people have "lost their bearings" in a society which accepts hypocrisy and the cult of the absurd as nearly unavoidable "facts of life." When the Saturn power of both personal and social structuring loses its strength or usefulness, the negative effect of Neptune must be expected; and Neptune symbolizes essentially either an unstructured condition of existence — which we may call "cosmic consciousness" when eager to glorify it, usually without real justification — or a type of universalistic structural organization which is still so far ahead of any possibility of practical, concrete realization that it is actually only an ideal, a "utopia."

The capacity to "bear" adversity or criticism is a form of spiritual-mental bearing. It is developed in proportion as the individual's structure of selfhood is strong and resilient, which means that this individual feels secure in his ability to meet any situation.

However, this feeling of structural integrity and security has not only a personal character; it is profoundly affected by the over-all situation of society. In a society like ours

which has lost both its traditional (if outmoded) class structure and any real sense of security as to its future, only the individual person who is born to harmonious and emotionally steady parents and has been allowed to grow under a fine balance of discipline and freedom of expression — **and** in an atmosphere of intelligent love — is likely to have a sufficiently developed sense of structural integrity to feel inwardly secure.

Being secure in his Saturnian psychological as well as physiological selfhood, he bears himself well and does not lose his bearings. His consciousness is well "formed," and his character has the best possible chance of maturing in terms of freely accepted responsibilities.

To be a responsible person is to be able to respond to everyday life challenges in terms of his own structure of being. Such a person accepts readily responsibility in interpersonal relationships because he is sure of himself and of his motives. He knows that he can remain what he essentially is — i.e., in his fundamental nature — even while allowing the play (or even the dramas and revolutions) of interpersonal relationships to develop spontaneously according to the logic of such relationships. He has no fear of others because he has no fear of his becoming "dis-structured" by these relationships.

Saturn as Life Achievement

Sometimes the astrologer relates Saturn in a birth-chart to the person's ambition in life. There are, of course, many kinds and degrees of ambition. There is a type of ambition which refers to social status and prestige, to achieving financial power or cultural fame — or even to a craving for any kind of notoriety, provided one "makes the headlines." But there is also the deep-rooted ambition which any individual person has — or should have if he is healthy at all levels — to actualize to the full the potentialities inherent at birth.

This last-mentioned kind of ambition is indeed the inner pressure exerted by the seed-that-was-in-the-beginning to reconstitute itself in a richer measure in the multiple seed harvest of the last days of a life cycle of continuous growth. This pressure is also related to Saturn acting as a "root energy" seeking fully to ascend to the "holy place" — the fruit — where the unfoldment of the new seed occurs.

In the vegetable kingdom, the seed must wait, perhaps for a very long time, for conditions making germination possible. In the animal kingdom, the new organism is born viable out of the mother's womb; yet it must be cared for and nurtured for some period of time. With man, this period is greatly extended because the growth potential of the new organism is not merely biological; it is **mainly** psychological and mental. Human growth is not merely generic — that is, referring only to the physical organism. It is more significantly psychological and mental. Saturn is the collective power that normally structures this super-physiological growth; it is the tradition, the culture, the way of life of the society to which the individual belongs. These things in association with Jupiter provide the expansion drive, the sense of fellowship, the religious and ethical cement that binds individual to individual

into communities within which they can share as well as learn by the example of their predecessors.

It happens, of course, that the individual, because of a great variety of possible circumstances, comes to feel alienated from his surroundings and unwilling to share in a patrimony the nature of which revolts his sense of inner "truth." This is when Uranus, the rebel and the iconoclast, succeeds in dominating the individual's life and consciousness. One can be an individual **within** a culture of which one readily accepts to become a unit of fulfillment; and one can be an individual **separated from or against** a culture within which one feels to be a stranger.

Yet even in this last instance, a time should come, theoretically at least, when the individualistic forces of withdrawal and revolt take on a more subdued character. They agree to operate in terms of a **mutation in the seed** rather than of an essentially **seedless revolution**. Changes have most likely come in the social-cultural order while the individual rebel has grown older. He is seeing a new generation, perhaps two of them, reaching maturity. His protest may then come to seed to provide a foundation for perhaps tomorrow, perhaps days after tomorrow. In him, Saturn embodies the spirit of an assuaged Uranus and works in partnership with a Jupiter transfigured by the vaster horizons of Neptune. The Saturnian seed is projected into the future, over which Pluto watches as "guardian of the threshold."

Saturn is, in most cases, the opposite — indeed, the enemy of Uranus, this perpetual challenger of the status quo. Yet Uranus, when operating in its positive aspect, does not seek to destroy the structural integrity which Saturn symbolizes in a person. Uranus seeks **to transfigure** rather than break down. When Jesus descended from the Mount of Transfiguration — according to the Gospel narrative — his face shone with light but the structure of the face had not been altered. Likewise, when the Saturnian ego accepts to become attuned to the power of a divine presence within the soul and — surrendering its exclusivism and its cherished privileges — opens itself wide to the descent of the light, his essential identity is not destroyed. The individual consciousness which this Saturnian ego structured is illuminated by and radiates the light, but it does not forget "who" it is; it says "I" with a voice that reverberates with the power of a multitudinous "We" — We, the brotherhood of illumined persons; We, the divine host, the divine seed that will become in due time the foundation of a new cycle or a new universe.

Overcoming the Negative Saturn

The negative aspect of Saturn to which our traditional astrology pays so much attention is mainly a product of the state of society in which human beings live. Man has been called a social animal; but human society is basically different from other kinds of animal societies. Human society has as its basic function and dominant purpose in the evolution of our planet the development of the collective mind of humanity. This purpose is not too obvious in the

primitive kinds of tribal societies; but it dominates the stage of history the moment cities are built and what should be strictly called "civilization" begins.

In Genesis, two trends of human development are sharply differentiated: the "pastoral" life of the followers of Seth — after Abel has been killed — and the life of cities built by the descendants of Cain. In the pastoral life, built around the multiplication of the seed and over which God extends His constant protection, Saturn is an entirely positive factor; indeed, it is God's power and protection. Only in the cities, where industry develops through the use of fire and the production of metallic tools, does Saturn take on the character of a negative force. Saturn uses "fire" (which includes in the end atomic power) and becomes not only the father of technology and science, but also the progenitor of our civilization of egos, by egos, and for the greater glory of egos.

Society then becomes a field for unceasing conflicts and for measureless ambition and greed. Saturn no longer represents the natural spontaneous desire to actualize in forms of beauty and of pure relatedness the birth potential (the essential identity) of human persons; it symbolizes the more or less ruthless and bitter drive of separative individuals for power — i.e., social, political, financial ambition.

To this negative aspect of Saturn is wedded an equally harsh and bitter reaction. Saturn is called upon, then, to act as "karma," a term which denotes to most ego-controlled and guilt-haunted minds suffering and punishment. Saturn is, I repeat, slave-driver for those who have enslaved themselves by being driven by ambition and by the hunger for power — and for sex, this "second prize" for those who fail to qualify for the first place in the social race for power or who, having won the prize of success and fame, find it empty and bitter.

How can this negative aspect of Saturn be overcome within us? A section of our modern youth attempts awkwardly to do so by repudiating social ambition through the simple device of "dropping out" of all the harsh and monotonous assembly lines of our modern society. A few would like to seek the "pastoral life" of an idealized past, of a lost age of innocence; in a sense, Zen Buddhism is one aspect of that search. Nudism, the cult of health and "organic" food, is another way which takes the surface physiological aspects of human existence as an all-essential factor, which it no longer is in our time of total, planetwide evolutionary crisis.

To overcome the negative aspect of Saturn means today, first of all, to change our basic frames of reference for **all** human values — to bring forth and to pay allegiance to new "images," image of God as well as image of Man. It is to discover a new planet as the field for human existence — **not** a planet far out in space, but our very Earth, the **one home** of all human beings, when these meet as brothers and sisters, and as "companions", in harmonious sharing of and respect for all the aspects and elements of this Earth.

How can we begin such a seemingly Herculean task of regeneration and transfiguration of ourselves, our minds, our planet? This is a question which must have as many answers as there are individual persons. But, in all cases, the answer demands a clear recognition of

what is at stake and a fervent eagerness to consecrate our whole person to the effort obviously necessary to produce an effectual and transforming solution. In this sense, of course, Saturn will appear also as taskmaster and disciplinarian. Yet in this discipline, there can be joy and peace inasmuch as the whole nature not only assents to it but also participates in it as well. As it is performed, all the energies of life become integrated and condensed in the pursuit of this one goal, this final life achievement.