

One is Never Too Old To Begin Again by Dane Rudhyar

Today, in 1967, in the United States there are close to 20 million men and women above the age of 65. We are told that by the year 2000 there will be 34 million. The life expectancy for any new-born baby is now age 70; it was 50 or less in 1900. And by the year 2000 it could easily reach age 75 or more.

These figures do not tell the whole story, for what we have also to take into account is the very fast trend toward automation and the expanded development and use of new technologies. Automation may decrease the number of jobs and, thus, release people for retirement at an earlier age; but it also demands highly trained workers with an ever-increasing amount of technical skill and intellectual knowledge.

This, in turn, has a twofold result; young people have to go through a longer period of study either to get a technical job or to be able to understand the impact of this advanced technology upon what we call today imprecisely "the humanities". If advanced degrees become prerequisite for a growing number of jobs, a young man or woman may have to study until perhaps 25 years old — and, in many cases, 28 or 30 — before he can fulfill adequately his or her mature role in our ever-more-complex society. It means also that the type of technical skill acquired at 25 may not be sufficient to handle the new techniques the worker, thinker, or teacher will have to use or to understand when he is in his mid-fifties. Thus, he will either have to pass through a new period of learning in his forties or early fifties or else retire before he is 65. But retire to what kind of life?

The Saturnian Life Pattern of Man

The life of an individual person runs in cycles; and the more we are aware of the nature and the meaning of such cycles, the better for all concerned. The time may well have passed when a man's life was one monolithic whole — that is, a single process of development along one single line and with one type of occupation. You learned a set of principles and a particular skill before you "came of age" at 21 — and, in many cases, until you left primary school for some special agricultural, industrial, or office job. You married once and for all. You remained within some local family or communal environment and worked along more or less the same line of activity until you were incapacitated or had made enough money to enjoy the kind of rest which led you pleasantly or painfully to death.

This type of existence was given a rigid and, at the same time, a profoundly significant form in old India according to the Laws of Manu. There were four great classes of social activities represented by the four basic castes; and there were four phases in the life span

of a human being: the learning phase of the student; the phase of biological-social productivity according to set family patterns and trade patterns; the phase of disengagement from possessions and attachments through retirement and meditation, but also in some cases of broad participation in the over-all affairs of the community as a public servant; and finally, the preparation for a significant death, perhaps as a totally unattached wanderer.

Such an approach to human life meant that the person was born to fulfill **one** simple, precise role and that he learned it, performed it, withdrew from it so as to realize his own spiritual selfhood, and prepared himself for a new step in his spiritual evolution through the gates of death. It was a unitarian concept of personal-social existence in a society which practically did not change. The person, himself, remained what he was, just as a yearly plant germinates, flowers, brings forth fruits and seed, and dies according to a stable generic formula. Such a life pattern operates under the astrological influence of Saturn; its over-all process of energy unfoldment is conditioned by the rhythm of what I have called "the progressed lunation cycle" — i.e., the recurrent phases of the soli-lunar relationship established at birth. In its social aspect, it is deeply marked by the 20-year cycle of the conjunctions of Jupiter and Saturn.

After three such conjunctions, both Jupiter and Saturn return to their places in the birth-chart and, thus, repeat their original natal aspect. The human being is about 60. As each **progressed** lunation cycle lasts 30 **years** (this, because New Moons occur actually every 30 **days**), the progressed Moon and the progressed Sun repeat their natal aspect also at about 60. In China and ancient Greece, 60 was said to be the "age of philosophy." Man was theoretically ready to look upon his life and the life of his community with a detached and objective understanding. Relatively few men or women reached that age. They became the patriarchs or elder statesmen, and the respected and very powerful matriarchs ruling over large families — during the few years leading them to the occult "three scores and ten" period which was considered the limit of man's life.

These may have been the good old days; but unless our modern society collapses, they are gone forever. Human life is no longer one simple process, plant-like in rhythm. During one life span of their body, men and women appear fated to have to experience perhaps two or three different lives — to die to the first and to be reborn into another which demands a basically new start — and, in a very real sense, a new education. The old Saturn and Jupiter-Saturn cycles are no longer adequate clocks beating the hours and minutes of existence. We have to seek new ways of measuring the living time of human individuals; and it is the motion of Uranus which reveals to us at present the most significant pattern of changes in our long and complex lives as modern individuals.

The Uranus-Patterned Human Life

It takes Uranus 84 years to complete its revolution around the Sun. Uranus reaches the opposition to its natal place, thus, at the age of about 42 — which is the time at which a

definite psychological, if not biological, change is experienced today by a very large majority of men and women. These men and women have, to some extent at least, become "individuals" in their own right; but these modern individuals more often than not are experiencing anxiety and frustrations, and they are ready for a more or less accentuated "crisis of the forties." I have in past articles characterized this well-publicized crisis as a kind of "adolescence in reverse."

When a human life was supposed to have the archetypal length of 70 years, 35 was the midpoint of such a life span. This was **theoretically** the great moment of maturity — that is, the time when a human being was in full possession of his productive power and with enough past experiences to use this power validly in terms of the performance of his social-personal role in his community. If, on the other hand, we consider that the archetypal measure of a man's life is 84 years, the situation changes. It changes because we are dealing now with a Uranus-conditioned life, one in which **change rather than stability** is the keynote. We no longer live in a static type of society. Modern living is essentially and (in the deepest sense of this word) "tragically" **dynamic** . . . and far more exciting!

Indeed, men and women in our Western society are very often living not one but at least two lives during the life span of their body; and it is almost evident that this pattern of multiple successive lives will become more widely experienced as our society becomes more technological and more complex. In other words, the rhythm of individualized existence of the modern man and woman is moving at such a fast pace, **and starting so early**, that the whole pattern of human existence has to at least divide itself in two if it is to meet significantly the challenge of this new age.

At some period in our mid-life, we tend almost inevitably to feel the need of starting life afresh on a new basis — and the spread of the most recent forms of technology will force us in many cases to do so, in perhaps subtle yet none the less powerful ways. It is because society today still does not recognize this to be a fact and because it retains its old dualistic patterns of morality (which are neither significantly valid any longer nor enforceable) that so much psychological and social chaos is being experienced and hypocrisy and intellectual dishonesty are practiced everywhere at all personal and social levels.

Today, almost at once after adolescence, if not before, the child begins to function **as an immature adult**. The reasons for this are obvious. We need only mention the way in which modern families live, the psychological pressures experienced by children of disturbed and emotional (or divorced) parents, sex-and-violence stimulating television programs, and the general tempo of an existence revolving more around cars than around an integrated home. Considering the way adolescents are brought up, it is most unreasonable to expect them not to seek sexual experiences and to claim the right to participate fully in the society of grown-ups; and this leads to early marriages in a large number of cases and to student rebelliousness. As the boy may have to pass much of his twenties in some college and as the girl also studies or works, it is obvious that new types of family patterns must be

developed — a new kind of relationship between children and parents, as well as between the sexes.

In any case, at age 42 it is reasonable for the early-married parents to expect that their children will be grown up, in college, or married. At this age, the technology learned at the age of 20 may have already become partially obsolete. Around this age, too, the husband-wife relationship tends to be deeply altered. Uranus is in opposition to its natal place. The stage is set for a new life. The same persons may participate in it, but are they the same persons they were at 21 — granted that they have not been divorced years before?

The Seven-Year Cycles

The 84-year cycle of Uranus divides itself into twelve 7-year cycles — and also seven 12-year periods of a Jupiterian nature. The most basic, in a general sense, is the 7-year cycle. Its rhythm has evidently a **generic** rather than an **individual** character; but we should never forget (though we so often do!) that a person is "human" first, only later a social being — and still later truly an individual.

The ages of 14, 21, 28, 35, 42, 49 are, in most cases, very important milestones in the development of an individual person. At about age 14, the child experiences adolescence; at age 28, he or she usually is in some way challenged to discover more fully what he is as an individual. I have spoken of it as the second birth, "birth in individuality." It may be the age at which the youth increasingly ends his technological education (including perhaps training of a practical nature in a job, world traveling). He then assumes his definite productive role in society. In some fields (as in modern physics or in the arts), it may be the time at which he makes his initial individual contribution to all-human knowledge — perhaps an intuitive, fresh contribution which he will have gradually to develop and make fully productive during the 7 or 14 following years.

Then comes age 42. This period is rather often a serious crisis only because the individuals concerned do not want to accept the fact that they are changed persons. They cling to old and now obsolete images of themselves, of "the other" and the family, or of their place in society. Would it not be more in keeping with the accelerated rhythm and the pressures of our modern society if people realized that at that age they are actually ending at least the first phase of their life and that they are faced with the challenge of beginning a new and perhaps quite different phase? Would it not be, in many cases at least, a constructive social policy to allow for **a few years of renewed education, psychological as well as technical or intellectual**, as a preparation for the beginning of a new life in the late forties?

A New Life Foundation

Obviously, many objections and a probable storm of protest will greet such an idea; but the actual fact is that it would simply bring into the open what, in many cases, is actually

occurring in terms of an often destructive crisis which may well poison psychologically the remainder of the life of the persons concerned. Today, this remainder may well be the entire second half of the life! Would it not be more significant to accept the fact that this second half need not be merely a repetition or dull continuation of the first and that it can essentially differ from the first phase? The type of interpersonal relationships and the quality of knowledge which would become the foundations of the new life of individuals having lived more or less independent lives since the age of 14 or 16 would assuredly differ from the type and quality of the contacts and the learning which are possible to teen-agers.

If this were well understood and if it were generally accepted that the second half of the life can be a new life started afresh and on a new psychological, social, and spiritual-mental foundation, then people would not need to retire at 65 to a more or less socially unproductive and useless existence around golf courses or bridge tables. They could have, from around 48 to 70 or later, many years of constructive, truly mature, and "contemporary" (rather than based on old precedents) productivity. They would produce — after a few years of physical, psychological, philosophical, scientific re-education and rebirth — on the foundation of a truly mature type of knowledge and experience. It should be a creative foundation of wisdom, rather than one based on ancestral traditional knowledge, mixed up with adolescent subjectivity, ebullience, rebelliousness.

When men and women would retire at or after 70, they would be able to look back to a double — or it might be triple or quadruple — harvest of experience. Then they might be challenged to try to **integrate** this manifold experience. As a result, they would leave to their grandchildren or great-grandchildren the rich harvest of a very full, varied, and encompassing life. The old static and monolithic Saturnian concept of life in a strictly limited environment and in terms of narrowly focused interpersonal relationships would then be superseded by a dynamic, multifarious, and multi-leveled existence always open to new horizons — a truly constructively Uranian life.

Midpoints of Cycles

I have stressed in the foregoing the obvious fact that for modern individuals living under the pressures of vast cities and of constantly renewed interpersonal contacts, the forties constitute the most characteristic period of Uranian transformation. But in some cases, the rhythm of consciousness changes might be accelerated even further. The three 28-year cycles which add up to a full Uranus cycle establish a most significant threefold pattern which is already appearing in the lives of a number of people, especially in the cases of very early marriages. I have found in my more than 30 years' practice as a consultant that the thirty-ninth year is fairly often a time when the seed of unrest in social or conjugal relationships is sown; this germinates only a little later, during the mid-forties. The fourth year in any 7-year cycle is the "bottom" (3 1/2 point) of the cycle. What has been started at the beginning of that cycle can either lead to a fruitful consummation during the two following years or it may begin to show signs of disintegration.

Ira Progoff, New York psychologist whose writings and lectures are gradually adding a new dimension to the Jungian type of depth psychology, has stressed recently the significance of "midpoints" in the cyclic growth, maturation, and obsolescence of the "images" which constitute the very foundation of man's psycho-mental life. The concept of midpoint is very important in modern astrology, especially in the system known as "Uranian Astrology" in Germany. The mid-forties represent the midpoint of a theoretical 84-year-long life; and ages 14, 42, and 70 are the midpoints of the 28-year cycles.

One could very well say that, if age 14 is identifiable as the crisis of adolescence — a crisis on the outcome of which the whole life of interpersonal and sexual relationship often depends — age 42 constitutes a subtle or acute reversal of the process of adolescence and at times a somewhat frenzied "second adolescence," during which the modern individual who may have had a frustrated teen-age period overeagerly seeks new sexual relationships **before it is too late.**

At 70, the last 28-year period of the theoretical Uranus-controlled life span reaches its midpoint. The realization that certain things should be done, also "before it is too late," can become an insistent pressure. This should be, I believe, the normal retirement age for individuals who have been involved in continuous social or business activity. But "retirement" should mean the "coming to seed" of the human "plant." It should mean extracting from the life now ebbing the harvest of all the experiences through which one has lived since adolescence.

According to the Buddhist tradition, Gautama the Buddha, just before reaching his supreme illumination and the state of Nirvana, passed through a condition called *sammāsambuddhi*, in which he "saw" in rapid succession not only every event in his life (he was then 35 years old), but also the essential meaning (*buddhi*) of these events in terms of their synthesis (*samma*). The seed in the autumnal sign, Libra, is the synthesis of all the spring-summer activities of the plant. It is such a "seed synthesis" which the individual reaching age 70 should be able to accomplish **within his own consciousness.**

Whether he has the mental capacity of transferring to others and of formulating publicly this synthesis is not here the important point. What is important is that this seed synthesis in terms of the individual's consciousness and inner life of feelings should be what "retirement" means. It should not merely amount to years of empty relaxation and "passing the time away" while consciously or subconsciously clinging tenaciously to the mere fact of existence in a deteriorating physical organism. The individual should retire within in order to bring his whole life experience to a state of **consummation in meaning.** This alone is the positive, truly human significance of retirement. If the results of such a consummation can be shared with other people close by, or with humanity as a whole, so much the better.

The fear of death which has left vivid and at times fantastic imprints upon the Christian-Western civilization is in large measure an expression of the feeling of one's inability to bring one's life to a condition of seed consummation. For him who has known,

while alive, several deaths and rebirths, there can be no real fear or anxiety concerning death. Death is just one more change — an exciting one.

Community for Rebirth

These are confused and confusing times; but we have to face facts straightforwardly. What was valuable and made sense when most human beings lived only 40 to 50 years cannot claim the same validity for human beings who can expect to live up to 80. The problems involved in our fast-increasing population of retired men and women are becoming more evident every year. We can look at these problems from many angles; and the much-publicized problem of the use of leisure is not the only one, especially as popularly formulated. The main point is not what you will do with your time when you retire, but what you will **do with yourself and with your past**. Saturnian senility is a return to childishness; but Uranian rebirth leads us farther back to the creative act itself — and every moment can be a creative act, a new beginning.

However, to be born anew requires a period of preparation and gestation. If a man is to experience several births during his 80 or more years, he should be allowed also to experience periods of pause and rebuilding during which the process of renewal of body, mind, and feelings should go on with a minimum of tension and disturbance. What we need are special "colonies" or communities in which human beings could come to pass two, three, or more years in preparation for a valid, constructive change of life. In these healthful communities, there would be all conceivable facilities for technical as well as psychological, philosophical, historical, and spiritual re-education.