

What Is My Nature?

See It Revealed in Your New Moon Before Birth Chart

by Dane Rudhyar

When the astrologers of past centuries made forecasts for the year starting at the vernal equinox, Nature's year, they paid the most careful attention to a chart erected for the last New Moon occurring before the beginning of spring. They used this chart as the basis for their world-predictions far more than charts cast for the exact minute the Sun entered the zodiacal sign Aries in various parts of the world. Today these "Ingress charts", as the latter are called, are much more popular among astrologers; and one is usually erected for each of the capitals of the major nations.

Mundane astrologers study, it is true, the lunation charts for every month of the year. But astrology today is greatly conditioned by the need popular magazines have to stress above all "solar" charts and sun-sign readings. Thus we tend to forget that whatever the Sun indicates would not be practically and concretely effective in everyday life were it not for the polarizing, modifying and completing "influence" of the Moon. Life is always the result of two polar energies, masculine and feminine — solar and lunar. We never can understand and experience life truly if we stress one force at the expense of the other. Only a **solli-lunar** cycle can reveal to us the secrets of Nature, because all that we call "natural" is an expression of **bi-polar** life-energy.

"Sex," in the ordinary sense of the term, is only one aspect of this bi-polarity of life; there are many other aspects and all these forms of interplay between the two great forces in all existence can be said to be rooted in, and maybe symbolized by, the basic relationship between Sun and Moon. When we speak, inaccurately, of the "phases of the Moon, we actually mean the phases of the cyclically evolving relationship between the two "Lights". It is not the Moon as a body which varies in size; it is the light which the Moon reflects, and this light measures the ever-changing relationship between the two polarities of life on our globe, the solar and the lunar forces. The lunation cycle, extending from one New Moon to the next, provides us with a measuring rod to ascertain the state of this solli-lunar relationship in its monthly cycle. It reveals the "rhythm" of all "natural" life processes, in our body and personality as well as in the outer world of living beings on earth.

This cycle is therefore of paramount importance, for without life there would be no embodied consciousness and no individuality. The lunation cycle should be the very foundation of any astrological interpretation of personality, as well as of health and happiness or ease of function. Thus the fact that a person is born at one phase or another of this solli-lunar cycle conditions, and often determines, his typical character; it defines the

person's **fundamental nature** — a phrase used so much in Zen philosophy, now quite popular among members of our "intelligentsia."

You, as a particular person, were born within the span of such a cyclic process, just as inevitably as you were born during one of the four seasons of the year. Your "solar birthday" refers to this seasonal factor, but you have also a "lunation birthday" which tells you at what phase of the lunation cycle you were born.

This lunation birthday recurs every month; but let it be stressed here that it has nothing to do with the "lunar return" (i.e. the time when the Moon every month returns to the exact zodiacal place it occupied at birth). The lunation birthday is the time every month when the **cyclic relationship** of Moon to Sun is in the same phase as the one it was in at the time of your birth. This means that a waxing phase is to be sharply differentiated from a waning phase; so that it is not merely the Sun-Moon **aspect** that counts, but the place of that aspect within the framework of the entire lunation cycle. The positions of the Sun and the Moon, from this point of view, are not to be referred to the zodiacal circle but to the lunation cycle.

Most astrologers make no distinction between a "first quarter" and a "last quarter" square of the Moon and the Sun. Yet, in terms of the basic **life-processes** which the lunation cycle represents and helps us to measure, a birth at the "last quarter" of the solilunar relationship differs considerably from one at the "first quarter." Likewise to be born within 24 hours before New Moon is certainly different from being born the day after the New Moon. Truly the end of a cycle and the beginning of the next do meet, but the magnetic characteristics and inherent dynamisms of what happens in the "last moment" and the "first moment" of any cyclic process are obviously not to be considered the same! The usual belief that the distinction is not important does not make sense; at least, it does not make sense where **life-processes** and their psychological overtones are concerned. It may be acceptable in the realm of mechanistic phenomena, but astrology, as I conceive its meaning and value, has nothing or very little to do with such a realm.

These remarks apply to **all**, astrological cycles. If Jupiter is in mid-Aries and Saturn in mid-Cancer they form a waning ("last quarter") square in their 20-year cycle of relationship; but if Jupiter should be in mid-Libra while Saturn is in mid-Cancer, then the Jupiter-Saturn relationship is a "first quarter" or waxing square relationship. The distinction has great meaning; and it has meaning **regardless** of what the signs of the zodiac are in which the planets are located.

It is such cyclic-phase-meanings which the old Arabian astrologers pictorialized with their many "Parts." The "Part of Fortune," for instance, represents the **status of the solilunar relationship** as the latter affects an individual person on earth; and it is, for this reason, one of the most important clues to the "fundamental nature" of an individual and to the quality of his or her typical personal responses to life-situations. These responses add up in time to happiness or unhappiness, to "good" or "bad" fortune.

The New Moon Before Birth

In most cases a person is born after a lunation cycle has begun, as very few people utter their "first cry" exactly at the time of a New Moon. The character of the particular lunation cycle within the span of which we are born is a very important factor in ascertaining the fundamental nature of the stream of vital forces energizing our entire organism (biological, and as well, psychological). Because in astrology any cycle is stamped with the root-characteristics of its starting point, the New Moon which preceded our birth becomes inevitably the key to the basic character of our inherent vitality.

The first thing to consider in studying this New-Moon-before-birth is whether it occurred in the same zodiacal sign as that in which the Sun is located at birth. If both the New-Moon-before-birth and the natal Sun are in the same sign the quality of this sign pervades freely the whole nature of the person; but if the natal Sun and the New-Moon-before-birth are in two different signs a basic dualism should be more or less strongly in evidence in the personality.

Any astrological factor which occurred before birth tends to represent something deeply rooted **in the past**. We may think of "the past" as the ancestral, racial and cultural past of an individual, his antecedents and all that he found confronting him at birth; or we may think of the past as the "Karma" of a reincarnating soul or spiritual entity. In either case what is of the past always tends to have a somewhat compulsive character. It operates in the unconscious; it surges, often unexpectedly and startlingly, out of our psychic depths.

Moreover, we should realize that two successive zodiacal signs are of opposite polarities, Aries is a "masculine" sign; Taurus, a "feminine" sign, etc. The first is typified by the element Fire; the second, by the element Earth. If therefore the New-Moon-before-birth is in Aries and the natal Sun in Taurus, we find a personality whose ancestral, unconscious vital urges belong to a cycle stamped with Aries characteristics; yet in actual every day living the Taurus force is most active, most influential in all conscious life-processes. The unconscious "fieriness" of Aries may manifest as a compulsion for emotional release in a typical Aries manner; but it will usually be held in check by the Taurus-dominated conscious purpose or will of the individual. Yet occasionally the Aries force may flare up suddenly and startlingly from the psychic depths — perhaps causing much havoc, or at least deep-rooted emotional conflicts. The nature of the person may thus include masculine as well as feminine traits; at any rate it will tend to be complex and at times unpredictable.

The way in which psychological and indeed biological forces surging from the unconscious depths tend to operate can be made clearer if we observe in which **natal** house the New-Moon-before-birth falls. It may be the house in which the natal Sun is located, and again it may be the preceding house. If **both** the signs and the houses of that New Moon and of the natal Sun differ the psychosomatic dualism is strengthened; the personality tends to operate within two definite fields of influence or activity.

Consider, for instance, the birth-chart of the great psychiatrist, **Carl Jung**, born July 26, 1875 with the Sun in the fourth degree of Leo and the Moon in mid-Taurus. He was born

thus with the Moon waning and past the Last Quarter phase of the lunation cycle which had begun at the New Moon of July 3rd on the eleventh degree of Cancer. Jung's natal Sun is located in his natal 7th house, but the eleventh degree of Cancer falls in his natal 6th house; so that the natal Sun and the New-Moon-before-birth occupy different signs and different houses.

Quite evidently we are dealing here with a complex nature, characterized further by an emphasis on fixed signs, with the chart's ruler, Saturn, retrograde in Aquarius, intercepted in the first house, squaring Pluto and loosely opposing Uranus. It is a very dynamic chart, and the whole trend of Jung's thought and practice of psychotherapy has been along the line of the integration of strong oppositions and basic conflicts. The fact that the New-Moon-before-birth falls in the 6th house suggests a concentration of energy in the field of work, self-discipline, health, technique, etc. The Cancer-Leo combination of the two foci of vital energy is interesting in as much as it stresses the summer solstice signs, one ruled by the Sun, the other by the Moon. And alchemy, which has occupied so much of Jung's attention, is based largely on the interplay of the Sun and the Moon forces — the "King" and the "Queen" featured in alchemical symbolism.

A detailed study of the New-Moon-before-birth requires that one should cast a chart for the time of that New Moon, placing the New Moon degree on the Ascendant of the chart, and the planets in equal 30° houses. Such a chart does not refer to any actual event insofar as the still embryonic organism is concerned, but it helps us to analyze the **potential of vital energy released** at the time of that New Moon. This release of potential thereafter flows through the entire lunation cycle; and as the individual is born **within** this cycle, he is conditioned **in depth of vital nature** by the character of the New Moon release.

In the case of the great Hindu political leader, yogi, philosopher and poet, **Sri Aurobindo** (August 15, 1872), who his followers now consider as a direct manifestation of God, we find the Sun at Leo 22° 23', Jupiter at Leo 13° 36' and the Ascendant at Leo 13° 24'. The New-Moon-before-birth took place on August 4th at Leo 12° 15', thus at the natal Ascendant point and just past the actual conjunction with Jupiter of August 3rd, at Leo 11° 07'. The tie-up between Sun, New Moon, Ascendant and Jupiter is most powerful, and Jupiter in India symbolizes the great Guru or Spiritual Teacher. Indeed, Theosophists have spoken of a mysterious Personage whose Presence is particularly focused in the mountains of Southern India, not far from which Sri Aurobindo had his ashram for 40 years, and to whom they gave the name of "Master Jupiter." An interesting correlation.

When the New-Moon-before-birth occurs very close to one of the planets in the natal chart, this planet can be considered as a **channel of destiny** for the life-energies released through the personality of the native. Take for instance **Alexander Graham Bell** whose name is associated indelibly with the transmission of sound. He was born in Scotland, March 3, 1847 with the Sun around 12° Pisces and one day after full Moon (Moon at 24 1/2 Virgo). The lunation cycle in which he was born had begun with the New Moon of February 15th, at Aquarius 26° 13'; and Neptune was about one degree ahead of this point conjunct Mercury

— Neptune which deals so much with sound, music, vibrations in the "electrical" sign, Aquarius. Thus the whole lunation was stamped by this Neptune-Mercury impress.

In the case of **Alice Bailey** (June 16, 1860), the Theosophist who founded the Arcane School and wrote many books on occultism under occult inspiration, the natal Sun was at Gemini 25 1/2° with natal Venus at 17° 52' of the same sign. The lunation cycle in which the birth occurred began on June 7th, with the New Moon at 17° 31° Gemini thus the ancestral forces (or Karmic soul-forces) were focused in Alice Bailey's life largely through Venus, which enabled her to stress successfully group-values and to hold together for many years a quite large group of seekers stressing an intellectual formulation of universal ideas.

Moving to an entirely different field, we can now consider our Vice-President **Richard Nixon's** chart. Capricorn 19° 23' is the natal Sun's degree, and he is born characteristically with a waxing Moon in Aquarius, nearly 31 degrees ahead of the Sun, his New-Moon-before-birth occurred therefore at Capricorn 16 1/2°; so, the New Moon and the natal Sun are in the same sign, and presumably the same (fifth) house.

An extreme case is provided by people born almost exactly at New Moon, or like **Karl Marx** during a solar eclipse (the most intense focusing of vital forces possible). A New Moon birth, however, often leads to a state of emotional confusion, and at times to a rather fanatic belief in a special destiny or in the person being a needed channel for "higher forces." **Queen Victoria** exemplifies also such a New Moon type of birth.

Fate and Free Will

The chart of the New-Moon-before-birth and the natal chart can be said to represent, respectively, that which in a person's life is compulsive, rooted in the past — thus "fateful" — and that which constitutes the new potential of life, the creativity inherent (yet at first only latent) in the individual. Indeed every astrological factor which **precedes** birth must be essentially referred to the past; and this includes the "prenatal chart" erected for the presumed moment of "conception."

Birth — or rather the **first breath** — is the beginning of (at least relatively) independent existence. Nothing "individual" can be referred to the process of gestation and the embryonic state. Individuality demands an independent rhythm of existence; and such a rhythm, at least symbolically, starts to operate with the "first cry" or breath-expulsion that is, with the first **response** of the organism-as-a-whole to the universe in which the newborn is meant to operate in his or her individualized, unique way.

Freedom for the individual can only refer to his capacity for making an autonomous, undetermined response to the pressures, challenges and opportunities of life. These pressures and challenges of life constitute the **particular condition imposed upon him at birth by heredity and environment**. The newborn cannot change this conditioning. He is the product thereof; he is born with a set of genes and within a definite race, family, culture and class. All these factors inevitably **condition** his personality; they constitute his "nature,"

But they do not **determine** his responses to them; because, I believe, there is within and beyond his organism a "factor of indeterminacy" — a spark of divinity. This factor, this divine spark, is his **potential** freedom. It is "potential" only; for it may remain latent and inoperative — and it usually does so except at crucial times in the person's life. These crucial times, or "crises", are moments of decision.

The decision **may** be made by the non-determined, free will — the will **not to conform to the past** (i.e. to our inherited and environmental influences), and instead to **transform** this past, our "nature", by the introduction of a **new** vision, a new goal or realization. But in many cases, as the opportunity for such a decision comes, the ancient deep-rooted power of our "nature" (of all that is, in us, the past of the human race . . . and the "Karma" of the individual Soul) makes the transforming decision impossible, or half-hearted and confused.

Then we are "determined" by this past; then, we lose our God-given power of individual freedom. We are once more caught back into the prenatal state of dependence upon the Mother — and by "Mother" — I mean here all that enwombs and binds us: family, religion, tradition, class standards, conventional morality, etc. All of these inevitably **condition** our personality; yet they need not **determine** our responses to life's challenges and opportunities.

The distinction between the two words, condition and determine, is a capital one. When its meaning is really understood the bitter conflict between the two schools of thought teaching respectively that man has free will and that determinism (or fate) rules over everything becomes rather senseless. No man is absolutely free, for the very concept of such an absolute "freedom" has really no meaning at all; but every man can, at crucial times of decision, transform to some extent his actual conditions by some creative response which was non-determined and essentially unpredictable until it was made. The New-Moon-before-birth chart — and all "converse progressions" and prenatal charts — refer to the conditioning of our nature; thus, to the area of our personality where the past impels, and often, compels us to act according to old patterns or traditions. But the birth-chart, calculated for the exact moment of the first exhalation of breath, symbolizes the potentiality of our making free, transforming, creative decisions.

The lunation cycle within the confines of which we are born constitutes the "wave of life" which powers us into existence. But the man who comes to be truly an "Individual" in conscious and transforming selfhood must emerge out of that wave, even while being supported by it. He rides that wave to a self-envisioned destination. This ride is his true destiny. The wave eventually must return to the sea-depths; but man may by then be walking on the shore, in the freedom of the land.