

## Using Astrology to Search for Solutions to our Nation's problems

We live in an amazing spot on planet Earth – America. All civilizations are based on some set of principles -- the most basic principle often being 'do no harm'. (Thus laws against lying, and stealing, and murder.) In America we are not born into a formal caste system where our personal rights and aspirations are bounded by the limitations placed upon the rights and aspirations of our caste. Where an informal caste seems to appear (ex. 'the homeless'), we are free to work towards redressing the situation. Not so everywhere.

But we, as a nation, have many problems. Some critical, like the scarcity of jobs for people who are seeking paying work to support their families. Or the dangerously limited access to health care because of the out of control costs in that industry. Some of our problems are serious, but still a step below critical. For example, the usury rates of interest charged by Visa companies and other financial institutions. And the targeting of consumer groups who have no reasonable means of paying these charges, but are none the less 'preapproved'.

Actions that are 'legal but not ethical' have very deep roots, and are not limited to finance companies. About 10 years ago I was teaching a math class and initiated a discussion about cheating on tests. Too often (for my comfort) the response was: it's OK to cheat, but it's wrong to get caught. If that's the beginning, then what can we expect from our business leaders and politicians?

So, where should we begin? And how can astrology help us to figure it out? Let's take a look at ourselves, the citizens of the United States of America, and at some of our common conditioning and culture. We can use our country's natal chart for this purpose (July 4, 1776 5:10 pm, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania).

1. Cardinal energy rules. While all energies are expressed to some extent in our national chart, the 4 cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn) are strongly emphasized. We want to be in charge; and we are willing to assume the responsibilities associated with being in charge. This is the energy that made it possible to settle territory after territory, as we grew and expanded westward. With our country's South Node in Aquarius, it is comfortable for us (collectively) to think outside the box -- and consequently continue to settle new frontiers.
2. It should be noted that we are all individuals, and cardinal energy is not necessarily the dominant energy in our personal chart. But, it is still a dominant energy in our conditioning. Witness the popularity of 'slaying the dragon', and in a none too subtle way, whether it be in a Harry Potter film, a SWAT TV program, action movies in general, an initial impulse towards military action, or over-the-top heavy handedness in some business, and political, practices. The undercurrents in our personal makeup produced by conditioning generally go un-noticed by us. We assume that the way we feel is just the way things are, and there really is no other way to feel. And we are very vehement in our feelings. This extra shot of cardinal energy that we are heir to needs to be channeled into productive uses.
3. Saturn (the structure of our government) in Libra (balance that can be expressed via rational thought). The 3 branches of our government – executive, legislature, judiciary. The autonomy of local government. The separation of church and state. The constitution. But Saturn opposes Chiron -- our growing pains. Maintaining the integrity of each separate branch of government is critical in order for the entire structure to work properly. (Likewise, we need to balance the disparate parts of our own personalities -- also accompanied by growing pains.)
4. Pluto (zoom in on the essence, drop the excess) in Capricorn (sensitivity to material necessities, traditional structures – the family in particular -- and the appreciation, and safe-keeping, of abundance.) Note that Pluto was in Capricorn between World War 1 and World War 2, and also when our country was born (1776). Protecting home and family were primary images throughout those periods. Notice the shifting definitions of family (for better or for worse) since the 1960s. A subtle, but very definite part of our personal ongoing conditioning.
5. What is missing from our national conditioning? Earth energy is not especially emphasized in the USA chart, in spite of Pluto being in Capricorn. We, the citizens of the USA, live in the physical world, but are too often not focused on any physical needs beyond our own personal physical needs. As a nation of consumers, we are used to buying many 'things', and what seems like endless packaging. The idea of not wasting resources often is experienced as a guideline 'out there', but not as something we, personally, are conditioned to feel in the core of our own being.

While our own individual charts may give us quite different information, it is worthwhile to keep these undercurrents in mind -- especially when we consider the handling of national issues. Let's take a look at some of our more pressing national issues.

1) Jobs.

The most basic human instinct is survival. Survival requires that we individually provide for our own basic needs (adequate food, clothing, a place to shelter from the elements, education, etc). The current inability of large numbers of people to find paying work is, in the opinion of this writer, the greatest national tragedy of our time. Rent, grocery bills, and oil changes for our cars are all dependent on having the necessary cash in hand. Where does this cash come from? From the work that we do - work that someone else is willing to pay us to do. Every person needs to have access to a paying job that they can accomplish. (I am not ignoring extenuating circumstances. But they are extenuating, and not the general rule.)

In recent years we have been seeing a small but steadily growing subculture in America's working population. More job seekers are seeking niche positions where they can sell their skills, not as an employee, but as a consultant, or independent sub-contractor, or entrepreneur, or outside vendor. Pick your favorite word -- they all mean the same thing. The company sees an attractive skill set that is made available on an 'as needed' basis, without the stresses of long term commitments and expensive benefits packages. These companies are generally willing to pay fair market value for this freedom. The entrepreneur sees a potentially available and expanding source of income, and is willing to work hard towards making this happen.

Too many others are just struggling, with no viable way to pay the bills (or all the bills). On the plus side -- when entrepreneurs get together, new small businesses are born. And hire yet more of us. But we need more. Can the outer planets help guide our way?

2) US vs. THEM, and the satisfactions of righteous indignation.

Relaxed energy, and attitudes of easy camaraderie, are not today's norm. The economic chaos has left multitudes of people running for cover in their own hermetically sealed emotional spaces and groupings --the US defined. So who are the US and who is the THEM?

- a) US = the tax payers, paying for EVERYTHING! THEM = whoever has their hand out, legitimate or otherwise. Or. US = the poor and oppressed, in real need. THEM = the fat cats, who can afford to pay taxes. A pox on their house, but not on their taxes. Either way, what happened to the middle class? It's splitting and being pushed by circumstance to one extreme or the other.
- b) US, and our slogan is Buy American! THEM, the unwashed, somewhat sub-human, non-Americans, stealing from us! The explosion in communication technology (especially the internet) makes the entire globe a single neighborhood. We generally do not think of Connecticut competing with Iowa (for example) -- but we have a very strong sense of US, the USA, vs. THEM (ex. India, the land of computer help desk outsourcing). Many, if not most, of our major corporations are international in their business dealings. Also, many American workers are employed by non-US companies such as Hyundai or Siemens. Not to mention the very significant portion of our national debt held by foreign countries (China in particular).
- c) US. My great great grandfather was a Democrat, and if it was good enough for him it's good enough for me!! And besides we have the presidential edict. THEM. We at least know where the OFF button is on the printing presses at the federal reserve.

3) Health Care.

It seems inconceivable, at least to me, that in a place like America where so much scientific know-how and medical talent is available, there are so many people unable to consult a doctor when a medical concern arises. What are the real problems causing this?

The costs for medical procedures, products, and professional opinions are out of sight. Why? High on the list are the multi-million dollar settlements associated with possible medical malpractice law suits. Consequently each doctor turns to his or her client base to cover the equally high costs of medical liability insurance. It is my personal opinion that medical malpractice is a criminal offense, and not a civil offence -- and should be prosecuted as such. It is also my personal opinion that if a person accepts medical treatment, then that person must also accept certain risks that naturally come along with those procedures and treatments.

Another factor sending medical costs into the stratosphere is widespread trips to hospital emergency rooms for non-emergency situations. This is a tough one because where-else-is-there-to-go without sizeable cash in pocket? Following treatment, the patient is followed home by a hefty bill, perhaps via a collection agency. The fact that so many such bills remain

unpaid creates another surcharge for the rest of us. One obvious solution, at least in part, is to establish a system of local clinics staffed by nurses, physician's assistants, and perhaps one or two physicians per clinic. These clinics should be open fixed hours, operate on a first come, first served basis, and be available to anyone who walks through the door. Funding these clinics is far less costly than the costs associated with misusing expensive hospital facilities.

Pharmaceutical research and development can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars -- and a patent lasts for only 17 years. The cost of developing a new drug is built into the sale price of that drug. Thus the free samples, wining and dining, ..., of medical personnel who are able to write prescriptions for this new drug. The thinking is that if enough people use this drug frequently enough, then the costs of creating the drug will be covered -- and in fact generate a profit for the pharmaceutical company.

Motivated by this same thinking is the non-stop advertising of these drugs on TV, and on any other available media. Asking your doctor if you can buy that exciting yellow pill is about the same as a child asking mommy and daddy for that special new toy, or cupcake, seen on TV. Pharmaceutical advertising on TV has simply replaced tobacco advertising. (Visualize the Marlboro Man very slowly swallowing that special orange pill.)

#### 4) If the government pays for it, it's not my money, and it doesn't cost anything.

It's true that a particular expense (ex. snow removal on my street) may be paid for without my using my own personal income, or personal savings, or taking out a personal loan. But someone is paying for it. Everyone in my town who pays taxes is covering this particular bill -- or trying to. The government doesn't earn any money through its own efforts -- it simply collects taxes, and then uses this tax money to fund whatever needs to be done. If there is not enough tax money to cover what needs to be done, then the government can either add more taxes or borrow money -- from individuals, and sometimes from other countries. That is what's being talked about when we say that China is holding a significant part of America's debt. All borrowed money needs to be repaid. Nothing is free.

The above attitudes, beliefs, and predispositions are of deep concern to all of us. Can astrology really give us clues for workable solutions?

Our nation's Sun, Jupiter, and Venus are all being extremely 'activated', as this article is being written. The Sun represents the essential 'us' (as in USA), both individually and collectively. We are being called upon (both individually and collectively) to move beyond personal ambition and defensiveness, into a level of healing and responsibility. The energy represented by Jupiter adds extra strength to our actions, and to the new codes of conduct that we construct. Venus presents to us, in sharp relief against each other, what we think we want, what we actually want, and what we procrastinate about.

This stellium in the sign of Cancer is opposing transiting Pluto (in Capricorn). We have the energy to do what is necessary. But we do not have time to waste. Transformation will happen. If we let go of emotional attachments, and just do what we consciously recognize as necessary, then transformation can hopefully happen 'with' us, and not 'to' us.

This stellium (in Cancer) is also squaring transiting Uranus (in Aires). Change is imminent. So it is best to be prepared. Saturn in Libra, which is trining our stellium in Cancer, is affording us the opportunity to put our thoughts and strategies together -- sane and responsible thoughts and strategies. (The current round of emotional temper tantrums on the political front are anything but sane and responsible.)

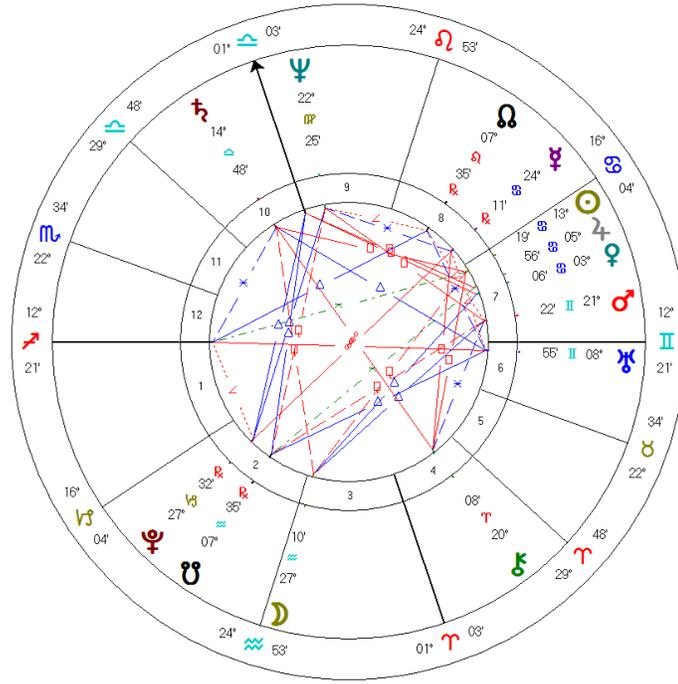
Our nation's stellium (in Cancer) is also trining the transiting Neptune / Chiron combo. Healing is available, water style. Less mask-building and more listening.

As transiting Venus continues to square our Cancer stellium, we have an extra shot of energy with which to more clearly discriminate between what we want for ourselves and our children, what we feel is best for all of our country, and what simply appears (with perhaps quite pleasurable side effects) in our fantasy life. Honesty, not defensiveness, is the goal here.

Note that Pluto entered the USA's 1<sup>st</sup> house in 2000, where it continues to transit, and Pluto entered the sign of Capricorn in 2008. Neptune entered the USA's 3<sup>rd</sup> house in 2009, and conjuncted the USA Moon in March 2010, August 2010, and January 2011. Neptune entered Pisces in April 2011. Uranus entered the USA's 3<sup>rd</sup> house in 2002, and entered the USA's 4<sup>th</sup> house in March 2011.

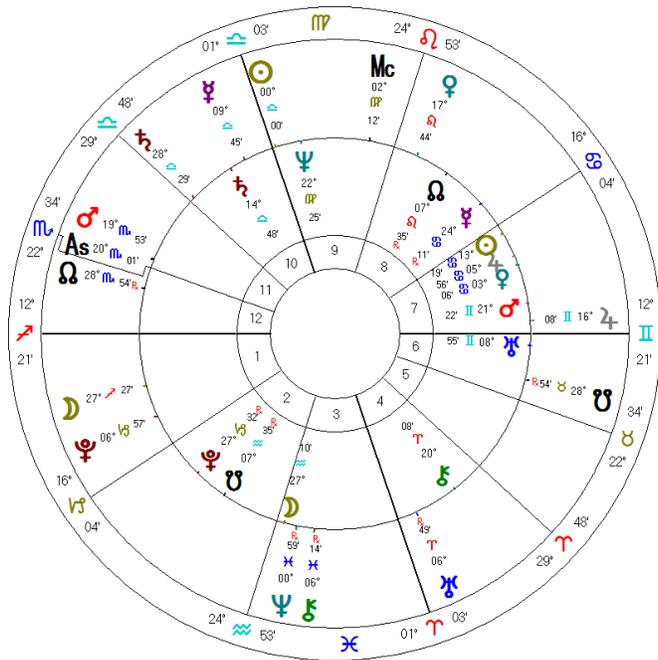
I invite you -- in fact I implore you -- to use all of your astrological skills to outline one or two concrete steps that you would suggest as part of our nation's healing process. These ideas could be shared via articles submitted to the ASC. Or, perhaps, the ASC could organize a round-table discussion guided by your ideas.

**USA (Sibly)**  
**Natal Chart (3)**  
 Jul 4 1776 NS, Thu  
 5:10pm LMT +5:00:39  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 39°N 57°08' 075°W 09°51"  
*Geocentric  
 Tropical  
 Placidus  
 Mean Node*



A view of the transiting planets as the Sun enters the cardinal sign of Libra:

Inner Wheel  
**USA (Sibly)**  
**Natal Chart (3)**  
 Jul 4 1776 NS, Thu  
 5:10pm LMT +5:00:39  
 Philadelphia, PA  
 39°N 57°08' 075°W 09°51"  
*Geocentric  
 Tropical  
 Placidus  
 Mean Node*



Outer Wheel  
**Transits Sep 22 2012**  
**Event Chart (6)**  
 Sep 22 2012, Sat  
 11:00 am EDT +4:00  
 Hartford, CT  
 41°N 45°49' 072°W 41°08'  
*Geocentric  
 Tropical  
 Placidus  
 Mean Node*

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