

Arcturus Rising

the astrology group for Bristol and the West

The following is the handouts for the talk that Judy Hall gave to Arcturus Rising on 27 February 2008.

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Soul purpose or soul imperative?

Karmic astrology believes there is a purpose to incarnation, a soul intention to grow and evolve, but can we ascertain our true purpose from the chart and are there other factors that can intervene?

For over thirty five years I've been exploring astrology from the reincarnationist point of view. I work from the basis that we have a soul that is eternal and which is on a journey of evolution through many lifetimes - and different planes of being. As we know, a birthchart is a 'frozen' moment of time and I believe that we chose a moment to be born that reflects our life plan for the current incarnation and what has gone before.

From the karmic astrology perspective the chart shows how a person will react to challenges, the expectations and ingrained patterns of behaviour carried forward and the karmic lessons to be learned: the credits and deficits on the karmic credit card as it were. It also shows, from the Nodes of the Moon and Saturn's placement and aspects, the purpose the soul had when it incarnated.¹ This isn't some fanciful, new agey astrology, Saturn was dubbed the Lord of Karma a long time ago. I've found mention of Saturn and rebirth in the Yavanajataka of Sphujidhvaja, an Indian translation and commentary on a Hellenistic astrological document from the third century.² Saturn's sign and house placement have a bearing on soul purpose and soul challenges, as do the aspects to Saturn. What is given below is a brief menu that applies to any aspect between the planets concerned but which needs considerable refining taking into account the placement as well as the aspects. From my experience of karmic astrology there is no such thing as 'good' or 'bad'

aspects, only varied expressions of the principle behind the contact. There is however a wide difference in how, and how constructively, the underlying principle might manifest.

Saturn and soul purpose

Saturn-Sun: fathering, finding self worth, developing self-autonomy.

Saturn-Moon: mothering, breaking free from the past, gaining emotional autonomy

Saturn-Mercury: overcoming past beliefs and limitations of the mind, developing intellectual autonomy.

Saturn-Venus: learning to love oneself.

Saturn-Mars: aligning the will to serve the Self rather than the ego, breaking free from old vows, developing self-assertion.

Saturn-Jupiter: controlled expansion, trusting the universe, the soul is questioned as to how much it is still controlled by a mentor or father figure.

Saturn-Chiron: healing the past.

Saturn-Uranus: moving beyond intellect into intuitive transformation.

Saturn-Neptune: solving the mystic-pragmatist dilemma.

Saturn-Pluto: overcoming social control and fanaticism and fear of death.

Saturn-North Node: finding new understanding and autonomy.

Saturn-South Node: liberation from old restricting beliefs.

The Nodes and Soul Purpose

North Node in:

Aries: The path of self-development. The soul is learning to be a separate, self-sufficient individual, centred around the Self, with the courage to initiate change and to evolve independently.

Taurus: The path of inner security. The soul is learning the strength that awareness of being an immortal soul on a human journey brings. This is the only security that can be taken out of life.

Gemini: The path of effective communication. The soul is learning how to communicate who and what it is without ambiguity or ambivalence. This is a path of truth.

Cancer: The path of nurture. The soul is learning to nurture and care about itself and those around it.

Leo: The path of the heart. The soul is learning to keep an open heart, to be heart-centred in all that it does, and to be empowered from the heart.

Virgo: The path of service. The soul is learning to be of service to others without thought of reward, recognition or validation.

Libra: The path of relationship. The soul is learning how to be an equal partner in relationship, how to adjust and compromise so that the needs of each party are taken care of in a balanced interweaving of souls.

Scorpio: The path of mastering power. The soul is learning how to use its considerable power for the good of all. This is also the path of self-mastery and the application of power.

Sagittarius: The path of the seeker. The soul is on a quest for knowledge of the true meaning behind the universe and physical incarnation.

Capricorn: The path of self-discipline. The soul is learning how to control the world through being in control of oneself. The soul must learn to listen to its own authority rather than the authority figures it has formerly relied upon.

Aquarius: The path of evolution. The soul is assisting the evolution of humanity to a new vibration that brings equality for each and every soul.

Pisces: The path of enlightenment. The soul is seeking at-onement and must learn the difference between this and atonement. This is the path of return to the divine.

From many years of regressing people to the between life state, it has become obvious to me that some people plan their new incarnation extremely carefully and others pop back without much thought. Both are drawn back by unfinished business, the difference being in how they plan - or don't plan - to deal with it and, in addition, those who plan usually have a purpose to develop or evolve. It has also become apparent to me that souls are not 'all of a piece'. We can easily leave a part of our soul somewhere back in another life whether the death was less than satisfactory, for instance, just as we can leave a part of ourselves back in childhood at a traumatic event. Soul retrieval has been practised by shamans for hundreds if not thousands of years for this very reason. So, for me, the soul is a vehicle for the eternal spirit just as our physical body is a carrier for the soul whilst in incarnation.

But it is only recently that I began to look beyond this and to examine more carefully my notion of the 'higher self' that is not totally in incarnation. I call it 'higher' because it operates on a finer vibration and is therefore less earthbound and dense than our physical self. To me the higher self is a portion of the soul that can see much further than the small self that is here on earth. I, and my workshop participants, have worked with the higher self for many years as we sought to bring more of our highest possibilities into incarnation and help our soul to grow.

To me, it is the higher self that holds and manifests our soul purpose: literally, how our soul seeks to evolve in the present incarnation and what it considers its mission, if any, to be. However, I have come to realise that this soul purpose is not always clear and unsullied. It can be contradictory and, in some cases, downright destructive. Just as our small self - what we could perhaps call the psychological self - can have unconscious desires and imperatives born out of previous conditioning that is directing behaviour, so too can our higher self. If we had a soul purpose in the past and it was not fulfilled, then it could still be operating unconsciously and might have subtly perverted its intent. It may nonetheless appear to be coming from the highest level of guidance rather than from a deeply unconscious place but which nevertheless represents a past that may need to be transcended or transformed. Of course, soul imperatives may be positive and beneficial and still valid, but if they are they are unlikely to cause difficulties. So it is negative soul imperatives with which I am concerned. This is particularly so when it is part of a repeating pattern of lives. I am choosing to call it a soul imperative although I am aware that in some astrological and theosophical literature soul imperative and soul purpose are used interchangeably. The difference for me is that an imperative is not a conscious choice, it is a directive arising directly from the past.

So, for instance, a client of mine (26 September 1941 7.00am. Darlington) went into a loop in her present life where time after time she felt impelled to help someone in their spiritual journey because, somewhere in the past, she was convinced she had let them down. She saw herself in many lifetimes as a leader of a group or a tribe, who over and over again, either left someone behind or was the cause of a death "because the group had to be put first". In the present life, this meant

that someone would come to one of her healing groups, she would identify them as a person from one of these past groups who had died because of her, and would then concentrate all her efforts on helping them shed the past, especially the abandonment, and 'grow' in accordance with what she felt was right for them. It took her quite a time to recognise that pattern was a compelling response to other life behaviour, and then she apparently received higher guidance that there were a certain number of people she had to bring to their full potential to help the world evolve. She felt that this was world service and her highest purpose.

I meanwhile heard alarm bells ringing and tuned in to ask what it was all about. It appeared that it was an old soul imperative that arose out of perceived failure, abandonment and letting people down rather than being a true soul purpose - in other words it was still arising out of the past. It could also bring people under her power rather than empowering them to be all that they could be - which was her consciously stated purpose. That led me to the complicated notion - which I am still exploring and hope to have further insights after my summer retreat at Glastonbury where we'll be looking at it as part of *Awakening Soul Purpose*³ - that the Higher Self might itself need some kind of soul retrieval, release from the past and reassessment of purpose. That in turn led me to question whether there were any astrological insights that would help. I've gone back over dozens of client charts - and those for well known figures - and, of course, took another look at the chart for the person who'd started the quest.

The first thing that I noticed in her chart was that she had the Sun right on the Ascendant in Libra, conjunct the North Node of the Moon conjunct Neptune in Virgo in the twelfth house with, of course, the South Node in Pisces in the sixth. In karmic terms, the North Node in

Virgo is here to serve and with its placement in the twelfth house is here to take out some of the collective karma of humankind - the basis for her feeling that she had to be of world service. (Collective karma is the stuff that no one is personally responsible for but it nevertheless needs clearing, which people with strong twelfth house placements can do.) Her Neptune to the North Node conjunction would be hyping up that feeling, but was it all an illusion? The South Node in Pisces has played the saviour - and the martyr - many times before and here again it is in the sixth house of service. She also has a Chiron Pluto conjunction in Leo in the tenth house, perhaps a pointer towards her feeling that in leading a new group she would be making reparation for past deaths, but also an indication that power and control issues might arise, as so easily could fanaticism - in her professional life, she was being pushed to become the head of a new therapy movement. That Chiron-Pluto conjunction was trined by the Moon in Sagittarius, bringing in the past.

In karmic astrology, the Moon represents an ingrained, instinctual pattern that has been present throughout many lifetimes and so might well represent a soul imperative, particularly one based on emotional conditioning and the karmic treadmill - a repeating pattern over many lifetimes. Although the Moon can be deeply unconscious at times, it rarely represents the urges of higher consciousness however, so is unlikely to relate to the Higher Self although it's small self imperatives could be the same as the South Node imperatives below. For the Higher Self I think we need to look at both the South Node and planets aspecting the nodal axis, and also at Neptune although this is planet, and its aspects, is fraught with the possibility of delusion and self-deception so clarity and rigour to be applied.

South Node Soul Imperatives

Aries: ego, self-centredness, self-absorption and selfishness, tilting at windmills.

Taurus: possessiveness and attachment to material goods or notions, the drive for more.

Gemini: insincerity, lack of veracity, expediency, taking the path of least resistance, over influenced by others.

Cancer: emotional possessiveness and attachment to the past, over-nurturing, control freakery.

Leo: desire to rule, power, emotional games, false humility and pride.

Virgo: servitude, servility, criticalness and the search for perfection.

Libra: overwhelming need for relationship, losing sight of itself in relationships, over-adaptation and compromise.

Scorpio: addiction to traumas and dramas, emotional pain and power issues, death wish.

Sagittarius: adherence to ideology, philosophies and ingrained beliefs, constant restless quest to know more, economical with the truth.

Capricorn: authoritarianism, a tendency to exercise tight control over everything, scapegoat.

Aquarius: rebellion, old humanitarian ideals that no longer appertain, being different simply for the sake of so doing.

Pisces: sacrifice, escapism, atonement, dissolution, victim-martyr-saviour.

Neptune and soul imperatives

Neptune, as we know, is the urge to transcend the boundaries that keep the soul separate from the whole but with its permeability it is open to past life influence breaking through - and to illusion and disillusion. This

planet moves between the greatest extremes: from the most profound spiritual awareness through imagination and fantasy to the deepest deception. It is also a planet with strong links to the victim/martyr/saviour/rescuer/persecutor soul pattern. It could well, therefore, conceal a hidden aspect of soul purpose that is less than constructive and based on previous idealism or ideology according to its sign, house placement and aspects. So far I have come up with the following broad principles:

Neptune to the Sun: highest ideals and principles or a deeply ingrained delusion or illusion, idealisation of the father.

Neptune to the Moon: highly imaginative and sensitive ideals, deeply psychic or delusional, idealisation of the mother or the feminine, old romantic notions can rule - pull towards soulmate delusions.

Neptune to Mercury: highest spiritual communication or the biggest delusion of all time. Little boundary between lives, ideals easily become imperatives.

Neptune to Venus: desperate search for perfect love, or the opportunity for truly unconditional love. Past life relationships can re-manifest as apparent soulmates. But!

Neptune to Mars: following the dictates of the ego or the aspirations of the soul? Past life urge to be a messiah or guru breaks through, can be power hungry.

Neptune to Jupiter: old religious idealism holds sway and can become expanded and inflated.

Neptune to Chiron: old wounds intercede in an apparent spiritual purpose.

Neptune to Saturn: religious dictates can intercede in spiritual idealism.

Tendency to sacrifice oneself, to become the scapegoat for an ideal.

Neptune to Uranus: old idealism and revolutionary intention still holds sway.

Neptune to Pluto: deep power urge disguised as idealism.

Neptune to the Node: the belief that the person is here to save the world *their way*.

Having got that far, I thought I'd look at a few well known examples of people who felt they had a purpose or mission in life, whether they would express it as soul purpose or not, and questioned whether they might have an underlying soul imperative that was possibly tripping them up or deluding them. I initially found that I had, without realising it, selected charts that all had the North Node in Gemini, three of my examples being born in the same year and one much earlier.

I began with George W. Bush (6 July 1946, 8.26am. New Haven CT) with his Neptune-Pluto sextile, Sun-Neptune square, and Gemini North Node conjunction to Uranus. Sun-Neptune indicates that idealisation of the father has taken place in many lifetimes and George appears to be following faithfully in his father's footsteps. We all know how George W. trips over his words - and how devious and fanatical-sounding those words can appear even though he means them most sincerely folks - his Mercury Pluto conjunction is right there on the Ascendant. The purpose of a North Node in Gemini conjunct Uranus is to communicate change and a new vision. He spouted democracy, touted war, and thousands of people died in its name. Was this the kind of revolution his soul really intended? Or is it a soul imperative taking over, a real possibility when we look at that Moon, Chiron, Jupiter conjunction inflating the nodal axis. In a recent t.v.

programme it was suggested that recovered-alcoholic-turned-Born Again George W. might be trying to invoke the rapture of the end of the world. Looks that way to me!

So then I turned to Harold Shipman (14 January 1946, 1.30am. Nottingham), whose experience of the difference morphine made to his dying, domineering mother allegedly led to him becoming a doctor and ultimately to, in his eyes, put at least fifteen people into a state of bliss - having made sure he would benefit from the wills. Well, Pluto up there on the Midheaven in Leo could indicate Dr Death playing God and, once again, Chiron Jupiter inflates the mix: this time in the twelfth house and aspecting the nodal axis. Shipman was the favoured child in whom his mother instilled a sense of superiority that left him isolated with few friends, neatly fitting his Pluto on the Midheaven sextiling the Gemini Moon.⁴ But it's not clear how the North Node in Gemini figures or the South Node in Sagittarius, except for how adept he was at covering his tracks and how he slid around investigations of the truth. Both Gemini and Sagittarius can be economical with the truth at times. He could hardly communicate the success of his self-imposed mission to the outside world whilst maintaining the authority figure status of his Capricorn Sun-Venus opposing Saturn. But maybe the fact that his North Node was in the eighth house of death and rebirth (in my preferred Placidus system), as were his Moon and Uranus, indicates a twisted soul imperative to despatch those in his care (Saturn in Cancer) so that they could be reborn or transformed. More obvious to me however would be the finger of fate (yod) that (with my generous 8 degree orb for inconjuncts) has a backbone of Saturn conjunct Mars opposing that Sun-Venus with the sextile between Pluto and the Moon at the base. There's a lot of karma in that little package but that's another story.

Another murderer who was adept at avoiding capture - he was questioned by the police on at least one occasion - was Peter Sutcliffe (6 February 1946, 5.30 pm, Bingley, Glos), another example of the Gemini North and Sagittarian South Node. Deeply religious and moralistic, Sutcliffe is reputed to have said that God told him to murder prostitutes, although his killing spree went beyond the sex workers that he boasted of his exploits with to acquaintances. Again we have Chiron Jupiter inflating the nodal axis which is otherwise unaspected (I'm not suggesting this combination is invariable destructive, I simply happen to have chosen three examples who were born in the same year.) An unaspected, or lightly aspected, nodal axis tends to act rather like an unaspected planet, it carries deep karmic issues that break through from time to time with tremendous power and are seemingly unrelated to the everyday life of the person. This can manifest rather like schizophrenia and is reflected in the contradiction of a deeply moralistic man who nevertheless used - and killed - prostitutes. Sutcliffe is said to have preferred his mother's company and his Neptune opposition to the Moon suggests that he idealised her and his very wide Neptune trine to Venus suggests that he had brought forward from other lives an underlying Madonna-whore dichotomy in which women can either be spiritual or sexual but not both, which could easily have twisted in the present life to a soul imperative to 'purify' women who did not match up to his ideal of sainted womanhood.

Having read an outline biography of the mystic St Teresa of Avila (28 March 1515, sunrise chart: 5.48 am, Avilia, Spain) and noted that when she was only seven she left home with her young brother with the apparent intention of travelling to Moorish territory "to be beheaded for Christ", I wondered whether that was a soul purpose or an imperative from the past. With Neptune closely conjunct the South Node in Aquarius

it felt as though it may well be the latter with a strong martyrdom theme running deep in her past - especially as she has Chiron in Pisces. Teresa had a long period of ill health after she became a nun and in her autobiography, *The Way of Perfection*, says 'I did not know how to proceed in prayer or how to become recollected, and so I took much pleasure in it and dedicated to follow that path with all my strength'. A statement reflecting her Sun conjunct Venus in Aries - and one of her biographers states that 'she was held back by a strong desire to be appreciated by others' (her North Node in Leo) but that a mystical experience of the 'sorely wounded Christ' 'dislodged the egoism that had hindered her spiritual development'. Her all too physical ecstatic manifestations of God's presence within her, which led to some priests accusing her of intercourse with the devil, most probably reflect her Moon in Taurus but could also indicate the influence of the mystical Neptune.

Finally, I looked at another religious figure, Mother Teresa. She has two charts, the most usual one, 27 August 1910, 2.25 pm. Skopje, is based on her christening date when she 'began life in Christ'. Her actual birth was a day earlier, 26 August 1920.⁵ Mother Teresa was twelve when she received the call of God and "had to be a missionary to spread the love of Christ". Both charts give her the Sun in the service-orientated sign of Virgo:

"I heard the call to give up all and follow Christ into the slums to serve Him amongst the poorest of the poor. It was an order."

Her Saturn trine to Mars and the Sun indicates aligning the will to serve the Self rather than the ego, breaking free from old vows, finding autonomy and developing self-assertion. She appears to have taken God as

her father figure although she is clear that God cannot be blamed for what happens to people:

"When a poor person dies of hunger, it has not happened because God did not take care of him or her.

It has happened because neither you nor I wanted to give that person what he or she needed."

In her birth chart the Moon is conjunct the North Node in Taurus, indicating that she has to rework the past and to take more of the positive side of Taurus into her life. As a soul purpose, this means becoming more aware of being an immortal soul who happens to be on a human journey and finding the inner security that such a realisation brings. In the christening chart, the Moon has moved into Gemini which would not involve a reworking of the past in the same way.

It may of course be that to take up a vocation is to follow a soul imperative. Both the Teresas have the Saturn-Mars connection that suggests they have been nuns who have handed over their will to God in former lives and both have strong opposition crosses involving the nodes (although not grand crosses) in their charts. More work will be need to establish whether the soul imperative was aligned with the soul purpose.

Appendix

Chart patterns are also indicators of soul purpose:

Grand Crosses = what the soul must bring into harmony, forces that impel the soul towards evolution.

The Crosses of Incarnation into matter:

Cardinal, fixed and mutable represent basic pathways that can operate on three levels according to soul's evolution:

'Lowest level': unconscious unity that is personality centred

'Middle level': conscious duality, personality and soul entering into dialogue.

'Highest level': transpersonal expression, conscious unity, soul centred.

Cardinal cross: personality is vehicle for the soul, experience is based on spiritual attraction and intent. Can be a path of sacrifice and service according to sun sign or testing Duty and Relations with Others. Dharma, responsibilities, stress is resolved through action not contemplation, prefers not to look deeply inside oneself.

e.g. Lowest level of Capricorn would be seeking personal authority and power, middle level could be seeking authority out in the world and may become a scapegoat as a way of resolving duality; highest level seeks initiation and spiritual authority.

Fixed: the desires motivate. Path of devotion and will. Resistance to change, tight control, domineering, acquisitiveness, accumulation, rigidity - need to let go. Aspirations motivate.

e.g. Lowest level of Taurus could be seeking worldly status or sensual satisfaction; middle level, using status to improve material conditions for others. highest level, liberation from attachment to matter, establishment of one's true spiritual identity.

Mutable cross: desires motivate. Wisdom and Balance. Flexibility, problem solving, 'leaky aura', over-responsive to others. Need to develop discipline, focus, discrimination, openness to new information.

e.g. Lowest level of Virgo becomes the drudge; middle level has a vocation to serve; highest level, can serve without need for recognition.

Yod = what the soul has come to integrate.

Split charts = split souls. Check planets to see what parts are split off, are they past life or this life.

Grand Sextiles = spiritual purpose to be made manifest

Mystic rectangles = seeking spiritual illumination and ways to manifest hard won gifts.

Grand Trines: Gifts to be reclaimed.

¹ Karmic astrology and soul purpose are delineated at length in my books *Patterns of the Past* and *Karmic Connections* both published by Wessex Astrologer.

² *The Yavanajataka of Sphujidvaja*, trans. David Pingree, Harvard University Press 1978. This book is almost impossible to get hold of but I do have a copy if anyone is interested.

³ See my website www.judyhall.co.uk for details of these retreats

⁴ See my book *The Hades Moon: Pluto in aspect to the Moon* Samuel Weiser

⁵ Date taken from Nobelprize.org