

The Shattering of Life As We Knew It

By Janet Booth

“What’s going in the stars?” people are asking me about the recent tragic events.

We’re in a period of great change. But who’d have thought there would be so much change *all in one day*? Certainly not me! In retrospect – hindsight’s 20-20 - we can always find several “signposts in the sky,” with Saturn looming large in the picture. All this tragedy seems so unreal, yet terribly too real. It’s not a horror film – it’s the news. Saturn rules reality. And you’ve heard the recent saying, “Reality Bites.”

Long-term Cycles Set the Stage

Now that we’re in the 2000s, the 2 in numerology shows it’s time for unity and cooperation. These are Libra traits, along with harmony, fairness and teamwork. One of the primary planetary combinations of 2001-2002 marks the halfway point of a long-term (38-year) cycle that began in the sign of Libra in 1982 when Saturn joined Pluto. Saturn is related to systems, structures and governments. Pluto is the transformer, sometimes destroying the old to make way for the new. It is related to hidden forces, the criminal element, death and rebirth. A positive symbol for Pluto is the phoenix rising from the ashes of destruction. Pluto is also related to finances and shared resources, including the stock market. Our recent recession worries and market dips are definitely related to this Saturn-Pluto opposition. Our struggles in sharing the world’s resources may be the karmic result of not adapting the values we should have 20 years ago to share Spaceship Earth with all peoples and nations as equal partners. The first Earth Day was over 30 years ago and Americans still aren’t environmentally conscientious!

Pluto is currently in Sagittarius, the sign related to philosophies, belief systems, religions, interactions with foreigners and long distance travel. Pluto’s mission in this sign is to transform these areas. It does seem like we’ve seen an increase in airplane death tragedies in the years since Pluto entered Sag in 1995-6, including TWA 800 and JFK Jr’s. death. When Pluto is connected to the “heavy” planet, Saturn, they rock foundations, literally and figuratively. That’s what happened on Sept. 11th.

When Saturn is emphasized, the rings that bind us (or webs we’ve woven) are subject to scrutiny. Responsibilities weigh heavily on us. We take a look at the rules of the game and we realize the impact of how we’ve defined things. Saturn wants us to grow up and be mature, no matter what age. If we refuse, Saturn will exact a price, probably a failure of some sort. Saturn is the main planet in charge of reality. It signifies obstacles and delays, emphasizes boundaries and definitions, and pushes us to know our limits. It’s in Gemini, the sign of thinking and communications. As the tester, it is now testing our thought forms.

Saturn is associated with time. Its regular cycle with Jupiter strikes a cultural drumbeat, showing the concerns of the times. These two join up every 20 or so years, and can spend a century of these conjunctions occurring in signs of the same element. In 1980-

81, Jupiter joined Saturn in Libra, which is an air sign. That is the element related to communications, and the 20-year period up to the year 2000 coincided with an information explosion/revolution. But if we really had incorporated the Libra vibe, surely we would be living in better harmony and peace now, sharing better. In 2000 Jupiter joined Saturn in Taurus, an earth sign, showing a shift back into a material mode. This is the last phase of a series of Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions in earth signs, the main portion of which ran from 1840 to 1960. After 2020, the Jupiter-Saturn conjunctions move to air signs for over a century, so this is our last cycle to get their message about controlled growth on the material level. This cycle is not supposed to be about self-indulgence and “the one with the most toys wins.” Rather, it’s time to make every day Earth Day, remembering where all our “stuff” comes from. Most modern people are quite out of touch with the earth and the elements. Now maybe we’ll stop to think of how everything interrelates. For instance, my sister recently returned from Africa and relayed the process for preparing our coffee: many steps with much hand labor - largely by women paid only a pittance, all so the civilized societies can enjoy an uplifting jolt of energy at an “affordable” price.

So we have come to the testing point of the Saturn-Pluto cycle that began in Libra. Saturn is half of the sky away from (“opposition”) Pluto, with Saturn in Gemini and Pluto in Sagittarius. Systems (Saturn) are being destroyed (Pluto). The old rules (Saturn) don’t work any longer (Pluto). Our thinking (Gemini) has to transform (Pluto) toward the higher principles (Sagittarius). But we have to beware the destructive power (Pluto) of our beliefs (Sagittarius), such as religious fanaticism. We need to look at the destructive power of beliefs in our *own* culture, too, not just finger-point at others. Our own rednecks and right wing Fundamentalists (part of our “shadow” side) have exhibited similarly dangerous thinking.

In my Janet’s PLAN-ITS 2001 and 2002 calendars, I wrote about the Saturn-Pluto opposition:

This is your signal to get your act together and make the changes that you need to. ... [If you do not] change outworn structures, life will force you to, and not necessarily nicely.

So life is forcing us to change, not so nicely.

Here’s part of a 2002 overview I was writing, prior to the Sept. 11 attack:

After surviving the fixed grand cross eclipse in August 1999, other astrological combinations tend to pale in comparison and seem not so intimidating. Still, we’re all wondering what impact the Saturn-Pluto opposition will have, particularly on the global economy.

We will now see how every sector of our existence will be affected by the events of Sept. 11. Everything is so interconnected these days, no stone will go unturned. [The 1999 pattern led some people toward millennium madness and end-of-the-world dire predictions, quoting Nostradamus (as you see a lot of today, too), yet produced very little major news stories. But eclipses have a tendency to reverberate over months or years following the actual date of the Eclipse.]

The Saturn-Pluto opposition is a long-term influence, in effect over many months. We expected peaks in its effects when their opposition is closest to exact, around 8/5/01, 11/2/01 and 5/25/02. The 9/11 strike wasn't too far from the 8/5 peak, and it was very close to the Full Moon on 9/2, which featured the Moon in a difficult pattern called a "Grand Cross." It was lined up across from (opposite) the Sun (as it is at all Full Moons; that's the definition of a Full Moon), with both at right angles to Saturn opposite Pluto, all 4 forming the Cross. This is considered the most powerfully challenging interplanetary combination. Still, the 9/2 Full Moon isn't when the attack occurred. Other factors had to come into position.

The Plot Thickens Over the Summer

Mars passes by any part of its orbit about once every two years. All summer long, this planet of aggression was slow due to being "Retrograde" (apparent backward motion), moving back and forth in the neighborhood of a star in the constellation of Scorpio called Antares. The roots of this word are *ant* (like anti) = against, combined with *Ares*, the war god, a similar to the word Aries, the sign Mars rules and another name for Mars, as well. To look at them with the naked eye, Antares looks a little like Mars does when it's further from earth. This summer, Mars was about as near as it gets to earth, thus bigger and brighter. The ancient astrologers considered the combination of Mars and Antares to be a portent of war.

And guess what was near Antares then (and now), too? Pluto! Mars came very close to Pluto in its backward march; together, they're a deadly combination. And in its back and forth Retrogradation, Mars passed the asteroid Chiron three times. The first time was on May Day, the second around Memorial Day, and the third time around Aug. 12. Mars was only 8 degrees beyond Chiron on Sept. 11th, still within the range considered effective. Chiron (known as the "Wounded Healer") relates to wounds and hurts, healing and teaching. Like Pluto, it's in Sagittarius, showing we can be hurt by our beliefs and religions or hurt through them. And this points again to air travel as another arena for trouble.

What else is Mars up to? From mid-April through mid-October, it's in a condition called "out of bounds," kind of like stepping off the normal playing surface. Usually you think of the zodiac belt as the circle of the constellations, Aries through Pisces, that the planets travel around. These signs form the circumference of the zodiac belt. The belt has a girth, or width, as well. The planets do a wave pattern in parabolas above and below the center point of this girth, which is the celestial equator. Ordinarily, they stay with 23 degrees of the celestial equator, but once in a while, they exceed this and go "out of bounds." The energies associated with the planet go to an extreme or get out of control. In this case, it can signal Mars' happier associations: leadership, pioneering, male energy or physical fitness. But it can also mean extremes of Mars' Achilles' heels: selfishness, anger and aggression.

Also, this summer, at its beginning at the Summer Solstice, we had a Solar Eclipse at 0 degrees of Cancer. A Solstice shows features of the season to follow (which lasts until

the Fall Equinox on Sept. 22). A Solar Eclipse shows major events. At the time of the terrorist attack on America, Mars had just entered cool and calculating Capricorn and moved opposite (180 degrees from) the Solstice Eclipse degree. An opposition is a natural position of confrontation. Additionally, Mars entered the range of degrees in which it will oppose Jupiter, which exaggerates what it's in contact with. Jupiter rules foreign affairs, philosophies and religions, and air travel. It's in Cancer, the sign of home turf, and America's birth sign. On Sept. 11, Mars was poised to make its presence felt.

The Day Is Signaled by Mercury, Venus, the Moon - and Numerology

My friend, numerologist Sally Faubion in San Francisco, emailed me this tidbit:

9/11/2001* -- the numbers are those of the Nazis - really! (Hitler had a 5 destiny and was born on a 2 day and most of the head honcho SS Nazis were born on the 11th or the 29th or had an 11 or 5 destiny.) 9/11/2001 reduces to the 41/5 which is also a number, if experienced on the negative side, which brings changes through explosion, the air and fire.

*destiny # calculation: $9 + 1 + 1 + 2 + 0 + 0 + 1 = 14, 1 + 4 = 5$

There are sectors of the chart called houses that relate to various circumstances. The part related to death and transformation is the 8th House, and it is ruled by Pluto. In the USA birth chart, the 8th House cusp is at 1 degree of Capricorn. The day of the attack, Mars, moving half a degree a day, passed over it, a definite indicator of a lethal blow. (A note for astrology aficionados: This is from the Placidus house system chart calculated using the 2:18 AM birth time for the USA when the Declaration of Independence began being signed. It has Gemini rising with Uranus on the Ascendant.)

On 9/11, the Moon, which moves 12-15 degrees a day, moved through Cancer, passing the Eclipse degree. Granted, it moves through each sign once a month, but now Mars was opposite this. The attack took place only hours before the opposition was formed by the Moon. By the time the opposition was exact, we were dealing with the emotional impact (Moon) of an attack on our soil (Cancer).

Jeff Jawer and Rick Levine point out in an article on their web site, www.StarIQ.com, that on 9/11 the rising Mercury was connected with the Sun and Uranus by 7ths-of-the-sky-apart angles ("septiles") which are indicators of fate. The wake-up call (Uranus) of the messenger (Mercury) has hit us right in the heart (the Sun).

Venus, the planet of love, harmony and diplomatic relations, stood roughly opposite Uranus, the planet of the revolutionary, of surprise and shocking change. This indicates the balance of power has been shattered. Venus is in Leo, the sign of the King, confronted by Uranus in its home sign of Aquarius. This can represent the masses in general, or it might mean the outcasts of civilization. When our country originated, Uranus represented us – we were the rebels fighting the King. But now, we're the King being rebelled against. Robert Blaschke points out that Venus on Sept. 11 was at 18 degrees Leo, the degree of that 1999 Solar Eclipse. So maybe we haven't slipped past that Eclipse totally unscathed. Dietrech Pessin has shown the relation of moon phases

that occur at about the same degree of the same sign in a pattern over a 2-1/4-year period. She calls these "Moon Families" and they consist of a New Moon, First Quarter Moon, Full Moon and Last Quarter Moon, each 9 months after one another. The Moon Family of the Aug. 1999 New Moon Eclipse has its Last Quarter phase on 11/08/01. That's less than a week after the next Saturn-Pluto opposition. We may see more of this Eclipse's power soon. And we may not have seen the last of the big changes that are in store for us all.

The Time and Place Factor In

As the two planes crashed into the World Trade Center towers in New York City, Mercury, the messenger planet, was rising above the horizon (a powerful position in astrology), although no one would have noticed it amongst the confusion (it's not often visible to the naked eye). The attack was a message, a wake-up call. All of us should look at our "shadow" sides to see what changes we need to make.

Mercury was just entering the degree range where it doubles back over when Retrograde Oct. 1-22. On 9/11, it occupied the zodiac degree where it changes back to Direct motion on 10/22. There is a good chance we won't have all the information we need on this situation before then, or that we find out a key piece of the puzzle around that date. Meanwhile, with the Mercury Retrograde period upon us, we should be careful of jumping to erroneous conclusions or being subject to misinformation.

An additional pattern was taking place on Sept. 11, too, called a "Finger of God," said to indicate destiny. It involved the Saturn-Pluto opposition with Jupiter, one sign ahead of Saturn, and in a difficult 5-signs-apart connection ("inconjunct") to Pluto, signaling growing pains. With the signs involved, religious beliefs and foreign affairs are highlighted, along with power struggles. At the time of the New York City attacks, the Finger of God pattern was formed by the 8th House "cusp" (or doorway, the power place of a house), being inconjunct to Pluto, one sign from Saturn and two from Jupiter. This cusp was only at the appropriate degrees to make this triangle of destiny for a few minutes of time. (House cusps change rapidly, about a degree every four minutes, since they're related to the earth rotating 360 degrees every 24 hours. And they are specific to the longitude and latitude. During those minutes, the 8th House cusp would not be at those degrees in Philadelphia or Boston, as they were in New York.) The Finger pointed at Pluto, showing it is our destiny to transform, even if it has to begin as destruction. Sometimes you wonder just which finger God is using in the Finger of God.

In my experience, the Finger of God pattern signals a series of related events that seem fated. Weird Event A leads to Weird Event B and you're asking yourself, "What can be the meaning of these weird events? I know everything happens for a reason, but what's the reason for this?" Then B leads to C and C is cool, and you realize you couldn't have had C without A and B. So hopefully you learn to trust that everything that happens, happens for a reason, only at first the reason may not seem reasonable. I hope that's what we have here. We'll have to wait a while for C, though, I think. Perhaps the good outcomes are that we will all think about life differently and live our lives differently. As

a nation, we need to interact with the other nations of the world differently. At home and around the world, individually and collectively, we need to replace hate with love. We're seeing our "true colors" now – and they're not necessarily red, white and blue. Do you have compassion or do you want retribution? Are you filled with fear or do you have faith? Those are today's big questions as we face tomorrow. Amid the terrible tragedy, we see a sense of unity and a spirit of connectedness growing, and that's a good thing. One we need to extend beyond our borders to include our entire globe.

In Conclusion

Our reality has been shattered. But we can – and must - put the pieces back together again. Pluto brings rebuilding. It signals survivors. What remains to be seen is what kind of reality we will create on top of our ashes. Will we sell out freedom (Sagittarius) for security (Saturn)? Or build a new foundation (Saturn) based on communicating (Gemini) and sharing resources (Pluto) internationally (Sagittarius)? Will we continue to use Mars' aggressive side, perpetuating war, or can we use Mars' pioneering spirit to forge a truly brave new world, with respect for each individual? That would be a Herculean "Humpty Dumpty" effort, but what other choice do we have, to survive - and thrive? If we base our future on more balanced values, we might experience the cool "C" that the Finger of God points to.

I think it's important now to focus on the positive outcomes of Sept. 11. Look to the Light. Do not be seduced by "the Dark Side of the Force," such as fear and hatred. Love. Love yourself. Love your family. Love your neighbors, town and nation. But don't stop there. Love the world. Love all peoples. Love the animals. Love the mountains, plains and forests. Love the oceans. Love your enemy. Love.