

Strands of Dharma



"lateral gravitation" by Lanvi Nguyen

INTELLIGENCE for Libra by Eric Francis

Your destination on Dec. 21, 2020 is a place where you may embark on your true calling: where you find yourself in your work, and in your most expressive creativity. I know this sounds ideal, and for some, unattainable. Regardless, I suggest you hold your highest vision, and aim to connect with developments in society that help get you where you want to be. You're able to blend your ability to take a risk with a conservative approach to existence that allows you both to experiment and to focus a result. This most unusual chart illustrates enough confidence and faith in yourself to be able to take action, and to handle any circumstance you may encounter.

The journey to this destination, though, involves doing something potentially difficult for you, which is engaging conflict in an honest and above-board way. I know that most "spiritual" teaching is supposedly about avoiding conflict, which really means suppressing it. One typical result is akin to what happens when forest fires are suppressed: the conditions become correct for a really, really big one. So

what you want is to design a controlled, conscious approach to disagreement, which will teach you how to be both sincere and sensitive.

Presumably you want to create a space of peace and productivity with your loved ones, your friends and your neighbors, yet this can only come from being real. Being real does not mean being aggressive. It means being forward enough, and courageous enough, to facilitate a real conversation, and perhaps get the result you want. In this sense, the usual Libran gift for diplomacy will be transformed (with your practice and participation) into a talent for leverage. There's more to it than this, of course, but there's your fortune cookie version.

Your path to this destination also takes you through the territory of challenging everything that makes you feel secure, or insecure. They are different sides of the same concept. These ideas and what they represent get put through both analysis and real-time tests, and are seen for what they are.

Something Like This Has Happened Before

At the moment and through the next two years, there is unusual activity in Capricorn, which is at the root of your chart. The now close-and-getting-closer conjunction of Saturn and Pluto on Jan. 12, 2020, is part of it; there is also the ingress of the influential, high-energy centaur Pholus into Capricorn, and a diversity of conditions related to the connection of Capricorn to your relationship sign, Aries. I'll cover all that in more detail, but for now, we can say that what happens in the other cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer and Cap) shows up in your life — the question is where and how.

When reading the chart of someone born in the 1980s or early 1990s, I explain that they arrived in an earthquake zone. Saturn, Uranus and Neptune all passed through Capricorn, giving all of existence for such individuals the sensation of being on shaky ground.

The world responded: a few years after the Saturn-Uranus-Neptune pattern, there was no USSR, no Berlin Wall, no real threat from the Cold War, and there were many other rearrangements to geopolitics and to our own society.

The structure of consciousness itself changed as well. In 1980, being psychic was considered spooky or a joke. By 1990, it was considered normal. It was as if the previously solid structure of Capricorn, and the beliefs that it represents, were hollowed out by this unusual alignment, and it became a different thing. Something similar is happening now, and in truth has been since about 2008, when Pluto entered Capricorn. Yet the presence of Saturn is accelerating the process.

Because Capricorn is at the root of your chart, you now live on what amounts to an astrological fault line. There is more activity in Capricorn now than there has been in the past 25 years combined, and it's ramping up to full strength. This is in the form of the Saturn-Pluto conjunction, which takes place in your 4th solar house (Capricorn, which is your natal 4th house if Libra rising).

The 4th represents the ground we stand on. It's our symbolic taproot into the Earth and into the past. It's the ancestral lineage, particularly on the father's side.

In the most basic sense, the 4th represents your home, and your sense of safety and security on our little planet. In any chart, or any life, it's a sensitive zone, often full of history and mystery. What makes humans feel safe, or unsafe, is a real study in perception. Billionaires who live isolated from humanity and who have access to underground bunkers freak out about what might happen. That's because they have failed, so far, to figure out that fear is something that happens in consciousness and not in reality. Events happen in reality; fear happens in the mind.

Fear tends to influence people to build heavier structures, thicker walls and denser barricades. Early cultures (not subject to colonization and development) that have evolved in earthquake zones tend to inhabit lighter structures, things like tents and thatched huts, which can withstand movement; and if they fall down, nobody gets hurt.

This is the approach I suggest you take. Lighten up your life. Cast off possessions that you don't need. Clean and clear closets and storage spaces. This has spiritual value, though primarily I mean for the physical benefits of having less stuff and more space for your consciousness to expand. This will also be helpful if you decide at some point in the next year or so to move to a different location. There is rarely time for this kind of sorting out when you change locations or upgrade your living space, so stuff tends to get ported from place to place. It's better to do this incrementally, and it comes with the general theme of making things lighter and less dense — a theme that seems to be going around these days and would be significantly helpful for you to apply.

As I have suggested in other readings, while you do this, keep an archive of your most meaningful papers and artifacts. There are some people who just purge everything, by the box. That's not a good idea. There are things you will want when you arrive in your new life — important connections to the past.

Also, be respectful of the property of others. It's possible that you're storing the possessions of relatives in your space — possibly your children, possibly the belongings of deceased older relatives. Keep a mind for what belongs not to you but to the family, and determine what to do about it. The presence of Pholus in this

angle of your chart is almost proof positive that you will be handling collective, multi-generational property, which may include real estate.

In all that you do, bear in mind that your primary responsibility is to resolve things; to bring certain matters to an end. Other regions of your chart may provide clues as to what, though any such subject matter will make itself known. To the extent that this is centered around your family, I would offer you two reminders: one is that it will help you to pay attention to what is your karma and what is not. The best way you can do that is to ask out loud, and request information back from Source. The second suggestion is to remember that you don't have to "do the whole thing," but rather be mindful of the fact that you have assistance, and remember that small moves mean a lot.

Chiron in Capricorn — an Inquiry

One way to investigate potentially hidden material in your 4th house is to check what was happening in your life in the immediately post-9/11 era. I would start on Sept. 11, 2001, and count four years to Sept. 11, 2005.

One issue with that era is that everyone was so traumatized by the Sept. 11 incident that it was difficult to keep track of our personal affairs. This incident delivered a blow to the very ground of being, and you may have experienced this directly. This shock may have masked over, from your memory, some of the personal material that was going on for you, which is likely to have been significant.

I suggest you be thorough about this. Go through journals, email archives, files, notes and photos and see what you find out about that time. Pay careful attention to matters related to your family (particularly your father's side, but everyone), why you lived where you lived, who you lived with, and matters related to home ownership and estates.

Chiron Is Now in Aries

Once again, Chiron is prominent in your astrology. While there are many moving parts to the current picture, Chiron in your opposite sign or 7th house will be one of the most noticeable transits of the next eight years. In some ways, it contains a key to all of the others, and provides you with an available resource.

The 7th is an important house in that it describes your prevailing environment. All the houses relate to specific environments, though the 7th has a way of representing the environment generally: the overall vibe of what you face every day, like the psychic weather. Your solar 7th house is Aries; if you are Libra rising, all of Aries is your whole-sign 7th house.

One effect of this is that you're accustomed to people coming toward you. Aries is high-energy and it tends to act; that's what you're used to. Part of what you're here to learn is how to assert yourself, and to move toward what you want.

As a point of background, the past seven years of Uranus moving through Aries has been destabilizing in your relationship life and your environment generally. Uranus, whether in your sign or your opposite sign, comes with a lot of shakeups, and this particular Uranus cycle was somewhat infamous. It included the seven contacts of the Uranus-Pluto square (for a few years circa 2012), and three contacts of the Uranus-Eris conjunction. I have covered these in many prior annuals, so I will just sum up here.

In one sense, Uranus transiting your 7th house was the very antithesis of Libra; your sign is about balance. Uranus is about shaking the tree, rocking the boat, the strike of lightning and the stroke of genius. Your sign is ruled by Venus and Saturn; you prefer a coherent presentation, clothes that match, and stable, dependable people. You don't always get this, and Uranus has presented you with quite the opposite over the past few years — going back to around 2011.

Note that you may have accumulated an interesting collection of people during these years; as time goes on, you may decide that some were not nearly as weird as you thought they were; they just didn't meet your expectations of who you thought they should be. Over time, you will understand them better, and you could benefit greatly from reaching out to some who seem to have moved on from your life.

Uranus is about to move into Taurus, which is another story; and Chiron has taken up residence in Aries. This will, in some ways, be a stabilizing influence. Though it tends to bridge the two, Chiron has more in common with Saturn than with Uranus. Chiron is methodical, and seeks stability. What it has in common with Uranus is its intensity, which is focused to precision with Chiron.

Dharma: A Different Focus on Relationships

Chiron in Aries for the next eight years will present you with a different focus on relationships compared to your recent experiences. Where Uranus is distracting, and scattering, Chiron draws you right into the highest priorities you need to attend to. This is challenging because so much about relationships tends to be about avoidance rather than taking care of necessities: for example, of the relationship's growth and healing agenda.

That theme will come to front and center under this extended phase of astrology. With Chiron moving through your 7th, your relationships must focus on their purpose, whatever purpose that might be. Think of this as dharma, which is a central organizing principle of the universe. Translated from Sanskrit, it

means *acting as if to hold the world together*.

We live in times when it's supposedly appropriate to smash on the world. It's become acceptable to be rude, to ignore communications, to tease people by pretending you're about to text them, to break up with them by text, to get as much for free as you can, and to do as little work as you can. This is not helping anyone or anything, particularly the practitioners of such a philosophy.

We have a massive swath of the American public, and those of other countries, taking a nihilist position in politics. This comes from the same word root as *annihilate*, which means reduce to nothing. On many days, it seems that's where the world is headed; and this theory, which amounts to toxic anarchy, has manifestations on both wings of the political spectrum, which are usually the only ones we hear from. This tears at the fabric of the world rather than holding it together.

Even if there is no specific intent, the fact that the internet has supplanted nearly all previous forms of communication and socialization has had a scattering effect on society and on individuals. The ground beneath us is crumbling, which is a reflection of the ground within. Notably, much of the astrology I associate with this process has taken place in your house of relationships (Aries, your 7th place) and your house of home and security (Capricorn, your 4th place). So this has had an especially direct impact on you, and its effects have been contrary to all that we love and value about Libra: its sense of balance, of connection, and of esthetics.

Chiron transiting the 7th places an emphasis on connection and on healing through connection, and the healing of connection. It's likely to place a magnifying lens over certain relationships, and show you what you need to address. So at first, this transit might seem to have a destabilizing effect. Chiron will begin to point out potential places where thought, focus and work are necessary fairly soon after it arrives in a new phase of its cycle (which it has today, as of this writing).

This is part of why Chiron has such an odd, mixed reputation and why so many astrologers avoid it. However, none of what Chiron points out is its fault; rather, it's there to help set things right.

Chiron will help you address relationship patterns that you may have wanted to change for years. Should those exist, there is of course the reason they have persisted: it was inconvenient or painful to address them. So here, we will get Chiron in its manifestation as the "inconvenient benefic" (borrowing a phrase from the late Al Morrison). With Chiron, it's better to take action as soon as you become aware of something. This just works better and it gets the flow going in the

direction of gradual progress; then you don't have to do everything at once, or wait for a system (such as a relationship) to break down before you take action.

Chiron in the 7th: Signifies People

Chiron in the 7th points to the presence of two general categories of individuals: one is the broad category of teachers, healers and mentors. When we take Chiron to the essence of its being, this is one of the pure crystals. The mythical Chiron raised a generation of heroes from the classical Greek era. He was a guide to many. He taught medicine and surgery to Asclepius, the god whose realm covers this topic. Think of it: he taught medicine to the god of medicine. From this we get a sense of Chiron not just as teacher but meta-teacher.

Second is people who come to you and ask for help, directly or indirectly. This is your opportunity to pass forward the good graces that have been given to you by your own teachers and healers, and to assist others in ways appropriate to the situation. How do you know when it's safe, or appropriate, to proceed? A Course in Miracles tells us that when assisting someone will not harm either party, that is when it's safe to proceed. So if you are concerned that some harm may come to either of you through a healing process, it's best to wait until such a time as that condition changes — or refer the person to someone more suited to them.

Under this influence, notice who shows up in your energy field. Note each and every new person who enters your life, and the circumstances under which they arrive. This includes passing on the stairs, chance meeting in an elevator, standing at the next urinal at Madison Square Garden before Radiohead went on, helping pick up her books on the street outside an NYU dormitory, and so on. It's possible to work out a lot of karma in these chance encounters, and to meet people who become the most meaningful collaborators — if you're paying attention. The idea is not to be superstitious and mumble about how everything happens for a reason; rather, be observant and engage with the flow.

Meanwhile, pay attention to what you need; begin to make the match-ups between the two and see how the mutuality of the bond manifests. Take your time. It will probably happen in ways you're not expecting. Chiron at its best is slow-acting and, in relationships, summons an intentional process of getting to know someone, and focusing on developing the purpose of the meeting. Note: if sometimes it doesn't seem to manifest, just let it go.

While I often describe the 7th as the general environment, and the house focused on relationships, it's also the house of *seeing yourself in the other*. It's right at the core of the *zone of projection*, so it's vitally necessary to filter your perceptions for what is really all about you and not about anyone else. This is particularly true if you're working with people in their healing process. You need to understand the

dangers of transference and countertransference (both of which are types of projection) well enough to spot them when they are happening.

While many people are busy tearing at the delicate fabric of the world, Chiron in the 7th ultimately says that your role is to gently weave the strands of dharma, one by one, day by day and relationship by relationship. Stay close to your purpose. Keep knitting and embroidering and making that stitch in time. Remind yourself often: *I am here only to be truly helpful.*

Understanding Your Sexuality

Through 2019, Chiron will be conjunct another slow-mover in your 7th house, called Salacia. Named for the sea-nymph consort of ocean god Neptune, her name is presumably the root of both salt (as in saline, salt water) and the modern word *salacious*. With Salacia (which moves much more slowly than Chiron) in early Aries, hovering around the “personal is political” Aries Point, we have seen many, many salacious personal details of people’s lives, whether true or not, blown into the political and collective spheres.

Lest we think this is a good thing, consider how little discussion there has been of what is right and true; of what we all want; of what people can do to improve matters; how men and women share many mutual needs for one another, and also share responsibility for what happens within relationships; and how we can grapple with such issues as sexual consent (and what it obscures, which is the whole matter of honest desire).

Chiron conjunct Salacia is part of a more complex aspect pattern, involving slow-movers Pholus and Quaoar in your 4th house. I have covered this in detail in the reference readings for Aries and Capricorn, two of the other signs on the cardinal cross and therefore the most significant to you. These transits in Capricorn will bring in the topic of family material, which relates to the themes of Capricorn, and the 4th, and the planets involved. All matters of sexuality and relationships stem from the home environment.

It would seem that we in American society, and many places in the West, and many elsewhere, can only handle sexuality as a salacious topic: wrapped in scandal, crime, alleged misconduct or the vague and entirely subjective issue of appropriateness (the discussion of sex is rarely held as such).

When it’s not any of those things, most often the issues are seen as political, or they are made political. This is a diversion from doing the deep relationship work that we must do if we want to heal ourselves, have more grounded and productive relationships — and make the world a better place. Instead, the general trend,

consistent with ripping away at the delicate material of society, is to make our world less trusting, more deeply divided, a more dangerous place, by prohibiting or subverting discussions of things we really need to be talking about more openly.

It is rare indeed that adults in our society have an adult discussion about sexuality. However, with Chiron conjunct Salacia in your chart through 2019 and 2020, this is one of the things that's going to come up for you, no matter how you may feel about it. It would be helpful if you were to orient on a positive frame of mind, and the potential that you have to grow and to share.

Note the level on which most of society takes sex: as a necessary evil, an actual evil, an inconvenience, or merely an itch to scratch. This programming is coming from nearly all quarters, and we need more positive influences and better models. Because Chiron and Salacia are meeting right in your house of relationships, as the first order of business associated with the new Chiron transit, you are involved as teacher, student and direct participant in the new paradigm.

I often recall a teaching of Alice A. Bailey's in *Esoteric Astrology*, the most influential astrology book hardly anyone has read (it's not easy, but it's worth it). She offers many interesting background details about the astrological signs. I am paraphrasing a bit, though she says that people (as in astrologers) think Scorpio is the sign of sexuality; but if you really want to understand this topic, study the sign Libra carefully — Libra is the sign to most effectively focus this discussion (that means you).

We could start with a new definition of the whole topic area. When aware, sensitive and expressive, in a tuned vehicle, sexuality is a direct pathway to the core of creative awareness, a way to tap into and experience the creative force directly. It contains the seed energy of love; and all of the healing codes, brain refreshing, psychic clearing, pressure equalization on the subtle planes and the physical; self-acceptance, love of other, and reverence for existence through sincere recognition of the feminine.

Oh, and babies can be made — but notice how few sexual "acts" or feelings result in babies! There are thousands of possibilities for how to play; just one makes babies. The one that Catholics grudgingly allow, as long as you don't feel good about it. And it would seem that this Catholic approach has taken over society: it's trendy to be all wound up about sin, and to be drowning in guilt and body shame. This is not helping anything, and the incoming energies are going to need you to hang loose and take things as they come rather than being judgmental about yourself or others.

Note that I am talking about sexuality in a way that it's rarely considered: as a tap into Source energy, whatever that is called: the vital force, the sacral life force,

orgone, kundalini, root chakra energy or whatever. It's true that there are many ways to tap into these things, though the problem of sexuality will continue to be a vexing one until it is addressed. It makes more sense to include the whole matter within the context of spiritual and personal development, rather than casting it off.

It is the most direct way to God, though this takes study and discipline and intention and some luck. And it would be set within the context of a culture that does not support these ideas — which indeed actively repels them. This is why conscious sexuality is considered an "enemy" of religion or to have no spiritual value. It's easier to influence and control people when they don't possess levels of awareness and these kinds of tools, so religion/government (agents of one another) has made sex into the shameful and disparaged thing that it is today.

The resources needed to get out of this are very, very basic. I won't say that it's easier than learning to play a musical instrument; the work required, particularly now, must be comprehensive and holistic. It is however on that level. It is learning to play an instrument — yourself. Let this be a gentle, intuitive and informed process. Learn how to be in tune. Learn to cultivate your affinity for pleasure and creativity — and your anxiety will gradually drain out of your psyche.

The Need to Renegotiate Long-Standing Commitments

One essential element of astrology taking hold now is Uranus in Taurus. While much of the ground is shifting beneath you, this transit will have an influence on relationships you're involved with; they are part of that shifting ground. To have Taurus in your 8th place speaks of your need for stability, and for something solid in your bonds with others, perhaps more than any other factor in your chart.

Uranus, however, is an influence that shakes up reality and liberates us from what is familiar and predictable. It can help as a utility in a time when so much else is changing, adjusting and rearranging. The presence of Chiron in your 7th will be shifting the meaning and purpose of all your relationships; you will therefore need to develop new terms of agreement, and that is a factor related to Uranus.

We tend to take a rigid view of relationship agreements; too often they seem not subject to adjustment. It would be better if you think of your agreements with others as distinct inventions to accommodate that particular interaction. Take any opportunity you can to make an agreement that actually serves both people. Take the approach that a win-win is possible — neither life nor happiness is a zero-sum game. There do not need to be winners and losers coexisting at one another's expense. Yet for that to work, we will need to open our minds and be available for something better.

Some of this may involve renegotiating sexual boundaries. Nothing says “potentially polyamorous” like Uranus in the 8th house. This does not mean you’ll wake up poly one day. Some people may wake up to the fact that they already were. Whatever this may indicate, it pretty much rules out a conventional approach to relating. It does describe something interesting, different and innovative; something that is unfamiliar to you and your partner.

Be aware that when dealing with particularly rigid people, or those who don’t have a sense that something else is possible, the path to a mutual resolve may be dissolving the relationship. It’s not worth the struggle to maintain something that is not working for both parties mutually, or not working for you. Be open to moving along and open to something new, if and when the time comes. You will have your options open.

Into Aquarius and the 5th House

As you go through these experiments in what makes you feel secure, and what helps you provide for your needs, bear in mind that this is a journey on the way to somewhere else. It’s true that your 4th house stuff — the earthquake zone — has gone on since 2008, when Pluto entered Capricorn. And while Pluto will still be in Capricorn even after the current wave of astrology reaches a point of arrival in late 2020, you will have been through a series of events that will help you gain mastery over yourself.

Yours is an air sign, co-ruled by Saturn. Both Jupiter and Saturn are headed for Aquarius, a fellow air sign; they settle into place on Dec. 21 2020. What’s so interesting here is that you have Aquarius associated with a house that involves taking risks and expressing yourself in new ways. Aquarius, for its part, is given to a kind of stability and predictability, though that is about to change. You can draw on the best elements of Aquarian consistency and also the best elements of its rebellious spirit.

This is one heck of a grand transit: the ruling planet of Aquarius coming back to its home sign; joined by Jupiter (which loves Aquarius); in your 5th house of self-expression. The upshot is that you will need to learn how to take bigger risks.

Everything you’re going through now and will experience through 2020 is preparation for this, and will teach you what it really means to dare. The concept of taking a chance in life has nearly lost its meaning. For you, risk means risking something tangible, something you can name, not merely a concept lurking in your mind. You need to know what, exactly, you’ve got on the line, and what you stand to gain. In truth, you have more to gain than you have to lose. Yet fear would easily obscure this fact, and keep it from your awareness.

Aquarius can tend toward logical thought patterns. When you choose to do something adventurous, the final decision will not come from your mind; it will come from your desire nature and your intuition, which is a form of body-knowledge. Notice who and what you're drawn to; notice who is drawn toward you; and pay attention to your options. Vast new fields of both personal experience and collaboration will open up — though the prerequisite is that you feel like you belong on the planet; that you feel at home in your home and in your body.

Even if you're only aware of wanting to be this way, that plus the aspiration to get there will be enough. Keep reaching for the light. Keep moving through your inner terrain, no matter how shaky or rocky, and remember: when in doubt, sleep in a tent. Lighten up what you think you need for shelter and protection. And take every opportunity to act as if to hold the world together, one strand of dharma at a time.