

Meeting the Wider World



'honolulu waimea valley arboretum skittles tree of life' by Lanvi Nguyen.

INTELLIGENCE for Leo by Eric Francis

"If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, Infinite. For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern."

— William Blake, c. 1793

When Jupiter and Saturn form their once-per-generation conjunction on Dec. 21, 2020, they do so in Aquarius, your opposite sign. Not just anywhere, either — in the first degree of Aquarius, as if for dramatic effect. What happens in Aquarius is something you experience directly in your environment; the 7th house in any form is the world we're looking right at and into; the world of perception and projection.

By all indications, your world expands as this conjunction takes shape, though you're currently opening up the space where this expansion will occur. You stabilize

something about your existence, after many recent years of shakeup and perhaps turmoil. It's as if you meet the world on entirely new terms — with new people and new opportunities and horizons that appear before your eyes.

Jupiter, about 1,200 times the size of Earth, aligns with Saturn, about 800 times the size of Earth. Jupiter alone has enough gravity to wobble the Sun; together there will be extra pull in the direction of the two planets. The conjunction will be quite a scene even from a modest telescope. Saturn has 62 natural satellites with proper names; as of last year, Jupiter has 79. These are miniature solar systems, which arise in tandem with one another on the event horizon of your life. This happens after a profound series of transitions (which have been underway since 2016 and which likely go back further).

There are times when the Sabian symbols come in handy, a degree-by-degree set of images that cover the entire zodiac. I'm especially fond of the first degree of Aquarius: an old adobe mission in California. Dane Rudhyar, in his 1973 rendering of the symbols, *An Astrological Mandala*, talks about the good works we do that have the ability to endure beyond our lifetimes. As the sign Aquarius suggests, we usually do this together, though it's often the vision and leadership of one person who crystallizes the process of creation. In this respect, it's essential that you continue to stand apart from others.

Recently, I posted my chart for the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction to Facebook, without saying what it was. Someone named Karen Tlusty caught the essence of this conjunction, particularly as it influences you: *"Tending to our personal spiritual flame will light the path of our evolution. We are vulnerable when we are drawn into the spiritual illusions of the group mind."*

As these two years develop, many different factors guide, nudge and push you into your individuality. This has been happening for a while, though granted, not in a particularly elegant fashion. The primary influence in recent years has been a series of eclipses in your sign and, to a lesser degree, in your opposite sign Aquarius. The epicenter was the Aug. 21, 2017, **total solar eclipse in late Leo** — an eclipse that was also an event in American history, and that marked a disturbing moment in it.

Solar eclipses in Leo have a greater than usual impact on everyone, though particularly you. The impact is through your sign and the star that rules it, the Sun, invested with the power of the Moon, and the lunar nodes. Even without the Jupiter-Saturn conjunction, these years would be a before-and-after time in your life. Yet with this

phase of your existence commemorated by such a beautiful conjunction, you are on notice that the work you're doing is beneficial and will come with its rewards. It would be better, though, not to think about those rewards so much and, instead, keep your focus on two themes: your work and your wellbeing.

Recovering from Eclipses

Leo is a fixed sign, and eclipses bring to bear tremendous pressure to change. Being a fixed sign means holding a kind of alignment or orientation; it's about stability. Eclipses of the Sun in your sign are especially challenging for Sun-ruled Leo, and there has been a series of them lately. The most recent recalled an earlier event from August 1999 that may still be a factor in your life.

For the next year or two, it would be wise to consider yourself in a kind of recovery phase from these most recent eclipses. Indicators in your chart suggest that you must be taking care of stress, workload, food and structuring your time; this would be a very good start.

Yet other factors suggest that putting emphasis on your spiritual life would be valuable. The two are related. You might say that Buddhism has two components — one being "chop wood and carry water" and the other being about mindfulness and awareness. There is another dimension to the mindfulness portion, which I will get into later, and that involves teaching. Teaching is the best way to facilitate learning. You grow exponentially when you share your ideas with others.

In hindsight, you will see that 2018 and 2019 mark a before-and-after point in your life. These happen occasionally; they are relatively rare, though you have one now. You're still working the line of demarcation; how you emerge from whatever you went through will mark your direction for the future.

Room to Experiment

Jupiter is in your fellow fire sign Sagittarius at the moment; it will be there until it enters Capricorn late in the year, which will help usher in many of the events I'm describing in this reading. Sagittarius is the 5th house of the archetypal Leo chart, whether you're Leo Sun or rising.

Put these factors together — Jupiter, Sagittarius, 5th — and you have room to explore, to experiment, and to try taking your life in unusual directions that your typically cautious approach does not really allow. For as courageous as you can be, you are also

not inclined to take chances, usually accepting that discretion is the better part of valor.

This year, let courage be the better part of valor. It's true that to the extent recent events have shaken you up, you might not be so inclined to. However, you need to get back on the horse of your own life, and ride again. Jupiter is providing enough "luck" and protection to give you some room for errors. The exception to this would be financial speculation. I do not suggest investing money in the businesses of others, or if you do, invest as much as you are wholly willing to lose. You might not; you could do very well; but this is a year to hedge certain bets.

Rather, invest in yourself, in what gives you pleasure and helps you feel free. You are doing some extraordinarily challenging and even difficult work in other areas of your life, and you need a place to stretch out and think about other things; to pursue purely personal interests that are not designed to benefit others. You share enough of yourself already.

The 6th House and Capricorn

If you are Leo, your 6th house (counting whole signs) is Capricorn; the same is true if you're Leo Sun (counting solar houses). Think of this as the archetypal chart for your sign, which in many ways describes you. Capricorn has a quality of high aspirations and great accomplishments; the 6th is the house of humble work, service, day-to-day efforts and the basic rituals that make up our lives. The suggestion here is that you invest your ambition into a job well done.

Leo is often miscast as the sign of bossy and egotistical people. Such individuals exist under every Sun or rising sign. I have a different theory about the essence of Leo, ruled by the Sun. The Sun holds the Solar System together. It's the primary source of energy that feeds life, including flooding us with a stream of subatomic particles day and night.

Your role as a Leo, accordingly, is to hold the world together, and to provide a source of heat and light. This is crucial for everyone in our time in history, as so many forces rip and pull at the fabric of existence. Using the Sun as your model, you provide a central gravitational force that holds the planets in place. This is not an easy job, and most people take you for granted. And it's possible that others might misinterpret your role. Part of that interpretation will depend on your leadership style, though even if you're the mellow type, others might project their authority issues onto you.

That said, your primary role is not to be a “big star” but rather the ordinary star that serves as our point of orientation here on Earth, indispensable as such.

This has been consistent with a major transit to your chart, Pluto through Capricorn, your 6th house. The 6th covers service, work, wellbeing and healing. Where Pluto goes, there will be increased emphasis in life, as if some deep force is drawing you into a new level of commitment that you may or may not be ready for.

The inherent tension of the 6th is commitment to others vs. taking care of yourself. In some ways, this is the “healer’s dilemma” — taking such good care of others that you can neglect your own needs. This is amplified by Capricorn, which can have a Spartan and pragmatic quality to it, without much extra to go around; without the feeling of abundance. So you might be a little inclined to self-neglect inherently.

Yet when Pluto showed up in 2008, it engaged a new level of commitment to resolving this seeming paradox. Pluto can represent things that you simply have to deal with, no matter what. That’s one way to resolve things — you do what you gotta do. And you gotta do both — take care of yourself and fulfill your responsibilities. Pluto has been granting you the power to do that, though there’s something necessary, which is dismantling the old structures of your existence that have not supported you, and building new ones.

With Pluto, though, the effect can seem like constant stress and deconstructing, with little in the way of rebuilding going on. That is likely to have shifted with the arrival of Saturn in Capricorn in late 2017: at that point it became obvious how urgently necessary it is to begin the conscious construction of patterns, schedules and business structures in order to get your work done.

The two processes catch up with one another in early 2020, at the time of the Saturn-Pluto conjunction. This, by the way, is really a five-way alignment, within a degree or so — Mercury, the Sun, Ceres, Saturn and Pluto — with Jupiter nearby. This unusual event provides you with energy, resources and quite a bit of information. It would seem that the place to orient your life is on food: to build all of your structures and your ideas around physical nourishment.

This means taking note of how specific foods make you feel. Feeling will include getting messages from your body, which usually speaks in the language of sensation. Pay special attention to your skin and your bones, as well as to all facets of digestion. At this stage of civilization, we are nearly out of contact with our bodies and any natural sense of what to eat. At no point during human evolution, prior to our time,

could people eat a meal at Wendy's and consume that much salt, fat and protein, and no vegetables whatsoever (ketchup does not count).

Getting into contact with the right thing for you to eat requires overcoming a lot of conditioning and propaganda. The conditioning is coming from the menu options that society seems to offer working people (most often, some form of fast food) and propaganda (in the form of nonstop dieting and nutritional advice streaming from every conceivable source except maybe the Rolling Stones channel on XM).

In all, events in your 6th might be interpreted as needing to apply a large amount of effort and long periods of time. You need to be conscious of this, and make sure you know when you are efforting too much. Monitor your energy level. Messages of the 6th include: knowing when to dial it back; understanding how to use time wisely; and finally, striving for efficiency without skipping any important steps.

Yet in any event, the emphasis on learning how to take care of yourself is one of the most vital themes of this time in your life, and is a prerequisite to your next stage of evolution. You might say that your 6th house represents "the real work" and that you are close to a breakthrough.

The 9th House: Seeking Your Spiritual Center

Your spiritual center is within you. Organizations like to call themselves "centers" but really, we each have just one — which we carry around all the time.

In astrology, the 9th house describes spiritual, religious and cosmological themes. It is interesting that you have Aries here, which emphasizes the Leo theme of existing at the center of it all. Where you have Aries you seek yourself; the 9th is where you might look for your god-concept. Put the two together and you know that "thou art God," in the words of Valentine Michael Smith.

This placement of Aries in the archetypal Leo chart might account for how some people respond to you. You're unlikely to put much faith in an external authority; you know that ultimately you are your own authority, or that divinity (in whatever form it takes) will come directly through you and not through some third party.

This is a fundamental structure of your character. And it comes into focus now that Chiron is in Aries, on an eight-year journey across your 9th house. Chiron in the 9th is about seeking the direct experience of spiritual phenomena. This seeking might come through some form of soul-searching, or it might come through some form of

exploration of the world; usually the two are related. With Aries involved, though, the self-and-soul orientation is inevitable.

Worldly thinking is likely to recast this (as it usually does) as some version of, "The ego is supreme." We can set that aside; it's not really worth addressing except to admit that it exists and is not what you're after, nor what I am talking about. It is however true that people act like "god" more often than they make contact with their own divinity. This is your assignment.

It's related to your 6th house work, only it's happening in a different order. The 9th is entered more fully with ideas than with actions; with sensing your reality rather than physically accomplishing things. Yet if there is 9th house work, it involves discovering and making peace with what is true for you on what you might call the level of your personal religion. You're considerably freer here than you are in the 6th, where a diversity of pressures comes to bear, particularly because of Capricorn's tendency to want to conform to society and its expectations (beginning with your family).

The 9th house is where you can roam where you want, soar when you will, and set out in earnest to find yourself. While this has, at different times, been a text and subtext of your life, there are two factors to consider. One is that the past seven years of Uranus through the 9th have had a scattering effect. Uranus is not exactly decisive, and it can come with various upheavals, which in this case related to what you believe or believed.

Chiron's influence will, at once, be grounding, more focused, and potentially push you into a specific crisis of identity or faith. This will be worth the effort that's involved, though remember it's a specific kind of effort: that associated with seeking understanding rather than fixing. Chiron is here to show you that there is a truth of who you are, and that it's accessible to you.

Awareness of a Wider World

One of the great things that happens when the 9th house is activated is that your view of the world gets wider. It's as if your horizons open up, such as when you get a view from a mountaintop, tall building or airplane. This is ultimately a view of yourself, because you are the one perceiving the universe.

This can indicate a kind of soul-searching, though there are several other expressions. One is travel. While it's true that "wherever you go, that's where you are," it's also true that travel has spiritual benefits. These are often oversold, as visits to "power places"

and such; I suggest you take a more modest view, even if you visit one. And maintain environmental awareness.

For example, if you are in the U.K., you might want to visit Stonehenge. However, there is a much more interesting place called Avebury Henge just an hour away. Instead of being greeted by throngs and guards and little ropes and rules, you can have a picnic with the monoliths, touch them, smell them, and hang out with grazing sheep and probably see only one or two living people. This is applicable to anyplace you might visit in the world. Right near the mobbed scene there will be the thing only the locals know about.

In the same spirit, try to travel during the off-season, before the tourists arrive — this will make it easier to tune into the land and the spirit of the places you visit.

I also suggest you take at least one solo trip somewhere this year, particularly if you have never traveled to a new place alone. You may indeed be drawn to some ancient historic place; that would probably serve you better than going to Disney World. Wherever you go, I suggest you stay off the beaten path and invest yourself in the local environment however you can. From this perspective, the idea of travel is to confront you with the unknown, so you can learn something new about yourself.

Another facet of the 9th house is study. This could be through an academic institution of some kind, though that is unlikely. What I propose you need is to focus on a subject of deep relevance to you, whatever that might be. You may need to re-learn how to learn about a new subject. With Chiron involved, there will be a measure of book learning, some one-on-one learning, and then direct experience.

Chiron's presence represents the essence of experiential learning. In our digital world of apps and 3-D movies, the idea of experience is almost forgotten, as if it were a thing from the gone world. It is not. It will be right there waiting for you when you look for it, and seek it. Experience will be different from how you imagined it. It will differ from theory, and may directly challenge what you learn in theory. Reconciling these differences is the whole point.

I suggest you take an organized approach, *in the spirit of Chiron, utilizing the tools of documentation*: careful notebooks, journals, scrapbooks (meaning collections of artifacts), photography, and physical books that you take possession of and annotate. This bit is vital: the part about taking possession of your knowledge. Under this theory, any book you work with and learn from becomes an extension of your personal notebook.

Finding Your Ministry

The 9th house is that of higher learning, and of what some call the “higher self.” This is an interesting concept, as usually it’s the deeper self. We might, though, say that it’s who within yourself you make contact with as a result of your personal spiritual quest.

Chiron is the teacher. This transit suggests that you may be open to an important teacher entering your life. Be mindful that teachers are human; they are not infallible.

It’s just as likely that you will take up a role as a teacher. It seems to be a potential missing element in your life; and if you are in some way a teacher, consider that the nature of your calling is likely to change or deepen.

Nearly all teaching happens by example, which means the example of who you are. It’s also likely that whatever you are teaching, in terms of something topical, will choose you — and it may have already. It’s good to start right where you are, and explain to others what you do and how you do it. This can apply to any facet of your life, though particularly what you’re the most devoted to.

There will almost always be some element of writing and publishing involved. I suggest you set a high standard when you release your words to the public. You have Libra on the house associated with writing — the 3rd. Libra wants beauty of ideas, of presentation, and of the flow of words. Don’t let this make you into a perfectionist. Let your spirit fire the words onto the page or screen, then tidy them up later.

Take a professional tone, and make sure you verify all of your facts before committing to them in print or on the internet. I suggest you make a distinction between articles or other writing that is from personal experience, and that which needs to be more objective and factually based. In the style of Libra, make sure your ideas are balanced. Leave yourself room to be wrong.

Most of all, though, get used to the idea of a ministry. I don’t mean this in a pious or pompous way. I mean that it’s nearly a certainty that you will be called upon to teach. Remember, as you do, that to teach is to learn. Listen to the ideas and observations of those who still have their beginner’s mind — and let them awaken yours.

Uranus in Taurus: The Distinction of Your Work

One of the most exciting transits of the next seven years is Uranus in Taurus, which warmed up last year (covered in the audio sections) and which has fully engaged as of early March 2019. Taurus is the 10th place from Leo — that of reputation,

responsibility, enterprise and distinction. Uranus has a way of bestowing originality, and a touch of revolution.

This transit will reinvigorate your professional aspirations. How long has it been since you wanted to really do something bold and interesting? Something that fully engages your creativity and talent? The time is nigh.

Something may take you like a storm. You may resist making any total changes or 180 reversals or whatever. You have strong *preserver* energy coming into you through Taurus. Therefore, conduct experiments and forays, and for now, preserve what you have gained and built. There may come a time when you decide to take a leap and go for something new. You will know it when you get there.

For now, take advantage of the Uranian power of invention and its ability to give your world a little jolt, and try some new things, new projects, new ideas. You may have a hobby of some sort that you're ready to bring out to the front of your life.

Bear in mind that it's not merely that one is never too old to do new things or embark on new experiments. Rather, doing so keeps you young by stretching your capacities and making you learn new talents. With Uranus in the 10th, the thing to emphasize is what is different about what you do. Taurus will protect you in the sense of providing some camouflage of tradition and aesthetic presentation. Yet Uranus is the new factor, and at its best, it's about how you distinguish your talents and contribution.

One other factor it represents is your ability or calling to work with a group, in a more open leadership style. Here is the thing, though: no matter who you collaborate with or take into your leadership cadre, remember what you are personally responsible for, in your life; remember to whom you are personally accountable. Ultimately in certain contexts, there are things that have nothing to do with the people around you and have only to do with you, personally.

A New World in a New Sign: Varuna in Leo

Varuna is an object in the Kuiper Belt discovered in 2000. I don't think I've mentioned it anywhere in the eight other signs I've written before yours; I've been saving it for you: as of late 2018, Varuna has completed its approximately two-year transition into your sign.

Discovered in 2000 in Cancer, Varuna bears the honorific minor planet number (20000) Varuna — that's how important a discovery it was counted as (by astronomers) at the time. A few astrologers took note, but not many.

It has an orbit of 281 years, longer than that of Pluto, and much less elongated. And it's now in your sign and will be until about 2042. Its entry into Leo is the first sign change that astrologers are aware of (the few who are tracking it). I've been observing Varuna since it was discovered, and considering the different commentaries, and can offer a few ideas and approaches.

First, the mythical figure Varuna is a member of the cycle of myths related to the keeping of contracts. Varuna is about keeping your promises and commitments. My impression is that this translates into its astrological context.

This may relate to the astrology of your 8th house (the one specifically related to agreements), which is Pisces, currently home to Neptune. It's a reminder to make sure your agreements, financial and otherwise, are tidy, and that you are good for your commitments. If you need to renegotiate, make sure you do it consciously, seeking a consensus, and maintaining awareness of your limits.

Varuna has some other properties. It can represent *what is behind things: an invisible, pervasive influence* coming from the background. One astrologer, astute at making observations about new discoveries, said to look for what is "behind everything."
[There are [additional notes here.](#)]

This is a role you can take up: working from the background, by which I mean behind the scenes, to foster correct outcomes. You don't need your name and face involved with everything you do. There will be times when it's altogether better to have your modest (or major) influence and nobody even knows you were involved. There will be situations where it's better to proceed on private terms, as someone who works indirectly, or from backstage or in the accounting office rather than facing the audience. At other times you may come into the foreground, but not all the time.

It will help you to develop the sensitivity to your environment to know when to drop back and when to come forward. Varuna, in another manifestation, may bestow you with knowledge that comes from beyond what you are aware of, or beyond what you have formally studied. It's essential that you take this knowledge lightly and not present yourself as an expert or authority; the downfall of Varuna is arrogance. Just use what you know, remembering to experiment and test your approach first before going full-on.

Vulcanus in Leo

A second point, also very slow-moving, has recently entered Leo after a several-year transition. It's called Vulcanus. It's part of a set of *hypothetical planets* from the early 20th century, called the Uranian points or Witte points. It's a very, very slow mover (considerably slower than Pluto — it has taken more than 50 years to make it across Cancer and arrive in your sign). It does not possess a physical form.

It is a concept, but one that's chartable by astrology — though rarely used except by a small sect of astrologers. Vulcanus represents vital force — the power of a volcano — a thing well-known to Leo. When you think of Vulcanus, it's helpful to consider it as power coming up from the ground.

Susan Herskowitz writes that it represents "masculine energy, great strength, brute force, vitality and good recuperative powers; it's the athlete with the powerful physique. Yet when it's weak, insecure or manifesting negatively, Vulcanus is capable of brutality and violence. Vulcanus is represented by a triangle with an arrow shooting upward resembling a volcanic explosion alluding to massive energy potential."

This will be conjunct Varuna early in your sign for many years. It will also be in a trine to Chiron in your 9th house. So this will provide you with a whole new level of engaging faith in yourself, and living out your convictions. And this is something to be cautious of, that thing being dogma. The dictionary definition of that is "a principle or set of principles laid down by an authority as incontrovertibly true."

Remember that Don Juan of the Castaneda series of books warned that clarity is one of the enemies of man. By clarity, he meant thinking you know; false certainty; being stuck in a point of view. It will help if you remind yourself not to be so sure of yourself. I am reminded here of a quote I remember from the first time I read *The Doors of Perception* by Aldous Huxley. He is describing his response to his first experience on psychedelics, a dose of synthetic mescaline. I am leaving in the original 1954 language that includes "man" and "he," which is how just about everything used to be written.

"The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries, forever vainly, to comprehend."

Jupiter-Saturn: Your New Horizon

Let's end where we began — with the Jupiter-Saturn alignment in the first degree of Aquarius. As you can see, you have some adapting to do, and some ground to cover, before you get there. And you will want to cover that ground and do that work, because it will make your arrival that much happier and more productive. You will feel more natural when you meet the world on these new terms.

It's always better either to work out your inner material or to be well aware of it, and in the process of working it out, before you embark on a new phase of your life. That does not mean attaining a state of perfection — I cannot emphasize that strongly enough. Rather, I am talking about "awareness" in the form of working knowledge — knowledge that you work with and use.

Aspects in these two years (2019 and 2020) combine to place you within a new standing in society. Yet this will require many adaptations, a new idea of collaboration, a sense of your own leadership and authority, and adjusting to changes in your psychic structure. Said another way, you will be learning how to tap into the new inner resources that you are developing.

Though it's not possible to predict what this meeting of Jupiter and Saturn will bring you, it's possible to prepare the ground for something positive, which will involve living in a wider world, engaged in a new mission. That means freedom, though that never works without a highly evolved sense of discipline and responsibility.