

Saturn in Capricorn

Part Three: The Saturn-Sun Cycle

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[In Part One of this three-part commentary on Saturn in Capricorn, I wrote about the collective meanings of that two-and-a-half year passage, taking into account other current and upcoming astrological alignments. In Part Two, I addressed some of the ways that Saturn's passage through Capricorn is relevant for individuals. Now, in Part Three's conclusion, I'll discuss the overriding importance of Saturn in Capricorn for those people born with the Sun in that sign.]

Of the different ways I discussed in Part Two that Saturn's movement through a particular sign (in this case, Capricorn) can be astrologically relevant to the lives of individuals, one particular possibility stands head and shoulders above all the rest. That is the passage of transiting Saturn over the Sun in a person's natal chart, which marks the start (or restart) of what's called the *Saturn-Sun cycle*.

That cycle is, in my opinion, the most significant and central structural indicator in personal astrology. I'm not sure which other transit cycle I'd put in second place (Saturn-Moon, Saturn-Saturn, or Saturn-Angles), but the Saturn-Sun cycle would be the winner by a mile, in terms of greatest importance. It is not a particularly dramatic cycle, and its four quarterly transitions (occurring at roughly seven-year intervals) don't necessarily correspond to the kinds of climactic events or radical changes sometimes associated with other outer-planet cycles.

The Saturn-Sun cycle is about what we build in our lives and how we build it — brick by brick, over time — rather than the often unexpected wild-cards of outer-planet cycles that swoop in from left field to signal a major alteration of our experience and direction. In fact (meaning in real life), the four major transits of the Saturn-Sun cycle are frequently very restrained in manifestation. Especially at the beginning of the cycle, life often grinds to a halt. Not literally, of course, but, in the experience of the person undergoing the birth of a new Saturn-Sun cycle, all momentum may seem to be lost and the way ahead appears blocked.

In metaphor, the experience is a bit like driving down the road in your car and coming upon a railroad crossing where the gates are down, the lights are flashing, and a long freight train is clackety-clacking its slow passage through the crossing. The only option is to stop.

But wait, you say, can't I just speed a quarter-mile down the road and breeze through a different crossing that the train hasn't reached yet? Nope. This is one of those seemingly endless freight trains that fills the entire horizon, so that you can't see the engine or the caboose. No, the only recourse is to get in line with the rest of the cars already backed up at the crossing and wait for the train to slowly pass before continuing on your journey.

Saturn in natal astrology (interpreted typically by sign, house associations, and aspects), represents the mountain each of us has to climb. It symbolizes the real-life obstacles that stand in the way of our fulfillment as individuals. Your mountain looks small to me, and mine looks small to you. To us, however, our mountains feel like Everest or K2. Others may think we can overcome our obstacles easily, but each of us feels the full weight of blockage or fear right down to our bones. What Saturn is about is slow maturation through sustained effort, the understanding of patience and how to deal with delayed gratification.

The Sun represents the central theme of the individual life, the symbolic source of energy and vitality that confers a sense of core meaning and purpose. Put the two symbols together, and the 29-year Saturn-Sun cycle reveals the gradual development and expression of one's central themes in real life — not abstract, not theoretical, not just poetic, but actual. The cycle offers a timeline for the expression of individual purpose, meaning, and maturation over a three-decade period.

The Saturn-Sun cycle doesn't start at birth. It kicks in somewhere between birth and age 30. Once underway, the cycle repeats every 29 years. If you begin your first Saturn-Sun cycle in adolescence, say at age 15, the forms you create in life to express your purpose, meaning, and maturation will be "pegged" to the beginning quarter of the cycle and who you were at that point and over the next seven years (the spring "season" of the cycle). When the cycle starts over (in the example at age 44), the *symbolism* is the same, but the necessary *forms* are quite different. That's true again of the third cycle that would begin in the example at age 73. Each phase of our life-journeys has its own characteristic forms of expression, and the Saturn-Sun cycle is necessarily custom-tailored to where we are on our journeys when the cycle begins.

Each time the cycle starts — whether for the first time or in subsequent restarts — we begin anew. Depending on our experience over the previous cycle, we may build on our former achievements, or we might toss out everything and start over from scratch, planting new seeds in our life-purpose garden. My take on this, after having been an astrologer for nearly half a century, is that the process is about 10% conscious and 90% unconscious. Whatever ends up planted in the central theme garden — whether by choice, chance, destiny, or fate — grows and becomes more important over time.

In summary, the Saturn-Sun cycle is about what's at the heart and soul of one's life-journey. In other words, it's about what really matters. If the cycle unfolds well, we end up building a structure in reality that both creates and maintains meaning and coherence in our lives. If the cycle fails — for any of a thousand reasons — we still get on with our lives, but we may remain fundamentally adrift and unfulfilled, as if our spiritual purpose and our material life were never able to hook up or get in synch. Both of those possibilities can and do happen in the lives of real human beings.

OK, what has all this to do with Saturn in Capricorn?

Approximately one-twelfth of the world's human population is born with the Sun in Capricorn. Right now, that's about 623 million people. The distribution of Sun Signs isn't perfectly even, because the number of conceptions is larger or smaller at certain times throughout the year. As a result, fewer people are born in certain signs than would be expected were the distribution of births equal, and more people are born in other signs. An even distribution would mean that each sign would contain the Sun in 8.3% of the population. According to the web site Statistic Brain, however, the distribution is a bit skewed. Below is a table showing the percentages and population numbers for each Sun sign:

<i>Scorpio</i>	<i>9.6%</i>	<i>730 million</i>
<i>Virgo</i>	<i>9.4%</i>	<i>714 million</i>
<i>Gemini</i>	<i>9.3%</i>	<i>707 million</i>
<i>Pisces</i>	<i>9.1%</i>	<i>692 million</i>
<i>Libra</i>	<i>8.8%</i>	<i>669 million</i>
<i>Cancer</i>	<i>8.5%</i>	<i>646 million</i>
<i>Taurus</i>	<i>8.3%</i>	<i>631 million</i>
<i>Capricorn</i>	<i>8.2%</i>	<i>623 million</i>
<i>Aries</i>	<i>8.1%</i>	<i>616 million</i>
<i>Sagittarius</i>	<i>7.3%</i>	<i>555 million</i>
<i>Leo</i>	<i>7.1%</i>	<i>540 million</i>
<i>Aquarius</i>	<i>6.3%</i>	<i>479 million</i>

These percentages and numbers don't account for "cuspal" births, but they provide a reasonable benchmark for the different percentages and current population numbers for the twelve Sun signs.

Over the coming three years, all the individuals born with the Sun in Capricorn will go through the beginning of a new Saturn-Sun cycle. For people who were born with the Sun in early Capricorn, that will happen in 2018. For those born with the Sun in middle Capricorn, the conjunction will occur in 2019. And for individuals born when the Sun was moving through late Capricorn, their Saturn-Sun cycle will start in 2020.

For Capricorn Sun people who are young, meaning not yet through their 20s, the coming passage of Saturn over their natal Sun positions will most likely mark the beginning of their first Saturn-Sun cycle. The onset of that cycle marks the assumption of full responsibility for any individual. Before the Saturn-Sun cycle begins, our lives are a little like sitting at a poker table where we're dealt hands and making bets, but we're playing with Monopoly money. Essentially, we're learning the rules of the game, and while we may win or lose certain hands, we don't get to keep the benefits when we win, and we aren't held fully accountable when we lose. Life happens to all of us all the time, but the consequences of our actions are minimized before we are fully responsible for ourselves.

The beginning of our Saturn-Sun cycles is akin to the dealer at the poker table saying to us, *"OK, enough practice hands. Now take out your wallet and buy some chips. From this point on, you're in the game for real. Win, and you get to keep your winnings. Lose, and you have to pay the piper."*

This means that the younger cohort of Capricorn Suns will, at some time over the coming three years, become fully subject (for the first time) to the Laws of Karma. Pragmatically, they will get down to business, growing more serious about getting on with their life-journeys. This will occur whatever their age at the time, whether they are three years old or 28 years old.

For those Capricorn Sun people who are older, the coming Saturn passage over their natal Suns will be a restart. Those in mid-life will begin their second Saturn-Sun cycle, while those in seniorhood will start their third. As stated earlier in the commentary, the symbolic implications remain the same as earlier, but the forms of expression necessarily change from the previous cycle. In other words, meaning and purpose remain the same throughout the entire life, but how we shape the activities and behaviors in our lives that express our central organizing themes must naturally be custom-tailored to wherever we are on our life-journeys.

Here's an analogy to explain that. Two people get married in their early 20s and buy a small, modest starter house. As the years go by, they have children and move forward in their careers. By their mid-30s, they move into a larger and fancier house that's more comfortable for their growing families. By their 50s or 60s, however, their children are grown and making families of their own. The parents (now perhaps grandparents as well) are now empty-nesters, so they sell their big house and move into a smaller condo that requires less maintenance. All three of their residences were homes that suited their needs and wishes for awhile. But each is custom-tailored to a certain chapter of life.

In the same way, we rethink our life-purposes with each round through the Saturn-Sun cycle, as we periodically establish new forms for the expression of meaning and coherence.

This is not merely a conscious decision related to age, however. No, the Saturn-Sun cycle goes far beyond simple choice. Events happen in life that we didn't choose but must accommodate. Illness, deaths, and losses of all sorts force us to adapt. In addition, new opportunities may arise for some people even late in life that open previously unknown or locked doorways for them. When such events (whether positive or negative) arise in the early phase of a Saturn-Sun cycle, they tend to be important — whether or not we realize it at the time. They persevere and must be accounted for, so we make whatever changes we need to, whether to survive losses or take advantage of new possibilities.

Each time Saturn leaves one sign of the zodiac and enters the next sign, another cohort of human beings — approximately one-twelfth of living humanity — begins a new Saturn-Sun cycle. They begin to lay the foundation for a life of meaning and purpose that will provide coherence and fulfillment.

For the coming three years, that's people born with the Sun in Capricorn. For those individuals, more than for any other Sun sign, this means taking on responsibilities in the marketplace or for the community, setting one's sights as high as possible on the achievement of authority, excellence, and respect, and working diligently in that direction. More than anything else, it means doing what is necessary — whatever is necessary.

The challenge is to slow down and stop, to pay attention to what's happening in the outer environment of circumstances and the inner environment of the psyche, and to do so without undue frustration or impatience. Yes, delays, obstacles, blocks, and even some failures may be encountered, but all these represent putting on the brakes for the sake of safety. Slowing down is required because something important is beginning.

Those with the Sun in Capricorn are now standing in their life-purpose gardens with a rake, roto-tiller, bags of peat moss, and seed packets. Characteristically, the most natural approach is to be methodical in the preparation of the garden and the planting of seeds, but not everyone will do this, since different charts (and different lives) require very custom-tailored approaches. Some Capricorn Suns will be thoughtful and careful in planting their gardens. Others will be more radical, tossing out seeds almost randomly. The approach varies from one chart to the next, based on both the fundamental meanings indicated by the natal chart and the overall matrix of active cycles during the birth of the cycle.

In seven years, the pace of life will accelerate as the cycle shifts into the summer season of tending the growing garden, and in 14-15 years, the autumn harvest will begin, reaping what was sowed. Here at the beginning of spring, however, moving slowly and with care is generally good advice. For the majority of those born with the Sun in Capricorn, that will maximize the chances for a bountiful harvest and a fulfilled life.