

Chiron, the Wounded Healer

By Marcha Fox

Astronomical Description

Chiron was discovered November 1, 1977 by astronomer, Charles T. Kowal. He was the first asteroid discovered of a classification that came to be known as Centaurs. His highly elliptical orbit is located between Saturn and Uranus with an orbital period of approximately 50 years.

Mythological Background

Chiron is the product of Cronus' amorous pursuit of the nymph, Philyra. In her attempt to elude Cronus, Philyra turned herself into a mare, but Cronus likewise changed himself into a horse and succeeded in mating with her. The result was Chiron the Centaur, who had the torso of a man and body and legs of a horse. Upon his birth, Philyra was so distressed that she not only rejected Chiron but pleaded to be changed into anything other than what she was. The gods responded by turning her into a linden tree, abandoning Chiron forever. Apollo later found him, took care of him, and taught him many skills, including the art of healing.

Chiron's wound came as the result of what you could call a mythological bar fight. The Centaurs invited Hercules to dinner, someone started some crap, and Hercules lashed out at full bore. The Centaurs ran off, as expected, Hercules in pursuit. One of his arrows struck Chiron in the leg, which resulted in an incurable wound from which Chiron suffered for the rest of his life. Since he was immortal, no end to his suffering was in sight, but others benefited greatly from his ongoing search to help cure his own wound. His eventual release came ironically through Hercules, who had caused the wound in the first place, who pleaded with Zeus to allow Chiron to trade places with Prometheus,

who'd been chained to a rock where a large bird would eat his liver each day only to have it grow back each night. This eternal torment could only be ended by an immortal trading places with Prometheus and also sacrificing their own immortality. Chiron had no problem becoming mortal so that his suffering could end, and thus it was. After his death, Zeus immortalized him as the constellation Centaurus.



Astrological Implications

Note that Chiron had done nothing wrong, had only been in the wrong place at the wrong time. The wound was far from intentional, though sometimes being hurt by a friend is more painful than a direct hit by an enemy. It's always interesting to ponder the fact that the Greek gods had far from idyllic lives, but had many troubles and conflicts just as we do. There is much to be learned by the analogies that lie in their stories.

Astrologically, Chiron's placement on your Natal Chart represents an area of our life where a significant wounding or sacrifice will take place, depending on its Sign and House placement. The House will indicate the area of your life in which it will occur and the Sign will give an indication of its flavor, how you'll respond, and how it can be healed. For example, if you have Chiron in Aries in your 3rd House, which includes your early childhood learning experiences, it's likely that you had difficulties in this area. Perhaps you had Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and struggled in school or were different from the other children, such as being a minority, poor, overweight, or wearing glasses, for which you were ridiculed or harassed in some way. In Aries, you were likely to respond to this treatment in an aggressive way. Someone with Chiron in Virgo in the 7th House is likely to experience hurtful relationships, about which they'll probably do a lot of blaming and criticizing.

The beauty of Chiron, however, is that to use its energy properly we must take this hurt we've experienced and then go forth and help others with a similar affliction. For the above example with Chiron in Aries in the 3rd House, this person would find satisfaction helping other children with a similar problem, either as a teacher, counselor, or perhaps simply a caring parent, friend, or relative. The second example, the person with Chiron in Virgo in the 7th, would be more willing than most to listen to others with similar problems and sympathize with them. Frequently, we can help others heal more readily than we can ourselves. I, for one, have always had a major case of math anxiety, in spite of the fact I survived seven college quarters of calculus on the way to a degree in physics. While I've never gotten over it, I've been able to tutor and help various others to feel more comfortable with their math abilities and avoid the panic I've always felt when confronted with an exam. I survived and was thus able to convince them they could, too. As Prometheus so aptly stated in Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound*, "Oh, it is easy for the one who stands outside the prison wall of pain to exhort and teach the one who suffers." None of us listen too well to the advice of someone who's never been in our particular situation.

Chiron can also indicate how and in what manner we inflict hurts on others. An unfortunate example of this is found in the cycle of child abuse, where those that have been abused as children are very likely to abuse their own or other's children as well. Another element of the Chiron archetype is that we're all part animal and part human and must struggle to overcome any inappropriate instincts that can harm ourselves or others.

As with other planets that have significance when they return to the zodiacal location where they were located when you were born, a Chiron Return will also have an effect on

your life. This only occurs every 50 years, but when it makes major aspects to it's natal position key events will occur as well, such as when it makes a square (~12.5 years and then again at 37 years and 62 years) or opposition (25 years and 75 years). At these times we'll find ourselves having to deal with Chironic issues of some description, especially if we haven't done so in the past as we should. Confronting painful issues isn't easy, but failing to do so also denies us the opportunity to heal and move on. These are typically deep-seeded baggage or self-defeating behaviors that are not resolved in a simplistic manner. In some cases, a Pluto transit can help facilitate the resolution of Chiron issues by unearthing and exposing areas that require work.

When Chiron is retrograde, expressing this energy is more difficult. In my experience I've found that those with a retrograde Chiron in their natal chart hold onto their hurts more readily than those who do not. They are wounded more deeply and forgiving and forgetting represents a major challenge. These folks will have to make a special effort to understand that many times the hurts others inflict upon us are unintentional, much as Hercules' wounding of Chiron, in which case they should give special effort to internalizing the thought, "It's foolish to take offense when none is intended." If it was deliberate, they still need to work at getting past it or it will affect their own progression. It's more important than ever that those in this situation put concerted effort into the healing part of Chiron's energy. In helping others with similar wounds they can help heal their own.

Chiron is a figure that is seldom mentioned outside of astrological circles. Just about every knows their sign and perhaps a bit about the basic characteristics of each one. The planets certainly influence the daily transits, but Chiron and the other asteroids fall by the wayside. However, it's by close examination of the placement of such minor planets as Chiron and the main asteroids, *i.e.* Ceres, Vesta, Pallas Athena, and Juno, that we get an even closer view of what makes us tick.

Picture credit: The Wounded Centaur, Fillipino Lippi (c. 1457 - 1504) Original painting located in the Christ Church Picture Gallery, Oxford, UK.

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Marcha Fox has a bachelors degree in physics from Utah State University and has worked at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas for over 20 years. She began studying astrology over twenty-five years ago with the intent of debunking it and instead became convinced of its credibility and astounded by its accuracy. She is currently an advanced student pursuing her diploma from OCA. The mother of six children and grandmother of (currently) 15, she has had a statistically significant sampling of astrological test subjects within her close perusal for many years. Much to the mortification of her offspring, some of these long-time observations are documented in her sign write-ups.

As a physicist she is deeply aware that the most profound questions in the universe are yet unanswered. When those answers are found, she believes that the truth and mechanism of astrology will be among them. She has worked with the space shuttle in a variety of capacities ranging from engineer to manager for most of her career. As that program fades into the sunset she hopes to do the same and focus her sights on a new career in astrology. Marcha is a Capricorn with a Virgo rising and Gemini Moon. She welcomes your comments at astrogoddess@ValkyrieAstrology.com.

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