

# Chiron

## The Shaman Centaur

By Larry Williamson

Centaurus is one of two constellations said to represent the Centaurs, mythical creatures with a human head and torso on top of a horse's body. Centaurus was the name of the first Centaur. The constellation is primarily associated with Chiron, a wise, immortal being who was the King of the Centaurs. He was renowned for his healing skills and a wise teacher and mentor.

Chiron was the Son of Cronus (Saturn), ruler of the vanished golden age, where men lived in harmony with nature. His Mother was the nymph 'Philyra' whose name means both 'the love of music of the lyre' and sweet-scented linden tree. Philyra gave birth to Chiron and was horrified by his appearance and abandoned him. Chiron's initial wound was the rejection and abandonment by his Mother.

Apollo the Sun god and Diana, Goddess of the Moon and wild animals became his foster parents and was to become their first pupil and teach humankind. They taught him the art of healing, medicine, science, music, art of war, archery and all survival skills. All the greatest Kings and heroes were taken to him as children, to be raised in his cave. Some of his students were Jason, Achilles, and Hercules. He taught Orpheus (the great musician)

That made trees weep and rocks melt how to play the lyre. He taught Asclepius (God of healing) the art of healing and medicine.

Chiron's healing powers were so great it was said that he cured those who suffered mortal wounds during the Trojan wars. Below Chiron's cave lies a sacred valley where he grew powerful medicinal herbs, which he shared with his pupils and how to turn them into salves and potions. Chiron was the only Centaur able to maintain his higher self. The Centaurs were known for their rude, drunken and rowdy behavior, but Chiron was above the fray.

The rip off was that a stray arrow from the bow of Hercules accidentally wounded Chiron himself. The accident occurred during a wedding feast near Chiron's cave. Pholus (prophecy) opened a cask of wine at the request of Hercules reluctantly, but the wild centaurs could smell the aroma of the wine from miles away, drank all the wine and went berserk, and tried to rape the bride. All mayhem broke out and Hercules tried to stop them. Elatus the centaur is associated with the woodlands and means "Fir Man" because he used to pull up whole fir trees and use them as weapons. He was killed by one of the poisoned arrows, the blood from the Hydra from which there was no cure, from the bow of Hercules that passed through his arm and continued to wound Chiron in the knee.

Hercules ran to him, pulled out the arrow and dressed the wound with a salve Chiron handed to him. Because the wound was incurable, and Chiron moved to his cave yearned for death, but could not die because he was immortal. He then passed on his immortality to Prometheus, and Zeus saw what a grand and noble gesture this was then placed Chiron amongst the stars.

In some versions , in spite of his own pain and suffering Chiron continued to help, heal and serve others. This is the term “ Wounded Healer” seems to have emerged. Others claim he cured his wounds with the plant “Centaur” the sacred herb of the Centaurs , and never died. The best definition I ever heard of the Wounded Healer is “ It’s the ability to do things for others, that we cannot necessarily do for ourselves.”

The kicker of the story is once Chiron was transformed into a constellation it was not the archer centaur (Sagittarius) but actually the Shaman centaur. The brilliant shamanic astrologer Daniel Giamario revealed this to me during an interview. Here the Shaman Centaur is dancing with a She-Wolf (Lupus) holding not a lance, or spear, but a magical and sexual Thyrsus held by the Centaurs. There is a region below the southern ecliptic including, Centaurus, the Shaman Centaur, the original constellation of Chiron. This area of the sky was far more elevated in the southern sky, and due to the precession was pretty much lost to view in northern latitudes. Because the ancients Greeks couldn’t see the constellation Centaurs, they transferred it into the centaur of the archer (Sagittarius).

Before Chiron was discovered, astrologer Dane Rudhyar predicted there would be a new planetary body found between Saturn and Uranus that would act like a higher Moon. This is interesting, as both, Apollo and Diana, Goddess of the Moon, raised Chiron. One of the greatest paradoxes about Chiron astrologically is in our wounding lies the key to our healing, and it all has to do with feelings and emotions. All healing needs to begin with emotional healing .

This same paradox applies from an astrological interpretive point of view. Wherever Chiron is placed in the natal chart points to an area of possible woundedness, but it also indicates the area in which we can awaken the healing process for ourselves, and how we can best help, heal, and serve others towards intergration and transformation. One of the first steps to accelerate the healing process is to ‘ own our wounds’ you can’t change or transform anything your denying. Chiron, like Pluto can serve as a powerful attachment breaker. De-nial isn’t just a river in Egypt!

Many astronomers believe Chiron not to be an original member of our solar system, but to have come outside as a Maverick, temporary visitor and in time it will eventually leave. This is symbolically parallel to the idea of That Bodhisattvas voluntarily return to the world of suffering to help assist others on the path of enlightenment. This clearly serves as a powerful metaphor of the Chironic themes of healing, helping and serving others. It is this astrologers humble opinion the connection between Chiron and Virgo seems clear, both are associated with healing and service.

The humanistic astrologer Dane Rudhyr states that the trans-Saturnian planets owe allegiance to the galaxy, not the Sun! The former seems to imply ‘outside help’ the latter relates to ‘inner work’, or the power of change, transformation inherent in each of us. I feel it is incumbent for all astrologers not to become locked in, or fixed solely on the principle of wounding with Chiron, but to cultivate and celebrate the teaching, mentoring, meaningful service function. We all need someone in our lives at times to serve as a teacher, mentor and act as a bridge between two worlds.

Finally, let us honor our Inner Shaman, inner Teacher to help guide us on our journey towards healing, reconciliation and wholeness. The next time you need healing, go and heal someone else, and ask where have I failed to give? Out of the place of our wounds, will come our greatest gifts.

References:

*Catherine Tennant* – The Lost Zodiac

*Tim Lyons* - Astrology Beyond Ego

*Daniel GiaMario* – Reflections on being 52