

SOLAR RETURN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

by Mary Fortier Shea, M.A. Counseling Psychology

1. Can you precess a tropical solar return chart?

Tropical charts are geocentric and based on when the Sun crosses the equator at the equinoxes or reaches its nadir or zenith at the solstices. Precession is a sidereal, star-oriented technique based on zero-point-Aries in the sky. The two systems are totally different and separate. To precess a tropical chart is like mixing apples and oranges. It just makes no sense to do this and generally the charts make no sense either. Tropical charts should not be precession corrected.

2. What location should you use in calculating your solar return chart?

You can use your natal location, the location for your current home, or your current location if you are away from home. The difference is as follows:

- * the natal location is like a progression. You are born with this series of Solar Returns and there is no modification for free-willed choices, but the charts do work.
- * The Solar Return for your present residence reflects the changes you have made over the years. If you have moved away, the location and the orientation of the Solar Return has changed reflecting the internal shift.
- * The location for your exact position at the time of the Sun's return is in my opinion the most accurate because it most closely reflects your present state of mind and any free-willed choices you have made. It is not necessary that you remain in this location for the year or even for very long. You only need relocate long enough to set your intention or about a day.

3. Can you go on vacation for a day to change your Solar Return chart?

Yes, you can. You cannot change the planetary positions, but you can change their house positions and the orientation of the Solar Return by moving east or west. The configurations stay the same, but you choose how you wish to work with them. For example, you have a t-square coming up in your next Solar Return. It falls in the 1st-10th-7th houses. You decide you do not wish to focus on relationships at this time. You would rather relocate with your company and move to another part of the country. In this case, you might go on vacation, change your Solar Return location and shift the t-square into the 10th-1st-4th houses which would more accurately fit your goals. The relocated Solar Return will begin to act on you as soon as you commit in your mind to make a change. In this way, you can try on the new Solar Return even before you travel! One reminder though, you can change your Solar Return, but you cannot change your transits, progressions and solar arcs. It doesn't do any good to travel when these methods continue to emphasize what you are seeking to avoid.

4. How long is the Solar Return in effect?

The Solar Return interpretations begin to apply about three months before your birthday, last the year, and usually fade by the time of your following birthday. Three months to the day before your birthday is usually a significant time for new issues to arise. The month before your birthday marks a time of great transition to the new chart. If you tend to procrastinate, a Solar Return chart can stretch three months past your birthday. Each Solar Return year is built on the last. The more you accomplish this year, the more options you will have next year. The effect is cumulative.

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5. Should you place the Solar Return chart outside the natal chart?

The Solar Return chart can be read by itself. If you can begin to read a natal chart, you can begin to read a Solar Return chart. The placement of the planets in the houses is very important and you would lose this positioning if you merely place the SR chart around the natal like a secondary progression. You can use a two chart technique for the Solar Return, but in this case, place the Solar Return chart on the inside and put the natal chart around the outside. Then be sure to read the solar return as a complete chart in itself.

6. What's most important regarding Solar Return interpretation?

Probably the most important thing to look at is the house placement of all the planets. Sign is not generally so important. The Sun is always the same sign. Mercury can only be plus or minus a sign from the Sun. Venus has only eight placements and then begins to repeat itself. The Moon has nineteen placements since it is on the eclipse cycle. Jupiter will be one sign or the other for everyone since it moves one sign per year. Saturn and the other outer planets will generally be the same for everyone. That leaves Mars, which is the only planet that does not appear to have a cycle, so focus on the house placement.

7. What do retrograde planets mean in a Solar Return chart?

There are only three retrogrades to interpret, Mercury, Venus and Mars. The outer planets are fifty/fifty direct or retrograde since they hold their direction for half a year. Some people will have Pluto retrograde in their Solar Return charts for their entire lives. These retrogradations of the outer planets do not seem to matter. Retrogradation of the inner planets however, is important. Mercury retrograde calls for a movement inward. You have gathered enough information and now it is time for you to reorganize your thoughts and consolidate your thinking. When Venus is retrograde, you must focus on inner qualities, rather than the quantity of money, possessions, and external trappings, or the legalization of a relationship. When Mars is retrograde, you need to learn how to handle your anger in an intelligent way.

8. Can I use Sabian Symbols and asteroids in my Solar Returns?

Anything that you use in a natal chart, you can use in a Solar Return chart.

9. Can you use a Solar Return chart for timing?

Generally, the Solar Return is not the best timing tool. You will need to use it in combination with transits, progressions and solar arcs. However, there are a few things you can watch for.

- * Look for the transits of the outer planets over an angle or over a house cusp. (This works with the Placidus house system.) The interpretation might change or an event might occur. This might even help you with rectification since the transits of the angles tend to be pronounced.
- * You can also progress the Solar Return Moon according to its speed on the day of the SR. Usually this equals about a degree per month.