

# THE SKY WITHIN

Report for John Hanson  
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart  
by  
Steven Forrest



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## The Sky Within

**John Hanson**  
**May 12, 1965**  
**07:30:00 AM MST +07:00**  
**Ogden, UT**  
**111W58'00" 41N13'00"**

<u>Planet</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>House</u>
Sun	Taurus	21°Ta38'	12th	01 28°Ge09'
Moon	Libra	17°Li01'	05th	02 18°Ca09'
Mercury	Aries	26°Ar08'	11th	03 08°Le47'
Venus	Taurus	29°Ta37'	12th	04 03°Vi47'
Mars	Virgo	11°Vi35'	04th	05 07°Li05'
Jupiter	Gemini	04°Ge32'	12th	06 18°Sc46'
Saturn	Pisces	15°Pi29'	10th	07 28°Sg09'
Uranus	Virgo	10°Vi43'	04th	08 18°Cp09'
Neptune	Scorpio	18°Sc33'	06th	09 08°Aq47'
Pluto	Virgo	13°Vi43'	04th	10 03°Pi47'
	Pisces	03°Pi47'	10th	11 07°Ar05'
Ascendant	Gemini	28°Ge09'	01st	12 18°Ta46'

*Planets within orb of 1.5 degrees of the following  
house cusp are displayed and interpreted as being in  
that house, except the Ascendant which uses 3 degrees.*

*Orb Conjunctions with Sun or Moon are 8 degrees.  
All orbs are set according to Steven Forrest's methods.*

# THE SKY WITHIN

by Steven Forrest

## Using Your Birthchart as a Spiritual Guide

A woman has a baby and is blissful about it. Another one does the same, and spends the rest of her life dreaming about how she might have been a ballerina. The same choice: having a kid. But only one smiling woman.

Nobody has a generic formula for happiness, at least not one that does the trick for everyone. That's where astrology comes in.

The birthchart, stripped to bare bones, is simply a description of the happiest, most fulfilling life that's available to you... personally. It spells out a set of strategies you can use to avoid boring routines, bad choices, and dead ends. It lists your resources. And it talks about how your life looks when you're misusing the resources and distorting the strategies -- shooting yourself in the foot, in other words.

All from a map of the sky?

Hard to believe. But think for a minute...

"How can the planets possibly affect us? They're millions of miles away." Astrology's critics are fond of rolling out that argument. But it doesn't hold water. Go out and gaze at the moon. What's really happening? Incomprehensible energies are plunging across a quarter million miles of void, crashing through your eyeballs and creating electrochemical changes in your brain. We call the process "seeing the moon." Certainly the planets affect us. The question is where do we draw the boundaries around those effects?

Let's go a step further.

Open your eyes on a starry night. What do you see? A vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Now close your eyes so tight they ache. Where are you now? What do you see? Again, a vast, luminous space, full of shadows and light. Consciousness and cosmos are structured around the same laws, follow the same patterns, and even feel pretty much the same to our senses.

"As above, so below." Just as the starry night awes us with its vastness, there's something infinitely deep inside you, a place you go when you close your eyes, a place that's beyond being an Aries or a Gemini or even a specific gender. At the most profound level, a birthchart is a map back to that magical center. It describes a series of earthly experiences which, if you're brave and open enough, will trigger certain states of consciousness in you -- states that operate like powerful spiritual catalysts, vaulting you into higher levels of being.

In the pages that follow, you'll tour your personal birthchart. But don't expect the usual "Scorpios are sexy" stuff. You are a mysterious being in a mysterious cosmos. You're here for just a little while, a blink of God's eye. You face a monumental task: figuring out what's going on! In that spiritual work, astrology is your ally. How will it help?

Certainly not by pigeon-holing you as a certain "type."

Astrology works by reminding you who you are, by warning you about the comforting lies we all tell ourselves, and by illuminating the experiences that trigger your most explosive leaps in awareness.

After that, the rest is up to you.

## YOUR TEN TEACHERS

Freud divided the human mind into three compartments: ego, id, and superego. Astrologers do the same thing, except that our model of the mind differs from Freud's in two fundamental ways. First, it's a lot more elaborate. Instead of three compartments, we have ten: Sun, Moon, and the eight planets we see from Earth. As we'll discover, each planet represents more than a "circuit" in your psyche. It also serves as a kind of "Teacher," guiding you into certain consciousness-triggering kinds of experience.

The second difference between astrology and psychology is that astrology's mind-map, unlike Freud's, is rooted in nature itself, just as we are.

The primary celestial teacher is the Sun. What does it teach? Selfhood. Vitality. How to keep the life-force strong in yourself. If the Sun grew dimmer, so would all the planets -- they shine by reflecting solar light. Similarly, if you fail to stoke the furnaces of your own inner Sun, then you'll simply be "out of gas." All your other planetary functions will suffer too.

How do we learn this teacher's lessons?

Start by realizing that when you were born the Sun was in Taurus.

Ease, calm, naturalness -- those are the spiritual goals of the Bull. Silence too. But not just the kind that comes from keeping your mouth closed. The Bull's silence is deeper: it's a quiet heart. Feel the wind in your hair. Feel the efficiency of your body, the rightness of its rhythms, the easy intelligence of your cells and muscles. That's Taurus. The part of you that's learning the lessons of the Bull is getting more grounded, more present, more receptive to immediate reality. As a result, it has a physical orientation and a practical feeling. It's not so interested in abstract flights of speculation. It avoids the metaphysical Disneyland that seem to fascinate so many people. It specializes in the wordless mysticism of ordinary life.

Feed your Taurean side with hands-on work: gardening, crafting wood or cloth, communing with animals. Soothe it with music. Restore and renew it with time spent close to nature -- in the forest, in the mountain valley, by the ocean. Dress it in blue jeans and flannel. And never, ever, ask it to go to a cocktail party!

With your Sun in Taurus, you renew your basic vitality in simple ways. Take a walk in the woods. Paddle a canoe. Build something of oak or maple. Your deepest nature is quiet, stable, solid. You benefit from having a strong tone of continuity in your life -- especially in relationships. Keep in touch with old friends. Stay close to people who aren't too quick to get off on "trips," be they guru-scenes, make-a-million schemes, or a new kind of bean sprout that will change your life. At the deepest level, you are learning about calm and naturalness. So keep things simple.

Your practical skills are enormous: you understand the world of raw materials, of money, of daily life. Be careful those skills don't run away with you! A pitfall for you lies in getting so busy keeping all your responsibilities magnificently fulfilled that you starve yourself for quiet time. Then the Sun grows dimmer in you, and every other aspect of your character has less light to reflect.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Twelfth house. What does that signify?

Start by realizing that Houses represent twelve basic arenas of life. There's a House of Marriage, for example, and a House of Career. Always, we find an element of "fate" in our House structures; the "Hand of God" continually presents us with existential and moral questions connected with our emphasized Houses. How we react and what we learn -- or fail to learn -- is our own business.

One brief technical note: Sometimes the Sun, the Moon, or a planet lies near the end of the House. We then say it's "conjunct the cusp" of the subsequent House, and interpret it as though it were a little further along... in the next House, in other words.

Slipping the bonds of ego, letting consciousness expand beyond the narrow framework of personality -- that's the terrain of the Twelfth House. A planet here stands between you and higher states of consciousness, not as an obstacle but as a bridge. For that reason, it's helpful to view such a planet as your "Guru" or "Master Teacher."

The very existence of a planet in this part of your chart tells us that in this lifetime you're ready for a quantum leap in awareness. But to accomplish that, you must practice a very specific "yoga." What yoga? That depends on the planets involved.

Before we identify that spiritual discipline, there's one more point -- your planetary "guru" is rather insistent. If you avoid the methods the Teacher suggests, your poor ego will take some hard knocks. To the old astrologers, this was the "House of Troubles." That's a fair description of what's in store for us if we choose to maintain our usual attachments, ignoring the call of the inner worlds.

With the Sun in the Twelfth House, you're learning about nonattachment. That doesn't necessarily mean poverty, celibacy, and a begging bowl -- those can be attachments too! Nonattachment means being willing to let go of anything, anytime. It means recognizing that you're not simply a personality, you're a consciousness, something deeper than all your postures or possessions. It means putting your inner life on the front burner all the time. Nonattachment, then, is an inner attitude, not an outward condition.

When you fail to maintain that lofty state, "bad luck" will intervene: the thing you're stuck on will be taken from you. That's why, centuries ago, astrologers named this sector of the birthchart the House of Troubles. What they forgot to add is that the troubles are optional.

The next step in our journey through your birthchart carries us to the Moon.

As you might expect, Luna resonates with the magical, emotional sides of your psyche. It represents your mood, averaged over a lifetime. As the heart's teacher, it tells you how to feel comfortable, how to meet your deepest needs. While the Sun lets you know what kinds of experiences and relationships help you feel sane, the Moon is concerned with another piece of the puzzle: feeling happy.

When you were born, the Moon was in Libra.

Perfect equilibrium. That's the spirit of the Scales. When Libra realizes its evolutionary aim, the nervous system is as still as a dark pool on a windless summer evening. Outwardly, Libran

energy often looks as though it's already there: it seems graceful and balanced, even unflappable. Inwardly, it's another story: the Libran part of you is tuned as tight as the high string on a violin. Spirit gave you some advice back before you were born: don't pluck it. And don't let anyone else pluck it either.

Inevitably, with your terrific sensitivity, you'll get rattled from time to time. What can you do about it? Watch a ballet, or any other beautiful thing. The outer harmony will internalize; you'll sigh, releasing tension. That's the Libran evolutionary strategy in a nutshell: flood your senses with perceptions of beauty. It will soothe you, lifting you closer to the unbreakable serenity which is the true goal of this sign of the zodiac.

With your Moon in Libra, you have the heart of an artist. You can get a tear in your eye watching a beautiful sunset. You feed your spirit whenever you experience harmony -- among colors, sounds, shapes, words. But also between people. Instinctively you reach out to others, attempt to create linkages and understandings. You have the soul of a diplomat or a counselor. Empathy -- the ability to stand in the other person's shoes -- is one of your greatest strengths. But be careful of your talent for creating the illusion of harmony when none is really there. A pitfall for you, in a word, is hypocrisy... the kind that comes, not from malice, but from the urge not to give offense. Some of your hardest emotional lessons revolve around realizing that gentleness and understanding, when overdone, can lead to the most brutal kind of conflict: the kind that's been put off too long.

Still, to be comfortable you need to surround yourself with people who are sensitive to the loveliness and grace of life, and with whom you can celebrate it.

Going farther, we see that your Moon lies in the Fifth house of your chart.

Pleasure -- that's Fifth House territory. It's as though God marched you off the end of the cosmic diving board with the words, "Go down there and try to have a good time!" That sounds pretty lightweight, but think about it: feeling good in this world isn't so easy! We've got global pollution, schizophrenics with AK-47s, ego-maniacs with nuclear warheads... not to mention disease, taxes, mosquitos, cars that won't start....

How do we feel real pleasure here on planet Earth? Alone, the "pleasures of the flesh" can't cut the mustard; money, alcohol, orgasms -- they help, but they're not enough... just look at the usual life-expectancy of a "purely physical relationship." Where to turn? To the pleasures of the mind, the heart, the soul! The joy of learning. The spiritual high of athletic excellence. The bliss of meditation. And, perhaps above all, the sheer pleasure of creative self-expression.

Astrological force is focused here in your birthchart. It offers joy -- and warns of the addictions that can overcome you if you miss that joy, or seek it all in one place.

With the Moon in the Fifth House, there's clearly a playful streak in your character, a desire to express yourself whimsically and creatively. Trouble is, it's fairly easily abashed. Your evolutionary challenge is to keep that "child within" alive and confident, despite the wounds of life's early years. You have a terrific imagination. You can build inner worlds before breakfast. Make sure you enjoy the bliss of expressing that fantasy-life. If you don't, you'll try to make up the pleasure deficit in less healthy ways: stupid self-indulgences, typically with food or sex.

There's a third critical piece in your astrological puzzle -- the Ascendant, or rising sign. Along

with the Sun and Moon, it completes the "primal triad." What is it? What does it mean? Simple -- the Ascendant is the sign that was coming up over the eastern horizon at the instant of your birth. It's where the sun is at dawn, in other words. In exactly the same way, the Ascendant represents how you "dawn" on people -- that is, how you present yourself. It's your "style," or your "mask."

The ascendant means more than that. It symbolizes a way you can help yourself feel centered, at ease, comfortable with who you are. If you get its message, then something wonderful happens: your style hooks you into the world of experience in a way that feeds your spirit exactly the kinds of events and relationships you need. Your soul is charged with more enthusiasm for the life you're living -- and you feel vibrant, confident, and full of animal grace.

When you took your first breath, Gemini was lifting over the eastern horizon of Ogden, UT. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Storyteller".

Wonder, amazement, astonishment, a sense of the miraculous -- those states of consciousness are the best of what Gemini symbolizes. Although this is an Air sign and therefore rather mental in its orientation, the Twins represent something more primal than thinking. They represent perception itself: all the raw, undigested stuff that pours in through our senses. Thinking too much about that material removes us from its immediate, moment-to-moment reality. We start to inhabit theories instead of the actual world of perception. "Authority" creeps in. So does "rightness." And "mental clarity." And the Twins wither. Nourish your Geminian energies with an endless diet of newness and change. They're hungry for anything they've not seen or felt before. Feed them! Give them conversation, books, travel, education... anything but boredom.

With Gemini rising, your outward style is quick and alert, hungry for input. You have a sharp wit and a mind that's faster than Ma Bell's switchboard. For most of your life, people will tend to underestimate your age... the reason being that we tend to associate curiosity and energy with youth! You have plenty of both, and that'll be just as true on your ninety-seventh birthday. To feel centered, you need to flood your senses with torrents of new information. You can do that by traveling, or by reading, or by pursuing education. One of your favorite methods is to talk with interesting people... just make sure you listen too.

Cultivate patience; the world is full of folks who are full of fascinating insights and experiences, but most of them pace their lives -- and minds -- more slowly than yours. You'll need to slow down a bit to synchronize enough with them for the data exchange to take place.

What have we learned so far? Quite a lot. Astrologers use the primal triad of Sun, Moon, and Ascendant in much the same way people who know just a little astrology use Sun signs. The difference is that while there are only twelve Sun signs, there are 1728 different combinations of all three factors. So when we say that you are a Taurus with the Moon in Libra and Gemini rising, that's a very specific statement.

Here's a way to make those words come even more alive. Traditionally, signs are connected with Bulls and Sea-Goats and Scorpions -- creatures we don't see every day. But we can translate those images into more modern archetypes.

We can say you are "The Naturalist", or "The Elf", or "The Silent One". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Taurus.

We can say you have the soul of "The Artist", or "The Diplomat", or "The Lover"... your Moon lies in Libra, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Storyteller", or "The Journalist", or "The Witness". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Gemini.

You can combine those archetypes any way you want. And you can go further: Once you have a feel for the three basic signs in your primal triad, you can make up your own images to go with them. Whatever words you choose, those simple statements are your fundamental astrological signature. It's your skeleton. Our next step is to begin adding flesh and hair to that skeleton by considering the planets.

Unsurprisingly, planets can gain prominence in a birthchart through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant. These three are power brokers, and any linkage with them boosts a planet's influence.

Your own birthchart is complicated by the fact that, at your birth, Venus was aligned with the Sun... or "conjunct" the Sun, to use the proper astrological term. Thus, the energy and spirit of that planet is fused with your solar identity. In a sense, you are an "incarnation" of Venus."

What can that mean? Start by understanding the significance of the planet.

Venus is the part of your mental circuitry that's concerned with releasing tension and maintaining harmony. Its focus is always peace, inwardly and outwardly. As such, it represents your aesthetic functions -- your taste in colors, sounds, and forms. Why? Because the perception of beauty soothes the human heart. Venus is also tied to your affiliative functions -- your romantic instincts, your sense of courtesy or diplomacy, your taste in friends. Invariably, this planet has one goal: sustaining your serenity in the face of life's onslaughts.

Venus was passing through Taurus. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the earthy, physical spirit of the Bull. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the colors and textures of the countryside, sensual but never jolting. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate unpretentious people, the kind who are comfortable perched on a boulder with the wind ruffling their hair... the kind who aren't upset at the thought of sitting silently for half an hour.

With Venus in your Twelfth House, your Inner Teacher is the Goddess of Beauty. Translated, that means that you benefit spiritually from immersing yourself in inspiring lovely surroundings. Ultimately, in this House we are learning the hard lesson of letting go -- and therefore at least one of the most critical spiritual turning points for you revolves around the loss of someone upon whom you've allowed yourself to depend a little too much.

While a fairly large number of people have Venus in that sign and house, the fact that it lies conjunct your Sun gives it special emphasis. By pushing the strengths it suggests toward their limits, you charge your solar vitality, approach your destiny, and set the stage for fulfilling your spiritual purpose.

Sometimes a planet gains prominence in a birthchart simply by sharing a House with the Sun.

That's the case with you. Jupiter is bathing in solar light, occupying the Twelfth House along with our central star.

Take all the planets, all the meteors, moons, asteroids, and comets. Roll them up in a big ball of cosmic mush. They still wouldn't equal the mass of the "King of the Gods" -- Jupiter. Exactly that same bigness pervades the planet's astrological spirit. Jupiter is the symbol of buoyancy and generosity, of opportunity and joy. At the deepest level, it represents faith... faith in life, that is, rather than faith in anybody's theological position papers.

Jupiter stands in Gemini. This is an important piece of information -- maybe a pivotal one. Being human is tough sometimes. When you need to boost your elemental faith in life, your answer lies in following the Way of the Witness or the Storyteller. What that means is that when you're sad, the only cure is a big dose of amazement. Do something new. Take a chance. Learn something. Break up a routine. Have a fascinating conversation with an intriguing stranger. Almost invariably that will put the sparkle back in your eyes.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Twelfth House -- traditionally the "House of Troubles," but actually the House of higher consciousness. Spiritually you have reached a point in the inner journey in which you need to learn lessons about radical faith. That is to say, in order to enter higher levels of being, you must first be willing to take chances in the world... such as traveling to a Sacred Site, even if you can't afford it. Again and again, Spirit will ask you one simple question: "Do you trust me?"

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Fourth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Mars, Uranus and Pluto in that area of your life, it is charged with activity, soul lessons, and opportunities for personal development. Before we even consider the planets separately, our first step is to explore this piece of existential real estate in broad terms.

Peel away the layers of the psychological onion, get down to the core of your being, the realm of your heros and nightmares -- you've entered the Fourth House. This is psychic bedrock. Traditionally, it's the House of the Home. That's a valid notion in lots of ways. First, with any astrological factor in this part of the birthchart, you're at least "minoring in psychology" and that process requires a safe haven; hence, you feel an elevated need for the privacy and security of the "nest." Second, much of your psychic bedrock was profoundly influenced -- or scarred -- by your childhood experiences. Many of your most fundamental challenges spin off the effects of a powerful parent upon your present character. Third, "Home" is "where you're coming from" -- and this House answers that question in the deepest way: it's the core of your being.

Pale red Mars suggested blood to our ancestors, and they named it the War God. That's an effective metaphor -- Mars does represent violence. But today we go further. The red planet symbolizes the power of the Will. Assertiveness. Courage. Without it, there'd be no fire in life. No spark. Where your Mars lies, you are challenged to find the Spiritual Warrior inside yourself, the part of you that's brave and clear enough to claim your own path and follow it.

Mars is steaming in the searching, questioning, restless field of energy we call Virgo. The Warrior inside you is bent on one target: seeking out flaws, weaknesses, errors. Like a magnetic compass, you unerringly home in on the fracture zones in any monolith -- be it an argument, an idea, a strategy... or a person. Spiritually you're learning two lessons here. One is how to be

scrupulously honest in naming problems. The other, which makes the first enduring, is forgiveness.

With the War-God occupying your Fourth House, there's fire buried deep inside you. When we strip away the layers of your psychological onion and bare the core, we find the Warrior or the Crusader or the Adventurer--passion, in other words. From an evolutionary perspective, it is essential that you express those qualities behaviorally, or they'll back up inside you, turning to seething anger and eventually into depression.

If Uranus were the only planet in the sky, we'd all be so independent we'd still be Neanderthals throwing rocks at each other. There would be no language, no culture, no law. On the other hand, if Uranus did not exist, we'd all still be hauling rocks for Pharaoh. All individuality would be suppressed. This is the planet of individuation... the process whereby we separate out who we are from what everybody else wants us to be. Always it indicates an area of our lives in which, to be true to ourselves, we must "break the rules" -- that is, overcome the forces of socialization and peer pressure. In that part of our experience, what feeds our souls tends to annoy mom and dad... and all the "moms" and "dads" who lay down the law of the tribe.

With Uranus in Virgo, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Artisan. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through cultivating and polishing your innate hunger for the attainment of consummate skill. At what? Almost anything, so long as it requires effort, self-discipline, and practice. Without such a craft, you're likely to befuddle yourself with a love-hate, approach-avoidance attitude toward your daily responsibilities.

House of the Home -- that's the old name for the Fourth House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just home, but also your psychological "home base" -- the innermost "Myth of Self." Uranus is your Teacher here, and the myth or archetype upon which your outer life must be founded is that of the Genius or the Revolutionary. But to achieve the expression of that brilliance you first face some friction: something happened to you in your early life, something that antagonized the expression of your individuality. Find it and conquer it.

"Life's a bitch. Then you die." Go to any boutique from coast to coast; you'll find those words on a coffee mug. Meaninglessness. Like most truly frightening ideas, we make a joke of it. That's Plutonian territory: the realm of all that terrifies us so badly we need to hide from it. Death. Disease. Our personal shame. Sexuality, to some extent. Initially, Pluto asks us to face our own wounds, squarely and honestly. Then, if we succeed, it offers us a way to create an unshakable sense of meaning in our lives. How? Methods vary according to the Signs and Houses involved, but always they have one point in common: the high Plutonian path invariably involves accepting some trans-personal purpose in your life.

One more point: Pluto moves so slowly that it remains in a given Sign for many years. As a result, its Sign position in your birthchart refers not only to you but also to your generation. The House position, however, is much more personal in its relevance.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Virgo. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Perfectionist archetype: surrendering to cynicism and defeat. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen to take refuge in bitterness over the pain of continuing your journey? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then

congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Fourth House... the part of the birthchart where what we call "psychology" happens. Spirit has blessed you with sound instincts regarding the way people come to live with their old wounds, surviving, but also suffering. To create a sense of meaning in your life, you need to accept your role as a healer of spirits. To do that, you must first recognize the places where darkness touched you as a child.

In the final analysis, all planets are important. Each one plays a unique role in your developmental pattern, and failure to feed any one of them results in a diminution of your life. Just because the following planets aren't "having breakfast with the President" through association with the Sun, Moon, or Ascendant doesn't mean we can ignore them.

You're lying in your bed, going to sleep. Suddenly a jolt runs through your body. You just "caught yourself falling asleep." Where were you two seconds before the jolt? What were you? Astrologically, the answer lies with Neptune. This is the planet of trance, of meditation, of dreams. It represents your doorway into the "Not-Self." Based on the sign the planet occupies, we identify a particularly critical spiritual catalyst for you... although we need to remember that Neptune remains in a Sign for an average of a little over thirteen years, so its Sign position actually describes not only you, but your whole generation. Its House position, however, is more uniquely your own.

Neptune was passing through Scorpio. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Sorcerer... that is consciously, intentionally to seek access to the power aspects of the Great Mystery, perhaps through the mastery of healing techniques, or a study of shamanistic traditions, or the use of divinatory methods such as astrology or the tarot cards. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of what we could broadly call "magic," you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Sixth House of your birthchart, where mystical dimensions become linked to your natural skills and instincts for service. You grow spiritually through helping others -- and not because God hands out brownie points, but rather because service, more than any other spiritual discipline, teaches us humility and compassion. One more piece of the puzzle: You have a special instinct for working directly with other people's unconscious minds. This may mean you were born to help others unravel their dreams, or that you should work with guided imagery, or with hypnosis.

Look at a NASA photo of Saturn. The icy elegance of the planet's rings, the pale understatement of the cloud bands... both hint at the clarity and precision which characterize Saturn's astrological spirit. Part of the human psyche must be cold and calculating, cunning enough to survive in the physical world. Part of us thrives on self-discipline, seeks excellence, pays the price of devotion. Somewhere in our lives there's a region where nothing but the best of what we are is enough to satisfy us. That's the high realm of Saturn. In its low realm, we take one glance at those challenges and our hearts turn to ice. We freeze in fear, and despair claims us.

The fantastical terrain of Pisces offers a region of profound spiritual challenge for you, as Saturn was passing through that sign at your birth. You must learn to steel yourself in the face of the Fishes' shadow side: escapism, perhaps even addiction in any of its ten thousand forms. Make

your dreams real! That's your high road. And support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying yourself with concrete skills and strategies -- especially ones pertinent to Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The Tenth! The arena of life where we devise a meaningful role to play in our community. Typically, but not always, that means our job. With Saturn here, you bear the burden of destiny. You were born with a mission, and that mission involves commitment, years of effort, and an occasional willingness to tolerate meager rewards. The path of your work may look barren at times. Other paths, easier and juicier in material terms, may tempt you. Don't succumb: it would cost you your dignity.

Mercury buzzes around the Sun in eighty-eight days, making it the fastest of the planets. It buzzes around your head in exactly the same way: frantically. It's the part of you that never rests -- the endless firing of your synapses as your intelligence struggles to organize a picture of the world. Mercury represents thinking and speaking, learning and wondering. It is the great observer, always curious. It represents your senses themselves and all the raw, undigested data that pours through them.

Mercury is percolating in Aries. That combination links your mental functions with the energetic logic of the Warrior archetype. The result is that your mind is sharp, penetrating... and combative. Instinctively you think in terms of pros and cons, letting them do battle with each other. Spiritually you are learning a lot about uncompromising honesty... and about its costs.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Eleventh House, as you mature, your Mercury energies play an increasingly central role in your nature and circumstances. That means that if you play your cards right, you'll move in the direction of becoming a "voice" in your community, one who puts into words the needs, fears, and perceptions of your "tribe."

## **Your Lunar Nodes**

### **The soul's journey**

Here's a jolly baby. Here's a serious one. An alert one. A dull one. A wise one. Those are common nursery room observations, but they raise a fascinating question: How did that person get in there?

Most of our psychological theory, either technically or in folklore, is developmental theory... abuse a child and he'll grow up to be a child-abuser, for example. But in the eyes of the newborn infant, there is already character. How can that be? One might say it's heredity, and that's certainly at least part of the answer. A large part of the world's population would call it reincarnation -- that baby, for better or worse, represents the culmination of centuries of soul-development in many different bodies. A Fundamentalist might simply announce, "That's how God made the baby." Who's to say? But all three explanations hold one point in common: They all agree that we cannot account for what we observe in a baby's eyes without acknowledging the impact of events occurring before the child's birth.

In astrology, the South Node of the Moon refers to events occurring before your birth, helping

us to see what was in your eyes ten seconds after you were born... however we imagine it got in there! The Moon's North Node, always opposite the South Node, refers to your evolutionary future. It's a subtle point, but arguably the most important symbol in astrology. The North Node represents an alien state of consciousness and an unaccustomed set of circumstances. If you open your heart and mind to them, you put maximum tension on the deadening hold of the past.

As we consider the Nodes of the Moon in your birthchart, we'll be using the language of reincarnation. Whether that notion fits your own spiritual beliefs is of course your own business. If it doesn't work for you, please translate the ideas into ancestral hereditary terms. After all, it makes little practical difference whether we speak of a certain farmer weeding his beans a thousand years before the Caesars as your great, great, mega-great grandfather... or as you yourself in a previous incarnation. Either way, he's someone who lived way back there in history who sort of is you, sort of isn't, and lives on inside you--influencing but not ultimately defining you.

At your birth, the South Node of the Moon lay in Sagittarius, the sign of the Explorer. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent stretching beyond established frontiers: robustness, enthusiasm, expansiveness. In previous incarnations, you've had experiences in which you were sustained by little more than radical faith -- an absolute, unquestioning devotion to a dream or principle. Now, like a recovering Fundamentalist, you must learn a new lesson: how to let go of "clarity" and certainty, and see the astounding, fertile confusion that lies before your eyes.

That nascent ability to tolerate not knowing is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Gemini -- the sign of the Witness. As we saw earlier, the North Node can be seen as the most significant point in the entire birthchart. Why? Because it represents your evolutionary future... the ultimate reason you're alive, in other words. How can you accomplish this Geminian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your tendency to jump to grand philosophical cosmologies, and consciously seek the unintegrated details and loose ends that are always the clues to yet deeper levels of understanding.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Sixth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you learned a lot about humility. Your method was radical devotion to service and duty. Trouble is, you learned a bit about humiliation along the way, often crippling your creativity and individuality with feelings of inadequacy, shame, and guilt.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Twelfth House, you must act to counterbalance those self-undermining tendencies, and the critical self-appraisal that fueled them... not because critical self-appraisal is "bad," but because you've already learned everything you can from it. The time has come for you to accept the vastness of your own spirit, to realize your birthright as an evolving being. A "spiritual" ego-inflation isn't the point; the point is claiming the state of consciousness you earned long ago through your radical devotion to service and duty!

And that's your birth chart.

Trust it; the symbols are Spirit's message to you. In the course of a lifetime, you'll make a billion choices. Any one of them could potentially hurt you terribly, sending you down a barren road. How can you steer a true course? The answer is so profound that it circles around and sounds trivial: listen to your heart, be true to your soul. Noble words and accurate ones, but tough to follow.

The Universe, in its primal intelligence, seems to understand that difficulty. It supplies us with many external supports: Inspiring religions and philosophies. Dear friends who hold the mirror of truth before us. Omens of a thousand kinds. And, above all, the sky itself, which weaves its cryptic message above each newborn infant.

In these pages, you've experienced one reading of that celestial message as it pertains to you. There are others. You may want to consider sitting with a real astrologer ... micro-chips are fine, but a human heart can still express nuances of meaning that no computer can grasp. You may want to order other reports, ones that illuminate your current astrological "weather," or that analyze important relationships. Best of all, you may choose to learn this ancient language yourself, and begin unraveling your own message in your own words.

Whatever your course, we thank you for your time and attention, and wish you grace for your journey.