

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Sir Edmund Hillary
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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contactus@forecasters.co.nz

Your Chart Data

Sir Edmund Hillary
 Jul 20, 1919
 02:30:00 PM NZT
 Auckland, NZ
 174E46'00", 36S52'00"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Cancer	26°Ca20'	08th	01 18°Sg37'
Moon	Aries	21°Ar40'	05th	02 10°Cp34'
Mercury	Leo	23°Le03'	09th	03 02°Aq02'
Venus	Virgo	10°Vi51'	10th	04 26°Aq52'
Mars	Cancer	07°Ca38'	07th	05 28°Pi54'
Jupiter	Cancer	27°Ca03'	08th	06 08°Ta56'
Saturn	Leo	27°Le09'	10th	07 18°Ge37'
Uranus	Pisces	01°Pi00' R	04th	08 10°Ca34'
Neptune	Leo	08°Le34'	09th	09 02°Le02'
Pluto	Cancer	06°Ca40'	07th	10 26°Le52'
Midheaven	Leo	26°Le52'		11 28°Vi54'
Ascendant	Sagittarius	18°Sg37'		12 08°Sc56'

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.

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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 Cancer.

Opening the inner eye, mapping the topography of consciousness, learning to express compassion -- these are Cancer's evolutionary aims. To assist in that work, Cosmic Intelligence has cranked up the volume on the Crab's ability to feel. No other sign is so sensitive -- nor so vulnerable. A certain amount of self-defense is appropriate here; after all, this world isn't exactly the Garden of Eden. Trouble is, legitimate self-defense can degenerate into shyness or a fear of making changes. You really do care about the hurts that other beings suffer. That's good news. You also have an instinctive ability to soothe those hurts, homing in on the source of the pain. More good news. The bad news is that you could choose to remain forever protected within the safe (and invisible!) role of the Healer, the Counselor, or the Wise One.

With the Sun in Cancer, you feed your solar vitality by finding a role in the world in which you address the hurt in the lives of other beings. You become a nurturer or a healer of some sort.

You also need to make sure that you have enough real intimacy and quiet, private time to "nurture the nurturer" -- yourself, in other words.

Those methods strengthen your sense of identity. They trigger higher states of awareness in you. If you don't express your soothing wound-binding instincts, all the glories of the world would leave you feeling like an imposter in your own life. And without quiet time and naked intimate honesty, you'll quickly burn out on playing the role of everyone's psychotherapist.

Like the crab, you're a vulnerable creature who's evolved a shell. That's fine and necessary. But again like the crab, you must eventually shed your shell and grow a larger, more inclusive one, or you'll be awfully cramped.

We can take our analysis of your natal Sun a step further. When you were born, that solar light illuminated the Eighth 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.

In the Eighth House you experience three basic human instincts in a radically heightened way. The first instinct is sexual -- not simply having intercourse, but also allowing yourself to bond fully with a partner, letting the primal sexual "program" in your deep psyche manifest, riding the roller coaster, trusting it, even though no one can completely understand it.

Death is the second Eighth House instinct. Again, we let ourselves flow with something deep within us, learning consciously something that our cells know automatically -- that death, like sex, is just another biological roller coaster, spooky maybe, but worthy of trust... which leads directly to the third instinct: our sense of immortality. Something deep and trans-rational in us knows there is a realm beyond death. Life has an "occult" dimension -- that is, a hidden one. Without an acceptance of that intuitive feeling, we live forever under a shadow of futility and foreboding.

You have lessons here. Let's consider them.

With the Sun in the Eighth House, you can't learn what you've come into the world to learn without the catalytic effect of a lover upon you... and whether or not you and that lover are married is irrelevant. The point is that many of your deepest lessons lie in the steamy realm of committed sexual intimacy.

Very likely, you've had more experience with the transitory nature of life than most of us--untimely deaths of family members or friends, near misses in automobiles. It's as though something keeps tapping you on the back, reminding you that any moment could be your last. You can get depressed about that, but there's a better response: you can realize your destiny, which is to live with absolute intensity and unwavering honesty, stemming from a feeling for life's fragility and preciousness.

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 Aries.

Courage! That's what Aries is all about. Traditionally this sign is represented as the Ram -- a fierce, frightening creature. That's a pretty good description of how this energy looks from the outside. Inside, it's different. Not the Ram, but the newborn robin, two days old, just hatched from its shell, living in a world full of creatures who think of it as breakfast. Does it cower? No -- the little bird flaps its stubby wings and squawks its head off, demanding its right to exist. That's Aries: the raw primal urge to survive. Existential courage.

Courage is a funny virtue -- it has to be scared into a person. In the evolutionary scheme of life, Aries energy has a disconcerting property: it draws stress to itself. You can choose a life of

risk and adventure. Or you can choose a life of one damn thing after another. Refuse the first, you'll get the second.

With your Moon in Aries, your heart is learning some hard lessons in courage. Like everyone else, you have feelings, needs, desires. Satisfying them isn't so easy. Circumstances crystallize around you in which, unless you find the "Spiritual Warrior" inside yourself, you'll go hungry. Sometimes that means recognizing that hurting someone with the straight truth is far kinder than being "gentle" or "self-sacrificing."

To feel comfortable, you require drama in your life. You need to feel the "edge" sometimes. You may get it from sailing in a hard wind. You may get it from riding a bicycle a little too fast. You may discover it in a steamy, intense, confrontive interaction with someone you love.

If you don't feed your Arian Moon the fiery experiences it needs, you tend to get temperamental, bossy, and needlessly competitive. But that's not your true nature -- just an "occupational hazard" that goes along with this volatile lunar position.

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, Sagittarius was lifting over the eastern horizon of Auckland, NZ. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Gypsy".

To the medieval astrologer, there were three kinds of Sagittarian: the gypsy, the scholar, and the philosopher. They're all legitimate, healthy parts of the picture. Sagittarius represents the urge to expand our horizons, to break up the routines that imprison us. One way to do that is to escape the bonds of the culture into which we were born -- that's the gypsy. Another is to educate ourselves, to push our intelligence beyond its customary "position papers" -- the way of the scholar. Finally, our intuition can stretch outward, trying to come to terms with cosmic law, attempting to grasp the meaning and purpose of life. That's the philosopher's path.

To keep your Sagittarian energies healthy, you need to feed them an endless supply of fresh experience. Travel. Take classes. Learn to scuba dive. Amazement feeds the Archer the same way protein feeds your physical body. Conversely, if there's a cardinal sin for Sagittarius, it is to consciously, willingly allow yourself to be bored.

With Sagittarius rising, you present a bright, breezy, self-confident face to the world. You seem to be alert and engaged with your environment, full of questions -- and the energy to pursue the answers. You radiate a straightforward, robust spirit of independence. What you need in order to feel centered and at ease is a sense of infinite possibility around you. When responsibilities tie you down to routines, you get edgy. Circumstances like that bring out the worst in you: an aloof, uncaring energy that makes people near you feel as though you don't think they're very important. You are in the right relationship to the physical world when you're convinced that mind-expanding surprises lie just over the horizon. So nourish yourself with travel, with adventure, with an openness to life. Do it, and you'll feel stronger and more at ease with yourself.

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 Cancer with the Moon in Aries and Sagittarius 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 Healer", or "The Wise One", or "The Invisible One". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Cancer.

We can say you have the soul of "The Warrior", or "The Survivor", or "The Daredevil"... your Moon lies in Aries, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Gypsy", or "The Scholar", or "The Philosopher". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Sagittarius.

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, Jupiter 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 Jupiter."

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

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 Cancer. 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 Healer or the Fantasy-Weaver. What that means is that when you're sad you have two solid options. One is to find another being who's wounded, and then bind the wounds -- visit a sick friend, adopt a cat, water the plants. The other is to curl up in a safe, hidden place, and either read some faraway tale or close your eyes and invent one of your own.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Eighth House -- traditionally the "House of Death," although mating and sexuality are actually more central to the symbolism. To maintain your faith in life, you must seek a living sexual bond, full of eye-contact and soul-contact, with an open, enthusiastic partner. If you lack such a connection in your life, then it's especially critical that you contact the primal forces of nature in other ways. Walk in the wind. Meditate on a mountaintop at midnight. Stand on a dune with your heart open to the gale-driven waves.

While a fairly large number of people have Jupiter 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.

Your birthchart displays another area of heightened activity: the Ninth House. The reason for that is simple -- there's a lot of planetary activity. With Mercury and Neptune 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.

The House of Long Journeys over Water -- that's one old name for this part of the birthchart. Since you have energy focused here a fortune-teller would say, "I see travel in your stars." True enough, although a deeper way of expressing the same notion is that immersing yourself in cultures outside the one into which you were born is a pivotal spiritual catalyst for you.

There are other kinds of catalytic journeys. Getting a wide education, formally or informally, is one. So is anything that breaks up the normal routines of life and thought. Even learning to hang-glide.

Ultimately, in the Ninth House you weave a grand scheme of life's meaning and purpose, at least your own version of it. This is the House of Religion... provided we recognize that many major world religions have no churches or temples. Cynicism is one such religion. Existentialism, Materialism, and Science are others, not to mention Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism and so on.

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 roaring in Leo. That combination links your mental functions to the self-expressive, dramatic logic of the Lion. Your intelligence is hungry for an audience and knows how to attract attention. Spiritually you are learning about the importance of being heard -- and about the trap of sacrificing honest but threatening content for the sake of mere showmanship.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Ninth House, you have the mind of the eternal student, always learning, always eager to stretch a little further. It's important that you blow out the mental cobwebs periodically by taking a trip into another culture -- or by enrolling in a stimulating class or workshop.

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 Leo. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Performer... that is consciously, intentionally to seek the purest expression of your creative vision. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of spontaneous, unreserved self-expression, you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Ninth House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to breaking up routines of thought and action. To grow spiritually, it is helpful for you to undertake periodic pilgrimages -- that is, to travel away from the scene of your daily life and to allow the energy of some "sacred site" to wash over you. Which sacred site? Trust your instincts, and pay close attention to any dream activity that may contain clues. One hint: The whole Earth is sacred, so the magic places for you may not be "officially" holy.

Your birthchart shows still another area where planets congregate: the Tenth. By combining forces, Venus and Saturn emphasize that department of your life almost as powerfully as the Sun or Moon would.

Community -- that's the key to the Tenth House. How do you fit into your local branch of civilization? What role do you play there? "He's an anesthesiologist." That's a Tenth House statement. But so is, "She's into the women's movement." Even though she doesn't make a dime being a feminist, it still says something about the hat she wears in the community.

Planetary Teachers in this House do two things for you. They outline your "cosmic job description." That is, they tip you off about the role you were born to play in your community. Unfortunately, they don't do that very well; there are a billion roles and only ten planets, so the descriptions they provide are of necessity rather vague. At best, they're rough guidelines.

Tenth House Teachers do better with their second task. They point out parts of your own character that need to be developed to a radical degree before your mission coalesces before your eyes. Accept their suggestions, act on them, and you'll leave a lasting stamp of your vision upon the myths and symbols of your community.

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 Virgo. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners is shaped by the keen-eyed discrimination of the Virgin. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for quality, for precise execution, for technical virtuosity. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate people with a no-nonsense air of competence and realism, people who assess themselves with searing honesty, then get on with the business of working on themselves.

With Venus in the Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Peacemaker, Counselor, or Artist. An old-fashioned astrologer would simply say you're lucky when it comes to work and status. That's true... in a way. But be careful: Life will dangle cushy positions before you like the worm before the trout... and they conceal the hook of emptiness. (How to avoid it? Go back half a hundred words and re-read your "cosmic job description"... those Venus-sign images describe the paths of joy for you.)

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 colorful terrain of Leo 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 Lion's shadow side: fear of rejection. If people applaud your false self, what good is that? Cultivate your creativity and don't be afraid of artful embellishment, but will yourself toward honesty too! And support that journey in practical, Saturnian terms by fortifying your creative talents -- especially in areas 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.

Your birthchart shows still another area where planets congregate: the Seventh. By combining forces, Mars and Pluto emphasize that department of your life almost as powerfully as the Sun or Moon would.

One thing about love -- there's no way to learn much about it without some help! The Seventh House, traditionally the House of Marriage, is the part of your birthchart where you encounter the people who'll provide your deepest insights into intimacy. But that's not a code word for sex! For that reason, "Marriage" is a misleading title for this House. You can have intimacy without erotic or romantic feelings.

There are two parts to understanding the Seventh House. The first is that whatever energies you have in this part of your birthchart represent lessons you're learning about empathy, trust, and commitment. The second is that those same planetary energies describe the people who'll provide the lessons. They may be mates or lovers. They may be best friends. They may be colleagues or business associates. They may even be "worthy opponents."

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 sleeping in Cancer. Your assertiveness is directed inward, toward the heart. Your internal life is vivid, full of heroic fantasy. Spiritually you are learning many lessons about the kind of courage it takes to be vulnerable -- to those you love and, even more, to your own personal history. The surest way to evoke the Warrior's rage in you is to attack your home, your family, or the sanctity of your own privacy.

With the War-God occupying your "House of Marriage," emotional closeness for you depends upon an exchange of passion and fire. Rise to that challenge, or your personal life will degenerate into a pattern of bickering and petty vengeance. Your natural "soulmates" are strong people, often somewhat opinionated. Like it or not, they demand Mars qualities in you such as assertiveness, pluck, and a willingness to call a spade a spade.

"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.

Pluto was journeying slowly through the sign Cancer. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Crab archetype: hiding from life. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen safety over experience, the appearance of love over the steamy reality of shared growth, security over magic? (If you answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto gleamed in the Seventh House... the part of the natal chart concerned with intimacy. Your soulmates will, at times, push you toward your emotional limits. That may be exhausting, but anyone who isn't capable of that kind of intensity won't hold your attention or interest for very long. Through those relationships you are learning -- sometimes the hard way -- many truths about human partnership. Your transpersonal mission ultimately revolves around sharing those insights.

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.

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 Pisces, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Mystic. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own identity through a radically independent investigation of your own consciousness. You can call this process "religious" if you want to, but the key is that you never sign away your Uranian capacity to think for yourself and to experience your own inner life through as few philosophical filters as possible.

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.

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 Gemini, the sign of the Storyteller. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed the results of lifetimes spent sharpening the senses, honing your capacity for instantaneous reaction and adaptation. Many incarnations in which you lived by your wits have made you quick and fluid, hungry for fresh experience, eager to share ideas. But triumph for yourself -- that's the only cure. The triumph may be huge -- like getting your Ph.D. -- or it may be a little daily thing, like actually getting around to cleaning out the closet.

That nascent ability to come to terms with the intuitive, faithful side of your own psyche is symbolized by the North Node of the Moon, which lies in Sagittarius -- the sign of the Gypsy. 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 Sagittarian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome your addiction to the sharpness of your own formidable intelligence, intentionally placing yourself in situations which you do not comprehend and to which you must therefore respond from your gut rather than from your head.

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.