

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Britney Spears
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



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The Sky Within

Britney Spears
December 02, 1981
01:30:00 AM CST +06:00
Mahon, MS
089W30'55" 34N48'53"

Planet	Sign	Position	House	House Cusps
Sun	Sagittarius	10°Sg02'	03rd	01 03°Li23'
Moon	Aquarius	12°Aq23'	05th	02 00°Sc38'
Mercury	Sagittarius	05°Sg25'	03rd	03 01°Sg11'
Venus	Capricorn	25°Cp07'	04th	04 03°Cp43'
Mars	Virgo	23°Vi17'	12th	05 06°Aq12'
Jupiter	Scorpio	01°Sc01'	02nd	06 06°Pi34'
Saturn	Libra	19°Li16'	01st	07 03°Ar23'
Uranus	Sagittarius	00°Sg59'	03rd	08 00°Ta38'
Neptune	Sagittarius	24°Sg02'	03rd	09 01°Ge11'
Pluto	Libra	25°Li58'	01st	10 03°Ca43'
Midheaven	Cancer	03°Ca43'		11 06°Le12'
Ascendant	Libra	03°Li23'		12 06°Vi34'

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 child. 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 Sagittarius**.

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 your **Sun in Sagittarius**, freedom is the most precious arrow in your quiver. You thrive on experience. Your heart beats faster at the sight of a far horizon. Your life is a quest... for adventure, for experience, ultimately, for meaning. The Gypsy, the Scholar, and the Philosopher all play major roles in your interior existence... and need to have major input into your existential shopping list! There's a Gypsy-like destiny element in your life that presents you again and again with culture shock, like travel or working with people from different backgrounds. The Scholar manifests as your lifelong desire to learn, to break up your mental routines. And you've been a Philosopher ever since you were born -- you popped out of your mother's womb wondering, "Why am I here?"

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

Learning to see what's before your eyes -- that's Third House territory. Traditionally, this is the House of Communication. Perception might be a better word. The words on this page are "communicating" with you. But so does the blueness of the sky and the warmth of a friend's touch. Through your perceptions, the universe floods you with a continuous storm of raw information. Trouble is, we tend to miss most of it. How? By filtering it through the thick mesh of our preconceived notions and pet theories, often symbolized astrologically by whatever planets lie in this part of the birthchart.

The evolutionary question you're facing in this House is simple... to say. Can you keep a radically open mind? Can you really see what is before your eyes? Can you bleach your senses as clean as buffalo bones in the desert?

Spirit has given you intelligence and a capacity to communicate. It's given you curiosity. The discipline here is talking -- and listening. Experiencing -- and digesting. Understanding -- and endlessly questioning your understanding.

With your **Sun in the Third House**, you're bright and communicative, generally curious about the world around you. You've probably been given the gift of gab. You're a natural teacher, too, born to explain things. From an evolutionary perspective, everything depends upon keeping yourself... confused! That is to say, keeping yourself in a state in which what you've allowed yourself to experience is a few steps ahead of what you've figured out.

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 Aquarius**.

Aquarius is the sign of geniuses -- and criminals. It represents Individuation, which is a five-dollar word meaning the process of being yourself. Set against your individuation are all the social forces of conformity. Buy a necktie! Shave your legs! Get hungry at noon! Outwardly, they show up as peer pressures. Inwardly, those forces are more subtle but even more formidable: all the internalized scripts that go with having once been a very little kid learning how to be human from mom, dad, and the television set.

The Aquarian part of you is odd somehow. It doesn't fit into the social environment, at least not without betraying itself. In this part of your life, the more centered you get, the weirder you'll seem -- to Ann Landers and her crowd. Go for it, and pay the price of alienation or ostracism. It's high... but not as high as the price of living a life that's not your own.

With the Moon in Aquarius, your feelings "don't work right" -- that, at least, will often be the consensus among your self-appointed psychotherapists, employment counselors, and sundry gurus. There are times when you'll be under a lot of social pressure to feel happy -- and you'll be sad. Other times, you'll be pressured to mourn -- and you'll feel release. Or jealous -- and you'll be secure. Or enraged -- and you'll be accepting. It's enough to make a person feel crazy. Avoid that

too; it's just another one of the social scripts you're learning to break. From an evolutionary viewpoint, you are developing the ability to be true to your own instincts about what's going on inside you... and to avoid what for you would be the deadening emptiness of conventional "normalcy."

The people who make you feel most comfortable are outsiders, the ones who don't fit any social mold very tightly. Spend time with them; they feed your spirit.

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, Libra was lifting over the eastern horizon of Mahon, MS. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Artist".

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 **Libra rising**, you radiate grace and friendliness. Instinctively, people feel at ease around you... which spotlights the central characteristic of your outer self: courtesy. In this context that word doesn't mean being painfully "proper" all the time; instead it implies the capacity to grease the social wheels, to help people feel accepted and natural. You have that skill in abundance.

You feel most centered when you're creating harmony -- and that covers a lot of bases. Encouraging friends to relax and unwind certainly is part of it. But you can also create harmony between colors, shapes, and sounds. We call that "art," and expressing yourself artistically is quite self-affirming for you. Similarly, you can create harmony inside yourself by letting beauty wash over your senses, or by simply sitting quietly in an elegant 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 Sagittarius with the Moon in Aquarius and Libra 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 Gypsy", or "The Scholar", or "The Philosopher". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Sagittarius.

We can say you have the soul of "The Genius", or "The Truth-Sayer", or "The Exile"... your Moon lies in Aquarius, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Artist", or "The Diplomat", or "The Lover". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Libra.

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.

We find exactly that situation in your case. Saturn lies in your First House, a part of the chart which is really just an extension of the Ascendant. Thus, Saturn adds yet another tone to your "mask," modifying and deepening some of what we've already seen.

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 graceful terrain of Libra 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 Scales' shadow side: indecision and people-pleasing. Sometimes bridges must be crossed -- or burned. Will yourself toward commitment! This is especially pertinent in regard to the affairs of Saturn's House in your birthchart. Which House was that?

The First! The arena of life where you are asked to create the character you'll play 'til the end, and upon whose successes your spiritual fate hinges. With Saturn here, you radiate a quality of competence, perhaps even an intimidating seriousness, into the social world. More importantly you strengthen your sense of yourself in one fundamental way: through the accomplishment of great undertakings. For you, everything depends ultimately upon commitment, and the day-to-day self-discipline that brings those commitments to fruition.

There's even more going on in this part of your birthchart. Also found here is Pluto.

"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 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 Libra. Thus the shadow material you are called upon to face has to do with the dark side of the Lover archetype: shallowness. In what part of your life or personal history have you chosen to preserve the appearance of peace and understanding at the expense of truth? (If your answer is "Nowhere!" then congratulations... you're Enlightened... or not looking hard enough.)

At the moment of your birth, Pluto stood in the First House just below the eastern horizon--about to "dawn." In exactly the same way, you "dawn" on people in a Plutonian way: intensely. It's pivotally important that you find some larger framework of purpose for your life... or else all that intensity with which you were born will dissipate itself first in pointless drama, then in bitterness.

Your own birthchart is complicated by the fact that, at your birth, Mercury 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 Mercury."

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 soaring in Sagittarius. This combination links your mental functions to the exploratory, speculative, adventuresome logic of the Gypsy archetype. Intellectually you are curious, full of desire for wonder and amazement -- and the urge to convert it into philosophical understanding. Spiritually you are learning about the soul's absolute need for an endless, voracious diet of new experience.

With the traditional "Messenger of the Gods" occupying your Third House, you are a natural explainer. With little effort, you can become a remarkably effectively writer too. Be careful you don't intimidate others with your quick mind. If you do, they'll keep mum and you'll miss the insights they potentially offer.

While a fairly large number of people have Mercury 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. Uranus is bathing in solar light, occupying the Third House along with our central star.

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 Sagittarius, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Gypsy. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through stretching out toward new horizons -- and without that kind of mind-expanding experience you're likely to foul up your life with long periods of "practicality," punctuated with explosions of impulsiveness. Consciously chosen forays into the exotic and alien, such as adventuresome travel or exciting intellectual stimulation, purify your sense of self, purging out the spurious "inner voices" you've swallowed sitting in front of the great wraparound television set of late twentieth century Industrial Culture.

House of Communication -- that's the old name for the Third House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just language, but the whole web of undigested impressions which forms the matrix of your world view. Uranus is your Teacher here, and the lesson can be summarized this way: Trust your eyes! You have been given the ability to see what others miss, to sense the subtle "lies agreed upon" that underlies the version of the world they taught you in grammar school. Explore that data energetically or you'll dissipate this energy in argumentativeness and "foot-in-mouth" disease.

Your Third House is crowded. Also found here is Neptune.

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 Sagittarius. Thus, to trigger higher states of consciousness in yourself and to stimulate your psychic development, you may choose to follow the Path of the Gypsy... that is consciously, intentionally to expand awareness, perhaps through pilgrimage to holy places, certainly through a study of metaphysical philosophy. Without exposure to the purifying, soul-bleaching effects of that kind of mind-stretching activity, you tend to drift away from Spirit, losing yourself in the mazes of daily life.

Neptune, planet of transcendence, occupies the Third House of your birthchart, where its mystical feelings are linked to questions of communication and perception. You have the mind -- and voice -- of a poet. That is, you naturally think and speak in terms of symbols and innuendo. This is strength, but our culture doesn't value it much. Be careful you don't let society trick you into thinking there's something wrong with your mind! You're a visionary, and you grow spiritually when you take steps to put that vision into a form that can be shared.

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.

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 Capricorn. Thus, both your aesthetic sensitivity and your taste in partners are shaped by the stoic, austere spirit of the Lord of Winter. In the realm of beauty, whether natural or wrought by human hands, you have a taste for the spare and functional, for the sun-bleached purity of windblown rock. The same goes for friends and sexual partners -- you appreciate quiet individuals with character and integrity, and when you make a promise to them, you keep it... and expect the same.

With Venus in the Fourth House, you restore your psychic equilibrium by retreating into quiet havens--home, garden, your bedroom, a shady bend in the brook. There's a wonderful tenderness about your spirit, but you may have to make an effort to reveal it. Deep down, your self-image is organized around the twin archetypes of the Artist and the Romantic.

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 endurable, is forgiveness.

With Mars occupying your Twelfth House, the "War God" stands between you and the realization of loftier states of consciousness... not as an obstacle, but as a bridge. What that means is that you've come to a place in the spiritual journey where, if you're going to go further, you need to become braver. The point is that, despite the pretty words in inspirational books, there's something frightening about entering higher levels of awareness, and that very jitteriness is holding you back. Hence, your "guru" is the "Cosmic Warrior."

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 Scorpio. 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 Sorcerer. Go walking under the moon in a hard wind. Fill your house with candlelight. Get lost in the eyes of another soul who shares some of your humility before the awesome mysteries of existence.

In your chart, the "King of the Gods" reigns in the Second House -- traditionally the "House of Money." In the old days, that meant you'd be rich. Even now, it generally correlates with at least a subjective experience of abundance. Spiritually, though, the meaning is far deeper. You have many lessons to learn about appropriate self-love: how to care for yourself, to celebrate yourself, to invest generously in yourself, and then how to reward yourself for your victories.

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 Capricorn, the sign of the Great Father. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed an uncanny maturity, as though he or she were looking into the eyes of an octogenarian. For a thousand years you've found yourself again and again in positions of authority and responsibility, often in the face of daunting circumstances. As a result, resourcefulness has arisen in you, as have toughness and what the British call "a stiff upper lip." Now, like a child who grew up in a terrible street war, you must learn new lessons: spontaneity, emotional self-expression, a willingness to feel.

That nascent ability to open the heart utterly to emotion is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Cancer -- the sign of the Mother. 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 Cancerian spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the hermit inside yourself, drop your attachment to your own self-sufficiency, and reveal yourself to someone! That is, you need to intentionally place yourself in situations which encourage emotional self-expression: stable relationships with people whom you respect, trust, and view as equals.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Fourth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you were often born into "Great Houses" -- that is, families with powerful traditions... and clear expectations regarding the destinies of their progeny. You tended to remain safely ensconced within those established patterns, learning much about love, devotion, and respect for tradition, but little about creating your own independent future.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Tenth House, you must act to counterbalance those old conservative tendencies... not so much because they're "bad" as because you've already learned everything you can from them. The time has come for you to express who you are, vigorously and publicly, probably through the medium of a colorful career.

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.