

THE SKY WITHIN

Report for Sean Penn
An Interpretation of Your Birth Chart
by
Steven Forrest



This sample report compliments of:

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The Sky Within

Sean Penn
Aug 17, 1960
12:00:00 PM PDT +07:00
Burbank, CA
121W55'50" 37N19'24"

<u>Planet</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Position</u>	<u>House</u>	<u>House</u>
Sun	Leo	24°Le50'	10th	01 01°Sc57'
Moon	Cancer	04°Ca05'	09th	02 00°Sg29'
Mercury	Leo	11°Le40'	10th	03 02°Cp34'
Venus	Virgo	10°Vi16'	11th	04 06°Aq50'
Mars	Gemini	10°Ge07'	08th	05 09°Pi42'
Jupiter	Sagittarius	23°Sg47'	02nd	06 08°Ar14'
Saturn	Capricorn	12°Cp29'	03rd	07 01°Ta57'
Uranus	Leo	21°Le38'	10th	08 00°Ge29'
Neptune	Scorpio	06°Sc37'	01st	09 02°Ca34'
Pluto	Virgo	05°Vi30'	10th	10 06°Le50'
Midheaven	Leo	06°Le50'		11 09°Vi42'
Ascendant	Scorpio	01°Sc57'		12 08°Li14'

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 Leo.

When we hear "Lion," we think "fierce." But that's misleading. Go to the zoo and have a look at the "King of the Beasts." He's lying there, one eye open, looking regal. He knows he's the king. He doesn't need to make a fuss about it. The lion, like Leo at its best, radiates quiet confidence. A happy, creative, comfortable participation in the human family -- that's what Leo the Lion is all about.

The evolutionary method is deceptively simple: creative self-expression. As we offer evidence of our internal processes to the world, we feel more at home, more accepted, more spontaneous -- provided the world claps its hands for us! That's the catch. Leo needs an appreciative audience. That audience can be a thousand people cheering or one person saying "I love you." Either way, it's applause, and for the Lion, that's evolutionary rocket fuel.

Toughing it out, not letting oneself be affected by a lack of support or understanding, may well be an important spiritual lesson -- but not for Leo. Here the evolutionary problem comes down to lack of real, ultimate trust in other people. The cure isn't toughness; it's building a pattern of joyful give-and-take. So perform! And if no one claps, go somewhere else and perform again.

With your Sun in Leo, you are naturally creative. Your task is to express that side of your character vigorously and confidently -- and to make sure that what you offer is appreciated. What is the best truth you know? What's holy and pure in your life, worth living for? That's your gift. Dramatize it. Package it somehow. And perform! You may be drawn to the arts. But just as possibly, you might express your creativity in a business, or in some public service.

Beneath the colorful surface of your character, there is an insecurity. Hardly anyone sees it. It's the fundamental spiritual problem you've come into this life to work out. Your "yoga" lies in tricking the world into clapping its hands for you. Be wary, though: even if you win the Nobel prize, it won't mean a thing unless you win it for expressing your SELF. Otherwise, your deep-seated doubts and insecurities about your SELF go untouched and unhealed.

One more thing -- if you're doing your best and nobody's clapping, remember this: your act is fine; it's the audience that needs to be replaced.

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

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.

With the Sun in the Tenth House, it's as though Spirit has asked you to figure out a way to get paid for being yourself. Prominent in your "cosmic job description" is the notion that you are to be some sort of role model or exemplar for your community, embodying in yourself a set of principles or skills. To accomplish that, the part of your character you must develop to a radical degree is... yourself. And that takes time. In youth, be wary of the way society will try to seduce you into prematurely accepting some role that doesn't have much to do with your nature or values. When a Tenth House Sun blooms well, it usually blooms late.

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 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.

Traditionally, the Moon is said to be the "ruler" of Cancer. What that means in plain English is simply that the Moon and Cancer are fond of each other; the combination is a very strong one. The Moon represents emotion; so does the Crab. You've linked the two in your birthchart. The effect is that the subjective, creative, feeling side of your life is extremely alive. The same can be said for your vulnerability. If this world were always a gentle, supportive place, you'd naturally express a lot of sentiment. But it's not! The world is dangerous, full of treachery and pain sometimes. As a result, you've learned to defend yourself. That's fine. But a big piece of your evolutionary work in this lifetime revolves around learning to trust people. To give them a chance to love you. To let them see your humanness. Avoid the trap of withdrawing utterly into your inner labyrinths. Avoid also the more subtle trap of always being the one who understands and forgives, never revealing your own pain.

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

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.

With the Moon in the Ninth House, instinctively you sense that each moment is precious. Your heart has a taste for adventure, for learning, stretching, seeking new horizons to cross. You have wonderfully adaptive reflexes when presented with changing circumstances or alien customs. All those qualities taken together constitute a powerful "Teacher" inside you. To learn the lessons, all you need to do is follow that expansive impulse within yourself, however impractical or irrational it may seem: travel, explore, connect with people from radically different backgrounds than yourself. Yours is a religion of the heart; knowledge, information, even insight take a back seat to a simple feeling that the universe is the Great Mother, that she's wiser than you, and that she's guiding you.

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, Scorpio was lifting over the eastern horizon of Burbank, CA. Let's begin our analysis by considering the meaning and spiritual message of the sign of "The Detective".

The Scorpion! A spooky image for a spooky sign. There's a scary side to life. People get terrible diseases. Kids get damaged. Old people are forgotten. Everybody dies. Socially we're conditioned to avoid mentioning those things, or to mention them only in ritual contexts -- like jokes or political speeches. For Scorpio, the evolutionary aim is to face those shadowy places. To make the unconscious conscious. To break taboos.

The Scorpio part of you is deep and penetrating. It has little patience with phoniness or hypocrisy. Trouble is, a little phoniness or hypocrisy often make life a lot easier for everyone! Be careful of becoming so "deep" that you lose perspective. In the Scorpion part of your life, you could slip into brooding and heaviness. So laugh a little! And find a few friends you can talk to. Do that, and you'll keep you balance well enough to find wisdom.

With Scorpio rising, we find something of an astrological paradox: the sign most concerned with penetrating the innermost reaches of the psyche is charged with the task of creating the exterior of the character! It's not a natural combination, but what happens is that your style tends toward intensity and probing. You make eye contact easily. A wall of energy radiates from you, carrying an unspoken message: "There will be no phoniness between us. Either tell the truth, or take a walk." Some people will choose to

take the walk! But others will immediately find themselves overwhelmed with a desire to "confess" something to you. "I've never told anyone this before, but..."

To feel centered, you need to experience a lot of eye-to-eye intensity. There must be drama in your life; there must be truth; and there must be passion.

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 Leo with the Moon in Cancer and Scorpio 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 Performer", or "The Aristocrat", or "The Clown". Those are just different ways of saying you have the Sun in Leo.

We can say you have the soul of "The Healer", or "The Wise One", or "The Invisible One"... your Moon lies in Cancer, in other words.

We can add that you wear the mask of "The Detective", or "The Sorcerer", or "The Hypnotist". Those images capture the spirit of your Ascendant, which is Scorpio.

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

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.

At your birth, Neptune was about to rise -- in your First House, in other words. This is a position of great prominence for any planet. As a result, we recognize that Neptunian qualities (psychic sensitivity, spiritual leanings) figure vividly in your character, and that those qualities show--people sense them in you. At your best you wear the mask of the mystic, but you can also wear the mask of the chameleon, changing your colors to fit your surroundings and thereby losing track of your own vision and momentum. The cure? Keep Neptune healthy by feeding it meditative silence, ideally once a day.

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

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

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 Leo, the process of individuation for you is tied up with the Path of the Performer. That is to say, you strengthen and clarify your own Uranian identity through cultivating and polishing your innate capacity for creative self-expression -- and without that outlet, you're likely to clog up your life with unnecessary bombast and drama. Consciously chosen forays into the realm of performance, such as theater, music, or even the pursuit of athletic excellence, 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 Honor -- that's the old name for the Tenth House, where your Uranus lies. The issues are broader; not just your reputation, but also your career, and even more broadly, your "cosmic job description." Uranus is your Teacher here and the lessons can be summarized this way: to find your most satisfying role in the human community, you must first find yourself... that is, separate from the promptings of your spirit all the extraneous, phony dreams you internalized watching TV when you were a kid. You HAVE a cosmic job description, and it is Revolutionary, Breaker of Rules, Troublemaker, Sower of the Seeds of Doubt.

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

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 Tenth House, your "cosmic job description" is Communicator or Teacher. That means that you were born with something significant to say to the human family. You may write it. You may broadcast it. You may announce it from a soapbox. But before you can pull it off, you'll need to unravel a riddle Life has set before your spirit: How to find your true voice?

Your Tenth House is crowded. 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 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 Tenth House -- the part of the natal chart that helps clarify your "cosmic job description." You were born with a mission, and your sense of meaning in life depends on fulfilling it. What is the mission? We can't say precisely, but we can narrow it down. First, it involves blowing the whistle on lies. Second, it involves countering the force that has historically been called Evil, and healing its effects. Third, it depends totally upon your courage to speak out at the level of moral principle.

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.

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 Sagittarius. 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 Gypsy. That is, break out from under the tyranny of the familiar and the "practical." Stretch out into amazement and adventure. Start a Quest... or just hit the road.

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.

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 savvy, ambitious terrain of Capricorn 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 Sea-Goat's shadow side: self-mechanization, and self-imposed emotional exile. Will yourself toward joy! Learn the discipline of spontaneity! 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 Third! The arena of life where we speak and listen, read and write. With Saturn here, you need to take an orderly, long-term attitude toward building your communication skills. Your mind doesn't work quickly, but it works with depth and precision. Trust it! And push it towards the limits of logic and concentration. As you approach your goal here, increasingly people will recognize an innate authority in your tone... unless you've bamboozled yourself out of your birthright by mistaking your natural deliberation for mental inadequacy.

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 vibrating in Gemini. When circumstances contrive to rob you of variety and mental stimulation, the Warrior inside you rises up and starts throwing Molotov cocktails. When you're bored, you're mean, in other words. Spiritually you're learning how to engineer -- forcefully, if necessary -- a fascinating, varied life, full of encounters with amazing strangers and astounding experiences.

With the War-God occupying your Eighth House, the archetype of the dark-eyed Mexican Dancer -- moody, passionate, explosive -- figures vividly in your psychological make-up. From an evolutionary perspective, you are developing the courage to deal

honestly and effectively with the most basic hungers in your spirit. Sexually, the only kind of partner who'll hold your attention for long is one with whom there is a real exchange of life-force... that is, lots of eye contact, plenty of emotional nakedness, and a spirit of endless risk.

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 Eleventh House, as you mature, your Venusian energies figure more prominently in your character and situation. That suggests a trend toward more prosperity, more comfort, and better fortunes in the world of intimacy as the years go by. There is an artist in you, but it's a late-bloomer... even if that truth is veiled by lesser successes earlier in life. Is all that guaranteed? Yes... provided you don't cancel it by slipping under the thumb of the dark Venus, descending into laziness, self-indulgence, and escapism.

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 Pisces, the sign of the Mystic. Anyone looking into your eyes as you took your first breath would have observed an eerie wisdom, as though he or she were looking into the eyes of a buddha. For centuries, you've been exploring trance states, typically in the context of spiritual traditions and institutions but occasionally in darker ways... like the "trance" induced by alcohol or opium. As a result, an intuitive grasp of altered and higher states of consciousness has arisen in you. Now, like one who has become too heavenly to be of any earthly good, you must learn new lessons: practical helpfulness toward others and a willingness to face squarely the mucky details of getting free.

That nascent ability to willingly and effectively accept the yoke of service is symbolized by your North Node of the Moon, which lies in Virgo -- the sign of the Craftsperson. 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 Virgoan spiritual work? The "yoga" is easy to say, harder to do: you must overcome the myth of "World Transcendence" inside yourself, and begin polishing a set of skills with which you can address the pain of other people, one by one.

There's another piece to the puzzle: The Moon's South Node falls in the Fifth House of your chart. This implies that previous to this lifetime you lived out the notion that "the road of excess leads to the palace of wisdom." There has developed in your spirit a spontaneous immediacy... creative and joyful, but vulnerable to the life-derailing effects of whimsy and self-indulgence.

In this lifetime, with your North Node of the Moon in the Eleventh House, you must act to counterbalance those whimsical, self-indulgent 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 take authority over the shape of your own life, establishing your own goals and priorities, determining in advance what kind of elderly person you'll become. Finish what you start!

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.