

A SECRET PLACE—THE TWELFTH HOUSE, PART I.

What we are witnessing today is the gradual emergence of a picture of the universe which presents us with a special problem, for it demands the acceptance of a new dimension of reality. This “fourth dimension” can be defined by the elusive, yet revealing word: Interpenetration. What is implied by it is that the universe and our total being interpenetrate. The era of isolated, irreducible, and quasi-absolute individualities...is passing away.

--Dane Rudhyar
The Sun is Also a Star

This is the first of a two-part article on one of the most obscure parts of the chart—the Twelfth House. In this article, we shall be dealing with the nature of the Twelfth and assess what it means for an individual to have each of the twelve signs on its cusp. In Part II, we will examine the indications for each of the planets (and especially the ruler of the horoscope) when placed in this portion of the astrological wheel.

Many of us are hard at work seeking to evolve on the spiritual path. One of the most beautiful and appreciated results of this spiritual growth is the fact that the more evolved our consciousness, the more our sense of universal inclusivity. This manifests in the fact that the more we understand ourselves to be individualized “units”, the more we also see ourselves connected within the functioning of an infinite Whole. When once there stood a frightened and overly self-involved ego has become a vehicle for the activities of the soul. Where once there was a person separated from others by the exclusive dynamics of the personal desire nature, there is now a human being centered in Love. In astrological terms, the focus of self-awareness of our personal identification as seen through the lens of the Ascendant (the ego’s immediate contact to its environment), gradually yields to the mystical awareness of our union with the universe.

The Twelfth House and its natural ruling planet, Neptune, are the “keepers of the seal” surrounding this transformational evolutionary process. In soul-centered, esoteric astrology, we also associate Pluto as ruler of Pisces and hence of the Twelfth as the

processes of death and transformation are intimately evolved with the gradual evolution of consciousness and the consequent soul/personality alignment. Many astrologers call the Twelfth the “House of Karma,” as well as the “House of Self-Undoing.” But these appellations are not exact in their application as *all* the houses of the horoscope contain aspects of the total karma of one’s life. It should also be pointed out that much of karma also consists of rewards and riches, not only difficulties and punishments. As for “self-undoing,” one of the greatest gifts we can give to ourselves is the ability to undo the lower self and make way for the Higher. This is accomplished through the spiritual Path.

The special karma that is specific to the Twelfth House has to do with are relationship to the collective within which we live and breathe and have our being. The Twelfth represents the synthesis of what has been stored from previous turns of the astrological wheel, that is, other life cycles. Thus the Twelfth is the storehouse of our secret treasures as well as the strength we have gained from accumulating such experience. This last house of the horoscope contains our oceanic reserves of power and potency from all the good we have done and all the positive services we have performed. In effect, the Twelfth is the repository of our “good” karma.

One of the primary characteristics of being human is that human life is basically dualistic and remains so until we have achieved an advanced state of spiritual initiation. As human beings we are also possessed of a “bipolar” relationship to ourselves and to life manifesting as a magnetic shadow that is both self-destructive and harmful. Locked away within the treasure chest of our positive, hidden potencies are also our (not so) obscured hidden weaknesses and addictive vulnerabilities. We could thus rightly say that right next door to our protective guardian angels live our worst enemies, and all of these entities comprise those parts of ourselves that are also found in the Twelfth House. But please bear in mind that our own duality is a reflection of the greater duality that is the manifested

universe itself: as above, so below. There is a “land” of unfathomable unity and peace that is devoid of duality. Some call this place the “Heart of God”, “The Center of the Center”, or more commonly, “Nirvana.”

The Twelfth is the house of convents and monasteries, esoteric schools and secret lodges, but it is also the domicile of insane asylums and torture chambers. The Twelfth is where hope for healing may be found in hospitals and medical clinics and, too, where the dying are comforted by kind “Twelfth House souls” working in hospices. Yet, we also know that the Twelfth is the location where slave quarters, jails, and concentrations camps may be found. Neptune, the natural ruler of the Twelfth, rules the great healing wonders of the plant kingdom but Neptune also rules heroin, crack cocaine, alcohol, and all other life-destroying addictive substances.

For those who do not believe in reincarnation, the approach to the Twelfth as “the house that teaches us what we need to overcome from past lives,” may not be of interest. The fact remains however that the Twelfth House tells us what we have to overcome in *this* life and this alone is quite the task in itself. The Twelfth may also reveal some of our greatest tools (our hidden treasures) with which we may accomplish such a task. As we leave the realm of the Twelfth, we come once again to the Ascendant. If we have managed to purify our nature and therefore externalize much more of our latent consciousness, love and light, we may then find ourselves ready to state *in this lifetime*, “I and the Universe are One.”

Aries on the cusp of the Twelfth House: When the Ram is on the last cusp of the horoscope, it is an indication of a person’s need to mask or suppress his or her personal self-assertiveness. This is thus an individual who functions best when behind the scenes. Positively, this sign/cusp combination makes for an excellent strategist whose real power, although far from being felt in any immediate sense, is nonetheless present. Although we

can never judge the totality of the meaning of a natal map from one position, Aries on the Twelfth certainly contributes to a person acting out the role of the “power behind the throne.” When negative, this position leads to self-victimization or the urge take on the karma of others. The Ram likes to charge forward unimpeded by any opposing forces. The watery and diffused Twelfth House environment is thus not the easiest terrain for Aries’ direct and headstrong tactics. The position of Mars in the natal chart by sign, house and aspect tells the astrologer how the Ram is likely to fare in this position.

Taurus on the cusp of the Twelfth House: When the Celestial Bull occupies this position the indications can be most favorable as this position may easily bestow a tremendous reserve of power and resources. When positive, Taurus on this cusp allows an individual to possess a secret storehouse of talents, abilities, and riches to be used when life is at its most difficult. It may also indication another kind of wealth, a wealth of common sense, allowing the person to see into the real meaning behind most of life’s situations. This is when Taurus is seeing into the “heart of matter” and is not fooled by the matter at hand. Problems may come about if one’s attitude to money is dishonest or foolhardy. Care must then be taken not to seek out illegal monetary dealings. When used correctly, this position is a potent source of abundance as it may indicate that the individual is in touch with “universal supply.” How fortunate! The position of Venus in the natal chart will reveal much more to us about how the Twelfth House operates in this case.

Gemini on the cusp of the Twelfth House: As we can expect with this sign, there is a marked duality in terms of the affairs of this domicile. One has to be quite careful that there is consistency and honesty in all forms of communication. Sometime a person with this sign/cusp combination is apt to tell two entirely different stories about the same thing. The position of Mercury in the horoscope, especially in relationship to Neptune will reveal if the individual tends to be honest or dualistic in his or her ways of communicating. Many

people with Gemini on the Twelfth can try to be all things to all people. If the rest of the horoscope reveals a certain maturity of character and a more steadfast nature (such as the presence of a number of planets well placed in the fixed signs), this position may indicate that one is able to find all the “missing links” in any social situation. He or she knows instinctively how things should relate and come together.

Cancer on the cusp of the Twelfth House: The individual with this sign/cusp combination may be incredibly compassionate, seeking to help and protect those in distress. Yet the danger of this position is that it may induce a person to take all impersonal situations too personally and thus become involved in situations that are simply none of one’s business. In other words, attachment occurs when detachment is most needed. Yet this is one of the best zodiacal indications for the capacity to nurture others. Indeed, Cancer on this cusp may indicate the tendency to be the mother to all and everyone. The position of the Moon in the natal chart (especially as it relates to Neptune and/or Venus) will show if the individual will mother or smother—or *be* smothered by too many feelings. Like Taurus on this cusp, the Crab here gives one the tendency to have secret storehouses of abundance. Cancer always likes to save for the eventual “rainy day.”

Leo on the cusp of the Twelfth House: Leo is a very demanding sign by nature and what the Celestial Lion most requires is personal recognition. Yet the Twelfth is the least personal of all the astrological houses. When Leo is on this cusp, one of the life lessons is how to integrate the urge for personal self-expression (and the resultant applause) within a more universal and certainly less personal context. This sign/cusp combination thus brings forth experiences that yield humility and quite self-sacrifice. Leo on the Twelfth may well endow a person with enormous will power but the will is not allowed to be expressed in obvious ways. Negatively, this may tend to produce a very manipulative person. Positively, it stimulates the urge to be strong but unassuming, supportive but modest, and

forceful but subtle. The position of the Sun in the natal chart will carry forth and broaden the meaning of Leo on the Twelfth for the astrologer.

Virgo on the cusp of the Twelfth House: There is a distinct orientation to healing and service when the Celestial Virgin occupies this position. It indicates a person who has the potential to utilize many practical techniques and methodologies in order to resolve many challenging issues and circumstances. It is almost like walking through life with a universal toolbox containing a cure for almost any ill. This sign/cusp combination often produces people who work in hospitals and institutions where healing skills are required. The difficulty in this position comes about if the person is chaotic and indiscriminate. It is impossible to find a cure for everyone as well as a place to put all mental and material details of life. Care has to be taken here not to lose the thread and get tangled up in the spool! The position of Mercury (especially in relation to Neptune) in the natal chart will tell us much about how Virgo on the Twelfth will externalize in a person's life.

Libra on the cusp of the Twelfth House: It is sometimes difficult to be sure about the degree of intimacy within the context of relationships when Libra is in this position. Sometimes one is too detached and, at other times, the connection with the other person is too deep in light of the surrounding circumstances. If Venus is afflicted when Libra is on this cusp (especially by Neptune), there is the distinct danger of being too idealistic about others, putting them up on pedestals and of seeing all relationships in an unrealistic light. Yet when positive and especially if the Venus/Neptune relationship is a good one, the spiritual gifts of this position are most profound. One is then free of human prejudice, all people are one's brothers and sisters, and there is a clear and distinct urge to be a bestower of peace. This sign/cusp combination may also indicate that one is involved with clandestine relationships. The entire chart would have to be examined to see if these "secret friends" help or hinder one's life.

Scorpio on the cusp of the Twelfth House: The potentiality for great emotional growth and spiritual development is very strong with this sign/cusp combination—but so are the dangers and pitfalls. So much has to do with how the person deals with his or her desire nature. Scorpio on this cusp requires one to be very clear about the direction of one's needs and wants. If this orientation is undisciplined than the individual is the prisoner of a ceaseless ocean of unrequited desires. Why unrequited? Because the nature of desire is that it is never satisfied—this is the propelling concept behind the Law of Karma. Yet if the lessons of the traps of the desire nature have been learned and transformed, then there is no position that is greater as a source for healing power. The latter requires that one finds the “universal catalyst”—that facet of oneself which when released, brings one to wholeness on ever more refined levels of expression. The astrology student should examine the relationship between Mars, Pluto and Neptune to uncover more about this position.

Sagittarius on the cusp of the Twelfth House: This sign/cusp combination may well point to a person with a profound interest in the metaphysical and the occult, as there is often a profound need to unlock the doors to universal truth. On a more practical level, this position may allow a person to come up with understandings that she never knew she had. As the Twelfth is the house of “human collectivity” and Sagittarius is the sign of higher knowledge, when the Centaur rules this domicile, access is given to information that goes beyond the personal. In essence, the way is opened to access the “collective encyclopedia” of the human mind. Of course not all people have this ability. Sagittarius on the Twelfth may just produce a “know-it-all” who knows nothing at all! What is required for deeper knowledge and higher wisdom is the acquisition of the discipline of one-pointedness in terms of the spiritual path. A closer examination of Jupiter in the natal chart will tell the astrologer more about this position.

Capricorn on the cusp of the Twelfth House: There is a need and often the ability to

perceive who holds the real power in any social situation when the Mountain Goat occupies this position in the natal chart. The individual is made frequently uncomfortable by the thought that people or circumstances beyond his control may suppress his personal influence. Indeed, this position could be said to express the idea: To control or not to control, that is the question? As a result, Capricorn on the Twelfth can be highly manipulative. On the other hand, this sign/cusp combination can be a rich source of hidden wealth and resources. It may indicate a person who has mastered the art of creating those inner structures that help to create businesses, social services, and material benefits for oneself and others. An examination of Saturn is essential to a greater understanding of the implications of this position. This is especially true of the interchange between Saturn and Neptune. When this is positive, the person has the ability to free oneself from limitations and restrictions but when negative, there is the tendency to create a great deal of confusion for oneself.

Aquarius on the cusp of the Twelfth House: This sign/cusp combination appears in the horoscope of people for whom no one is a stranger and few life situations are surprising. This is a person who senses the collective, universal stream of life running through each and every one of us. Wherever Aquarius appears in the horoscope, there is a tendency towards diffusion of energy. When this characteristic is applied to the Twelfth House, diffusion takes the form of losing oneself in idealism and humanitarian speculation. On a less exalted level, a person can get lost in being too social and too dreamy for one's hopes, wishes, and aspirations may not be grounded in the reality of one's life. Discernment and discrimination may have to be integrated into one's life in order to see that on a universal level we are indeed all one, but on a practical level, there are great differences between people. When grounded, this position contributes to a definite humanitarian perspective on life and a willingness to be of service to others. The positions of Uranus and Saturn in the

natal chart are indications of the direction and form of this orientation.

Pisces on the cusp of the Twelfth House: As the natural ruler of this cusp, Pisces on the Twelfth can indicate a person with an extremely deep spirituality and an inner calling to be of service to the human collective. This orientation can easily produce an attitude of great inclusivity and an ocean of personal compassion towards life. Yet care has to be taken so that one does not drown in unseen currents and hidden depths. It is therefore quite essential not to flounder in a world of dreams and illusions. This sign/cusp combination is indicative of a person who may easily be called to the spiritual life. This is the world of the upstream swimming fish. But the downstream fish also beacons so that Pisces on the Twelfth may also indicate a person prone to self-destructive addictions and habit patterns. The nature of the Fish's duality and the direction one is likely to take in the stream of life may be more easily determined by the astrologer through an examination of the positions of Jupiter and Neptune especially as they relate to the Sun and Moon in the natal chart.

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