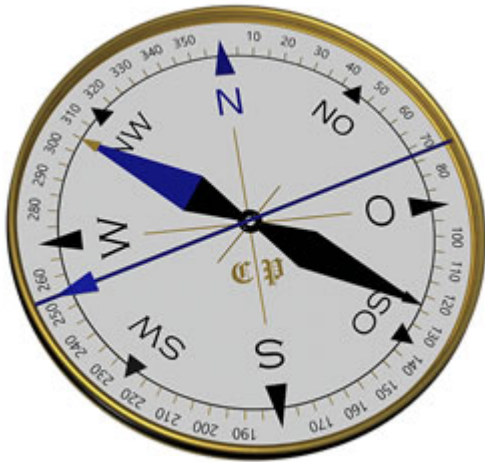


Your Guiding Planet - Discover Your Innate Skills and Inner Faculties

by Michael R. Meyer



Each of us possess guiding qualities and innate skills bestowed to help us fulfill our special destiny as individuals and as purposeful members of humanity. But conditions pervading in our schools, offices and factories, and the conforming pressures of society, usually conspire to force us to into predetermined molds, with little regard for our special faculties and talents, unless they happen to be useful in the business world. As a result, our inner faculties — our individual guiding compass that helps us navigate our own special way through both the calm and the stormy seas of life to our ultimate, fullest destination — is often inadequately developed, or family and social conditions may predispose us to ignore, suppress or distrust our guiding voice.

In a less abstract and more practical way, each of us have a stock of innate special talents and skills which we may develop and exploit in life, or which may lie largely dormant or latent, flashing forth at moments of great need, crisis or inspiration. Most of us have a knack for something. One person may have a knack for getting along with people and self-promotion, another a special gift for teaching, counseling and helping others, and yet another may have a creative talent which is best expressed working alone in her studio or at the keyboard of her computer. Yet few of us are fortunate enough to find ourselves involved in the sort of work or study where we both naturally excel and find personal fulfillment and happiness.

If you want to get closer in tune with your inner guiding faculties, or if you're one of the many who are frustrated with your current line of work and are not quite sure where your special skills lie, or if you are considering a career change, the easy-to-use astrological technique presented here will help you both tune into and enhance your inner guiding voice **and** discover your innate skills and faculties and how to best apply them.

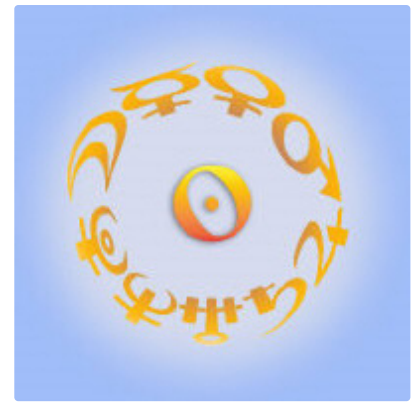
According to humanistic astrology, your entire birth-chart — the natal horoscope — is a seed-pattern of your birth potential, and any thorough interpretation of an astrological chart requires tuning into the chart "as a whole," as well as a consideration of how the individual planets — the ten fundamental variables of astrology — fit into the whole chart. Traditional, old-fashioned, natal astrology — which is, unfortunately, as strong and visible today as ever — usually places most of its attention on the signs occupied by the planets and the connections existing between one planet and another (the astrological aspects), with loads of baggage attached to where the "malefics" (the "bad guys" of astrology, the planets Mars and Saturn) are placed and how they hook-up with other planets. On the other hand, humanistic astrology shows that **there are no good or bad planets, signs or aspects**. Without Mars — the principle of mobilization — we couldn't act or move! Without Saturn — the principle of form and definition — we would be formless blobs of "mostly water" lacking individuality and a distinct function or character of being.

Humanistic astrology focuses on the core factors of an astrological chart, avoiding an overload of secondary and tertiary data and the side-issues specious data sidetrack us into obsessing about. Humanistic astrology has developed lots of simple and easy-to-use procedures, all dealing with core principles and issues, which allow us to learn and discover a very great deal which is usually entirely overlooked by or unknown to the mainstream, traditional astrologer. The procedure we'll explore here concerns the determination and interpretation of your **Guiding Planet** or **Skill Symbol**.

From ancient times, the planet crossing the eastern horizon — the astrological Ascendant — immediately before the Sun has symbolized the practical channel through which solar will and vitality is expressed. The ancients called this body the "**Planet of Oriental Appearance**" because it appears in the eastern sky immediately before the Sun — that is, the planet rising directly before the Sun. Today, we refer to the Planet of Oriental Appearance at your birth time as your **Guiding Planet** or your **Skill Symbol**, because it represents both your inner guiding principle and your innate skills and special

faculties, and how both may be best realized, enhanced and applied. Your Skill Symbol shows you how to best handle and cope with the demands and opportunities of daily life in a skillful, productive and fulfilling manner, and where your inherent skills and practical abilities lie. As your Guiding Planet, the planet rising immediately before the Sun symbolizes the faculties and inner senses scouting your path ahead, or your ability to navigate the best course to self-realization and fulfillment.

In other words, as Skill Symbol the Planet of Oriental Appearance is seen in its more mundane aspect, as abilities and skills that can be tapped and applied for practical results; as Guiding Planet, the same body shows its more abstract aspect, operating on a more intuitive or instinctual level, and less in terms of immediate practical application than in terms of one's destiny or life as a whole. And usually the balance is more one than the other, so we are often challenged to integrate both sides — the practical and the intuitive — of the planet's principles and functions.



Finding your Planet of Oriental Appearance is easy. If you have a copy of your birth-chart, simply look to see which planet is immediately before the Sun in a clockwise direction. If you haven't gotten around to having your birth-chart calculated, you can find your Oriental Planet by referring to an ephemeris for the day and year of your birth. Your Oriental Planet is the planet immediately preceding the Sun in the zodiac. For example, if the ephemeris shows your Sun as 22 degrees Scorpio and Neptune is shown as 10 degrees Libra, Neptune would be your Planet of Oriental Appearance — **if there are no other planets** between 10 degrees Libra and 22 degrees Scorpio. The depictions which follow describe each of the nine planets (the Sun is never in Oriental Appearance) when acting as a Guiding Planet and Skill Symbol.

Mercury Guiding Planet

A true mental type, you have a special knack for thinking and talking your way through challenges and problems. In meeting everyday experiences, your mind is your best guide. You do best when you thoroughly think things out beforehand, though you may have a tendency to think and talk too quickly, dismissing as irrelevant much of what people try to tell you or skipping over much of the information and experience which comes your way. Relying so much on thinking and talking, you may too easily fall into the "all talk and no action" syndrome.

If your **Skill Symbol** is Mercury, you work best under conditions of your own device, though you are no doubt a quick study at mastering new systems and technology. Efficiency, reliability, self-mastery, and the ability to think and communicate clearly are your strong points. On the other hand, gossiping and a tendency to be led astray by others could prove damaging. You excel at mental work of all types, especially work that relies heavily on written or spoken communications, computers, technology and telephones. Having Mercury as your Skill Symbol doesn't mean you're smarter than anybody else, or even that you are a profound thinker. You might simply have a skill for processing data and information and using telephones and electronics.

As **Guiding Planet**, Mercury suggests inner guidance in the form of an intuitive sense of the connections and associations existing between people and things. As Guiding Planet, Mercury acts in a more electric, instinctual and intuitive sense than it does in its aspect as Skill Planet. Yet, true to the dual nature of Mercury, the highly active mental and analytical activities of Mercury may get in the way when it comes to tuning into the more abstract, guiding qualities of the planet. Surface noise and distractions may first need quieting with the help of relaxation, contemplation and meditation.

An Oriental Appearing Mercury is found in the birth-chart of Year 2000 presidential candidate

[Al Gore](#), and it is also featured in the natal chart of [the Dalai Lama](#) of Tibet, whose Oriental Gemini Mercury helps him communicate and promote the message of Buddhism and the plight of the Tibetan people worldwide. [Friedrich Nietzsche](#), one of the most influential writers and intellectuals of his time is another example of Mercury Oriental, and so are artists [Andy Warhol](#) and [Paul Cezanne](#). Mercury Oriental seems well-integrated as both Guiding Planet and Skill Symbol in the natal chart of [Fritjof Capra](#), the atomic physicist who saw connections between quantum physics and ancient mysticism,

starting a movement of sorts with the publication of the superb book [The Tao of Physics](#). The Oriental Planet alone doesn't tell the whole story, and we always need to consider how it fits into the chart as a whole. Added insights may be gained by considering aspects the Oriental Planet forms with other natal planets. In Capra's natal chart, Oriental Mercury is septile (the destiny-directed, possibly psychic, aspect) natal Uranus (the planet of discovery, invention and transformation) and the south lunar node, both of which are near the Ascendant in the twelfth house of hidden side of things.



[Marilyn Monroe](#) was born with Mercury less than four degrees ahead of the Sun. While she doesn't epitomize the "brainy female," she was very much attracted to highly intelligent men, accounting for her nearly delusional attraction to Robert F. Kennedy and her statement that Albert Einstein was the sexiest man she had ever met. In instances, which as Marilyn's, when the Oriental Planet is very near the Sun, the planet rising immediately before the Oriental Planet may assume some of the Skill Symbol's functions, and some degree of disassociation, or a lack of integration, might be seen. In the birth-chart of Marilyn Monroe, the planet Venus rises before Mercury and about forty degrees ahead of both the Sun and Mercury. While Mercury seemed to act well — at least in part — in her instance as Guiding Planet, leading her and attracting her to highly intelligent men, Venus (which is trine natal Neptune in the first house) seems to have usurped the role of Skill Symbol, leading her to fame as an immortal sex symbol and tragic female.

In another way, when the Oriental Planet is situated very near the Sun, it may operate in a rather subjective manner and the person may, in some capacity, seem to epitomize or idealize its characteristics. While Marilyn Monroe idealized Mercurial men, [Allen Ginsberg](#) (born when Mercury was Oriental, only one degree from the Sun, both in Gemini) epitomized certain Mercurial qualities — talkative, very quick-minded, analytical, nerdy, and an excellent promoter of his own and others ideas and work. Yet he is best known for his work of poetry (more a Vesuvian or a Neptunian form than Mercurial) and his radical (Uranian) politics. In Ginsberg's birth-chart, Venus is the first planet to rise before Oriental Mercury, and it is forty zodiacal degrees from the two. Additionally, the Sun and Mercury form a quintile (talent, skill) aspect to Uranus on the Ascendant and another quintile to Neptune (music, poetry, drugs and mysticism), and a bi-quintile between Neptune and Uranus completes a triangular configuration of quintile-based aspects with the Sun and Mercury pair at the apex.

Because they are situated within earth's orbit, Mercury and Venus are always near the sun in the sky, and therefore the two planets are more often seen in Oriental Appearance than any other planet. Additionally much depends on whether Mercury's apparent motion is **direct** or **retrograde** (see the section on [The Four Faces of Mercury](#)).

Mercury retrograde is seen in only about ten percent of all astrological charts, and when it figures as Oriental Planet it often bestows prophetic qualities and a future-oriented outlook. People with Mercury retrograde as Guiding Planet are often trend-setters, ahead of their time or misunderstood in their lifetime, but honored by future generations. Examples included the visionary, futurist writer [Aldous Huxley](#), who was one of the most intellectual men of his generation, and [Helen Gurley Brown](#), the promethean new woman who helped create the sexual revolution in the pages of her **Cosmopolitan** magazine.

Venus Guiding Planet

You are very concerned with how others value you and all that you do. As a Venus **Skill Symbol** person, you may feel impelled to leave a personal impression on all you touch, hoping others will recognize, accept, value and praise your originality or worthiness. Your special skills are those requiring artistry, perception, personal charm and grace, evaluation and judgment. In meeting the demands of daily life, you do well when maintaining your emotional cool and relying on your intuition and judgment in seeking a creative solution.

With Venus as your **Guiding Planet**, you do well when you allow your instincts and personal values guide you through practical life. Yet at times there may be a conflict between the preservation of your personal values and a need to be praised and treated as someone special, especially when material

rewards, comfort, security and luxury figure as incentives.

To achieve happiness, you need be especially careful concerning career, employment and personal relationships. Just any job won't do — your high expectations and sensitivity to criticism, combined with a need for creative expression and a desire to be appreciated and praised, may place you at odds with a conventional career. If you feel frustrated with your current career, a change to a career requiring creativity, judgment or evaluation may be the remedy. Similarly with your choice of companionship and mates. You need to be appreciated and loved, praised and respected, by those closest to you. Because Venus is the first planet within earth's orbit, in astrology it symbolizes all inwardly directed energies and activities, and in today's intensely self-centered society, it may be too easy for the Oriental Venus person to slip into the self-absorption of narcissism — the "it's all about me" syndrome. So, appreciation of others and the development of social graces should go hand-in-hand with self-respect and self-worth.



It's no surprise that Venus Oriental figures in the birth-charts of many artists in search of new artistic values and ideals, even though their individual styles and biographies often differ radically. Vincent van Gogh, Pablo Picasso and Salvador Dali all have Venus as Skill Symbol. In the instance of [van Gogh](#), the Sun is unaspected, with Venus in close conjunction with Mars. [Picasso's](#) natal chart features Venus in Libra, rising well before a Scorpio Sun, septile Mercury rising well after the Sun. The birth-chart of [Dali](#) shows Sun and Venus in Taurus, with Moon at the Midheaven, revealing an artist with an intense need to be "original" and earn vast sums of money to satisfy an avaricious wife. Modern artist [Joan Miro](#) was born with Venus Oriental very close to the north lunar node and the Sun. Here Venus is perhaps overshadowed by the Sun, with some the Guiding Planet's attributes shifted to Mercury, which rises twenty degrees before Venus. And, indeed, Miro's work has a fluid Mercurial quality and his approach is distinctly mental, even if, in a sense, surreal.

Venus Oriental also figures in the birth charts of poets and writers dealing with issues of art, values, culture and society. [Joseph Campbell's](#) birth-chart has Venus Oriental, trine Neptune in the ninth house and bi-quintile Moon in the tenth house. Poet [Arthur Rimbaud](#) has the Sun and Venus Oriental in Libra, and poet, social satirist and wit [Oscar Wilde](#) was also born with the Sun and Venus Oriental in Libra. Venus Oriental is also seen in the charts of "macho men," such as [Ernest Hemingway](#). Pornographer [Larry Flynt](#) has Venus Oriental close to a Scorpio Sun, with Mars, also in Scorpio, rising five-degrees before Venus — a revealing configuration. [Yasir Arafat](#), the leader of the Palestinian people, has Venus Oriental rising forty-one degrees before the Sun, and it is very near Pluto and close to the Ascendant, suggesting his total dedication and identification with the values and needs of his people.

A number of women who have made their way as original, creative and independent voices in the world were born when Venus was Oriental. The natal chart of singer [Alanis Morissette](#) features Venus in Taurus (an excellent symbol for a vocalist) rising thirty-nine degrees before her Gemini Sun. The exact opposition between her natal Moon in the second degree of Scorpio and Venus Oriental seems to express itself well through her edgy lyrics portraying female angst unleashed. Women of rock [Chrissie Hynde](#) and [Courtney Love](#) were both born when Venus retrograde was Oriental. Chrissie's Venus forms a bi-quintile aspect to Jupiter, and Courtney's Venus forms a bi-quintile to Neptune in the first house.

Jupiter Guiding Planet

Your skills and resources are many, and you have a knack for getting things done simply by taking things as they come. You have a social sense and possess a natural skill for handling people and social activities. Jupiter **Skill Symbol** people often seek prestigious careers, they typify senior executives, lawyers, politicians and people in positions of social and economic power. When in a tough spot, you do well to keep your spirits high and rely on friends and personal resources. You work best with others and on tasks which, while requiring a wide range of abilities, do not necessarily require a high degree of skill in a single area. Your generosity, social ease and ability to delegate are great assets, yet there might be a bit of a snob or money-chaser beneath the finesse.



Jupiter **Guiding Planet** denotes a capacity for tuning into and seeing the big social, philosophical, religious, economic and political picture, and an ability to sense where one best fits for the good of society, or where one is most likely to prosper. Often conventional in their aspirations, Jupiter Oriental types are frequently driven to seek wealth and positions of power and status, and self-awareness and a deep questioning of motive may be needed to keep the highly ambitious aspect of Jupiter Skill Symbol in balance with the social responsibility implicit in Jupiter Guiding Planet.

As expected, Jupiter Oriental is frequently seen in the birth-charts of individuals concerned with religious and social issues who find themselves playing a public role in the promotion of their cause or beliefs. The natal horoscope of [Victoria Woodhull](#), one of the first promoters of sexual freedom and woman's liberation, features Jupiter Oriental on the Ascendant rising less than a degree before the Sun and forming a destiny-driven septile to the Moon in the second house Scorpio. Mercury Prometheus retrograde rises seven degrees before Jupiter and the Sun, perhaps compensating for some of Oriental Jupiter's conventionality. The whole package suits one of the most promethean women of all time. Woodhull was not only a very visible political activist who once stood for the office of U.S. President, she was also a spiritualist, one of the first "channel writers" and a natural food advocate.

Dancer [Ruth St. Denis](#) was also born with Jupiter Oriental, rising twelve degrees before the Sun, with Mercury Prometheus retrograde rising six degrees before Jupiter. Oriental Jupiter forms a "yod" configuration with the Moon and Saturn. St. Denis held a highly visible and prestigious position in society during the early decades of the 20th Century and was recognized, along with Isadora Duncan, as one of the two leading "modern" dancers of the time. With Ted Shawn, she established a prestigious school of dance in Hollywood. Much involved with neo-theosophy and activities at nearby Krotona Institute of Theosophy, St. Denis spent more time lecturing her students — the group included the first truly modern dancer, Martha Graham — on neo-theosophy and oriental philosophy than on teaching dance.

[William Blake](#), the 18th Century painter and mystic whose work shows highly romantic, mystical and religious imagery, was born when Jupiter was Oriental in Sagittarius. Born with Jupiter Guiding Planet, [Albert Einstein](#) possessed a strong social conscience and a profound religious, mystical and philosophical streak — he even kept a copy of Blavatsky's [Secret Doctrine](#) on his desk for inspiration. [Maria Callas](#), one of the most successful and accomplished women her generation, was born with the Sun on the Ascendant, and with Jupiter rising eight degrees earlier.

An intense need to win and succeed, and to gain worldwide status as "the best," is one aspect of Jupiter Oriental. The extraordinary birth-chart of champion figure-skater [Tonya Harding](#) features Jupiter Oriental rising three degrees before the Sun, with Venus retrograde rising two degrees ahead of Jupiter, and the three planets are in tight opposition to a conjunction of the Moon and Saturn retrograde, which stands alone as a "singleton pair."