

Book Review

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Astrology Illumined: Revealing Soul Through Astrology,

by Donna Mitchell-Moniak & Sara Traub.

Seeds of Light Publications, Leyden, Mass.

2007. Paperback, 168 pages. US\$15.00.

As the back cover of the book indicates, *Astrology Illumined* is intended for the beginning student of astrology, the practicing astrologer who wants a deeper understanding of esoteric astrology, or the spiritually-minded person with a yearning for greater knowledge. This reviewer qualifies for the first and last of these categories.

Astrology, contend the authors, is a “sea of forces,” and these forces at all levels of manifestation, “are actually Beings that share their energies and qualities with us.” Giving credit to the Beings immediately caught my interest.

The authors use a term, “A Turn of the Spiral,” to indicate how astrological interpretations vary and can change according to a person’s growth and evolvment at a soul level. The way in which these growth patterns are de-scribed gives this book a clarity, simplicity and, as claimed in the title, an unfolding illumination.

The confusing sea of information and complexity that all previous books I have encountered on this subject almost drowned me, but the fresh language and new keys approaching the major topics of this science—“Spiritual Science,” as Rudolf Steiner would say—were particularly helpful to me. Several examples come to mind:

1. A discussion of the elements—fire, earth, water, air—in the introductory section of the book focused my mind on the importance of these distinctions, unlike previous books or articles that seemed to relegate these matters as a sort of after-thought of minor significance.
2. The planet Earth is given equal rights in her own chapter. And a chapter is de-voted to Vulcan, an esoteric, unseen planet, describing that influence on our inner spiritual development.
3. A separate discussion of the cardinal, fixed and mutable qualities is given much notice and even shows an insight into crosses as a Pythagorean geometric relationship.
4. Rulership of the planets is explained prior to the chapters of the zodiacal signs, so when exoteric, esoteric or hierarchical rulers are mentioned, one has a better sense of these differences.

In a departure from other reference books of this ilk, the authors inject a summary, called “A Glance Back,” after the first six signs. Attention is called to the way in which each succeeding sign contrasts with the previous one, e.g. “Aries is about rapid movement. Taurus is about slow, predictable, steady progress.” A second “Glance Back” occurs after the last six signs.

Another refinement is the inclusion of a special chapter on “The Four Universal Signs.” Once again, the emphasis on the four elements is presented as the third Turn of the Spiral—which has evolved from the personal level to the social level, and now the transpersonal realm. A curious

note that had never occurred to me was the fact that the last four signs: Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces, all have mythical animals as their symbols.

The insertion of these special sections into the main body of the book helps solidify the rest of the information that is now needed to make an actual chart. Of course, the Houses, Aspects and Ascendants are given their due and there are several appendices for quick reference.

I guess that I most enjoyed the discussions for each zodiacal sign. Historical, literary, mythological and other illusions seemed to me broader and more penetrating than previous books I've read. They are a far cry from the canned phrases and one-size-fits-all paragraphs that are found on the internet, for example. At my age I know many people in each of these signs and it helped me see them with new eyes.

It was helpful to have the Glossary of Terms, but unfortunately, it was incomplete. For instance, the words designated by asterisks: "Afflicted" (page 5) and "Modes" and "Quality" (page 37), were not actually included in the glossary—though they were defined in the text.

Although I am not as informed of the Tibetan's teachings as these two authors are, their thought provoking approach to this subject, which has always been daunting to this Sagittarian, has *inspired* me to look more deeply into esoteric astrology. And I trust that many readers will also enjoy this *illuminating* book.

Sylvia Lagergren
Johnson City, TN