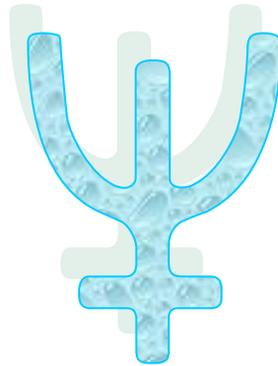


Neptune in the 9th House.

by Sarah Guppy



Revelations are mostly beautiful. I had confirmation of this today in my astrology class, when a long discussion on Neptune gave me the chance to explore the significance of my natal Neptune, which resides in the 9th house.

Little did I know, when I was a child in Sunday school, that my deep love affair with a poster of “Christ carrying the lamp” was just the beginning of a passion for all things spiritual. For me the Christ poster was the reason I went to Sunday school, and I was sure that “these beautiful eyes” were watching me day and night, and then on Sunday, as if to show myself and my devotion, I was ‘topped up with the light’ for another week. I told my father, a devoted Christian, that Christ and his lamp spoke to me, and I didn't understand why all the other children were not also in love with the Christ. He told me that each soul finds their own way, and I was lucky to have found it so early.

My next spiritual passion was divinity class in school, where I came near to the top in exams. It helped to have the only male teacher in an all girls school, who was also our chaplain and extremely good looking.

But I already loved the robes, the kit of ritual and the bells that called - for me they were a journey to a magic place, a haunting, strange other world where I could be, without judgement, without information or condition. I was not satisfied with it in the end, with one way of belief, nor the virgin birth. This led to heated discussion with my divinity teacher and my father, both of whom I respected, but my overpowering curiosity would not stop simply at Christianity.

When I was 17 and walking up Queen Street on a hot afternoon, I heard the sound of wonder cymbals and singing. There appeared a group of saffron robed singing Hare Krishna. I left my friend on the pavement and joined in, singing all the way to K’Road - it

felt like the most natural thing in the world to do, much to the amazement of my friend, who was convinced I had been brainwashed in an instant.

Time passed, but it was always the spiritual aspect of anything that appealed to me. My husband, who had been partly brought up by his aunt, was a disciple of Rudolf Steiner. In 1980 we toured Europe and spent time in Dornach, in Switzerland to see the Goetheanum, a marvelous sculptural building housing a huge auditorium and the home of the Anthroposophical Society. I was enthralled and fascinated by the architecture and the spiritual teachings that was all part of a whole way of existing.

It took a divorce and nervous break down to discover the next magical link to the spiritual depths. At a large party in London I found myself attracted to talking to a woman, who was a complete stranger to me. Through a sea of people she seemed to stand out , and I knew I must talk to her. Having said my name is 'Sarah', she replied "Haven't we meet before or is it that we need to meet?" This was the beginning of a 7-year intense relationship, which included weekly meditation meetings at Philipa's home in Putney.

After a year she invited me to a meditation with her teacher, a woman called Mrs Tweedy. We journeyed to north London together and gathered in a small room with many other followers .It was the first time I recognized everyone in the room as the same humanity. Philipa at that time was studying Egypt, and was spending a lot of time there. In February 1996 she took a group of 15 woman to explore the sacred sites of Cairo. We visited Coptic churches, mosques and the most powerful of all was a mediation we did inside the pyramid in Giza. It was a spontaneous thing . Eight of us crawled in to the tomb, where we found another woman sitting. The space was small, probably large enough for 12 people in all. Philipa began chanting, and we all followed suit. The walls disappeared and I was transported to what I can only describe as an illuminated state. All time vanished, all life , except for our breath vanished.

The chanting crescendoed and came back to a low slow drone, which finished, unformed, unplanned. When we came out of the pyramid into the daylight of Giza, the woman who we had found already inside the pyramid was crying, and laughing and in a state of great excitement. We discovered that she had journeyed from America with a terminal illness, which a physic had told her, would be healed by unknown people in an unknown place. We were all thrilled to be part of the unknown !!

But there was more - the next day Philipa, a keen horsewoman, had got up early to go riding in the dessert. Our accommodation had been strategically placed at a country club on the edge of the Sahara desert, which also had stables. I was eating my breakfast when news came that Philipa had fallen and smashed her head on a rock. Within an hour she was brought back carried by a local horseman with blood all over his shirt. I barely remember how she got to hospital, but I do remember the doctor. He turned out to be a Sufi, and we spent most of the afternoon, after the eight stitches across the

head, and three above the eye, talking about Sufism. He also instructed me to take Philipa's stitches out, when we returned to England - it felt like a karmic condition, that I should be serving my teacher in such a way.

In 1992 fate put me in Delhi airport, where I was to meet a girl called Jane from New York. We had spoken on the telephone, but never met. She was a friend of a friend of mine, and by chance we were going to India at the same time, looking for the same thing - spiritual enlightenment. This turned out to be a beautiful connection. In a foreign land, with a foreign tongue and a harsh reality, Jane and I journeyed to the Ashram of Sri Aurobindo and Sweet Mother in Pondicherry, in the far south near Madras. We arrived the day before an important festival, which was to be attended by over 20,000 people.

It was the day Sri Aurobindo had received knowledge from God, and each year, on that day people gathered to be part of that experience. Jane and I had no idea about the event before hand, so we were delighted to suddenly be a part of such a profound event.

Having found rooms in the Ashram, we spent the night under our mosquito nets listening to the Bay of Bengal wash beneath our bedroom window. I let the sea in, and felt nothing but unconditional love.

The next morning at dawn, Jane and I walked to a huge compound, following hundreds of other people, their bright and beautiful saris making it feel as if we were a sea of flowers all being carried along a river.

We sat on a sandy ground and after a long prayer we were told that the knowledge would come in the silence of the next hour. I closed my eyes, and could only smell sweet flora fragrance mixed with sandalwood. The silence grew, the stillness too; soon I was transported into a labyrinth of light, where time vanished and the beauty of nothing clothed my every being. I was 'awoken' by the sound of a bell. I opened my eyes smiling, and Jane looked at me and said "You got it, didn't you? But he missed me!!!" Our conversations for the next month traveling around India were mostly about that day.

During early 1993 a friend called David invited me to help him do a gilding job in Germany. We drove there from Britain to Frankfurt, talking most of the way about his partner who had been diagnosed with Aids.

Our job was a month's work, living on site in a beautiful home which backed on to the Black Forest. David had been given the name of a woman who had great healing powers, and lived not far from Frankfurt and suggested on our day off, that we journey to see her. It was a difficult journey, the roads and autobahns like a spaghetti to understand, and the village we eventually got to was grey and unattractive. We discovered we were two of about 150 people who had come to see her.

We waited patiently to file into a modest room where we each had a seat. We waited perhaps an hour before Mother Merra came. She was small and sparkling, and sat on an oversized seat, looking like a child.

She began with a brief introduction to her 'work' - then she asked each one of us, in our own time to come and receive 'grace'. David was full of turmoil , emotion and fear and I knew we where in the right place to receive freedom from those conditions. Watching each person leave their seat, and kneel in front of Mother Merra was heartening. She placed her hands on their head and gave up a barely audible prayer. The time came when I went up, I felt my heart race. As I knelt down I felt her hands heat my mind, she melted all language and for a second I felt what it must be like to wear a halo. David also received a great sense of calm and stillness. All the way home we felt radiant, and for the following weeks, we gilded with a renewed energy and strength.

Neptune in the ninth , I have realized has shaped most of the powerful experiences in my life, and given it marvelous meaning.

© Sarah Guppy 2007. All Rights Reserved.

Sarah Guppy is an artist, potter and master gilder by training. She has exhibited in England & New Zealand, and her paintings are in collections in Europe, America, Britain and Australasia.