

Post Inauguration commentary (written Jan. 23, 2009)
by Edith Hathaway
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Here is a recap of what I said about the Inauguration chart in early Feb. 2008, predicting Obama's victory in Nov. 2008:

"There are four planets in the 10th house in Capricorn: Sun at 6:47 Capricorn, Mercury at 7:41 Capricorn, Jupiter at 9:32 Capricorn, and Rahu at 15:55 Capricorn. Moon in Scorpio is in the 8th house, but in *Anuradha nakshatra*, ruled by *Mitra*, goddess of friendship. Jupiter conjunct Rahu in the 10th suggests the foreigner or outsider elevated. Retrograde Mercury is exactly conjunct the Sun and powerful, suggesting a memorable speech. The leader (Sun) overshadows his Vice President (Jupiter, which is combust the Sun – not visible in the heavens due to the planet's proximity to the Sun by degree of celestial longitude). Jupiter contacting the Sun can also describe a highly educated leader, with Mercury, one who speaks well, and with Rahu, one who is in some way a foreigner, or unexpected. His speech, or knowledge is magnified in importance due to Rahu, which tends to magnify whatever it touches, and may give some celebrity quality. This looks to me like Obama, especially with tr. Jupiter within two degrees of Obama's natal Jupiter, his *Dasa* lord. It takes 12 years for Jupiter to return to this position, and it is auspicious for him."

On Inauguration day 2009, the position of **transiting Jupiter** was excellent for Obama. It was in *Uttara Ashada nakshatra* ("the unstoppable victory" and "the later victor"). This is the same *nakshatra* as his natal Jupiter, and also his current *Dasa* lord, so its importance is notable and further magnified by transiting Rahu close by in Capricorn. In the sign of its debilitation, transiting Jupiter shows that anyone winning this presidential election would have come to the top from an initially disadvantaged position. (Jupiter is located at the top of the sky, the most visible position.) Moon debilitated in Scorpio in the 8th house shows citizens in a major transition, and also at a disadvantage - especially economically, with some disappointment from women due to Hillary Clinton's loss in the Primaries. *Mitra*, goddess of friendship, allays some fears.

Many astrologers were concerned about **Moon in the 8th house** of this chart, but citizens (Moon) have been traumatized by eight years of Bush policies, as well as massive job losses due to the economic downturn, now called a full-fledged "Depression." Many people were even fearful whether the country could survive Bush's Imperial presidency, one that increasingly ignored the basic rights of citizens, both at home and abroad. Therefore, the outlook for Obama is not only lifted up by his own inspiring presence, but also rests on the conditions inherited from President Bush. Fortunately, in this 2009 Inauguration chart, Mars is situated near the 9th house cusp, a place of right action (*dharma*). Mars was exactly setting on the Descendant in George W. Bush's Inauguration on Jan. 20,

2001. This showed already an aggressive intention, a tendency to be attacked, and to attack back. The Moon was exactly on the 8th house cusp. The people were also very traumatized after the long and drawn-out 2000 Election.

In the aftermath of the 2009 Inauguration, we can finally relate the astrological chart to the actual event: With **four planets in Capricorn** at the top of the sky (Mercury, Sun, Jupiter and Rahu), we note that Jupiter and Rahu joined the expected combination of Sun and Mercury at this time of year. More unusual too is Mercury almost exactly conjunct the Sun (within 6 minutes). This gave to Obama brilliant speech, though many did not see how brilliant his Inaugural address was until they reheard or re-read it. (Mercury is Retrograde, which as a classic benefic planet, gives it added positive power, as it is closer to the earth.) Then each phrase and sentence became fodder for further study. At the time the address was delivered, it was somewhat overwhelmed by the intensity and the pageantry of the moment. This was fitting astrologically, with Mercury so close to the Sun. The speech lasted 18 minutes, the same exact length as John F. Kennedy's Inaugural address.

Obama's abilities as a fine speaker were anticipated. But his decisive personal victory was generally unexpected – and unexpected for an African American, thus changing the trajectory of American history. This particular combination of planets in the 10th house of the 12 noon Inauguration chart indicated in advance that something of this nature was likely to happen. We also knew there was an exchange between Saturn and Sun - signifiers for workers and leaders, respectively. So we knew there was going to be a theme of service and sacrifice of workers and volunteers, and that leaders would depend on that same spirit of mutual cooperation to help make this presidency possible. As 5th and 10th house lords, the outlook was good for motifs made loud and clear in this passage from Obama's Inaugural address, when he spoke of a **“new era of responsibility”**:

"What is required of us now is a new era of responsibility -- a recognition, on the part of every American, that we have duties to ourselves, our nation, and the world, duties that we do not grudgingly accept but rather seize gladly, firm in the knowledge that there is nothing so satisfying to the spirit, so defining of our character, than giving our all to a difficult task."

All through 2008 we had a foretaste of the infectious joy we witnessed on Inauguration day. It happened whenever Obama as presidential candidate appeared to be winning. But none of those events fully prepared us for the electrifying moment of the Inauguration. As well as a personal triumph for Obama, it was one of triumph over a long and dark period in American history, when people of color, notably African Americans among others, were for several hundred years relegated to slavery, followed by 100 years of segregation. U.S. Inauguration 2009 was unlike any other in reminding us that it was African American slaves who built most of the nation's capitol, and were forced to sleep on the same ground where nearly two million people gathered for this remarkable moment. Such repressive and shameful chapters of our nation's history were

broken dramatically with Obama's Inauguration. Citizens celebrated not only this moment, but the end of a dangerously repressive presidency. The result was a breakout of euphoria across the nation and across the world. To quote NBC news analyst Michelle Bernard, herself African American: "A tornado of happiness has hit Washington!"

Mercury close to Jupiter loves to express itself, is not shy about it, and is often optimistic. This Mercury was just three degrees from Jupiter, ignited by the Sun, and magnified by Rahu, the outsider. A strong African-American presence was evident everywhere at the Inauguration, on the stage and in the crowds. Many of them chanted "Obama! Obama!" and "We love you, Obama!" But this was by no means confined to African-Americans. Many in this huge crowd were by turns tearful and jubilant, a mood echoed by Inaugural poet Elizabeth Alexander, in her lines: "Love that casts a widening pool of light... Praise song for walking forward in that light." Most journalists who had covered decades of presidential inaugurations had never witnessed this level of excitement and elation. Historians were going back several centuries to George Washington, casting about to find anything similar. There wasn't any precedent, except possibly George Washington. Not even 1961, also ushering in a young president and his young family, could match the emotional outpouring of these crowds, who braved many hours of standing in the cold. Thousands came during the night, and many more before sunrise to find their place at this historic event.

Simple Gifts

'Tis the gift to be simple,
 'Tis the gift to be free,
 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be,
 And when we find ourselves in the place just right,
 It will be in the valley of love and delight.

When true simplicity is gained,
 to bow and to bend, we will not be ashamed
 To turn, turn, will be our delight,
 'Til by turning, turning, we come round right.

Obama's presidency began officially at **12 noon EST** on Jan. 20, 2009 at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. At this very moment, witnessed by crowds of close to two million, and a television audience of an estimated five billion, a quartet of illustrious musicians, including clarinetist Anthony McGill, an African-American from Chicago's South Side, performed the beautiful *Simple Gifts*. Though this was an instrumental version of the famous work, a perusal of the lyrics above reveals the basic and most poignant themes of the Obama administration and its two year-long presidential campaign. It also reflects the mutual reception (*Parivartana yoga*) between Sun in Capricorn and Saturn in Leo, in 10th and 5th houses respectively of the Inauguration chart. This planetary configuration highlights the tension that can occur between service to self (Leo) versus service to a larger community (Capricorn). Saturn in Leo reminds us that

self-service can also descend into mere self-gratification. Likewise, the social responsibility evocative of Sun in Capricorn can descend into national or corporate self-aggrandizement, whose heedless arrogance we have seen more and more in recent months and years, including Bank Bailouts benefiting only banks, rather than ordinary citizens and small businesses desperately needing credit and loans. By contrast, the first moment of Obama's presidency began lyrically, with this instrumental version of *Simple Gifts*, a Shaker hymn and work song written by Shaker Elder Joseph Brackett, Jr. in 1848. The music was performed between the swearing in of the Vice president and the President.

Glitches: Potential glitches were avoided in the flawless performance of *Simple Gifts*. I would call it a good omen of foresight. Musicians playing outdoors in such cold weather (around 15 degrees F.) could have easily been hampered in their ability to play properly, if at all. Their instruments could have also suffered under those conditions, accounting for broken strings, for example. At such an important occasion, and before such a huge audience, there was no room for error. The musicians – Itzhak Perlman, violin, Yo-Yo Ma, cello, Anthony McGill, clarinet, and Gabriela Montero, piano – opted to pre-record two days earlier at the Marine Barracks in Washington. What we saw was a play-synched performance. Was this a misrepresentation? No, it seems to me a wise precaution under such extreme circumstances. Prior to 12 noon, Aretha Franklin sang *My Country 'Tis of Thee*, in a live rendition. Her normally strong voice wavered in the wintry temperatures, a flaw for which she later apologized.

Supreme Court Justice Roberts might have also avoided his own error, the only real glitch during the entire ceremony, by bringing along a written copy of the President's Oath of Office (all 35 words). Astrologically, our attention is drawn to Jupiter (the judiciary). When a planet is very close to the Sun in celestial longitude, it is considered overwhelmed by the Sun's rays. With Jupiter so closely combust the Sun (the leader) in the Inauguration chart, Roberts could have forgotten his lines, being temporarily blinded by such proximity to the new leader!

Inauguration Oath Taking: According to a clock synchronized to the U.S. Naval Observatory, Washington, D.C., Vice President Joe Biden was sworn in at 11:58:47 AM, and President Barack Obama at 12:06:12 PM on Jan. 20, 2009. In administering the Presidential Oath of Office, Supreme Court Justice Roberts not only spoke too quickly, cutting off Obama when he started to say "I Barack" but misplaced the word "faithfully." Because of this slight slip-up by the Chief Justice, a second oath was delivered at 7:35 PM EST on Jan. 21, 2009.

Though many astrologers tend to choose the time when the Oath taking is finished, I would adhere to the time of 12 noon EST chart for Jan. 20th. That is the time when U.S. Presidential power changes hands every four years, according to the U.S. Constitution, whether or not the President-elect has yet even taken the oath. The U.S. Constitution also states that the Oath shall be taken in that exact form. All was correct except for Roberts' misplacement of one

word: “faithfully.” Legal experts were not concerned, and mostly only a few Right wing pundits complained that something was amiss. Even so, just to avoid any problems from future troublemakers – the oath taking was redone, and the tone was jocular, Obama saying “It was so nice, we decided to do it twice!” Roberts donned his black robe for the 25-second occasion, done slowly this time, with Saturn (the slow-moving one) in the Ascendant.

The chart of the second Presidential Oath taking at 7:25 PM on Jan. 21, 2009 at the White House is not one of major importance, in my opinion. It is more about how Obama will have to manage the nation’s weaknesses at a time when it is especially fragile financially, with a long neglected infrastructure, and increasing loss of jobs. The second Oath taking was not done at a particularly auspicious time. Saturn was rising in Leo, with four planets in Capricorn in the 6th house. It reiterates themes of the 12 noon chart, only now Leo rises instead of Aries. Saturn and Sun are in mutual exchange between 1st and the 6th houses. But Sun (the President) is more dominant at the top of the sky in the 12 noon chart, and in any case tends to dominate Saturn, as Sun and Saturn are both in *nakshatras* ruled by the Sun, an important underlying rule.

The second Oath taking simply underscores the many conflicts that await our leader’s attention. But **Sun-Saturn themes** have already dominated Election 2008. Obama’s Sun is opposite Saturn in his birth chart, and the same pattern occurred when he announced his presidential candidacy in Feb. 2007, signifying his readiness and his destiny to challenge the Status Quo. He reinforced this theme in some of the most pungent lines of his Inaugural address:

“As for our common defense, we reject as false a choice between our safety and our ideals.... Know that America is a friend of each nation, and America is ready to lead once again.”

Obama delivered these words with George W. Bush only a few feet away from him. Though couched in softened language, his Inaugural address was a tough indictment of the eight years of the Bush presidency. It reflects the tremendously damaged state of affairs Bush has left behind and which appear to define some of the most challenging issues Obama faces. As early as the night of his Inauguration, he issued his first executive orders: they were to close Guantanamo Bay prison within the year, and to place an immediate 120 day moratorium on all tribunals being held there. A flurry of policy statements followed, most marking an abrupt break with some of the most controversial Bush policies. And there were many. By Jan. 22nd, Obama ordered all secret prisons and detention camps closed.

The Jan. 21st chart does not reflect the overwhelming positive support Obama enjoys, though it does reflect the immense problems he faces. The 12 noon Inauguration chart (and even the 12:06 PM chart) more accurately show the power of the presidency that was apparent on Jan. 20, 2009. With this in mind, the Sun (representing Obama) should indicate his already high status as

President, and being greeted so eagerly after eight such unhappy years. The Sun was high in the sky, with the very favorable *Abhijit muhurtha*, from 12 noon to 12:48 PM on that day. If the second Oath taking shows the inevitable conflicts and problems this new president must handle, the 12 noon chart shows the good will Obama has from citizens at home and abroad, with an 83 % approval rate nationally upon entering office – an unprecedented high, not to mention his 62% approval rating in Texas, Bush's home state.

Nimittas (omens) are classically a very important component of Vedic astrology. To be of significance, a *nimitta* has to coincide with something astrological, or something closely connected to a very relevant person or event, preferably both.

If Obama came into his presidency with a high approval rating, Bush and Cheney exited with unprecedented lows of 22% and 13% respectively. There was some powerful imagery to match these low numbers. **Cheney** attended the Inauguration in a wheel chair, due to a recent back injury while loading boxes. When his entry was announced, **Bush** was greeted by loud boos from the crowd, and by loud cheers when he and Laura Bush lifted off in the military helicopter from Washington. The red carpet that was to have been laid out for him at Andrews Air Force Base could not be laid out due to high winds.

As I watched the public **Oath taking**, it occurred to me that this flub on the part of Justice Roberts could indicate some future problems between the Presidency and the Supreme Court. Justice Roberts reflects the Right Wing ideology of President George W. Bush, who appointed him in 2005. Then Senator Obama voted against his confirmation, and favors a non-ideological, more pragmatic approach. The Supreme Court is insulated, and remains largely Conservative. The new President represents a new Progressive majority that could test this court, and vice versa. He won by a sweeping majority, and reflects the will of the people, whereas the courts still largely reflect Conservatives who have dominated for some 28 years, but are no longer the political majority.

Senator Ted Kennedy (Democrat, MA), nearly 77, suffered seizures at the Inaugural luncheon during the dessert portion of the meal. He was taken to the hospital in an ambulance for observation. Doctors said it was "mental fatigue," and he recovered shortly thereafter. But it cast a brief pall over the celebrations. Senator Robert Byrd (Democrat, WV), age 91, also left the luncheon just before Kennedy, suffering some "discomfort," from which he soon recovered as well. Byrd is the longest serving member in the Senate's history, from Nov. 1958, and the oldest. Kennedy is the second most senior member of the U.S. Senate, from Nov. 1962. He played a major role in supporting Obama's presidential candidacy, endorsing him in late Jan. 2008 at a critical juncture in the Democratic primaries. At the very least, these events during the Inaugural luncheon focus our attention on the two most senior Senators, and to their state of health on the first day of the era of Obama. At 47, he is a young president, the third youngest to be elected president – after John F. Kennedy, 42, and Bill Clinton, 46.

Ted Kennedy suffers from an aggressive brain tumor discovered in June 2008, raising the possibility of a Senate without a Kennedy for the first time since 1952. Highly regarded in both houses of Congress, Ted Kennedy commands the loyalty and affection of many friends and colleagues. He is very close to his niece Caroline Kennedy, who was encouraged by both her uncle and Barack Obama to seek the N.Y. Senate seat just vacated by Hillary Clinton. After a two-month hiatus with no appointment by New York's Governor Paterson, this event looked initially like a *nimitta* that Caroline might shortly be appointed U.S. Senator from N.Y. But Caroline told close friends she was "spooked" by her uncle's seizures at the Inaugural luncheon, and surprised everyone when she announced she was withdrawing her name from consideration, citing only "personal reasons." She released a brief statement just after midnight Thursday, Jan. 22, 2009.

Bush's last week in office: We have mostly looked at Barack Obama at the start of his presidency, and the victorious position of his Dasa lord Jupiter at the top of the sky in the Inauguration chart. Meanwhile, there were some notable omens regarding outgoing President George W. Bush. The astrological backdrop also gave some clues. On Sunday, Jan. 11, 2009, transiting **Mercury** turned **Stationary Retrograde** closely opposite Bush's Ascendant, as well as opposite his natal Mercury, his current Dasa lord. Further, the degree at which Mercury turned Stationary Retrograde (13:46 Capricorn) was very close to the degree of the upcoming Solar eclipse Jan. 26, 2009 (12:30 Capricorn). This gives more weight to Mercury in the heavens in terms of communications and travel symbols at this juncture, especially as Bush was still Head of State at this time. **Mercury Retrograde** in the 7th house casts its glance backwards into the 6th house of conflict. Together with the upcoming omens, this Mercury Retrograde may indicate that his Legacy rebuilding project is headed into reverse mode, starting from that very week. For Obama, with Cancer Ascendant as well (using my 6:10 AM time), he too may have to review some of his policies, and renew and restore confidence in his campaign promises. Mercury Retrograde is not always a reversal, but it casts light on what has been done or said previously.

Two plane crashes: During the last week of his presidency, there were two plane crashes that I consider important *nimittas*. They are relevant in occurring on **Jan. 12 and 15, 2009** – days on which Bush conducted his **last press conference** and his **farewell address to the nation**, respectively. In those speeches Bush defended his record, and emphasized the terrorist attacks on 9-11-01 as the central point of his presidency, noting too that he had kept the country safe since then. The second crash coincided with Martin Luther King's 80th birthday. The one was an unnecessary plane crash of a smaller private plane, which landed in Florida. The other was an absolutely necessary plane crash – an emergency landing – of a large passenger plane in New York City (Manhattan). Both locations were pivotal for the Bush presidency. The first pilot was expert, but daredevil, and didn't care if he crash-landed his plane, as that was part of his plan. He radioed an air traffic control tower, giving false information about his own condition as well as that of his plane. Lying

intentionally, he bailed out of the plane, put it on autopilot, and allowed it to crash where it would, heedless of the human lives and human laws below. He intended to fake his own death in order to avoid numerous personal difficulties, including being indicted for business fraud, and being sued for divorce. The plane landed in a Florida swamp.

The second pilot had less than four minutes to save perhaps tens of thousands of people in a crowded urban area, in addition to himself, his crew, and 155 passengers. He made the right decision, and along with his expertise – he evoked calmness everywhere around him on the plane. The actions of the second pilot were not only heroic, but astonishingly masterful in landing a plane that had suddenly lost all power in both engines due to being hit by a flock of birds. He landed it in the Hudson River, without causing the breakup of the plane, or any loss of life. Only one person was injured.

With the **first plane crash**, we note that within minutes of reports of a plane in trouble, two military jet fighter planes were dispatched to check out the plane, called “a scramble.” Coming along side it, they found the door to the cockpit open, and the cockpit dark. No one was flying this plane, and no blood was on the window or anywhere in the plane, as the pilot had claimed in his message to the control tower. The plane was on autopilot and crashed in a Florida swamp. The pilot intended it to crash in the Gulf of Mexico, but ran out of gas. Comparing this event to Sept. 11, 2001, we note that despite at least three errant aircraft on the Eastern seaboard flying towards New York City and Washington, D.C., and having lost all contact with air control towers for some 30 to 40 minutes, *no military planes whatsoever* were dispatched to investigate the situation. Several years later, the 9-11 Commission hearings revealed that no military aircraft were available anywhere along the Eastern seaboard on 9-11, as they were all involved in war games that day. This was remarkable in a period when Intelligence briefings gave the highest level of warnings of terrorist attacks, specifically with the possible use of hijacked airplanes to attack tall buildings in some major U.S. cities. The President had been warned in early August 2001, and all during summer 2001, when he took a long vacation.

Thus, an important part of the *nimitta* of the Jan. 12, 2009 plane crash is to remind us of the extreme readiness of military jets to investigate just one errant small private plane over a Florida swamp, yet no readiness to prevent a 9-11 event of some magnitude. It also reminds us of a presidency which essentially began because of events in Florida eight years ago, and is now still resting its historical significance on the events of 9-11 in New York City. Bush does not want to direct our attention to whether or not he prevented the attacks occurring nearly eight months into his presidency. In fact, he and his defenders are now saying that he “inherited” 9-11,” and could not have prevented it.

As for the **second plane landing** on Jan. 15th, the day of Bush’s farewell address, and also Martin Luther Kings’ 80th birthday – people may hope it is a

sign that President Barack Obama will rescue us all in a time of grave peril for the nation. Certainly the second pilot's behavior and demeanor remind us of Obama, and may well be signaling the Age of Obama, especially coinciding with King's birthday. However, it was also Bush's very last speech to the nation while still President. He had to move out of the White House by the next day. This plane crash just hours before Bush's farewell speech, along with Eric Holder's Senate nomination hearings for Attorney General that day, mostly eclipsed Bush's farewell speech in the news. It also highlights Bush's determination to stick to his script emphasizing New York City on 9-11-2001, but not on this day. He never once mentioned the heroic pilot or his miraculous crash landing in the Hudson River. This is because 9-11 still remains the bedrock of his presidency, and the single factor he uses for explaining its subsequent actions.

At the very least, these two powerful omens in the last week of the Bush presidency show us **two stark contrasts in leadership** – or in this analogy – piloting a plane. You can have all the qualifications to fly it – which some argue Bush really didn't have from the start – but you don't want to cause an unnecessary crash, especially one that only benefits yourself and injures many others. You can crash the plane (or Ship of State) heedlessly, such as with warrant-less wiretapping and unnecessary wars – or you can guide it with steely calm and a sense of what has to be done instantly in order best to serve the passengers (citizens).

Since both plane crashes occurred on Bush's last watch, they may be inviting us to observe the damage he has done to the country during his presidency, especially with these kinds of parallels. The emergency landing by an exemplary pilot gives us hope of a distinctly new kind of leadership, and thus much more positive results. It shows us that great leadership *does exist*, as seen with the piloting skills of Sully Sullenberger and his emergency landing in Manhattan, New York - the scene of two plane crashes on 9-11, and the fulcrum of the Bush presidency.

These two omens, along with a solar eclipse just six days into the Obama presidency, seem to reinforce the urgency for the new president to deal with so many issues of the Bush presidency.¹ For instance, many say that if Obama does *not* prosecute figures from the previous administration for war crimes, then he really can't claim to be the President who is restoring moral authority. Many ask what kind of restored civility Obama can promote if he looks only forward and refuses to prosecute such crimes, which historically, when they remain buried, only rise again in a more exaggerated form. It is not yet clear how far the Obama administration will go to pursue these issues, though in his Inauguration speech the new president gave some hint, as did his actions and executive orders during his first few days in office. We wish him great courage, strength, and blessings for the tasks he has sworn to undertake.

¹ The Jan. 26 eclipse is within one degree of the Mercury Stationary Retrograde Jan. 11, 2009, confirming the need for review, as Mercury is transiting back over territory it has just been in.

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