

The Starfire Messenger

A Free Weekly Newsletter

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Signs of the Times: Mercury Retrograde and Shifting Perspectives

On June 17 at 11:59 pm CDT, Mercury will station and turn retrograde in the zodiac, doing so at the 15th degree of the sign Cancer. Mercury will then remain retrograde through July 12, when it makes the direct station and resumes apparent normal motion in the zodiac at the 6th degree of Cancer. As a result, from June 17 through July 12, Mercury will retrograde, back-tracking in the zodiac from 15 degrees of Cancer to 6 degrees of Cancer, causing a shift of perspective in the matters ruled by Cancer.

The sign cancer rules the masses of Humanity, family, biological origin, ancestry, lineages, heritage, custom, and traditions. For the masses, the sign Cancer connotes the home, the place of dwelling, the neighborhood, the tribe, the village, and the sense of security and belonging. At the basic biological level, Cancer as a sign concerns the fundamental stuff of which life is made – matter, tangible items, edibles, food, nutrition, building materials for construction of homes and offices,

and the sense of basic biological satisfactions coming from adequate food, drink, shelter, clothing, and association. At this level, the sign of Cancer is ruled by the Moon, emblem of instinct, emotions, basic survival needs, and the drive to attain minimal assurances of peace and security. Closely linked with all these drives is the sense of identity derived from the group, also ruled by Cancer. This sign therefore connotes the urge to find safety and security through connecting with blood kin and others who are like unto family. Symbolized by the sea-crab which carries its home on its back, Cancer might be well symbolized by the walls around a castle, creating what would seem an invulnerable safe space within the confines of the ancestral home.

At the level of the soul, the sign Cancer rules other matters, connoting the life plan of the soul as it designs each successive incarnation, and the inner powers of reflection and sensitivity which allow for spiritual direction while in the material or incarnated state. Ruled at this level by Neptune, Cancer at the level of the soul has to do with the power of the inner self to register images and impressions coming from the environment in the form of telepathy. The impressing sources for such telepathy may be the surrounding psychic life of Humanity or the higher psychic life of soul groupings occupied with meditating upon the manifestation of the Divine Plan. A divine sentiency results from the action of Cancer, working with its esoteric ruler to cultivate in the individual and in the group the facility to register higher impressions and to shape and form such impressions into meaningful concepts and definite, well-developed thoughtforms. This is the mental reflection of the form-giving impulse expressed by Cancer at the physical level. At the mental level, Cancer drives the condensation of thoughtforms; at the physical level, it drives the process of incarnation.

All of these themes will be emphasized and brought up for consideration and evaluation during the upcoming period of retrograde Mercury in Cancer from June 17 through July 12. In fact, this process of meditation on Cancerian themes has already begun, for Mercury on June 2

entered the degrees of the sign Cancer which will be affected by retrogradation, thus generating a mild effect similar to that of the formal Mercury retrograde period. Then the same mild effect similar to that of retrogradation will occur after Mercury goes direct, from July 12 through July 27 while Mercury passes through the remaining degrees affected by retrogradation. All in all, this means that the sequence is as follows: 1) a mild effect somewhat like Mercury retrograde from June 2 – June 17; 2) the formal retrograde period from June 17 – July 12; and 3) a second mild effect similar to formal retrogradation from July 12 – July 27.

Hence, the entirety of the months of June and July 2020 are, by virtue of retrograde Mercury in Cancer and its related secondary periods of influence, consumed with a focus on the Cancerian themes of home, family, ancestry, lineage, heritage, group identity, and the inner powers of the soul to be guided through the registration of higher telepathic impressions. Given that Mercury is retrograde during the core of this period, this means that examination and re-evaluation of concepts regarding home, family, group identity, and inner soul guidance will be potent themes for the bulk of the summer. In practical terms, it means that many will re-evaluate the adequacy of their physical home spaces, seeking either other quarters or improvements in the existing situation. Others will consider the nature of their family and group connections, leaning toward meaningful adjustments. Still others will focus on group soul telepathy.

In many ways, this process of re-evaluation of home, family, and inner guidance will prove to be a profoundly subjective and inward experience, for Cancer is a water sign of the feminine polarity, the domain therefore of that which magnetically draws attention and action inward and downward to the depths of being. Into this Cancerian matrix will plunge the planet Mercury, held by many traditions to be the Psychopomp or Guide of Souls in the World of the Dead, the one who leads the way in deep subjective space. The retrograde condition will draw attention to this role for the planet Mercury.

According to the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan, the planet Mercury is of great importance in our solar system because it is one of seven planets held to be of sacred status,¹ an evolutionary level considerably in advance of the non-sacred planet Earth. Much the same is said of Mercury in the Agni Yoga literature, where Mercury is characterized as a world much older and therefore much more spiritually advanced than is our planet.² Esoteric tradition therefore accords the planet Mercury a relatively high spiritual status, standing in evolutionary advance of Earth and ready to guide the consciousness of Earth forward.

Mainstream astrology has no comment to make on the esoteric distinction between sacred and non-sacred planets. For mainstream astrology, Mercury is simply the planet of mind, intelligence, thought, word, numbers, communication, language, learning, writing, commerce, transport, and all technologies designed for related purposes. Certainly the mentally agile Mercury archetype manifests as all this and much more, but the esoteric tradition adds a new slant on Mercury worth considering as well. According to the esoteric astrological doctrine of Alice Bailey and the Tibetan, the influence of the planet Mercury derives largely from the fact that it's conditioned by and a distributor of the Fourth Ray of Harmony through Conflict, and therefore is associated with the Fourth or Buddhic plane and the Fourth or Buddhic Principle. Mercury thus connotes the faculty of consciousness designated buddhic, also defined as the intuition

¹ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 506, *Esoteric Psychology I*, 336.

² *Letters of Helena Roerich II*, November 16, 1935. "Mercury and Venus have no satellites, but they had 'parents' just as the Earth had. Both are far older than the Earth."

and pure reason.³ Intuition in this sense is not simply “psychic hunch” functioning in the popular sense, but rather a level of consciousness which connotes universal love, perception of universal law, and divine discrimination.

Humanity, the esoteric doctrine holds, is uniquely responsive to the Fourth Ray and Fourth or Buddhic Principle because Humanity itself is ruled as a group by the Fourth Ray, the Ray of Harmony through Conflict.⁴ As a result, Humanity is uniquely positioned to develop the higher or Buddhic type of awareness,⁵ also called the Christ Consciousness in some contexts. It is this very principle with which, according to the esoteric doctrine, the planet Mercury is imbued. Thus, when Mercury is powerfully active in an astrological sense, a moment of evolutionary opportunity is at hand. This is the case for June and July of 2020, a two-month period strongly conditioned by the action of Mercury in its periods of primary retrograde and secondary effects, for as a Ray Four group, Humanity is uniquely attuned to and affected by the planet Mercury. This is why, when Mercury goes retrograde in the zodiac, Humanity is profoundly affected.

Many will wonder if retrogradation helps or hinders the power of Mercury to share its higher vibrations with the denizens of Earth. Perhaps a partial answer to that question might be had by taking a look at the life expressions of well-known individuals born with retrograde Mercury in their charts. Notable in this regard are Yuri Gagarin and John Glenn, both pioneering astronauts. Born with retrograde Mercury conjunct the Sun in Pisces, the Russian Gagarin was the first human being to explore space.

³ Alice A. Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I*, 336, 419; *Esoteric Astrology*, 187.

⁴ Alice A. Bailey, *Rays and Initiations*, 603; *Esoteric Healing*, 709.

⁵ Alice A. Bailey, *Cosmic Fire*, 588.

American astronaut and politician John Glenn was born with retrograde Mercury conjunct Pluto in Cancer. Both men went way outside the box in not only their thinking, but in their acting, thus suggesting that the retrograde condition of Mercury in the natal chart is no hindrance whatsoever to innovation, daring, and cosmic consciousness.

Thinking outside the box came naturally to a number of other well-known individuals born with retrograde Mercury as well. For example, revolutionary nineteenth century historian and sociologist Frederich Engels was born with retrograde Mercury conjunct Mars and Uranus in Sagittarius, leading him to reject the conventional historical analysis of his day and to collaborate with Karl Marx in originating what would become a dominant intellectual paradigm. Also out beyond his world and his time was nineteenth century Hindu saint Ramakrishna, born with retrograde Mercury conjunct Uranus in the mystical sign of Pisces. Like Ramakrishna, twentieth-century American consumer crusader Ralph Nader was born with retrograde Mercury in Pisces. Twentieth century psychologist and reincarnation researcher Helen Wambach was born with retrograde Mercury (looking back into the past) conjunct Mars in Virgo.⁶

What all these individuals with retrograde Mercury have in common is an ability to go against the grain or popular herd thinking of the moment to favor their own intuitions and pursue their own inclinations. These inclinations are, in this case, decidedly adventurous and expansive in scope. Although this small sample of retrograde Mercury births surely

⁶ Information on famous persons born with retrograde Mercury has been drawn from: Pamela Rowe, "The Enigma of Retrograde Mercury." Australian Academy of Astrology and Cosmobiology. Accessed June 12, 2020.

<https://www.astrologycosmobiology.com.au/articles/tutorial/the-enigma-of-retrograde-mercury.html>

does not cover all the bases, just on its own it demonstrates that the intuitive and intellectual functions associated with Mercury are in no way debilitated by the retrograde condition. In fact, they may well be enhanced, as the likes of Gagarin, Glenn, Ramakrishna, and Womback suggest. Let's remember that as June and July 2020 unfold. In the midst of the potentially irritating schedule changes, logistical rearrangements, and shifts of perspective sure to emerge during this period, there is woven a golden thread of great spiritual value. We need only look up, if only metaphorically, to the higher side of Mercury, sacred planet distributing the Ray of the Intuition.

Analysis and Predictions for the Week Ahead: Solar Eclipse at Solstice

The week of **June 15 – 21, 2020** is conditioned by a swarm of powerful astrological influences. This is so even though the bulk of the week takes place during waning Moon. Mercury goes retrograde on **June 17**, signaling changes in routines and alterations in plans. **Thursday through Saturday June 18 – 20** brings opportunity and comfort across the board as Mars in accommodating Pisces makes the sextile to both Pluto and Jupiter in security-oriented Capricorn. Agreeable methods and means will thus be found even in the midst of (or perhaps because of) recent rearrangements brought by retrograde Mercury. Then, the big drama for the week shapes up on the weekend, with the Cancer Solstice on **Saturday June 20** and a New Moon/Solar Eclipse on **Sunday June 21**. New starts and major trends thus arise, with an emphasis on soul groupings and on the mass or entirety of the Human Family, as symbolized by the sign of Cancer.

Monday June 15 is conditioned by the square of the waning Aries Moon to Pluto and Jupiter in bureaucratic Capricorn. Restrictions of various types thus circulate in mind and expression, but the trend of the moment is decrease in this area. Mercury has no zodiacal motion as it slows to the

retrograde station, thus correlating to temporary stalls, stoppages, and cessations, as alternative directions begin to emerge soon.

Tuesday and Wednesday June 16 and 17 feature the Moon in stolid Taurus square to Saturn and conjunct Uranus, indicative of resistances and refusals to cooperate. Then Mercury goes retrograde on **Wednesday June 17** at 11:59 pm CDT, dramatically shifting perspectives and plans. Upheaval is in the air, but it is not more than can be managed.

Thursday and Friday June 18 and 19 present moments of opportunity and relief as Mars in empathic Pisces makes the sextile to both Pluto and Jupiter, and at the same time, the Moon in unhurried Taurus makes the soothing sextile to Mars and the fulfilling trine to both Pluto and Jupiter. Even in the midst of the sudden detours and alterations caused by retrograde Mercury, positive circumstances materialize, with advantages coming from unexpected directions. We continue to feel the assistance of Mars in sextile to Jupiter, which is exact early CDT on **Saturday June 20**.

The real excitement for the week unfolds on **Saturday and Sunday June 20 and 21**. The Sun enters Cancer on Saturday June 20 at 4:44 pm CDT, proclaiming the moment of Cancer Solstice, thus bringing to a highpoint those basic underlying trends which were begun six months ago at the Capricorn Solstice. Then on **Sunday June 21** at 1:41 am CDT, New Moon occurs at 0 degrees Cancer, establishing a new life wave. This New Moon is particularly powerful, for it's also a solar eclipse.

According to channelings from the Master Morya through Helena Roerich, solar eclipses exert a definite influence on the store of psychic energy contained in each person,⁷ ostensibly disturbing or even dramatically decreasing it. Helena Roerich herself expressed grave reserve about the nature of the solar eclipse, writing in her published letters that

⁷ *Aum* 366. "...psychic energy reacts singularly to a solar eclipse."

“...the solar eclipse... will not result in anything good. It is interesting to observe that during eclipses the activity of psychic energy is greatly decreased, and at the very moment of the full eclipse, it almost ceases.”⁸ Expressing the matter even more pointedly, Helena Roerich wrote in another letter, “Eclipses are always followed by cosmic perturbations and by all sorts of madnesses in the world.”⁹

These statements from Morya and his amanuensis Helena Roerich serve to point out the potency of any solar eclipse. To this, logic adds that all their warnings about such an astronomical happening ring especially true of a solar eclipse occurring only a few hours after the exact moment of the Cancer Solstice, a potent phenomenon on its own. As both Morya and Roerich point out, solar eclipses in general can be moments of low physical and psychic energy which can disturb and destabilize mind, emotions, and body, and which can as a result lead to extreme behaviors and over-reactions in the masses of Humanity. This suggests that the moment of the solar eclipse of June 2020 should be a time of retirement, rest, spiritual vigilance, and close observation for all. Master Morya states as much, admonishing in *Supermundane* that “It is regrettable that people do not make use of all the information provided by nature. For example, people know long in advance about an eclipse, but do not examine evidence of its influence on the human psyche.”¹⁰

In solitude and peace, therefore, let us receive the solar eclipse of June 21, 2020. As with all New Moons, something dies away, yet something is simultaneously reborn. This solar eclipse promises power in that regard.

⁸ *Letters of Helena Roerich II*, November 27, 1937.

⁹ *Letters of Helena Roerich II*, October 1, 1935.

¹⁰ *Supermundane*, 533.

