

The Starfire Messenger



A Free Weekly Newsletter

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Mars, Pluto, and the Burning Ground

The entire second half of 2020 is conditioned by the passage of Mars through Aries as it sequentially makes the square or 90-degree arc to the three major planets now transiting in Capricorn. A key episode in this lengthy chapter of experience emerges during the week of August 10 – 16 with the square of Mars at 23 degrees Aries to Pluto at 23 degrees Capricorn. The exact square occurs on Thursday August 13, but the general vibrations of this aspect are so potent that they'll be palpable for many days before and after. Indeed, the Mars-Pluto square promises to be a major attention-getter, forcefully merging Ray Six Mars and Ray One Pluto,

both non-sacred planets associated with conflict, struggle, and severe trial in the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey.¹ Mainstream astrology presents these two archetypes similarly, with Mars emblematic of the separative ego, self-assertion, motivation, drive, conflict, strife, competition, and the fight for physical survival, and Pluto as the emblem of catharsis, transformation, death, decay, purification, and resurrection.

Neither of these two planets presents an easy face with which to deal. In fact, Mars and Pluto in combination expressing through the innately tense square aspect connote the dramatic clash of opposing views, even to the point of life-threatening intensity. Mars as the Red Planet and God of War has long been known to stir the heated passions of men, a fact enshrined in the esoteric astrological characterization of the planet Mars as a distributor of the Sixth Ray, a ray characterized by intense ideological conviction and devotion to causes, potentially leading to aggressive and even militant expression.² Pluto as the God of the Underworld has also quite a reputation for its tendency to intensify circumstances and conditions, bringing out hidden, repressed, or subconscious factors in a process of devastation preceding resurrection. In fact, Pluto is portrayed in the esoteric astrology of Alice Bailey as the distributor of Ray One, the Shiva or Destroyer Ray, which itself is characterized as The Lord of Death, the Liberator from Form, The Fiery Element, The Ravisher of Souls, and the Lord of the Burning Ground.³

Given the fiery, red-hot nature of Mars and the destructive proclivity of Pluto, the Burning Ground therefore might be the most apt metaphor by which to understand the nature of the Mars-Pluto square of mid-August 2020. The notion of the Burning Ground is familiar to all who have read the books of Alice Bailey. Referred to often and in several of the Bailey books, the Burning Ground is both an image meant to convey a psychospiritual

¹ Alice Bailey, *Esoteric Astrology*, 210 – 211, 248; Alice Bailey, *Esoteric Psychology I*, 64.

² *Esoteric Astrology*, 248; *Esoteric Psychology I*, 64 – 86.

³ *Esoteric Psychology I*, 64.

truth and a spiritual reality through which many have passed. Interestingly, the effects of the planet Pluto are specifically associated by Bailey with the Burning Ground. Pluto, she writes,

“governs the lesser burning ground, in order that the man may live in truth in the higher land of light.”⁴

Whether the Burning Ground is experienced as lesser or greater, its effects remain similar. According to the esoteric astrological teaching, Pluto as governor and Lord of the Burning Ground impacts the lower nature of the human being in a process deliberately invoked by the personality of the one who wills to tread the Higher Way. In that process, Pluto operates as the agent of death to all that would hinder or obstruct the attainment of that objective. In so doing, it reacts upon the very personality which invoked it, for when the Burning Ground has done its work, the personality becomes

“nothing more or less than the purified shell or form through which the light, the radiance, the quality and the characteristics of the [Solar] Angel can shine...”⁵

Further, the influence of First Ray Pluto is inherently connected with termination of certain conditions. As Bailey writes,

“...the first ray is the controller of the death drama in all kingdoms—a destruction of forms which brings about release of power and permits *entrance into Light through the gateway of Death.*”⁶

The conditions to be terminated are both within and without, but the inner psychological self is the primary stage upon which the battle of the Burning Ground is waged. Indeed, the Burning Ground is a

⁴ *Esoteric Astrology*, 78.

⁵ Alice Bailey, *Glamour, A World Problem*, 269 – 270.

⁶ *Esoteric Psychology I*, 64.

psychological place, described by Bailey as a zone of mental and emotional anguish, soul-searching, and inner conflict.⁷



The battle to be waged on the Burning Ground is thus a subjective altercation, a clashing of forces in the psyche of the individual. In esoteric terms, it is a fight between the values and interests of the Mars-ruled personality and its vehicles on one hand, versus the values and interests of the soul, or perhaps of the monad (depending upon the initiatory status of the individual), on the other. At the very least, the Burning Ground experience is most certainly a potent examination of character and occult capacity. Shall the self be hung up by every passing Mars-driven irritation in the personality world, or shall the personality prioritize higher objectives and learn to be a responsible transmitter of energies? Will the vehicles of manifestation call the shots, or will the commitments to the Divine Plan determine response to the conditions of life? Will fiery Mars incite to anger and swift rejection of others? Will untrammelled Pluto lead to unwarranted levels of annihilation? Will the right relinquishments be laid on the altar of sacrifice? These and many

⁷ Alice Bailey, *Discipleship in the New Age I*, 464.

others are the questions posed by Mars and Pluto as the candidate for initiation passes through the Burning Ground. Pluto wants to blast away that which it has been invoked to clear, but it needs must stop short of total obliteration. Will the form nature allow and cooperate with appropriate destructions and terminations? That is the question.

And that is the question to be posed by the intensity of the energies associated with the Mars-Pluto square of mid-August 2020. Whether one feels called to fight valiantly or even belligerently for a treasured cause, whether one is tempted to give in to depression or despair, or whether one is swept up in a danger-ridden regional political uproar, the question remains the same. What shall be shed, what left behind? What no longer serves the objectives of the soul? What can be relinquished here and now that the load may be lightened and the path for the future cleared?

How we meet this week's Burning Ground test will most surely determine the result.

Analysis and Predictions for the Week Ahead

The week of **August 10 – 16** is certain to be volatile, intense, active, and revolutionary. Although the Moon is in waning phase all week and normally that begets a decrease of intensity, this week departs from that pattern. Three powerful short-term activations see to that: **Mercury square Uranus** on the head-end of the week, **Mars square Pluto exact on August 13** yet palpable throughout the week, and **Uranus stationary direct on August 15** during the weekend. All three activations feature potential for disruption, upheaval, excitement, over-reaction, sharp differences of opinion, outright conflict, and uncommon developments. The likelihood of shocking world events is high, dangerous situations and high-risk circumstances all too prevalent. Minimizing exposure to unpredictable and violent crowd outbursts is the right course of action for the week. Any

public place is best avoided at this time. On the road, let the other driver have the benefit of the doubt; hang back and give others an opportunity to correct mistakes while driving during this passage. On the internet, stay cool and provide personal information to no unknown parties.

Monday August 10 features the Mercury-Uranus square from 11 degrees Leo to 11 degrees Taurus. Occurring in and therefore highlighting fixed signs, this square involving mental Mercury and revolutionary Uranus will disrupt and dislodge rigid patterns, attitudes, beliefs, and policies. Greater flexibility and new approaches will be required and demanded. Extreme reactions are likely to abound, with many individuals and groups impulsively jumping to conclusions and adopting extreme points of view. Sudden and somewhat unexpected developments are likely, especially 5 – 9 pm CDT while the Taurus Moon conjuncts Uranus and squares Mercury, intensifying the whole configuration.

Tuesday – Friday August 11 – 14 is primarily conditioned by Mars square Pluto, yet another volatile influence certain to stir up the moods of the masses, inciting extremes of resentment, distrust, and animosity. Many are likely to register the influence of this activation as unrest, discomfort, and emotional agitation. Hurt feelings and frustrated intentions are likely to run rampant. Others will feel this internally as well in the form of concern and foreboding. Indeed, such psychic impressions are likely to be on target today, warning all to avoid dangerous spots where individual and crowd anger could flash into violence.

The masses feel under tremendous pressure at this time. That pressure is shortly to explode and will find a method of release in outbursts and confrontations. **A brief interval of peace emerges on Tuesday August 11 from 1 – 7 pm CDT** while the now sedate Taurus Moon makes a sextile to ethereal Neptune and a trine to rejuvenative Pluto. Then the Moon enters non-committal Gemini at 8:46 am CDT on **Wednesday August 12**, reducing the likelihood of ferocity based on feelings of ownership and possessiveness, but the Mars-Pluto square is forming rapidly, indicating

that anger and animosity are building dramatically anyway. Locations where this intensity might be expressed will include the Gemini theme, suggesting places of transportation, or perhaps even the internet.

Thursday August 13 sees the exact square of Mars and Pluto at 2:14 am CDT, a moment sure to be a highpoint of tension, confrontation, and troubled feelings. Upwelling of deep psychic content is likely through dreams and other channels. **Friday August 14** is still under the heat of the Mars-Pluto square, with tempers on edge and animosity on the prowl. The Moon enters Cancer at 6:35 pm CDT on Friday August 14, shifting attention to home security, family, and group relations.

No let-up in the intensity forms quite yet, for **volatile and explosive Uranus turns stationary retrograde at 9:25 am CDT on Saturday August 15**, making Thursday, Friday, and Saturday one big blur of intensified experience characterized by a growing sense of urgency and crowd irritation. Extremely creative persons will be able to use this heightened energy level for creative endeavors and for accelerated progress toward artistic and spiritual goals, if they stay out of the way of verbal and physical fisticuffs. Much potential for wasting and draining of energies through emotional upset is present throughout this period. A strongly focused will helps throughout.

Saturday and Sunday August 15 and 16 are conditioned by the retrograde station of Uranus, and are thus permeated with the sense of instability, readiness for creative alteration, and wild divergences from established patterns. Sudden changes shatter impediments and point toward necessary future adaptations. A potent insight into the current situation is available from **noon to 3 pm CDT on Sunday August 16** when the Moon in Cancer activates the still existing Mars-Pluto square, opposing Pluto and squaring Mars. A dramatic week draws to a close, demonstrating the truth that where attention goes, there energy flows.