

# *The Starfire Messenger*



**A Free Weekly Newsletter**

**From Archetype Astrologer Maureen Richmond, M.A.**

**Issue #136: October 12 - 18, 2020**

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## **Retrograde Mars, Retrograde Mercury, and the Eternal Return to Center**

On October 13, transiting Mercury will turn retrograde for a three-week period. In its apparent backward zodiacal motion, Mercury will join transiting Mars, which has been in the retrograde condition since early September 2020 and will remain that way through mid-November. With both mind-planet Mercury and action-planet Mars in retrograde motion from mid-October through early November 2020, a powerful impetus to interrupt the usual head-long rush into the future, reverse the course of life, and return to elements rooted deeply in the collective and individual past will take hold. For those in a hurry to reach the next unknown

futuristic destination, that's a problem, perhaps. Adjustment to retrogradation, however, is a fact of life, so it's important to get inside the retrograde meaning and entrain with the significance.

Though periods of retrograde Mercury and Mars are usually characterized in the astrological press as disturbing and problematic, there's another way in which these profound influences might be understood. This other way of understanding retrograde periods hinges on the role of symbolic thought. When planets turn retrograde in the zodiac, from the vantage point of Earth, they appear to re-trace their steps and return to prior positions. Such a celestial event might be understood to symbolize a change of direction in the path of human psychic energy as it flows forth into experience and evolution. Is human growth of consciousness a straight-line path direct from here to infinity? Everyone knows it is not, though much of the time, society ignores this fact and assumes that endless, blindered forward momentum is the single form of the good. To the contrary, growth and evolution seem to follow a spiral path. Traversing on the spiral, the sense of forward progression prevails, yet at the same time, the path curves around the center axis over and over again, bringing the moving point of evolution back, and back yet again, to a glimpse of the center. Periods of profound planetary retrogradation might be said to symbolically contribute to the curving of the path around the center axis, affecting the psychology of the collective and the individual in just such a way that a desire arises for a renewed glimpse of the center.

Historian of religion Mircea Eliade has referred to such a movement in consciousness as the Eternal Return, or the Eternal Return to Center. As a mythic journey to the center of the world or cosmos, the Eternal Return conducts the seeker to the sacred, so much the better to survive in the profane. The Eternal Return thus affirms the ground of existence and positions the individual to better deal with time and space. With two of the inner planets in retrograde motion from mid-October to early November, the call of the Eternal Return is likely to sound very clearly for many. When

that call comes, the seeker is summoned to temporarily disconnect from the affairs of daily life and enter into a different frame of reference, this movement often facilitated by the ritual establishment of sacred space and the entry into an otherworldly trance state. Mythologist Joseph Campbell has written about this departure from the mundane in his *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, where he wrote, “the first work of the hero is to retreat from the world scene of secondary effects to those causal zones of the psyche where the difficulties really reside.”<sup>1</sup> Campbell further explains that in all world religion and myth, the power of the hero to lift self and society derives from a stage of spiritual seeking in which he or she dies to the world.<sup>2</sup> Astrologically, that dying to the regular course of the mundane world can be symbolized by the condition of going retrograde, or turning deeper within psychic space.

The business of temporarily dying to the world through the inner journey is the first work of the hero, says Campbell. Who is the hero in this scenario? The human seeker, of course. The planet Mars is an apt symbol of the hero, known as it is for its acts of valor and courage, and its tendency to risk all for the cause at hand. Indeed, mythological Mars is the heroic actor if ever there was one, always ready to take on a challenge and soldier on to the end against all odds. With Mars in apparent backward motion, the energies of the hero planet are symbolically seeking a return to center. That’s been the condition since early September, and come mid-October, Mercury will add its power to this theme, making for a very strong siren call to walk away from the mundane, enter ritual space, engage in trance, and take the necessary spiritual journey. Such a quest might take many forms, including actual physical trips or pilgrimages to exotic and somewhat perilous locations associated with ancient traditions and

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<sup>1</sup> Joseph Campbell, *Hero of a Thousand Faces*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973), 17.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

transformative Earth energies, or something as simple and immediately accessible as a daily personal ritual performed in the safety of home.

The important thing is to heed the call to the center as it comes in the next few weeks. This period of the next few weeks will contain not only the combined influences of retrograde Mars and Mercury, but also the thinning of the veil at Samhain for the northern hemisphere and the same at Beltane for the southern hemisphere, moments in time well-known by the magical traditions to offer enhanced opportunity to cross the border from the mundane to the sacred. Those who harken to this call to the subjective sacred are in for a meaningful journey, for the astrological energies point dramatically in the interior direction. There lies the territory of conquest for Mars the hero and Mercury the student of life for the next few weeks.

### **Analysis and Prediction for the Week of October 12 – 18, 2020**

The week ahead is packed with astrological intensity. Five major aspects, a retrograde station, and the New Moon spell a fast-paced period filled with important developments even though the Moon wanes.

The week starts out under the influence of the inspiring Jupiter-Neptune sextile, which throws a glimmering charm over everything for positive magic and blissful feelings. At the same time, Mercury makes a sextile to Venus, further aiding the flow of life and facilitating meaningful realizations. Then the currents change as the Sun opposes Mars and Mercury goes retrograde on Tuesday, kicking up plenty of drama. The Sun squares Pluto on Thursday, making for deep concerns and low energies at the tail end of the lunar cycle. The New Moon at last arrives on Friday, injecting new life into all, but the Sun squares Saturn and puts on the brakes with heavy burdens and time-consuming duties. The weekend sees bellicose Mars square pompous Jupiter and indulgent Venus oppose

avoidant Neptune, ratcheting up the argument factor in public discourse and complicating perceptions.

**Monday October 12** promises an interval of calm before changes of direction kick in for the week in earnest. All the same, we feel the inner shiftings of priorities as Mercury prepares to go retrograde. Jupiter sextile Neptune from 19 Capricorn to 19 Pisces and Mercury sextile Venus from 11 Scorpio to 11 Virgo today bring beauty, peace, harmony, and charm into our worlds through tradition and depth research. The waning Moon is in Leo, sextile the Sun and trine Mars from 5 am – 10 am CDT, providing an opportunity to let go of issues and enjoy creative potential. The waning Moon puts the emphasis on following through on projects initiated previously. Then the Moon departs flamboyant Leo and enters demure Virgo at 11:56 pm CDT, shifting attention to careful analysis, correction of mistakes, and effective management of the domestic scene. We feel intensities starting to manifest from tomorrow's exact aspects.

**Tuesday October 13** brings the opposition of the Sun and Mars from 21 Libra to 21 Aries. The social impulse of Libra and the individualistic impulse of Aries interact and compete forcefully. Tempers flare and spirited discussions abound, turning into outright confrontations if caution is not observed. Mercury turns retrograde today at 8:05 pm CDT, signaling the arrival of a new angle of perception in many matters. Schedules and plans begin to shift and change. Matters are aided all the way around by the Moon in trine to Uranus, sextile Mercury, and conjunct Venus 3 pm – 10 pm CDT, allowing for corrections and revisions to be made without too much angst.

**Wednesday October 14** continues the themes of disruption and alteration from yesterday. Perceptions are fogged and complicated by the accuracy-loving Virgo Moon in opposition to generality-loving Neptune in inexact Pisces 6 – 8 am CDT. But then the sharp-eyed Virgo Moon also comes to the rescue 6 am – 6 pm CDT as it trines Jupiter, Pluto, and Saturn, thus

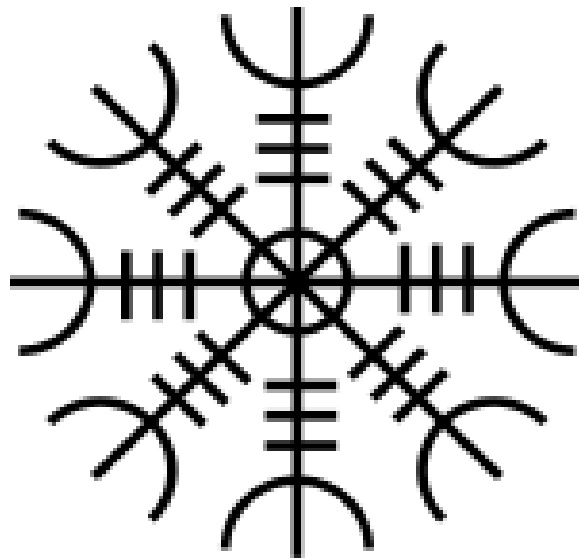
grounding our outlooks and securing our thoughts in something more like dependable basics.

**Thursday October 15** sees the Moon enter intellectual and aesthetic Libra at 12:54 am CDT, setting up for the New Moon in 24 degrees Libra on Friday. But that's not quite yet. In fact, Thursday represents the final few hours of the current lunar cycle, thus corresponding to a passage of fatigue and temporary loss of interest. At the same time, the Sun at 23 Libra squares Pluto at 23 Capricorn, stimulating awareness of deep problems and issues in government, business, corporate entities, power structures, and hidden factors. Big personal goals ask much from us today. We may feel we are climbing up a steep mountain without much to help. Rest and inner focus are called for to rejuvenate the spirit.

**Friday October 16** looks like hard going for the most part. The Libra Moon squares Jupiter, Pluto and Saturn, and opposes Mars 6 am – 6 pm CDT, stimulating thoughts of all those factors which seem to block the way, as well as revealing exterior manifestations of tests and trials. It seems like little progress can be made in any direction. Indeed, now is a good time to stand back and let the course of events work out, for in the final hours of the lunar cycle, no new energy wants to be called up. Then at 2:31 pm CDT, the exact New Moon moment takes place, with the Sun and Moon conjunct at 24 Libra. A new life wave is born, restoring enthusiasm and interest in efforts. Now we can go ahead. New associations and collaborations call.

**Saturday October 17** brings the very new Moon into perceptive and regenerative Scorpio at 12:05 am CDT, initiating a new trend in the area of detection, perception, depth analysis, and undercover doings. Astounding revelations and discoveries along that path unfold 1 – 6 pm CDT while the Moon in shrouded Scorpio opposes electric, revelatory Uranus and conjuncts newly retrograde and doubly inquisitive Mercury. We are suddenly thrown into a higher state of awareness through our efforts to uncover information.

**Sunday October 18** marks a point of concern, subdued spirits, uncertainty, and conflicted opinions as the Sun at 26 Libra squares Saturn at 26 Capricorn, Venus at 19 Virgo opposes Neptune at 19 Pisces, and Mars at 19 Aries squares Jupiter at 19 Capricorn. The atmosphere is tense, with the background of newly retrograde Mercury throwing much into doubt and uncertainty. Public debate today is filled with poor communication methods, accusations, blaming and shaming strategies, as well as outright put-downs. Sanity gets help 4 am – 5 pm CDT while the Moon in psychically resilient Scorpio makes sextiles to Venus, Jupiter, Pluto, and Saturn, and a trine to Neptune. It's thus possible to navigate around the nonsense, uproar, and melee caused by the throwing around of scandalous accusations and inflammatory comments. The Moon enters Sagittarius at 11:43 pm CDT, shifting attention to ethics and spiritual philosophy.



MAGICAL RUNESTAVE FOR PROTECTION