

The Starfire Messenger



A Free Weekly Newsletter

From Archetypal Astrologer Maureen Richmond, M.A.

Issue #151: January 25 - 31, 2021

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Navigating Retrograde Mercury

Ready or not, here comes an adventure in consciousness! Mercury turns retrograde on January 30, 2021, at 9:52 am CST, in the 26th degree of Aquarius, signaling the onset of a three-week period of shifting points of view, changes in scheduling and logistics, and complications arising from mismatching or missing information. Even so, the effect of retrograde Mercury is not all bad. In fact, it's been known to bring episodes of serendipity, stunning moments of synchronicity (or meaningful "coincidence"), fortuitous meetings, reappearance of long-lost objects, and reclamation of former loves and passions (whether romantic, scholarly, athletic, or creative).



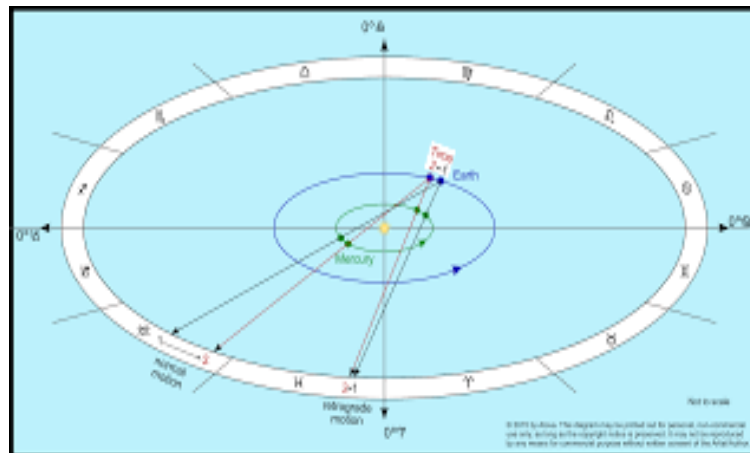
While it's always true that what emerges during retrograde Mercury should be regarded gingerly and allowed to marinate to see if it holds up to the passage of time, all the same, the whim of the Winged God when pursuing his alternate course is not altogether heinous.

During retrograde Mercury, we see another face of the Greek god of messages and communication. To the people of ancient Greece, this god was Hermes, willing servant of the Olympians, intermediary between the divine world on high and the human world below. It was the task of Hermes to link or connect the aeonic consciousness of the great Olympian archetypes with the mind and wit of the Human Kingdom. Hermes had many a way of accomplishing that task, including dreams, omens, tricks, signs, and direct verbal communications. When ancient Rome adopted the Greek pantheon, the name given to this figure was the Latin Mercurius, known to modern English as Mercury. When he's in apparent retrograde motion, he shows a different side of himself. This connotes a different mental gear, as understood within the framework of astrology.

To astronomy, Mercury is the planet in our solar system closest to the Sun, a tiny body dominated by the vast fusional blast of the solar body. With its orbit positioned so close to the Sun, Mercury has the smallest orbit of all the planets in the solar system, making it all the way around in less than one Earth year. Because of its position inward to the center of the solar system, we on Earth perceive Mercury to be retrograde, or in apparent

backward motion, three times each year. Of course, retrogradation is only an appearance. The simple truth is that Mercury ever goes on tumbling forward in its orbit of the Sun. It's just that we on Earth get a different perspective on it from time to time.

The diagram below depicts the situation. See the yellow dot in the center for the Sun. Around it is a green orbit for Mercury, then farther out, a blue orbit for Earth. Follow the indicated positions and see the changes in the line of sight from Earth, to Mercury, to the reference points in the zodiac. Thus, in this sense, apparent retrogradation is only an astronomical phenomenon.



Be that as it may, for astrology, retrograde Mercury is an important matter. Why so? It's so because watchers of astrological matters have for centuries noted that when Mercury changes apparent direction in the zodiac, human affairs do likewise, taking a different direction in the terrestrial zone. It's as simple as the old Hermetic dictum: *As above, so below*. Hermetic dictum? Is that a reference to Greek Hermes and therefore Roman Mercury? Yes. Much of the wisdom of the ancient world was bundled up and presented under the guise of Hermeticism, a direct linguistic reference to Hermes/Mercury. It seems the wise of the human race have always been curious about what he'd have to say. Thus, when he

speaks differently during retrograde motion, we want to hear that, too. And one of the key ideas the wisdom of Hermes has always promoted is the notion of the close relationship between the configuration of the planets in the heavens above and the nature of human affairs on the Earth below. That's the meaning of the saying, *as above, so below*.

Applying that knowledge, however, can be a bit of a trick. Even so, in the case of Mercury, there is a pattern to be discerned in regard to the mysteries of retrograde motion. Here's a key to navigating the upcoming period of retrograde Mercury, a time map of sorts that just might help in interpreting these altered signals coming from Hermes/Mercury.

The effect of retrograde (Rx) Mercury passes through three definite stages:

- 1) **the first shadow period**, a mild version of the retrograde influence, which arises when Mercury first passes in front of the degrees of the zodiac which will eventually be affected by retrogradation,
- 2) **the formal retrograde period**, the most intense phase,
- 3) **the second shadow period**, another mild version of Rx Mercury during which Mercury passes in front of the degrees of the zodiac which were affected by retrogradation.

The formal retrograde period lasts only about three weeks, but the two shadow periods add about 3 weeks on the front and back ends of that period, making the entire time passage equal to about two months.

Here's how it works out.

January 15, 2021 Mercury passes 11 degrees Aquarius, the point at which it will turn direct in February. This initiates **the first shadow period, which runs January 15 – 30, 2021.**

January 30, 2021 Mercury turns Rx at 26 degrees of Aquarius. **This begins the formal retrograde period, which runs January 30 – February 20, 2021. This is the time of the most intense Rx effect.**

February 20, 2021 Mercury turns direct at 11 degrees of Aquarius. At this point, Mercury is direct, but must still pass through **the second shadow period, which lasts February 20 - March 12.**

March 13, 2021 Mercury passes beyond 26 degrees Aquarius, thus departing from all the degrees in the zodiac which shall have been affected by retrogradation for this Rx period. **This represents total relief from all Rx Mercury effect for this cycle.**

March 13 – May 14, 2021 is entirely clear and free of all Rx Mercury influence. (After May 14, 2021, the first shadow of the next Rx Mercury period begins.)

Worldly matters such as real estate transactions, medical and dental procedures, major purchases, the making of major decisions and commitments, and job interviews are all best done under entirely direct Mercury influence. For the first half of 2021, those dates are March 13 – May 14. Otherworldly matters, however, get along nicely with Rx Mercury, which emphasizes the subjective dimension. Thus, from January 15 – March 12, 2021, the times are excellent for inner experiences, such as hypnosis, trance, shamanistic journeying, ritual work, past life regression, meditation, mental telepathy, psychic impression, and all manner of subjective or inner questing.

The key to managing retrograde Mercury periods is to hold on to the crucial knowledge that during the entirety of the Rx Mercury influence, messenger Hermes reveals a different side of his nature. This is true for the entire two-month period of January 15 through March 12, 2021, with **the greatest intensity of the Rx Mercury effect in the period January 30 – February 20, 2021.** During these periods, attitudes may shift and change, directions and instructions you've been given before may turn out to be in doubt, and you yourself may find that different priorities bubble up from the psyche within. The plan of life has a way of deviating into unplanned paths under the Rx Mercury influence. It's alright to walk down those alternate paths for a time. Something new might be learned.

Daily Analysis and Prediction for the Week of January 25 – 31, 2021

The Moon waxes through Thursday, January 28, when it becomes Full with the Sun at 9 degrees Aquarius and the Moon at 9 degrees of Leo. As always, the days leading right up to Full Moon constitute an interval of increasing intensity in all sectors of life – personal, creative, scholarly, athletic, emotional, physical, political, and spiritual. This week is like that in spades, for the Full Moon axis is square Mars and Uranus, and conjunct Jupiter. That spells all kind of drama and tension, all of it targeted for January 28. Leading up to that point, the Sun squares Uranus on January 26, emphasizing originality, individuality, exception from the norm, freedom, independence, and even dissension. To add to the intensity, Venus conjuncts Pluto in Capricorn on Full Moon day, coloring the atmosphere with the love of power, domination, and control. Then, leading away from the Full Moon highpoint, Mercury turns retrograde on January 30, altering plans, viewpoints, allegiances, and routines.

Monday January 25 begins the work week with the Moon in Gemini, intensifying intellectual curiosity. We get facts and needed info around 1 am CST while the Moon in mental Gemini trines Mercury in brainy Aquarius. Then the Moon enters sentimental Cancer at 12:52 pm CST, shifting attention to emotional, physical, financial, and territorial security. Disruption of patterns, however, is in the offing, as the Sun moves to square Uranus, spelling upending of routines and expectations. All the same, creative change is working out. We tolerate no trivia.

Tuesday January 26 brings the exact square of Sun and Uranus, accelerating all matters to peak intensity, just as the lunar cycle heats up as well. In the mix, intriguing options and positive solutions manifest 2 am – midnight CST while the Cancer Moon sextiles Uranus, and then Mars, and trines Neptune. We are able to adapt and flow with the sudden and perhaps jarring developments decreed by Sun square Uranus, and make these happenings our own as if we had planned them, for the Cancer Moon takes ownership whenever and wherever it can.

Wednesday January 27 continues the Cancerian Moon theme, bringing attention to our past, ancestry, heritage, lineage, and place of belonging. Such matters loom large and put the spin of emotion in play about it 9 am – noon CST while the Moon opposes Venus and Pluto, these two now forming a conjunction in tradition-bound Capricorn. Moody seriousness pervades the scene as we seek for our right places and pursue the sense of fitting in. Hesitancy rules for a time. But the angst does not last long. The Moon enters Leo at 8:54 pm CST, flamethrowers at the ready. Spectacle replaces sentiment in a flash. Major drama is building in the wings, set for big doings on the morrow.

Thursday January 28 is an astrological blockbuster of a day. The action starts shortly before 6 am CST when the now rapidly waxing Leo Moon opposes Saturn in Aquarius, dampening enthusiasm with the heavy hand of governmental regulation, but bringing sharp clarity about freedoms and liberties as well. Then the Leo Moon squares Uranus 8 – 10 am CST, shaking foundations and disrupting the sleepy status quo wherever it may hide. Venus makes the exact conjunction to Pluto shortly after 10 am CST, bringing focus and attention to women in politics, power, and commerce, as well as enhancing the magnetic resonance of the earthen Mother and thereby **amping up all magical ceremonies and efforts at this time**. Full Moon arrives with a clang and a bang at 1:16 pm CST, opposing Jupiter and squaring Mars. The Sun is conjunct Jupiter, too, exact at 7:40 pm CST in the 9th degree of Aquarius. Here will be a day to remember. Unnerving revelations are a sure bet, as are hints of back room misbehavior and highhanded work of elites. But that's not all. It's also a day in which extreme quantities of raw cosmic power pour down. For those who have the strong will and trained capacity to implement magical power, there's an ample supply of high-octane fuel for precisely that purpose.

Friday January 29 is driven and buoyed by the upsurge of inspiration, enthusiasm, and activation had at the Full Moon. Reflection about it comes clear around 8 pm CST when the Moon opposes Mercury, sparking a think.

Mercury prepares to go retrograde, and we feel the mental energies turning within toward introspective journeying.

The Moon enters Virgo at 2:02 am CST on **Saturday January 30**, toning down the wildcat energies of Leo into the domesticated lady of Virgo. It's a good thing, as order must be restored after the Dionysian Shindig of the Full Moon. The party is over and the Virgo clean-up crew comes along. Then Mercury turns retrograde at 9:52 am CST, thus signaling the advent of a three-week interval during which significant alterations in attitude, scheduling, plans, and interactions will play a key role. Weather responds with atypical happenings. Many things change, but we find serendipity here and there as the Moon trines Uranus and Mars 1 pm – midnight CST.

Sunday January 31 is conditioned by a forming square between the Sun and Mars, exact tomorrow. With the Moon in neatfreak Virgo, this means today there flows an abundance of energy to get things done in the areas of data management, workspace organization, and practical planning. The Virgo Moon likes things to run efficiently, so we try to get with the program in a methodical way, but that impulsive Sun-Mars energy would rather go by fits and starts. Potential for impatience and irritation is high. It's best to go one thing at a time if at all possible.

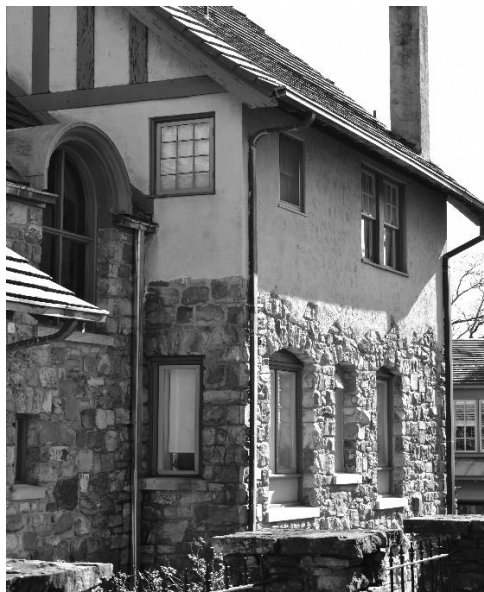


Photo by Maureen Richmond