

CELESTIAL TRANSITS
December 20-January 19
(all dates and times are given in GMT)

December 20: Mars turns retrograde at 19.42 Leo.

Although Mars normally stays about 6 weeks in a given sign, he pauses once to go retrograde during his two year transit around the Sun. This pause means that he may stay up to 8 months in one sign before speeding up again. This time his sojourn is in Leo which he entered in mid-October 2009 and where he will remain until early June of 2010.

This retrogradation is especially important for people with the Sun in Aries or Scorpio or either of these two signs of the Ascendant. It points to a three month period in which inner activity may be more important than outer and a reassessment of sexual issues can prove to be helpful. Mars enjoys being in Leo. This is the sign of personal creativity. Getting in touch with one's creative drive, anchoring that force and building up creative reserves will all be positive and effective ways to use this retrograde martial potency.

December 21: Venus sextile Jupiter and Neptune as well as Jupiter conjunct Neptune all at 24° Sagittarius/Aquarius; Sun enters Capricorn at 01.47pm.

It is the winter solstice in the Northern Hemisphere and the summer solstice in the Southern. No matter your physical location on the planet the "Sun stands still" (literal translation of the Latin word "solstice"). Daylight will either be the longest or the shortest depending on your position north or south of the equator. Here in Bali, which is just a few degrees south of the equator, the sun will set around 7.10pm (Bali's longest day of the year). 0° of Capricorn (the degree of the solstice) is known as the "point of culmination" and in esoteric astrology, it is known as the "degree of initiation." This is thus a very good time for us to take stock of where we stand on all levels of personal achievement: physical/material, emotional, mental, and spiritual.

The Venus/Jupiter/Neptune aspects are great for humanitarian efforts (too bad about the basic failure of such efforts in Copenhagen), so as the expression goes: "Think globally and act locally." The combination of these three bodies is also great for group gatherings and festive occasions, so enjoy your Christmas parties whether they are taking place at a sophisticated New York club, on the beaches in Sydney, or at home wherever that may be. I know that some of my friends in Santa Fe will be sharing the solstice celebration in tee-pees and sweat-lodges.

December 24-29: a very intense period for one and all.

Of course this is the height of the Holiday Season for so many people, but this year these days are also astrologically stressful. As I have been mentioning in all my recent writings, the first 5° of the cardinal signs (Aries, Cancer, Libra, and Capricorn) are being strongly afflicted by powerful and difficult aspects (well, “challenging” to say the least or in “new age speak”—“You will have a lot of opportunities for growth!”). So along with the normal tensions of this time of year, these stresses are strongly augmented by the celestial transits. So my advice to people would be, relax and tell the truth to yourselves and others. Lighten up on the expectations. Accept the reality in front of your face because you have little other choice (of course the difficulty is to *see* what that reality *really* is). And oh yes, have a Happy *Christmas*.

December 24/25: Sun conjunct Pluto at 03.03 Capricorn; Venus enters 0° Capricorn; Sun square Saturn at 4.20 Capricorn/Libra.

Globally, this is a period of unrest among the political powers, especially on economic fronts. At home, challenges can be experienced with (or as) parents and grandparents especially if these degrees fall in important placements to your natal chart. Should these placements involve your natal Moon, Saturn, or the rulers of your 4th and 10th houses, this tendency will be augmented. Questions surrounding career and economic goals are also highlighted. All of what has just been said is especially strong on the 24th when the Moon is in these first 5° of Aries.

December 26: Mercury goes retrograde at 21.48 Capricorn and conjoins the North Node of the Moon.

Travel will be a zoo. Of course it usually is on the day after Christmas, but this year it will be worse than ever. Weather will be a big problem for many in the Northern Hemisphere and there will be more delays than usual. The conjunction of retrograde Mercury to the lunar node is exact over the entire weekend of December 25th to 27th. This is another indication of travel delays and miscommunication. Simplify Christmas plans, do not make important appointments over these days, and do not expect to be able to catch up on Monday, December 28th. Give yourselves and others plenty of slack.

December 28-29: Venus conjunct Pluto at 3.10 Capricorn; Venus square Saturn at 4.26 Capricorn/Libra.

Although the exact Venus/Sun conjunction takes place on January 11th, Venus is very close to the solar position during the last 6 days of the year. Both Sun and Venus connect strongly with the Pluto/Saturn square during this whole period. This is therefore not a time in which people will be extending their compassion and human understanding. It is a time in which a lot of people will be counting their miseries and not their blessings. Will you be among them? I mean here is a time in which you can “walk your (spiritual) talk.” It is a time in which those of us who have been practicing some form of spiritual life orientation can stand firm in their center of consciousness and declare “I am love” and the “Incarnation of Love” lives inside of me. Am I sounding too much like the 1960’s Flower Child that that has only bloomed larger within me as my hair has become shorter over the past 40 years? No doubt about it. But hey, it was a firm (if sometimes *hazy* Neptune in Libra) foundation in love and Right Human Relations, a foundation that would be good for all of us to practice during these last days of 2009 and for the rest of our lives for that matter!

December 31: Full Moon eclipse at 10.15 Cancer/Capricorn at 07.24pm.

Right so there is a Full Moon eclipse on New Year’s Eve! What a good time *not* to be driving and part of the collective craziness. The Moon rules mass consciousness and Cancer is the Moon’s sign, only emphasizing the urge for the return to instinctual behavior. It will be a great mess of a mass out there, trust me! My suggestions for a perfect New Year’s Eve that night—curl up and cuddle with a best friend or lover/partner in a warm and cozy (or air-conditioned if you happen to be in Bali and other points south of the equator) house. Alternatively, have a sleep-over with a few dear friends and eat cookies and Hagen Daaz. If alone, give yourself the opportunity to touch base with the reality of your Self—you’ll find it even more delicious than the Daaz!

OK—I’ll be the astrologer now and interpret the position! A Full Moon means the end of the form of expression of something and the opportunity to improve or find a new form for that life situation. As the signs in this case are Cancer/Capricorn, the orientation has a lot to do with family as well as the sense of personal security. So what are the forms that our insecurities take? How solid is our sense of personal well being and our capacity to nurture and be nurtured in return? Where do I need to break free from my connection to my family’s patterns of responding to life and where does my family need to break free from me? What is the next step along my road to greater psychological freedom? The house positions where this eclipse takes place will offer a major hint as to the areas of life where such processes are taking place. Even after 42 years of study and practice, I still am amazed at the efficiency of

the astrological “road map.” As a friend of mine wisely said many years ago: “The Lord ain’t foolin’!”

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

January 4/5: Mercury conjunct the Sun at 14.19 Capricorn; Mercury conjunct Venus at 13.27 Capricorn.

Capricorn is a builder. When Mercury and the Sun combine in this sign, we tend to build mental images, plans, and projects. With Mercury retrograde at this time, the conjunction would seem to warn us not to make such an effort in terms of past patterns of thinking that no longer serve us. In this respect, if we have learned how to be objective to the thinking process (using the Higher Mind to observe the lower), we can learn a lot about the way we think and direct this thinking mechanism towards more profitable results. As the eminent Dr. Ernest Holmes has written: “The mind will express into the material plane what we feed into it.”

In terms of Venus and Mercury, here we have an additional principle. We have building the building of mental structures (Mercury in Capricorn along with the vitality of the Sun) as applied to human relationships and finances (Venus). But keep in mind that Mercury is retrograde, so we do not want to reinforce negative mental habit patterns in these two important areas of our lives.

You always have the ultimate responsibility for the creation and outworking of your destiny.

January 11: Sun and Venus conjunct the North Node, Venus conjunct the Sun all at 21° of Capricorn.

Your relationships will be of paramount importance especially as they concern finances and shared human responsibilities. This will be especially emphasized should you have 20°-22° of the cardinal signs featured in your natal chart, especially if they involve the rulers of your 2nd and/or 7th houses or planets at those degrees within those houses.

January 13: Sun and Venus sextile Uranus, Sun conjunct Venus all at 23.28 Capricorn/Pisces; Saturn turns retrograde at 4.39 Libra.

I am a great fan of Sun/Uranus/Venus combinations. This is because I like unusual friends who play or work together under unusual circumstances. All of this gives one the opportunity to explore the creative dynamics of human relationships. Should 23° of Aries, Cancer, or Libra be important to you, such interchanges will however

be possessed of certain challenges. Should 23° of Taurus, Virgo, Capricorn, Scorpio, or Pisces be prominent in your chart, then these events will take on a more enjoyable expression. In the case of the earthy signs, these happenings may even bring about some sort of financial bonus.

Saturn turns retrograde, and will reenter Virgo for the last time until July 2037 on April 5, 2010 remaining in that sign until July 22, 2010 when it enters Libra once again. So for the next few months Saturn will be in a very tight square to Pluto. This means that our efforts at restructuring our personal relationships is again given another boost (to use a positive turn of phrase) or we find that we are still stuck in old relationship patterns that give rise to lots of difficulties and challenges (to be more realistic). Well nothing like a strong “celestial reminder” to let us know where there is still some (more!) work to do. Well as it is said: A conscious person’s job is never done.

January 15: Mercury turns direct at 05.33 Capricorn; New Moon eclipse at 25.01 Capricorn.

Mercury goes direct which will rejoice the majority of us. Let’s get on with our New Year’s projects. Except of course for Aries and Scorpio folks who still have Mars retrograde in Leo—well at least you guys (including Mr. Oken who is an Aries with Scorpio rising) can have a clearer sense of direction for your inner, creative work.

As for the New Moon eclipse, well this is actually a Solar Eclipse as the New Moon is the conjunction of the two luminaries at the same degree of the zodiac. A solar eclipse means that there is a distinct ending of something because there is no more vitality to sustain it, i.e. the solar light is going out for a while. Yet the Sun always reappears, giving the solar eclipse the sense of washing away the past and offering a renewal. The sign of this eclipse is Capricorn, so we are dealing with the urge to bring culmination to our creative activities. Capricorn is the natural builder and seeks to create lasting monuments to its efforts. Sometimes these edifices have to come tumbling down. But lo! Pluto, planet of regeneration is also in Capricorn and thus is the dispositor of Saturn in Libra, meaning that Pluto has power over Capricorn’s ruler. Thus the orientation to renew, reestablish, and refocus one’s plans and projects is very strong and powerful these days. Thus this eclipse could prove to be quite efficient in the way we use our resources. All it will take on our part is letting go and giving ourselves the freedom to reinvent a thing or two. Take note of the house position where the eclipse is happening in your chart. It will tell you exactly where all of this is to take place.

January 17: Jupiter enters Pisces at 10.10pm.

How nice! How compassionate! How universal! The “Big Guru” moves amazingly quickly through the Fish, covering all 30° of the sign in just 4.5 months. He enters Aries on June 6th for an exact three month stay but only covering the first 3° of the Ram, retrograding into Pisces once again remaining in the last 7 degrees of the Fish. I will be following Jupiter’s passage with great interest and share what I see with you as he moves along in the sky. Right now, let me say that this is a fortuitous passage as Pisces is one of the signs of Jupiter’s rulership. So not only is this transit auspicious for our fishy friends but it is usually great for all of us in terms of the house or houses in your chart where Pisces may be found.

Jupiter in Pisces brings fertility. Thus it fecundates our emotional nature with the possibilities to expand into a more universal compassion for all sentient life. But it can also increase the urge for emotional and sensorial extravagance, so hedonists and addictive personalities please take note.

January 18: Venus enters Aquarius.

How friendly! This position opens the door to experimentation in human relationships. It gives a decidedly idealistic and humanistic orientation to interpersonal interactions and it also enjoys the creation of social networks. It is the perfect Venus for Facebook!

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