



*Photo by Eric Francis*

## **Inner Space for Gemini**

# **The Only Question that Matters**

Dear Gemini Sun, Moon or Rising:

The rare retrograde of Mars in your sign in many ways sets the theme of the seasons ahead, though there is much more happening in the air signs (and elsewhere) that will influence your decisions.

Mars retrograde is more like an initiation experience, a kind of trial that you must pass through in order to address the more significant issues ahead. Mars is the planet of desire, of motivation, of self-assertion and a foundation of one's sense of identity.

The fundamental question of Mars retrograde is perhaps the most important one we can ask, when incarnated on the cosmic physical plane: **What do you want?**

This is the great taboo. Sooner or later, every therapy process, spiritual path or personal journey — if successful — ends up asking this one question. All of the removing of mental and emotional obstacles, clearing the path, learning sincerity and seeking the truth will point to the matter *of what you want*.

Correspondingly, nearly all religion and other authority-based conditioning is designed to subvert *what you want*, hide it from you or otherwise make it wrong. We are told that to follow desire will lead to chaos and anarchy; society will fall apart; people will run wild and “act like animals” and all of that. Therefore, we all get many versions of “you must not draw a picture with crayons when you're supposed to be writing an essay with a pen.”

What you want is the most powerful force in your psyche. The pressure to conform to some external plan requires the diversion of this force, or turning it against itself, which manifests as resentment and guilt. Once this is accomplished, we are at the same time conditioned to be bored and to tolerate living dull lives, investing our time in things we don't want to do.

This never serves us; it is the harvesting of our energy that serves others against our will. The more power and influence you have (including money), the more impact your personal desire has on the world around you.

Yet exclusive of any ability to amplify your influence, your core guidance comes through observing and connecting with your desire and your needs. Even if you take a wholly submissive spiritual route and “turn this matter over to God,” that implies a conscious act of asking and receiving; it is part of a living relationship that you are initiating and taking responsibility for.

## **The Role of Neptune in Pisces**

The distinction of this particular Mars retrograde in Gemini, and the thing that focuses it into a spiritual initiation for you, is the series of squares to Neptune. Two of these were

in the autumn; the last one arrives in March, amidst many other changes (and is likely to get lost in the sauce, unless we keep it right where we can see it).

These squares accelerate and intensify the question, though they may at times cloud the issue for you; this calls for some sorting out.

Neptune has been in Pisces since the 2012-era. It is in your 10th solar house (or 10th whole-sign house if you are Gemini rising). The 10th is a crucial point of orientation. The theme of this house is itself desire — for what you want to accomplish, and what you want to be known for. Neptune's presence has not made this easier for you, it has a way of fogging the issue and confusing true desire with a form of fantasy.

The connection between Mars in your sign pushing Neptune (by square aspect) in your 10th is helping you focus the issue. It may be a little chaotic and call for some sifting through, but you will be pressed to ask yourself real questions. However, note that you may be going through a process of elimination (of what you don't want and need) before you get to the point of what you actually want and need.

Then you will need to experiment with that. Fortunately, more help is on the way. However, the Mars-Neptune pattern involving your sign is so rare, you don't want to miss this opportunity.

One thing you will be summoned to do is to be honest. There will be plenty of opportunities to cheat; plenty of advantages to take; and Mars square or opposite Neptune can seem to grant a pass for the suspension of ethics. In fact, I have seen this to be true with any and every contact between Mercury OR Mars and Neptune (except maybe the sextile). I have seen this slippery quality to the trine, which goes a little like this: "You lie and I'll swear to it."

You want no part of any such transaction. Given the sheer energy volume moving through you and its tendency to magnify karma, keep your hands clean and your soul pure.

## **Saturn from Aquarius to Pisces**

Saturn has just spent the past three years in Aquarius, the angle of your chart associated with spiritual matters. This transit ends in March and a few weeks later, Pluto enters this area of your chart for 21 years, though 2044 — for one routine astrological factor, Pluto

moving through a sign. Note that Pluto is slowing down; in our lifetime, it was only 14 years per sign and as Pluto moves further from the Sun, these transits will last longer.

Saturn's visit can be read as preparation for Pluto's extended stay. Notice the intensity of activity, public and private, on every level, associated with Saturn in Aquarius. This has come with the total uprising of shadow Aquarius — a global authoritarian movement. It has completely reorganized social networks, friendships and families (all factors of Aquarius).

In this section, let's focus on the meaning of Aquarius as the 9th house or place, and Saturn ingressing the 10th. Then in the next section let's cover Pluto in Aquarius, a transit that will represent a sea-change for humanity like no other we have lived through.

The essence of the 9th is your relationship to God, spirit, higher power, inner teacher, inner light, or your soul — however you think of it. While the whole chart resonates with this, the 9th is the specific environment of all matters spiritual. The sign on this house tells us a lot about the style in which you expect this to come. And with Aquarius here, you expect spirituality to manifest as community. For example, if you go to church, you go to be around people — not so much for what is said.

You know that the transformation of humanity is just exactly that: it's up to us. Nobody saves us; we learn how to make decisions together. Saturn through Aquarius (and other factors) have had a diversity of effects, though one was to suck the social realm into the digital space. Humanity is not digital. We are flesh, bones, water, earth and feelings. This has not been easy on anyone — and it has not been easy on you.

The very best Zoom meeting is not as good as people physically getting together. It is up to you to take leadership in the social reality that surrounds you. It is up to you to weave the social reality that you want, as a spiritual devotion. Some may light candles; some pray; some meditate; some seek the guidance of Buddha or their guides.

Whatever else you may do, think or believe, the spiritual realm manifests through the social realm for you. Community has a much more profound meaning for you than it does for most of the people you know, and the current massive stress put on the ability of humans to simply commune with one another — including the fracturing of trust during the past three years — presents a mission you may want or need to take up.

The 10th place, Pisces, is a whole other reality than the 9th. We get into professional mission, vocation, your relationship to official state authority, and all people in power. In

the 10th, you and what you do are visible, and you may be subject to some scrutiny. This is why the truth-telling practices associated with Mars retrograde in your sign are so vital to your journey.

The 10th has important family connections, as the 4th and the 10th (the MC and IC) are the axis of your blood relations (especially parents) and recent ancestors.

In the most practical sense, Saturn through your 10th will finally give you a handle on the confusion that's been emanating from Neptune in this house the past decade. Simply put, Neptune has made it difficult for you to have a clear sight of what you want to accomplish or be known for. You may have confronted the feeling of being invisible.

You will be given the opportunity — many, in fact — to focus your vocational mission. And much of the information you need to make these choices wisely is arriving through Mars completing its series of squares to Neptune. The overarching message here is to use what you know; remember what you have discovered and act boldly, as if that is a necessary truth to actually express every day in the world.

With Pisces on the 10th place of your solar chart, your notion of vocation is better thought of as your chosen service, or the service that calls you to act upon it. Pisces above all wants and needs to serve. It is not the sign of personal gain. It is not the sign of ambition. It is not the sign of personal power.

It is about a spiritually focused and creative kind of offering to society, with the work you do and the modest authority you are given. Saturn has a way of bringing this into full focus. It's fortunate that this transit harmonizes with many others that you're having at this time; it will serve you well under the first few years of Pluto in Aquarius.

My read on your astrology is this: the career, professional or vocational choices you make (whatever term you prefer) would best be based on a combination of what you want to do and how you want to serve. This is not about making sacrifices. There will be many sweet spots where you accomplish both. And there will be times when you simply must do what you're called upon to do. Please recognize them when you see them.

This is a deeply private matter, however it manifests. Yet the theme of your charts through the year is how what seems private to you is the most important influence on your activities in the wider world.

As with any Saturn transit through the 10th (in any form), you must take authority over your affairs. I cannot emphasize this enough: you are the boss and must follow through on every task at all times.

## **Pluto in Aquarius — Your 9th House or Place**

Beginning in March 2023 through November 2024, Pluto will make a series of ingresses into Aquarius, finally arriving to stay on Nov. 19, 2024. It will remain in Aquarius through 2044. For in-depth information about what is happening in the sign Aquarius as it affects everyone, [please check this reading from 2021](#).

Pluto has two faces: one of raw power, and the other of experiences that cultivate the development of the soul. I use the term “soul” loosely to mean spiritual, emotional or psychological growth. The raw power aspect we can see in Saturn opposite Pluto at the time the World Trade Center fell like marionettes.

The growth factor is understood by astrologers and those who study the planets through many experiences of Pluto transits. The key to Pluto is staying with the growth factor. In personal affairs, if this is not attended to, the power factor eventually kicks in and we meet Pluto as Kali or Lord Shiva in ways that were avoidable.

Consider the role of Aquarius in your solar chart (described above), and now add the Pluto factor as a more or less permanent placement. Ask what your role might be in a climate where social leadership is spiritual leadership and where the social environment is the spiritual environment. While this is specifically true for you, it’s also true for a lot of other people who may not have occasion to make the connection. They may think the guy in the frock or the robes is what they need, when you know that more than anything, we human critters need one another.

Speaking of, it’s crucial that you be highly conscious around those who claim to have spiritual power, or those whom you believe do. Pluto in Aquarius is the very sigil of the cult mentality, which got started and then fizzled out under the much more progressive, organized and inherently social influence of Saturn in Aquarius.

While I have written much about Pluto in Aquarius, and while we have many clues about what is manifesting, we do not know the actual effect, impact or consequences of this transit. I am here to caution you that they may be all-encompassing, which would shift the relative luxury of spiritual expression and social coordination to the level of urgent necessity.

This may not be just about parties, retreats and weekly get-togethers. If we find ourselves in a position where the powers that be respond to Pluto in Aquarius by moving in one massive lurch (as happened three years earlier), it will be all hands on deck. I'm here to tell you that you will be either running one of the muster points, or coordinating several of them.

In any event, we will be confronted with the matter of group initiation. This is to say, we will learn the power of groups to get work done, or to crush people and snuff out their individuality. There is only so much that this is about a person's choice. There are some people who are not strong enough to stand up to intense pressure to conform.

You may be someone who is. You may find yourself in a position to assist others who are not. You are very likely to be in a position to set the terms of group dynamics and to keep them humane, respectful and honest. There are many other options that we do not want.

## **Mars Enters Cancer**

Mars arrives in Cancer on March 25, 2023. This comes in a time of many other rapid changes for every individual and for society. Between Saturn and Pluto changing signs the same month, it will barely be noticeable, though it will be a crucial factor — in particular because Mars will be making contact with the extremely sensitive first degree of Cancer. It will be transiting Cancer through May 20, 2023, when it arrives in Leo.

This will be a crucial time for you to make adjustments to your financial or organizational scheme and rearrange your priorities accordingly.

While this is only a two-month inner transit, that is plenty of time for what you need. And it has special value because of the seven months Mars will have just spent in your sign. This is likely to manifest as a moment of clarity about how you allocate your resources; how to budget your household; and the revelation that your emotional resources are your most vital commodity.

Normally, Mars ingresses are routine items that give horoscope columnists something to write about. However, Mars will be fully charged-up with Gemini energy for its whole cycle, till it stations retrograde in Leo in 2024. So in a sense you will be taking a ride on Mars for this whole cycle and that means being bold about what you want.

However, Mars entering Cancer will come with a burst of energy that the whole world will feel, and I reckon that includes you. There is plenty of interesting astrology to describe, however here is my summary of the net effect: you may seem to be pursuing something that you think you will get hold of immediately, but which you will only finally catch up with in May. This relates to a financial matter or something that can be described as being about “family resources.”

You will need to make do until you are under what seem to be different circumstances and you can finally make contact. The gain will be worth more for being delayed.

### **Venus Retrograde in Leo (July 22-Sept. 3, 2023)**

This transit could arrive with a brilliant business idea. It may be something you’ve thought about many times, but have never expressed openly or only shared with one person privately. The idea may seem to come out of nowhere and heck, you might not even notice. However, let’s count the entirety of Venus in Leo as “business development season.” That spans from June 5 through Oct. 8, which I count as the full duration of an inner-planet transit (its time in the entire sign, assuming it does not enter a new sign during the retrograde).

The emphasis is on doing something with flair and style. It’s also about understanding the through-lines of community, communication and commerce, which are all aspects of the same idea. To work, this must be something personal to you — probably not index arbitrage trading or credit default swaps.

I suggest that the best way to proceed in any venture is to start small, with enough investment to get the project started. Do work that you’re proud of, that you stand behind, and that helps your customers.

### **Jupiter Sweeps Through Aries and Lands in Taurus**

Jupiter arrived in Aries Dec. 20, 2022. Jupiter arrives in Taurus May 16, 2023, covering all of Aries in five months. This is a perfectly spectacular transit for you.

We might ask why Gemini is such a social sign, and could find the answer described or confirmed in every house of your solar chart.



However, nothing says it better than Aries being your 11th place, the house of social activities, friends and income based on your profession. Wherever a person has Aries in their chart, they seek to find and express themselves, and you have it in one of the best possible places — the house of the social affairs of humanity.

When you read back through the interpretations in this essay, you will see they all contain the theme of where community meets spiritual development. However, this adds something much more fun, which is a sense of your presence in the world and exploring the actual feeling of what it means to succeed at what you want. However, this is dependent upon your direct participation and your venturing somewhat into the unfamiliar. Remember that socially, we live in an entirely different world than the one you grew up in. This will continue to evolve rapidly, especially under the influence of the next transit.

## **The Chiron-Eris Conjunction**

There are two slow-movers in Aries that pertain to what I've written above, and which are conditioning that particular environment and aspect of your life. Eris has been in Aries since 1925; Chiron has been in Aries since early 2018.

They form a series of conjunctions in 2025 and 2026 that will be significant from a historical perspective, as this is the only outer-planet conjunction for many years on either side (I count the most recent as the Uranus-Neptune conjunctions of 1993).

This seems like a long time away, though it's happening now. One manifestation of this is the conjunction of Jupiter to Chiron on March 12 followed by Jupiter conjunct Eris on April 23 — in very close proximity. The question of “orbs” (what is the effective orb of an aspect?) is answered by “transits” (when a transit comes, how closely does it make contact with the planets making the aspect?).

These conjunctions add to the intrigue and excitement of Jupiter in Aries for you. They are reminders that your exploration of the community around you, including the business community and its potential social expressions, are fertile ground for you to make progress in your life. Think of the conjunctions as events, as developments and as opportunities — professional, social and sexual.

## **Asbolus Transiting from Gemini to Cancer**

Since the summer of 2013 — a whole other landscape of time — you have been under the influence of a powerful centaur (Chiron-like planet) called Asbolus. This is now in the process of moving into Cancer, which will take until 2024. Asbolus means “carbon dust,” which is what all life has in common. We are all made of water and carbon.

Yet if we move to the level of metaphor, what all life has in common is the desire to survive; to live. It is this that most humans have in common with trees, cats, dogs and your average paramecium. Most, not all. Of all species, humans have the greatest struggle with the psychological aspects of survival. In this time, many people are losing or have lost their will to live.

Most of this involves the total failure or destruction of our in-person social cosmos. I am a reasonably stable person and my worst moments of existential despair involve loneliness and isolation. And I have, at least, community through the work that I do, and many friends around the world — but the missing element is the in-person physical association with others.

Here, you are a master: you have a kind of social passport that would make most people envious. You are easily conversant in a way that facilitates your ability to make friends. Sure, there are introverted Geminis. But even they are at least somewhat socially adept. It is for all these reasons that I am asking you to take leadership in the social realm, and to look for people who are excluded and bring them into the fold in some way. I don't usually make such direct requests in readings, though this one is obvious, particularly given that Pluto will be working its way through the “social is spiritual” angle of your chart, Aquarius.

All of the Mercury retrogrades of 2023 take place in earth signs (with the exception of one in December that is between Capricorn and Sagittarius). The forthcoming retrograde of late 2022 and early 2023 is in Capricorn; the one in the Northern Hemisphere Spring is in Taurus; and we will have one in Virgo in late August-September. This provides you with grounding and means you will be experienced by others as a source of stability and someone solid in a time when these qualities are rare indeed.

This will be an excellent way to take care of your own needs while assisting others. In these years ahead, social equates to survival equates to spiritual, meaning that your connection to your fellow humans is your connection to the cosmos.

Humans are not easy, but as Björk and others have said, forming connections with them is usually worth the trouble. You will find that this is a much more tangible process when you are real with the people you meet. This means erring on the side of being assertive

and bold rather than polite. While it's true that things can go wrong when you assert yourself boldly, and insist that people notice you, I would say it's a lot better than the opposite.

Nobody with an idea ever got anywhere by concealing it from view. Nobody with a message ever made their mark by remaining silent. Your transits in these years have been all about gaining knowledge and experience, of which action is natural fruit; the natural result; and the thing we see so little of in any meaningful form. There is an old expression: fake it till you make it. They have that backwards. All you can really do is be real until you make it — and when you get there, you will have nothing to explain and no excuses to make.

With love,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Eric Francis". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.