

# DETRIMENTAL PLANETS

By KEVIN B. BURK

Several weeks ago, I wrote an article about how I personally work with the Essential Dignities in a natal chart. I mentioned that I always pay attention to the Essential Debilities, Detriment and Fall, because these conditions carry so much essential information with them. Planets in Detriment operate on the mental/emotional plane, which usually translates to one thing: worry. Planets in Fall operate on the physical plane.

In this article, we will take a closer look at planets in Detriment, and explore how (and why) these planets worry.

## THE SUN: DETRIMENT IN AQUARIUS

The Sun is masculine, focused, one-pointed and direct in nature. The Sun is about self-expression, and individuality. The Sun is therefore happiest in signs that support its nature, particularly the Fire signs. The Sun is the least happy in the Air signs, because all of the Air signs are double signs.

Aquarius, in particular is a very challenging sign for the Sun. The Sun needs to express individual identity, and Aquarius is the sign that is entirely about *group* identity. In fact, Aquarius can only consider individuals in the context of the group.

The Sun in Aquarius, therefore *worries* about the question of individual identity, because it is always looking for ways to define individual identity in terms of the group.

## THE MOON: DETRIMENT IN CAPRICORN

The Moon is the least logical, most fluid and changeable planet in astrology. The Moon relates to our emotions, our feelings, and our safety needs. The Moon is how we nurture ourselves and others, and how we experience and express our memory, our unconscious, and our souls.

Capricorn, is ruled by Saturn, the planet of structure, responsibility, limitations, and boundaries. The Moon in Capricorn has an entirely unfair and unjust reputation for being cold and unfeeling. In fact, the opposite is true. Individuals with the Moon in Capricorn experience their emotions with great power and depth. Their challenge is that they *worry* about finding an appropriate, responsible, practical, structured way to express those emotions.

The Moon in Capricorn is not always a challenge. Capricorn is an Earth sign, and the Moon is the nocturnal Triplicity ruler of Earth. What this means, is that in a nocturnal chart (when the Sun is below the horizon in houses 1 through 6), while the Moon in Capricorn is in Detriment, it is also dignified by Triplicity, which makes the Moon lucky. Sometimes, it is better to control our emotions and look for appropriate and responsible ways to express them!

## MERCURY: DETRIMENT IN SAGITTARIUS AND PISCES

Mercury is the planet that governs our minds, our intellect, how we communicate, how we learn, and, ultimately, how we experience reality (because our experience of reality is nothing more than how we describe the world to ourselves).

Mercury and Jupiter are complimentary planets. Mercury governs the "lower" mind, while Jupiter governs the "higher" mind. Mercury looks at the details, and by analyzing and exploring the little things, eventually comes to understand the bigger picture. Jupiter looks at the big picture and eventually learns how the larger themes show up in the smaller details. Mercury is in Detriment in the signs ruled by Jupiter, and Jupiter is in Detriment in the Signs ruled by Mercury.

Sagittarius is about discovering the universal Truth. The motivation of Sagittarius is to pursue the one unifying belief that illuminates our relationship as an individual to the Universe. Mercury, on the other hand, is inherently dual in its nature. When Mercury is in Sagittarius, it *worries* about the big picture, and as a result, often loses sight of the important details. Pisces energy, on the other hand, is about integration. Pisces is where we

reconnect with the truth that there is no separation; that All That Is is, in fact, *all* that is. The illusion of separation from the Source begins to dissolve, and we lose the ability to make distinctions and discriminate, because what's the point?

Mercury in Pisces is perhaps the least happy combination for any planet. In Pisces, Mercury *worries* that it is powerless, because the usual strategies it follows to understand and communicate with and about the world don't seem to work. Mercury needs words to define the world. Words differentiate and discriminate, and in Pisces, words lose much of their meaning. Mercury in Pisces must learn how to describe and define a completely different and unfamiliar experience of reality.

Not only is Mercury in Pisces in Detriment, but Mercury in Pisces is *also* in Fall. Not only is Mercury *worrying* because of the mental/emotional focus of planets in Detriment, but Mercury is also confronting challenges in the *physical* world, because it's in Fall.

## VENUS: DETRIMENT IN ARIES AND SCORPIO

Venus is the planet of relationships and partnership. Venus never operates alone. With Venus, there are always two sides to the matter, even if we're merely looking at our own reflection. Is it any wonder why Venus is in Detriment in Aries? Think about it. The planet of relationship in the sign that only recognizes the individual.

Aries energy is completely ignorant that there are other people in the world. Aries is the most focused, direct, and above all, self-centered energy in the entire Zodiac. Small wonder that when Venus is in Aries, it *worries* about how well it is relating to others! Venus in Aries approaches relationships from the perspective of the *individual*, and must learn how to take others into account.

Venus also enjoys beauty, comfort, abundance and stability. Venus rules the sign of Taurus, which embodies the slow, steady, continuous growth of the Spring (at least in the Northern Hemisphere). Venus enjoys harmony and balance—two words that will never be used to describe the energy of Scorpio.

Scorpio is where Persephone returns to the Underworld. Scorpio is about change, about death, and about confronting the darkness. Venus in Scorpio *worries* about finding some much-needed stability in the emotional turmoil, so it pursues the deepest, most primal emotional connections it can find. Venus in Scorpio wants to cut through the illusions and connect at a Soul level, because when we connect on this deep of a level, we experience peace and stability.

## MARS: DETRIMENT IN TAURUS AND LIBRA

Like the Sun, Mars is masculine, active, focused, and single-minded. Mars is happiest when it is able to express itself freely and directly. Mars is very much like the engine of our car: it doesn't care where it's going, and it doesn't care who's doing the driving. All it cares about is that it's moving.

Taurus, of course, is the slowest-moving sign in the Zodiac. Taurus is deliberate, methodical, practical, and glacial. When Mars is in Taurus, Mars is weighted down and prevented from taking action as quickly and impulsively as it would like. In Taurus, Mars *worries* about finding a practical, sensible, stable course of action. Mars in Taurus can grow extremely frustrated, and very angry. The less action it is able to take, the more the pressure builds.

Libra, as a Cardinal Air sign is a far more active energy than Taurus, and Mars in Libra is free to move as it pleases. The challenge with Mars in Libra is that Libra, like all Air signs, is a double sign. Mars, like the Sun, needs a single focus. When presented with choices, Mars finds it difficult to act. Mars in Libra *worries* about the effects of its choices. Libra tells Mars that it must maintain balance and harmony at all times, but taking any action will always upset that balance, because every action has an equal and opposite reaction. While Mars in Taurus knows what it wants to do and finds it difficult to take action, Mars in Libra is free to take action, but is often immobilized by indecision about which course of action to choose.

## JUPITER: DETRIMENT IN GEMINI AND VIRGO

Jupiter relates to the "higher" mind, while Mercury relates to the "lower" mind. Jupiter is concerned with the big picture, with abstract concepts, philosophy, religion, spirituality and faith. Jupiter wants to expand by leaps and

bounds, to paint in broad strokes, and to approach each new experience holistically.

In Gemini, Jupiter has trouble approaching experiences holistically, because Jupiter in Gemini tends to *worry* about the little details. Cliché though it may be, in Gemini, Jupiter can no longer see the forest because it becomes too engrossed in understanding each individual tree. While it's possible to understand the Big Picture by focusing in on the smallest details, it's definitely going the long way around.

Virgo is also very concerned with the details, and Jupiter in Virgo faces many of the same fundamental challenges as Jupiter in Gemini. But Jupiter in Virgo has more pressing concerns. Why does Jupiter in Virgo *worry*? Put quite simply, Jupiter in Virgo is the planet of faith in the sign that demands proof. In Virgo, Jupiter begins to question its faith in the unseen and the unknown, looking for proof that the Universal forces are indeed manifesting in even the smallest details of life.

## SATURN: DETRIMENT IN CANCER AND LEO

Finally, we have Saturn, the planet of responsibility, limitations, boundaries and restrictions. Saturn is an absolutely necessary force. We may take Saturn for granted, but Saturn is responsible for our ability to experience and explore the third dimension of matter and form. Without Saturn, there is no matter, there is no form. Important as Saturn is, Saturn has never, not even by the most generous souls, been described as *fun*.

Saturn is an old man, the embodiment of rules, regulations, and established roles. Saturn is stiff, inflexible, and rigid. Saturn is structure. When Saturn is in detriment, this rigidity is what creates the challenges. Picture Saturn at a party, and you have an idea of Saturn in detriment. Saturn wants to let loose and have fun, but at best, its efforts are awkward.

When Saturn is in Cancer, Saturn is expected to be nurturing, and to experience emotional connections with other individuals. Emotions need to flow freely, and Saturn has difficulty letting go of its need to create structure. Saturn in Cancer *worries* that it's not expressing emotions correctly, or responsibly. It tries very hard, because Saturn *always* tries hard, but Saturn in Cancer is in completely unfamiliar territory. Try as it might, Saturn just isn't terribly warm.

When Saturn is in Leo, the motivation is to express itself, demonstrating how unique, special, warm, generous, and deserving of love and attention it is. Leo energy comes from the heart, but Saturn in Leo often gets stuck in the head. Saturn in Leo *worries* that it's not good enough, and at the same time, it *worries* that it is not behaving responsibly. Saturn's need for responsible behavior often ends up censoring its expression, which in turn fuels the fear that it isn't good enough.

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### About Kevin B. Burk

[or, who is this “Kevin” person, anyway?]

Kevin B. Burk has had a life-long interest in astrology and began self-study in 1992. Kevin has been studying Astrology formally since 1995, and currently holds a [Level IV NCGR Certification in Astrological Counselling](#).

Kevin's approach to Astrology is a Spiritual one, and he both uses and advocates Astrology as a tool to gain greater understanding of ourselves and our Spiritual Path. Kevin is the author of [Astrology: Understanding the Birth Chart](#) and [The Complete Node Book](#), both published by Llewellyn, and [Astrology Math Made Easy](#), published by Serendipity Press.

In 2005, Serendipity Press will release two more astrology books by Kevin B. Burk: [Ask Kevin](#) (a collection of “Ask Kevin” articles from this site), and the [Astrological Relationship Handbook](#).

Kevin specializes in human relationships, and is the author of [The Relationship Handbook: How to Understand and Improve Every Relationship in Your Life](#) (Serendipity Press, 2004). He travels across the United States conducting [relationship workshops](#).

Kevin is a member of the San Diego Chapter of the National Council for Geocosmic Research (NCGR).

Kevin was born on [October 24, 1967](#) in New Orleans, LA. He has a Scorpio Sun, Cancer Moon, and Gemini Ascendant.