

COMPILATION ON NEPTUNE AND PLUTO

© Malvin Artley

What follows is a compilation of excerpts from letters between 2005-2009 regarding Neptune and its relation to Pluto.



Pisces Letter, 11 Mar 09: Modern astrology posits Neptune as the ruler of Pisces, but in years past Jupiter was the ruler of the sign. Both planets are valid rulers of Pisces. Esoteric rulership places Pluto firmly as the ruler of the sign. If Pisces is an indication of the *kalyana mitra*, do these planets indicate such? As it turns out, they do. Jupiter, the 'old ruler', governs expansion of consciousness and the law of supply in our solar system. The spiritual friend expands our energy fields, especially if such a friend is a fully realized (enlightened) being. Such a being is what we would term a guru, a bodhisattva, living buddha, avatar, or whatever one's tradition designates as an exalted being. Jupiter, above all else, governs empowerment, and

the fully enlightened being has the capacity to bestow empowerment upon a person. Such empowerments enable one to progress along the way with much greater facility and speed than would otherwise be possible. There is thus a bond formed when such an empowerment is given and – little-registered to the consciousness of the student – such a bond is cemented by the teacher and is taken on for the fullness of the student's tenure on the path. There is a quickening that comes with empowerments (initiations), often initially quite to the dismay of the student because such empowerments call for the clearing away of obstacles to the path undertaken. It is truly a case of being careful what one asks for because we might actually get it - that is to say, any issues that stand in the way of the realization of the path of the empowerment can and do come up for clearing (purification) and will do so quickly once empowerment is given.

Neptune as the ruler of Pisces governs truth in all its aspects and the overcoming of self-deception, especially. Neptune is representative of one's spiritual truth, the highest aspects of one's nature. Neptune rules dharma to a large extent, especially that aspect of dharma which leads to the acquirement of the 'enjoyment' or 'bliss body' – the *samboghakaya* – which in Theosophical terms is most closely approximated by buddhi, or the intuitional plane. Once one steps onto the path there is no room for falsehood or ordinary appearances, for such appearances are deceptive. Dharma is truth and truth alone, and the 'pot at the end of the rainbow' with dharma (which is Sanskrit for the union of right religion, right philosophy and right science – the Law) is bliss, a divine state wherein no separation is known. All is one. All worldly concerns dissolve into emptiness – *shunyata*, the 'Mystic Fullness of Space'. 'Emptiness' in this respect is not nihilism, nothingness or negation. Instead, it is the realization that all things arise in dependence on causes (karma) and they have no inherent existence of their own. Knowing this, we see that all worldly matters are transitory and temporary at best. Every experience becomes a springboard to something else. Every object is the same in its essence because it is dependent upon something else for its arising.

There is naught in bliss but truth. We can, perhaps, see in the preceding sentences why the action of Neptune is often seen as such a detrimental influence in human relations and worldly affairs. Neptune, in reality, is completely beyond the ken of worldly existence in its influence. It dissolves all of our preconceptions and attachments. It is the 'divine clarifier'. This is exactly what the spiritual friend does for us: They hold our eye up to the mirror of truth and show us the real in life, which is often contrary to what we believe in the beginning. They show us the oft-times folly of our attachments to things, circumstances, outcomes and even people. It is this attachment to the ephemeral that brings us suffering, precisely because worldly matters always have a term or length

of life. The only thing that matters after we realize such a thing is that we do things in our lives that have real meaning, which is not chasing after things or temporal fulfillment. What ultimately becomes important to a person who has realized such is service – ending the suffering of those dear to us, which is ultimately everyone. This is what the ‘world saviours’ (the ‘spiritual friends’ of this world) know and it is how they live.

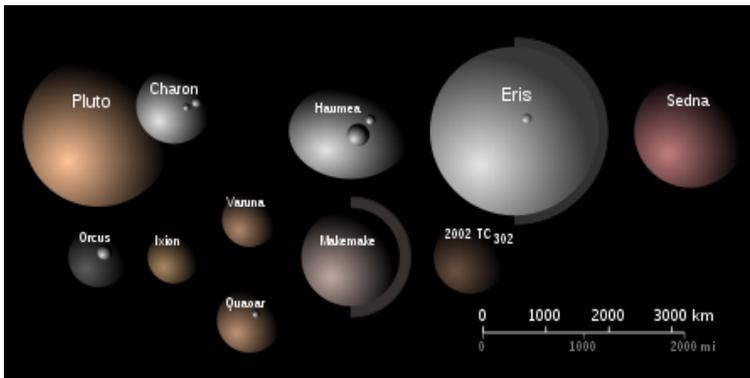


Linked with Neptune, Pluto breaks our bondage to attachments and shatters our illusions. Pluto is the hand-servant of Neptune, as I have stated in past letters. Pluto, put simply, is purification. Whenever Pluto is active in one's chart either through natal placement, transit, progression or direction, then one can be certain that some process of purification is active in one's life. Pluto is very active in the world at this time, especially from now through the next few decades. Pluto prepares the field for planting by Neptune, in a manner of speaking. Purification is two things – distillation of a thing to its essence and the discarding of any obstructions to the full expression of that essence. For people who have Pluto activating key points (luminaries or angles) in their chart, one can be certain that their life is one in which some aspect of their nature is being purified. If the Moon is affected, then it is clarification of needs and the release of the past, leading to freedom from emotional control. If the Sun is affected, then it is a testing of the ego in service and the clarification of purpose, leading to empowerment. If the horizon is affected, then Pluto stands as the ferryman leading to the higher realms and personal/relationship issues will plague the person until they ‘get’ the fact that ‘it is nothing personal’, if one understands my meaning. If the meridian is affected, then Pluto clears the path to the ashram, or one's inner or spiritual group. Such a one is tested sorely at times through domestic and/or public matters. The spiritual friend does all this for us, too. They highlight exactly where our obstructions are, what needs to be done to enable us to let them go and what seeds to plant in their stead. They show us how to ‘make our affairs let go of us’, in a manner of speaking.

Aries Letter 2007: If we look at the planets involved in the septile patterns we find two of the main planets of occultism involved—Neptune and Pluto. Pluto clears the way for the sublime Light of Neptune. It brings about freedom from the past and the end of illusion. Neptune is lord over Pluto and governs its orbital movement, so all outer occurrences that have the stamp of Pluto upon them are actually precursors of Neptunian enlightenment to come. This last point was covered in the 2005 Pisces letter. Any time we find both planets involved in a septile pattern then we can be certain that a rare opportunity for insight is to be bestowed if we are open to it. One could say that Pluto is the herald of expanded intuition, which Neptune represents.

Pisces Letter 2005: I have been given to mulling over Pluto and Neptune in the past weeks because of a class of asteroids that are found in a band of planetary bodies in the outer reaches of the solar system known as the Kuiper Belt. As it turns out, a closer study of these particular asteroids reveals some surprising facts about our two friends in the outer reaches of our solar system. It also begins to peel away some of the veil of mystery which hides the true potency and power of Neptune. Although Neptune is said to rule over all things nebulous and misunderstood, the fact of the matter is that we really have little understanding of its true nature ourselves. We can be forgiven, then, for associating vagueness, confusion and miasmas with Neptune and for projecting our own misconceptions upon it, even though Neptune is actually responsible for the very highest insight, clarity and vision once all is said and done. As I was saying, there is a particular class of asteroids in that part of the solar system that are all connected with Neptune gravitationally. The occultist knows all too well that gravitation between celestial bodies says a lot about centers of spiritual Being, and that the center of gravity in any heavenly system also indicates the center of its Being. Gravity

defines the mundane parameters for the heavenly body representing the Lord of a celestial realm. As we will see, then, Neptune is the regent of all those particular asteroids under consideration here, and that also includes Pluto, which is thought to be simply a large asteroid anyway in some quarters of scientific thought.



Dwarf planets and] asteroids are a study all to themselves in astrological and astronomical lore. There are over 50 classes of asteroids in our solar system. The majority are in between Mars and Jupiter, though there are a large number in the Kuiper Belt as well. The asteroids connected with Neptune are of three main types. They are known as Neptune trojans, twotinos and

plutinos ('small Pluto-like object'). This latter group is the one with which I have found the greatest fascination, but they all have their tales to tell. The thing that connects these bodies with Neptune is a phenomenon called *orbital resonance*. Without going into technicalities, orbital resonance means that the planetary body involved has been trapped by the gravitation of a larger body - usually a planet - and it has an orbit that coincides with the orbit of the 'host' planet by a set ratio. In the case of plutinos, the main ratio is 3:2, meaning that for every 3 orbits of Neptune, Pluto or any plutino asteroid makes 2 orbits. In the case of twotinos the ratio is 2:1, and for trojans the ratio is 1:1. There are bodies that respond to various other resonances as well, but they are few and do not constitute well-defined groups as of yet. However, for all of these groups the fact remains - they are all trapped in synch with the orbit and cycle of Neptune and are thus ruled by its gravitational pull.

[**Addition Dec 2011:** A distinction should be made here between asteroids and dwarf planets. Asteroids are generally thought to be 'space rubble' and as it turns out many of the larger ones are said to be 'rubble piles', meaning that they are simple aggregates of rock and dust that lack sufficient gravity to collapse their constituents together into a spherical shape. By far the largest proportion of asteroids are simply single or very small piles of rock. The constituent parts of such bodies are easily seen and the surfaces of such bodies often display large cracks and are seldom approaching anything close to a spherical shape. It takes a certain amount of mass to cause a complete accretion of a rubble pile into a sphere and thus into a body resembling a planet. Such a smaller planetary body with sufficient gravity is then classified as a 'dwarf planet' and Ceres is the smallest of these. So, in my opinion astrologers need to make some differentiations armed with this new data: Do we treat dwarf planets differently to asteroids in our delineations? In terms of 'evolution', dwarf planets clearly have a stronger gravitational influence and thus a greater role of activation within a chart.]

The dwarf planet that most captured my attention and prompted my study has been named Orcus, and it is a plutino. Its astronomical nomenclature is 90482 Orcus, and it is currently found in the late degrees of Leo. All plutinos have orbits of roughly the period of Pluto (app. 248 years), and they are found on the inner portion of the Kuiper belt. It has been estimated that there are over 28,000 plutino asteroids [quite aside from minor planets], but only a few of them have actually been named and described as to their astrological influence. They are all named after gods of the underworld after some type of mythology and in the tradition of Pluto. There are two others I know of that have been named, and they are Ixion and Huya. Orcus is said to mete out retribution over broken oaths. Incidentally, the Orcs in *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy take their name from Orcus, and in the story line they were formed in the Underworld. Ixion was the first human to shed kindred blood, and thus

there is the association of Ixion with blood guilt and with betrayal and lack of gratitude for benefactors. We have not the space to go into the depth about the mythology. Huya is named after a rain god from the traditions of a South American aboriginal tribe. I have not gone into the astrology of these to any depth. My fascination with them lies in their relation to Neptune and the role Neptune has in the scheme of things as a result.

Pluto and these plutinos cross Neptune's orbital path due to the eccentricity of their orbits and their inclination, but there is never any danger of them colliding with Neptune because of those factors, plus the fact that, due to the gravitational nodes (I won't go into that here), they all cross Neptune's orbit at 90 degrees from Neptune, either advancing or retarded. Hence, they are always square to Neptune when their orbital paths cross. This latter fact is of interest to astrologers, because it somewhat defines the relationship between Pluto, the plutinos and Neptune. These crossings (squares) occur roughly every 248 years. Keeping the aspect orb to one degree, the last time this happened was between 19 Dec 1815 and 4 Sep 1820. It happens several times during those 5-6 year periods. The interesting part of it is that no real history-changing events took place at the time of the last one. The war of 1812 ended, Napoleon was exiled to the Island of St. Helena and Mt. Tambora in Indonesia exploded. These sorts of things happen all the time throughout history, though, and there is nothing there that could really be called a pattern that would fit the aspect. However, if one looks at the people who were born then and when we examine the legacy they left to the world, a pattern *does* appear. [It would be a very fruitful study to look at the characteristics of people born when the other Neptune-resonant dwarf planets crossed the orbit of Neptune.] Of those Pluto crossings, we have the following people of note:

Elizabeth Caddy-Stanton (women's rights reformer), Karl Marx (author of *The Communist Manifesto* – an exposition of a noble ideal, but practically impossible to make work in the world at large at the moment), Frederick Douglas (The Great Emancipator), John Ruskin (naturalist and critic), Queen Victoria (pride of British Empire), Allan Pinkerton (of detective agency fame), The Bab (whose followers eventually founded the Baha'i faith), William Tecumseh Sherman (founder of modern warfare, with his scorched earth policy), Susan B. Anthony (suffrage, temperance and equal rights activist), Florence Nightingale (founder of modern nursing), Horace Wells (dentist and pioneer of anesthesia), William Thomas Green Morton (same), Crawford Williamson Long (surgeon, anesthesia), Ignaz Semmelweis (pioneer in germ theory and post-natal health), Edwin Drake (inventor of the modern oil well), Otto von Bismarck (statesman, emperor of Germany, founder of social security), Sir Humphrey Davy (miner's caps and mine safety), Amelia Jenks Bloomers (activist. Women have her to thank for 'bloomers' and comfortable underwear - freedom 'underneath'), and Harriet Tubman ('underground railroad' - freedom from slavery). Certain things stand out from the above list:

1. All of these people stood for freedom in some way,
2. Most of them sought to relieve human suffering
3. Most of them were unifiers and/or pioneers after some fashion
4. Most of them brought light into dark places and brought forward social reform for the under classes or for the sick or oppressed
5. Some of them worked directly with the "underworld", either literally or figuratively, and brought things either to light or to the surface
6. They were all reformers and all of them eventually brought the release of human suffering in some way and ended the old social order in some way.

There is more that could be said, but this will suffice for now. A few of these will seem a bit of a stretch given the criteria I have just outlined, but a little reflection should show the truth of the matter. Also, we may not like what they stood for, and the truth is that none of them were saints, but they all advanced the human condition in some way or at least gave us vision for the future. It is

also of interest that Kepler was born during an earlier period of this square (pioneer of modern astronomy) and that Anton Mesmer (hypnotism) passed on in the 1815-1820 period. This square says a lot about the ending of illusions and awakening people to realities. One of these periods also marked the commencement of Halloween (All Hallows Eve) and All-Saint's Day as holidays, as an aside.

So, what does all this say about the relationship between Neptune and Pluto? We know that Pluto governs the 'burning ground' [the path of purification] and thus the destruction or ending of those situations that prove an impediment to human progress. Pluto is also said to work primarily in the realm of *kama-manas* (desire-mind), and from that point alone we can see a connection with Neptune because Neptune rules over the entirety of the astral plane (desire world). Pluto brings clarity to the desire nature and to the lower mind through the destruction of thought-forms (which are the cause of habitual thought and emotions), whether individual or national. Pluto thus brings clarity to the lower nature. Its primary sphere of influence, if you want to call it that, is the solar plexus area. Now, it is of more than passing interest to note in this regard that the solar plexus is the animal brain and instinctive nature. It also rules the nervous system as well as digestion.

The solar plexus is a great psychic eye and it presides over lunar (astral) psychism. All animals have this eye open and functioning. For this reason it is said that lunar psychism is no indication of spiritual attainment. Governing the instinctive nature as it does, the solar plexus also rules over the subconscious - the personal "underworld" - and it is the center which is the clearing house for the other lower centers. All aspects of the persona are influenced by or are ruled over by the solar plexus at some point. The solar plexus is also most active during the hours of sleep, at which time a person is 'released' onto the astral plane temporarily. There is a lot of argument about what planets rule the centers (chakras). I have always taken the view that all planets can work through all the centers in some manner and it is entirely a matter of perspective, but each planet has a special 'resonance' with one or more centers. Various sources have given their respective rulers of the solar plexus to be the Sun, the Moon, Jupiter, Pluto, Mars and Neptune. Take your pick, but Pluto and Neptune are both strongly active there in some manner.

In its role as a psychic eye, the solar plexus puts one in touch with the lower kingdoms in nature, as well as developing clair-sentientcy, the ability to feel all things clearly, which is the basis of psychometry as a psychic ability. It is the seat of the astral elemental essence, it governs the fear reflexes, it is the recording station for the persona, it sees all in the three human worlds and it governs the integration of the lower self (persona) to a large degree. It has a resonance with the ajna (brow) center, which rules the integration of the persona at a later stage of evolution. When the two function together one is opened to the highest of the extended senses and the higher worlds are then an open book. A clear solar plexus gives one freedom in earth and through space, and it is the most receptive of the centers. When the persona is fully dedicated to the life of the Soul and the psychic debris has finally been cleared out of the astral body, then and only then does the solar plexus give one freedom in and power over the lower worlds. Until then, one is still at least somewhat ruled by the lower desires and thus glammers can be a problem to the striving one. One still 'sees through the glass, but darkly'. Pluto's true role here is to cleanse the lower nature and prepare it for the receipt of higher guidance - intuition or pure reason (direct valid cognition, in Buddhist terminology). For those who think the solar plexus works only with baser desires, we should take into account that there is a solar plexus center at every level of our being and that desire, whether basest or of the highest, is the *raison d'être* of human rebirth.

Pluto rules Pisces esoterically. What is it about Pisces that earmarks it as the sign of the World Savior, though? In short, all the great saviors of the human race have overturned the existing order in some way. They have identified illusions and glammers and they have shown people the way to resolve and dispel them. They have shown the way to clarify human thought and emotion because

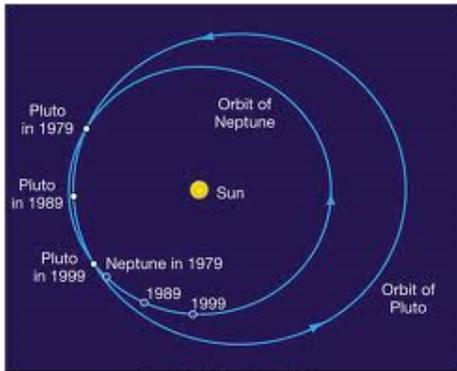
they have done so in their own natures. They are the exemplification of the adage “Physician, heal thyself.” Pluto has done its work on them and they stand freed from the lower worlds. They have given humanity vision for the future and have shown the way toward extended senses and greater alignment with one’s essential being. They light their torch in the higher Realms and they bring the Light down into the darkness - into the realms of the murky underworld that is the field of experience for the human persona. Neptune thus works through them unimpeded. Their way seems hard at first, and painful, but when their teaching is realized, one’s eye is opened and there is no going back to the old ways. The whole of one’s being is then lifted up, and the lower vibration that was can no longer find hold in the life of the one thus saved. Salvation, if we really examine it, is the release from the hold of the lives that make up the lower self and their alignment with a higher order. In the scheme of things, we begin first with the release of the things (thoughts and emotions) that keep us from the higher Life, and then our entire being is flooded with Light. Pluto is instrumental in this process, and it is for this reason that Pluto is called the great Healer of the zodiac - the guardian of hidden (buried) treasures. And, what of Neptune?

Neptune gives the highest and most sublime insight when it is allowed to fully function in the human system. It is the ‘light of intuition’. But it is also much more than that, for the intuition is but a reflection of Light that comes to us from beyond the seven worlds (planes) that we can know on this Earth. Neptune rules Cancer esoterically and Cancer rules the great Creative Hierarchy that stands as the gateway between our Earth existence and the worlds and Lives beyond our solar system. Cancer is the fount of divine Desire and the birthing ground for all that we see around us. When we are told that humanity took Souls (came into being) under the influence of Cancer and that we then began our long cycle of reincarnation, it is often not realized that the call for this came from levels outside of the planes we can know. It was the result of a far greater and higher Desire—the desire by the Lord of our world to fully manifest and undergo the great Initiation that He is set to take in this, His life. Neptune, through Cancer, is the gateway for the great cosmic pathways that await all of us at the end of our terms here on Earth. It rules the eventual gateway of escape from this world; hence Neptune has always been associated with escapism, which is a corruption of this higher meaning. It rules over a type of desire incomprehensible to us, but it is desire nonetheless.

It is said that Neptune is the God of the Waters. Most people take this to mean the human astral realms. Actually, the ‘waters’ referred to here is the very life-force of all that we see and know and it emanates from cosmic levels. Those waters are the cause of generation, both human and planetary, and it is the force of desire that overlays the entirety of the cosmic physical plane. Neptune is really beyond the persona and the conception of the lower mind. It is said that when Neptune is strongly placed in a person’s chart, buddhi (intuition or pure reason) is strongly enhanced because the buddhic vehicle is undergoing some degree of coordination during that particular life. This buddhic vehicle, as it is called, is what makes us uniquely human, because it is the essence of the Soul and the seat of the love-nature in humanity. So, we are plainly told that Neptune governs the coordination of that part of us - the essential part of us - the part that marks us as expressions of God’s love on Earth. We became that quality when we became human, we manifest it outwardly more and more with each passing year, and it will persist with us as long as we have to keep being reborn here. Neptune is with us always, and it brings us to the fullest understanding of what it is to be human and to express love. But, we have digressed a bit from the connection with Pluto.

In orthodox astrology we are taught that it is Neptune that governs Pisces. In esoteric astrology we are taught that Neptune *focuses* the influence of Pisces as it concerns humanity, and as a whole, but does not rule it. In that one sentence lies the key to the connection between Neptune, Pisces and Pluto. But, what is the difference between *ruling* a sign and *focusing the influence* of a sign? It is desire that shapes the human realms, not will. How often have we heard the phrase “You have to give up something to get what you want.”, or something like it? Neptune, representing the higher

desires in humanity (the urge toward a spiritual life), points to that which is desired, and Pluto represents what we must give up to attain the goal. In astronomical terms, *Pluto has been captured by the gravitational pull of Neptune* and is controlled within Neptune's orbit, *being in resonance with it*. If we said the same thing in terms of orthodox astrology, it would seem a ludicrous statement because the actions of the two planets seem so totally different. Neptune is seen in the main as a soft influence - confusing, dissolving, deluding and ethereal. On the other hand, Pluto is seen as hard, cathartic, disruptive and unstoppable. Both planets work with aspects of the nether regions, though. They are both very powerful in their own ways, but it is water that governs life on this planet and, in that connection, Neptune is the greater of the two.



The fact remains that Neptune controls and directs Pluto, especially when one aspires to a spiritual life and comes under spiritual disciplines. To ignore the astronomical tidbit about orbital resonance is to close one's mind off to some amazing possibilities for the future of astrology and to deny the true power, potency and action of Neptune. Yes, Neptune does indeed focus the influence of Pisces, and it does so initially through Pluto. In fact, Neptune really has rulership in some manner over all the water signs. It rules Cancer esoterically and it focuses and controls the lower aspects of Scorpio and esoteric Pisces through Pluto. It also controls a lot of other planetary bodies through its orbital

resonance. Its influence has been hidden very well for a very long time. I do not expect anyone to accept what I have just said, but there is certainly a lot to ponder upon there.

How would all this show in a chart, though? For people focused upon a high ethic for life and who are governed by a strong sense of brotherhood and goodwill, Neptune and Pluto are of more than passing importance. All transits and progressions either by those planets or by other planets over their places in the natal chart indicate times of great spiritual opportunity. I know quite a few Aquarians, for instance, (since Neptune is in Aquarius at the moment) who have been complaining of confusion, scattered thinking and all things normally associated with Neptune because of Neptune's transit over their natal Sun. To all of them I would ask: Is what you are experiencing confusion or a call to set the reasoning mind aside? Is it unclarity of thought or is it simply a dynamic or current of thought with which you are unfamiliar? Are you simply scattered or are you being opened to greater possibilities? Do you really feel a loss of direction and a sense of waywardness, or do you feel that there are new possibilities and/or things you have been missing? And, after the transit has passed, what is your state of mind now compared with the time before the transit? Do you sense things more deeply than before? Are your hunches about things and people stronger? Most importantly, do you feel renewed? I have always found that Neptune brings the highest insight when one is attuned to the possibilities. It may bring a bit of initial dishevelment, but the psyche is always much clearer after the fact, and the intuition is usually stronger as well.

The Magi Society has an interesting take on Neptune. They say it grants longevity, durability and staying power. They have the hard empirical data that shows this to be true. There are esoteric reasons for this effect as well, though. The fact of the matter is that so long as a person has desire for a thing they will persist at attaining it. Once the desire (passion) for it goes things tend to fall to pieces and the objective is lost. In terms of motivating people, the best way to get people to do things is to make them want it. One can spout all the specious reasons and mental arguments about a thing until blue in the face, but unless the listener wants what is being described, all those words may as well fall on deaf ears. That is just simple human nature. The other thing the Magi point out is that Neptune seems to act like a sort of fountain of youth. When we remember that Neptune represents the fount of the life force itself that calls us all into being, then their statement is not so

far-fetched. When we couple with this as well that Pluto, being the healer, is directed by Neptune that adds further weight to their argument, because under the influence of Neptune/Pluto a person is potentially constantly renewed. There is a lot more that could be said about this, too, but that is another letter. Lastly, Pluto is called a 'power planet', and it is an expression of the 1st Ray, which gives the power to persist and endure, as well as the capacity to destroy. It is love that must direct the will in our solar system. In fact, we could say that the Will of God is Love, at least for humanity.

One final point I will make about this fascinating relationship between these two planets that seem so diametrically opposed at times relates to the higher octave of Pluto, which is Mars in the esoteric literature. Basically, it would seem to me that both Pluto and Mars have to eventually 'answer' to Neptune. Mars and Neptune both express the 6th Ray. Esoterically, Mars is eventually transmuted into Neptune. There is more truth in that statement than seems immediately apparent. Mars "is objective and full of blood (passion)" whereas Neptune "is subjective and full of life". Mars governs desire in the lower self, whereas Neptune transmits divine desire (love) and draws the heated desire and passions of the lower nature 'upwards' into communion with the soul. Both planets rule over the birth and development of humanity, Mars from the standpoint of the struggling and achieving persona and Neptune from the perspective of the Soul itself - our very essence and that principle that guides us from 'beyond the veil'. There is a lot to chew over here...