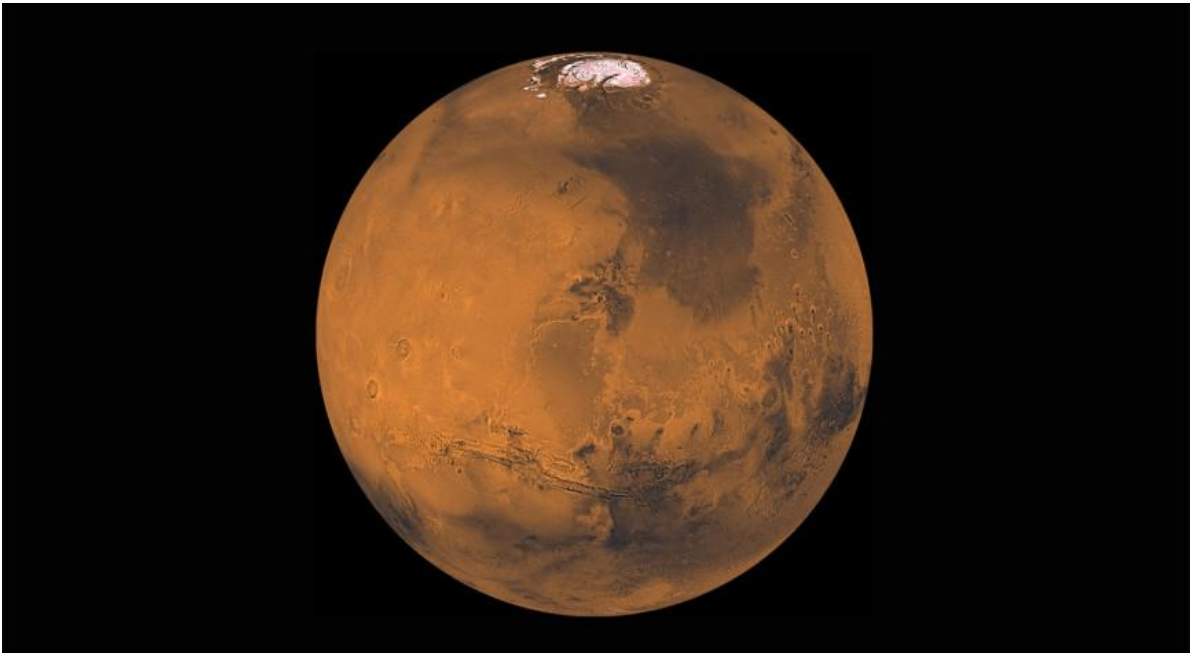


## **Mars: The Sacred Masculine Within**



The image I chose to examine is the simple glyphic image representing Mars. My thesis is that this image is a sacred representation of our own masculine energy. It is worthy of our attention, cultivation, and reverence. I incorporate aspects of the transpersonal approach. I will illustrate the connection of the glyph to the mythological and symbolic implications with their psychological relevance. I intend to explore how deeply the influence of Mars reaches within us. This is done to further assert the sanctity of Mars and the importance of living in balance with this ancient god within us.

Rosemarie Anderson advocates an intuitive approach to inquiry. Anderson articulates a transpersonal approach methodology, which is connected to transpersonal psychology. Transpersonal psychology seeks to comprehend and value life in the midst of transformative experience. Moments of profound realization and processes of change, particularly when posited in the light of self-actualization, are of interest

to the transpersonal psychologist. Transformations reflected in mythological characters can inspire us to understand personal processes of change.

Anderson encourages an imaginative approach in the process and presentation of research. I employed the three main approaches to research that Anderson advocates; “sympathetic resonance” ,“constructing the social context through knowledge” and “breakthroughs and synthesizing the findings” . Sympathetic resonance allows the researcher to create understanding by drawing on analogies and myth. Here I cite the myth of Ares to create a connection between our image of the symbol, its sacrosanct and allegorical meanings, and its connection to our psyche. The mythology of Ares is a way to create a social and psychological context, both past and present. This will allow the relevance of this glyph in our times to be shown, and its inviolability to be acknowledged. I hope to synthesize my findings in a manner that reveals a connection between the symbol, the mythology, and the psychology of Mars. My findings should lead back to my original thesis; Mars is a sacred representation of our own masculine energy. It is worthy of our attention, cultivation, and reverence.

To explore the glyph of Mars, I begin with the image; a circle with an arrow emerging from it. The circle appears to be the foundation of the image, which serves as base to the arrow. Marie Von Franz explained that the circle is the symbol of the complete self. In the circle we find the psyche in total ownership and possession of itself. The psyche is in a relationship with itself, its internal environment, and with its external environment. This is evidenced through nature and in our relationship with the cosmos. The entirety of the circle is found not only in the centre of the person, but also in the circle in which she lives. The circle is found inside oneself or as part of the totality of the world. It is union in its most profound, non-intellectual sense. It surpasses an understanding that

words alone can suppress. The circle appears in many cultures and contexts. It is always indicative of the supreme comprehensiveness inherent in every person. The circle has existed since the beginning of our collective history and memory.

The ultimate understanding of the circle speaks profoundly of the union between a human soul and God. The psychological symbolism expresses the merging of ego with the divine force in each person. Von Franz states that this force is at the heart of every religious teaching. Humanity desires to bring their inner self and outer reality into complement. This has led to the creation of a variety of religious symbols that incorporate the circle as their central spiritual feature. Von Franz points to the architecture and landscape of cities considered religious or spiritual centres. The cities themselves, and the temples within, become external projections of our desire for the psychological totality contained within them. The city becomes a microcosm of a prearranged cosmos. A sacrosanct location centred in the reality of the spiritual world. This conversion from city architecture to sacred space becomes the external manifestation of our need to be recognized as inherently spiritual beings.

Carl Jung believes that when we analyze the symbol of the circle we are actually contemplating our self. The circle is the most powerful religious symbol due to its fundamental nature. It is an image we repeatedly encounter in connection with religious mythology and structure. Joseph Campbell considers the circle to represent the place from which we have come from and the place to which we will go to when our lives are complete. It represents the life-death-rebirth cycle present in the mythologies of ancient religions. It is ever-present. The soul is a circle. It is a concluded totality, the alpha and the omega. It mirrors our understanding of God, who has no beginning and no end. It is sacred, uniting all aspects of life, so that we may be inspired to live our life at

the centre. The centre is a place that is true to the divine energy within each of us.

The symbolic image of the circle is a microcosm of our own lives and a macrocosm of the world-life. They are to be synchronized. We identify with the power in the circle when it is used for purposes of meditation. It represents the total spiritual forces operating in our lives. This image of the circle is seen throughout the world because it represents a basic archetype of the collective unconscious.

Having observed and attempted to define the circle, I turn to the arrow. This emerges from the glyph of the planet Mars. Before I move to the arrow, I find it relevant to explore the other most sacred spiritual symbol of our time, besides the circle; the cross. I believe the cross mirrors the arrow in its directionality and outward movement. Von Franz carefully notes that through the course of our collective history, the religious symbol most utilized in the western world is not the circle but the cross. It has become the principal symbol of Christianity. The Christian cross grew from the original Greek cross, that had a circular mandala incorporated within its imagery. The separation of the cross from the circle of the mandala becomes symbolic of the separation between God and the self. The body, as expressed by the circle, is removed from the most prominent religious symbol of our time. The cross becomes a functional arrow, without the circle, meant to direct a person outward and upward to find spiritual strength and divine communion. The circle is now something to transcend and overcome. We are to progress outward and upward.

Von Franz uses the architecture of many major cathedrals themselves, with their ever ascending steeples, to illustrate directing of the self /circle of the church building and grounds towards something that is considered higher. The massive cathedral is a literal symbol of the spiritual quest that cannot be completed by staying turned inward in

the circle. Spiritual fulfilment is to be found not only on the ground of the circular temple. As a collective, we have moved away from the centre and towards the heavens.

I continue to study the cross. I consider what else could be used to direct, manifest, and express. Similar to the rising and directing of one's self toward divine will that the steeple is, Rowena Shepherd and Rupert Shepherd believe that the sword represents the directing of divine will. The sword here is a conduit of celestial aspiration. It may also symbolize the union between, and the ability to connect, the earthly world to the divine realm of the sky. The sword also becomes an instrument to exert divine potency, righteousness dispensed, and warranted retribution. Swords may also represent distinction of thought and skilful use of free will. The sword denotes fresh thinking exerted outwards onto the world. Swords may also act as vessels and conduits of spirits and divine beings, allowing these entities to work their magic through the human being utilizing the sword.

Though I can make connections from the cross, the steeple, and the sword, with the arrow on an aesthetic level, I move on to consider how the arrow itself has been symbolically regarded. Shepherd and Shepherd describe the arrow in similar terms to the sword. Arrows are symbolic of spiritual entities directing their will to accomplish their aims. An example is the "arrow of truth" used in native tribes to make decisions. The tribes were assured the resulting decisions were supported and encouraged by their spiritual ancestors. The Greek deity Eros uses arrows to exert divine love between people. I begin to see the symbolism inherent in the steeple, the sword, and the arrow. All represent the flow of energy and the directionality of what precedes it.

J.C. Cooper believes the arrow represents the piercing, masculine principle. In its most masculine interpretation, the arrow depicts penetration and phallic symbolism. The masculinization of the arrow is

in stark contrast to the feminization of the circle, in its wholeness and completion, like the womb of a woman. However, the spiritual quality of the arrow is not lost in the masculinization. The virility of the arrow is a complement to the open womb of the circle. The penetration of the arrow leads to the fertilization of the circle, thereby making the arrow a potent agent of conception. It is in the wholeness of the womb where the human spirit finds its first home. The womb is the place from which we come that is also the feminine complement to the masculine arrow of ascent to the celestial. Alongside the wrath, pain, and death that the arrow can symbolically and literally cause, it can also represent freewill, directionality, light where there was darkness, and transcending the earthly state towards greater spiritual understandings.

I merge these two symbols together. The circle as the base and the arrow arising from it. This is the glyph of Mars. I consider Mars as part of the self. The circle reveals a sacred symbol that represents completeness and containment. It can be seen as a full womb, a sacred oven, or a contained "ball" of energy. It is from this place of containment, where one is that ball of energy, that the connection to a source of energy is found. Perhaps this energy can be characterized as enthusiasm, passion, or conviction. Once we are connected to the base we can then move with the precision of an arrow. We can focus outward, at the world. The merging of the two symbols of the circle and arrow is the glyphic image of Mars, is an illustration of self-expression that comes from a place of truth and wholeness within. With the arrow emerging from the circle, externalization of the self becomes possible. Spirituality finds external expression and manifestation. We are able to live what we know to be true in our deepest being.

The glyph of Mars can also characterize self-confidence. With Mars we come from a place of knowing we are inherently valuable and complete as we are. Our worthiness lies so deep it forms the base of our instinct.

We recognize we are spiritual beings. With the awareness of our spirit we also recognize we can direct our energy, our very life force, in the direction of exaltation and manifestation. We express ourselves honestly and completely in the moment, knowing that there is no need for pretence or question. We come from a place of trust that the expression is, in and of itself, sacred. The impact we have, or how others may interpret our expression, is not relevant. We are living honestly in the present.

Mars has many intrinsic gifts. Mars believes that we have an inherent right to believe in our own worthiness. Mars is fierce certainty in one's self. The certainty of the circle leads to an absolute faith in one's life. We demonstrate our faith through the arrow. The arrow allows us to focus our intentions, which arise from the circle of faith. Through the demonstration of our faith, Mars blesses us with the ability to go out in the world with directed energy. We come from the core of our being and the truth of who we are. In honest expression, honestly expressed, with precision and point.

The planet Mars is a physical representative of the Greek mythological god Ares. His legends in Greece are varied and many. I am fascinated by The Homeric Hymns, which contain this prayer to Ares:

Mighty Ares, gold-helmed chariot master

Shield bearer, bronze armoured city guard, strong willed,

Strong armed, untiring spear strength, defence of Olympus,

Father of victory in war, aid to Themis

Tyrant to enemies, leader of righteous men,

Wielding manhood's sceptre, your red ore whirling

Among the seven paths of the planets of the ether  
Where your fiery stallions bear you above the third orbit.  
Hear me, ally of mortals, you grant blossoming youth,  
Blazing down a soft flame into my life  
And warrior strength that I might drive  
Bitter wickedness from my head,  
My mind bending my soul's deceitful impulse,  
To restrain my heart's sharp temper provoking me  
To enter bone-cold battle. But you, Blessed one,  
Give me courage to stay within the gentle laws of peace,  
Fleeing enemy battle and violent death.

The prayer begins with praise and acknowledgment of the incredible power of Ares. His nature is virtuous. His role as god of war has him overseeing success in battle. His shield and spear can be seen as represented within the glyph of Mars, where the circle of wholeness is his source of courage and protection. His spear is the arrow that rises out in divine expression from that place of completeness. He is also a guide of honourable people. Ares represents manhood itself. It is here that the inner animus is signified.

Jung deemed the animus as the male aspect of the female psyche. Though he specifically attributes the animus to a feminine psyche, the understanding of this inner male energy is important to every person. We have all internalized concepts of what constitutes masculinity and



femininity. There are positive and negative aspects associated with the inner animus, depending on our relationship with our own masculine energy. When we have a healthy relationship with our animus, the animus provides creative possibilities and the self-confidence to believe in our ability to direct and realize our creative energy. By accessing Ares as a mythologized animus we are blessed with qualities of initiative, bravery, impartiality, independence, and spiritual insight.

According to Jung, The animus displays four stages of development. The myth of Ares, as invoked in Homer's prayer, takes on four stages of development as well, mirroring the animus in this respect. In the first stage we are impressed with physical power. The first half of this prayer contains the recognition of Ares' physical strength and his abilities. With divine shields and weapons, he is able to carry out acts of dominance and control.

In the second stage, the animus demonstrates masculine attributes through action. In this stage, Ares holds initiative and the ability to carefully plan his actions. He has the ability, in the second stanza, to focus the mind away from deceit and towards calm. He is in precise control of erratic emotional impulses. A demeanour that is conducive to success in battle can be achieved. It is from this calm state in which a person can carry out plans and trust instincts that are outside the tempers of the angry moments that any battle can inspire. It is here that the sword as arrow is carefully aligned with the intentions within the circle. The sword is controlled with precision. The arrow has its point of focus, in control so that it may reach its target.

In the third stage, the animus finds a distinct voice and gives pronunciation to its creative desires. It is here that the "Bitter wickedness from my head" , the voice within, is indicated. By debating with our inner animus we exercise our intellect. We become aware of its positive and negative manifestations. We can choose to enforce the most uplifting,

protective, and creative aspects of our inner Ares. In the fourth and final stage, the animus incarnates a higher meaning. Life is defined in more spiritual terms. This is the "courage to stay within the gentle laws of peace" that Ares allows. It is here that the true meaning of battle is found. The gentle laws of peace are the purpose behind war, the purpose behind the invocation of Ares, and the true strength of the warrior seeking spiritual insights and the god within the battle.

Jung acknowledges that a woman with a healthy, fully developed animus, and by extension a healthy relationship with Ares, affords her an inner collaboration that complements the outer feminine gentleness she has been conditioned to display. When the animus is most evolved it allows a woman to connect with spiritual intuition that can allow her to be more creative in thought than her male counterparts. She is better able to control her emotional impulses and channel her emotions towards her creative development. Jung theorizes it was this reason that allowed women the place of diviners and prophetesses in male-dominated societies. Their creative confidence, which was the signature of a well-developed, healthy animus, allowed them to express thoughts that were utilized by male leaders of that society. Homer's hymn speaks to developing a healthy, balanced relationship to our own male energy within us. Ares becomes a part of us to nourish and revere, a part of us that is worthy of our cultivation and our honour. It is through the acknowledgement that this powerful energy is not only out there in this god but also within us as a part of our psyche and indeed, as part of the divine within, that we can then grow and utilize our fullest creative abilities.

Joseph Campbell believes that myths articulate a "hero's journey". "The goal of the quest for yourself is to find the burning point within yourself. That becoming thing within yourself that is fearless and desire less. Just becoming. This is the condition of a warrior going into battle with perfect

courage. That's life in movement... it's the coming into...just becoming...it's the coming into being that's it. That's the life force within you, and that's the point of these myths." It is exactly this force that we seek to invoke when we recite Homer's hymn to Ares.

Ares is both emotional control and emotional impulse. The multi-faceted relationship we can have with our own inner drive, motivation, and male energy led the Greeks to conceive of Ares with contradictions. While the Homeric Hymn to Ares shows him as revered, C. Kerényi articulates a myth of Ares that illustrates mistrust of this divine entity.

Kerényi perceived a legend of Ares' that can give us insight into how this god was understood. Ares is attracted to Aphrodite, the wife of his estranged brother Hephaestus. Ares cannot help but feel an immense magnetism to her. At first he demonstrates the emotional control that he has been noted for in Homer's hymn, though the attraction between them is evident. When Aphrodite's husband is away, he impulsively declares that they must seize this moment to express their passions. Without weighing the consequence, he embraces Aphrodite and makes love to her until they both tire and fall asleep.

Once they are asleep, the trap that has been laid for them by Hephaestus falls and they are enchained on the bed. All the gods are called to witness the infidelity. This event can be understood symbolically. Ares is enchained within his own desires. Following his impulse has led him into a trap. He cannot free himself, for his single-minded passion has led him to be confined to his obsession. He is enslaved until the gods, representing divine intervention, arrive and petition for his freedom.

This myth of Ares can be seen as representative of our own varied relationship with our animus. Our internalized masculine voice can

struggle to find acknowledgement within us. Homer's hymn demonstrates admiration and reverence. Ares is sacred for his bravery and calm. We can come to a place where we are blessed with the ability to put our tempers aside. We utilize focused instinct confidently in a sacred battle of our own. Ares is our own desire for "becoming", as Campbell calls it. Our desire to fully own the creative, instinctive, decisive, self-confident, assertive, and inspired energy within us is embodied in Ares. These myths are all a call to our own inner divinity. The myths and hymns of Ares speak of our conflicting relationship with this divine aspect of our self.

It is here that I am brought back to the circle and arrow. The glyph of Mars that began my journey. I am reminded of how energy, when coming from a place that is not contained and properly directed in my own life can cause rash decisions resulting in undesirable consequences. I am aware of the times I have come from the complete circle and directed my will in a way that was calm and precise, and the rewards I reaped from the authentic expression of my truest self. Perhaps Ares was one of our first articulations in understanding our free will, and the positive and negative consequences, which may result. Perhaps the Greeks were able to acknowledge something that we are still attempting to acknowledge today; our creative drive and impulses can be very good when guided with divinity in mind. When dishonourable motives drive us, we can become selfish or hurt others and our self. Perhaps most of us have had these contradictory experiences with our own drive.

Desire, impulse, and drive is perhaps more divine than I had anticipated. I examined, through symbol and psychology, how the influence of Mars reaches deep within us. I utilized myth to delve into how the sanctity of Mars, with all its contradictions, is expressive of an important part of our psyche. I considered the importance of living in balance with this

ancient god within, which could be understood as the animus. Striking this delicate balance can lead us to the truth of who we are within the circle, evident through what we manifest. Perhaps living out of balance with this strong masculine energy can lead us to manifest things we are not proud of. But the rewards of utilizing Homer's powerful prayer and coming from a circle that is truly complete can put us in balance with this sacred aspect of ourselves. Coming from that whole, virtuous place within can lead us to like what we express in the world. I remain meditating on the sacredness of the circle, and all that is within me that desires expression and manifestation.

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