

# Vedic Astrology for August: Eclipses and Mercury Retrograde Offer Challenge and Opportunity



August marks the start of a significant and busy month that includes a fascinating eclipse season, with a lunar eclipse occurring on August 7 followed by a total solar eclipse on August 21. These eclipses are the big news this month and may bring deep, personal shifts and expanded revelations.

Mars, planet of action and vitality, while being debilitated in the sign of Cancer most of August, brings lessons about how we can direct our energies more appropriately. Mercury, planet of communications, begins its retrograde motion in August, suggesting a time of review and revision. Then Saturn, lord of truth, goes direct at the end of August, bringing increased productivity.

Eclipses are catalysts for change and they can bring significant events into one's life. They reveal truths and

break down barriers, helping us to grow. In Vedic, eclipses are days for spiritual life and inner work, such as meditation, mantra recitation, pranayama, yoga, retreat, and introspection. Traditionally they are not auspicious days for material activities, such as business or financial dealings, as we may not see as clearly, or unexpected issues may surface and need to be dealt with.

In general, solar eclipses are more potent than lunar ones and tend to have a greater global effect. Also, the three to six days on either side of eclipse dates can be unstable, so do things that help you ground and feel supported, like connect with family and friends and spend time in natural or peaceful surroundings.

The first eclipse is a lunar one which takes place on August 7, 2017 at 21 degrees Capricorn in the nakshatra of Shravana. Being in the sign of Capricorn creates focus on our work, business, the government and service. Shravana nakshatra is about taking the higher moral ground, having good ethics, and re-establishing order and dharma in our lives. We may need to let go of emotional attachments or any activities that pull us down. This eclipse can also prompt us to prioritize our lives, focus on our spiritual side, and decide what is truly important and heart-felt in life. The key is to feel hopeful for the future.

The more powerful eclipse happens on August 21 when we will experience a total solar eclipse, which will be entirely visible in the United States. This is extremely significant, since the last time there was a total solar eclipse visible across the United States was in 1918! This eclipse occurs at 4 degrees Leo in the nakshatra of Magha. This nakshatra connects us to other dimensions or higher realms as it is ruled by the Ketu, planet of moksha, which gives brings in spirituality, heightened sensitivity and vulnerability.

The deities associated with Magha nakshatra are the Pitris, the deified ancestors which brings an opening to heal past ancestral or familial issues. The symbol for Magha nakshatra is a throne, so it carries royal energies, signifying events could surface surrounding a member of royalty or a political

leader. And as this eclipse is in the sign of Leo ruled by the Sun, we may experience insights connected to our identity, soul connections, self-esteem, and career choices.

Mercury, planet of communications and travel, goes retrograde in the sign of Leo from August 12 until September 5, 2017. It is significant that Mercury is near the eclipse on August 21 (within 10 degrees) and in the same sign, so lack of clarity, angry words, or misunderstandings may affect our communications during this time. In general during a Mercury retrograde period, it is wise to be precise with what you say or put in writing. It's a good time to review your plans and research ideas, back up data, and take time for inner reflection and meditation.

Mars, planet of action and energy, is a major influence the month of August. First, debilitated Mars in Cancer is somewhat close to the August 21 solar eclipse (within 7 degrees), so we must watch for being too impulsive or acting out of fear, which can later bring regret. Stay calm and be mindful.

A few days after the solar eclipse, on August 23 and 24, Mars will be at its exact degree of debility at 28 degrees of Cancer, which is a period to be extra careful in how we assert ourselves with others. Later on August 27 and 28, Mars leaves its debilitated sign of Cancer and enters the fire sign of Leo, where it will immediately conjunct Rahu (north node of Moon) at 0 degrees Leo, which can be quite a combustible combination.


This conjunction of Mars and Rahu occurs at the juncture between a water sign and fire sign – called gandanta or “spiritual knot,” indicating we are working through some ancient karma, and possibly testing our power and courage. Watch for increased agitations, rising tempers, or power struggles with others. This is a time to slow down, be neutral, and don't get overly stimulated or project our frustrations onto others. Don't let your fears sabotage you. Accept the journey you have taken, and don't fight what you're here to learn. Be accepting and responsive with others. Be open and channel the powerful energy generated by Mars and

Rahu into creative, uplifting activities instead.

Saturn, planet of discipline and truth, goes direct at 27 degrees Scorpio on August 25, 2017, having been retrograde since April 5, 2017. This directional shift of Saturn occurs within days of the August 21 solar eclipse which may influence Saturn's direct motion in a significant way. Issues that have been dormant since April may rise now to be addressed and solidified. With increased effort, you can find better ways to serve others.

It seems that August is going to be a fairly exciting month, but remember your intention creates your reality. Maintain your personal integrity and walk your talk. Be more dedicated with your personal practices. Don't avoid the challenges, but move gracefully through them. Engage in activities that do not create more suffering in the world. If you do, you'll have big opportunities to grow and expand your awareness.



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