

Although Parashara appears to give precedence to Rashi Drishti in BPHS, many Jyotishis do not apply them and only use planetary aspects, a principle that will be applied throughout this book. Rashi aspects are, in any case, a principle to be found in Maha Rishi Jaimini's *Upadesa Sutras*.

### Rashis Aspects

Rashi	Aspects	Rashi	Aspects
Aries	Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius	Libra	Aquarius, Taurus, Leo
Taurus	Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	Scorpio	Capricorn, Aries, Cancer
Gemini	Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces	Sagittarius	Pisces, Gemini, Virgo
Cancer	Scorpio, Aquarius, Taurus	Capricorn	Taurus, Leo, Scorpio
Leo	Libra, Capricorn, Aries	Aquarius	Aries, Cancer, Libra
Virgo	Sagittarius, Pisces, Gemini	Pisces	Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius

Planets in these rashis will have the same vision as the rashi in which they are placed.

### Retrograde Planets (Sanskrit: Vakra, M/W 910/3 meaning having backward motion)

The astronomical basis for planets seemingly changing their direction from forward to reverse, called retrograde, was explained in the previous chapter. Saturn retrogrades for four and a half months every year, Jupiter retrogrades for four months, and Mercury retrogrades on three occasions for about twenty-one days. Mars goes retrograde every two years for about three months, and Venus's retrograde period lasts approximately one and a half months.

Because retrograde planets are closest to the Earth, they exert a more substantial influence than when going direct. They strengthen whatever they indicate by house ownership and natural significations in the chart. But this added strength may not necessarily be beneficial if they rule negative houses.

Retrograde planets are more potent due to deeper subtle, subconscious, non-linear forces at work than standard mental processes. They often trigger actions far more outstanding for good or ill than those indicated by planets in direct motion. They can bring success when all else fails; hence, they are considered more spiritual than material, implying that "faith can move mountains" when all physical means have not worked.

Maharishi Parashara states that a retrograde planet will reverse the effects of being exalted or debilitated. These rules imply that a retrograde and debilitated planet loses some of its negative energy to some extent. A planet that is both retrograde and exalted loses some of its positive energy. The position of the lord of the rashi where these planets are placed does not modify these rules.

### Mars Retrograde

People with natal Mars retrograde may lack the physical energy and vitality to meet challenges and undertake necessary actions. Instead, they are inclined to wait until there is a crisis, and then they are forced to act. They may start a task when a subconscious motivation unrelated to the issue in front of them compels them into action. In its extremely harmful condition, a person may feel angry and frustrated and stick a knife into a passerby for no apparent reason.

Its helpful function is to act with detachment and clarity of purpose to pursue some ideal. People with Mars retrograde often make good scientists and doctors and succeed in occupations requiring objectivity and non-personal involvement. They are adept at planning and organising the work of others. When Mars is retrograde by transit, it is an unfavourable time to begin a new project that requires the planet's energy to be completed successfully.

### **Mercury Retrograde**

People with Mercury retrograde in the natal chart tend to use their intuition more and be right-brain dominant instead of thinking about facts, logic, and reason, which are Mercury's natural characteristics when moving in direct or forward motion. Their mind functions more easily subconsciously, so they arrive at conclusions without seemingly conducting any analysis. This does not mean they are wrong; on the contrary, they are often correct. They are at home in the realms of abstract, higher mathematics, psychological analysis, and writing novels full of atmosphere, deep characters and subtlety. Mercury is retrograde three times every year for about twenty-one days. At these times, communication problems and unexpected difficulties often arise. For instance, the legal process of selling or buying a house may suddenly stop for no apparent reason. Consequently, it can be a frustrating time.

### **Jupiter Retrograde**

People with Jupiter retrograde do not have the mental limitations most people have. Defeat for them is not an option. Indeed, they find success in the failure of others. These people revive failing companies, uncover hidden assets, help rejected or abandoned people, and are disappointed when opportunities do not work out easily. They are always looking for the best deal or possibility of gain during financially challenging times. Laziness, or too much optimism, can lead them to miss apparent benefits. They are helpful in situations involving an unknown element or a chance factor.

### **Venus Retrograde**

Those with natal Venus retrograde have an unusual attitude to social matters and to love. They prefer to be blunt and truthful in situations calling for tact and charm. They cannot stand hypocrisy about forms of love and are likely to renounce physical love entirely and turn to religion. They can have a high level of expectation regarding love, marriage, sex and childbirth, which may be different from experience.

They are not good marriage partners because finding a fulfilling, lasting relationship is challenging. Sometimes, these people prefer the company of their gender, either through friendships or same-sex relationships. They often have an intense creative urge, so artists, musicians, poets, dancers and dress designers frequently have Venus retrograde. A transit of Venus retrograde may create unsettling emotional forces, which can increase or decrease desires for social intercourse.

### **Saturn Retrograde**

People with natal Saturn retrograde have a strong sense of fate, i.e. some universal force that controls their destiny. They feel alone, isolated, separated from their fellow human beings and rarely understood. Often, they become more self-isolating and even anti-social. Behind all these attitudes is a fear of failure in other people's eyes or being rejected. Fatalism and pessimism cloud their life. In a more constructive manifestation, they find security in intellectual and spiritual pursuits. With maturity comes the realisation that material desires do not bring peace, that their views about how other people see them are untrue, and that peace is to be found within themselves.

### **Planetary War (Sanskrit: Graha Yuddha, M/W 854/3, meaning war, encountered, conquered)**

This situation occurs when two of the five real planets – Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn – are within 1° of each other, either in the same rashi or adjacent rashis, in the natal chart. On looking up at the sky, both planets would be vying for consideration from observers, hence the “war”.

The planet losing the planetary war has its strength substantially reduced, and the victor takes its energy. Consequently, the loser's indications as house lord and significator (see Chapter Six) are adversely affected.

A malefic planet loses some of its capacity to do ill, while a benefic planet loses some of its auspiciousness. Conversely, a malefic winner becomes more malefic, and a benefic winner becomes more benefic. Further details about graha yuddha, with an example, are to be found in Chapter Twenty-Two.

### Combust Planets

A planet is said to be “Combust” when close to the Sun against the backdrop of the zodiacal belt. Combust implies that the planet is invisible as viewed from the Earth, so its significations are weak. BPHS states the following are the degrees from the Sun when a planet can be regarded as weak:

Moon 12°, Mars 17°, Mercury 14°, Jupiter 11°, Venus 10°, Saturn 15°.

The closer the planet is to the Sun, the greater the effect of the combustion. However, the Sun in a favourable planetary yoga will not impair the other planet. See Chapter Nine on “Planetary Combinations”.

One important rule for interpreting combustion is that the externalised meanings of houses ruled by the combust planet, including areas of the body, are often damaged. The inner significations of the planet, particularly intellectual and psychological faculties, are not spoilt.

Hart deFouw considered planets’ external indications as house rulers to be seriously combust when they were within 6° of the Sun and slightly impaired between 6° and the above maximums. This rule is recommended.

Applying logic to given rules:

Many astrological rules are based on common sense when considering the astronomical situation. For instance, Mars is exalted in Capricorn, ruled by Saturn, one of its enemies. Mars signifies a person full of energy and power, and this “martial” spirit needs to be channelled and adequately directed. Saturn, the planet of discipline and lord of a practical earth rashi, makes Capricorn the ideal place where this power may be focused for good or ill.

### Vargottama Planets

A planet placed in the same rashi in the navamsha chart (D9), as in the main birth chart (D1), is called “Vargottama” from “Varga”, meaning “a division” and “uttama”, meaning “highest, best, excellent”. It is said to have the power of an exalted planet. The navamsha chart is constructed by subdividing each rashi into nine parts. It is the most important of many such sub-divisions of rashis explained in Chapter Twelve, entitled “Divisional Charts”.

### Planets’ Vargottama Degrees Positions

Rashi Type	Rashis	Vargottama Degrees
Moveable	Aries, Cancer, Libra, Capricorn	00° 00 – 03° 20
Fixed	Taurus, Leo, Scorpio, Aquarius	13° 20 – 16° 40
Dual	Gemini, Virgo, Sagittarius, Pisces	26° 40 – 30° 00

Hart deFouw has said that the D1 chart shows the potential of the native’s life, while the D9 navamsha chart shows the fruit. So, when a planet is in the same rashi in both charts, it is extra strong and will promote the houses it rules and its significations. It is a factor to be looked out for when assessing the strength of any planet. The concept of vargottama applies to all divisional charts.

If the Sun, for instance, is located at 2° 00 Libra, it would be both debilitated and vargottama. The rule is that both apply. The person is likely to lack self-confidence initially but learns to deal with it. His relationship with his father could be problematic, but they eventually develop a great relationship. (The Sun is the permanent significator of the father.) Vargottama planets bring strength and endurance to situations.

### Sandhi Planets

When a planet is close to zero degrees within a rashi, it is considered weak. This applies when a planet is between 0 and 1 degrees or 29 and 30 degrees. In Sanskrit, “Sandhi” means “junction point”. During the dasha period of such a planet, people are unsure where they are going and find it challenging to address problems and opportunities in areas of life signified by that planet.

### Gandanta Positions

As a further refinement on sandhi planets, there are three locations where a planet is “Gandanta”, indicating “devoid of strength”. The word gandanta comes from the Sanskrit “Ganda”, meaning “cheek or joint”, and “anta” meaning “end or boundary”. gandanta, therefore, means “end of a joint” and refers to positions where both nakshatras and rashis end and begin again, as shown in the following tables.

Natal Chart	Rashi Degrees	Element	Nakshatra	Nakshatra Ruler	Navamsha Rashi, Element & Ruler
Pisces	26° 40 – 30° 00	Water	Revati	Mercury	Pisces, Water, Jupiter
Aries	00° 00 – 03° 20	Fire	Ashwinī	Ketu	Aries, Fire, Mars

Cancer	26° 40 – 30° 00	Water	Asleshā	Mercury	Pisces, Water, Jupiter
Leo	00° 00 – 03° 20	Fire	Magha	Ketu	Aries, Fire, Mars

Scorpio	26° 40 – 30° 00	Water	Jyeshtha	Mercury	Pisces, Water, Jupiter
Sagittarius	00° 00 – 03° 20	Fire	Mula	Ketu	Aries, Fire, Mars

Planets placed in the last 3° 20 of Pisces, Cancer and Scorpio indicate that the person’s material values will be challenged and must be redefined to grow in wisdom and inner strength. The spiritual world is calling with the influence of Ketu on their horizon, supported by the fire of knowledge, so they will need to let go of past desires for worldly matters. Suffering, loss, and ill health could arise depending on the houses ruled by the gandanta planet. The pain will not be so great for a planet in the last part of Pisces or the first part of Aries. It would be vargottama, i.e. located in the same rashi in the natal and navamsha charts and, therefore, in a strong condition.

Planets placed in the first 3° 20 of Aries, Leo and Sagittarius indicate that the person has begun a new cycle of spiritual growth and will need the energy from Mars and Ketu to support their fledgling development if they are to progress. Cancer/Asleshā are at the end of the rajasic part of the cycle; Scorpio/Jyeshtha are at the end of the tamas part, and Pisces/Revati are at the end of the sattva part. The aim is to become free of the guna influences over many lifetimes by repaying one’s karmic debts and gradually surrendering attachments and the ego to cosmic consciousness, also called Absolute or Brahman.

### Rahu and Ketu

These two planets are said to be co-rulers of two rashis. Rahu is the joint ruler of Aquarius along with Saturn. Ketu is the joint ruler of Scorpio with Mars. Hence, the maxim “Rahu acts like Saturn and Ketu acts like Mars”. BPHS states that Ketu is exalted in Scorpio, and Rahu is exalted in Taurus, and vice versa for debilitation.

Rahu is positive and helpful in Virgo and Gemini, and Ketu is well-placed in Pisces and Sagittarius. The two nodes in or transiting Cancer and Leo cause serious problems, as the Sun and Moon are their bitter enemies.

The significations of Rahu and Ketu in a chart depend on the following principles:

1. They produce the effect of the strongest out of:
  - a. Any planet in the same rashi, i.e. conjunct Rahu or Ketu
  - b. The lord of the rashi in which Rahu or Ketu are placed
  - c. The planet aspecting them.
2. These nodes retain their capacity to act according to their astrological nature.
3. For a detailed explanation of how to interpret these vital planets, see Chapter Seventeen.

## **Periods of Life**

There are times in life when planets exert their influence according to their nature:

- Moon rules ages 0 to 4 when the child is under the guiding light of their mother and their emotional development is of paramount importance.
- Mercury rules from ages 5 to 14 when learning physical and intellectual skills is paramount.
- Venus rules from ages 15 to 22 when sexual powers are aroused and desires for personal relationships begin.
- Sun rules from ages 23 to 41 when the focus is on developing a career and achieving status within society.
- Mars rules from ages 42 to 56 when dissatisfactions in life to date need to be addressed.
- Jupiter rules from ages 57 to 68 when wisdom and spirituality can apply to benefit family and society.
- Saturn, Rahu and Ketu rule life from ages 69 to 120. These years are times for completing one's karmas given for this life or physical and mental degeneration. Saturn's aspect on the seventh house may postpone marriage until after age 40.

## **Planets' Characteristics, Rulerships and Significations**

Planets are the cornerstone of Jyotish and are applied in every branch of the subject. Their most essential features are summarised on the following pages and should be memorised.

Each planet's favourable and unfavourable significations (karakas) and their permanent indications of occupations, ailments, primary functions, etc., are listed. These matters will be modified by other planets that are conjunct or aspect them. In other words, one has to combine the significations of both planets to arrive at a feature applicable to the natal chart under consideration. For example, Venus conjunct Rahu could indicate a foreigner with an independent nature who becomes the subject's marriage or business partner. Venus indicates marriage and partnerships; Rahu brings independence and indicates foreigners. When medical matters are being considered, this combination could indicate cancer (Rahu) of the ovaries or some other condition signified by Venus. At this point, we are into chart interpretation. Sound conclusions can only be obtained by analysing the whole chart and applying the rules in Chapter Thirteen.

Later chapters explain how the planets' characteristics can be applied for various purposes.

- Chapter Eighteen covers marriage and relationships.
- Chapter Nineteen covers professions and occupations.
- Chapter Twenty covers the ailments and diseases and their related parts of the body.
- Chapter Twenty-Four covers Electoral astrology, muhurta, for selecting an auspicious time to begin important tasks.
- Chapter Twenty-Seven covers remedial measures, including the use of appropriate gemstones.

The following pages are reference tables for each planet, summarising their main features and significations.

Planet	SUN
Sanskrit Names & Meaning	Surya (source of light), Ravi (Sun-god)
Ruling Deity	Agni, the god of fire, represented by the twelve sovereign principles (Adityas)
Governance according to BPHS Ch. 3 v. 12–13	Sun rules the soul, also called the Self and “Kala Purusha” (the individual human being (living) within time).
Rashi Rulerships	Leo, a fire rashi, fifth from Aries
Exaltation	Aries, highest point 10° Aries
Debilitation	Libra, lowest point 10° Libra
Mulatrikona	Leo 0° – 20°
Planetary Friends	Moon, Mars, Jupiter
Enemies	Saturn, Venus
Neutral	Mercury
Element	Fire
Guna	Sattva
Favourable/General Karakas (indications)	Soul, the individual self; Saguna Brahman that reincarnates life after life; inner light of consciousness that gives life to all beings; will, power, authority, leadership; intelligence; fame; individuality; self-reliance, self-esteem; ethical and moral behaviour; status; honour; respect; health in general; vitality; public duties; government; royalty; temples; self-realisation; interest in religious and spiritual processes; love of arts, music, drama; gold; grains; agriculture.
Unfavourable Karakas	Egoism, pride, arrogance, selfishness, being overbearing, self-centredness, lying, ungratefulness, authoritarian, ostentatiousness; despotism; insecure, low self-esteem, shyness; struggles to relate and get on with other people; has enemies; prone to illicit romantic affairs; domineering attitude to employees, family and friends; hostility; fearful and subject to dark moods.
Colour	Dark red
Dosha	Pitta
Sex	Male
Social Caste	Kshatriya (military and governing classes)
Profession and Occupations	Government, royalty, ruling classes, leaders, managers, prestigious jobs; physicians, health professionals and chemists; administrators, politicians, magistrates, forest officers, promoters, business owners, service under a prominent person; gambling; working with metals, fire and heat; farmers.
Relations Karaka	Father, paternal uncle
Primary Function in Life	The Sun represents the light of consciousness. How it is directed will determine whether it is towards ignorance or spiritual practices and truth.
Weekday Karaka	Sunday
Directional Strength	tenth house; South direction
Body	Head, brain, heart, arteries, vitality, digestion, bones, teeth, right eye.
Ailments and Diseases	Heart and eye problems, gall bladder issues, burns, baldness, teeth problems, circulatory disorders, hypotension, fevers that exhaust bodily fluids, headaches, epilepsy, stomach ailments, bone disorders, hyper-irritability, and skin problems.
Suitable Gemstones (See Ch. 27)	The primary stone is ruby; the secondary stone is garnet. These stones should be worn on the index or ring fingers.
Mantra	Om Sri Suryaya Namah
Parashara’s Description BPHS Ch. 3 v. 23	The Sun has honey-coloured eyes, a square body, pure, pitta in constitution, intelligent, masculine, and tends towards baldness.