

THE OBSERVATORY

December 2024 Solstice Edition

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We begin the season with a very irritable Mars in retrograde motion. (Please refer to previous articles, as much has been written.) Mars retrograde began December 7 and won't end until February 24, 2025. The period is long because Mars is moving slowly in the months before and after the retrograde, starting October 2024 in Gemini, then in Cancer for December and most of January 2025, then back into Gemini on January 22, and finally direct on February 25. Since Mars won't leave Cancer until early June, we continue to have an argumentative Mars when in Gemini, and a wounded Mars when in its debilitation sign of Cancer. Most of us have no control on world affairs, but we can do our part to control our own tempers and address with compassion the irritations around us.

Venus in Capricorn and Jupiter in Taurus are in *Parivartana* Yoga (mutual reception) December 21-28, a great combination for social and practical matters, promoting prosperity. Make the most of it.

Jupiter in Taurus and Saturn in Aquarius occupy the fixed signs, and Saturn dominates. This is a season in which people are seeking stability, but great changes are ahead as Jupiter and Saturn move into Gemini and Pisces, respectively, in the Spring, when change will be the game.

The Full Moon days this season are unusual in that they all fall on the last degree of a *rashi* or zodiac sign. Those planning events may wish to make careful use of a *panchanga* – you may not get the best results on the Full Moon date.

Mercury runs direct and rapid until the next retrograde period which begins March 15. Mercury makes an exact conjunction with Venus in Pisces on March 9, and the two share a sign for a long time, from February 18 to May 6. While Mercury will be debilitated, Venus will be exalted, helping Mercury express itself. There are some potential auspicious dates for social and cultural events. Both Venus and Jupiter are in Venus-ruled signs in this period, also helpful. Event planners will need to be alert to big weather events around the Eclipse season at the end of March and into April.

Venus undergoes a retrograde period from March 3 to April 12 in Pisces, which amplifies its power of compassion, and perhaps a chance for remediation and reconciliation. In the mundane world, the Venus retrograde, which is infrequent, often brings readjustment in money or other measurements of value in the market.

Uranus dropped back into Aries last month and will stay there until March 19 when it moves back into Taurus, where it will stay until 2031.

Neptune is still in the early days of its 14-year stay in the sign of Pisces – in western astrology it is a co-ruler of Pisces. It may be encouraging that Rahu makes an exact conjunction with Neptune this season, in the same week as Venus is in the same degree! Look for this triple conjunction February 1 through 3. Mercury visits Neptune and Rahu in the first week of March, and the Equinox will bring the Sun to Rahu.

Pluto in Capricorn makes a second opposition to Mars in Cancer January 3, with a third one coming in April. It will come as no surprise that there are many power plays going on in the world. Here is one positive – Mars is exalted in Capricorn, so any influence from that sign may be ultimately for the better.

Pluto will enter the nakshatra *Abijit* on February 7. The 28th nakshatra is rather mysterious and overlaps with the last three degrees of *Uttara Ashadha* at 8-10 degrees Capricorn. This part of the sky has many associations with universal values of the *Vishvadevas* and the cluster of stars at the center of our galaxy. The non-visible Pluto is not one of the traditional *grahas* of Vedic astrology, and is now considered a dwarf planet by astronomers, but it can be a useful symbol for the uncharted depths described by the *rishis* in the *Vedas*. With Neptune in Pisces and Pluto in *Abijit*, there is potential to channel compassion and wisdom in this season.

The Almanac

Times when listed are for Eastern Standard Time (-5:00) or Eastern Daylight time (-4:00), calculated for New York City, USA. Daylight Savings Time in the USA will begin Sunday, March 9, 2025. The exact time and date of these events will vary around the world. Sidereal zodiac, Lahiri Ayanamsa.

December 2024

December 15, Mercury stations direct at 12deg15 Scorpio

December 21, Winter Solstice Northern Hemisphere, Summer Solstice Southern Hemisphere at 4:21 am EST.

December 22, Venus enters *Dhanistha* nakshatra

December 24-27, Mercury at 19 degrees Scorpio is in 1:7 aspect to Jupiter in Taurus and also receives 1:10 aspect from Saturn in Aquarius. Jupiter and Saturn are in 90-degree aspect by degree in same time period

December 28, Sun enters *Purva Ashadha*

December 28, Venus enters Aquarius

December 30, New Moon at 5:27 pm at 15deg17 Sagittarius

December 31, Ketu at 6deg50 Virgo makes an exact 1:5 aspect to Pluto at 6deg50 Capricorn

January 2025

January 3, Venus enters *Shatabhishak* at 6deg40 Aquarius

January 3, Mars at 6deg57 Cancer is exactly opposite Pluto at 6deg57 Capricorn.

January 5, Mercury enters Sagittarius and *Mula* nakshatra

January 10, Sun enters *Uttara Ashadha* at 26deg40 Sagittarius

January 11, Mars moving retrograde moves out of *Pushya* back into *Punarvasu* at 03deg20 Cancer

January 13, Full Moon at 29deg32 Gemini
January 13, Mercury enters *Purva Ashadha* at 13deg20 Sagittarius
January 15, Sun enters Capricorn
January 16, Sun at 7deg29 Capricorn is exactly opposite Mars at 7deg29 Cancer
January 16, Neptune enters *Uttara Bhadrapada* at 3deg20 Pisces
January 17, Venus enters *Purva Bhadrapada* at 20deg00 Aquarius
January 18, Venus exactly conjunct Saturn at 21deg47 Aquarius
January 21, Sun exactly conjunct Pluto at 7deg29 Capricorn
January 22, Mercury enters *Uttara Ashadha* at 26deg40 Sagittarius
January 23, Sun enters *Shravana* at 10deg00 Capricorn
January 23, Mercury at 28deg59 Sagittarius exactly opposite Mars at 28deg59 Gemini
January 23, Mercury at 29deg05 Sagittarius exactly trine Uranus at 29deg05 Gemini
January 27, Venus enters Pisces
January 29, Mercury exactly conjunct Pluto at 7deg47 Capricorn
January 29, New Moon at 15deg18 Capricorn in *Shravana*
January 30, Sun at 17deg06 Capricorn receives an exact trine aspect from Jupiter at 17deg06 Taurus
January 30, Mercury enters *Shravana* at 10deg00 Capricorn
January 30, Uranus ends retrograde and begins direct motion at 29deg03 Aries/*Krittika*
January 31, Venus enters *Uttara Bhadrapada* at 3deg20 Pisces

February 2025

February 1, Venus exactly conjunct Neptune at 3deg46 Pisces
February 1, Venus exactly conjunct Rahu at 3deg56 Pisces
February 3, Rahu exactly conjoins Neptune at 3deg55 Pisces
February 6, Sun enters *Dhanishtha* at 23deg20 Capricorn
February 7, Mercury enters *Dhanistha*
February 7, Pluto enters *Abijit* nakshatra at 8deg00 Capricorn
February 9, Sun exactly conjunct Mercury at 26deg44 Capricorn
February 10, Jupiter ends retrograde motion and begins direct at 17deg04 Taurus
February 12, Full Moon at 29deg26 Cancer/*Ashlesha*
February 13, Sun enters Aquarius
February 14, Mercury enters *Shatabhishak* at 06deg40 Aquarius
February 16, Rahu moves from *Uttara Bhadrapada* to *Purva Bhadrapada* at 3deg20 Pisces

February 22, Sun enters *Shatabhishak* at 06deg40 Aquarius

February 22, Mercury enters *Purva Bhadrapada* at 20deg00 Aquarius

February 24, Mars ends retrograde and begins direct motion at 22deg48 Gemini/*Punarvasu*

February 25, Mercury exactly conjunct Saturn at 26 degrees Aquarius

February 28, New Moon at 15deg01 Aquarius/*Shatabhishak*

March 2025

March 1, Mercury exactly conjunct Rahu at 3deg11 Pisces

March 1, Mercury enters *Uttara Bhadrapada*

March 2, Venus begins retrograde motion at 16deg38 Pisces/*Uttara Bhadrapada*

March 3, Mercury exactly conjunct Neptune at 4deg44 Pisces

March 7, Sun enters *Purva Bhadrapada* at 20deg00 Aquarius

March 9, USA begins Daylight Savings Time at 02:00 am

March 12, Mercury exactly conjunct Venus at 14deg36 Pisces

March 14, Full Moon at 29deg17Leo/*Uttara Phalguni*

March 15, Sun enters Pisces

March 15, Mercury begins retrograde period at 15deg22 Pisces/*Uttara Bhadrapada*

March 19, Uranus moving direct enters Taurus

March 20, Spring Equinox Northern Hemisphere, Fall Equinox Southern Hemisphere, 5:01 am EDT