



Retrograde Planets and their Effects

By Arpita Nath · How to Read a Chart · 2026-07-27

In Vedic Astrology (Jyotish), when a planet goes Retrograde (known as Vakra or Vakri), it appears to move backward in the night sky from our viewpoint on Earth.

While retrograded motion is an optical illusion created by differences in orbital speed, its astrological impact is very real. In a birth chart (Kundli), a retrograde planet is not broken - it is intense, non-conventional and deeply internal.

What Does Retrograde (Vakri) Mean in a Kundli?

The Sanskrit word Vakra literally means "crooked" or "circuitous." When a planet is retrograde:

- **Chesta Bala (Directional Strength):** The planet gets extraordinarily strong because it is physically closest to Earth during retrograde motion.
- **Unconventional Behavior:** Rather than following standard, straightforward paths, retrograde planets act in unexpected, original or roundabout ways.
- **Karmic Reflection:** They signal unresolved karma or unfinished business from past lives related to the themes governed by that planet.
- **Delayed, Internalized Energy:** Results may come later in life after deep self-reflection, experimentation or reworking old patterns.

Which Planets Go Retrograde?

- **Always Direct:** Sun (Surya) and Moon (Chandra) never go retrograde.
- **Always Retrograde:** Rahu and Ketu always move backward through the zodiac.
- **Can Be Retrograde:** Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus and Saturn (The 5 Physical Planets).

Effects of Every Retrograde Planet

1. Retrograde Mercury (Budh Vakri)

- **Core Impact:** Deeply reflective mind, unconventional thinking and re-evaluating communication.
- **Key Effects:** Instead of processing thoughts externally, people with retrograde Mercury digest information internally. They often possess unique writing, artistic or problem-solving talents, but may struggle with miscommunications, self-doubt in speech during youth or over-analyzing simple decisions.

2. Retrograde Venus (Shukra Vakri)

- **Core Impact:** Re-evaluating love, intense internal value systems and unique artistic tastes.
- **Key Effects:** Venus governs romance, beauty and luxury. When retrograde, individuals process affection on a deep, soul level rather than through superficial gestures. It can bring karmic relationship patterns, delays in finding the right partner or a distinct, non-traditional sense of art and aesthetics.

3. Retrograde Mars (Mangal Vakri)

- **Core Impact:** Internalized energy, strategic drive and re-directed passion or anger.
- **Key Effects:** Mars is raw action and assertion. When retrograde, physical energy doesn't burst outward immediately; instead, it builds up inside. The person may struggle to express anger directly in early life, leading to sudden bursts of action or high endurance once they master strategic timing.

4. Retrograde Jupiter (Guru Vakri)

- **Core Impact:** Internal moral compass, independent philosophy and re-defining belief systems.
- **Key Effects:** Jupiter represents wisdom, dharma and mentorship. A retrograde Jupiter makes an individual question dogma and conventional religious rules. They seek spiritual truth through personal experience rather than blind faith, often becoming original thinkers, deep researchers or self-taught scholars.

5. Retrograde Saturn (Shani Vakri)

- **Core Impact:** Heavy karmic duty, extreme self-discipline and re-working life foundations.

- **Key Effects:** Saturn is the judge of karma. When retrograde, its weight is felt intensely inside. Individuals often carry a strong sense of responsibility from childhood, feeling as though they must work twice as hard to prove themselves. Once they overcome self-imposed perfectionism, they achieve rock-solid, enduring success.

Summary

A retrograde planet in your birth chart is like a cosmic pause button. It asks you to stop, re-evaluate and do the internal work rather than rushing toward quick external rewards. Once mastered, retrograde planets become your greatest sources of original talent and profound wisdom!

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