

The Fire of Transformation: Thoughts on The Great American Solar Eclipse

by Neeshee Pandit



On August 21, the United States will experience its first total solar eclipse in 99 years. Astrologers have their eyes on this eclipse and have been sharing their assessments of its import. I have been examining this eclipse closely as well, and as we are less than 2 weeks away, I felt it was time to share some of my thoughts.

There is a tendency for major astronomical events such as this to generate drama. Some astrologers are making a big deal out of the Aug 21 eclipse, while others are downplaying it. The true import of the eclipse is between these two extremes--and that is what I want to explore.

Eclipses are not a rare event, and they are visible from different parts of the world. Why is this upcoming eclipse in particular already exerting such a magnetizing effect? The answer is multi-faceted, but for one, it is occurring in the sign of Leo: the sign of magnetism and power.

First, it is important to understand that eclipses affect the places from which it is visible. In other words, an eclipse affects the location upon which it casts its shadow (also known as the "eclipse path"). The Aug 21 eclipse is a total solar eclipse that casts its shadow across the continental United States. It is visible throughout the United States, most fully in Portland, OR. As such, eclipses primarily influence outer events rather than personal events.

Yet, everything is connected to everything. Changes in the outer world affect us all personally in different ways. Similarly, by affecting the United States, the Aug 21 eclipse will also indirectly affect the entire world. If you have Sun, Moon, Mars, or Rahu in Leo, then the eclipse will especially "resonate" with you and be felt on a more personal level.

How exactly will the solar eclipse affect the United States? This eclipse in particular is part of a larger series of eclipses that occur every 18 years and which have a pattern of influencing world events. Therefore, the Aug 21 eclipse can affect US politics and leaders significantly. The eclipse itself is occurring in the sign of Leo and the nakshatra of Magha. As President Donald Trump has his Ascendant in the sign of Leo and the nakshatra of Magha, it becomes very clear that this eclipse will affect Trump's Presidency and the socio-political consciousness of the country. Not only is the eclipse occurring across the United States, it is occurring in the very sign and nakshatra of its leader. This is what makes it especially powerful. Furthermore, Mars is also placed in the sign of Leo and nakshatra of Magha during

the eclipse. In President Trump's chart, Mars joins his Ascendant and is placed in the sign of Leo and the nakshatra of Magha. Mars is also the most powerful planet for Leo Ascendants.

Some who have analyzed (or read analyses) of the Aug 21 eclipse are hoping this means something negative for Trump's Presidency. I would caution against making such value judgments. There are strong indications of a significant shift, but it is difficult to say exactly how that shift will play out and what its overall effect will be in terms of "good" or "bad". Astrological shifts are energetic and therefore subtle in nature, though they can trigger significant physical events (even natural disasters). What an astrologer is reading is the energy behind what may manifest, and the probability of it manifesting.

President Trump is also not what he appears to be and is therefore much more complex to analyze astrologically. If anything, it seems more likely that this eclipse will empower him further, but in what direction remains to be seen. One thing is certain: he is more powerful than people give him credit for. As his Mercury is combust, he is impaired in the realm of communications. But the auspicious placement of Mars with his Ascendant, and the eclipse signifying his Mars transit and overall Ascendant pattern--it is safe to say there is much more going on than tweets.

This solar eclipse is a culminating sign of the times we are in--a shift we all felt in the last election, but that has been building for some time. The Aug 21 eclipse is the peak moment. It is also a trigger for the emergence of something new, as a peak only signals the beginning of an end. When the Moon is full, it has reached its peak brightness. But this peak brightness is only the beginning of its waning cycle, the shift toward less and less light culminating in the New Moon.

What should you do during this potent moment? Traditionally, Spiritual teachers and astrologers alike strongly recommend that people not view eclipses. The rays of the eclipse are damaging to the eyes and so one should not view it directly (without proper eyewear), but the astrologers of India equally caution that the energy of the eclipse disturbs the mind. Being outside during an eclipse allows "exposure" to its energies, and so stated simply, one should remain indoors during the solar eclipse. It is much less exciting, but much more auspicious. Gurus and astrologers have also said that eclipses are a powerful moment for spiritual practices. This is because while the light of the Sun and Moon are temporarily blocked, the light of the soul is still shining and all the more evident. It is therefore an opportunity to magnify one's spiritual practice and intentions. It is said that any mantras chanted during the time of an eclipse is magnified one-thousand times. Essentially, one should use this moment for spiritual invocation, whatever that is for you personally.

As the light of the Sun and Moon are blocked, it is also recommended to fast during an eclipse. The Sun is the source of light on Earth, and the source of digestive fire (or agni) in our bodies. When the Sun reaches its highest point in the sky at noon, we feel hungry and are capable of digesting our largest meal of the day. Similarly, when its light is eclipsed, our digestive strength is greatly diminished.

The Moon provides us with nourishment and immunity. On a subtle level, it governs the mind and emotions. While its light is eclipsed, we do not have the capacity to absorb and retain nourishment from our food, and likewise our immunity can be unstable. If food is eaten during an eclipse, it will not be fully digested and undigested food particles will clog the channels and toxify the body. While people often fail to digest their food properly, one's vitality can especially suffer through poor digestion during an eclipse. A "fast" can also be accomplished through eating light raw foods, such as green smoothies and juices, fruits, etc. Prepare for the eclipse by caring for your digestion and preserving your vitality. On the actual eclipse day, conserve your energies rather than spending time socializing too much and being very active.

The solar eclipse will not last long as an astronomical event, but its effects are felt up to a month before it occurs, and for months (and even years) after it occurs. If you are already feeling it, this is why.

Be conscious of the coming months and act with intention and consciousness. The shift is coming, but it has also already happened. The best thing to do is to flow with the change and embrace what is unexpected but necessary.