



Upagrahas in Vedic Astrology: Gulika, Mandi, Yamaghantaka and the Shadow Points

By Arpita Nath · Timing & Prediction · 2026-09-17

In standard Vedic chart analysis, astrologers look primarily at the nine physical or primary nodes - the Navagrahas (Sun through Ketu). However, classical texts like the Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra (BPHS) describe a secondary layer of non-luminous, sensitive calculation points known as Upagrahas (sub-planets or shadow points).

Upa means "secondary," "subordinate," or "near." While Upagrahas have no physical mass, they function as sensitive energetic triggers. They act as cosmic litmus tests, revealing hidden vulnerabilities, latent karmic debts, sudden events and psychological blind spots that primary planetary placements alone might not expose.

The Two Distinct Classes of Upagrahas

Classical Jyotish divides the sub-planets into two mathematical categories:

- 1. Kalavelas (Time-Based Portions):** Calculated by dividing daytime and nighttime into eight equal segments (Prahars) ruled by the planetary lords.
- 2. Aprakash Grahas (Non-Luminous Solar Points):** Calculated by adding fixed mathematical arcs to the exact longitudinal degree of the Sun.

Part 1: The Kalavelas (Time-Based Sub-Planets)

The five primary Kalavelas are considered the subtle, non-luminous "offspring" or shadow extensions of specific primary planets:

1. Gulika (Offspring of Saturn)

- **Nature:** Malefic, heavy, restrictive.
- **Core Influence:** Gulika is by far the most prominent Upagraha used in predictive astrology, especially in the South Indian and Parashari traditions. It signifies lingering karmic dues, delays, chronic ailments and subtle toxicity (Visha).
- **Placement Dynamic:** Unfavorable in cardinal or angle houses (Kendra/Trikona), but exceptionally favorable in Upachaya houses (3rd, 6th and 11th), where it grants fierce

competitive stamina, endurance and victory over adversaries.

2. Mandi (Alternative Saturnian Shadow)

- **Nature:** Closely linked to Gulika, often considered its sister point or exact moment of entry.
- **Core Influence:** While some traditions calculate Mandi slightly differently based on the beginning or middle of Saturn's planetary division, its effects mirror Gulika - governing physical sluggishness, structural blockages and sudden psychological hesitation.

3. Yamaghantaka (Offspring of Jupiter)

- **Nature:** Auspicious, benefic, protective.
- **Core Influence:** Named after Yama (the lord of dharma and death), this point counteracts premature loss. Where it sits, it provides a quiet cushion of divine grace, higher learning and timely protection during major health or financial crises.

4. Ardhaprahara (Offspring of Mercury)

- **Nature:** Mixed to benefic.
- **Core Influence:** Governs mental agility, commerce, communication clarity and tactical problem-solving. A well-placed Ardhaprahara supports smooth business trade and sharp analytical perception.

5. Kaala (Offspring of the Sun)

- **Nature:** Mildly malefic, authoritative, transformative.
- **Core Influence:** Represents the relentless pressure of time (Kaala). When triggered by dasha or transit, it brings sudden tests of ego, administrative friction or decisive career shifts requiring moral integrity.

Part 2: The Aprakash Grahas (Sun-Derived Shadow Points)

These five mathematical points are calculated directly from the position of the Sun (Surya), acting as mirrors of solar heat, karmic transformation and spiritual awakening:

1. Dhuma (The Smoky Point)

- **Calculation:** Sun's longitude + 133° 20'
- **Nature:** Fiery, obscure, turbulent.
- **Core Influence:** Dhuma represents suffocating smoke that blocks clear vision. It creates psychological restlessness, confusion in career choices, heated arguments and difficulty seeing

situations objectively.

2. Vyatipata (The Great Fall)

- **Calculation:** 360° - Dhuma
- **Nature:** Volatile, disruptive.
- **Core Influence:** Signifies sudden reversals of fortune, unexpected slips from authority and structural upheaval. When afflicting personal houses, it warns against overconfidence and risky financial speculation.

3. Parivesha (The Halo / Enclosure)

- **Calculation:** Vyatipata + 180°
- **Nature:** Restrictive, inward-turning.
- **Core Influence:** Parivesha acts like a siege or solar halo that confines energy. It can indicate feelings of entrapment, familial obligations or emotional confinement, but aids in monastic solitude and esoteric study.

4. Indra Chapa (The Rainbow / Kodanda)

- **Calculation:** 360° - Parivesha
- **Nature:** Deceptive, illusionary.
- **Core Influence:** Represents an alluring rainbow - promising vast material rewards that may turn out to be ephemeral. It governs aesthetic desires, sudden public recognition or commercial opportunities that require careful vetting.

5. Upaketu (The Secondary Tail)

- **Calculation:** Indra Chapa + $16^\circ 40'$ (which lands exactly 30° behind the Sun)
- **Nature:** Detached, sudden, spiritualizing.
- **Core Influence:** Behaves very much like the true node Ketu. It brings unexpected endings, sudden career exits, interest in occult sciences and liberation from material dependencies.

How to Read Upagrahas in Practice

- **Conjunctions with Luminary Planets:** When an Upagraha conjuncts the Sun or Moon within an orb of 3° to 5° , it colors the native's physical vitality (Sun) or psychological stability (Moon) with its specific theme.
- **House Vulnerabilities:** An afflicted house containing a malefic Upagraha (like Dhuma or

Gulika) often shows where a native experiences recurrent, unexplained delays or "bad luck" despite having strong main sign lords.

- **Transit Triggers:** Major outer planet transits (Saturn, Jupiter, Rahu) over the exact degree of your natal Upagrahas frequently unlock sudden life transitions or sudden payoffs.

<https://astroarpitanath.com/upagrahas-in-vedic-astrology/>

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