

# The Leo Ascendant

## by Edith Hathaway

Excerpt from *In Search of Destiny: Biography, History & Culture*  
*As Told Through Vedic Astrology* © 2012

### Introduction

Leo is **Simha** (the lion) in Sanskrit. After Aries, it is the second *Dharma* sign in the zodiac. Leo is fire and a fixed sign, leading towards consolidation. Vedic astrology associates all three fire signs (Aries, Leo, and Sagittarius) with the **Kshatriya**, or warrior class, which includes political leaders. *Kshatriyas* have royal status, as do the Sun and the Moon, the two great luminaries and symbols of the King and the Queen, respectively. This includes the signs over which they rule: the Sun rules Leo and the Moon rules Cancer. Since each luminary rules only one sign, their respective Ascendants are important for that reason, among others. Of the three fire signs all associated with royalty, Leo is considered the most royal sign, especially with *Magha nakshatra* at the start of Leo. Its symbol is a throne room.

The Sun, the Moon and Venus are the three brightest objects in the sky. As such, all three planets are associated with vision and eyesight. When they are all strong and unafflicted in the chart, these planets give good eyesight. If all three are afflicted, there is poor eyesight or even blindness. The Sun symbolizes domination, authority (also the government), will power, leadership, self-confidence, physical vitality, and the physical heart. As a *karaka* (significator) for the Ascendant in general as well as lord of Leo Ascendant in particular, the Sun is also the *karaka* for *Ahamkara* – called the “ego-principle” by Yogananda. Others say it encompasses the ego, but is neither entirely ego nor personality. (See also Glossary)

As both Ascendant lord and *karaka* for physical vitality, its position in the chart is doubly important for determining physical health. As with the Moon, the Sun has 108 Sanskrit names. The most common one is *Surya* (the luminous); also *Aditya* (son of the primordial vastness; or the source) and *Savitr* (procreator or nourisher). The Sun is the immortal soul, or that which inspires us from a deep level. We look to the Sun for constancy on a personal level, and likewise the Leo persona prefers the personal touch and everything related back to the Self. Here lies Leo’s greatest strength *and* weakness. In seeking the Self, the ego easily becomes inflated. Just as the lion’s image – and roar – is invoked to lead us with pride and self-confidence, the need for respect from others can also be excessive.

The Leo Ascendant person often has an innate sense of being special. They feel they have inherited a unique position in life, and thus may be driven to seek a leadership position or to seek recognition for their talents, which often lie in the dramatic or visual arts, music, politics or education. They are often associated with the performing arts, because they can be seen and appreciated. While Cancer shows the innate intelligence, Leo shows the creative intelligence. (This is because the outgrowth of the

4<sup>th</sup> house or sign of Cancer can be seen in the 2<sup>nd</sup> house from it – the 5<sup>th</sup> house or sign of Leo.) The Leo Ascendant person is also attracted to wealth, and may draw it to themselves – depending on the rest of the chart, especially on the strength of the Sun and Moon. Marriage may bring wealth, and may be very important in the life, even more so if key planets reside in either *Purva Phalguni* or *Uttara Phalguni nakshatras*, from 13:20 Leo to 30:00 Leo.

With a fire sign Ascendant, once again we have the natural sequence of the houses in terms of the four Vedic noble aims: *Dharma* – fire; *Artha* – earth; *Kama* – air; and *Moksha* – water. When the natural *Dharma* element is on the Ascendant, there is a strong yearning for a sense of purpose in the life. The fire Ascendant person burns with the intensity of this need for a purpose. With Leo Ascendant the personal story of the individual becomes dominant, even if the ultimate aim of the life is a spiritual one. The search for fulfillment must be both personally satisfying and engender respect and a good reputation. As the Sun rules over the father and spiritual authority, the Leo Ascendant person usually has a strong theme with his or her father, and at times a spiritual teacher or guru. The house placement of the natal Sun will indicate how this theme plays out, along with aspects to the Sun in the birth chart and in the *Navamsha* chart. And in general, the house placement of the Sun will show where the person puts a lot of his or her energy. The Sun's best house position is the 10<sup>th</sup> house, where it has *Digbala*. There it gives off the most light and most heat. From the 10<sup>th</sup> house the Sun can shine down on everything, and maintain the greatest amount of control. When in the 10<sup>th</sup> house from natal Moon, the Sun has a similar effect.

The Sun is also a classical malefic planet, as it can burn and cause separation due to the very power it possesses: its light, heat, and dominance. In human terms, this may be the heat of the Sun's power and ambition. When planets are too close to the Sun, they are said to be **combust**. This means their effectiveness to operate may be greatly curtailed by being burnt by the Sun's rays. In some cases, especially with Mercury or Venus, when they are within one degree of the Sun, the qualities of that planet suffer somewhat through burnout. But they may also receive extra brilliance, with their powers magnified. This is further described by the sign and house location of the combust planet and Sun. Note also the houses over which the combust planet rules and its role as *karaka*. Since Mercury always travels within 28 degrees of the Sun, its combustion is not considered as serious; but if it is at least 10 degrees away from the Sun in the same sign, this condition produces a *Budha Aditya yoga*, a *yoga* of cleverness. If Mercury is unafflicted and at least 20 degrees away from the Sun in the same sign, the condition is greatly enhanced. The **specific range of combustion** is related to how far away from the Sun the planet must be in order to be visible from the earth. Five degrees either side of the Sun is a very strong combustion, especially if the planet is 5 degrees behind the Sun in celestial longitude. Moon, Rahu and Ketu do not qualify for combustion. For planets to be combust, the widest range of orbs used on either side of the Sun is the following: Mars: 17 degrees; Mercury: 13 degrees; Jupiter: 11 degrees; Venus: 9 degrees; and Saturn: 15 degrees.

With Leo Ascendant, we are one step further along in the *Dharmic* sequence, once Aries has initiated the action. Being a fixed fire sign and the natural 5<sup>th</sup> house, Leo relates to the consolidation of the firepower begun in Aries. We have already discussed how Leo (and or the 5<sup>th</sup> house) relates to the fruitfulness of the mind and thus one's creative intelligence and acquired education. It is also one's past life credit, or *Poorvapunya*. If creative intelligence and artistic creativity are featured in the 5<sup>th</sup> house and sign, biological creativity is there as well, and thus – children. If malefics are placed in the 5<sup>th</sup> house or aspect the 5<sup>th</sup> house from the Ascendant (or from the Moon), one or more of the various levels of the 5<sup>th</sup> house may become afflicted. For instance, it will become difficult to either bear children or keep them – even if one becomes pregnant. This may be due to miscarriage, abortion, or stillbirth. Also, one may lose a child due to a custody battle, or some situation where the child is removed from the parent. If the 5<sup>th</sup> house is well disposed and aspected, the affairs of the 5<sup>th</sup> house go smoothly. Further confirmation resides in the *Navamsha* chart. If the *karaka* for children and fertility (Jupiter) resides in the 5<sup>th</sup> house, this does not bode well for pregnancy, especially for a woman, but it can also apply to a man. However, it is good for creative intelligence and the ability to learn and/or be a scholar or poet. Jupiter's aspects from its own house to the Ascendant and the 9<sup>th</sup> house are also beneficial to the native in terms of their own physical health and safety. This position also brings the *Bhagya yoga*, a yoga of great good fortune, when a strong benefic aspects both the Ascendant and the 9<sup>th</sup> house.

When there is a fixed sign Ascendant with at least several planets also in fixed signs, this is called a *Musala yoga*. (A stricter definition demands all planets be in fixed signs.) With a *Musala yoga* the nature of fixity is emphasized in the life. On the positive side, loyalty, continuity, and steadfastness of purpose are featured. On the negative side, the person can be stubborn, and fixity of purpose or of ideas will veer towards the judgmental and biased, not being able to see another way of doing things or of relating to people and events. With Leo, there is always the possibility the ego can become too attached to pride. Royalty cannot be snubbed, but when it feels fulfilled, there is great magnanimity and often an illustrious appearance.

**Nakshatras:** The *nakshatras* contained within Leo are as follows: **Magha:** 00 – 13:20 Leo (ruled by Ketu); **Purva Phalguni:** 13:20 – 26:40 Leo (ruled by Venus); and **Uttara Phalguni:** 26:40 – 30:00 Leo (ruled by the Sun). (*Uttara Phalguni nakshatra* continues for 10 degrees into Virgo.) The Leo Ascendant, or any planet situated in one of these three *nakshatras* is colored by being: 1) in Leo, ruled by the Sun; 2) in one of these three *nakshatras*, ruled by Ketu, Venus, and Sun, respectively; and 3) by aspects to the Ascendant and Asc. lord Sun.

Jupiter is the best planet for Leo Ascendant and is the *Nadi yogakaraka*.

**Gandanta:** The first 3:20 of fire signs are *gandanta* and thus more vulnerable, though not as vulnerable and unpredictable as the last 3:20 of water signs. Ketu's house and sign position in the chart will be important to determine the outcome of any planets situated in *Magha nakshatra*.

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## Chart Examples:

- 1) **Paramahansa Yogananda**, Indian saint, spiritual leader, founder of Self-Realization Fellowship
- 2) **Maya Angelou**, American poet, writer, performing artist, actress, college professor
- 3) **Woody Allen**, American film director, screenwriter, actor, musician
- 4) **James Taylor**, American singer, songwriter, musician

## From the Glossary of Sanskrit & Astrological Terms (*In Search of Destiny*, © 2012)

**Ahamkara** (*ah – ham – KAH – rah*) : the specific point in material reality when the consciousness becomes embodied, and considered for the birth of an individual astrologically as the Ascendant. As a *karaka* (significator) for the Ascendant, the Sun is also *karaka* for the *Ahamkara*. Neither entirely ego, nor personality – but encompasses the ego, and is the notion of individual existence. (See also **Ascendant**)

**Ascendant** : the point where the Eastern horizon intersects with the ecliptic, or the Sun's apparent path around the earth. At sunrise, the Sun is on the Ascendant to the exact degree. It takes on average two hours for a zodiacal sign to pass over the horizon. This varies according to the sign's ascension and the latitude in question. The destiny of any entity begins at the Ascendant, according to Vedic philosophy.... With whole sign houses the Ascendant always falls in House 1.

**Author's notes, Aug. 2015:** The Leo Ascendant chapter, from *In Search of Destiny*, 2012, (pp. 277-320) includes in-depth coverage of the four Example Charts given above, followed by 2 pp. with questions on the Leo Ascendant charts, reviewing all charts. Continuing the Leo theme, and with tr. Sun and Jupiter currently in Leo, we can cite the unfolding 2016 U.S. Presidential campaign. As of late Aug. 2015 the two candidates attracting by far the largest crowds are the Republican Donald Trump, with Ascendant and Mars in Leo; and on the Democratic side: Bernie Sanders, whose birth time is as yet unknown, but whose natal Sun and Rahu are in Leo. Donald Trump was born June 14, 1946, 10:54 am EDT, Jamaica, NY. Bernie Sanders was born Sept. 8, 1941, Brooklyn (King's county), NY. With a speculative rectified time of 1:05 am EDT (by the author), Sanders' Ascendant is 16:44 Gemini, with Moon in the 10th house in Pisces, Ascendant lord Mercury exalted in Virgo in the 4th house conjoining Venus. Using this birth time, Sanders would be in the favorable Rahu-Venus period in the *Vimshottari Dasha* system: March 15, 2015 through March 15, 2018. Donald Trump also has natal Sun conjoining Rahu, his in the dominant 10th house opposite Moon and Ketu. He is currently in Rahu-Moon *Dasha*, and on Oct.29, 2015 he enters Rahu-Mars *Dasha*, the last sub-period of the 18-year Rahu *Dasha*. His 16-year Jupiter *Dasha* starts Nov. 16, 2016, 8 days after the 2016 U.S. Presidential Election.

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**Edith Hathaway** is an international consultant in practice since 1980, author, teacher, and lecturer of Vedic astrology, and among the few contemporary astrologers trained and certified in systems of both East and West. She was a Founding member of the American Council of Vedic Astrology and since 1992 has served as a faculty and board member of both the American Council and American College of Vedic Astrology. She has received numerous certificates and awards from leading astrological organizations, including the *Jyotish Brihaspati*, the highest award given by the Council of Vedic Astrology (CVA). Her articles and lectures are available at her website [www.edithhathaway.com](http://www.edithhathaway.com), along with testimonials and reviews of her most recent book, *In Search of Destiny: Biography, History & Culture As Told Through Vedic Astrology*, 2012. It is available in both paperback and Kindle e-book versions at Amazon USA, Amazon Europe and elsewhere. See her website store for her lectures on video or mp3s along with accompanying PDF files.

**New at the web store – Sept. 2015!** The re-release of Edith's 2002 Audio course, *The Vedic Chart: An Expert Guide Through the 12 Ascendants*. The 12 audio cassettes are now available for purchase as mp3s, either as a collection or selectively, along with a Short version PDF (22 pp.) and a Full version PDF (84 pp.), both containing Addenda with updates on both birth data and biographical data. The Full version PDF comes with the 12 mp3s and contains all 62 charts and birth data. This 18 ½ hour collection qualifies for at least 20 credits in most Vedic astrology accreditation programs in the United States and elsewhere.