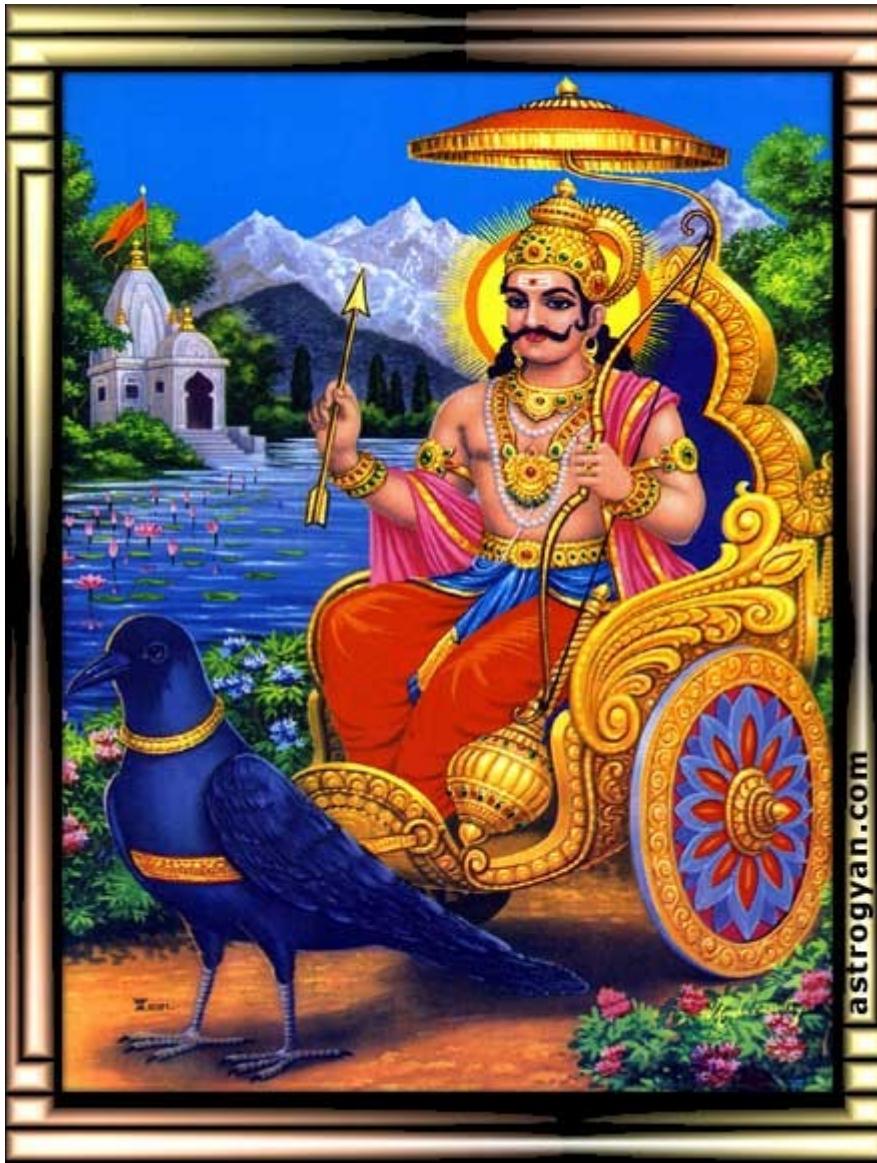


Shani-deva (The Saturn Planet)



The planet Saturn (Shani), is one of the Navagraha. Shani is embodied in the planet Saturn and is the Lord of Saturday (Saturn-day). The word shani also denotes the seventh day or Saturday. The word shani comes from Shanye Kramati Sah, the one who moves slowly, because Saturn takes about 30 years to revolve around the Sun. Shani is the son of the Sun Deity (Surya-deva) and his wife Chhaya, hence is also known as Chayyaputra. He is the elder brother of Yamaraja, the Deity of Death. Surya's two sons Shanideva and Yama-raj performs judgement upon the world. Shani gives us the results of one's deeds throughout one's life through appropriate punishments and rewards and Yamaraja grants the results of one's deeds after death. "The ultimate Tantric viewpoint in Indian astrology is to please Saturn, because of all the planets Saturn is the greatest." It is possible, through rigorous penance, to control the darshan of all eight of the other planets, but Saturn can only be propitiated, not controlled. While everyone - deva, asura or human - who has tried to control Saturn has come to grief, anyone who can propitiate Saturn will pass safely through life with very few hindrances in his/her path.

Suryadeva was married to Samjna (she was the daughter of Vishvakarma - the architect of the universe). Samjna lived with her husband for many years, during which time she gave

birth to the first three of her children: Vaivasvata Manu, Lord Yamaraja (the lord of death) and Yami. When Suryadeva's intense heat became unbearable for her she created a substitute wife, in her exact form, by awakening her own shadow (Chaya). She then proceeded to her father's house where she told him that she couldn't bear the heat of her husband. Her father requested her to go back to her husband, but she didn't - instead she decided to go the Earth and changed her form into a mare and began performing severe penance, subsisting on dry grass alone, so that she might come to withstand her husband's effulgence. In the meanwhile Chaya, who was Samjna's shadow brought to life, bore with Suryadeva three children Savarni (the next Manu after Vaivasvata Manu), Tapati (who became a river in India) and Saturn.

In the Shani Mahatyama it is stated that as soon as Shani was born, his gaze fell on his father and caused vitiligo (is a condition that causes de-pigmentation of sections of one's skin); his gaze next fell on the Sun's charioteer, who fell and broke his thigh; and when that gaze lit upon the 7 horses of the Sun's chariot they all went stone blind. The Sun tried a number of remedies to remove these infirmities but nothing worked. It was only when Saturn's gaze left them that the Sun's skin cleared, his charioteer's femur healed and his horses regained their sight.

Although Saturn became a planet after performing penance in Benares and propitiating Lord Shiva, he did not even spare his benefactor. When Lord Shiva's son Lord Ganesha was born, his mother Parvati wanted to show the boy to Shani deva. Saturn politely advised her not to do so, but when she insisted, he gazed at the child with only one eye. Instantly Lord Ganesha's head was reduced to ashes. To prevent Parvati in her anger from destroying the world, Lord Vishnu flew north on His eagle Garuda and, finding a bull elephant exhausted from intercourse with it's mate, cut off his head, returned with it, and joined it successfully to Lord Ganesha's body.

The Shani Mahatmya declares, "Saturn, who rules both longevity and prosperity, can turn even a king into a pauper and vice versa. When Saturn is happy he causes good fortune to sweep through your life, and when angry he destroys everything. He controls everyone's destiny. No one can escape from Saturn's grasp, no matter where he might be in the world. No planet except Saturn can give you both long life and also plenty of things to consume during that life. Saturn has that ability to change your destiny and is the force of fate, the force that makes you experience your karmas whether you want to or not. In Sanskrit it is said svabhavo vijayati iti shauryam – the true heroism is to conquer your own nature. Until you have completely conquered your innate nature, Saturn can still affect you. Saturn will search out the weakness in your personality and will expose them to full view, making you experience your limitations by making your ego self-identify with those limitations. As long as you are unable to control your own nature, you are at Saturn's mercy. If you can completely conquer what comes naturally to you Saturn can have no effect on you. But it's not so easy to control your nature, and as long as it not perfectly controlled you will always be subjected to Saturn and his effects."

Shanideva is known as the greatest teacher and well wisher for the righteous as well the greatest punisher for those who follow the path of evil, betrayal, backstabbing and unjust revenge. He is depicted as being dark in colour, clothed in black, holding a sword, arrows & two daggers and mounted on a crow, which is Shani's vehicle(inverted commas perhaps). As the protector of property, Shani is able to repress the thieving tendencies of birds.

Maharaja Dasaratha, emperor of Ayodhya, challenged Lord Shanaishchara to a duel as he prepared to cross his empire bringing drought and poverty. Lord Shanaishchara extolled

Dasaratha's virtues and replied to him that "I can't skip my duties but I'm pleased with your courage. Great sage Rishyasringa can help you. Wherever Rishyasringa lives, that country will have no drought and dryness." Dasaratha, after receiving the blessings from Lord Shanaishchara, wisely arranged for his daughter to marry Rishyasringa so that he is always present in Ayodhya.

Ravana and Saturn:- Saturn said, "after Ravana had succeeded in gaining control of all of us 9 planets, he installed us face down on the nine steps which led to his throne. Each morning when he would ascend to his throne, he would step firmly on the back of each of us, causing us great anguish and insult. Then one day Narada Muni came to Ravana's palace and, seeing us 9 planets lying face down on the steps of the throne, said to me, "O Saturn! You are the mightiest and the most terrible of all the planets, but even though Ravana has insulted you to this extent you can do nothing about it. Why is this?". I replied, "Because I am faced down my gaze cannot fall on Ravana, so I cannot affect him. If someone can turn me over onto my back then I will show you what I can do. Advise him to turn me over, and I will do the rest". Narada Muni understood, and went to search out for Ravana. After praising him to the skies Narada Muni ended by saying, "But there is one thing here that I don't like". Ravana indignantly asked, "And what might be that?" Narada Muni replied, "O Ravana! You have the Nine Planets lying face down. Why not turn them over, so that instead of stepping on their backs each day as you mount your throne you can step on their chests, and see the discomfiture on their faces?" Ravana liked this suggestion. As soon as he turned us planets over onto our backs, and arranged us neatly on steps leading up to his throne, my gaze fell on him, and his mind became perverted. Within the space of a few months he kidnapped Sita Devi. Then Lord Raam invaded Shree Lanka and killed him, and his sons and grandsons were all slaughtered – all as the result of my influence on him during his Sadi-Sate (7 and a half year) period.

In the Ramayana, Shree Hanumanji rescued Saturn (Shani-deva) from the clutches of Ravana and in gratitude, Shani-dev promised Shree Hanumanji that anyone who prayed to him (Shree Hanumanji), especially on Saturdays, would be rescued from the "malefic" effects of himself (Saturn), or, at the very least, the effects would be softened. All the Navagrahas are friends of Shree Hanumanji, particularly Shanideva. There has been an "MOU" (Memorandum of Understanding) between the Navagrahas and Shree Hanumanji. While Shree Hanumanji was on his way to Shree Lanka to find Sita-Devi, he had seen "Navagrahas" being captured and tied together by Ravana asura. The Navagrahas knew that only Shree Anjaneya (Shree Hanumanji) had the power to release them from the clutches of evil king Ravana. They worshipped Shree Hanumanji and requested him to free them their distress. Shree Hanumanji, (being the great superhero that he is), immediately realised the presence of Shani-dev amongst the Navagrahas and asked Shani-dev "If I release you O Shani-dev, you will gaze at me and I will be under your spell for 7.5 years". For this Shani-dev replied that he will not do that and even spare those who worship Shree Anjaneya from the ill effects of his dosha (gaze/malefic effects). They, (the Navagrahas) then blessed Shree Hanumanji, saying "Those who are devoted to you are blessed by us too." All the Grahas blessed Shree Hanumanji individually. Thus, the 9 planets' negative influences are subdued when one worships Shree Hanumanji.



Shrine at Shani Shingnapur

A very important Shrine for Lord Shani is in Shani Shingnapur, Maharashtra, India. The deity here is "Swayambhu" (self-evolved deity) that is self emerged from earth in form of black but imposing stone. Though no one knows the exact period, it is believed that the Swayambhu Shanaishwara statue was found from times immemorial by shepherds of the then local hamlet. The katha of the swayambhu statue was handed down from generations through word of mouth, and goes something like this: When the Shepherd touched the stone with a pointed rod, the stone started bleeding. The shepherds were astounded. Soon the whole village gathered around to watch the miracle. On that night Lord Shanaishwara appeared in the dream of the most devoted and pious of the shepherds. He told the shepherd that he is "Shanaishwara". He also told that the unique looking black stone is his swayambhu form. The shepherd prayed and asked the lord whether he should construct a temple for him. To this, Lord Shani Mahatma said there is no need for a roof as the whole sky is his roof and he preferred to be under open sky. He asked the shepherd to do daily pooja and 'Tailabhisheka' (oil bath) every Saturday without fail. He also promised the whole hamlet will have no fear of dacoits or burglars or thieves.

So, Lord Shanaishwara can be seen even today, in the open yard without any roof above. To this day, there are no doors for any houses, shops, temples. It is to be seen to believe that even the post office has no door, not to speak of locks. Due to the fear of Lord Shani, none of the structures, be it dwelling houses, huts, shops, etc. situated within a one kilometre radius of this Lord Shani temple have neither doors nor locks. No thievery or burglary ever occurred here in this hamlet called Shani Shingnapur. Some who have tried to steal have died vomiting blood within minutes of their act and before they could cross the boundary. Many others are said to have received varied "punishments" such as long sickness, mental imbalance etc.

This Shani Shingnapur is visited daily by thousands of devotees praying for Lord Shanaishwara's favour. The place is busiest on Saturdays. Shani Trayodashi is considered to be a favourite day of the lord. Similarly, a Saturday falling on 'Amavasya'(new moon day), is considered to be a favourite day for Lord Shanaishwara. Thousands of devotees seeking his blessings flock to this temple. These dates are provided on our website.

The Planet Saturn (Shani-deva) in Vedic astrology.

Saturn is traditionally the most difficult of the major planets, the legendary king of the malefics. He has been feared throughout the centuries as the great Deity of Death - the signifier of death, disease, poverty, separation, ugliness and perversity. Though Saturn possesses a higher and more beneficent side, at least from the standpoint of the spiritual life, even this is stern and exacting, hard to live up to and to endure, a power of discipline, asceticism and solitude.

Please note, what you are about to read below is not comforting and instead of conjuring over who Saturn is and why he is so consequential, please simply let his katha work on you, for Saturn will affect you whether you know him or not. Know, however, that Saturn is the most important player in the systematization of Reality known as Vedic Jyotish.

Saturn brings limitation and obstruction, hindrance in self-expression and in self-manifestation, which may become oppression and adversity. As Jupiter indicates the process of creation and expansion, Saturn brings about destruction and contraction. As Jupiter is the great affirm-er, Saturn is the great negator. As Jupiter is the Deity of joy, Saturn is the Deity of sorrow. As Jupiter is the optimist, he is the pessimist. As Jupiter shows the joy inherent in all life, Saturn reveals all life as misery. Jupiter is the positive teacher of the soul; Saturn is the negative guide.

Saturn is the significator of disease, old age and death - the great enemies of human life, which overcome all life bound by time. As the furthest in orbit of the major planets, his is the major influence we all must face in the end. Hence the placement of Saturn in the chart is the ultimate issue of our life and destiny, the hard facts or stern reality we must face.

Though the power of Saturn to limit or destroy what it influences should not be underestimated, its positive value must also be considered. Destruction is the necessary counterpart for creation, as decay and death is required for new life and growth. The limitation on our material fate is necessary: all material things must come to an end, what is put together must come apart and all things must return to their constituent elements. The four noble Truths of the Gautama Buddha (Life means suffering, The origin of suffering is attachment, The cessation of suffering is attainable & The path to the cessation of suffering), and his doctrines of impermanence and universal suffering reflect the wisdom of Saturn.

Our great fear of Saturn has measured the degree of our attachment to the material world and our inability to face the ultimate issues of our existence. Saturn shows us the limitation of this realm, which is the necessary but painful lesson we must learn in order to find our way into the unlimited. Saturn is death that takes us beyond the limitations of mortal life, which is the gateway to the eternal, though straight and narrow as the razor's edge.

Saturn gives bad luck, misfortune and difficult karma. It is the planet of bad karma or unfortunate destiny. Yet these may come upon a soul not because it has been evil or slow to evolve in past lives. Some souls, particularly those who are more advanced, may seek such things as a means of quicker and deeper spiritual growth in life. Anyone can resort to the Divine in adversity, but who can do so in prosperity? Such is the measure of a great soul. Saturn is also the suffering that makes us grow inwardly.

The influence of Saturn is to delay, to withhold. As the slowest moving of the planets he retards things, holds back their development. Those retarded in mind or speech are usually under a strong affliction of Saturn. He makes us deaf and blind, stunted or deformed. Saturn is the significator of old age, the Deity of time, who brings on all the degenerative processes of ageing, the failure of our faculties and our powers. As such a badly placed Saturn causes premature ageing. Saturn takes away our vitality, on a physical and/or on a mental level. He causes depression, melancholy, self-pity and gives rise to worry, fear and anxiety. As a nervous planet, Saturn obstructs nerve functioning. He may cause numbness, paralysis or degenerative neurological disorders. His obstructing and repressing influence on the mind may promote neurosis or insanity. Saturn is behind most diseases, particularly chronic, degenerative diseases, diseases of old age, including arthritis and cancer. As representing decay he can cause an accumulation of waste materials in the body and often is

a point of de-vitalization in one's birth chart.

Saturn causes poverty, deprivation and want. He keeps us in bondage or servitude, under the domination of others, under the rule of external forces. Yet Saturn also causes us to retain what we possess. Saturn indicates property, land, fixed assets. Those who obtain wealth through a well-disposed Saturn may become misers, and will carefully hold on to what has, with such difficulty, been acquired. In the lower sense, Saturn, is a selfish planet. In fact, we could say that Saturn is the planet of selfishness. It indicates our most deep-seated and obstinate ego drives towards self-protection. Saturn is our survival instinct, which becomes our need to maintain our separate existence, and is more basic and stronger even than our sexual drive. Most of our materialistic values, like our need for wealth, are little more than glorified survival values and bear the limitation and poverty of vision of Saturn. They are caused by the influence of Saturn but as circumscribed by it are also destroyed by its disintegrating affect.

As the planet of the ego, Saturn is furthermore the planet of fear, upon which the ego is based. Saturn creates fear and darkness in the mind. It makes us feel that we cannot overcome things, that life is against us. He makes us doubt ourselves, doubt even the Divine and makes us prey to dark fears, fantasies and phobias. Saturn represents the darker side of the mind and the baser elements of life: crime, perversity, paranoia. Saturn indicates the underworld, the lower astral realms. Its influence works through ugliness, terror and fright, through abuse, degradation and self-debasement. **Saturn not only can cause separation from loved ones and loss of love, he can also cause sexual perversions and unnatural sexual actions. Saturn can cause us to pursue gross pleasure without any grace or associated with violence and the pleasure of harming others or seeing others in pain.**

Usually a strongly malefic Saturn is prominent in the charts of criminals, perverts or evil-minded people. Its negative side comes out particularly in association with Mars, another cruel planet. There is no limit to the destruction these planets can project when not under benefic influence. On a lower level Saturn represents the gross body and the senses, the elemental forces which dominate us. It's the gravity that pulls us down and gets us attached to what is inferior. As the power of darkness and obstruction, Saturn is the enemy of the Sun and the Moon, and has an eclipse like affect upon them. Only Jupiter has the power to really subdue or to balance out his influence, though Venus and Mercury can reduce it to a great degree. As Saturn is limiting, Jupiter pushes the boundaries. As Saturn is miserly, Jupiter is generous. Both – together - allow for an equalized movement of expansion and contraction, creation and destruction, in which there can be true growth. As Jupiter elevates Saturn, Saturn gives Jupiter a greater detachment and more objective perception.

Saturn is not only in many respects the lowest of the planets, it is also the highest. Its lesson is the most difficult but the most rewarding. Saturn is the grandfather spirit and law giver, our guiding ancestor. He represents not only the negative influence of the past which constricts us, he represents the positive spirit of the past that brings order and consistency to our lives.

Saturn is the yogi in meditation. He can give complete detachment and independence. He is the one who stands alone and goes beyond the limitations of the masses. He shows the way of transcendence, though necessarily difficult, whereby all limitations can be overcome by resorting to our true and unlimited Self.

A well-placed and strong Saturn is thus necessary for the spiritual life. In fact, it is necessary for creating anything of enduring value in any domain of life. Saturn gives the concentration, the sense of detail, the discipline and seriousness necessary to deal with the

great challenges of life.

Saturn is the significator of life itself. It indicates fate, term of life, longevity. A strong Saturn protects the life. Saturn is the planet to be propitiated in old age. He indicates the regime necessary for full life and longevity, violating which we suffer from premature decay and death.

IN YOUR CHART SATURN CONTROLS (IN YOUR LIFE):- adversities, captivity, difficulties, austerity, enjoyment denied, barriers, bondage, deterrence, black, blue, grey, dangers, destruction, dejection, depression, discipline, destroyer of illusion, dreadful terms, endless, helplessness, frustration, introverted, humiliation, martyrs, inactivity, lack of desire, low class ways/people, mental trouble, misery, misfortunes, monks, gurus, old persons, death, bones, persistence, patience, philosophers, poverty, sorrows, power for austerity, profession in general, seriousness, slowness, gradual nature, surrender, thin, lean, unattractive to worldly people, undesirable things, worker class.

WHEN SATURN IS BENEFIC IN YOUR LIFE CURRENTLY THEN ONE SHOULD FEEL THESE EFFECTS:- Shani-dev makes you a true person, reliable, honest, sincere, faithful, chaste, having good concentration, meditation, and prayers,

WHEN SATURN IS MALEFIC IN YOUR LIFE CURRENTLY THEN ONE SHOULD FEEL THESE EFFECTS:- an afflicted Saturn in your birth chart will make the benefics given above negative in your life making one perform stupid acts, dullness, want of originality and ideas, diseases which takes long to be cured, impediments of the right ear, teeth, cold, leprosy, consumption (pulmonary tuberculosis), jaundice, palsy, gout, deafness, colic, paralysis, diseases of the spleen, all chronic ailments of the bone system are attributed to Saturn.

If Saturn is afflicted by Mars in your chart then there will be falls, injuries, bruises, operation, amputation, fracture, curvature of the spine, gall stones...

If Saturn is afflicted by the Sun in your chart then there will be blood pressure troubles, cerebral haemorrhage, cerebral anaemia, thrombosis, cardiac troubles, gout...

The ultimate Tantric viewpoint in Vedic Astrology is to please Saturn, because all of Jyotish is Saturn. It is possible, through rigorous penance, to control the darshan (meaning "sight", "auspicious viewing") of the eight of the other Grahas, but the image of Saturn can only be propitiated, not controlled. While everyone - Deva, Asura or human - who has tried to control Saturn has come to grief, anyone who can propitiate Saturn will pass safely through the Valley of the Shadow of Death.

Kindly note:- Some the information above may portray the Celestials (like Shanideva) as adharmic, but you should know much information that one reads in our Shastras is totally inconceivable to us mere mortals. To truly understand our Vedic Scriptures can be quite an effort indeed hence It requires a Guru to explain the intricacies and the secrets it has in It. Every event conveys some noble secrets in some direct or indirect way. You have to understand It with one's inner self and not like a novel. The personalities in our Vedic Scriptures are of course not worthy of comparison to the characters we come across in a novel. In each personality in our Vedic Scriptures, are there to convey message(s) to us. But let me state here categorically, when the Supreme Personality of Godhead Shree Krishna and His devotees like Lord Brahma, Lord Shiva, Mother Durga, Lord Indra, the 9 planets, and so forth performs an act, it should NEVER be questioned. Yes, this will not go down well with many so called "new-aged" "I want the truth" people out there, but honestly what right does one have to question the Lord and his elevated servants? God can do what ever He pleases and He is not accountable to no being... BUT His servants are. The Lord has a

reason for everything He does, and who gives one the right to question our Dear Lord... His Lila (pastime) is beyond human comprehension but we humbly tried to explain a little (with my minuscule intelligence) above as to why the Lord or His devotee acted in this regard. (say this is my take/opinion, etc)

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Compiled for the upliftment of Sanathan Dharma
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