

Rahu-deva (Rahu)



Rahu is a cut-off head of an asura (demon), that swallows the sun or the moon causing eclipses. He is depicted in art as a serpent with no body riding a chariot drawn by eight black horses. Rahu is one of the Navagrahas (nine planets) in Vedic astrology. The Rahu kala (time of day under the influence of Rahu) is considered inauspicious.

Astronomically, Rahu and Ketu denote the two points of intersection of the paths of the Sun and the Moon as they move around the (or ecliptic) celestial sphere. Therefore, Rahu and Ketu are respectively called the north and the south lunar nodes. The fact that eclipses occur when Sun and Moon are at one of these points gives rise to the idea of the swallowing of the Sun. Rahu and Ketu likewise afflicts the Moon, and Ketu the Sun. Rahu and Ketu likewise eclipse the lives of living beings, and though they spare no one, you can be happy if you worship them and make appropriate offerings. Since they are amongst the planets are particularly cruel, it is essential to worship them regularly. When propitiated, Rahu fills one with mercy and removes diseases and fear of snakes, while a pleased Ketu gives one transcendental wisdom.

The intelligent Rahu is the severed head of the son of the mightily demon Viprachitti and his wife Simhika, the sister of Shree Prahlada Maharaja. Ketu is the dismembered body of which Rahu is the head. Rahu and Ketu were split at the time of the Churning of the Milk Ocean, which came about as the result of a curse by Durvasa Muni. This curse caused the glory, lustre and prosperity of the Celestials to wane, as the Moon had waned when he was cursed by Daksha. Dejected and forlorn, the great Celestials consulted Lord Brahma for help who is return asked the Supreme Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu said to them “the present time is propitious for your foes the asuras (demon), but not for you. You will have to bide your time until time turns in your favour. In the meanwhile, make peace with your enemies, and cooperate with them to churn the Milk Ocean, that you may obtain amrita (the nectar of immortality) thereby”. This they did and they added all kinds of medicinal herbs, bushes,

creepers and other planets into the ocean and using Mount Mandara for the churning rod and the great serpent Vasuki for the churning stick, the devas and asuras industriously churned the Ocean of Milk. Lord Vishnu also assisted the process by making Vasuki resistant to any pain. The egotistic demons proud of their knowledge and glory, had insisted on holding Vasuki's head and Lord Vishnu had advised the devas to agree. The devas therefore smugly clung onto Vasuki's tail as they churned the watched the asuras being blasted by the fiery poison that the distressed snake exhaled. Below is more information about the Churning of the Milk ocean.

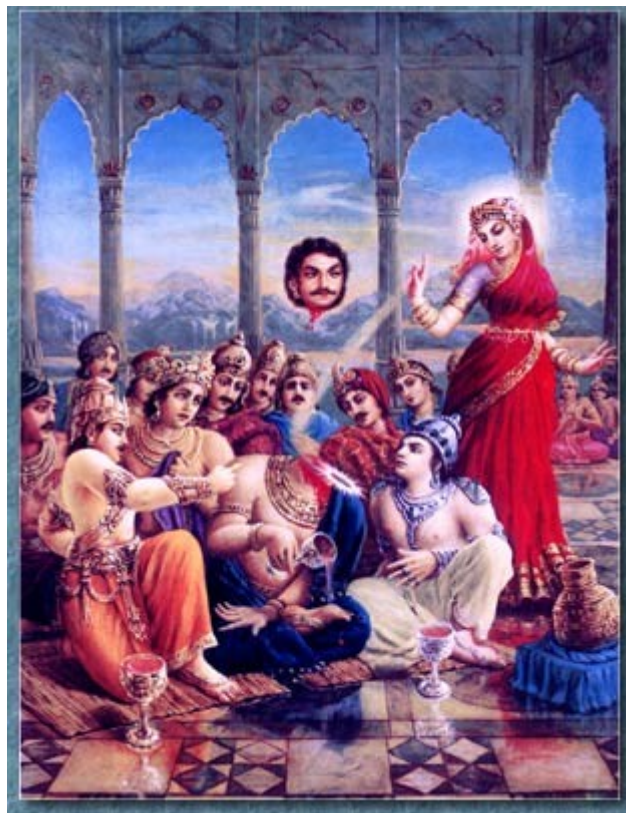
In the Srimad Bhagavatam Maha Purana 8th canto chapters 5-10. The devas and the demons assembled on the shore of the milk ocean that lies in the celestial region of the cosmos. The devas and the demons devised a plan to churn the milk ocean to produce the nectar of immortality. They then agreed to share the nectar equally once it was produced. For the task of churning the milk ocean, the Mandara Mountain was used as the churning rod, and Vasuki, the king of serpents, became the rope for churning. As the churning began, the Mandara Mountain began to sink deep into the ocean, at which time Lord Vishnu incarnated as a great tortoise called Lord Kurma and supported the mountain on His back. With the devas at Vasuki's tail and the demons at his head, they churned the milk ocean for one thousand years.

The churning of the milk ocean (Pictured Below) first produced a deadly poison, which Lord Shiva drank without being affected.



As Lord Shiva drank the poison, a few drops fell from his hands and were licked up by scorpions, snakes, and similar other deadly creatures. After Lord Shiva drank the poison, numerous opulent items were produced. First a Surabhi cow appeared who could yield

unlimited quantities of milk. A white horse named Uccaihsrava was then produced, as well as a white elephant named Airavata. Then a valuable gem called the Kaustubha-mani appeared. Next came the Apsaras, beautiful dancing girls and a host of other wonderful things appeared from the milk ocean. At last the Lord came in a form called Dhanvantari appeared carrying the pot of immortal nectar in His hands. Seeing Lord Dhanvantari with the pot of nectar, both the devas and demons became anxious. The devas, being fearful of what would happen if the demons drank their share of the nectar of immortality, forcibly seized the pot. Wherever the devas went with the pot of nectar, fierce fighting ensued. In an endeavour to keep the nectar from falling into the hands of the demons, the devas hid it in four places on the earth - Bharat (India), Prayag (Allahabad), Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik. At each of the hiding places, a drop of immortal nectar spilled from the pot and landed on the earth. These four places since then have acquired mystical powers. Eventually, the demons overpowered the devas and took possession of the nectar of immortality. To rescue the devas from the hands of fate, Lord Vishnu incarnated as a beautiful woman, Mohini-murti (Picture Below), and approached the demons. When the demons saw the charming beauty of Mohini-murti, they lost all composure. Seeing Her slender hips, raised breasts, and pleasing smile, the demons completely forgot about drinking the nectar of immortality. While Her beauty thus bewildered the demons, Mohini-murti seized the nectar and returned it to the devas, who drank it immediately. But Rahu had disguised himself as a deva. The Sun (Suryadev) and the Moon (Chandradev) pointed this out to Mohini Devi who immediately slashed off the demon's head. Since the nectar had by then already reached up to the neck, he did not die. Thus the head came to be known as Rahu and the body as Ketu. To avenge this betrayal, Rahu and Ketu periodically eclipse the sun and the moon.



Rahu's body was later revived and became Ketu. Garlic sprang up from wherever drops of Rahu's blood fell to Earth; its medicinal qualities are like those of amrita, but has a Rahu like effects on the minds of those who consume it.

Rahu is a legendary master of deception who signifies cheaters, pleasure seekers, operators in foreign lands, drug dealers, poison dealers, insincere & immoral acts, etc. It is the significator of an irreligious person, an outcast, harsh speech, logical fallacy, falsehoods, uncleanliness, abdominal ulcers, bones, and transmigration. Rahu is instrumental in strengthening one's power and converting even an enemy into a friend.

Shree Hanumanji, in his childhood, flew towards the Sun (see the picture below), as it appeared to be a big red fruit. The day was solar eclipse day, when Rahu was to swallow up the Sun. Rahu arrived and saw Shree Hanumanji trying to swallow the Sun; little Hanumanji, seeing Rahu, was attracted to the curiosity of the disembodied head, and caught Rahu.



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 greatest 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.

In Vedic astrology Rahu is seen as an asura or demon who does his best to plunge any area of life he controls into chaos, mystery, and cruelty. He is associated with the world of material manifestation and worldly desire, as well as random, uncontrolled growth without wisdom or understanding. Rahu is supposed to be a mighty and naughty child of maya (illusory power of nature), and thus has a lot of dualities attached to its illusory nature. Various names assigned to Rahu in Vedic texts—the chief, the advisor of the demons, the

minister of the demons, ever-angry, the tormentor, bitter enemy of the luminaries, lord of illusions, one who frightens the Sun, the one who makes the Moon lustreless, the peacemaker, the immortal (having drunk the divine nectar), bestower of prosperity and wealth and ultimate knowledge—give a clue to its basic energy and attributes. Rahu can be considered the expert among the planets when it comes to scheming and plotting. It is the master of manipulation.

Rahu governs all sorts of poisonous chemicals like fertilizers, pesticides, and disinfectants that are in use in the present times. It also governs all the substances with a strong pungent smell like sulfur dioxide gas. In other words, Rahu has a role to play whenever a poisonous substance is involved. There is no equal to Rahu when it comes to giving upliftment in name and fame or sudden luck at gambling, which is probably the reason why Western astrologers regard it as the greatest benefic force. Rahu is associated with the following: its colour is smoky, metal is lead, and its gemstone is hessonite. Its element is air and its direction is south-west.

Rahu (Rahu-deva) in Vedic astrology.

Apart from the seven planets, Vedic astrology gives consideration to certain significant points of planetary relationship as minor or secondary planets. The two most important of these are the nodes of the Moon. The north node is called "Rahu" or the Dragon's Head; the south node is called "Ketu" or the Dragon's Tail. We will refer to these two nodes throughout the book as Rahu and Ketu, as it is a simpler nomenclature. These two nodes are considered to be secondary or shadowy planets. Astronomically, they represent the points at which the Moon's orbit crosses the ecliptic, the celestial equator. These are the places at which the Moon crosses the point of the Sun's orbit, at which eclipses can occur. The lunar nodes show the times when the solar and lunar forces obstruct each other or cancel each other out. They show the potential for short-circuiting, as it were, our solar or lunar energies. They are thus very sensitive points that can cause repercussions in the entire field of planetary forces.

Rahu, the north or ascending node is the point at which the Moon crosses the ecliptic to the north. Ketu, the south or descending node is where it crosses it to the south. The influence of the north node is thus ascending, expanding, externalizing but of what is largely a negative force. The south node is descending, contracting and internalizing. Hence in the Vedic system the south node is less negative than the north.

Eclipses of the Sun and Moon can occur in proximity to either of the nodes. The nodes are regarded in Vedic Shastras as the demon which swallows the luminary and causes the eclipse. As such, they have the power to overcome the Sun and the Moon, and in this sense can be stronger than any of the planets. In Vedic astrology, therefore, the conjunction of any planet with either of the lunar nodes is regarded as a kind of eclipse of that planet, wherein its energy is in some way obstructed, negated or liberated.

While it's the practice of many modern/western astrologers of today to overlook or lightly consider the lunar nodes, Vedic astrology regards them as among the most important factors in one's birth chart interpretation. They possess the power not only to negate planetary influences, but as the eclipses are points of energy transformation, they have additional special properties to transfer or to augment planetary influences, for good or ill.

The lunar nodes in Vedic astrology are a much more complex and studied phenomenon than in Western astrology. Their meaning is usually quite different, though under certain conditions it can be similar to that in the western system. The lunar nodes, by themselves, are regarded as generally the most malefic forces in the chart. The north node, Rahu, is said

to be like Saturn, the greater malefic; the south node, Ketu, like Mars, the lesser malefic. Yet the nodes have a subtler, more psychic and difficult to neutralize malefic force than these two main malefics. Of the two, the north node, Rahu, is regarded as more malefic, as usually the most malefic force in the chart. That the two nodes are malefic is quite logical, as they indicate the factors which cause eclipses, which block out the light of the great luminaries, the Sun and the Moon. For this reason they are more indicators of bad karma than good.

Rahu is regarded as the main planetary factor behind insanity, neurosis, neurological disorders, possession by negative entities and other such abnormal sensitivities of the mind and nervous system. This is particularly true when it influences the Moon, especially a conjunction, and other factors representing the mind (like Mercury and the fourth house in one's birth chart). It can heighten our astral sensitivity which can be to weaken our soul's grip upon the physical body. Rahu's manifestation is not always as severe, and may be counteracted by other forces, as anything in astrology. The key to most nervous, psychological and emotional disturbances, susceptibility to drugs and psychic influences, mysterious diseases like cancer or neuro-muscular disorders, as well as most inexplicable general mental unhappiness and malaise and unrest in life, can usually be traced to the influence of these nodes, especially Rahu. This is particularly true when they combine with and augment the negative force of other malefics like Saturn.

Ketu, though malefic, it is not regarded quite as malefic as it is in the Western system. Ketu creates doubt, disturbance, anger, ambition, wilfulness, a critical and often narrow vision in life, which may lead to conflict and argument. While Rahu shows an individual carried away by mass trends, collective, unconscious or astral influences, Ketu shows the individual caught more in their own contracted energies, isolated, alienated, obstinately separate and on their own.

POSITIVE SIDES OF RAHU AND KETU:- On the positive side, the influence of Rahu can put us in harmony with collective trends and give popularity, prestige, fame and power. It imparts an almost psychic sensitivity to mass trends and a capacity to use them. Ketu, in the positive sense, can create great powers of concentration, powerful perception, independence, the capacity to transcend external influences, psychic and spiritual insight. In terms of yoga and the spiritual life it ultimately becomes the signifier of liberation itself. Aligned with Mercury it gives good insight and is helpful in the pursuit of such subtle subjects as astrology. The positive influence of the nodes, however, is less common than the negative and both tend to have a debasing effect upon us. Both nodes represent very difficult forces to handle, and their positive side may only come out through overcoming great obstacles in life and may have side-effects.

IN YOUR CHART RAHU CONTROLS (IN YOUR LIFE):- accidents, afflictions, astrologers, cosmic law, bad character, undesirable, begins to provoke radical change, beyond help, cheating, corruption, cracks, crevasses, destiny, destroys the past, devils, dangerous people, devourer of the moon, disenchantment with matter, divine plan revealed, fear, foreigners, good, but through troubles, hard times, immense pain, hysteria, insanity, imprisonment, inevitable law, insects, poisons, law, karma, supreme, must be endured alone, past lives debts, powerful, no escape, violence, vomiting, weaned, widowhood

WHEN RAHU IS BENEFIC IN YOUR LIFE CURRENTLY THEN ONE SHOULD FEEL THESE EFFECTS:- gives fame, status and prestige, worldly powers and success, the fulfilment outwardly of worldly desires, psychic powers.

WHEN RAHU IS MALEFIC IN YOUR LIFE CURRENTLY THEN ONE SHOULD FEEL THESE EFFECTS:- an afflicted Rahu in your birth chart will make the benefics given above negative in your life making one's inner fulfilment unfulfilled, worldly desires that can never be fulfilled, however successful the individual may be--an outer good luck combined with an inner unrest, diseases of the spleen, gas troubles, rheumatism, cholera, dysentery, nasty diseases of the mind and body, to have suicide tendencies, diseases that are difficult to diagnose, imprisonment, drowning, pleasures with diseased people, amputation, leprosy, giddiness, life, beware of danger from drugs, danger of possession and danger from black magic...

Kindly note:- Some the information above may portray the Celestials (like Rahu-deva or Durvasa Muni) 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.

Do note:- 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.

DISCLAIMER:- Do note that Dipika is not affiliated to any Hindu group or organization. We at Dipika choose to remain an independent repository of spiritual advice. We appreciate that there are variances between organisations and humbly request that if our views differ from yours that you respect our decision not to conform to the prescripts of your particular organisation. We remain committed to spiritual advice which is based on scripture.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read this article. We pray that this article will assist you in some way and we also pray that it helps you to appreciate the beauty and remarkable foresight of our ancient Hindu culture. We wish to educate all readers and demystify the path of Hinduism (Sanatan Dharma). Please feel free to share these articles with friends and family who do not have direct access to our website or articles. If you use the articles in any form including blogs and/or as part of other articles kindly credit our website as a source. We hope that the articles serve as a reference to you and your family when you need clarification of certain topics. Jai Hind... Jai Shree Radha Krsna.

Compiled for the upliftment of Sanathan Dharma
Narottam das & Arjun Nandlal
Email info@dipika.org.za