

RAHU (The North Node) and KETU (the South Node) ESSAY
(Submitted to Asheville Vedic Astrology class on Apr 15th, 2020).

Year 3, Semester 1: Rahu and Ketu (1700 words)

The mysterious Nodes are difficult to describe. While their effects will always contain a shroud of unpredictability, there are ways of generally defining whether the experience of a node in a person's life will turn out to be a difficult one or a satisfying one, and what a person can do to remedy any experiences therein that might be detrimental to their mental health. The teachers of every astrology lineage take pains to clarify their schema of interpreting the nodes' position in a chart. Tropical Vedic Astrology generally boils it down to a combination of factors, including house prosperity, as well as the Dignity, Shad bala, Lajitaadi Avastas, and auspicious Yogas that the nodes and their lords are involved in throughout the Vargas. The condition of the house and lord of the nodes is what determines a person's capacity to gain traction in the realm of the unconscious, to which these shadow planets are impulsively shackled. This article aims to suggest that both Rahu and Ketu can represent positive figures of neurological reactive programming (Ketu) or impulsive ambition and willpower (Rahu), if they are auspiciously aligned and properly channeled.

The nature of the house that a node is placed in shows how strong that node's presence is in a person's awareness: Angular houses are highly active and always important, fixed houses are generally neutral (except for the undesirable 11th and unstable 8th house), and mutable houses are generally quieter and can go unnoticed, although the 9th house is always auspicious. Everyone must use all the planets in their chart in a balanced way in order to be healthy, so a person cannot ignore a node simply because its nature (its house and dispositor) are antagonistic to the Lagna or some other preferential part of the personality. The relationship of a node's sign with the lagna defines the auspiciousness of that node because the lagna represents the natural lifepath of the soul. Since Rahu and Ketu are on an axis, it is likely that either Rahu's Lord or Ketu's Lord will be friends with the lagna, while the other will be neutral or antagonistic – which says something interesting about the duality between the two. A lagna is either friendly to Rahu's placement or to Ketu's placement. It should be said that both situations are equally desirable karmically speaking, as any person thus has either the luck with which to maintain the energy field easily (Ketu friendly to the Lagna), or the ambition with which to experience novelty that would keep them from getting stuck (Rahu friendly to the Lagna).

The lords of the nodes being in certain signs further defines the foundational bias of this relationship between the nodes and the lagna of a chart. For example, dealing with Rahu in Scorpio with Mars in Pisces for a Gemini Lagna (Mars as inauspicious 6th and 11th Lord in the 10th house) is much more difficult than for a Cancer Lagna (Mars as auspicious 5th and 10th lord in the auspicious 9th house). This is a clue to the deeper experience of what Rahu and its lord means to the Lagna, and vice versa. A person whose Rahu Lord is friendly to the lagna and is placed somewhere that supports the lagna, with all other positive factors considered, is usually granted positive growth experiences which are always worth their wear on the person, and may even be very satisfying, though they are still likely to prove intense and difficult no matter what – no worthy aspiration ever came without effort. The only problem in such a situation is that Ketu would have to be ill-placed to the lagna by comparison, in this case being in Taurus, which would prove worse for the Cancer Lagna (Ketu in Taurus as Cancer's inauspicious 11th

house) than the Gemini lagna (Ketu in Taurus as Gemini's 12th house, sharing Venus's lordship with Libra, Gemini's auspicious 5th house). Yet while there is always a bias of either Rahu or Ketu towards the lagna lord, we must remember that having an easy time maintaining one's own the energy field (strong Ketu) is just as impressive as developing the instincts to endure hardships despite all obstacles (strong Rahu).

In order to further define the indications and potentials of Rahu or Ketu we consider house prosperity, as well as Dignity, Shad bala, Lajitaadi Avastas, and yogas that involve that node's Lord in all the Vargas. Let's consider Rahu in Virgo. When Rahu is in Virgo and Ketu is in Pisces, ultimately the person wants to surrender to some kind of bliss in their lives that they feel is consistently useful (Virgo) and yet releasing (Pisces), something which speaks to their soul, but is also realistic, practical, and useful for its own sake. The Piscean "soulfulness" of Ketu here might speak more naturally to certain lagnas, while Rahu in Virgo's more precise, analytical desires might suit others better. Whatever the case, Rahu and Ketu will always both need one another as the yin to each other's yang, just as a flower needs a bee and a bee needs a flower; and one imbalanced against the other is bound to manifest an excess of something meaningless, and a lack of something meaningful. What determines this imbalance is simply the health of the house and Lord of the house in which Rahu and Ketu are placed, in this case the lord of Rahu's house being Mercury, and the lord of Ketu's house being Jupiter. Mercury is the transmitter and stabilizer of Rahu's black-hole energy in this placement, and since the attributes of any planet are amplified under Rahu's influence, the strengths and weaknesses of Mercury are in every way stronger or "louder" in such a native's life, while the qualities of Jupiter are strangely quieter yet more active, as if it were an all-too-familiar background for one's experiences. For Rahu in Virgo's case, this "loudness" is also carried into bad placements of Mercury, such as when Mercury is starved or agitated in the lajitaadi avastas, is associated with malefics or evil house lords, has ill dignity and Shad bala, etc; while the "quietness" of Jupiter becomes more pronounced with these ill placements, such that the native easily loses touch with that root of themselves, even though it enforces an unconscious "ceiling/limit" for one's approach to life.

Rahu in Virgo's desire to find constructive, constant practical service towards others depends on the condition of Mercury to be natural, effective, and strong in its manner. This is why it is so important that Rahu's Lord is in a position where it can express the potentials of that Lord in a natural and "spiritually ergonomical" way, so that no energy is lost during Rahu's venomous spike towards experiencing its ecliptic visions. Since the evolutionary desire for practical behaviors (Virgo) has been for so long repressed, there is a dualistic desire on one hand to continue Ketu's stale pattern, and on the other hand, to release the dam and experience the unknown which Rahu lusts for. Rahu will always jump headlong into its desires. It is a strong Rahu which determines whether a person will be *disappointed* by that experience, feeling it to be unsatisfying and not worth the wear on the spirit. If Mercury is well placed, the universe will conspire to encourage the development of that which Rahu represents by its house placement; and Saturn will be employed to increase the amount of time that a person can remain in that crucible of transformative, positive growth potential, in this case, in a period where reliable, constructive, 6th sign themes are being thrust upon the individual.

An ill placement of Mercury with Rahu in Virgo would entail that the person is bound to experience some kind of cognitive dissonance while trying to manifest this 6th sign desire structure, which agitates their overall enjoyment of Rahu's energy. As Astrologers we must teach our clients to accept that sometimes in life, phenomena will surface which cannot be

resolutely fixed or resolved in a permanent way. In such cases we must encourage our clients to combine all the powers of the whole chart to get in touch with this Rahu tension somehow, the place in their minds where Rahu desperately wants to resolve all uncertainties, because they may not ever be fully satisfied about this area. Rahu's venomous, obsessive qualities may cause more damage than good in its lack of ethics, due to the nature of Rahu's primal lust for experience. Yet even for someone with Scorpio Lagna who has Rahu in Virgo/11th, having positive strength in Mercury indicates that such a person could sublimate the lowest qualities of that inauspicious 11th house, ventilate them, and transmute them towards wholesome endeavors that in the end prove constructive to themselves and those around them. Everyone has an 11th house and its karmas to deal with, and this person may be proficient at sublimating the lowest qualities of their 11th house – a great karmic boon. Thus for Rahu in Virgo, the strength and auspiciousness of Mercury's placement is always what makes or breaks the experience, and the same can be said in turn for Ketu's stabilizing the energy field, providing the platform for Rahu to safely explore the fringe of the soul's unknowns.

The way in which Rahu and Ketu can be thwarted is exactly in respect to the factors we have already described. A Ketu in Pisces whose Lord Jupiter is starved in the sign of Gemini for example is bound to lose some grasp on their energy field, due to Jupiter's incapacity to express its nature in a way which will bring a positive yield to one's stores of energy – Jupiter's self-realization instinct, its capacity to express its soul (as per Ketu's desire here), is thwarted by "too much thinking and analysing" (Jupiter in Gemini), and not enough doing. When we consider these critical anchors to the lords of the nodes and their houses, we paint a picture of how these conditions effectively define the power of the nodes, and how we can orient our lives so that they receive the best of their lords' nature without too much undue hindrance and ill-digestion on our part.