

*To whose temple the Arch is starlit,
In whose temple the Sun is the image of God,
To whose temple the Moon goes every month
And brings the message out every full Moon,
And whose message the Moon sings as a word of sixteen letters,
His religion I belong to, His temple I visit,
His name I utter, His glory I live in.
To Him I offer the lotus of my day,
To Him I offer the lotus of my night.*

These seed thoughts from the Spiritual Psychology meditations of Dr Ekkirala Krishnamacharya give the note for the Lunar Messenger of the Circle of Good Will. The Moon is the reflective principle and symbol of the mind. When pure and calm, it reflects impressions from higher circles. The time of the full Moon is especially conducive for higher alignment if we are poised enough. The alignment of the Sun, Moon and Earth in the sky helps us to experience the magic of the light of the soul and its manifestation down to the physical.

The Lunar Messenger is published every month in time for the full Moon. It contains thoughts from the teachings of eternal wisdom. Its purpose is to inspire us to put the teachings into practical life.

VISTAS OF WISDOM 116: THE NODES OF THE MOON

Shadow Planets

A study of the nodes of the Moon is very important to a student on the spiritual path. The nodes are the two points of intersection between the Moon's orbit and the plane of the ecliptic. Seen from the earth, the ecliptic is the apparent path of the Sun moving in front of the fixed stars. With the ascending or north node, the Moon moves from the southern side of the ecliptic to the northern side; with the descending node, the Moon moves to the southern side.

The nodes are formations in the sky through which a shadow prevents the reception of the sunrays in a certain part of the planet. During the full moon hours, shadows occur when the Moon is close to the ascending node. The Earth is then in front of the Sun and the Moon behind the Earth. The shadow of the Earth falls on the Moon and causes a partial or total lunar eclipse. During the new moon hours, shadows occur when the Sun is close to the descending node. When the Moon then passes in front of the Sun, this causes a total or partial eclipse.

The seers of wisdom have recognised that the shadows of the nodes have a special meaning and have a strong influence on us. When a shadow falls on the Sun, we are struck by a debilitated sunray, and with the Moon we receive an impaired lunar ray. The nodes are also called shadow planets in astrology, although they are not planets but points. When one of the nodes passes over our Moon, Sun or ascendant, the north node causes a kind of eclipse in us eclipsing our consciousness or causing an impairment of life energy. The south node, which is more linked to the Moon, eclipses both our mind and moods. In times of shadows we do not think the right thoughts and we should wait until the light shines on us again.

The nodes have an orbital period of 18 years, while Jupiter takes 12 years. Therefore, their influence is said to be 1.5

times greater than that of Jupiter. The nodes stay in a Sun sign for one and a half years at a time. We should familiarise ourselves with the cyclic visit of these energies and know the houses in which the nodes are placed in the natal, transit and progressive charts. Their sphere of influence is about 8 degrees. We only consider conjunctions, not oppositions or squares. That is, an opposition is actually a conjunction because the two nodes are opposite each other (180 degrees); if one node is in Aries, the other is in Libra. Unlike the planets, the nodes move anti-clockwise. This means when we think things should happen a certain way, it doesn't happen the way we expect. If we are aware of the nodes and know their presence and significance, we can be vigilant.

The shadow of their transitory influence is not always seen or felt. But any planet in conjunction with one of the nodes will be influenced in a special way. A conjunction with the north node usually proves very positive and favourable. With the south node, memories come into our present life, for the purpose of reconciliation or as gifts of the past.

Effects of Conjunctions

Especially in conjunction of the descending node with certain planets, major obstacles or psychological difficulties may arise. Thus, in the horoscope of an average person, a conjunction between the descending node and Mars, Saturn, Sun, or Uranus may result in serious disturbances in the nervous system or even lead to serious nervous diseases. It is said that the serpent of time then has us bound head and feet. However, for every obstacle there is a method of treatment. If we are willing to work with it, conflicting energies can be harmonised with the help of sound, colour, and symbol. For problems with both nodes,

wisdom science recommends meditation on a white serpent standing on its tail on a black background. It is also recommended that we link to the cosmic 1st ray with the mantram "OM NAMA SHIVAYA"; then, the nodes can no longer exert their effect.

In the horoscope of a spiritual person, the conjunction of a planet with one of the nodes in the birth chart or in the progression offers a good opportunity to raise the level of consciousness. A conjunction of the Sun with the ascending node causes a stir in the *Sahasrara*, while a conjunction with the descending node affects the *Muladhara*. A conjunction of the Moon with the ascending node causes a stir in the pineal gland and with the descending node in the spleen centre. In the horoscope of average people, a conjunction of the ascending node with Venus, Jupiter or Neptune makes the person spiritual and enable him to receive beneficial instructions through subtle sources.

For a balanced effect of the planetary energies, small temples are often built in India with an altar on which symbols of all seven planetary energies as well as the two nodes are arranged in a certain order. This is called "*Nava-graha Mandapa*"; "*Nava*" means nine and "*Graha*" means planet. People also wear finger rings on which all nine planets are depicted, i.e. the seven planets and the two nodes. These traditions and practices show that there is an awareness of working with all nine energies.

Rahu and Ketu

In Vedic astrology, the north or ascending node is called *Rahu* and the descending south node is called *Ketu*. The effect of *Rahu* is similar to Mars, but it is stronger than Mars. Under the influence of *Rahu* we are active, agile, alert, and ready to seize an opportunity quickly. We have a positive attitude and do not miss the opportunities that come our way. *Ketu* acts like negative Mars and also similar to Saturn. Under its influence, we are generally introverted and also forgetful. We do not react immediately to an opportunity or miss it.

Both nodes are considered diabolical beings. In the *Puranas*, their symbolism is beautifully described in a story: When Lord Vishnu, the 2nd Logos, was distributing the potion of immortality meant for the *devas*, the Sun and Moon noticed that the demon *Rahu* had unjustly got hold of the nectar, and they warned Vishnu. Before the potion could reach *Rahu's* stomach, Vishnu cut the one demonic being in two. From the diaphragm upwards to the head, it became the positive north node (♊). The lower part, which could not receive the potion, became *Ketu*, the southern negative node (♋); its form goes from the diaphragm to the feet. The two said to the Lord, "Although You have severed me, we are now immortal as the south and north nodes!" And to the Sun God and Moon God they said, "We

will always disturb you two for complaining to Lord Vishnu..."

Rahu, the ascending node, is related to the positive aspect of the psyche. It enables success and fulfilment. We are positive and able to accumulate or achieve things. That is why *Rahu* is also considered to be related to Jupiter. When well placed, he gives stimulation, but he stimulates to overactivity and exaggeration. When *Rahu* conjuncts the Sun, he stimulates us to such an extent that we have far too big an image of ourselves.

Ketu, the descending node, is connected to the negative aspect of the psyche. It pulls us down and causes a negative self-report. When someone praises us, we cannot accept it and feel we have not done well enough. No matter how much we are built up again, our feeling remains dampened. If the Moon is also otherwise weak, people often become depressed when *Ketu* transits the Moon.

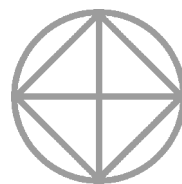
Grip and Slip

The rising node has a very firm grip. In the world it is sometimes necessary for us to pick something up, but often we grab the wrong things and not what is valuable to the soul. We hold on to our views, whether they are right or wrong. We hold on to money, power, or the opposite sex, or even the body when it is time to leave it. This excessive grip is a shadow that makes the soul unhappy. It exists at all levels of the personality.

The descending node does the opposite. We drop objects, things slip away, we lose things we need and sometimes memory. It is all right to forget the unnecessary, but we forget the essential. Helpful and valuable things are lost to us, but things we don't need we hold onto. When the south node is well placed in the chart, for example in the 8th and 12th houses, we find it easy to leave the body. When the south node is in the 11th house, we are more at home in the spiritual world than in the mundane world and have a relation to saints and sages.

With the transit of the nodes across the Sun, we may suddenly be thrown off the normal, harmonious path of life and fall into some crazy ideas, such as wanting to give up our job and rhythm of life, even if we have been comfortable in it. It is normal for the nodes to interrupt our normal flow of life with their coming - it is their job to work against the flow of the *devas*. In such constellations we need discernment and good guidance. When crazy ideas come, if Jupiter is strong in the chart, they are simply pushed aside.

Sources used: K.P. Kumar: *Wisdom of the Nodes*. Dhanishta; div. seminar notes / E. Krishnamacharya: *Spiritual Astrology*. Kulapathi Book Trust, Visakhapatnam, India (www.aquariusbookhouse.com).



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