

# The psychological and emotional understanding of an eclipse through the lens of an ancient Vedic Myth - *grab a cuppa and Enjoy!*

Image below is of an ancient statue depicting the Churning of the Ocean Myth



Lunar (partial) eclipse  
Mon 25th March 6.00pm EST

Solar (partial) eclipse  
Tue 9th April 4.20am EST

Mythology was used in ancient times to help us understand, not just the physical but the psychological and emotional aspects at the heart of a particular teaching. In this myth we are looking at the effects of the nodes of the Moon.

There are actual mathematical points in the sky where the eclipses happen and the ancient Vedic seers developed a method of accurately timing these eclipses. This required true astronomical conception of the lunar nodes, which involved an accurate knowledge of the Earth's orbit and Moon's orbit and the relationship between the two ecliptics. The fact that they were successful in doing so can be seen from the fact that the ephemeris developed by them can still determine the precise latitude of the nodes and predict present day eclipses with a high degree of accuracy. Bare in mind that this all happened thousands of years ago!

This Vedic civilisation is one source that has survived since the birth of time to give us yoga, astronomy, astrology and a host of other valuable tools for humans to navigate and evolve on Earth. The myth of the 'churning of the ocean' is wonderful at shedding light on the dualities we experience on Earth

and how we can use them for our growth and self empowerment.

The Lunar nodes are known as Rahu - the north node, and represents in everyone's chart why we are reincarnated and Ketu - the south node which represents our past lives, habits and spirituality.

## The origin of Rahu and Ketu goes something like this -

*A celestial demon known as Swarbhanu undertook a severe penance invoking Lord Brahma, the creator of the trinity. When finally Brahma did appear before him he asked for a boon, which involved conferring on him the status of a planet. Brahma granted the boon as a fruit of his penance and disappeared.*

In a later time, the gods and demons were involved in a collective churning of the *kshirsagar* or the celestial ocean. *Vasuki*, the serpent king was used as a cord to churn the mountain known as *Mandara*, which in turn was resting upon the *KurmaVatara* (tortoise incarnation) of Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu is the sustainer of life of the trinity.

As a result of churning, all the impurities of the ocean manifested themselves as deadly poison. At the request of the gods, Lord Shiva - the destroyer among the trinity, drank the poison and held it in his throat causing it to turn blue and saving creation. After this plants, animals and other useful things came out. Finally *Dhanvantari*, the celestial physician, came out with a pot containing *Amrita* or the divine nectar. Since there was a pact that everything will be distributed equally among the gods and demons, the demons wanted their share of the nectar known to confer immortality. They immediately grabbed the pot and because of the demonic nature soon forgot about the pact.

The gods requested Lord Vishnu for help. Vishnu himself did not want the demons to partake the divine nectar, as that would mean that evil forces would gain permanence, leaving little chance for goodness to thrive in the world. To achieve his end, Vishnu took the form of an enchantress who took the responsibility of distributing the nectar to the gods and demons. She made them sit in two different lines and started distributing the nectar to the line of the gods.

The plan was to finish the nectar before the turn of the demons came. The demons captivated by the beauty of the celestial maiden were not able to notice the trick, but one of them *Swarbhanu*, saw through the trick and stealthily infiltrating the ranks of the gods managed to drink the nectar. Vishnu knowingly overlooked his presence, as he was aware of the boon given by Brahma to him.

Two of the gods, Sun and Moon discovered his presence and asked Vishnu to destroy him. Vishnu severed Swarbhanu's head with his *sudarshan chakra* (celestial disc), but this did not kill him as he had already partaken the nectar. The severed head was joined with a serpent's tail and conferred by Brahma the status of a planet known as *Rahu*, while the remaining body that was attached to the head of a serpent, given the planetary status of the name *Ketu*.

Due to this incident Swarbhanu, now divided in two, became a bitter enemy of the Sun and Moon. He took it upon himself to afflict the Sun and Moon eternally through his newfound planetary status. This is when the eclipses started to happen according to ancient Vedic legend. Thus also began the trend of perceiving the eclipses as the swallowing of the Sun and Moon by Rahu and Ketu.

Since this is a story relating to the astral/causal plane, it can be seen that it relates to the material plane at a point of time in the evolution of our solar system, when the Moon's orbit and distance from the earth became exactly such that the phenomenon known as the total eclipse could take place. In another sense it represents the churning of the ocean of existence, which lies within each one of us. From this churning, many precious things and many poisonous things come out which manifest as the so-called good and bad qualities.

Amrita or the nectar of immortality, signifying true and supreme knowledge, helps one overcome the slavery of time. The involvement of the serpent Vasuki in this churning shows the involvement of the lunar nodes (serpent forces) with continuous churning going on within ourselves. It also shows we cannot achieve the nectar of immortality without the help of the cosmic forces symbolised by the lunar nodes.

In yoga the most powerful of forces within us is referred to as the Kundalini, the serpent power. This power is coiled up, like a serpent, at the base of every human beings' spine. The practice of yoga is to clear the way to help the kundalini rise, activating each chakra centre as it ascends and unites with cosmic energy at the crown (sahasrara) chakra where we become One with higher consciousness, which always is, always has been and always will be. Thus immortality.

I hope you have enjoyed this well-known and ancient story and I would love to hear your comments on it. Thanks for reading.

*If you would like to know where your nodal axis lies within your birth/natal chart please email me at [ascensionastrologyandyoga@gmail.com](mailto:ascensionastrologyandyoga@gmail.com)*