

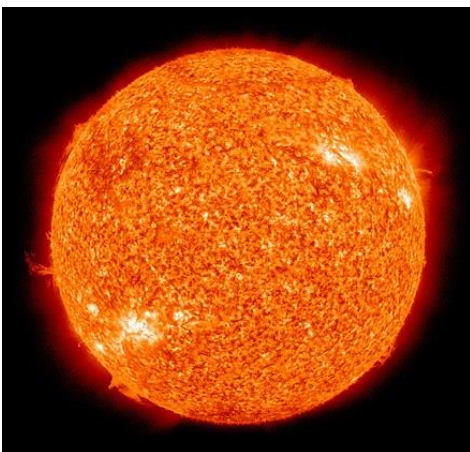
MEET THE PLANETS – SUN AND MOON

Writing about the Sun and Moon is like writing about one's father and mother. These two are the Lights or Luminary Grahas, the ones which cast light and which rule the very life energy and the rhythms of our existence. Just as we could not exist in our bodies without the act of creation by our biological father and mother, we could not exist as living or spiritual beings without the actions of Surya and Chandra.

Day and Night, Full Moon and New Moon, High Tide and Low Tide, Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter, all these rhythms and changes happen because of the Sun and Moon. Our calendars are based upon them. In India, the Panchanga or almanac will give the reader instant access to a complex system of division of months and days based upon Jyotish. The full study of Panchanga is not undertaken in ACVA until more advanced levels, but even in the first course of Jyotish Ratna the student is introduced to the wonders and mysteries of the Luminary Grahas and the Moon's cycle. As in our daily lives, this is the paradox of Sun and Moon – so fundamental and yet so subtle.

On another level, the Sun and Moon function as grahas, or members of the group of planets which exert pull or gravity upon the Earth and its inhabitants. In Course 102 of ACVA, the student learns the ancient tales connected with the grahas in Vedic tradition, along with the lists of attributes and characteristics of each. Today I'm just giving a bit of introduction of the flavor of these connections, a glimpse into why some of us love studying Jyotish so much.

SURYA THE SUN



Surya is the deity name in the Vedas used to describe the Sun's disc, the manifestation in our lives of the elemental fire represented by Agni as well as the principle of light. He is pictured as riding on a chariot pulled by seven horses. We learn that the Sun, in one of the nine incarnations of Vishnu into the world, appeared as Lord Rama (of the epic Ramayana). For the Sun we have a picture of a king or leader, fiery and full of dharma, casting light, orange-red in color, strongest at high noon, in the summer season, and with Sundays. The Sun is of the Sattvic guna, of the Pitta dosha, and in the body is connected with the right eye, the right nostril, and the Agni Chakra or third eye.

So it is definitely with a great deal of humility that we as humans offer prayers to the Sun, itself a small example of the Atman, the Great Soul. In many traditions it is taught that there is a bit of that animating spark or light in each of us, our personal Atman. While the details of worship and ritual will vary, all Jyotishas would agree that it is impossible to imagine astrology or to effectively practice it without acknowledging this reality.



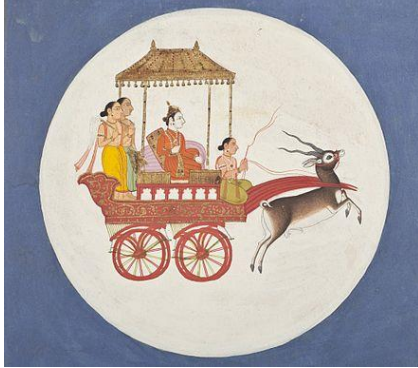
The Sun in a personal chart indicates all the characteristics mentioned above and more, but these can be summed up as an expression of Atman or Life Purpose. Children are often asked "What do you want to be when you grow up?" and in a way the answers we give as children are often closer to the inner meaning of our Sun than our adult job description. For those who come to Jyotish from Western Astrology, you tend to think of your "Sign" as the zodiac sign of your Sun. Jyotish is much more nuanced than that, and of course the "Sun Sign" is often in a different Rashi or zodiac sign. The astrologer puts together many elements to evaluate how the Solar principle functions in a particular birth chart.

CHANDRA THE MOON



Where would we be without the Moon? It is quite unique that of the many planets and solar systems, the Earth has a Moon which takes up the same relative size in the sky as our Sun, and moves about the Earth in a daily and monthly cycle, distributing and moving the waters of the Earth and in our bodies.

No wonder then that Moon stories became part of the teaching tales in all human cultures. In one story, Soma, the male Moon deity, was the husband to all 27 of the Aditis, the daughters of Daksha. He was expected to visit all of them on successive nights, just as the Moon will be seen to move through the background of Nakshatras, the ancient Lunar Mansions of India. But Soma fell in love with Rohini, and lingered in her bed night after night. The other wives complained to their father, who imposed a punishment upon Soma. He was afflicted with a periodic condition which caused him to waste away to nearly nothing every month, before returning gradually to his full brightness. Thus, the tale goes, the Moon does not stay at full brightness, nor does it stay in the same spot in the sky. Instead the Moon moves far more rapidly than the Sun and all the other planets, and goes through its cycles of New Moon and Full Moon every month. And as a graha, the Moon is unique in varying between functioning as a benefic when bright and a malefic when at or near the New Moon.



The Moon as the male deity Chandra, takes his place as one of the Navagrahas or nine planets dressed in lustrous white, and associated with pearls, the jewel of the sea, with silver. and is associated with the element of Water. His day is Monday, he rules the Zodiac sign Cancer, and is exalted in Taurus (but particularly in the portion of Taurus which is the Nakshatra Rohini, Soma's favorite lover). As one of the incarnations of Vishnu, he is Krishna who plays his flute and spreads love and delight. The Moon on another level is the Mother, the Queen. We associate the Moon with all watery places and fluids, with

salt, and in Ayurveda with Kapha dosha and with the midnight hour. The activities of females and mothers, of cows and milk, of food and nourishment, of the wisdom of the body, all of these are characteristics of the Moon. Like the Sun, the Moon has a Sattvic nature. In pranayama and yoga, the Moon is associated with the left eye and the cooling nadi and left nostril. In the Chakras, with the Crown Chakra as well.

A very important distinction of Jyotish and Vedic tradition is that the Moon has the primary influence on Manas or Mind, which means then entire spiritual, emotional and nervous makeup. So in Jyotish and in India in general, the most important thing to know from your birth chart is the placement of the Moon by sign and Nakshatra. This sort of understanding of individual psychologic makeup is critical to giving a good Jyotish consultation, particularly in having compassion for the portion of the human race born with a weak or afflicted Moon. Our ACVA students learn quite a bit about the Moon in early courses of the Jyotish Ratna series, and only then venture into a study of the 27 Nakshatras and their significance in Course 107.

If you want to learn more, you can sign up for a free Webinar or purchase audio tapes from our Store. If you are ready to make the commitment to mastering Jyotish, read about the Jyotish Ratna course on our website, <https://acvaonline.org/>, and direct your questions to the Registrar at Registrar@acvaonline.org.