



Access Online



Article DOI:

10.5281/zenodo.19967943

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How to Cite:

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Purohit (2026), the
Cosmic Sentinels:
Rahu and Ketu's Role
in Earth's Defense,
International
Educational Applied
Scientific & Research
Journal (IEASRJ),
Vol: 11, Issue: 4,
01-07

THE COSMIC SENTINELS: RAHU AND KETU'S ROLE IN EARTH'S DEFENSE

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SUMMARY

In the realm of traditional astrology, **Rahu and Ketu** are designated as *Chhaya Grahas*—the shadow planets. To the modern astronomer, these entities remain elusive, invisible even to the most formidable telescopes. Consequently, contemporary science often dismisses them as mere mathematical intersection points in space. However, the ancient Indian yogis and philosophers—harnessing the profound clarity of their **yogic powers**—looked deeper. They did not just analyze the metaphysical forms of Rahu and Ketu; they identified their critical contribution to the **safety and protection of planet Earth**. This ancient Indian research does more than just pave the way for future scientific breakthroughs in planetary defense; it establishes a profound discipline for **human ethics and behavior**. By understanding these cosmic forces, we find a roadmap that balances scientific inquiry with the necessity of a regulated, moral human existence.

KEYWORDS: The Contribution of Rahu and Ketu to the Protection of Earth

ETYMOLOGY AND COSMIC ORIGINS

The term **Rahu** finds its roots in the Sanskrit language, signifying “darkness,” “shadow,” or “eclipse.” Within the astrological framework, Rahu is recognized as a *Chhaya Graha* (Shadow Planet), representing the North Node of the Moon. Our solar system contains two such entities characterized by perpetual darkness; unlike celestial bodies that emit or reflect light regularly, these remain hidden from the naked eye. Born from the *Tamoguna* (the quality of inertia or darkness) of the Earth, these two bodies orbit our planet at an equal distance and constant velocity. Crucially, they serve as **Earth's guardians**, acting as a celestial shield against the gravitational pull and influences of other cosmic bodies. (Ramratan Thapliyal: *Vishwa Darshan*, p. 136)

THE ANATOMY OF THE SHADOW PLANETS

In terms of their physical manifestation,

these two entities possess distinct forms: one is **spherical**, while the other is **club-shaped** (resembling a radish). The spherical body is identified as **Rahu**, and the elongated, radish-shaped body is known as **Ketu**.

Both entities are approximately one-fifteenth the size of the Earth. While Rahu's circumference slightly exceeds that of Ketu's “head,” Ketu itself is longer in extension. Though generally invisible, Ketu occasionally becomes luminous and manifests in our sky. According to Mahatma Ramratan Thapliyal:

“When the Earth and other celestial bodies align in their orbits such that their gravitational tensions pull against one another, a unique kinetic attraction is birthed within Ketu. Positioned amidst these warring forces, Ketu absorbs solar light, appearing to Earth as a **comet**. During these cosmic gravitational ‘battles,’ Ketu acts as a celestial warning flag—a harbinger of famine or distress among the

spheres. Rahu, however, remains eternally shrouded in darkness, never reflecting light.”

ASTRONOMICAL VS. ASTROLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES

From a Western astronomical viewpoint, Rahu and Ketu are not physical masses but mathematical abstractions—specifically, the **nodes** where the orbit of the Moon intersects the ecliptic. However, when observed from the terrestrial vantage point of Earth, these points exert a profound influence on the Zodiac. Because their impact shifts distinctly across different constellations, they have been accorded a vital status among the **Navagrahas** (the nine planetary influences), bridging the gap between invisible energy and tangible destiny.

When observed through modern astronomical instruments, **Rahu and Ketu** are defined as the intersection points of the celestial equator (*Nadi Vritta*) and the ecliptic (*Kranti Vritta*). However, a geometric tension arises: if these nodes were perpetually positioned to the left and right of the Earth, they would never align in a direct syzygy with the Sun and Earth, making an eclipse impossible. Yet, when we view the Earth from the Sun’s perspective, these two circles appear to intersect in a way that perfectly aligns with the occurrence of eclipses. This suggests that the positioning of Rahu and Ketu as these specific points of intersection is not just a mathematical convenience, but a profound spatial reality.

Could Rahu be “Dark Matter”?

Modern physics grapples with **Dark Matter**—a mysterious substance that remains invisible to light and radiation yet exerts a tangible gravitational pull on the universe.

The invisible Influence: If we hypothesize Rahu as Dark Matter, it aligns perfectly with its astrological identity as an “invisible planet.”

The Gravity of Destiny: Just as Dark Matter holds galaxies together without being seen, Rahu exerts a “gravitational” force on human destiny and planetary equilibrium while remaining hidden from optical observation.

The Holographic Projection: Rahu as Cosmic Illusion
The **Holographic Principle** suggests that our three-dimensional universe may actually be a projection of two-dimensional information encoded at the boundary of space.

Rahu as Maya: In Vedic thought, Rahu is the primary agent of *Maya* (illusion). If Rahu is a **Holographic Projection**, it would explain why it possesses no physical mass yet dictates the flow of cosmic data.

Data over Matter: Rahu may not be a physical body, but a “cosmic image” or a concentrated pocket of data that influences the perception of reality.

Ketu: The Invisible Node and the Stream of Consciousness

In the shadow of its counterpart, **Ketu** represents the pinnacle of the “Invisibility Theory.”

Mathematical vs. Metaphysical: While science labels Ketu as a mass-less mathematical node, astrology links it to deep-seated karma, sudden liberation, and spirituality.

The Shadow of Information: If Ketu is a holographic image, it functions as a representation of **Cosmic Information**. It acts directly upon human **Consciousness** rather than physical matter.

The Non-Material Influence: The conclusion becomes clear: Ketu is not a dense physical object, but an imprint of celestial data—a shadow cast by the underlying information that governs our spiritual evolution.

The Enigma of Ketu: Illusion, Maya, and the Holographic Reflection

In the profound wisdom of the Vedas and Puranas, **Ketu** is inextricably linked with *Moksha* (liberation), mystery, and *Maya* (illusion). This mirrors the core of the **Holographic Principle**, which suggests that our perceived reality is merely a projection of a deeper, fundamental truth. If Ketu serves as the cosmic symbol of *Maya*, it functions remarkably like a holographic image—a sophisticated reflection of reality rather than a solid entity. Therefore, viewing Ketu as a holographic projection of cosmic data offers

a compelling synthesis between ancient spiritual symbolism and modern theoretical physics.

Celestial Mechanics: The Nodal Precession

The behavior of Rahu and Ketu is intrinsically tied to the specific tilt of the Moon's orbit. The lunar path is not merely inclined; it undergoes a continuous westward rotation known as **Nodal Precession**.

Retrograde Motion: Due to this precession, Rahu and Ketu maintain a constant retrograde (backward) motion of approximately **19 degrees per year**.

The 18.6-Year Cycle: They complete a full circuit of the zodiac every **18.6 years**.

Gravitational Dynamics: This movement is a direct result of the Moon's **5.1-degree orbital tilt**. If the orbit were flat, Rahu and Ketu would remain static. Instead, the constant gravitational tug-of-war between the Sun and the Earth forces this gradual, rhythmic rotation.

The Cosmic Buffer: Rahu, Ketu, and the Tides

Rahu and Ketu orbit the Earth along the ecliptic at a velocity synchronized with the Moon's own path, serving as a critical gravitational intermediary. Their influence is most visible in the phenomenon of the tides:

The Full Moon (Purnima): On a Full Moon, the Moon exerts its peak gravitational pull, causing the sea levels to rise in a high tide. During this alignment, either Rahu or Ketu positions itself between the Earth and the Moon. In this capacity, the "shadow planet" acts as a buffer, neutralizing the potentially harmful intensity of the Moon's direct attraction.

The New Moon (Amavasya): Conversely, on a New Moon, the Moon moves between the Earth and the Sun. Here, the combined gravitational forces of both the Sun and Moon pull upon the Earth. Again, Rahu or Ketu intervenes, standing between the Earth and this solar-lunar alignment to mitigate the cumulative impact.

The Mechanics of the Ebb: Because Rahu or Ketu intercepts these forces, the gravitational pull on the Earth's surface during a New Moon is actually more regulated than during a Full Moon. This intervention

allows the ocean waters to recede toward the Earth's lower surfaces, manifesting as the **ebb tide**.

CELESTIAL INTERSECTIONS: THE MECHANICS OF ECLIPSES AND THE ROLE OF RAHU-KETU

Rahu and Ketu are the specific intersection points of the lunar and terrestrial orbits, identified as the ascending and descending nodes of the Moon. An eclipse occurs only when the Sun, Moon, and Earth align near these precise points. Rahu, Ketu, and the Moon move within their respective ecliptics at nearly identical speeds but in opposite directions. Due to this synchronization, on a Full Moon, the Earth, Rahu, and the Moon align within a single degree of the terrestrial ecliptic; similarly, on a New Moon, the Earth, Ketu, and the Sun reach a near-perfect alignment. While Rahu and Ketu constantly circulate between the Earth, Moon, and Sun, eclipses do not occur every month. Although the larger bodies—the Earth and Moon—align daily in terms of degrees, minutes, and seconds, the significantly smaller bodies of Rahu and Ketu do not achieve that exact three-dimensional alignment on every occasion.

A lunar eclipse manifests on a Full Moon only when the Moon, the Earth's night side, and either Rahu or Ketu align so precisely that the shadow planet obscures the lunar disc, either partially or fully. Similarly, a solar eclipse occurs on a New Moon when the Earth's day side, the nodes, and the Sun-Moon alignment converge within the same degree and second, causing Rahu or Ketu to veil the solar disc. While one of these nodes is always positioned toward the Sun during a Full Moon, an eclipse is impossible then because they do not meet the exact coordinate alignment required to obstruct the Sun. Thus, it is an unyielding law of nature that solar eclipses belong to the New Moon and lunar eclipses to the Full Moon. While Rahu is primarily cited as the cause, solar eclipses can occasionally be attributed to Rahu and lunar eclipses to Ketu. To calculate these movements from our terrestrial vantage point, we establish a fixed ecliptic for the Earth, measuring coordinates in degrees, minutes, and seconds.

One might wonder how the relatively small discs of Rahu and Ketu can obscure the massive bodies of the Sun and Moon. This is explained by the universal

principle that a small object placed close to the observer can easily obstruct a much larger object in the distance. While many modern scientists suggest the Moon causes solar eclipses by passing between the Earth and Sun, and the Earth's shadow causes lunar eclipses, these theories face logical inconsistencies. If the Earth's shadow were the cause, the constant distance and speed of the Moon would result in an identical eclipse every single month, rather than the varied partial and total phases we observe.

Furthermore, if the Moon were the cause of a solar eclipse, it should become visible from Earth within seven to eight hours after the alignment breaks. However, the Moon remains invisible for more than twenty-four hours starting from the New Moon. This indicates that the Moon is neither a satellite of the Earth nor the cause of solar eclipses, just as the Earth's shadow is not the cause of lunar eclipses. Instead, the Moon orbits the Sun in a manner reminiscent of the circulation of elements within a womb, drawing its light and phases directly from the Sun. Those who label the Moon as a satellite often mistake the movements of Rahu and Ketu for those of the Moon, given their synchronized yet inverse velocities. To accurately calculate the timing of eclipses and planetary motion, the Earth is mathematically treated as a fixed point, utilizing a specific terrestrial ecliptic to account for the fact that all planets move along distinct orbital paths. (*Ramratan Thapliyal: Vishwa Darshan, p. 143*)

THE GREAT PROTECTORS OF EARTH: RAHU AND KETU

Both the bodies, Rahu and Ketu, protect the Earth from other celestial bodies at all times by revolving on both sides of the Earth in their respective movements and keep the Earth safe by mediating between the harmful attractions of other bodies in the sky. These two bodies remain on both sides of the Earth and keep revolving around it at an equal distance from each other. Rahu is perfectly spherical and Ketu is shaped like a radish. Ketu is also visible from the Earth at times. It is usually seen when its tail is directed straight from the Earth toward other celestial bodies. The head of Ketu remains toward the Earth in its ecliptic and the tail remains toward other bodies. The circumference of Rahu's disc and the circumference of Ketu's head are almost equal, yet Rahu's circumference is still slightly more, and Ketu

is longer than Rahu in length. The circumference of Rahu's disc is approximately 1,712 miles. Both the planets, Rahu and Ketu, revolve on both sides of the Earth in their ecliptic at a distance of 24,000 miles from the Earth. The circumference of the ecliptic of Rahu and Ketu is 175,856 miles. Both these bodies move in their respective paths at the same speed and at an equal distance from each other. Both the bodies complete one full revolution of the Earth by rotating in their ecliptic between 28 and 33 days through their respective movements. (*Ramratan Thapliyal: Vishwa Darshan, page-137*) Rahu and Ketu are always retrograde, meaning they move backward. While other planets move from East to West, Rahu and Ketu move from West to East. These planets transit in one zodiac sign for about 18 months. And it takes 18.5 years for Rahu-Ketu to complete the journey of the zodiac cycle, i.e., 12 zodiac signs.

The lunar nodal cycle is not a direct protective shield, but it protects us indirectly by controlling the Earth's climate and oceanic changes. [References-1-NASA Research on Lunar Nodal Cycle and Climate Effects (NASA.gov) 2-Tidal Variations and the 18.6-Year Lunar Nodal Cycle Journal of Geophysical Research 3- Influence of the Lunar Nodal Cycle on Ocean Currents Climate Science Journal]



Great protection of the Earth occurs through Rahu and Ketu. During the gravitational battle of the Earth with other celestial bodies, they come between the attractions and separate the harmful pull of the attractions of the Earth and other bodies and save them from colliding. However, even at such times, meteor showers occasionally occur in bodies like the Earth, because one body pulls the weak parts of another body toward itself through strong attraction. The planets Rahu and Ketu destroy the meteoroids coming toward the Earth/Moon. The point to be noted is that Rahu and Ketu are invisible. But the existence of any object does not end just by being invisible. Just as this body is animated by the life-breath (Prana), but when the life-breath leaves the body, it is not seen. But we have to accept the existence of the life-breath because the body has no existence without it. Exactly similar is the situation of Rahu and Ketu. Just as philosophers know the movement of the life-breath and perceive that soul-element, in the same way, yogis like Mahatma Ramratan, after knowing the nature of Rahu and Ketu, stated that Rahu and Ketu devour the meteoroids coming toward the Earth, which has great gravity. If Rahu-Ketu did not exist, the existence of the Earth would not have been possible due to the collision of many meteoroids, and when the Earth did not exist, the imagination of humans or life would also be unimaginable. It is a subject of research and investigation as to how even the largest meteoroids disappear upon entering the orbit of Rahu and Ketu? Rahu and Ketu protect the Earth in the same way as a father protects his son. Perhaps that is why philosophers have portrayed Rahu as the devourer of celestial bodies.

RAHU AND THE REALM OF THE ANCESTORS (PITRILOKA)

Every living being is an essence of the Divine, and Lord Narayana is the central source of all creation; however, Lord Narayana does not personally descend to protect a child—for that, the arrangement of a father exists. The father is merely an administrator. In the same way, Rahu is also an administrator. Indian scriptures describe the location of *Pitri-loka* (the realm of the ancestors) in close proximity to *Chandraloka* (the lunar realm). If observed with subtlety, it is Rahu's orbit that exists near the lunar realm. In other words, the orbit of Rahu itself is *Pitri-loka*. The word *Pitar* (ancestor) is intended to mean

Preta (disembodied spirit). When the aspirations of a living soul are not fulfilled and the life-breath departs, it becomes a *Preta*. The unfulfilled desires of these spirits are satiated by their offspring through Vedic traditions. Until their desires are satisfied, those souls are not liberated from the *Preta yoni* (spirit form) and they remain in *Pitri-loka*, which is to say, in the orbit of Rahu. From there, these ancestors continue to protect their offspring, ensuring that no meteoroid falls upon their progeny situated on Earth. Viewed from another perspective, Rahu himself has attained a state of *Pretatva* (spirit-hood), as his desire to become immortal by drinking the nectar of immortality remained unfulfilled. Apart from Rahu, this *Pitri-loka* is temporary. Most ancestors are continually being liberated through the efforts of their offspring. In a sense, *Pitri-loka* is a waiting room for liberation. However, as long as the spirits are not liberated, the souls within this *Pitri-loka* continue to suffer greatly. The reason is that there is no provision for food or water in *Pitri-loka*. Souls there writhe in hunger and thirst. Therefore, the *Pindadan* (offering of food balls) and *Tarpan* (libations of water) performed by virtuous offspring for their ancestors, when done according to prescribed rites, reach the ancestors in the form of food and water. This brings joy to the ancestors. Consequently, Rahu, the lord of this *Pitri-loka*, does not afflict those virtuous offspring. On the contrary, when Rahu is pleased, he can transform virtuous offspring from a pauper into a king. But for those unfortunate ancestors whose children forget them, Rahu afflicts them so severely that not just the offspring, but the entire lineage is destroyed. Now the question is: who and how many are our ancestors? The tradition of *Tarpan* extends from Lord Narayana to Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra and other deities, all sages, divine humans like Sanat Kumara, divine ancestors, Yama, and our own father, grandfather, great-grandfather, mother, maternal grandfather, maternal great-grandmother, paternal great-grandmother, mother, grandmother, and even all ancestors from the side of the parents-in-law and the various *Gotras* (clans). Otherwise, the ancestors do not remain satisfied. In addition to this—

देवासुरास्तथा यक्षा नागा गन्धर्वराक्षसाः। पिशाचा गुहाकाः सिद्धाः
कूष्माण्डास्तरवः खगाः॥
जलेचरा तृप्तिमेते भूनिलया वाय्वाधाराश्च जन्तवः। प्रयान्वाशु
महत्तेनाम्बुनाखिलाः॥

That is to say—whether they be Devas (deities), Asuras (demons), Yakshas (nature spirits), Gandharvas (celestial musicians), Nagas (serpents), Rakshasas (monsters), Pishachas (ghosts), Guhyakas (hidden spirits), Siddhas (perfected beings), Kushmandas (vegetation), birds, aquatic creatures, terrestrial animals, or celestial beings—may all my ancestors be satiated. There is also a prescription for offering libations of water (*Salil Jal*) even to those ancestors who have fallen into hell or are enduring various torments, as follows:

नरकेषु समस्तेषु यातनासु च ये स्थिताः। तेषामाप्यायनायैतद्दीयते
सलिलं मया॥

Not only this, but there is also a prescription for *Tarpan* for the satisfaction of those ancestors who were my kith and kin in previous births, whether they are currently unborn or have taken birth, or those who are devoid of a son or wife, or those whose lineage and *Pinda* rites have become extinct. As follows:

येऽबान्धवा बान्धवाश्च येऽन्यजन्मनि बान्धवाः।
ते तृप्तिमखिला यान्तु यश्चास्मत्तोऽभिवाञ्छिति ॥
ये मे कुले लुप्तपिण्डाः पुत्रदारविवर्जिताः। तेषां हि दत्तमक्षय्यमिदमस्तु
तिलोदकम् ॥
आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तं देवर्षिपितृमानवाः। तृप्यन्तु पितरः सर्वे मातृमातामहादयः
॥
अतीतकुलकोटीनां सप्तद्वीपनिवासिनाम्। आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकादिदमस्तु
तिलोदकम् ॥

Not only this, but it is also prayed that all the deities, sages, and humans from the creation of Prajapati Brahma until the present day, who have belonged to my father's and mother's lineages, be satiated by my libations (*Tarpan*). A prayer has also been made stating: I offer this water mixed with sesame seeds to all the millions of lineages of my past births who reside within the Earth of the seven continents or who dwell within the realms of Brahma.

The researcher's experience has been that by fulfilling one's duties toward the ancestors in a prescribed manner, an individual becomes free from *Pitri Dosha* (ancestral affliction). Serving one's living elders also eradicates past ancestral afflictions. Otherwise, the departed souls feel that they accumulated this wealth with such great effort, yet their descendants

are consuming it with ingratitude. This resentment and attachment to property cast the living souls into the *Yoni* (form) of a serpent; therefore, the Rahu of people with *Pitri Dosha* often becomes afflicted, and the ancestors, becoming serpents, continue to torment their successors. I purchased land from a Brahmin family who had no children. When the time of *Shraddha Paksha* (the fortnight of the ancestors) arrived, a three-foot-long serpent came in front of my house and began striking its head. It did not take me long to understand that this was the previous landowner of this very land. The reason being, it was not easy for such a small serpent to reach the house, which was well-plastered with cement on all sides. Bowing to the serpent deity, I lifted it with a stick and moved it to a safe place outside the boundaries of the house, and when the opportunity arose, I performed *Pindadan* and *Tarpan* in their name at the Narayana Shila in Haridwar. After that, that soul was liberated. And I felt satisfied that I had fulfilled my duty toward them. Detailed descriptions regarding the relationship between *Pitriloka* and *Chandraloka* (the lunar realm) are found in the second part of the Vishnu Purana, eighth chapter, from verses 92 to 95—

सप्तद्वीयावसुन्धराचन्द्रलोकस्यभूशणम्। तत्रपितृगणाः सर्वे
वसन्तिपुण्यकर्मणाम् ॥ 92 ॥
' तत्रसोमस्यराजस्यनिवासोऽमृतरूपिणः। पितृभिः सह धर्मात्मा रेमे स
भगवान् विधिः ॥ 193 ॥
तस्मिन्लोकपथेषुपुण्येयान्तिधर्मपराजनाः। तेतत्र वसुधा
भोगान्भुजितेकर्मसंचितान् ॥ 94 ॥
भुक्त्वातुविपुलान्भोगान्क्षीणेपुण्येषुभेदिने। पुनरावर्ततेजीवायथाकर्मतथागतिः
॥ 95 ॥

In these verses, it is described that *Pitriloka* is situated within *Chandraloka* (the lunar realm), where virtuous souls rest and await rebirth. Meanwhile, the 14th verse of the 27th chapter of the *Prakriti Khanda* in the *Brahmavaivarta Purana* mentions that ancestors who performed truthful and virtuous deeds attain a place in *Chandraloka*. This verse is as follows:

' सत्यंपुण्यं च ये चक्रुः पितरः सततंमम। तेषांलोकाः सोमस
षायान्तिचन्द्रमसंभुभम्

It is stated in the Garuda Purana that *Pitriloka* is under the jurisdiction of Yamaraja and is influenced by the planet Rahu. It mentions that if Rahu is

afflicted in a person's horoscope or if there is a specific influence of Rahu-Ketu, the person suffers from *Pitri Dosha*. The realm of Rahu is described as the abode of the ancestors and is linked to the North Lunar Node. *Rahum pīdayate yasya tasya pitrkṛtaṁ bhavet* (Garuda Purana, Preta Khanda)—meaning, if Rahu is afflicted, problems related to the ancestors arise. According to the Mahabharata, Anushasana Parva, Chapter 88, there is a deep connection between Rahu and *Pitriloka*, and the position of Rahu affects the satisfaction and blessings of the ancestors. The relationship between Rahu and *Pitriloka* is viewed as a manifestation of the fruits of one's *Karma*. The malefic effects of Rahu and *Pitri Dosha* are seen as interconnected, and to rectify this, performing the *Shraddha* and *Tarpan* of the ancestors is considered essential. Due to the influence of Rahu, *Pitri Dosha* arises, leading to problems in an individual's life, such as unrest in the family, diseases, and financial difficulties.

In Chapter 107 of the Mahabharata's Anushasana Parva, there is a detailed discussion between Bhishma and Yudhishtira regarding *Pitri Dosha*, *Shraddha*, and the worship of ancestors. This dialogue focuses primarily on the peace of the *Pitris* (ancestors) and the rituals associated with them. Although this specific chapter does not directly mention the planet Rahu and *Pitri Dosha* by name, it certainly discusses the defects arising from the failure to fulfill one's duties toward the ancestors. In this manner, the significance of Rahu and Ketu is not limited to the protection of the Earth; rather, they also pave the way for a discipline that regulates human conduct and behavior.

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