

What is Graha Shaanti?

The phrase Graha Shaanti, essentially means, a ritual to propitiate Nava Grahas in Rituals. Let us know the literal meaning and derivative method of this phrase along with the rationale.

The word 'GRAHA' connotes holding and captivating. 'SHAANTI' means cooling down or reducing. It is important and interesting to understand the concept how this ritual is identified with this name.

Astronomy

Many objects are orbiting in the sky or space. Many such objects are spherical in shape. These celestial objects of the sky are mainly divided into two categories. The first is the stars, which are luminous. These are self-illuminating, with the combustion of gases. In other words, it is Vaayu Hetuka Prakaasha. **Vaayoragnih** is the Upanishat Sentence.

The second category of non-luminous objects is called as "PLANETS". They do not produce their own light. Instead, they shine with the light reflected from a star. When we see planets in the night sky, such as Venus, the so-called Evening Star, we are seeing reflected sunlight.

The Solar Orbit is the main basis for all the planets in our solar system. How many planets are counted in this system? Typically, the nine planets that are closest to our planet are called the NAVA GRAHAS or nine planets. In fact, there are only seven spheres to count. Besides the SUN, there are still six.

- Rahu is not an actual planet, it is the shadow of an object. Hence, it is Chaaya Graha. And Ketu also known as Dhuma Ketu, is a comet.
- Currently, scientists say the moon is a satellite. Because it is so close to the earth, orbiting the earth. It's all about astronomy.

Reconciliation of modern and ancient texts

Although there are some differences between ancient astronomical texts and modern texts, one commonality is the distance from the Earth to the rest of the planets, the visibility duration, and the current angle in which they are seen. There is not much

difference between the ancient and the modern perceptions in these aspects. Hence, we do not find much difference in the results from the analysis in Jyotishya or Astrology, which is based on astronomy.

Word - GRAHA

Let us see how the name Graha came to be.

The transit of spheres orbiting in space and the various events that occur in the lives of humans living on this Earth - have a innocuous but profound relationship. This has been diligently observed by our senior scientists for centuries, whom we call as Sages or Seers or Rishis. These sages have published their doctrines, outlining their understanding.

Summary of the doctrine -

When a planet sees the Earth, its effect will be evident on the beings on the Earth. Sometimes, it is possible to see one, two, three, four or five planets in a direction, known as the Graha Kuta, such as Pancha Graha kuta, Chatur Graha kuta ... so on. It is further observed by the seers that, when some planets are seen in a common direction, the effects on this planet are beneficial. Vice-versa, when another set of planets are viewed in another direction, the result is adverse.

Planet viewing or Graha Drushti, shall not be taken literally. It implies that those living on Earth can see the respective planet or planets in a particular direction. This does not mean that planets see humans by telescopes or with a naked eye.

To buttress the effect of the planets on the happenings on the earth, our ancestors have said that those spheres control the conditions of our planet and their inhabitants. To make it easier to understand this observation, they said that we are in the grip or hold of those celestial spheres. To convey this feeling better, they used the name GRAHA, which means to "hold" or "captivate". This profound relationship is found in astrological texts.

However, in the Vedic texts we find the mention of the stars only. The word GRAHA, used in a different context, by Veda. There, the GRAHA indicates a wooden vessel holding the Soma Rasa, which is offered as Aahuti to the deities.

Graha Japa Sankhya

In the present era, we use the term Graha Shaanti, intended to reduce the adverse effects of planetary constellation or transit. Our Ancestors set the number of times, a Mantra has to be recited, for each Graha. The number is proportional to the orbital travel for each Graha. Thus, the Graha Japa count has represents planetary transit.

Differences of perceptions such as:

- Sun-like spheres orbit the earth,
- Or the earth revolves around other spheres
- Or all of them orbit independent of each other in their orbits.

These theoretical differences, have little consequences in the analysis of Graha Chaara or planetary transit, as the crux is on the angle/ direction in which a set of planets are seen from the earth.

No matter who revolves around who, how far one can see another planet, how long is this duration of the view determines the Mahadasha, Antar Dashaa, Yoga, Yoga Bhanga, Dosha and Dosha Bhanga.

Suggested Count for Nava Grahas

6000 for the Sun, 10000 for the Moon, 7000 for Mars, 17000 for Mercury, 16000 for Guru, 20000 for Venus, 19000 for Saturn, 18000 for Rahu and 7000 for Ketu.

Purpose of Japa is to praise the Deity of each planet. Here our prayers are not directed towards the physical objects, but the meta-physical divinity which presides over the celestial objects. Otherwise, how could these celestial objects continue to transit in their orbit, without any chance of collision for millennia.

Worshipping inanimate objects such as Stones, clay, water, wood and metals - is not new to us in the Indian continent.

This is something we worship regularly, as we have imbibed the philosophy of perceiving divinity in every object.

Sarvabhūtastham ātmānaṁ Sarvabhūtāni Cātmani. (Bhagavadgītā)

Therefore, we worship God in several afore-mentioned object categories. The essence of these Prayers thru Graha Japa, is to remind ourselves that the Supreme God is omnipresent. Thus, the pleasure of the Divinity, obtained through Graha Japa, can help us avoid the severity of adverse situations arising out of the different planetary constellations.

Namas'sūryāya Candrāya Maṅgaḷāya Budhāya Ca |

Guru Śukra Śanibhyaśca Rāhavē Kētave Namaḥ ||