

## THE NAVAGRAHAS: AN INSIGHT INTO HINDU COSMOLOGY AND BELIEFS

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### ABSTRACT

In Vedic culture, Navagrahas have a significant place in Indian epics, such as the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, as well as in Puranas, including the Brahmanda Purana, the Matsya Purana, the Shiva Purana, the Linga Purana, the Kurma Purana, the Garuda Purana, the Vayu Purana, and the Bhavishya Purana.

In India, people include Navagraha pooja in several rituals and traditions from birth till the death of an individual. Even the position of Navagrahas in the horoscope (Janam Kundli) is determined by the astrologers after childbirth based on time and location. While performing any rituals, Navagrahas are drawn as symbols on a wooden pedestal (worship). They are cordially invited to bestow their blessings in almost all the rituals that Hindus perform in their lifetime. Navagrahas are considered in Hindu temples as supporting deities. Before worshipping the main God in the sanctum sanctorum of the temple, devotees offer prayers to the Navagrahas. Research reports on types of installation of Navagrahas, their advent in Vedic Religion, their relevance, their process of worshipping, their positions with their specific symbols, their qualities and their effect on mental and physical health of a human body are available. The present work envisages my perceptions based on my findings for the above mentioned features of Navagrahas. The supplementary material viz. figures, tables etc. provided in my present work are original.

**Keywords :** Navagraha, Vedic, Symbol, Culture, Temples, Puranas

### INTRODUCTION

The Navagrahas, or nine celestial bodies, play a pivotal role in Hindu cosmology and spirituality. Rooted in ancient Vedic and Puranic traditions, these planetary deities are believed to govern different aspects of human life, influencing destiny and karma. This paper aims to provide a thorough exploration of the Navagrahas, shedding light on their historical evolution, astrological significance, and spiritual relevance in Hinduism.

As evident, the base and the ancient religion of India is Sanatana Dharm based on Vedas. In this culture, various rituals and customs are performed from birth till death of an individual's life. Right from birth or before birth, the "Sanskars" (ceremony) of "God Bharai", (Baby shower), *Chhatti* (six days ritual), *Baraha* (twelve day ritual), *Namkarna* (naming ceremony of child), *Mundan* (Head shave ritual), *Janeu* (bearing sacred thread on body), *Marriage* etc. are celebrated. After death, the *Dasva* (ten days ritual) and *Tehrvi* (thirteen days ritual) sanskars are performed.

In these Sanskars, a common thing which is being noticed is the importance of "Navagrahas" which plays an important role in Hindu culture. As soon as, the child is born, the association of Navagrahas are being studied according to the time and place of birth. The Pandits or Astrologers

believe that Navagrahas have a positive or negative effects depending on their positions at the time when an individual takes birth. Through the studies about the positions of grahas at that particular time, they can even predict the behavior and destiny of an individual in various stages for the whole life.

Moreover, these Navagrahas are being represented through symbols on a wooden pedestal while performing any Pooja (worship). Priests (worshipper) invoke them to present for bestowing blessings in almost every Sanskars Hindus perform in their whole life. Navagrahas are also found in the Hindu temples as subordinate deities. Devotees pray Navagrahas before worshipping the main deity in the temple's sanctum sanctorum. There are also some independent temples in India which are dedicated to an individual grahas Shani Mandir at Shani Signapur, Maharashtra.

Graha is a verb that means "to grasp." It is believed that planets hold and exert karmic influences that have an impact on our life, both positively and negatively. Depending on the planets' positions at a particular period, a graha may or may not be favourable for an individual, a group of individuals, or even an entire country. The grahas' subtle energies influence the physical and mental faculties of living things, which has an impact on our karmas and their results.

A prominent area of Vedic study known as the Jyotisha-shastram is frequently referred to as a Vedanga (one of the limbs of the Vedas). It is a thorough analysis of how the universe's constituent parts and how they interact with one another influence both our karmic fates and our everyday life.

Our epics, the Ramayana and Mahabharata, and Puranas, including the Shiva Purana, the Brahmanda Purana, the Garuda Purana, the Vayu Purana, the Matsya Purana, the Linga Purana, the Karma Purana, and the Bhavishya Purana, all contain narratives and descriptions of the Navagrahas and their effects.

#### ABOUT NAVAGRAHAS

The word "Navagrahas" is the combination of two words 'Nava the nine' and 'Grah means planet'. So Navagrahas are mainly nine celestials of our galaxy or solar system which is "Akashganga" in Vedas. Navagrahas are also considered as deities in Hindu mythology and out of nine grahas, seven are the names of God and two are the names of demons. Among nine Navagrahas, seven also correspond by the names of days in a week in Hindu calendar. (Figure 1)

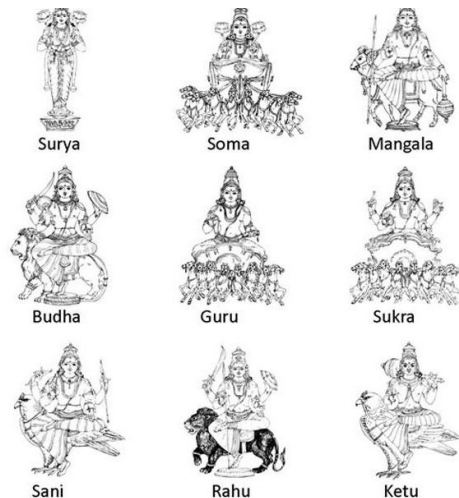


Figure 1 : Images of Navagrahas (Pimenta, S. <https://dsourc.in/resource/iconography-hinduism/navagraha>)

These Navagrahas are :

1. “Surya” or “Ravi” represents Sun. Sunday is regarded as the day of Ravi, therefore named as “Ravivar”.
2. “Chandra” or “Som” represents Moon. Monday is known as the day of Som, therefore named as “Somvar”.
3. “Mangala” represents the planet of Mars. Tuesday is therefore named as “Mangalvar”.
4. “Buddha” represents the planet of Mercury. Wednesday is named as “Buddhvar”
5. “Brihaspati” also known as “Brahmnapati” represents the planet of “Jupiter” also considered as the celestial teacher and is praised in many hymns of the Rigveda. Thursday is called as “Brihaspativar”.
6. “Śukra” represents the planet of Venus also regarded as mentor of demons and “Sukraniti” is written by him. Therefore, Friday is named as “Sukravar”.
7. “Śani” represents the planet of Saturn. Likewise, Saturday is named as “Sanivar”.
8. “Rāhu” represents the planet of Neptune and is considered as demon.
9. “Ketu” represents the planet of Pluto also considered as demon.

Basically, Navagrahas are drawn in the form of symbols by saints (learneds in Vedic Religion) while performing any pooja or ritual. These symbols are drawn in three rows and three columns on a wooden pedestal. The symbol of Grahas are been drawn in a specific position/cell in rows and columns.

The focal point of this research study is an effort to decipher the indepth significance of Navagrahas. To know the significance of the position and symbols of Navagrahas, and how they influence the destiny and future of a person.

To understand the hypothesis of Navagrahas, qualitative methodology will be employed. Almost twenty professionals or priests will be interviewed through a self-structured schedule. Various articles, research papers would be used as a secondary data for content analysis.

### **HISTORICAL EVIDENCES OF NAVAGRAHAS**

The roots of Navagrahas can be traced back to the Rig Veda, where certain hymns mention the influence of celestial bodies on earthly affairs. Over time, the concept of Navagrahas evolved, finding its elaborate expression in Puranic literature, particularly in texts like the Surya Siddhanta and Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra. The paper will discuss the historical development of Navagrahas and their incorporation into Hindu cosmology.

The Gupta period saw the emergence of monumental depictions of the planets in 4th century AD, which later expanded to South India by 11<sup>th</sup> century AD.

According to J.N. Bannerjea, “The worship of the twelve Adityas along with that of the nine so-called planets or Navagrahas came to occupy a very important place in the religious life of the Indians. The Navagrahas are Ravi (Sun), Soma (Moon), Mangala (Mars), Budha (Mercury), Bṛhaspati (Jupiter), Sukra (Venus), Sani (Saturn), Rahu and Ketu (the ascending and descending nodes of the moon); barring the first two and the last two, the rest are planets. This custom is still in practice by Hindus of India.

The order of the planets aligning with the days of the week is thought to have originated during the third century and became widespread amongst Hindus during the following century. Most Sanskrit texts describing the planets in the weekday order, therefore, should be dated past the third century. By this time, it became a general, widespread and unbreakable rule that the planets were to be named in accordance with their corresponding days of the week.

However, in 6<sup>th</sup> century AD, scholar Varahamihira interpreted Ketu as the tail of Raahu, said to have the form of a snake, and connected Raahu and Ketu with the ascending and descending nodes of the moon. The relevance of this analysis on the issue of planets is that, most likely the Indus people were planetary worshippers like the present day Hindus and many of the symbols of Indus Valley Civilization seals are depicting various planets and astronomical events.

According to tradition, the *Navagrahas* at the Navapashanam Temple, located at textual data Devipattinam, Tamilnadu is said to be installed by Lord Rama himself.

A group of nine Hindu temples known as the Navagraha temples can be spotted found in the Tamilnadu region of Kumbakonam, each one dedicated to one of the nine planetary deities. It is only in Tamil Nadu where the separate shrines are dedicated to Navagrahas. Similarly like these 9 temples can be found in Tondai Mandalam of Tamil Nadu.

Rajarajan (2006) also commented, “By and large, these deities seem to have got a regular place in temples since the Vijayanagara-Nāyaka time (dated since the 14th century A.D.). Early medieval temples, rock-cut, monolithic or structural, do not allot an exclusive venue for them as one finds the Sapta Matrīkas (e.g. Cave XVI, Ellora, called yajñāśālā). They are not found grouped in a row but independent images of Sūrya and Candra are reported (e.g. ceiling of the Agramaṇḍapa in the Virūpākṣa temple, Paṭṭadakkal), totally 13 images. Five grahas Maṅgala to Rāhu and Ketu are totally missing in Tamilnadu down to the Cōla time (mid-9th to the early 13th century CE).

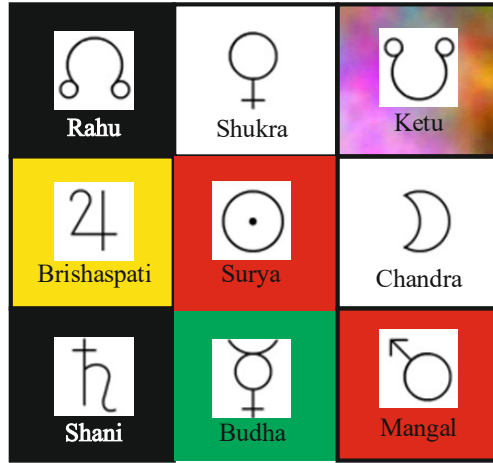
### **RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The present research study was designed to reveal the secrets of Navagrahas in Vedic Religion. Regarding this study the researcher has employed qualitative method which includes content analysis based on various books and websites. Interviews were also conducted on the professionals related to this field to gather the facts and their opinion on the above mentioned objectives.

### **TYPES OF INSTALLATION OF NAVAGRAHAS**

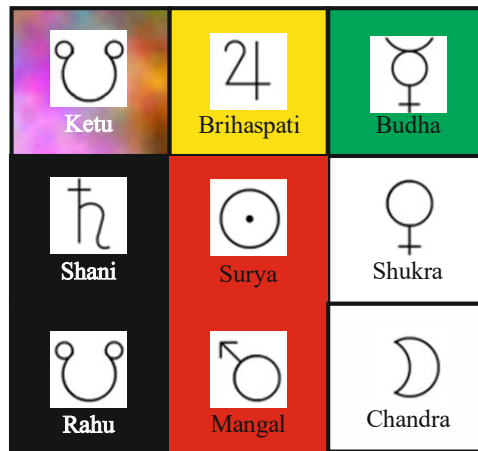
Hindu traditions propound that the Navagrahas or nine planets are generally arranged in a square form with the Sun (Surya) in the middle and the other grahas surrounding Surya; none of them are arranged to face one another. All significant Saiva temples in the entire India majorly contain their idols in the same manner. They are always positioned in a separate hall, located in the north-east of the main sanctorum, on a pedestal that is about three feet tall.

There are two types of arrangement/installation of grahas which are as follows : (i) Agama Prathishta (Figure 2) and Vaidika Prathishta (Figure 3).



**Figure 2 : Agama Prathishta (Graphic : Self)**

According to Agama Prathishta, Surya is the central component with Chandra to his east, Budha to his south, Brihaspati to his west, Shukra to his north, Mangala to his south-east, Shani to his south-west, Rahu to his north-west, and Ketu to his north-east. This method is used in temples like Tiruvaiyaru, Tiruvidadaimarudur, Suryanar Temple, and Tiruchchirappalli.



**Figure 3 : Vaidika Prathishta (Graphic : Self)**

According to Vaidika Prathishta, Surya is also placed in the centre with Shukra is to the east, Mangala is to the south, Shani is to the west, Brihaspati is to the north, Chandra is to the south-east, Rahu is to the south-west, Ketu is to the north-east, and Budha is to the north-east.

Nine stone slabs have been regarded as the Navagraha located in Navapashan in the Ramanathapuram state district. The Navagrahas are arranged in a line in temples like Tirukuvalai and Tiruvarur. Similarly, the planets are symbolized by nine holes in a stone in the Thirupanjali temple.

The Navagrahas are positioned on a pedestal in the Gangaikonda Cholapuram temple in Tamil Nadu, which has a distinctive design. In this edifice, Surya is vividly portrayed with seven horses drawing a chariot having two wheels and a charioteer. The sun is placed in the middle of the eight other grahas, which are known as Parikara Devas.

Furthermore, in Chennai at Agasthiyar Temple Pondy Bazaar, a totally different way of arrangement is made with Sun at the higher platform in the centre and the remaining planets are

positioned in an octagonal shape. This is called Agasthiyar Kattu (the form promoted by Sage Agasthiya).

#### ADVENT OF NAVAGRAHAS

Regarding this question how Navagrahas came in existence in Hindu pantheon and how our ancient saints to know that these celestial bodies existed in the universe. Apart from that, how these planetary bodies has its relevance in Vedic religion. In Vedic religion, the existence of planets were first mentioned in Atharveda. Later on, the planets were mentioned in Brhadprasharhora Shastra written by Rishi Parashar. Furthermore, the inscription and calculation of planets were also found in the book named “Siddhantsiromani” by Bhaskara II. The scholars like Varahmihir (505 A.D.), Kalyanverma (578 A.D.), Brahmgupta (598 A.D.), Munjal (584 A.D.), Bhatotpal (888 A.D.), Sudhakar Dwivedi (1860) had also shown interest in planets through their inscriptions. But all our ancient scholars had the same opinion that they acquire the knowledge of planets in solar system through their divya drishti (insight).

Ancient Indian scholars also believed that after meditation and research our saints have attained the knowledge that our solar system have emerged out from the will of the Supreme power. Even the veteran scholar Mr. N. R. Srinivasan also commented that “Through the observation of the sky above and by their yogic powers, the sages perceived perfect harmony and order in the movement of the heavenly bodies. Closely watching the solar system to which the earth belongs, our sages observed that the apparent path covered by the sun in relation to earth called the ecliptic recurred periodically with rhythmic precision. Likewise, they noticed that the Moon's path in relation to earth also occurred at regular intervals. Based on these observations they established units of time, such as day, month, year etc and gained the ability to precisely forecast the time of these recurring celestial events. Thus they gave the mankind a system of time measurement by which correct times of observance of religious rites.”<sup>i</sup>

They referred to the solar system's planets as "Navagrah," where "Nav" stands for "nine" and "grah" stands for "house or planet." Surya - the Sun, Chandra - the Moon, Mangal - Mars, Budha - Mercury, Guru - Jupiter, Shukra – Venus, Shani - Saturn, Rahu, and Ketu are the Navagraha Gods. Figure 4 depicts the placement of Navagraha at Aiyappa Temple, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India.



**Figure 4 : Placement of Navagraha at Aiyappa Temple, Lucknow (Image : Self)\***

**RELEVANCE OF NAVAGRAHAS**

Navagrahas gain an importance place in Vedic religion. Navagrahas play a vital role in making horoscope and predictions are also done accordingly. Not even that they are also considered responsible for a destiny of a person.

Gowthami stated “They act upon every Past and Present birth cycles in every good and bad acts of the person. They are the reasons and causes of the sufferings and happiness of the human livings.” The presence of Navagrahas are also mandatory in almost every rituals performed from birth till death.

**Sūrya:**

बीज मंत्र : ॐ हां हीं ह्रौं सः सूर्याय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum hraan hreen hron seh Suryay Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 7000 times within 40 days.)

Sūrya, the creator of warmth and light, is the third significant Vedic God who may have existed from the time of the Rigveda, or around 1500 BCE. According to Puranas, Rishi Kaśyapa and Aditi or Brahmā are regarded as his parents. He was married twice with Sañjnā and Chhāyā, which means "shadow." He has Karṇa as a son from Kunti, belongs to lunar race and Vāsudeva's sister, Śani, Sugrīva and the Manu Vaivasvata as descendants.

He is mounted on one horse with seven heads. He was born in Kaśyapagotra. He is the ruler of Kaliṅga-deśa. His colour is red. Sūrya is four-faced. His hands are eight that carry khaṭvaṅga, padma, cakra, śakti, pāśa, aṅkuśa, japamālā and kapāla. He shines exceedingly and is equal to Trimūrtis. He comes in circumambulation around the Meru in his one-wheeled chariot that is drawn by seven horses. He may also be seated on a padmāsana form.

Sūrya is the universe's supreme ruler. His forearms display the abhaya and varada - mudras, while his rear arms are holding lotus flowers. A ruby crest makes up the crown of his tiara. His colour is a deep red, and endowed with three eyes.

**Candra:**

बीज मंत्र : ॐ श्रां श्रीं श्रौं सः चंद्राय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum Shran Shrin Shron seh Chandraye Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 11000 times within 40 days)

The energetic Soma (Asclepias acida) juice, about which the Rigveda contains a mandala of hymns, is the genesis of Candra. The brāhmaṇas are fond of consuming it, as they believed it had the ability to cure all illnesses and bestow wealth to all.

Candra is born from Atri and Anasūyā. Others considered him as the son of Dharma, Prabhākara of the race of Atri or supposed to have been produced by churning the Ocean of Milk. Candra is the Lord of brāhmaṇas. The Bṛhadāraṇyaka would consider him a kṣatriya. He hails from the Atri-gotra. He is the ruler of trans-Yamunā-deśa. His body is in milk-white color. Dvibhuja, holds the gadā in one hand and shows varadamudrā with other. He was first born among the gods. He wears ornaments, studded with pearls. His dress is white. He comes in circumambulation around the Meru in a (three-wheeled) vehicle bearing a white flag and drawn by ten horses. He is also placed in a square pedestal in the Agni disha (southeast direction) with his wife and son. Candra is also considered as the colour of white camphor and sphaṭika “crystal”. His face is a pūrṇacandra that is a Indian literary allegory for beauty.

**Aṅgāraka:**

बीज मंत्र : ॐ क्रां क्रीं क्रौं सः भौमाय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum Kran Krin Kron seh Bhaumaaye Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 10000 times within 40 days)

Aṅgāraka is also referred as Maṅgala, identified as Kārttikeya, God of war. According to Rudrasaṃhita in Śiva Purāṇa, he is said to have been born from a drop of the sweat that fell from the forehead of Śiva who undertook a penance after the self-immolation of Satī. Śiva is said to have married a daughter of Hiranyākṣa by name Vikeśī to whom Maṅgala was born from the lump of an aborted embryo. The child is said to have been fed with the breast-milk of Bhūdevī. He is also considered the son of Bhū. He is also considered as the form of agni “fire” and his appearance is a blazing fire.

However, the rays coming from his persona is bearable. He was a descendant of the Bharatvāja-gotra and the ruler of Avanti-deśa. He has four hands carrying the śakti, gadā, śūla, and khaṭvaṅga. His ornaments are made of coral wearing red garment and garland. His vehicle is a ratha that is adorned with a red banner and drawn by eight goats in saffron colour. It comes around the Meru in pradakṣiṇa. Aṅgāraka should be placed on a triangular pedestal where Bhū and Skanda are present. He may also be mounted on a goat vehicle. One of his four hands may be in varadahasta mudra.

**Budha :**

बीज मंत्र : ॐ ब्रां ब्रीं ब्रौं सः बुधाय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum Bran Brin Bron seh Budhaye Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 9000 times within 40 days)

Budha means “wise” or “intelligent”. He is the author of a hymn in the Ṛgveda. He was the son of Candra through his beloved wife Rohinī or Tārā, wife of Bṛhaspati. He is also said to have married, Ilā, daughter of Manu Vaivasvata and who is the mother of Purūravas, the progenitor of the lunar race. Budha in amorous play with this damsel gave birth to Purūravas (Mani 1996: 165). His body radiates like the kuṅkum (saffron). He has four hands that holds the khaḍga, gadā, khetaka, and depicts varadamudrā.

**Brihaspati (Guru)**

बीज मंत्र : ॐ ग्रां ग्रीं ग्रौं सः गुरुवे नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** - “*Aum Gran Grin Gron seh Guruve Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 19000 times within 40 days)

*The Guru Brishaspati* is adorned with ornaments which are studded with the gem, marakata “emerald”. He wears yellow garment and garland. The śāstra-jñānis love him. His vāhana or ratha drawn by four lions, adorned with a soaring syāmaladvaja. He goes around the Meru in pradakṣiṇa in this chariot. He may also be placed on the siṃhavāhana. He is in golden colour and bestows boons to his devotees. He came to be the purohita (family) priest of the gods and is at times considered the “the father of the gods”. Later he became a brahmaṛṣi and Regent of the planet



Jupiter (Dowson 1998: 63-64). According to another version of the myth Aṅgiras (aṅgāra means live coal) was the son of Brahmā. Bṛhaspati was the son of Aṅgiras.

Bṛhaspati is the teacher of the sakaladevatas. His body parts shine like gold. He has four hands, bearing the daṇḍa, kamaṇḍalu, japamālā and depicting varadahasta mudra with one hand. He dressed up in garments and a garland which are yellow in color. His jewellery includes gems with puṣparāga (topaz, yellowish brown gem-stone). He mounts on a golden chariot, pulled by eight horses in white color. He is escorted by wives and āyudhapuruṣas.

### Śukra:

बीज मंत्र : ॐ द्रां द्रीं द्रौं सः शुक्राय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum Dran Drin Dron Seh Shukraye Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 16000 times within 40 days)

Śukra is the descendent of Bṛḡu and the mentor of Mahābali and the demons. He was also known as Kavi or poet, considered to be the son of Bṛḡu or Bṛḡu himself. He married to Jayantī, Indra’s daughter, was his wife for ten years. His another wife was Ūrjjasvatī to whom Devayānī was born.

He is an expert in the nītiśāstras. He is also caturbhuja (having four hands) bearing daṇḍa, kamaṇḍalu, japamālā and varadahasta. His dress is white with flowers and sandal-paste adorned with the diamond jewellery. His huge chariot is said to be drawn by eight horses in white color and also mounted with a flag in white color.

It is said that he was permitted to emerge from the penis of Śiva. Therefore, he got the name Śukra (sperms). Śukra served in the cabinet of Mahiṣāsura. • Prahlāda was the mentee of Śukra. He resides on the Meru Parvat with the demons. Siva taught him mṛtasañjīvanī-mantra (mantra that revives the dead). He learnt the Śivasaharanāma from Taṇḍi and then taught it to Gautama. He has seven sons.

### Śani or Śanaīścara:

बीज मंत्र : ॐ प्रां प्रीं प्रौं सः शनैश्चराय नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : “*Aum Pram Prim Pron seh Shanicharaye Namah*”

(This mantra should be chanted for 23000 times within 40 days)

According to the many horoscopes, Śani is the most charitable giver when he is happy. In contemporary India, the Śanaīścara of Naḷḷāru is considered as the most important God by the President to the Chief Minister of a state. He is a slow-moving planet and hence the name Śanaīścara (literally “slow moving”). He has four hands and bears dhanus, bāṇa, curika and abhayahasta. His garments, garland and sandal-paste are yellow. He is adorned with ornaments fitted with blue gems. He is all the time ferocious. His chariot is drawn by eight vultures and which is mounted with a blue banner. He may also be seated on a vulture carrier.

### Rāhu :

बीज मंत्र : ॐ भ्रां भ्रीं भ्रौं सः राहवे नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : *“Aum Bhran Bhrin Bhron seh Rahve Namah”*

(This mantra should be chanted for 18000 times within 40 days)

**Ketu :**

**बीज मंत्र** : ॐ स्रां स्रीं स्रौं सः केतवे नमः ॥

**Beej Mantra** : *“Aum Sran Srin Sron seh Ketve Namah”*

(This mantra should be chanted for 17000 times within 40 days)

Actually, only seven grahas are considered, Rahu and Ketu are known shadow planets or grhas. Furthermore, Rāhu literally is known as “eclipse”. Rāhu and Ketu are imaginary characters and symbolizing the descending and ascending parts of the moon. Rāhu is the ruler of meteors and safeguard the southwest quarter. Rāhu is a demon who grasps the sun and moon, prevents the light and hence responsible for the eclipses. He is the son of Viprachitta and Siṃhikā. He is known by the metronymic Sainhikeya. When the Amrut was obtained by gods and demons through their combined efforts. But Rahu and Ketu recognized Mohini's deceit, when he was distributing the Amrit and then stealthily drank a small amount of it. Mohinī or Vishnu is said to have strike off their heads and placed it alternatively (Kalidos 1986: 188-90). Thus, Rāhu got the head of a man and Ketu the head of a snake. He has four hands bearing the khaḍga, khetaka, śūla and varadahasta. He adorns black dress and black garland. His jewellery are fitted with gomedaka gems. He is mounted on a chariot which is drawn by a lion black in color and circumbulating around the Meru in a pradakṣiṇa (circular path). His face is dreadful.

Ketu is the descending part, also a comet or meteor. He is represented by a tail of a dragon. He is the son of Viprachitta and Siṃhikā (Dowson 1998: 157) and the uterine brother of Rāhu. He is also considered as the brother of Rāhu, son of Kaśyapa and Siṃhikā. Bhagavān Ketu is of the form of smoke (Śrītattvanidhi 5. 26). He hails from the Jaimini-gotra. He is the ruler of Madhya-deśa. He holds the gadā with one hand and depicting varadahasta mudra with other. He wears different types of garments and garlands. His ornaments are studded with vaiḍūrya (cat's eye gems).

#### **PROCESS OF WORSHIPPING NAVAGRAHAS**

The Navagrahas hold deep spiritual significance in Hinduism. Devotees believe that propitiating these planetary deities through rituals and prayers can mitigate the adverse effects of planetary influences and bring about positive changes in one's life. This section will explore the religious rituals, temples, and worship practices associated with each Navagraha, emphasizing their role in spiritual growth and cosmic harmony.

Navagrahas are being invited through mantras/slokas to give their blessings to an individual or a family in every festive occasion. There is specific process of worshipping each and every planet or Navagrahas. The priest enchant mantra or Shri Navagrah Strot which is written by Maharishi Ved Vyas to invite the planets.

<p>II श्री नवग्रह स्तोत्र II</p> <p>जपाकुसुम संकाशं काश्यपेयं महदद्युतिम् I</p> <p>तमोरिसर्वपापघ्नं प्रणतोऽस्मि दिवाकरम् II १ II</p> <p>दधिशंखतुषाराभं क्षीरोदारण्व संभवम् I</p> <p>नमामि शशिनं सोमं शंभोर्मुकुट भूषणम् II २ II</p> <p>धरणीगर्भं संभूतं विद्युत्कांति समप्रभम् I</p> <p>कुमारं शक्तिहस्तं तं मंगलं प्रणाम्यहम् II ३ II</p> <p>प्रियंगुकलिकाश्यामं रुपेणाप्रतिमं बुधम् I</p> <p>सौम्यं सौम्यगुणोपेतं तं बुधं प्रणाम्यहम् II ४ II</p> <p>देवानांच ऋषीनांच गुरुं कांचन सन्निभम् I</p> <p>बुद्धिभूतं त्रिलोकेशं तं नमामि बृहस्पतिम् II ५ II</p> <p>हिमकुंद मृणालाभं दैत्यानां परमं गुरुम् I</p> <p>सर्वशास्त्र प्रवक्तारं भार्गवं प्रणाम्यहम् II ६ II</p> <p>नीलांजन समाभासं रविपुत्रं यमाग्रजम् I</p> <p>छायामार्तंड संभूतं तं नमामि शनैश्चरम् II ७ II</p> <p>अर्धकायं महावीर्यं चंद्रादित्य विमर्दनम् I</p> <p>सिंहिकागर्भसंभूतं तं राहुं प्रणाम्यहम् II ८ II</p> <p>पलाशपुष्पसंकाशं तारकाग्रह मस्तकम् I</p> <p>रौद्ररौद्रात्मकं घोरं तं केतुं प्रणाम्यहम् II ९ II</p> <p>इति श्रीव्यासमुखोद्गीतम् यः पठेत् सुसमाहितः I</p> <p>दिवा वा यदि वा रात्रौ विघ्नं शांतिर्भविष्यति II १० II</p> <p>नरनारी नृपाणांच भवेत् दुःस्वप्ननाशनम् I</p> <p>ऐश्वर्यमतुलं तेषां आरोग्यं पुष्टिर्वर्धनम् II ११ II</p> <p>ग्रहनक्षत्रजाः पीडास्तस्कराग्निसमुद्भवाः I</p> <p>ता सर्वाः प्रशमं यान्ति व्यासोब्रुते न संशयः II १२ II</p> <p>II इति श्रीव्यास विरचितम् आदित्यादी नवग्रह स्तोत्रं संपूर्णं II</p>	<p>   Shri Navagrah Strot   </p> <p>Japaa kusuma Sankaasam – Kaasyapeyam Mahaath' yuthim</p> <p>Thamo'urim sarva Paapa ganam – Pranathosmi Dhiwaakaram   1  </p> <p>Dhadhi sanka Thushaaraabham – Ksheero Dhaarnava Sambhavam</p> <p>Namaami sasinam Somam – Sambhor makuta Bhooshanam   2  </p> <p>Dharanee garbha Sambhootham – Vidhyuth kaanthi Samaprabham</p> <p>Kumaaram Sakthi Hasthancha – Mangalam Pranamaam Yaham   3  </p> <p>Piryangu kali Kaasyaamam – Roope'naa Prathimam Budham Sowmyam sowmya Gunopetham–Tham Bhudham Pranamaam Yaham   4  </p> <p>Dhe'vaanaancha Risheenaancha – Gurum Kaanchan sannibham</p> <p>Bhudhdhi bhootham Thrilokesam – Thannamaami Bhruhaspathim   5  </p> <p>Hima kundha M'runaalaabam – Dhaithyaanam Paramam Gurum</p> <p>Sarva saasthra Pravruththaaram – Bhaargavam Pranamaam Yaham   6  </p> <p>Neelaanchana Samaabaasam – Raviputhram Yamaagrajam</p> <p>Chaayaa Maartaanda Sambhootham – Thannamaami Sanaicharam   7  </p> <p>Ardha kaayam mahaaveeyram – Chandhraadhithya vimardhanam Simhikaagarba Sambhootham – Tham Raahum Pranamaam Yaham   8  </p> <p>Palaasa pushpa sankaaasam–Thaarakagraha masthakam Rowdhram rowdhraathmakam go'ram–Tham Kethum Pranamaam Yaham  9  </p> <p>Iti Vyaasa-mukhod-giitam yah: path'et-susamaahitah:</p> <p>Divaa vaa yadi vaa raatrau vighna-shantir-bhavish'yati   10  </p> <p>Nara-naarii-nrupaan'aayn cha bhaved-duh:svapna-naashanam</p>
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	Aishvaryamatulam tesh'aam aarogyam push't'i- vardanam   11
	Graha-nakshatrajaa piid'aah: taskaraagni- samudbhavaah:
	Taah: sarvaah: prashamam yaanti Vyaaso bruute na sanshayah:   12
	Iti Shri Vyaasa-virachitam Navagraha-stotram sampurnam

The *Navagraha Shanti Mantra* is as follows:

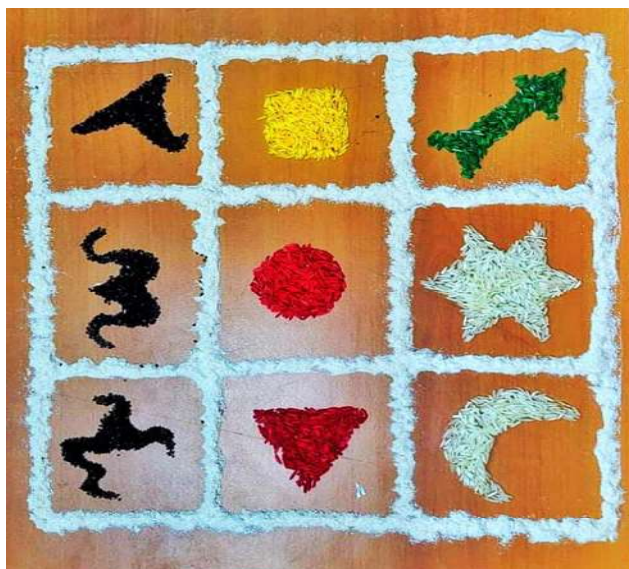
ब्रह्मा मुरारी त्रिपुरांतकारी भानुः शशि भूमि सुतो बुधश्च ।

गुरुश्च शुक्र शनि राहु केतव सर्वे ग्रहा शांति करा भवंतु ॥

*brahmaamuraaristripuraa.ntakaarii bhaanushashii bhuumisuto budhashcha |  
gurushcha shukrashcha shani raahu ketavah sarve graham shanti karo bhavantoo. ||*

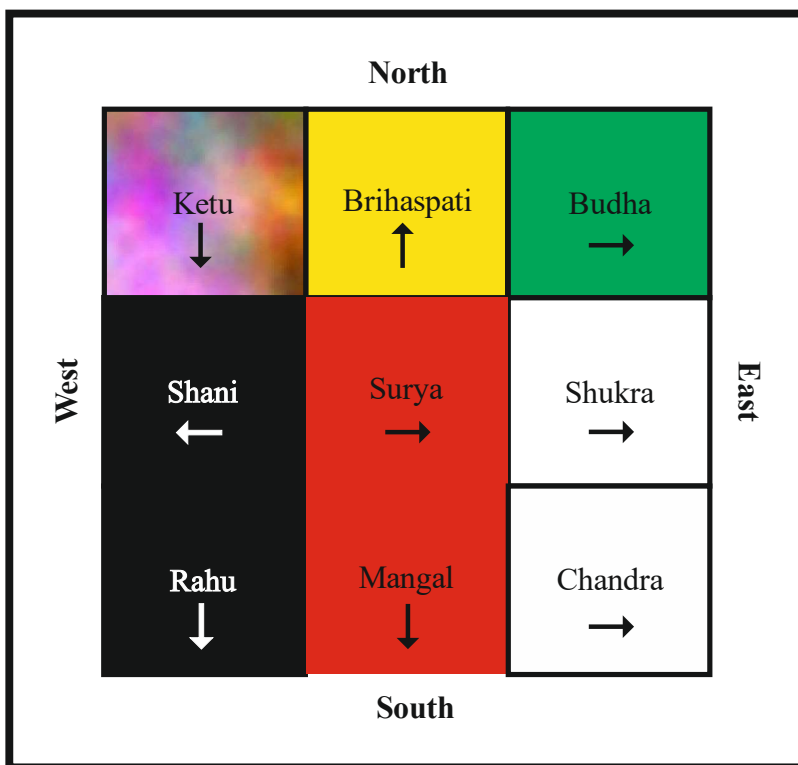
Then a yellow cloth is covered on the wooden pedestal. T.A. Gopinath Rao has also commented, “They are invariably placed in separate mandapa having a east pediment of about three feet in height; and not two of them are made to face each other.”

On the pedestal the Navagrahas are placed in the form of symbols. Furthermore, there is a place assigned for an each planet and these symbols are drawn with different colors for different planets (Figure 5).



**Figure 5 : Symbols and Places of Navagrahas on a Pedestal during worship (Image : Self)**

The placement and symbol for each planets are as follows :



**Figure 6 : Directions of facing each Navagraha idols (Graphic : Self)**

Sun always occupies the central position, Moon to the South-East, Mars to the South, Mercury to the Northeast, Jupiter to the North, Venus to the East, Saturn to the West, Rahu to the Southwest and Ketu to Northwest (Figure 6).

**CHARACTERISTICS OF NAVAGRAHAS**

Each and every Navagrahas bestow followings, however offering things and corresponding colors of each individual is enlisted in Table 1.

**Table 1 : Specific Features of Navagrahas**

Planet	Bestower	Plants	Grain	Flower	Colour	Gem
Surya/sun	Good health	Madar	Wheat	Lotus	Red	Ruby
Chandran/Moon	Victory	Palash	Rice	Arali	White	Pearl
Angaraka/mars	Family prosperity	Khadir	Thuvarai	Shenbagam	Red	Coral
Budha / mercury	Wisdom	Apamarg	Green gram	Kandhal	Green	Emerald
Guru / jupiter	Honour	Peepal	Bengal gram	Mullai	Yellow	Topaz
Sukhra / venus	Vocal skills	Gudhhal	Field Beans	White Lotus	White	Opal
Sani / saturn	Joy & happiness	Sami	Gingelley	Vanni	Black	Saphire
Rahu	Strength	Chandan	Black gram	Mandharai	Black	Komedhagam
Kethu	Personal opulence	Kush	Horse gram	Alli	Multi	Cats eye

Parihar, S. and Sharma D. (2021) also purports “All the gods and goddesses in Hindu mythology are related with certain trees, plants and bushes. Similarly, trees, plants, grasses, and bushes are related with all nine planets, which are said to govern a person’s destiny. Navagraha vatika or navghra plants are the plants that are planet themed with nine sacred trees, plants and bushes of India. In navgrah vatika or navgrah plants the trees are planted in a specific direction to reap the advantages of nine planets or grah. Each plant represents distinct heavenly energies in Navagraha vatika, hence vatika is made to obtain the power of nine planets. It generates positive energies, also purifies the air, gets rid of vastu dosh and plants are also helpful in treating many diseases. These nine plants also bring good health, money and prosperity”.

#### **PICTORIAL ILLUSTRATION OF NAVAGRAHAS**

The Citrasabh of Kulam contains some of the earliest illustrations of all, dating from perhaps the early 19th century. It should be mentioned that this Hall of Paintings supports two Nyaka and post-Nyaka traditions. The paintings depicting Naarja performing nandatavam, a Nyaka art form, reveal this. Postings of the Navagrahas are done in a straight line, starting with Srya and finishing with Ketu. They are all equally samapda-sthnaka. All others, excluding Rahu and Ketu, are caturbhujā. The positions of Rahu and Ketu are dvibhujā and ajalibandha, respectively. We should note that the ajalibandha is not attributed to them, despite the canons calling for four arms. They are all tastefully dressed in lower clothes, sakalbharas, various crowns, and skandams.

At every scenario, an ekvali necklace is prominent. Ketu's head and neck resemble those of a five-hooded cobra, while Rahu's lower body is that of a snake. The padmas and nilopalas are held in the rear arms by Surya and Candra. The front right hand of each person is held in abhayamudra. Surya's front left hand depicts varadamudra, while Candra's is in ruhasta.

Mangala features two different vajra varieties in its parahastas. Abhaya is on on his front right, while uru-hastas is on his left. The curika (right rear), tanka (rear left), upside down gada (front forearm), and depicting abhayamudra (left front) are held by Buddha (front left arm). The four mudras that Vyla is holding are a sunflower (rear right), a kamandalu (rear left), an abhaya (front right), and a varada (front left). The parahastas of Ukra is shown holding the akṣamālā (right) and Kamandalu (left). An inverted gada is being depicted in the right hand. The left hand in the front depicts varadamudrā.

Sani is holding a vajra in her rear left arm and a curika in the rear right. The left is uru-hastas and the front right is in abhaya. Rahu is holding an upright prayoga gada in his hand. No weapon is attributed to Ketu.

The literatures like the Visnudharmotara, Agnipurana, Anshumadbhedagama, Silparatna describe the forms of Navagraha reliefs in group representations often depict them in different pattern. Navagrahas were used as architectural pieces in medieval temples of different parts of India in a stone slabs with the figures of these ‘grahas’ as usually standing and rarely seated,

Bannerji also stated, “A late Gupta fragmentary sandstone relief from Sarnath in the Indian Museum contains the figures of four ‘planets’ Bṛhaspati, Śukra, Śani and Rāhu. All are two-armed, the first three standing in graceful poses, while the fierce-looking Rāhu is shown only up to the breast with a grinning face, round protruding eyes, hair tied up in a bunch of spiral coils rising upwards (pingalordhakesa). Bṛhaspati, Śukra and Śani have each a halo behind his head, and a rosary in his right hand, while the left hands of the first two hold a water-pot, Śani's left hand being broken; Ketu is not shown in it, as Rāhu whose hands are in the ‘tarpana mudra’, occupies the (extreme) end of the carved slab. Thus, the slab seems to have contained the figures of eight

'grahas' only (the figures of the first four being broken away), and this seems to have been the earlier convention in architectural use of these 'planets Ketu being a later addition.'

Rao, V. D. N. also commented, "The Abode of Surya is full of Agni and white where as Twishi or Chandra is full of water and white; Budha or Mercury who is Pancha Kirana or of Five Rays too is full of water and of dark colour; ShukraSthaana is a Lotus again with water and has sixteen Rays; Kuja also is full of water but of blood red colour; Brihaspati has a big Place and watery in green colour with twelve rays; Saturn has eight rays of black colour and Jalamaya or full of water; and Rahu Sthaana is of dark colour and is the tormentor of Praanis or Beings. All the Nakshatras are 'jalamayas' or full of water and of white colour glittering with illumination thanks to Surya Deva and these Stars were as old as Kalpa and are shiny due to the interaction of Surya."

The Siva temples at Bhuvaneshvar, Orissa, provide evidence to support this observation. There are just the eight 'grahas' shown on the lintel slabs of all the older shrines of this type from the Bhauma-Kara period.

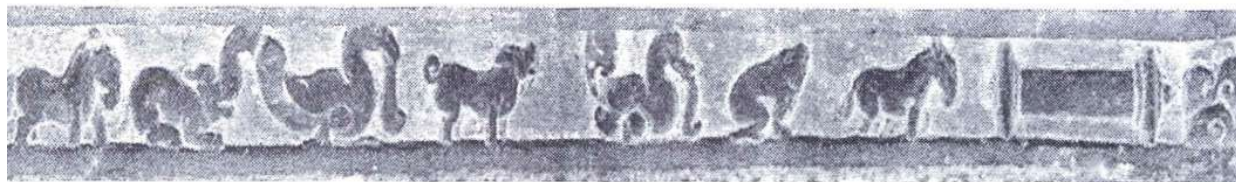
From the Ganga era onward, Ketu can be seen on the architraves. The group representation starts with the image of Ganapati in some of the later slabs of this type. This is demonstrated by a beautiful sculpture that was discovered at Kankandighi, Calcutta, depicting the nine "Planets" standing gracefully on lotus pedestals while holding their corresponding attributes in their hands, starting with Ganesha.

Their respective cognizance is engraved below the lengthy, double-petalled lotus, and only Bhaspati is depicted with a beard. The exquisitely crafted large rectangular stone, which has the principal figures inset in extremely high relief, seems to demonstrate that the composition was not a "door-piece," but rather an object for frequent devotion during the period of Grahayaga.

The twelve-spoked wheel, known as the Navagraha-cakra, which was discovered among the remains of Khiching offers a distinctive way to symbolise the "grahas." The twelve-spoke wheel is supported by a lotus pedestal and is lying on its side. The nine "Planets" figures are grouped inside the wide rim.

In the middle of the wheel is a three-faced, four-armed figure seated in padmasana with its front hands in the dhyanamudra and the objects in the back hands being indistinct; flames issue from the rim of the wheel. Rahu and Ketu are on either side in the bottom, Surya is seated in the top centre, and on the sides are carved one above the other the six other "grahas," three on either side. This sculpture also seems to have been a prominent object of worship like the Kankandighi relief."

Sarkar B. K. (2012) signifies, "The Patan (Dinajpur) panel datable to the eleventh century shows the vahanas of the seven planets starting from Ganesa as follows: Musika (mouse), Asva (horse), Hasti (elephant), Mayura (peacock), Sarameya (dog), Hamsa (swan), Bheka (frog) and Gardabha (ass)" (Figure 7)



**Figure 7 : Details of Vahanas/Mount : horse (Surya), elephant (Chandra), peacock (Mangala), dog (Budha), goose (Brishaspati), frog (Sukra), ass (Sani), axle-tree (Rahu), smoke (Ketu)** (Karatoya: NBU J. Hist. Vol. 5: 5-18 (2012))

Even each planets has its own mount or vehicle on which these planets or Gods travel on it. Balaji Mundkur (1978) has worked on the Indian and preColumbian Mesoamerican celestial gods of which he finds parallels and has presented a diagram of the Indian graha-gods, all uniformly mounted on chariots, ringed by the twelve zodiacal signs and peripherally encircled with 28 animals that represent the nakṣatras (asterisms).

The mounts of all the nine Grahas are depicted in Table 2 :

**Table 2 : Animals and Birds as the Mounts of Navagrahas**

Ketu : a pigeon	Sani : eight vulture	Rahu : black lion
Guru : eight white horses	Surya : seven horses	Angaraka : eight goats
Budha : lion	Sukra : eight white horse	Candra : ten horses

Amazingly these Navagrahas also influence the taste and liking of an individual. It is also said that these planets also have their positive and negative effect on the nature and health of a human being.

The many components of our body and how well they work are known to be affected by the Navagrahas. For instance, Surya promotes long life and good health, Digestion, fertility, and mental health are all impacted by Chandra. The muscular system is impacted by Mangala grah, the skin and respiratory system are impacted by Budha grah, the liver and pancreas are impacted by Guru grah, the reproductive system is impacted by Sukra grah, the nervous system is impacted by Sani grah, and phobias and anxieties are associated with Rahu and Ketu grahas.

Furthermore, the Navagraha shanti puja, an elaborate Vedic ritual is performed by trained priests, who chant mantras and make offerings to them for making the grahas to calm down their negative effects and bestow their blessings for wellbeing of an individual.

**Table 3 : Impact of Navagrahas on Human Beings**

Navagraha	Taste	Nature	Health Sensitive
Sun	Bitter	Brave, Young in nature	Fire
Chandra	Yoghurt	Peaceful, Medical	Cold and Cough
Mangal	Spicy/Drugs	Violent, Warrior	Operation
Buddha	Green leaves	Peaceful, Business minded	Falling down
Guru	Sweet	Wise, Religious, Teacher	Stomach problems
Shukra	Sweet	Judgmental, Logical power	Breathing problems
Shani	Sour, pungent	Cruel	Feverish, Lungs problems
Rahu	Jaggery, Drugs	Lower caste	Cancer, accidents
Ketu	-	Spiritual, ascetism, Intelligent	Fiery



**WORSHIP OF SPECIFIC GRAHAS FOR SPECIFIC ACCOMPLISHMENTS :**

1. Surya (Sun): Perform worship on Sunday to get power over foes, strength, well-being, and prosperity.
2. Chandra (Moon): Pray to Monday to find inner calm, bolster emotional stability, charm, and improve beauty.
3. Mangal (Mars): Tuesday worship aims for health, money, and success, which lessens the uncertainty of mishaps, confinement, and mortar attacks.
4. Buddha (Mercury): Wednesday worship bestows wisdom, inclusive success, progress, riches, and relief from nervous system diseases (neuro specific).
5. Guru (Jupiter): Thursday worship helps control negative emotions and gives moral gravity to higher education, creative and cultural abilities, money, and fortune.
6. Shukra (Venus): Friday worship encourages strong bonds, love and relationships, the conception of families, and happiness.
7. Shani (Saturn): Saturday's worship brought success and wealth as it defeated adversity and bad luck. It also blessed mental peace and harmony, wellbeing, and happiness.
8. Rahu (the head of a dragon) represents long life, emotional stability, and a distinguished position in the society and reputation.
9. Ketu (Dragon's Tail): Decrease the likelihood of loss of life and property, and promote health, family love, and prosperity.

As mentioned in the present research paper, that Navagrahas are invited in almost every festive occasion, likewise there is a process of visarajan (goodbye) of Navagrahas. After the ceremony, the mantras are enchanted to apologise and say goodbye to the Navagrahas for their mistakes made unconsciously.

ॐ यान्तु देवगणाः सर्वे पूजामादाय मामकीम् ।

इष्टकामसमृद्धयर्थं पुनर्ऋषि पुनरागमनाय च ॥

*Yantu Deva-Ganah Sarve, Pujamadaya Mamakim ।*

*Ishtha-Kama-Samriddhyartham, Punaragamanaya Cha ॥*

**CONCLUSION :**

This present work has endeavored to unravel the complexities surrounding celestial beings, shedding light on their origins, individual characteristics, astrological influences, and spiritual significance. According to Hindu religion doctrines, it is very auspicious and herculean task to interpret the astrological symbols. The concept of Navagrahas in Hindu religion encapsulates a rich tapestry of historical, astrological, and spiritual dimensions. It requires great in depth study to observe the movement of these grahas in the universe as they have very subtle relationship between the mental and physical state of a human being. Most of the predictors and horoscope readers also believed that the position of stars and grahas are responsible for all the events happening on the earth to a great extent. The ancient saints also very well understood that the universe is a reflection of the spirit, which is its essential life and soul, rather than merely a physical structure. The Navagrahas continue to play a vital role in shaping the spiritual landscape of Hinduism, serving as a bridge between the cosmic forces and the earthly journey of the devotees. Though the author has

tried to cover the related aspects of Navagrahas by available sources and self-interpretation but much more studies are required to explore more findings in this area.

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