



ISSN: 2456-4427

Impact Factor: RJIF: 5.11

Jyotish 2020; 5(2): 51-54

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www.jyotishajournal.com

Received: 16-05-2020

Accepted: 24-06-2020

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International Journal of Jyotish Research (वेदचक्षु)

Planets at the onset of Mahabharata war: Destructive combination of 9 energies

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Abstract

Veda Vyasa narration to Ganesha, as he has composed in three year of time has what come to know as Mahabharata. The basic story is of an 18-day war, which is very unique to existence in this solar system. Besides, the story of Pandava and Kaurava, their legend of mutual hatred and envy that formed the war, there were also peculiar combination occurring among planets in sky. Veda Vyasa, was fathered by Rishi Parasara, and he is also known as Father of Indian Astrology. Thus, taking guidance from such a benevolent sage, it was natural for Vyasa to include crucial aspect of astrological phenomenon of astrology in his text, which will be known by Jaya, the second Sanskrit epic after Ramayana.

Keywords: Mahabharata, planets, dating, eclipse

Introduction

Veda Vyasa give much information about both major and minor planets which also includes comets, in his epic. While, in this study we are only restricting ourselves to 9 planets system of Indian astrology, known as Navgraha. According to this, Both Sun and moon are planets. Moreover, the phenomenon of eclipses occurs due to two other planets – Rahu and Ketu. So, accordingly the Navgraha system has nine planets-Sun, Moon, Mars, Saturn, Venus, Mercury, Rahu and Ketu.

Materials and Methods

Udyoga, Bhishma and Karna Parva of Mahabharata give enough evidence of what was following in the skies. In Udyoga Parva, Karna states crucial orientation of planet to Krishna, whereas in Bhishma Parva, Vyasa the author himself mentions the planetary position to Kuru king, Dhritarashtra. While, a very important transition of planet Jupiter, can be extracted from Karna Parva, in which is mention the vital position of Jupiter, during the time when Karna was slayed by Arjuna, confirm on direction of Krishna.

For estimating accurate position of planet, only four extracts are use from Mahabharata – (A), (B), (C) and (D).

A. Udyoga parva states

As narrated by Karna to Krishna

“Without doubt, O Krishna, a great and fierce battle is at hand between the Pandavas and the Kurus which will cover the earth with bloody mire.....That fierce planet of great effulgence, Sanaischara (Saturn), is afflicting the constellation called Rohini, in order to afflict greatly the creatures of the earth. The planet Angaraka (Mars), wheeling, O slayer of Madhu, towards the constellation Jeshthya, approached towards Anuradhas, indicating a great slaughter of friends. Without doubt, O Krishna, a terrible calamity approached the Kurus when specially, O thou of Vrishni's race, the planet Mahapat afflicted the constellation Chitra. The spot on the lunar disc hath changed its position; and Rahu also approached towards the sun right. This also is an indication of their success. The same animal, O Kesava, pass by the left side of Duryodhana's army, while incorporeal voices are constantly heard (over their heads) A black circle surrounding the solar disc appears to the view. Both twilights at sunrise and sunset indicate great terrors...” From the above crucial conservation, that took place between Karna and Krishna. This all happen when Krishna was about to depart from Hastinapura on the failure of Peace negotiation.

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Krishna here revealed Karna his real identity, and eagerly want him to join his elder brother camp, however Karna refused it, as the act was a dishonour to his friendship to Duryodhana.

However, in due conservation Karna confirmed that a fiery battle is nigh, supporting his conclusion he gives description of position of planet in the sky which seem quite dreadful to him.

Some vital points, which can be segregated form above text are –

- A1. Saturn is afflicting the planet Rohini.
- A2. Mars is forwarding toward Jyestha.
- A3. Solar eclipse is nigh.

B. Bhisma parva, says

{Text }

As narrated by Veda Vyas to Dhristarshata –

“The earth is frequently trembling, and Rahu approached towards the sun. The white planet (Ketu) stayed, having passed beyond the constellation Chitra. All this particularly boded the destruction of the Kurus. A fierce comet rise, afflicting the constellation Pusya. This great planet will cause frightful mischief to both the armies. Mars wheeled towards Magha and Vrihaspati (Jupiter) towards Sravana. The Sun's offspring (Sani) approaching towards the constellation Bhaga, afflicted it. The planet Sukra, ascending towards Purva Bhadra, shined brilliantly, and wheeling towards the Uttar Bhadra, looked towards it, having effected a junction (with a smaller planet). The white planet (Ketu), blazing up like fire mixed with smoke, stayed, having attacked the bright constellation Jeshtha that is sacred to Indra. The constellation Dhruva, blazing fiercely, wheeled towards the right. Both the Moon and the Sun are afflicting Rohini. The fierce planet (Rahu) hath taken up its position between the constellations Chitra and Swati.”

Thus, from above text we can highlight that,

- B1. Rahu approached towards the sun
- B2. Ketu passed beyond the constellation Chitra
- B3. Mars wheeleth towards Magha
- B4. Vrihaspati (Jupiter) towards Sravana
- B5. (Sani) approaching towards the constellation Bhaga
- B6. Planet Sukra, ascending towards Purva Bhadra
- B7. (Ketu), blazing up like fire mixed with smoke, stayeth, having attacked the bright constellation Jeshtha that is sacred to Indra
- B8. Both the Moon and the Sun are afflicting Rohini.
- B9. The fierce planet (Rahu) hath taken up its position between the constellations Chitra and Swati.

Further

As narrated by Veda Vyas to Dhristarshata

“It seemeth, O great king that all weapons are now blazing with radiance. The effulgence of the constellation known by the name of the seven high-souled Rishis, hath been dimmed. Those two blazing planets, viz., Vrihaspati and Sani, having approached the constellation called Visakha, have become stationary there for a whole year. Three lunations twice meeting together in course of the same lunar fortnight, the duration of the latter is shortened by two days. On the thirteenth day therefore, from the first lunation, according as it is the day of the full moon or the new moon, the moon and the sun are afflicted by Rahu. Such strange eclipses, both lunar and solar, forebode a great slaughter. All the quarters of the earth, being overwhelmed by showers of dust, look inauspicious. Fierce clouds, portentous of danger, drop bloody

showers during the night. Rahu of fierce deeds is also, O monarch, afflicting the constellation Kirtika. Rough winds, portending fierce danger, are constantly blowing. All these beget a war characterised by many sad incidents. The constellations are divided into three classes. Upon one or another of each class, a planet of evil omen has shed its influence, foreboding terrible dangers. A lunar fortnight had hitherto consisted of fourteen days, or fifteen days (as usual), or sixteen days. This, however, I never knew that the day of new-moon would be on the thirteenth day from the first lunation, or the day of full-moon on the thirteenth day from the same. And yet in course of the same month both the Moon and the Sun have undergone eclipses on the thirteenth days from the day of the first lunation. The Sun and the Moon therefore, by undergoing eclipses on unusual days, will cause a great slaughter of the creatures of the earth. Indeed, Rakshasas, though drinking blood by mouthful, will yet not be satiated. The great rivers are flowing in opposite directions”

- B.11- Vrihaspati and Sani, having approached the constellation called Visakha, have become stationary there for a whole year.
- B.12- Three lunations twice meeting together in course of the same lunar fortnight, the duration of the latter is shortened by two days.
- B.13- On the thirteenth day therefore, from the first lunation, according as it is the day of the full moon or the new moon, the moon and the sun are afflicted by Rahu
- B.14- And yet in course of the same month both the Moon and the Sun have undergone eclipses on the thirteenth days from the day of the first lunation.

The above extract is in continuation, to the prior one but I intentionally give a pause. As, the particular extract, explains much about very extraordinary timing of the eclipses. According to the text, Vyasa exclaimed that two eclipses both lunar and solar eclipse occurred in the same month after first lunation (Amavasya).

Karna parva, says

The mountains with their forests began to tremble, and all creatures, O sire, felt pain. The planet Jupiter, afflicting the constellation Rohini assumed the hue of the moon or the sun. Upon the fall of Karna, the subsidiary points also of the compass became ablaze. The sky became enveloped in darkness. The earth trembled.

These lines define fall of Karna. According to the poet, when Karna was slain by Arjuna, the whole sky turned dark, whereas Jupiter was afflicting Rohini.

So, C.1 Jupiter was afflicting Rohini (When, Karna was slayed)

D. Bhisma parva, says

Then those Rishis in the forms of swans inhabiting the Manasa Lake, quickly rose up, and came together, for obtaining a sight of the Kuru grandsire Bhishma, to that spot where that foremost of men was lying on his bed of arrows. Then those Rishis in swanlike forms, coming to Bhishma, beheld that perpetuator of Kuru's race lying on his bed of arrows. Beholding that high-souled son of Ganga, that chief of the Bharatas, they walked round him, and the Sun being then in the southern solstice, they said, addressing one another, these words, 'Being a high-souled person, why should Bhishma pass out (of the world) during the southern declension?' Having said these words, those swans went away, proceeding towards the southern direction. Endued

with great intelligence, Bhishma, O Bharata. Beholding them, reflected for a moment. And the son of Santanu then said unto them. 'I will never pass out (of the world) as long as the Sun is in the southern solstice. Even this is my resolve. I will proceed to my own ancient abode when the Sun reached the northern solstice. Ye swans, I tell you this truly. Expectant of the northern declension I will hold my life. Since I have the fullest control over the yielding up of my life, I will, therefore, hold life, expectant of death during the northern declension. The boon that was granted to me by my illustrious sire, to the effect that my death would depend on my own wish O, let that boon become true. I will hold my life, since I have control in the matter of laying it down.' Having said these words to those swans, he continued to lie down on his bed of arrows.

At the time of Bhishma fall, swanlike sages who were inhabitant of Manasa Lake exclaimed that how does a high soul like Bhishma can depart to other 'loka', when sun was dwelling in southern direction. However, to this Bhishma confirmed that he will leave his material body, when the Sun will start its journey northward that is when it will enter the sign Capricorn. So, it is clear that at time of war, Sun was heading toward Capricorn. D.1. Sun was heading toward Capricorn.

Results and Discussions

Thus, from the above 18 points that we have segregated from 4 passages we will try to plot the planet on a rough chart – We will start with the planet, who is king among all – Sun.

Sun

From point D.1, Sun has to be in a sign very close to Capricorn. And according to B.8, the Sun was afflicting Rohini. Then, it has to be in Taurus directly or against his opposite house Scorpio. However, to be in Taurus contradict D.1, So, Sun was in Scorpio.
Result – Sun was in Scorpio.

Moon

From B.8 which mentions- Both Moon and Sun was afflicting Rohini, there is all possibility that Moon was in the same house where the Sun was at the onset of war.
Result – Moon was in Scorpio.

Rahu and Ketu

Eclipses occurs when Rahu or even Ketu, eats the two luminaries Sun or Moon. From point B.12, B.13 & B.14 it is clear that in those 18 days, two eclipses occur simultaneously. The thirteenth day, if was a lunar eclipse, was followed by a solar one. Point A.3 also confirm to this. Thus, from this information we can reach at notion that, either of Rahu or Ketu to be in the house occupied by Sun.

However, B, 1 give more information about Rahu, it says that Rahu was approaching Sun. So, Rahu must be in the same house that was occupied the Sun. So, Rahu was in Scorpio while its counter-part, Ketu was in Taurus. Further, Point B.2 along with B.7 & B.9 also aid this to conclusion.

1. Result - Rahu in Scorpio
2. Result - Ketu in Taurus

Mars

A.2, says Mars was forwarding through Jyestha, while B.3 follows that, Mars is heading toward Magha. Thus, Mars was moving toward Scorpio at time of meeting of Krishna with Karna, while Vyasa state that it was moving toward 'Leo'. Thus, for these two point to be true, Mars have to be in

retrograde motion. So from the two, we can say that Mars was 'most' probably close to Leo or in Leo 'itself', that too in Retrograde motion.

Result – Mars was in Virgo or Leo (Retrograde).

Saturn

Three point were crucial, for judging position of Saturn.

A1. Saturn is afflicting the planet Rohini.

B5. (Sani) approaching towards the constellation Bhaga

B.11– Vrihaspati and Sani, having approached the constellation called Visakha, have become stationary there for a whole year.

Through A.1, we can say that Saturn will effect Rohini if it is in Scorpio or Taurus. However, B.11 vividly states that, Saturn is approaching Vishaka, So Saturn was owing its retrograde journey and get stationary on reaching Libra.

Result – Saturn was in Libra, and before reaching there he was in retrograde motion.

Jupiter

B4. Vrihaspati (Jupiter) towards Sravana

B.11-Vrihaspati and Sani, having approached the constellation called Visakha, have become stationary there for a whole year.

C.1 Jupiter was afflicting Rohini (When, Karna was slayed)

From B.4 and B.11, we can derive that Jupiter was direct at that time. However, B11 distinctly mention that Jupiter was in same house of Saturn. However, Karna Parva says that Jupiter was afflicting Rohini, this will only happen when Saturn will leave his current position and move to Scorpio. Thus, during the war Jupiter changed his house in 'direct' motion.

Result - Jupiter was in Libra onset the war, while it moved to Scorpio at the time when Karna was slayed that is 17th day of war.

Venus

B6. Planet Sukra, ascending towards Purva Bhadra

From, above point nothing concrete can be judged for position of Venus. However, Venus can be two sign ahead of Sun or behind. Since, Sun was in Scorpio, Venus can be anywhere in between Virgo to Capricorn.

Result – Nothing can be directly confirmed for Venus.

Mercury

Out of all above extracts, nothing mentions about position of Mercury. But, we know that Mercury can't go more than 42 degrees from Sun. Mercury can be either in the same sign as sun or one sign ahead or behind the sun. Since, Sun was in Scorpio, Mercury can be anywhere between, Libra to Sagittarius.

Result – Nothing can be directly confirmed for Mercury.

Finally, all the 18 points, extracted from above 4 passage, were duly utilised in coming to 'probable' result.

Conclusion

Lot not only on field, but on sky was much happening. Mainly, the astronomical reference of thirteenth day to the 'eclipse pair' appears to be a unique astronomical observation. It states that two eclipses (both lunar and solar) occurred in same lunar month, within a short span of thirteen days from first lunation. Otherwise to this, Planets were also engaged in changing houses on such occasion as we find Jupiter moving from Libra to Scorpio. However, nothing concrete about Venus and mercury were derived, so then their possibilities of changing house amid the war can also be not

denied. Such, great combination was extremely rare one and gives us the most drastic war of human history till date. The war occurred over a period of 18 days in a place called Kurukshetra, while at the same time dark sky that one observes in night was forming another 'Kurukshetra' - A battleground for planets.

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