Rahu and Ketu are considered to be shadow planets or *chaya-graha* in the Vedic tradition. Since Rahu and Ketu always travel in concert, although 180 degrees apart, let us look at this new phase of Rahu’s and Ketu’s transit through the signs of Sagittarius and Gemini, respectively. Rahu and Ketu will enter these signs on November 2nd, 2009 and remain there for the next 1 1/2 years until May 3rd, 2011. For the most part, Rahu and Ketu travel backwards in motion.

The next year and a half should enable us to lighten up and laugh a little more, appreciating the irony, inscrutability and karmic nature of the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Comedy, humor, and laughter will get us through. Tears may provide a release but they will not get you out the other end of your predicament. But laughter will.

Our third eye of spiritual vision will become more opened on a collective level. Insight, perception, intuition and revelation is likely to increase for many. More time spent in meditation will personally help you bring this about for yourself or for the world at large if that is your stage. Your power of suggestion or transference of thoughts and ideas into the minds and hearts of others will also increase. A couple of good suggestions to world leaders wouldn’t hurt!

People’s beliefs, goals, objectives, ethics and values will transform, dramatically in some cases. In light of this past year’s economic events, corporations, banks, governments, institutions, investments, currencies, retirement plans, etc., may not be given the place of honor they were previously afforded. Since our collective faith has really been tested of late, we are learning that we cannot place so much faith in material and temporal persons, circumstances and institutions. This is a difficult lesson to learn but the teacher is now leaning over us with a hard cane, ready to deliver the next blow. The time has come in which to learn some of these painful lessons — and change our old ways of thinking and reconsider our placement of trust.

Since it is the daily duty of each and every person to take one step closer to their own truth, this simple act has never been more critical than at this time in our collective evolution. We have been misled and let down by untruth, cheating, misrepresentation, selfishness, greed and deception — all for the aggrandizement of the few to the detriment of the many. Cheaters will now be exposed in greater numbers. We must have the courage and conviction to purge ourselves and our society of our lower, self-interested nature in all its forms.

All *dharma* or virtue is based upon truth. Our actions and our words must be coherent. If we speak and act with such coherence and send that vibration out into the universe, won’t that same authenticity come back to us? In this way, drawing upon our own clear intent, let us create...
for ourselves a more desirable reality and a world of greater integrity.

With Rahu as the external force now in Sagittarius, our energies must be focused on bringing about a revolution in dharma, virtue, truth and honesty. With Ketu as the internal force, now in Gemini, our intuitive, analytical power must quickly enable us to know the truth when we see it, free from confusion.

How a Pearl is Formed

Formation of a pearl inside an oyster is thought to occur because of the presence of foreign material inside the body of the oyster. To save itself from the undesired material, the mollusk coats the object with layer upon layer of nacre. It takes many years for a mollusk to produce a pearl of substantial size. The process through which the pearls are formed inside the body of a mollusk is very delicate, and a little disturbance at any stage of the development of a pearl can influence its shape and luster. The finest pearl is that which has no foreign matter in its core.

According to Vedic history, pearls are said to be obtained from eight separate and widely different sources.

1. The first and by far the most common is the Oyster Pearl which is called Shukti-mukta in the Sanskrit language. This pearl is formed inside the body of pearl oysters from alternating layers of aragonite and an organic compound known as concholin. Indian mystics suggest that it is produced by the first raindrops that fall when the Moon is in the constellation of Swati. Pearl can assume five different forms according to the influence of the five major elements.

   i) If the pearl is sculpted under the influence of the etheric element, it possesses no luster and is rather light in weight.

   ii) If the pearl is developed with a predominance of the air element, it possesses a bluish tint and gives off light when in the presence of light.

   iii) If the pearl is created under the influence of the fire element, it possesses a reddish or rose-colored hue and gives off a reddish light when in the presence of light.

   iv) If the pearl is molded under the influence of the earth element, it is typically heavy in weight and poor in quality.

   v) If the pearl is formed under the auspices of the water element which is the Moon's natural element, it takes on a brilliant, pure white coloration and truly reflects the hues of the spectrum. It possesses a shimmering glow and is generally smooth, spotless and round like the full Moon. It appears as though water is circulating upon its surface. Oyster pearls of premier quality are always formed by the water element. These pearls are relate directly to the Moon and are the preferable choice.

2. Sky Pearl is known in Sanskrit as Megha-mukta. When rain falls while the Moon is situated in the constellations of Shravana or Pushya on a Sunday or a Monday, this pearl will fall to earth along with the raindrops. It is formed within clouds and can be a brilliant yellow or a slate gray color like the sky with yellowish tint to it. This round stone gives off a kind of glittering light which reminds one of lightning from the heavens. It is believed that the celestial beings are the first to grab such a pearl, since they are the closest to it. Then, when they see a worthy soul down here on earth with whom they are pleased, they send the Megha-mukta down to him and direct him to its place of discovery. Such a person is truly blessed by the gods. Not only does the Sky Pearl fulfill all the desires its owner may have but it can also aid him in discovering hidden treasures from deep within the earth. And such discoveries may occur repeatedly within his lifetime.

3. Cobra Pearl is known as Sarpa-mukta in Sanskrit. This pearl is formed within the hood of a king cobra when raindrops fall into the snake’s mouth under the Moon’s influence when it is situated in the sky in the constellation known as Swati. But it only happens to a cobra who has lived more than 100 years. It is said that after the pearl is produced within its hood, the cobra develops the power to transform itself into any form it chooses. As the snake continues to age, the gem continues to expand in size and in luster. Such a pearl resembles the Moon in that it is perfectly round. This radiant stone has a bluish tint and actually radiates light in the darkness. If a person is fortunate enough to come into possession of such a pearl, he becomes blessed with children, wealth and property. Further, all his desires will be fulfilled. All negative or inauspicious effects will be removed from the bearer of such a pearl. A cobra, upon losing his pearl, is said to lose his life as well.

4. Bamboo Pearl is called Bashh-mukta. This pearl is found in the hollow of a bamboo and is greenish in color and has the shape of a berry. When the Moon transits the constellations of Swathi, Pushya or Shravana, and the rain falls, the Bamboo Pearl is said to be formed within the stalk of a certain type of bamboo. A grove of this bamboo is thought to make a peculiar noise when the wind blows through it which resembles the sound of the chanting of Sanskrit mantras in a very low pitch. This pearl can only be discovered by a very fortunate soul for whom it will be the bestower of good luck, honored name and fame, respect and virtue, wealth and peace. The Bamboo Pearl is too hard to be drilled and as such cannot be strung upon a necklace. It is also quite large in size.

5. Porcine Pearl is known as Shrakara-mukta in the ancient Sanskrit language. Porcine Pearl is found in the head of a hog and is usually quite big in size like its producer. It has a nice roundness and is a mustard yellow in color. Highly rare and next to impossible to find, it is purported to possess Siddhis or mystical powers which it bestows on its wearer. It bestows vak-siddhi or a particular power of speech which gives its wearer the blessing that whatever he utters comes true. Also, it delivers svaraha-siddhi or the gift of heavenly song. Such a person will not only become an amazing singer...
but the sound vibration of his voice will be able to produce clouds in the sky or rain or fire when specific ragas or melodies are sung. By wearing a Porcine Pearl, a woman will give birth to a child with astounding qualities. It can also aid one in developing a photographic memory whereby one can read or hear something only once and retain it within the memory.

6. Elephantine Pearl is called Gaja-mukta in Sanskrit. This pearl is produced within the temple of the Airewata breed of elephants. Such an elephant would have to be born on a Sunday or Monday while the Moon resides in the constellations of Pushya or Shrawana. This is a very rare occurrence. Even then, it would not guarantee that the elephant born on that day would produce such a pearl. The Elephantine Pearl is beautifully round in shape, shines like the Moon itself and is the size of a small fruit. This pearl creates peace and tranquility. Wearing the Gaja-mukta will remove obstacles from one’s life and bestow peace, prosperity and wealth.

7. The Conch Pearl is known as Shankh-mukta in Sanskrit. This is a shell-based pearl like the Oyster Pearl but this pearl is produced in a conch shell. It has been found to be as large as an egg and is of the same oval shape. Also, like various types of eggs, it can be brown in color, white, light yellow or pale blue. Though less radiant than other pearls, it is sometimes distinctly marked with three stripes and cannot be drilled. Wearing this pearl eradicates poverty, bestows prosperity and stable wealth, the birth of children and peace. It also removes negative karmic reaction from past activities both from this lifetime and from previous lifetimes. It acts like a chintamani, a wish-fulfilling gem described in the Vedas, in that it fulfills all one’s desires.

8. Fish Pearl is also called Meena-mukta in the Sanskrit language. This small, pea-sized pearl is nurtured in the stomach or womb of a fish and is yellowish-white in color. Reputed to be very powerful, this stone can cure various diseases including tuberculosis. Ancient lore has it that Fish Pearl can enable one to see underwater, much like a fish. What scuba diver wouldn’t appreciate this?

These last seven classifications of pearls are very rare and are difficult to come by in this age of Kali, the Iron Age of corruption and hypocrisy which the universe is currently going through.

How to Choose a Quality Pearl

A genuine, high quality pearl should possess the following traits: its shape should be spherical and perfectly round. It should be attractive with a soft sheen or surface luster and possess a beautiful quality of reflection. It should shine like the full Moon in autumn. It should be spotless, smooth, and free from flaws, such as indentations, ridges or scratches.

Persons who wear such a quality pearl will be blessed with good fortune and wealth. Such souls will enjoy a long life while becoming freed from past negative karma. Their intellect and insight will expand and words of wisdom will be ever upon their lips. Their good name and reputation will be celebrated far and wide.

Avoid wearing oddly shaped pearls. They are usually inexpensive and you may end up paying a greater price in the form of harmful vibrations, negative energy and bad luck. Pearls should not be kept in cotton since it may cause scratches, cracks or waves to appear in their surface.

Cultured Pearls

A cultured pearl produced by the method of introducing foreign matter into the body of an oyster has the same qualities as a real pearl. It is almost impossible to tell the difference between the two varieties. Ayurvedic doctors, Vedic astrologers and gem therapists have come to accept the cultured pearl as a viable alternative to the naturally occurring pearl since the latter is so hard to come by nowadays. Fortunately, cultured pearls seem to have the same effect on the human organism as genuine pearls. Incidentally, about half the oysters that are surgically induced to produce cultured pearls perish in the process.

Natural pearls which are available on the market are also artificially created like cultured pearls. The difference is that the foreign object introduced into the natural pearl is actual mother-of-pearl and not a ball of glass or some such substance as in the cultured pearl. Natural, fresh-water pearls have a bluish tint to them and are preferable to cultured pearls.

The Four Classifications of Pearls

1. For the brahman, the teacher/advisor/healer category, the pearl should be pure and white. Such a stone is ideal for learned and spiritually inclined people.

2. With regard to a kshatriya, the second category of leader/organizer/protector, the pearl should have a rosy or pink hue. Such a stone is well-suited for those in positions of power and authority since it will increase their intellectual acumen and strengthen their courage.

3. A pearl suitable for the vaishya person, the merchant/businessman/farmer classification, should be yellowish in color. Such a stone will promote business and economic success for the vaishya.

4. For the shudra, the craftsman/tradesman/ laborer division, the preferable stone is a black pearl. Such a stone would bring peace and a sense of well-being to the shudra person.

If you are interested in obtaining a quality pearl, please contact Kalindi at kalindi.lawrence@gmail.com.

In this third article about Vastu, we will show you how to utilize the spatial energies in your home or place of business in the most effective manner. We will look at the Devas or celestial beings in charge of each of the directions and what role they play in bringing balance into your home, your office, and your life. The ancient Vedic science of Vastu, is the sacred science of space, spatial relationships and building. It is actually the origin of the popular Chinese system of Feng Shui. Correct Vastu is based on an orientation of all buildings in an appropriate primary and secondary directions.

We refer to the same diagram we used last time round. Beginning in the North direction, we find it ruled by the deva known as Kuvera. Kuvera is the treasurer of the gods so his primary concern is the attraction, safe-keeping and expansion of wealth. This area must be kept open and welcoming, both inside and outside the building. This is an ideal direction for the front door to face. It is a good place to keep a safe and all valuables including money, gems, gold and documents. A picture of Kuvera can be kept here if you are so inclined.

Moving clockwise which is the most favorable direction for movement, we come to the Northeast. The deva in charge of the Northeast direction is God Himself, known as Ishan, the supreme controller. Here is the direction from which the most spiritual and celestial energies enter the home. This is the place in which to set up your altar for making offerings of lights, candles, incense, food, flowers, fruits, personal service and love to God. This is also where meditation should take place and the practice of yoga and attunement with the divine energies. This is where you cultivate purity of heart and clear karma through remorse and forgiveness. The Northeast represents the future and how things will unfold for you. It is the place where human effort meets destiny, the two wheels on the chariot of human fulfillment. Here you can place a picture of Krishna, Vishnu, Shiva or whatever manifestation of God you serve and meditate upon.

Next we come to the East direction which is considered to be highly auspicious since the Sun rises daily from this direction, no matter what hemisphere you may live in. The deva which rules this direction is Indra, known as the king of the gods. Here we find the prime direction for the front door of your building. This is a good place in which to do business, expand your career goals, study, and take positive action to make your mark in the world. This is the place in which to realize your own kingship or queenship and to make your impact for the benefit of the whole. This is where you call upon your courage so that you...
may effectively utilize your power and potential. You can place a picture of Indra here if you like.

The next direction is the Southeast, the abode of Agni, the deva ruling fire. Fire can be a highly creative or destructive element. Creativity and conceptualization develop well here. Also, the realization of goals and objectives can be met in this direction. What cannot be entertained here are anger, frustration, resentment, criticism, blame and guilt. Because these will flare up like a volcano if allowed to run amok in the Southeast. And they will rapidly burn out of control. And so, with a cool head, nurture your creative fire here and feed thousands, rather than burn down the house and destroy what you have built. If you are inclined to perform sacred fire ceremonies, then they should be done here. You can place a burning candle here and a picture of Agni, the fire god, if you wish.

Moving down to the South, we come to the abode of Yama, the deva ruling autumn, decay, transitions, conclusions, resolutions and death. This is where you put an end to things, be they personal or business relationships, or various undertakings. Yama is also in charge of dharma or proper conduct and the realization of obligations. Here we ponder our duty and carry out our responsibilities. Here also, we mete out proper punishment and correction when necessary. This is the place of justice. The dead can also be helped from the South. Here we leave behind all that which has come to an end. A picture of Yama can be placed in this area if you choose.

Traveling to the Southwest, we enter the abode of great shadow and darkness. For this is the place of Nirriti, the goddess of darkness, destruction and shadow. It is also known as the place of Rahu (see above article). This direction embodies old, entrenched karma, unresolved issues, generational patterns, old family behaviors and expectations, addictions, obsessions and compulsions, depression, etc. It represents the past and the hold it may still have on us as we move forward into the future of our unfoldment. It is also the entry point or portal to the other dimension for a house that is haunted by ghosts, spirits or human souls who are stuck and unable to move on. When energies in a house or business become very dense, destructive and immovable, then this is the direction that demands our greatest attention. This is where deep clearing and cleansing can have the most benefit. With the intention of offering honor and recognition, you can place a picture of Nirriti and/or Rahu here.

As we move West, we enter the abode of Varuna, the god of the waters and the master of fate. And this is probably why he is so closely affiliated with Saturn, the planet of fate and destiny. Varuna is known as a magician and thus is a master of fate. In the West, you can sink more deeply into illusion or free yourself from illusion. Varuna maintains the inner truth of the universe which can be seen more clearly in the darkness at night, when this world of illusion effectively disappears for a time. This is the place of knowledge. Varuna is the master of 100,000 remedies so healing can effectively take place in the West of your home as well as the East. Life extension and longevity occur under these energies. Any needs you have regarding water for drinking and bathing, etc, fall under the domain of Varuna. In the West, we can calm the waters of emotional conflict. Here we should place some symbol of water — an urn filled with water, a swimming pool or hot tub, an indoor or outdoor fountain, a picture of the ocean, a lake or river. And a picture of the god of the waters, Varuna.

And finally, to the Northwest we find the deva of air, Vayu. Vayu rules life, health, activity and movement. This is the place of greatest movement, shift and change. That is why it is suitable for entertaining guests, such as a living room, a guest bedroom or activity room or den. Outdoors, we place the play area and/or the garage or driveway where vehicles come and go. This is where you come to breathe and catch your breath. If someone is having respiratory problems in the home or at work, there may be a blockage in the Northwest that needs to be cleared. Air and wind is known to be the great purifier of all spaces and places. Much power and strength can be harnessed in the Northwest direction. Since Vayu is known as the king of celestial musicians, this would be an ideal place to put your music or recording room. And a picture of Vayu would set it off nicely.

Contact us for a Vastu consultation for your home or office or to purchase yantras in order to neutralize Vastu defects in your environment.

— Drew and Kalindi Lawrence

Keeping a black or tawny (marmalade) cat around the home is considered to be auspicious. It keeps away negative subtle and psychic energies and prevents one from being haunted by ghosts and spirits. This is probably why witches have always been associated with black cats. Such cats are recognized as being highly favorable and are not to be regarded as negative or causing misfortune. (Mahabharata)

We have a black cat named Rahu who lives in our yard. He showed up one day at the beginning of my Rahu period and never left! The planet, Rahu, is often pictured riding a tiger!

From the Vedic Tradition
The last eclipse of 2009 coincidentally takes place on New Years Eve, December 31st. It is a Partial Lunar Eclipse and a minor one at that. It will be visible primarily from the Eastern Hemisphere of our beautiful planet. The eclipse will occur from 17.07 until 21.28 hours, Greenwich Time. The point of maximum eclipse will occur at 19.23 hours.

The Moon will be eclipsed by Ketu in the sign of Gemini according to Astronomical calculation from NASA as well as Vedic Astrological calculation. (Western astrologers will, true to form, erroneously believe that it happens in Cancer)

An eclipse is generally an inauspicious event since the planets which are the luminaries, the givers of light, are overshadowed or eclipsed by other celestial bodies. In Vedic tradition and astrological calculation, we always find the presence of either lunar node, Rahu or Ketu, in conjunction with the eclipsed planet. Rahu and Ketu are known as chaya-graha in Sanskrit which means ‘shadow planets’ since their purpose is to carry and project the shadow upon the other planets. This they accomplish both on the personal or individual level and the collective or world level. Rahu and Ketu uncover the nature of the shadow or negative behavior pattern and its consequences so that it can be recognized, exposed to the light of day, and subsequently resolved or removed.

EFFECTS

Eclipse effects may be felt during the actual time of eclipse but they may also reverberate for months to come.

The Moon will be in the constellation of Ardra. Some of the effects that may become apparent over the next several months are:

- Meat production and sales will suffer a decline. Market prices will fall. An outbreak of disease, such as Mad Cow, may occur once again. And consumption of meat will fall off. Farmers who pen large stocks of animals will suffer problems.
- Water sources may become contaminated and drought may occur or continue.
- Friends and associates will fall out over misunderstandings.
- Trade and commerce will remain weak.
- The good news is that thieves and murderers are more likely to be caught and properly punished. And people who are corrupt and ungrateful are likely to get their just desserts.

As mentioned, this is how humanity’s shadow is likely to be projected into our world. We can effectively counteract these repercussions by altering our behavior and attitudes. Applying a greater degree of compassion, empathy, kindness, and honesty will go a long way. And reducing our greed, deceit, misrepresentation of the truth and corruption of spirit will help even more.

WHAT TO DO DURING AN ECLIPSE

In Vedic times, many thousands of years ago, it was the custom to enter a river, particularly a sacred river, such as the Ganges, or the ocean or other body of water and chant mantras and offer prayers for purification for the duration of the eclipse. Solar and lunar eclipses are generally very inauspicious, with certain rare exceptions. It is nonetheless an advantageous opportunity for fasting, prayer and meditation on God. Fasting should be observed for the whole period of the eclipse in order to nullify the reactions of past negative or egocentric activities.

It is also recommended to give in charity to the poor as much as possible during the time of a lunar or solar eclipse. If you cannot afford to give in charity, then simply give charity within your mind, that is, envision yourself doing it just the way you would on the physical plane. The spiritual benefit for you will be the same.

Pregnant women should never look at an eclipse in charity, then simply give charity within your mind, that is, envision yourself doing it just the way you would on the physical plane. The spiritual benefit for you will be the same.

The berry itself appeared to contain sperm and was regarded as sperm from heaven – a gift from the gods. And thus it was believed to bring fertility. The Druids called it the All-heal plant since it could cure so many diseases.

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Tradition

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MISTLETOE

Kissing under the Mistletoe is a fertility ritual often practiced during Yuletide.

But for the Droids, Mistletoe was the most sacred of plants. It grew upon the revered and eternal oak tree. Its roots were in the air and not in the ground. Therefore, it was considered a heavenly plant since it never touched the earth. Its pollen was transported from oak to oak by the birds, the messengers of the gods.

The berry itself appeared to contain sperm and was regarded as sperm from heaven – a gift from the gods. And thus it was believed to bring fertility. The Druids called it the All-heal plant since it could cure so many diseases.

It was cut only in winter around the time of the Solstice at a particular phase of the lunar cycle with a golden sickle. Hymns and prayers were chanted and two white bulls, lunar symbols, were sacrificed to the gods.

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Send your name and email address to:
drewjlawrence@gmail.com
Website: www.drewlawrence.com

December 2009 Newsletter
Introduction to MEDITATION

A Workshop with Drew Lawrence

Saturday, January 16, 2010
10 am - 4 pm
Cost: €100
Place: Enniskerry, Ireland (Whitefield, Deakins Lane, Bahana)

Drew Lawrence, a world-class teacher with clients around the globe, shares 40 years experience in meditation practice and teaching.

Some of the techniques which will be introduced are:

- Relaxation
- Mantra Meditation
- Active Imagination
- Self-healing Meditation
- Creative Manifestation Meditation

Book Your Place Today!

Call +353 1 274.0206 or Email drewjlawrence@gmail.com

“The work was profound, very deep, healing and ultimately expansive for me. Much gratitude for your attentive, skillful, challenging yet sensitive presence.”

“I found the workshop to be excellent — great information, thought provoking, and intelligently presented.”

“Your workshop showed me that my feelings of lack of fulfillment were due to not being integrated with my subconscious.”
Finding Your LIFE PURPOSE
A Workshop with Drew Lawrence
Internationally acclaimed speaker, facilitator and healer

Sunday, January 17, 2010
10 am - 4 pm
Cost: €100
Place: Enniskerry, Ireland (Whitefield, Deakins Lane, Bahana)

Until you know what you’ve come here for and actually begin to do it, it is difficult to find fulfillment. This one-day workshop will help you discover your purpose and assist you in removing the obstacles which stand in your way.

You will examine your life in terms of your true vocation through in-depth questions and thought-provoking dialogue and discover what that purpose may be.

Purpose is that which you are here to give to the world. Desire is that which you are here to receive from the world. It effectively demonstrates how to bring these two opposites into harmony.

It points out the pitfalls many of us often slip into when choosing a life path and offers a practical means of evaluating every action and its meaning for you in your life.

While looking at your past and future decisions in terms of “action and reaction,” it will help you determine whether you are actually leading your life through your own decision-making process or are living your life in response to the demands and expectations of others.

• Lively group interaction.
• A great opportunity for change and transformation.
• You won’t look at your life in the same way by the time the day is through.

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“You gave me a larger context in which to imagine my life's vision and purpose.”

“Entertaining, inspiring and informative. I realize now that my life purpose is within reach.”

“I enjoyed the presentation and the humor. I appreciated all the material including the very thought-provoking questions.”

“It was informative and enjoyable. There is just nothing to compare it to. I now realize that I must make my passion my vocation.”

“I found your workshop very effective. It was well thought out and prepared, and the applications approach worked very well for me. I loved the four natural divisions of work and the pyramid to success.”

“The best idea I gained was that intuition should always be the focus. I have always felt that I have great intuition but have only started to listen to it recently.”

“My goal for your workshop was fulfilled. You have a wonderful teaching style that is truly a reflection of your purpose.”