

Muhurta Discussion and the Effects of Sneezing

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and Urmila Devi

editing: bh. Jan

The following discussion is about Muhurtas related to travel and certain Omens (sneezing) that occur just before starting journey.[editor]

Text 18806
From: Urmila (Devi Dasi) ACBSP (ISKCON School)
Date: 28-Jul-94 21:34 EDT
Subject: travel

In Hari Sauri's diary, I read how Prabhupada would rarely travel on Thursday between 4:30 and 7:30 PM because he said it was an inauspicious time for travel.

Over the years, I have heard many versions of this as well as many versions of how to circumvent it, e.g. put your suitcases outside the door on Wednesday.

Looking through the Prabhupada database, I find no mention of not traveling on Thursday afternoon. (Some devotees also say it's not good to travel on Ekadasi.)

Question: Is this a general principle or something Prabhupada did because of personal astrological considerations?

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Comments: Text 19445 by [LINK](#): Brahmananda (Dasa) ACBSP (Bhaktivedanta Archives)

Text 19445
From: Brahmananda (Dasa) ACBSP (Bhaktivedanta Archives)
Date: 30-Jul-94
Subject: travel

Srila Prabhupada always avoided commencing a journey on a Thursday, especially

in the early afternoon. The story about packing the bags and moving them from the room to the outer hallway - it was done by Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, so it was not a thing that pertained to Srila Prabhupada individually. Therefore, it must apply for all devotees. For myself I can tell you when I have commenced a journey in the Thursday afternoon, it resulted in near disaster several times.

Text 19801

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 01-Aug-94

Subject: travel and Muhurta

Mother Urmila requests information about why Srila Prabhupada didn't travel on Thursday afternoon. And asks:

"Is this a general principle or something Prabhupada did because of personal astrological considerations?"

My understanding is that he learned this habit from his association with his own guru Srila Bhaktisiddhanta who was a renowned astrologer in his purva-asrama. The reason is that on Thursday afternoon the Rahukalam - the time of Rahu - becomes prominent. (This is mentioned in the philosophy paper.)

The method of calculating when the Rahukalam will take place is as follows. First you must know when the sun rises for each day of the week. Then for each day the Rahukalam starts at a different time after sunrise and lasts for 90 minutes. The start times of the Rahukalam for different weekdays are:

Sunday	10.5 hours after sunrise
Monday	1.5 "
Tuesday	9 "
Wednesday	6 "
Thursday	7.5 "
Friday	4.5 "
Saturday	3 "

If the Sun were to rise at 6:00 AM then the Rahukalam on Thursday would correspond to 1:30-3:00 PM. [From Muhurta by B.V. Raman pg 201.] Needless to say the sun rises at various times at different seasons and at different latitudes. We also see that Rahukalam is not on Thursday only.

If one doesn't have the facility to calculate the exact planetary positions at the time of a journey then the above calculation would serve as a ready

reckoner. But it should be stressed that this is really only for layman.

From astrological texts it is noted that there are numerous flaws which could severely afflict a time for travel. This is especially significant in the case of long or important journeys. No time is perfect. What to do? What is done is to try as best as possible to choose a time free of as many flaws as possible and to strengthen the chart of travel by strengthening the position of the lagna and the Moon. Thus if Jupiter is in the lagna at the start of travel it greatly relieves the affliction. Texts on Muhurta give both evil combinations and ones that cancel. For example one should never travel if Mars is in the 8th, or if the 8th is otherwise afflicted. The 8th is the house of death and Mars there would indicate accidents. Considering that in the USA alone there are about 50,000 people killed on the road every year (more than the total US dead in the Vietnam war!) it would be wise to check out the time of travel before you literally risk your life by traveling at "break-neck speed" as Prabhupada said.

Choosing a good Muhurta is a lot more difficult than most people think for the very reasons stated above. Good times are just not that easy to get. For example as mentioned above about Jupiter in Lagna and Mars in the 8th. Better to have Mars somewhere else than Guru in lagna. It may be that you have a combination with Guru in lagna and Mars in the 8th. Avoid Mars in the 8th at all costs. Strengthen the lagna in other ways such as having Venus in lagna etc.

Regarding: "Over the years, I have heard many versions of this as well as many versions of how to circumvent it, e.g. put your suitcases outside the door on Wednesday."

I have never heard of this. What I heard was that Bhaktisiddhanta, in order to avoid traveling on ekadasi, would pack his bags and leave them outside on the day before so that it would be considered that the journey had already started.

From a strictly astrological view the ekadasi tithi is not in itself unfavorable for travel. In fact it is considered very good. But as Vaisnavas we prefer to spend ekadasi doing more service and thinking of Krsna etc. which is hampered by travel.

There are different restrictions for direction of travel on certain days. For example: do not travel towards the east on Sunday or Monday. But if the journey starts after 8 ghatas then it is okay (provided other considerations are good). [1 ghata = 24 minutes. Ghatas are counted from the moment of sunrise.] Under no circumstance should a journey commence if the Moon is in the nakshatra Bharani or Krttika.

ys shyama

Text 19802

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 01-Aug-94 01:17 EDT

To: Vedic Astrology (Symposium hosted by Shyamasundara Das) [15]

Subject: Muhurta

The question by Mother Urmila brings to mind a recent question put to me by some devotees about the auspicious time for doing a ground breaking for a temple. The same reasoning could apply to installing deities or getting married.

It was proposed that an important project be started and that the day chosen was Balarama's appearance day (I think). The grounds for doing so are stated below:

"Many devotees feel that because it celebrates an auspicious day it is therefore good for anything."

My response was something like this:

To do something on the grounds that it is the same as the day celebrating the anniversary of the appearance day of Krsna, Nrsimhadeva, Rama, Radha, Balarama, Srila Prabhupada, etc. is a total misunderstanding of astrology and the signification of the day.

It is very simplistic to think that because it is Janmastami then we can start any project on that day. On the actual day >>and time<< that Sri Krsna appeared in 3227 BC the planets were aligned in a unique and auspicious manner which have yet to be duplicated. And they will not be duplicated again until Krsna appears in the next day of Lord Brahma, which is a very long time from now. Janmastami day celebrates the appearance day of Lord Krsna, and we especially fast and do special prayers to glorify and worship Krsna on that day. It commemorates His appearance but it is not of the same potency as the day He actually appeared. There is great spiritual benefit mentioned in the scriptures to worship Sri Krsna on this day - but it is not identical with His actual appearance day. The proof of this is very simple. We simply note that Lord Sri Krsna, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, in all His glory, doesn't appear yearly in Mathura on that day. Why? Because the astrological configurations don't warrant such an appearance. (Don't forget astrology is a language of symptoms, it doesn't cause anything - it just describes things and

events.) In the same way you don't appear every year on your birthday.

Millions of entities are born on every holy day every year. But we don't notice new avatars roaming around (except of the bogus variety). Thousands upon thousands of persons are born every second, yet none of them are the personality of Godhead. This indicates that the original day that Sri Krsna, Rama, Nrsimha, etc. appeared is much different from the day on which their appearance is celebrated. In one sense you could say that it is non-different. But from a practical view it is very different.

So to choose an auspicious time simply on the basis that it is the appearance day of Sri Mahaprabhu or Sri Balarama is not something an intelligent person should do. Probably the best thing to do on those days is to worship the appropriate deity unless there are astrologically compelling reasons to do otherwise.

I clearly remember how in 1981 a godbrother was married. The day chosen was Sri Nrsimha-caturdasi, at sunset! What could be more auspicious for a wedding, it was thought. I cringed, but no one was going to listen to me. It was a horrible time to get married. I proved to be right. They had a child and divorced within 5 years. Another ISKCON tragedy. The day itself may have had some good time to choose for a marriage except that any caturdasi tithi is considered evil for marriage. But other combinations may have cancelled the caturdasi aspect. However under no circumstances should anyone be married at sunset. It is a prime dictum that for the time of marriage the 7th house must be vacant of any planet. But at the time of sunset, by definition, the sun is in the seventh, a most unwelcome place in a marriage chart.

Maybe for ordinary things a person can be slack. But when it comes to doing something very important or starting a project costing hundreds of thousands of dollars it would behoove the responsible parties to get the very best time possible. It would be a great shame to waste so much money, time and effort because of oversimplistic thinking, or previous bad experience with a questionable astrologer.

It is not materialistic to think about choosing the best time available to start a temple. As devotees, we only want the best for the Lord. The best fruits and vegetables, best cloth, the best of everything. Why not the best time, especially when the time is so important?

The importance of time can not be overestimated. I hope to soon present some research findings about the relationship between Krsna, Time and Astrology.

YS Shyamasundara Dasa

Text 20929

From: Hari Sauri (Dasa) ACBSP (Alachua, FL) "

Date: 02-Aug-94

Subject: travel and Muhurta

Although I found the information about Rahukalam hours interesting, they don't seem to align with Srila Prabhupada's observance of inauspicious times to travel. You have mentioned Thursdays as being between 1:30 - 3:00 PM but Srila Prabhupada told us the time he wouldn't travel was between 4:30 - 7:00 PM.

When we were in Madras and scheduled to fly back to Bombay at 7:30 PM Prabhupada wouldn't do it. He wanted to fly the next morning but because of some prior commitments which couldn't be cancelled he relented and traveled on the Thursday - but at 10 PM, the very last flight of the day.

I always regret not having asked him what the specific reasons were behind his "no travel on Thursday afternoon" rule. That was my chance but I blew it.

Text 21022

From: Brahmananda (Dasa) ACBSP (Bhaktivedanta Archives)

Date: 03-Aug-94 16:08 EDT

Subject: travel

Recently I had an auto accident while traveling across the country. I left Los Angeles on Thursday, June 2nd, at about 3:00 PM. I had so many reasons why I had to leave at that time, but even one devotee warned me not to go at that time. The next day at 12 noon in Yuma, AZ I had the accident, totaling my vehicle, with minor injury, and spoiling all my distribution programs for the entire summer. Should I have not left at that inauspicious time?

Text 21763

From: Urmila (Devi Dasi) ACBSP (ISKCON School)

Date: 02-Aug-94 22:38 EDT

Subject: travel

Sorry, Shyamasundara prabhu, but your answer raised more questions. If the influence of Rahu is there every day, why is Thursday particularly troublesome? It would seem, to my meager intelligence, that because Thursday is Jupiter's day, that the opposite would be true. Also, Hari Sauri writes

that Prabhupada would avoid travel between 4:30-7:30 PM which is later than the times you list.

Also, it seems that these calculations for travel only apply to the start of a journey. Is that correct?

Text 21308

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 04-Aug-94 07:12 EDT

Subject: Travel and Muhurta

The time of the Rahukalam is flexible and is linked to the time of sunrise, so conceivably the reason that Prabhupada traveled later was because the sun rose later that day.

Another reason could be that it had nothing at all to do with Rahukalam but some other consideration.

Also it is possible that in the Utkal (Bengal-Orissa) region they may have some different rule for calculating the Rahukalam. There are occasional regional differences in astrology.

Regarding marriage: if you are legally married before the fire sacrifice then it is the time of the legal marriage that is significant. Not the fire sacrifice. There are many forms of marriage recognized in the Vedas, not all require a fire sacrifice. For example Gandharva Vivaha, the simple exchange of garlands, requires no fire. In any case, if after a ceremony, civil or otherwise, a man and woman begin co-habiting and are recognized by society as being married then that is the beginning of their marriage. And that is the time to be considered.

It was also asked: "If the influence of Rahu is there every day, why is Thursday particularly troublesome?"

As I pointed out it may have nothing to do with Rahukalam at all because in Bengal they have their own system of calculating such things.

Even if it is caused because of Rahu then Thursday being ruled by Jupiter is not immune. In fact the conjunction of Jupiter and Rahu in a chart goes by the name of Guru-Candala Yoga and it often spoils the good qualities of Jupiter.

"Also, it seems that these calculations for travel only apply to the start of a journey. Is that correct?"

Yes.

Your servant

Shyamasundara Dasa

Text 21488

From: Urmila (Devi Dasi) ACBSP (ISKCON School)

Date: 04-Aug-94

Subject: travel

When ISKCON organizations plan meetings, we should *not* schedule them for Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. This forces devotees, especially those who are flying, to start their journey on a Thursday afternoon. I personally had a tragedy occur when I started on a Thursday afternoon for such a meeting. Why can't we meet on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, or Saturday, Sunday, and Monday? Should we be less careful than Prabhupada?

Text 21885

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 05-Aug-94 23:27 EDT

Subject: Brahmananda's accident

Hare Krsna!

Sorry to hear about your accident in the desert. Glad to hear that only the vehicle was badly damaged. We wouldn't want to part with you just yet. On June 2, at 3:00 PM in Los Angeles the following planetary positions prevailed:

Lagna	17VI06
Sun	18TA22
Moon	07PI59
Mars	13AR42
Mercury	11GE01
Jupiter R	12LI16
Venus	21GE36
Saturn	18AQ19
Rahu	29LI57
Ketu	29AR57

This chart is indeed not auspicious for travel. We note that Mars AND Ketu are in the 8th and that the Moon is in a Papi-kartari Yoga (malefics on both

sides). Also the Lagna is the object of a Lagna-adhi-yoga but by malefic planets rather than benefics. What really saved you was the strength of Mercury ruler of the lagna. You also broke a cardinal rule of travel: if someone warns you not to travel you should take it as an omen and delay your trip.

Some years ago a similar event happened to me. I had just borrowed Naveen Krsna's new car to do some business in Dallas. Just as I was about to pull away from the driveway he yelled at me to stop, then he came up to me and admonished me not to get in an accident. I was very mentally distressed at the time and didn't recognize the clear warnings from Supersoul. [It is standard practice that if somebody stops you in trip that you should stop or at least delay your departure. If you are stopped 3 times then you shouldn't leave.] I left and about ten minutes later I was involved in a very serious accident caused by adverse weather. I totaled the vehicle and severely injured my neck. I still suffer from the injuries.

On June 21 I was leaving Miami and starting a trip to Canada. I had planned to leave early but for various reasons my trip was delayed to the afternoon. When I looked at the chart I also got Virgo rising with Mars and Ketu in the 8th. I was not happy and thought that this would be a classical combination for an accident. Just then Rasabihari, the wife of Mahabuddhi, with whom I was staying, came in to my room. She had just got off work from the hospital and gave me a big handful of medical supplies - bandages, antiseptic sponges, etc. The lights immediately flashed in my mind; I had just been thinking that this was not a good time to travel because of possible accidents and here she comes giving me items that also indicate accidents and injuries i.e. medical supplies. I immediately cancelled my trip and left the next day.

YS Shyamasundara Dasa

Text 22259

From: Bhanu Swami (Madras)

Date: 07-Aug-94

Subject: marriage times

If Prabhupada was observing late Thursday afternoon, it seems it was Bar Bela, not Rahukalam. Bar Bela, Kala Bela and Ratri Bela are mentioned in the Navadvipa Panjika, so they are common knowledge in Bengal. Panjika notes that these times are bad for travel, causing death. Where the sastric source is I don't know.

Rahukala is common in South India. If we combine the timings of Rahukala, Bar Bela and Kala Bela, we see that all of Thursday afternoon becomes bad. As well

Sunday and Friday mornings and Tuesday early afternoon become bad. So why didn't Srila Bhaktisiddhanta follow all of these timings? Maybe Thursday was obvious because of the long period of possible dangers.

Note also that Mars hora will also fall at 2 PM on Thursday, so that would be an added consideration.

Rahukalam

Sunday 4:30 PM
Monday 7:30 AM
Tuesday 3:00 PM
Wednesday 12 Noon
Thursday 1:30 PM
Friday 10:30 AM
Saturday 9:00 AM

Bar Bela

Sunday 10:30 Noon
Monday 3:00 PM
Tuesday 7:30 AM
Wednesday 12:00 Noon
Thursday 4:30
Friday 9:00 AM
Saturday 1:30 PM

Kala Bela all three combined:

Sunday 12:00 10:30 - 1:30
Monday 7:30
Tuesday 1:30 1:30 - 4:30
Wednesday 9:00
Thursday 3:00 PM 1:30 - 6:00
Friday 10:30 9:00 - 12:00
Saturday: 6 AM and 4:30 PM

These tithis are bad for travel according to the panjika: tithis caturthi, sasthi, astami, navami, dvadasi, caturdasi, purnima amavasya and sukla pratipat.

Text 22658

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 07-Aug-94
Subject: Bar Bela

I suspected that these local Bengali timings of Bar Bela [Var Vela], Kala Bela [Kala Vela], and Ratri Bela, had something to do with it. But I have never had an explanation of how these velas are derived or defined even though I spent 2 years in Calcutta studying astrology. They are certainly not found in classical texts. Of course, this doesn't mean that they are not effective, only temporarily unexplained.

From the names, they seem to be related to the Kala Velas mentioned in Parasara Hora Sastra. But I am traveling and have no way of checking the reference.

ys shyama

Text 24018
From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)
Date: 10-Aug-94
Subject: travel etc.

One more point that I would like to mention is that although there are all these Rahukalams, Bar Bela, Kala Bela, etc. these can be neutralized if at the time of departure the lagna is strong, and planets well placed.

Text 24022
From: Brahmananda (Dasa) ACBSP (Bhaktivedanta Archives)
Date: 11-Aug-94
Subject: travel etc

Another interesting travel anecdote with Srila Prabhupada is as follows:

Once we were leaving to fly from Delhi to Ahmedabad. I happened to be ill with malaria at the time. We were a party of several devotees with Srila Prabhupada. After gathering all the bags and doing all the final arrangements, Srila Prabhupada got up to leave. As Srila Prabhupada walked out the door, I was right behind him and was followed by the other devotees. Suddenly, I sneezed. Srila Prabhupada immediately stopped in the doorway, neither going forward or turning around. In a deep, grave voice he said, "Now what to do?" Everyone stood still not understanding the seriousness of what I had done and what to do now. So, we all just kept standing there. Srila Prabhupada would not move an inch.

"Srila Prabhupada," said Nava Yoginder Maharaja, "Brahmananda is ill. He is sick with malaria." Actually Srila Prabhupada knew I was ill, but Nava Yoginder was reminding him. "Oh, then it is all right," said Srila Prabhupada. And he proceeded to walk out the door and into the waiting car.

Later on we discussed that it is a very bad omen if one sneezes while leaving a place on a journey, especially if one is on the threshold of the house. But, if one is sick, then the sneeze is attributed to that and the malefic influences are dissipated.

Text 27449

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 19-Aug-94

Subject: sneezing

Here are a few more interesting points about sneezing.

The general Vedic practice is that when one sneezes he should utter 'OM' and the on-lookers should say "santi."

General observations:

- 1 It is only at the time of starting an action that the effect of sneezing matters.
- 2 If the sneezer is suffering from a disease, the effect is neutralized.
- 3 If the sneezing occurs, one should stop the action for a few minutes [chant a couple of rounds] and then start again.
- 4 One has to be sure of the exact direction of the sneezing. [This will be more significant later when I explain the effects of sneezing from different directions at different times of day.]

General Effects:

- 1 Sneezing from the front side - inauspicious.
- 2 " in a chain (many sneezes or more than one person?) - good
- 3 Sneezing from the left side - auspicious
- 4 Sneezing of cats - bad
- 5 " at the time of purchasing something - good
- 6 " at start of religious ceremony - bad
- 7 " " a new business - good
- 8 " entering a new house - bad

- 9 " taking new medicine - good
10 " at the time of calling on a doctor - bad
11 " starting a journey - bad

More later.

YS
Shyamasundara Dasa

Text 27990
From: Hari Sauri (Dasa) ACBSP (Alachua, FL)"
Date: 20-Aug-94
Subject: sneezing

First of all, thanks for the comments on the dating of the Kuruksetra war.
Here is a question and some comments on sneezing.

What about when a person sneezes just as another makes a statement? Prabhupada once told Mahamsa at the Hyderabad farm that, "In Kali Yuga no one can work by himself." Just at that moment, Jagadisa, who was in another room and not able to hear our conversation, sneezed quite loudly. Prabhupada immediately raised his index finger and said, "Confirmed!"

I also heard that two sneezes in a row are auspicious but three are inauspicious. Prabhupada frequently sneezed in multiples of two, and sometimes three.

Prabhupada also told me once when I sneezed, "Now you will live a hundred years." I was puzzled and he laughed and said, "In Bengal sneezing is considered so healthy that you will live a very long time."

Text 29084
From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)
Date: 22-Aug-94
Subject: sneezing

Hari Sauri asks: "What about when a person sneezes just as another makes a statement?"

As I mentioned in the previous sneezing file, if you are thinking of something and then someone sneezes it can have a meaning to those who know the intricacies of the system. It is the general principle in India that if after an important statement is made some omen takes place then this confirms the

statement. In this case sneezing. But we are also familiar with tik-tiks, or the back fire of a car being used as confirming a statement.

As far as multiple sneezes I'm not sure. The reference I was using said that a succession of sneezes was good but I wasn't sure if that meant by the same person or by several persons sneezing several times. As for the number 2 sneezes good versus 3 sneezes bad, I don't know.

In regards to your longevity it may simply indicate, as Prabhupada said, that sneezing is good. A good hardy sneeze indicates that you are hale and healthy. It reminds me of some physiognomy text I read a long time ago quoting from Narada-samhita (I think). It stated that if a man urinates with a forceful stream making lots of noise and foam etc, then he will live for a long time, be wealthy, etc. But if the urine comes out in small dribbles with no force he will be poor, short lived etc. The point being that the former man was robust and strong while the later was weak and debilitated. It is hard to make much of oneself in life if health is poor.

Text 29235

From: Shyamasundara (Dasa) ACBSP (Astrologer)

Date: 22-Aug-94

Subject: Sneezing continued

In this section the result of a sneeze will depend on the time of the day, and the direction that the sneeze is coming from. For time of day you divide the day-light hours into four quarters, that is sufficient. (The quarters of the day are in numerals.) It should be remembered that in most traditional agrarian cultures most people would retire shortly after sunset. For sneezes after sunset we suggest that you repeat the sequence of quarters for the night that was there for the day. Remember that these results generally refer to the beginning of an action, such as a journey or business. They can also be to answer snap questions. Suppose you are thinking about a friend you haven't seen for a long time. Just then a person sneezes. You note that the sneeze came from the East and it was the last quarter of the day - "You will have a meeting with your friend."

Your Servant
Shyamasundara Dasa

Sneezing from the East

- 1 Work will be obstructed.
- 2 There is danger.

- 3 You will get food.
- 4 You will have a meeting with your friend.

Sneezing from the South East

- 1 You will have to face hindrances.
- 2 Beware of the outbreak of fire.
- 3 You will have opportunity to see your friend.
- 4 You will feel happy.

Sneezing from the South

- 1 You will enjoy a feast.
- 2 You may have quick gains.
- 3 You may have to face impediments.
- 4 You will have a meeting with your friend.

Sneezing from the South West

- 1 You will earn profits.
- 2 Beware of thieves.
- 3 You may have to proceed on a journey.
- 4 You will have comforts.

Sneezing from the West

- 1 There are chances of a journey.
- 2 You will have comforts.
- 3 You may have anguish.
- 4 You will gain.

Sneezing from the North West

- 1 You will earn profits.
- 2 You will have comforts.
- 3 You may have comforts.
- 4 You will gain the thing immediately.

Sneezing from the North

- 1 You will be in distress.
- 2 You may have comforts.
- 3 You may have delicious things to eat.
- 4 You will hear good news.

Sneezing from the North East

- 1 Beware of dangers.
- 2 You may have to bear a loss of money.
- 3 You will have to face impediments.
- 4 You will have quick gains.

All information on Sneezing derived from *Hindu Omens*, by C.D. Bijalwan, Sanskriti-Arnold-Heinemann, 1977.