

CHAPTER ONE

Differences Between Vedic and Western Astrology

INTRODUCTION

Astrology has always existed all over the world. Vedic Astrology comes from India and is probably the oldest astrological system known to humanity, going back almost unchanged to prehistoric times (possibly as early as 7000 BCE). It is based on the Vedas, India's original scriptures, including the Upanishads, Puranas, and Gitas, particularly *The Bhagavad Gita*. "Veda" means wisdom, knowledge of truth based on direct inner experience.

Another name for Vedic Astrology is "Jyotish", a Sanskrit word meaning "light". Its essential purpose is to shed light on what is not visible. In the present moment, one may see or know everything that needs to be understood, but knowledge of the past and future can only be acquired with the help of Jyotish.

In the West, astrology has received bad press over recent centuries. Many people regard it as a nonsensical subject of interest to unenlightened people, who must be many, as horoscopes appear in nearly every newspaper and magazine. If the reader is a non-believer in astrology, then you should know that the Vedic system is utterly different in many respects from its Western counterpart. In the hands of a competent practitioner, it can produce extraordinarily accurate forecasts of future events and advice on dealing with life's challenges.

DIFFERENT PLANETARY POSITIONS

The Vedic system applies the exact position of the planets used by astronomers against the background of particular fixed stars (or unchanging stellar lights from our perspective). It is called the "Sidereal Zodiac". Hence, in the past, the term astronomy covered astrology and the study of the physical heavens.

Western astrology is based on the orientation of the Earth to the Sun and applies the "Tropical Zodiac". For astrological purposes, it "assumes" that the point on the ecliptic path, where the Sun appears to cross over the equator as it travels from south to north each year, is defined as 0° Aries. At this time of the Spring Equinox on 20/21 March, the Sun appears directly above the Earth's equator, marking the starting point of the Western zodiac. The other eleven signs follow in order of Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricorn, Aquarius and Pisces.

PRECESSION OF THE EQUINOXES IGNORED BY WESTERN ASTROLOGERS

Due to the fundamental assumption that the moment of the Spring Equinox marks the point of 0° degrees Aries for the Sun's position, Western Astrologers use the tropical zodiac that disregards an astronomical event called the "Precession of the Equinoxes". The Earth, as it spins around every 23 hours 56 minutes, acts like a spinning top. A wobble on its axis creates an extended circle in the sky. As a result, the Earth's North Pole points to different stars at different times throughout history and into the future. It is pointing to the star Polaris in Ursa Minor, but in about 10,100 CE, Deneb will be the Pole Star.

As the Sun moves along its apparent path as viewed from the Earth, it does not return to the same position against the background of the fixed stars, where it was at the same time one year earlier. It is short by about 50.03 seconds of one degree. Over seventy-two years, this difference amounts to one degree, and in 2,148 years,

it grows to thirty degrees or one whole sign of the zodiac. The entire cycle takes approximately 25,772 years, and this is known as the “Great Year”.

AYANAMSHAS APPLIED IN JYOTISH

Vedic Astrology (Jyotish) applies the “Sidereal Zodiac” using a fixed point on the ecliptic path in relation to some prominent stars. However, ascertaining this initial point of the sidereal system proved controversial, with various pundits coming to separate conclusions.

The difference between the fixed initial point of the sidereal zodiac and the Vernal Equinox used for the Tropical zodiac is called “Ayanamsha”.

POPULAR AYANAMSHAS CALCULATED FOR 1 JANUARY 1950, AND THEIR ANNUAL PRECESSIONAL RATE

Ayanamsha Author	Value at Epoch	Annual Precessional Rate	Coincidence Year
N. C. Lahiri	23° 09' 28"	50.03 in arc seconds	285 CE
B. V. Raman	21° 42' 47"	50.34 ditto	389 CE
Shri Yukteswar	21° 45' 55"	53.99 ditto	499 CE
Fagan-Bradley	24° 09'	50.25 ditto	231 CE
Krishnamurti	23° 09' 07"	50.2388475 ditto	291 CE

The controversy concerning the basis of the sidereal zodiac led the Indian Government in 1952 to set up the Calendar Reform Commission, which included N. C. Lahiri, to recommend an ayanamsha to be applied in all panchangas and ephemerides in India. In 1953, they supported the adoption of calculations based on the star “Spica” (known as “α Virginis” by astronomers, and “Chitra” in Sanskrit) when it was close to the ecliptic path being positioned at 180° 00' 03" from the first point of Aries at the date of the Spring Equinox, 20 March 285 CE. Subsequently, the “Lahiri Ayanamsha” has become the most popular ayanamsha used by Vedic astrologers.

However, Lahiri originally intended that the star Spica be fixed at 0° Libra, but the official definition of this ayanamsha does not realise this idea accurately. The traditional method of calculating ayanamshas does not consider the proper motion of fixed stars and the slight change in the orientation of the ecliptic plane. As a result, some prominent astrologers have proposed a correction of the Lahiri ayanamsha called “Chitrapaksha”. Under this method, which is applied in this book, Jyotish software calculates the position of Spica and uses that, so there is no precessional rate. However, it is very close to Lahiri’s calculations. Jyotish computer systems always contain a feature that allows users to select their preferred ayanamsha.

By applying the precessional rate of 50.03 seconds per annum, the Sun is located at the Spring Equinox in the first three decades of the twenty-first century, close to six degrees Pisces, according to the sidereal zodiac, compared to zero degrees Aries according to the tropical zodiac. Thus, there is a difference of about twenty-four degrees between the two zodiacs, which grows larger every year. Since 285 CE, we have been in what is known as the Age of Pisces. The Aquarian Age is not due to start until 2433 CE.

Calculations for the sidereal zodiac, using an ayanamsha, consider the difference in planetary positions between the tropical and sidereal zodiacs by deducting the current value for the selected ayanamsha as it slowly increases daily. As a result of this mathematical adjustment, Jyotish natal charts have the ascendants and planets

in different signs from the Western system in most natal charts. The Sun in the sidereal zodiac changes signs about twenty-three/twenty-four days later, making five out of every six people being born under an earlier “Sun sign” than they had been led to believe by Western newspapers, as the following table shows:

DATES SUN ENTERS EACH SIGN ANNUALLY UNDER TROPICAL AND SIDEREAL SYSTEMS

Signs	Under Tropical System	Under Sidereal System
Aries	21 March to 19 April	14 April to 14 May
Taurus	20 April to 20 May	15 May to 14 June
Gemini	21 May to 20 June	15 June to 15 July
Cancer	21 June to 22 July	16 July to 16 August
Leo	23 July to 22 August	17 August to 16 September
Virgo	23 August to 22 September	17 September to 16 October
Libra	23 September to 22 October	17 October to 15 November
Scorpio	23 October to 21 November	16 November to 15 December
Sagittarius	22 November to 21 December	16 December to 13 January
Capricorn	22 December to 19 January	14 January to 12 February
Aquarius	20 January to 18 February	13 February to 13 March
Pisces	19 February to 20 March	14 March to 13 April

The above dates may be altered one day earlier or later due to leap years.

Example: A person born on 31 October would believe under the tropical zodiac that their “Sun sign” was Scorpio, whereas, using sidereal calculations, the Sun was traversing Libra.

DIFFERENT PLANETS USED

In Vedic Astrology, nine planets are used: the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, and the two nodes of the Moon, Rahu and Ketu. Astronomers recognise these nodes as points on the Sun’s ecliptic path, which the Moon cuts every month as it circles the Earth every 29.5 days.

Western astrologers also use Uranus, Neptune, Pluto, some of the planet’s moons, and the largest asteroids, such as Ceres. These are not part of the Vedic system as they are considered too distant from the Earth and too small to influence human affairs.

DISSIMILAR ORIGINAL SOURCES AND HISTORY

The principles and rules governing Jyotish have remained unaltered for thousands of years. They are contained in many classical texts, the greatest of which is called *Brihat Parashara Hora Shastra*, which translates as “The Great Sage Parashara’s Treatise on the Science of Time”. (“BPHS” in this book) It takes the form of a dialogue between a teacher, Sage Parashara, and a Brahmin, called Maitreya, and relates to the oral tradition of India for learning spiritual subjects.

Modern Western Astrology, on the other hand, has mainly evolved through empirical research into cosmic influences based on an analysis of thousands of charts. Consequential techniques have been amended as new planets and large asteroids have been discovered, incorporated into natal charts and become part of their interpretation.

DIFFERENT PRIMARY FOCUS

Tropical astrology is largely “Sun” based, for the signs of Aries, Taurus, Gemini, etc., may more accurately be called “solar houses”. It is primarily concerned with psychology, the personality and character, or the “solar” side of our life and nature. Sidereal astrology refers to “Cosmic astrology”, for it measures the relationship between the fixed stars and the solar system to us. As such, it covers all areas of life – our desires, talents, responsibilities and potential for spiritual growth – and has predictive powers to indicate the time and duration of significant events.

JYOTISH SYSTEM USES TWENTY-SEVEN FIXED STARS

Besides the twelve signs, Vedic Astrology breaks down the 360° circle into twenty-seven constellations called “Nakshatras”, which were initially identified with specific stars, but these days cover a span of 13 degrees 20 minutes. This more detailed analysis is also used in “Electional Astrology” to select the most auspicious time to start an important activity, such as a new business, constructing a home, or performing ceremonies such as marriage, coronations or initiations. There is no equivalent in Western astrology.

JYOTISH APPLIES A UNIQUE METHOD FOR TIMING EVENTS

Western astrology uses progressions and transits to time events or changes in our lives. Vedic astrologers may also apply these techniques, but their primary system will be planetary periods called “Dasha”. Under the Vimshottari dasha system, each of the nine planets has a period, varying from six to twenty years, when their particular influence will dominate an individual’s life. The word “Vimshottari”, in this case, means 120 years, this being the maximum length of human life in the current age, called the “Kali Yuga”, also known as the “Iron Age”.

Given an accurate birth time, this dasha system can precisely show when each period of fortune or misfortune begins and ends and provide actual dates. Two people may have beautiful careers, good earnings, and significant accomplishments indicated in their charts. One may find his niche early in life, while the other must navigate tricky waters before achieving prosperity. This system can predict the timing of such events and the extent of success or failure.

SIMILARITIES

Although there are considerable differences between the two systems, some consistent principles apply:

1. Both systems use scientific astronomical calculations before the ayanamsha is deducted for the Vedic system.
2. Both systems take a geocentric (Earth-centred) view of movements in the sky. From this standpoint, the Sun and Moon appear to go around the Earth and, therefore, are classified as “planets” for astrological purposes.
3. Both systems use the twelve signs of the zodiac.

4. Both systems use planetary transits, i.e. the planets' past, present and future movements over the natal planets, signs and houses.
5. Both systems make use of divisional charts. Books on Western astrology imply that their application is limited and needs further research. In Jyotish, there are clear rules about how and when they should be applied, and extensive use is made in this book.

CHAPTER TWO

Natural Laws and Philosophical Principles

DEFINITION OF NATURAL LAW

“There is indeed a law, right reason, which is in accordance with nature; existing in all, unchangeable, eternal. Commanding us to do what is right, forbidding us to do what is wrong. It has dominion over good men but possesses no influence over bad ones. No other law can be substituted for it, no part of it can be taken away, nor can it be abrogated altogether. Neither the people nor the Senate can be absolved from it. It is not one thing at Rome, and another thing at Athens: one thing today, and another tomorrow; but it is eternal and immutable for all nations and for all time.” From *De re publica* by Cicero, a Roman statesman, lawyer and philosopher.

Natural Law is a body of divine and eternal principles, including natural justice, that applies to every human being. It goes beyond the laws produced by the state or society and is laid down by God for the governance of his play of creation.

According to Vedic scripture, all men and women living at any time are equal in their fundamental divine nature, which is unlimited intelligent consciousness. The *Katha Upanishad* states in Book 1. ii. 18, “The Intelligent Self is neither born nor does it die. It did not originate from anything, nor did anything originate from it. It is birthless, eternal, undecaying, and ancient. It is not injured even when the body is killed.”

The apparent differences between humans are due to time, place, and heritage. These are transient superimpositions of this eternal truth beyond names and forms. Every human has a physical body, senses, and mental capacities, including emotions, a mental commentator, knowledge of right and wrong, and the power of reason. These faculties usually are in continual movement, and so are transient by nature. But, beyond all these experienced changes is the Witness, which is always constantly present, unmoving, eternal and consciously aware; that is the true Self of everyone. The *Katha Upanishad* also says, “God made sense turn outwards; man, therefore, looks outwards, not into himself. Now and again, a daring soul, desiring immortality, has looked back and found himself.”

THE LAWS

Reincarnation

Jyotish is based on two philosophical principles. The first is reincarnation. At so-called death, it is only the body that dies and not the essence of a person. Jesus promulgated this message when he said: “And fear not them which kill the body but are unable to kill the soul, but rather fear him which is able to destroy soul and body in hell.” (Matthew Ch. 10. v. 28.)

The Lord Shri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* (Ch. 2. v. 20–22) says: “The Self is not born, nor does It ever die; after having been, It can never cease to be. Unborn, eternal, unchangeable, yet most ancient, It dies not when the body dies. Those who know the Self as indestructible, immortal, unborn and inexhaustible, how should they be killed or cause to be killed?”

“Just as a person casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others which are new, so the embodied Self casts off worn-out bodies and enters others which are new.”

Note: The *Upanishads* and *Bhagavad Gita* are ancient Vedic texts from India that deal with philosophy, spiritual knowledge, and meditation. Jyotish is centred on the eternal universal principles in these writings, many of which are confirmed in the Bible.

Karma: Three Types

The second principle is the Law of Karma, which reflects a Christian doctrine: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.” The *Mundaka Upanishad* (Ch. 1. ii. v. 12) states: “There is nothing (in this world) that is not the result of Karma.” This law states that our deeds in previous lives determine the nature of events occurring in this present life, and our responses will determine our future. Therefore, we create our destiny, mould our future and determine our character by our thoughts and deeds.

“Karma” means “actions”. The karmic principle includes the law of causation, action and reaction, compensation and retribution. The apparent inequalities and diversities in nature are rationally explainable under this principle. The doctrine of karma falsifies the belief that God punishes the evil-doers and rewards the good ones. God never punishes the wicked nor rewards the virtuous, but the wicked punish themselves and the virtuous reward themselves by their thoughts and deeds.

If we injure, hate or cheat others, we literally harm, hate and deceive ourselves. The eternal Law of Karma predestines nothing but, on the contrary, makes every soul a free agent for action, showing the way out of the world through unselfish thoughts and good deeds. The biblical statement “As thou shalt sow, so shalt thou reap” neatly sums up this eternal law of cause and effect.

Paramahansa Yogananda, in his commentary on “The Bhagavad Gita”, states: “The astrological stars of a person are nothing but an environment that he himself has chosen by the karmic pattern he has fashioned by past-life actions. According to this karmic pattern, he is attracted to be reborn on Earth at a given time that is favourable to the fulfilment of that pattern.” Mahatma Gandhi said: “When God invented the Law of Karma, he was able to retire”.

Men’s and women’s actions and reactions are usually based on memory, mental impressions or recollections from the past. They manifest as their personality and character, producing habitual responses to events and other people. This store of tendencies is called “Sanchita” and is said to be located around the (subtle) heart consisting of feelings. It travels with the soul from life to life. It is an artificial superimposition covering the natural essence of every human being, which is pure consciousness.

Only a part of the Sanchita fructifies in this life, called “Prarabdha Karma”. These are favourable and unfavourable situations a person will encounter as their destiny or fate arises from past deeds occurring at the appointed time in this life. Prarabdha is a mechanical force operating in the physical world, which has no dominion over consciousness. It can bind individuals to an endless cycle of birth and death. This could involve transmigrating through 8,400,000 living forms, according to one’s Sanchita. Only human beings have an opportunity to leave this endless cycle. For this to happen, access to consciousness provided by the company and wisdom of a realised person is necessary. Meditation, supported by the power of good company, can weaken the binding force of prarabdha and enable the mind to become free and still, thus giving full access to unlimited consciousness.

By studying a natal chart based on the planetary positions at the moment a person is born, a Vedic Astrologer, called “a Jyotishi”, can ascertain the main events a person will face in this life and their timing with unerring accuracy. This ability to see a person’s future based on the pattern of the stars and planets at birth demonstrates the truth of the quotation above from the *Mundaka Upanishad* about the Law of Karma. This proposition should raise fundamental questions in readers’ minds about the purpose of the human embodiment, their duties and obligations, and their attitude to events and other people they meet during this life.

To summarise – there are three types of karma:

1. Sanchita – Store of samskara amassed over many lives as good and bad actions that are unmanifest but will be the source of events experienced at some point in the present or future lives.
2. Prarabdha – Portion of the Sanchita karma a person experiences in this life as fortunate or unfortunate circumstances.
3. Kriyamana – The samskara of the future produced by the quality of our actions performed in this life.

This process of continual rebirth over endless ages continues until self-realisation is achieved through the purification of the being by performing sacrificial actions, meditating, obtaining the proper knowledge, giving unconditional love, and living with good company.

Human beings are the only creatures responsible for their Sanchita karma. All others are governed by prarabdha and do not create kriyamana karma, as they are not designed to be consciously accountable beings. Likewise, children cannot create Sanchita karma because the buddhi, the power of discrimination, is not developed until adulthood. Until the age of sixteen, children experience the effects of their parents' prarabdha karma.

Three levels of intensity of prarabdha karma apply:

1. Dridha karma (fixed karma expressed as unavoidable events and situations the person has to meet).
2. Dridha-Adridha karma (fixed/non-fixed karma expressed as events and situations that can be altered through concentrated effort and hard work).
3. Adridha karma (non-fixed karma defined as events and conditions that can be easily changed).

These patterns can be ascertained from the natal chart by considering the strength of the recurrent patterns or significations shown by the planetary positions. Planets that are extremely strong or weak and supported elsewhere in the chart usually indicate fixed karma, indicating events that will necessarily take place. Planets in neutral or average conditions, with their significations supported in the chart, suggest that some choices can affect outcomes. There is freedom of action where planets' significations are unsupported elsewhere in the chart.

THREE GUNAS

According to Vedic texts, at the beginning of creation, out of the void, at the will or desire of the Absolute, came the first sound or word (called the “Pranava” sound”), which is “OM”. This is composed of “A”, “U” and “M”. These are the three components of this divine and original word. They form the substance of the creation as the “Gunas” down to the last detail. They are known as sattva, rajas and tamas. “A” stands for sattva, “U” stands for rajas, and “M” stands for tamas. They are always in a state of imbalance. When they are brought to a state of balance, creation is dissolved. As it says in St John’s Gospel, “In the beginning was The Word”, with the result that the creation was, and still is, spoken into existence.

These three gunas are the fundamental forces of creation, permeating it right down to the last detail. Sattva is the creative force that includes intelligence, purity, light and stillness; Rajas is the active force of movement, energy and passion, bringing everything into existence and sustaining all for a while; and Tamas is the regulating force bringing everything to completion, and eventually dissolves them back to their original elements. Tamas is also experienced as ignorance, inertia and darkness.

The three gunas have to be present before anything can manifest. The different manifestations throughout the creation are due to their proportions. According to the measures or proportions, these three gunas have

nine significant combinations. Sattva/sattva; sattva/rajas; sattva/tamas; rajas/sattva; rajas/rajas; rajas/tamas; tamas/sattva; tamas/rajas and tamas/tamas.

The three gunas are ultimately responsible for creating, sustaining, and disintegrating nature's endless variety of forms. They are the cause of the regulatory forces, of which the most important is time, which manifests in all that exists as rhythmic patterns, or cycles, moving according to natural laws. All living beings, planets, stars, empires, economic and social systems, seasons on Earth, indeed all manifestations in creation, arise, are sustained, and eventually dissolve back into their elemental components. These are universal forces present at the collective and individual levels.

Anyone in tune with nature may directly experience the three gunas. Sattva predominates for half an hour before and after sunrise and sunset each day. These are times when stillness and peace can be felt and very easily in the countryside. Rajas occur during the mornings, late afternoons and early evenings to support mental and physical activity, while tamas occur in the afternoons and at night when rest and sleep are necessary. Every lunar month is divided into the waxing phase, when it is easier to start new projects, and a waning phase, when consolidation and completion occur naturally. The hours around the New and Full Moons are times of sattva. The consciousness available around the Full Moon is significantly heightened, resulting in some people acting like "lunatics". The yearly seasons also express the movement of the gunas. The week after each solstice and equinox is a sattvic period.

FIVE ELEMENTAL FORCES

After the initiatory Pranava sound, OM, and the vibration and movement of the three gunas, the world takes shape in five primal elements: ether, air, fire, water and earth. These are mixed to form the physical elements perceptible to gross sense organs. Each element has a particular property connected to the people's subtle sense organs of knowledge and action, which are ultimately linked to the planets, as follows:

Element	Ether	Air	Fire	Water	Earth
Property	Sound	Touch	Sight	Taste	Smell
Sense Organ	Ears	Skin	Eyes	Tongue	Nose
Action Vehicle	Voice	Hands	Feet	Urinogenital	Anus
Action Sense	Speaking	Grasping	Moving	Procreating	Evacuating
Planet	Jupiter	Saturn, Rahu	Sun, Mars, Ketu	Moon, Venus	Mercury

THE VITAL FORCE

The connection between the subtle and physical world is the breath of life, called "Prana". Humans' and animals' bodies are animated by breath divided into five functions giving life known as the "Vital Forces":

1. A breath that goes upwards and resides in the mouth and nose is called Prana.
2. A breath that goes downwards below the navel is called Apana.
3. A breath that permeates the entire body is called Vyana.
4. Breath that leaves the body at death is called Udana.
5. The breath that digests resides in the middle of the body is called Samana.

SUBTLE FORCES OF THE MIND

The combinations of the three gunas produce four forces that make up the generic term “mind”.

Firstly, “Buddhi” is the organ of reason, intellect, and discriminative faculty. It works best when it is illuminated by consciousness emanating from the individual Self.

Secondly, “Chitta” is the causal heart where the samskara and a person’s memory are stored. It is also each person’s emotional centre.

Thirdly, “Ahankara” is the identification and feeling of being a separate individual, known as “The Ego”. Once this belief in being different from others has occurred, the person is bound to the endless journey of reincarnation. Self-realisation occurs when a person ceases to identify with the idea of being a separate individual. At that moment, the ahankara naturally unites with the pure, unlimited consciousness of the authentic Self.

Fourthly, the lowest level of the mind is the organ of thought, called “Manas”. This faculty is the commentator in the head who deliberates and has ideas, opinions and beliefs. It is the link between the physical world, via the organs of sense, and inner consideration by the buddhi and chitta. Manas is most helpful when under the still light of the Buddhi; otherwise, its constant activity may cause mental tiredness and even a breakdown.

FOUR AIMS OF LIFE, KNOWN AS “PURUSHĀRTHAS”

Every human being is tasked with addressing four aims of life:

1. “Dharma”, meaning “duty”, refers to “doing what you are born to do”; undertaking services to others that best fit your aptitudes or skills within the context of familial and societal responsibilities.
2. “Artha”, meaning “achievement of goals”, or in common parlance, refers to the acquisition of necessary resources or income, as well as the knowledge needed to fulfil one’s dharma. Every person should have the necessary resources to support themselves and their family in living fully and happily.
3. “Kama”, meaning “desire”, refers to our need for emotional and sensory happiness in life, generally in association with others. Everything we do should be enjoyable and not cause pain to ourselves or other people.
4. “Moksha”, meaning “liberation or freedom”, refers to our need for spiritual growth, including transcending our reliance on the three previously mentioned or lower aims.

These four aims permeate Jyotish (Vedic Astrology). Every zodiac sign and nakshatra has a governing purpose. The nakshatras are divided into four parts of 3 degrees 20 minutes, called “padas”. The first nakshatra pada refers to dharma, the second to artha, the third to kama, and the fourth to moksha. Planets at birth will be placed in one of these four padas, and consequently, greater emphasis will be given in life to fulfilling a particular aim with the support of that planet.

Individuals should not seek one of these and neglect the rest. All four are necessary for a balanced and integrated life. Moksha is the primary aim of life, and this will require the individual to make efforts and seek the support of good company and a teacher.

COSMIC FORCES REPRESENTED IN JYOTISH

1. Nine Planets

The three gunas give rise to apparent cycles within creation, such as birth, life and death. In the physical realm, these cycles are represented by five real planets, the Sun and Moon, and two nodes that appear to circle the Earth (taking a geocentric view). In Jyotish, these so-called “planets” represent universal powers:

- ▶ The Sun is the Jiva Atman, the Self living in creation, which is also called “Maya,” meaning “an illusion”, the magic that makes the universe seem to be present.
- ▶ Moon is the mind, comprised of two components, the chitta and manas.
- ▶ Mars is the vital force called “prana”.
- ▶ Mercury is the speech by which the “creation” comes into existence. Every form is given a name. Mercury’s Sanskrit name is “Buddha”, indicating a direct connection to the buddhi.
- ▶ Jupiter is knowledge learnt from scriptures, teachers, and books and is the guru (teacher) to the gods.
- ▶ Venus is love and the guru to the demons.
- ▶ Saturn is discipline, knowledge derived from experience, and life’s challenges.
- ▶ Rahu represents worldly desires and karmic events to be faced in the present embodiment.
- ▶ Ketu denotes spiritual powers, as it is headless and can give challenging lessons from past lives.

Each planet has a predominating guna quality:

- ▶ Sun, Moon and Jupiter are primarily sattvic.
- ▶ Mercury and Venus are rajasic principally.
- ▶ Mars, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu are primarily tamasic.

When applied to human nature, sattva promotes pure thoughts, honesty and ethical behaviour. Rajas promotes activity, desires for money, material goods, success, sensual passions, and selfish actions. Tamas regulates, completes and dissolves, although it may produce uncontrolled behaviour, including expressions of anger and frustration. The predominant qualities of an individual can be ascertained from the nature of the ascendant sign, the condition and placement of the planetary lord, and other planets that influence this house.

2. Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, Called “Rashis”

The 360-degree circle is divided into twelve rashis, known as “signs” in Western astrology. The twelve are comprised of the three gunas multiplied by the four elements. Each rashi has a ruling planet. Planets transit the rashis as they move around the Earth, at varying speeds depending on their distance from the Sun.

Rashi	Guna	Alternative Guna Name	Element	Ruling Planet
Aries	Rajas	Cardinal	Fire	Mars
Taurus	Tamas	Fixed	Earth	Venus
Gemini	Sattva	Mutable/dual	Air	Mercury
Cancer	Rajas	Cardinal	Water	Moon
Leo	Tamas	Fixed	Fire	Sun
Virgo	Sattva	Mutable/dual	Earth	Mercury
Libra	Rajas	Cardinal	Air	Venus
Scorpio	Tamas	Fixed	Water	Mars
Sagittarius	Sattva	Mutable/dual	Fire	Jupiter
Capricorn	Rajas	Cardinal	Earth	Saturn
Aquarius	Tamas	Fixed	Air	Saturn
Pisces	Sattva	Mutable/dual	Water	Jupiter

3. Twelve Houses

The same twelve divisions of the circle are divided into houses to denote the location of events in people's lives. Houses cover every possible activity people can experience physically, mentally and emotionally. In Jyotish, each house has the same degrees as each rashi.

The first house is determined at birth by the point, in degrees, minutes, and seconds, on the eastern horizon within a rashi. The Earth revolves on its axis every 23 hours 56 minutes. Each rashi takes its turn on this horizon in the order shown in the above table for an average of two hours. This house denotes the person's physical makeup, personality, character, and the ahankara (ego). The remaining eleven houses relate to parts of a person's life, such as family, communications, parents, spouse, marriage, children, transformation, luck, intellect, friends, income, gains, losses and expenditure.

4. Twenty-Seven Fixed Stars, Known as Nakshatras

The 360-degree circle is also divided into twenty-seven fixed stars, each of 13 degrees 20 minutes. They are under the dominion of the Moon, which visits on average once every day. As the Moon represents the mind, each nakshatra shows an extraordinary power by which the mental realm may express itself in individuals. The nakshatra, in which the Moon is located when a person is born, is the most significant in a person's life. Nothing arises in peoples' physical world without prior movement in the mind or emotions, hence their importance. All planets travel through these nakshatras simultaneously as they move through rashis, and their powers modify the planets' influences.

LAWS GOVERNING ALL ACTIVITIES

1. Time
2. A person's nature, attitudes and desires expressed from their prarabdha karma
3. The nature of the action
4. The balance of the three gunas at the place of the event
5. The social, economic and political environment at the place of the event

The interplay of these forces will decide each activity's outcome, our ability to express our talents, our emotional response, and our experience of our prarabdha karma, producing happiness or unhappiness.

The laws governing all activities operate at the individual and the universal levels. At the latter level, earthquakes, fires, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, pandemics, plagues, wars, major accidents, etc., occur that may kill people and destroy their property. Economic and social problems also affect populations and nations. Individuals would not cause these events, so they would not be indicated in their natal charts. The natural laws show that individuals everywhere suffer the consequences of whatever happens on either level.

Universal activities are the responsibility of the Absolute, also called the Universal Self or Brahman. As far as it is concerned, it is only a play, and it is not involved in the justice of what happens. No one is born nor dies, so gain and loss do not apply. The cosmic movements of the guna and the planets create the laws governing the time and place of these universal events. Due to these laws, there will never be a time when everything will be peaceful and stable, because the gunas are constantly in a state of imbalance and movement. Individuals have ways to escape from the world's challenges, which include spiritual practices, meditation, devotion to a deity, and following one of three paths towards enlightenment.

Jyotish contains rules for determining future disasters likely to affect many people in particular parts of the