Publisher's Desk
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"I Predict You'll Love this Issue"

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No one we know predicted beforehand the worldwide phenomenon--a once-in-a-lifetime real life miracle--of Lord Ganesha's milk-drinking, but we did find it afterwards in an ancient astrologer's text, so that means it has happened before and probably will again. Miracles and astrology could be said to go hand in hand. While miracles defy analysis, astrology is being systematized through the computer brains of the jyotisha shastrisof both the East and West. In our ashram we use it quite a lot to determine when to travel, meditate, begin new projects or just rest and let a harsh time pass. Experience assures us astrology is a reliable tool.

Astrologers the world over put their reputations on the line every time they make a prediction and it does not happen. Here is a positive way to look at what they have foretold. After all, it is the mind of the mass consciousness, and of great souls especially, that influence what happens to the individual. Prayer is also important and can affect events. For fifty years we lived under the predictions that California would soon fall into the ocean. Each year it was prophesied, and each year it did not happen. Could it have been the prayers of the people that prevented disaster from happening or just the natural

collective karmas of all those individuals living in the area? Who knows? So the next time you read the prediction of a terrible event anywhere on the planet, take the positive approach and include it in your prayers. Pray that it doesn't happen. Enough of us doing this will assuredly have some effect. But, we cannot then blame astrologers when destined mishaps are forestalled by our prayers. They did nothing but right in predicting the trends of earthly and planetary forces as to what could happen.

There is another positive approach to the bad news astrologers can bring from time to time. It is a metaphysical approach. When unfavorable times arise which have to be lived through (as they all too frequently do), we do not carp or cringe, but look at these as most excellent periods for meditation and sadhana rather than worldly activities. Just the reverse for the positive periods. Spiritual progress can be made during both periods. Both negative and positive times are, in fact, positive when used wisely. A competent jyotisha shastriis of help in forecasting the future as to when times will come along when advancments can be made. A positive mental attitude should be held during all the ups and downs that are predicated to happen. Be as the traveler in a 747 jet, flying high over the cities rather than a pedestrian wandering the streets below.

For raising offspring, like these school children I met last month in Fiji, a forecast can be of the utmost help. A baby predicted to have a fiery temper should be raised to always be kind and considerate of others' feelings, taught to never argue with others. Of course, good examples must be set early on by parents. This will soften the inclination toward temper. Fighting the child's impulse will just amplify it. A child of an

independent nature should be taught early on to care for himself in all respects so that the life ahead will benefit society and bring honor to the family. So much can be gained by reading the chart when approached with the attitude that all that is in it is helpful and necessary to know, even if it seems to be bad news. Difficulties need not be bad news if they are approached as our chance to grow in facing them.

We have for years in our monasteries lived by the panchangam, lahiri ayanamsa.All purnima, amavasyaand ashtamidays are respected by retreat. They are our "Saturday and Sunday," which explains why sometimes you may have called us on a Wednesday and found us unavailable. To be in harmony with the universe, at least our little galaxy, it is important to observe these days for happy, healthy, good living.

Another matter to take into consideration is that the nakshatrasand tithissometimes change days, depending upon latitude and longitude, which means from country to country. Nakshatraand tithisare important, as they begin and end auspicious events and establish the times of festivals, so we can't just use an Indian panchangamif we are in South Africa or the UK. This knowledge was first brought into the mass mind by Pundit Laxshmishankar Trivedi who created the Palaniswami Panchang for the Western world. We have a computerized panchangamfor each area and would be happy to make it available to priests and temple committees everywhere. Just write to me.

Yes, our loving Lord Ganesha made Himself a prominent figure

in the world media starting September 21st. It was a really great spiritual experience for us at Hinduism Today to receive the many phone calls and fax messages with positive, uplifting testimony as to His drinking milk in so many places around the world. The phones and fax machines didn't relent for a minute while this wondrous experience was taking place. Could it be coincidence that in two months our newest book will be released? Loving Ganesha: India's Endearing Elephant-Faced Godis an illustrated, 800-page book for adults and children alike. Would you like a copy? It sells for US$27.95. But I have arranged with the printer for 500 copies for our readers at a very low price. Send US$15 (or more) as a donation to Hindu Heritage Endowment, and you will receive a free autographed copy of Loving Ganesha. No more than three copies per person, please. The $15 will go into a permanent Hindu orphanage endowment.

Many are the births and deaths forgotten by souls shrouded in ignorance, enveloped in mala's darkness. At the moment Great Siva's grace is gained, the renunciate attains the splendorous light.--Tirumantiram 1615