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Pundit Navaratnam

Sri Pundit K.N. Navaratnam has been practicing astrology for the past 50 years, since age 18. He was born in Sri Lanka, where he received his initial training and the title of Jyotish Marthand. He spent many years at the feet of the great siddhar Siva Yogaswami of Jaffna. In 1971 he received the title of Pundit from the College of Astrology of Bangalore. He was appointed the National Astrologer of Australia after moving there in 1985, where he continues to give consultations to people of all walks of life.

Hinduism Today:Are we in the beginning or end of the Kali Yuga?

Pundit Navaratnam:We are in the fourth (Kali) Yuga. This fourth yuga is moving towards destruction. The world is really changing, not on the progressive side, but on the negative side. The morality of human beings is going down day by day, not only in the western world, but in India, where virtue, righteousness and morality were of the highest order. In this Kali Yuga, anything can happen. The son doesn't respect the father, the wife doesn't respect the husband, and so on. It is going from bad to worse.

HT:Can astrology be used in running a business?

PN:Astrology is the best source of choosing the right business for any individual. For example, I cannot do any business, except reading a horoscope. Some people are experts in technology. They can use technology in business. This is all shown in the horoscope. There is nothing hidden. The only thing is, there is little respect for astrology in this world today. Many people have started their business without astrology. They chose the wrong business and have lost all of their investments. So, astrology is the best tool for everything in life, including business.

HT:Do your clients heed your advice on marriage compatibilities?

PN:There is a saying, "Marriages are made in heaven." If marriages are made in heaven, how can we decide about it? Still, Hindu people used to compare horoscopes and marry. If you actually follow the Hindu rules of astrology for compatability in marriage, it will definitely work, at least 90% of the time. They will never part. In every case where the couple came to me before marrying and I gave blessings, based on the astrology, they are still together and happy--every case.

HT:What about past life readings?

PN:That's all foolishness.What you can do is to tell what is

going to happen, maybe what is going to be your next birth. Some may say you were this or you were that. It's all nonsense. I don't believe in it. I am a scientific, forthright astrologer. I must answer your questions forthrightly.

HT:Skeptics say, "the planets are out there. How can they affect us?"

PN:The planets have an effect on us because they are not outside, they are inside. I have never seen, according to my intuition and understanding, that the planets are on the outside. The whole world is inside. What does your guru say? "Everything is within you."

HT:How do you approach jyotisha?

PN:My guru, Siva Yogaswami, initiated me into astrology. He said, "You sit in one place. The people will come and consult you." Once, Lord Skanda, Muruga, appeared and told me, "Don't look at the horoscope with your head. Look at the horoscope with your heart and your predictions will come right." When I pray, I pray with the heart.

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K.N.Rao

Sri K.N. Rao is the founder of the world's largest astrological

school, in Delhi, India. It has 460 students and 24 teachers. Sri Rao retired from a top level government service position in India and now devotes all his time to astrology.

HT:Do you perform any spiritual practices to help with your work?

K.N. Rao:I do Vishnu Sahasranama, Aum Namasisivayaand Tryambakam yajamahe.These three are my favorite mantras. If a man is in very serious difficulty, I'll ask him to do Narayana Kavacham. These are my tested stotras. I tell people, "Spend some time for God." That is more important than spending money. A man who cannot give one hour every day to God is leading an animal life. It is a very strong statement, but I insist and repeat it.

HT:Does one have to be a Hindu to practicejyotisha?

KNR:No, one just needs to be spiritual. Parashara (a great sage who wrote the rules of jyotisha) does not say you have to be a Hindu to do astrology. He says you have to have technical, intellectual and moral excellence. It is at the spiritual level that humanity is one. At the religious level there have been so many quarrels, crusades and all these stupid things that have happened since the history of the world.

HT:Aren't there certain Hindu beliefs that are integral to jyotisha?

KNR:Yes.

HT:What about those who want to practice jyotisha as a business?

KNR:There is no harm. That has come to stay now and has become a fashion in India also. Some are very honest. For them, it is a profession. For me, it has not been a profession, it has been a serious academic pursuit. Around me has grown up in Delhi, at the Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, the world's largest astrology teaching institute, with 460 students. Out of those people, some take to professional astrology. They will be doing it like well-trained doctors or engineers, not like quacks, which, unfortunately is the condition of astrology both in India and in the other parts of the world.

HT:Are negative indications in a chart destined to happen?

KNR:In one case, in which I saw a negative event about to take place, I made the client chant the Mrityunjaya mantr two months in advance. Even then, 200 cement bags fell on him, but he escaped with a hairline fracture only, nothing more. So it is possible to avert or reduce such misfortune 80% of the time, through right karma. The rest of the time, the prarabdha karma may be so strong that a man may not overcome it. But, those 20% cases generally will not come to an astrologer.

HT:Can a priest perform a special homa for us to mitigate a negative indication in our chart?

KNR: Generally, I don't encourage this. The reason is very simple. When I sit down and pray for myself, or when I pray for someone whom I love, God rewards me for my sincerity. I generally tell people, "Do it yourself, even if you do it a little imperfectly, and God will reward you for your sincerity." If you have a lot of money which you could spend on homa, give it to charity, help a needy person and the needy person's blessings will also help you overcome the misfortunes indicated planetarily. This answer makes many people unhappy. But, after 30 years, I have seen this alone happening. One must remember that you can deceive anyone in the world except God.

HT: Do things happen simply because of the combination of the planets, or is it the result of our karma?

KNR: No, a horoscope is the allotment of karmas of previous lives. We are all getting the results of our karma, but not all of our karma. In my latest research I have been able to get 10 horoscopes of both lives, previous and present, of five people. I have seen very clearly the samskaras of the past life manifesting in the present. I see not one, but ten common links between the horoscopes of the previous life and this life. There is no doubt, it is the allotted karma, and it is the full janma samskaras. There is no accident in nature. There is harmony; there is orderliness in God's universe. It is man only that distorts that and begins to explain it as a coincidence or an accident. If it was an accident, how could we predict what we see in the chart?

HT: What is the cause of the Yugas?

KNR:That is for the Lord Himself to answer. I am too small a man for that.

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Chakrapani Ullal

Sri Chakrapani D. Ullal, a world renowned Vedic astrologer from South India, was invited by Swami Muktananda to come to America in 1979. He now has a busy private practice based in the Los Angeles, California area. He holds a degree in business and law and has lectured extensively throughout the world.

Hinduism Today:Please tell us of your guru, Swami Nityananda, and your practice of jyotisha?

Chakrapani Ullal:I spent 1953 to 1961 with him and met his disciple, Swami Muktananda in 1958. From 1953 onward, even though I had a basic training in astrology, my father said I should not become an astrologer. With that in mind, I joined the law college in Bombay. But Swami Nityananda would always refer to me as, "A man who looks to the future." This was quite embarrassing to me at the time. I felt it was below my idea of being a lawyer.

From a young age I was taught astrology by my father. People used to come to our home every day. As a small child I just sat, observed and learned a lot. My mother's father was also a

famous astrologer. I practiced astrology in my spare time, but I did not practice professionally until after 1966. By 1972, I was only doing astrology.

HT:In what capacity did Swami Muktananda use your talents?

CU:He told me, "forget about any kind of work, you just do astrology." When any of his followers had any questions, Swami would send them to me. He really trusted astrology, because he had knowledge of it, and he trusted my judgments completely. In all plans, he consulted astrology, from travel, to future sishya, starting new ashrams, everything.

HT:What kind of clientele do you have here in America?

CU:I would say 99.9% in one form or another are connected with some kind of spiritual practice. Perhaps I am the only astrologer that has that kind of a clientele. And 99% of my clientele are non-Indians.

HT:Can jyotisha be helpful on the path of spiritual unfoldment?

CU:Yes, because jyotishais a science of self-revelation. Through jyotisha,one begins to understand one's own nature, and one of the fundamental rules of spirituality is self-acceptance. Jyotishatells you what you really are, and that understanding enables a person to accept. That moment of acceptance is the beginning of spirituality. As long as we don't

accept the outer nature, we cannot transcend to the inner nature.

HT:Do realized saints and siddhas transcend the horoscope?

CU:Siddhars and saints, they all transcend jyotisha.Things still come to them, because of their prarabdha karma(the allotted karmas for this life), but they do not engage it. The way they react to what is happening is different than how we react. That is why the astrology, in a sense, does not apply to siddhars and enlightened beings, because they transcend the whole reaction to the situation.

HT:Can you foretell spiritual times in a persons chart?

CU:You can always foretell when the spiritual energy is more active in a person's chart. It is the time that, whatever situation a person is in today, when that intensity increases, they will jump to another level.

HT:Can the horoscope tell us about our past lives?

CU:It is said that one can predict the past, present and future lives from astrology. But, that kind of knowledge can only be had by one who has reached a certain level of enlightenment. Astrology can tell everything, but the astrologer may not be able to perceive it. Even if he perceives something, he may not understand. His own understanding and wisdom, that is his

limitation.

HT: Is a prediction based on the memorized slokas or intuition?

CU: The slokas are general rules that apply to almost every situation. We have to make it apply to the special situations. That is not only intuition, it is also judgment. Judgment is connected to intuition, and that comes from the guru's grace.

HT: We hear that certain days are not auspicious for new things. Does this have a basis in jyotisha?

CU: This certainly has some basis in jyotisha. Tuesday is ruled by Mars, and Saturday is ruled by Saturn. Mars brings the energy of aggravation, fire. Saturn is the planet of obstacles and delays. Therefore, we are generally told not to start anything new on Tuesdays or Saturdays. But, they are not bad for everything. Both are favorable for taking medicine, surgery work or anything to do with the health field. There are many rules that make a particular day favorable.

HT: How can these planets and stars affect me here on Earth?

CU: Knowledgeable people know that everything in this world and in the whole cosmos is interdependent and interconnected. Anything that is happening above will have an influence on Earth. The real scientists have come to this understanding. But, they may not know that the planets

influence a person's mind in a particular way. Astrology is a gift of God for mankind. In their compassionate nature, the great sages said that when people are suffering in this world, they can use this understanding and wisdom and reduce the suffering to a great extent. That is why astrology was created.

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Sidebar: Digitized Jyotisha

Several companies now offer astrology programs which can be of tremendous assistance to amateur and professional astrologers alike. The companies below all have programs of varied complexity with a variety of features. Write or call them for more information, and look for our reviews of their software in next month's issue.

GORAVANI JYOTISH(TM)

Das Goravani, 48529 Todd Eymann Road, Miramonte, California, 93641, USA. Phone: 209-336-2628.

SKYCLOCK

SynEnergy, P.O. Box 1668, Palo Alto, California, 94302, USA.
Phone: 415-327-2633.

HAYDN'S JYOTISH

Haydn Huntley, P.O. Box 1161, Fairfield, Iowa, 52556, USA.
Phone: 515-472-7025; fax: 515-472-8159; email:

huntley@mymenus.com

PARASHARA'S LIGHT

GeoVision Software, P.O. Box 2152, Fairfield, Iowa, 52556, USA. Phone: 515-472-0855.

VISUAL JYOTISH

C and D Scientific Software, 1 Ford Avenue, Lynnfield, Massachusetts, 01940, USA. Phone: 617-334-4967.

ASTRAL II

Institute for East/West Studies, Teresa Hamilton, 2665 San Benito Drive, Walnut Creek, California, 94598, USA. Phone: 510-944-9082.

JYOTISH VEDIC ASTROLOGY

Matrix Software, 315 Marion Avenue, Big Rapids, Michigan, 49307, USA. Phone: 616-796-2483. (PC only)

PC JYOTISH

Passage Press, P.O. Box 21713, Salt Lake City, Utah, 84121-0713, USA. Phone: 801-942-1440. (PC only)

He who dwells in the moon and the stars, yet is other than the moon and the stars, whom the moon and the stars do not know, whose body is the moon and stars, who controls the moon and the stars from within--He is the Atman within you, the inner controller. --Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 3.7.11