

[In Defense of Astrology](#)

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VEDIC ASTROLOGY

In Defense of Astrology

Daughter of famed astrologer B.V. Raman reasons with doubting scientists

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When the University Grants Commission of India brought Vedic astrology into the teaching curriculum of universities throughout the holy land of Bharat recently, an avalanche of letters and articles condemned the decision. These assaults revealed a great ignorance of Jyotisha, especially among the scientific community. All of the attacks followed the same pattern. The critics first projected their own preconceived misconceptions about astrology and then struck them down with faulty arguments that included a sizeable amount of fabricated statistics, concocted details and insubstantial references to movies and even sayings of great men like Gautama Buddha and Swami Vivekananda quoted out of context.

Any scientist who belittles the study of astrology will say it is impossible that planets and man have a connection. However, belief in impossibility is the starting point for logic, deductive mathematics and natural science.

The state of scientific thinking today approximates, in some ways, that which prevailed at the end of the 19th century. Scientists of that period were gloating over their past successes and were beginning to believe that all the important problems of physics had been solved—laws of motion, conservation of energy, gravity, electricity, magnetism, thermodynamics and more. This belief was neither true nor justified, as we all know now.

Science has gained much through the years but has stopped short in its attempts to understand the ultimate mystery of life. To advance further, it must now focus on ideas that are beyond observation by conventional methods. New methods must be evolved and explored. Otherwise, doubt will stagnate progress. It is here that a resurgence of Jyotisha, or Vedic astrology, can make a great difference in the development of human thought.

Insights from History

There is a common misconception that astrology was brought to India by Alexander the Great. Alexander was born in 356 bce. Yet it is a verified historical fact that court astrologers examined the chart of Gautama, the Buddha, born as Prince Siddhartha in 623 bce, to predict that Siddhartha would be the "king of kings" or "the emperor of renunciation." And long before this, in the historical epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, clear references were made to astrological

predictions.

In the Ramayana, the legendary Sage Valmiki describes the configuration of planets at the birth of Rama: "In the month of Chaitra, on the auspicious tithi of Navami, Lord Rama was born in Cancer Ascendant with the Moon in Punarvasu and five planets in exaltation with the Moon conjoining Jupiter in Cancer Ascendant." This was thousands of years before the flourishing of Greek culture.

When Valmiki talks of the rising sign Cancer and exaltation of planets, it is strong and irrefutable evidence of the indigenous origins of the astrological signs (rasis) and of the Indians' knowing them before the Greeks.

For calculating the true positions of planets, a high level of knowledge of astronomy is required. The Mahabharata shows that even as early as 5,000 years ago, ancient Indians had advanced greatly in the study of both astronomy and Jyotisha. Therefore, it is not true that astrology came into India from Greece. Astrology was born in India, discovered by the Vedic rishis. It is based on an intimate understanding of the correlation between planetary movements and terrestrial happenings.

The Facts of Science and Astrology

All Vedic Astrology is in Sanskrit and covers hundreds and thousands of permutations and combinations of planetary positions. Any criticism of this ancient and complex system should be made by someone with at least a minimal background in its study. This is not usually the case. Unfounded criticism of Vedic astrology is quite prevalent today and originates primarily from two sources: first, a lack of basic knowledge about astrology, and second, an assumption that anything beyond the established and "proven" laws of science cannot be recognized or respected by science.

In science, facts precede theories. Apples fall to the ground; so do material objects and unsupported bodies. Planets move around their primaries in accordance with Kepler's Law of Motion. Taking these facts into account, Newton began his investigations and came up with the law of gravitation. He attributed gravitation to the forces of mutual attraction between material objects. Later, when Einstein came on the scene, he explained the same phenomenon as due to the curvature of space in the neighborhood of the material object. Both were great scientists. However, each had his own theory which the respective contemporary scientific community accepted. The same phenomenon had two divergent theories of scientific explanation. Yet, the fact of falling bodies remained. In other words, one cannot say that because there are different theories of explanation, the bodies do not fall at all.

Where astrology is concerned, the primary function of science seems most often not to ask hypothetical questions but to explain corroborated facts. Yet, an astrologist might ask, "Do those who question astrology accept the facts of astrology as a basic working premise?"

Here are some accepted facts of Vedic astrology. Celestial events in different parts of the universe are interlinked. That which occurs in one part of the universe has a repercussion elsewhere in the cosmos. The cosmos for us on Earth begins with the solar system and its members, the navagrahas: the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu and Ketu. Thus, Vedic astrology is simply the study of planetary and celestial movements and their connections with what happens on Earth.

Scientific Proof and the Five Senses

Regarding the connection between man and planet, what is needed is a scientific theory that explains the facts of Vedic astrology in terms acceptable to scientists. Yet a scientist would be the first to state that

there is no such thing as ultimate scientific proof. He would admit that it is impossible to really prove any scientific model or theory. One can only show, he would say, that for a limited set of circumstances, the model or theory makes predictions that are consistent with the data. Although it is not possible to truly prove a scientific theory, it is possible to disprove it. Yet disproving one theory does not imply that another theory cannot be established.

As in science, astrological facts are to be understood under certain controlled conditions only. These conditions are defined in astrological texts. Where there is a variance in the conditions defined, there is bound to be a variance in the astrological facts and their operation. Such variance is often overlooked by scientists judging Vedic astrology. This indicates a bias and prejudice on the part of those making the judgment.

Western scientific thought, to which most scientists owe allegiance, draws on the traditions of Greek rationalist thinking which gives credence only to that which is within the purview of the five senses. Because of the prestige science has attracted due to its technological achievements, there is a tendency to accept what it says as sacrosanct without critical examination.

Also, scientific methods, as recognized and identified today, follow a closed system of reasoning which insulates it from factors that its methods cannot account for. Assuming such methods are beyond question, scientists keep on freely changing theories, discarding earlier ones for new ones, and have no qualms about it. It is not logical that these same scientists should profess to know the nature of matter energy in it's entirety, as well as all the laws of the universe, yet dare to dismiss jyotisha because it establishes conclusions that science cannot prove by it's rules or that it perceives a level of exostance beyond the five senses. They could certainly lear from a few among their peers who have transcended the trivial to accomplish great things. When edison was asked to define electricity, he said "Why define? It exists. Use it." Could not the same be said of vedic astrology?

A massive inferiority complex has been ingrained into the Indian psyche by the Macaulayite Education system (introduced by the British as a replacement for and superior to the already-existing Indian system of learning) and unless this is uprooted, a very sorry state of affairs will continue barring an honest appreciation of the intellectual legacy we have from ancient India.

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Sage Valmiki in the Ramayana